David Rock

THE BRITISH IN ARGENTINA

Commerce, Settlers & Power, 1800–2000

Britain and the World

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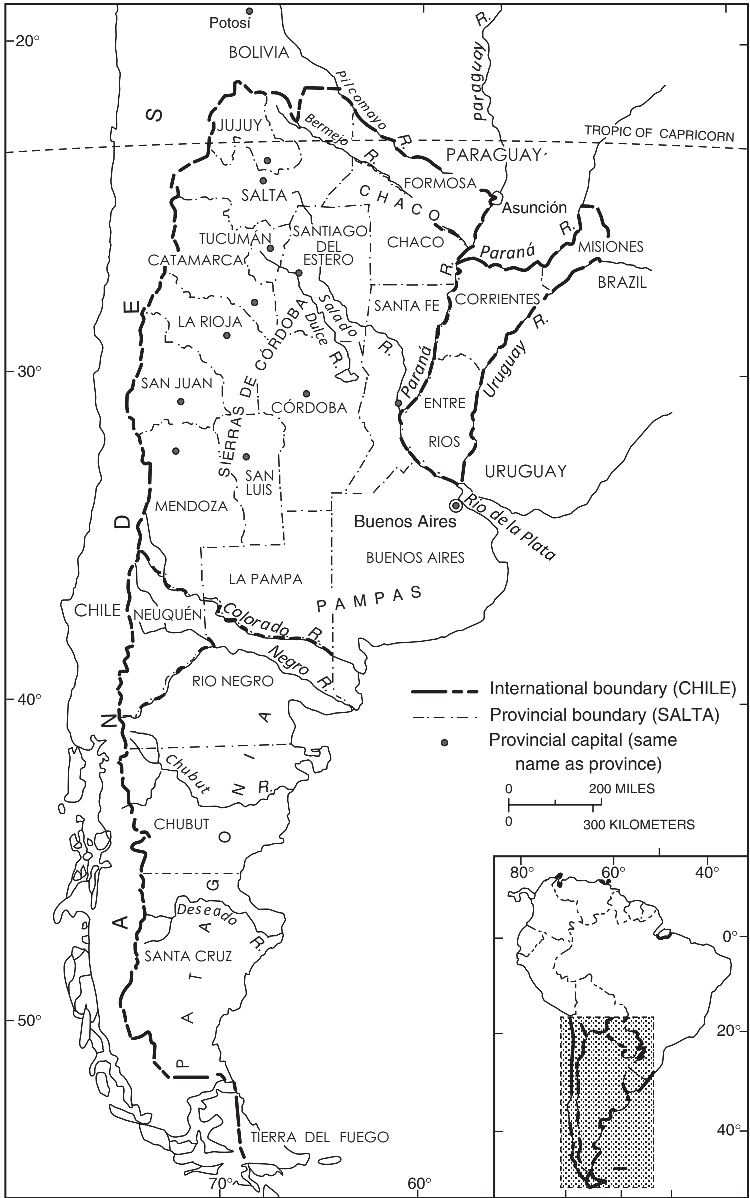
In memory of C.J.R., 1981–2004



Map 1 Argentina: provinces and main physical features

Preface

Ill-feeling and conflict between Britain and Argentina over the Falkland Islands have darkened memories of their once exceptionally close ties. From the Napoleonic wars into the 1950s, Argentina remained a major focus of British commerce, trade and investment, and British settlement there once climbed higher than anywhere else outside the Dominions and the United States. Led by several great railway interests, British businesses in Argentina included tram and gas firms, water and sewage works, along with meat packers, banks and insurance companies. Each year hundreds of British ships anchored off Buenos Aires on the Rio de la Plata estuary. British shippers, warehousemen and importers occupied prominent positions on the waterfront, while British shopkeepers sold British goods along the city's congested streets and avenues. Anglican and Presbyterian churches, cricket grounds and polo fields flourished in Buenos Aires and among interior towns and rural districts. British and Anglo-Argentine ranchers owned great estancias on the Argentine pampas. Welsh speakers lived (and still do) in Chubut province in Patagonia, while further south ranchers, commonly of Scottish descent transplanted from the Falkland Islands, owned vast sheep farms. When Ireland remained joined with the United Kingdom under the Act of Union, Irish sheep farmers settled in some of the richest counties of the province of Buenos Aires. Small British enclaves in different parts of the country included a few Scots Gaelic speakers in Entre Rios, north of Buenos Aires, and curiosities like the Leach family and their descendants, once of Rochdale, whose men became cricket-playing sugar barons in the far north-west. "Firms carry the mark 'Limited' to such an extent that one has the impression of dealing with a

British colony," observed a local commentator in 1911.[1] Yet Argentina was no colony. One of its most unusual features lay in its development as a great centre of British business, economic power and settlement while remaining an independent republic, free of the panoply of imperial rule.

When the British appeared on the Rio de la Plata in the early nineteenth century, they encountered a country of little apparent consequence, a mere gateway to the silver mines of Peru. In those early days, visitors revelled in galloping across the near-empty pampas. "Away and away again, with a fresh sweet breeze and a rising sun, the most delicious elements that a mortal man could desire," wrote one of them.[2] In the late nineteenth century, Argentina experienced explosive growth, a process in which the British became deeply implicated. The *Standard* of Buenos Aires, long a principal source of Argentine business news, regularly shipped 20,000 copies of its monthly supplement to British investors. Railways, artesian wells and windmills, paddocks, hundreds of miles of barbed wire fencing, pedigree cattle and sheep, and thousands of grain farms filled the landscape worked by tenant farmers, mainly Italians. In parts of rural Buenos Aires, estancia land appreciated to levels as high as anywhere in the world. Attracting hundreds of thousands of European immigrants, Buenos Aires became one of the world's great cities, Parisian in style and atmosphere but Chicagoan in energy. Political change reinforced the transition. Long dominated by petty warlords cannibalising meagre foreign trade revenues, Argentina crossed the threshold into respectable constitutional government. Expansion continued until World War I and in many respects until the Great Depression when instability, near-stagnation and bouts of authoritarian government supervened. As railway building and investment tailed away, the British population declined and the entire British connection weakened. From World War II, Juan Perón, a paladin for many but an arch villain for others, disrupted the liberal society the British helped to construct. By the time of Perón's fall in 1955, their once salient economic presence had shrunk to a negligible level from which it never recovered. The more recent history of the British in Argentina centred on the growth of multinational subsidiaries and, along with similar companies originating elsewhere, their impact on the social and political landscape. As it also

[1] Alberto B. Martínez, "Foreign Capital Investments in Argentina." *Review of the River Plate* 7 June 1918. Reproduced from a pre-war commentary.

[2] Thomas Woodbine Hinchliff. *South American Sketches; or, A Visit to Rio de Janeiro, the Organ Mountains, La Plata and the Paraná*. London: Longman, 1863, 134–135.

marked the progressive integration of the "Anglo" descendants of British settlers, the final period became dominated by the issue of the Falkland Islands.

Outlines and fragments of the story are known, most of all perhaps during its early phases. Contact between the two countries began with two British military assaults against Buenos Aires in 1806 and 1807. Their defeat stifled the hopes some entertained of building a British colony in the Plata. Soon afterwards during the independence era, British merchants selling textiles and buying Peruvian silver settled in Buenos Aires. For the next half-century, the antithetical figures of Bernardino Rivadavia, the liberal Unitario, and Juan Manuel de Rosas, the anti-liberal Federalist, one ostensibly pro-British and the other reputedly Anglophobic, dominate the story. The Rivadavia era of the 1820s is replete with colourful, informative accounts of the country by scarcely remembered British travellers and prospectors. Published literature in English of the Rosas period of the 1830s and 1840s includes W.H. Hudson's accounts of the birdlife and his memorable stories of the gauchos of the pampas. Following the destruction of the Federales soon after mid-century, the British re-engaged with Argentina as investors to build railways and many other businesses, and to strengthen the resident British community. Remnants of their presence include Anglican neo-Gothic churches, clubs with cricket squares and polo fields, and schools with names imported from the English Home Counties, whose pupils remain identifiable by their English-style school uniforms. Today, the historical British presence remains visible in commemorations of century-old sports heroes gilded on oak-panelled walls of some of the clubs, and in solemn observances of Armistice Day.

This book includes discussion of why the British first went to the Rio de la Plata and why contact took the form it did without any prolonged attempt at imperial possession. It addresses points of transition in the relationship such as the commercial collapse of the late 1820s. Another commercial breakdown fifty years later in the 1870s concluded in a great surge of British investment and railway construction. While it surveys the writings of travellers and explorers, Charles Darwin the best known among them, the book recalls the lives of almost unknown Irish and Scottish sheep farmers. It assesses the Baring crisis of 1890, a perennially fascinating subject for historians. Discussion of the twentieth century includes an assessment of the factors in British decline, the loss of manufacturing competitiveness, the rise of local Argentine industry and the eventually irresistible expansion of the United States. Later chapters examine Anglo-Argentine

relations during the era of Juan Perón, one of the best-known political leaders of twentieth-century Latin America. An epilogue explores the role of British multinationals in the political breakdown in Argentina of the 1970s, a process culminating in civil war, dictatorship and the closely interrelated war of 1982 over the Falkland Islands.

The book examines the nebulous issue of British power in Argentina. Textbooks cite the Anglo-Argentine relationship as a paradigm of "informal empire," the idea proposing that the British long dominated and profited from Argentina while deliberately sidestepping the burdens and expense of colonial government. Influential figures in Britain advocated such an approach even before the overthrow of Spanish colonial rule in 1810. Soon afterwards, critics of the British in the United States, notably John Quincy Adams, accused the British of practising indirect rule. In such cases, perception or propaganda sometimes fell short of reality. Noted historians have sometimes changed their mind on this elusive, perplexing issue. Long ago, H.S. Ferns embarked on his career with an article, "Britain's Informal Empire in Argentina." A decade later in *Britain and Argentina in the Nineteenth Century*, he disavowed the idea, questioning whether "the term imperialism [could] be applied to Anglo-Argentine relations? If we accept the proposition that imperialism embraces the fact of control through the use of political power, then the verdict for Britain is unquestionably 'Not Guilty'."[3] Ubiquitous yet impalpable, "empire" or "imperialism" when applied to Argentina evoke memories of George Bernard Shaw's aphorism, "There is only one religion though there are a hundred versions of it." Today, informal empire suffers from overuse and the protean, catch-all quality it has developed. Uncritical application has reduced its analytical utility.[4]

Concrete issues yield a more complex picture of Britain's quasi-imperial role in South America. The 1806 British military occupation of Buenos Aires for instance cannot be deemed an attack on Argentine sovereignty, which as yet in colonial times did not exist. With sovereignty over the ter-

[3] Salisbury, quoted in H.S. Ferns. *Britain and Argentina in the 19th Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960, 487. See also Ferns, "Britain's Informal Empire in Argentina, 1806–1914." *Past and Present*, No. 4, Nov., 1953, 60–75.

[4] A quite recent definition calls imperialism, in vague, unspecific terms, "the complex of intentions and material forces which predisposes states to an incursion, or attempted incursion, into the sovereignty of other states." P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins. *British Imperialism, 1688–2000*. New York: Longman, 1993, 43. The problems lie in terms like "intentions" and "predisposes."

ritory always in dispute, the Falkland Islands controversy can never be decided in favour of one side against the other, since the consent necessary to establish sovereignty can only be achieved politically by negotiation. The Anglo-French intervention in 1845 is conventionally viewed as an egregious case of British imperialism. The matter appears less clear-cut noting that Lord Aberdeen's instructions to his envoy Ouseley forbade any incursion against the sovereign rights of Buenos Aires. At the same time during this period, the local government used a leading British merchant in Buenos Aires as an interlocutor to propose a form of relationship with Britain identical to that of informal empire.

In other contexts, the British wielded power in Argentina subtly and selectively, preferring enticement, persuasion, example and certainly consent to coercion. During the Edwardian era, diplomats and businessmen promoted British interests using sports in part, in which imitation and emulation became a means to elicit deference and compliance. Argentines never became passive, inanimate victims of British domination, however avidly nationalists might argue to the contrary. When Argentina developed into a great artifice of British overseas investment, the material gains were shared. Argentina became the richest country in Latin America and likely the most egalitarian too. If this book seeks to illustrate multiple ways in which the British deployed power in Argentina, it also demonstrates that the Argentines retained extensive freedom of manoeuvre. Welcoming the British when it suited them, they also devised ways to resist them—by maintaining a tight grip on their own monetary system, for example—and thereby protecting their sovereignty. Nearly always open to wider external contact than with Britain alone, Argentina exemplified the great difference between free, independent states and closeted colonial subjects of the British Empire.

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My work began with an invitation by Robert Bickers to contribute a chapter on the British in Argentina to a collected volume on British communities in different parts of the world. The book has a second distant provenance from my contact with eminent historians of an earlier generation during student days at Cambridge University. David Joslin, D.C.M. Platt, Ronald Robinson and John Street became pioneers in this or cognate fields. H.S. Ferns, a non-Cambridge member of the fraternity of senior scholars whom I knew, deserves special mention. His *Britain and Argentina in the Nineteenth Century* published in 1960 stands above other work in the field. Almost sixty years after Ferns I have followed him with a new outlook and a longer time span, using many sources unavailable to him at the time he was writing. Throughout my career, ties and friendships with historians in Argentina led by Ezequiel Gallo and Tulio Halperín Donghi provided another major source of support and inspiration.

I prefer older usages when referring to Argentina and its people. Thus *Argentines* live in the country subject to the *Argentine* government. The term "River Plate" has largely fallen into disuse; "Rio de la Plata" replaces it. I often refer to the people of British descent in Argentina as Anglos as an abridged alternative to Anglo-Argentines.

I dedicate my book to Rosalind, my companion in many adventures in Argentina that began in 1968 as we sailed on the SS Arlanza from Tilbury to Buenos Aires.

Wetheringsett, Suffolk.

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CHAPTER 1

Soldiers and Merchants

His love of freedom was ardent and grand. He once said, that if he should live a few years, he would go over to South America, and write a Poem on Liberty.
Reporting John Keats *circa 1820*

In two volumes published in 1838 and 1843, John Parish Robertson and his younger brother William Parish Robertson recounted their careers as British merchants in the cities of the Rio de la Plata: Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Corrientes and Asunción del Paraguay. John Robertson first took a ship to South America from Scotland in 1806 with his father at the age of 14. He travelled as a powder monkey, a youth who serviced the cannon crews on board a warship. Hoping to establish a mercantile house in Buenos Aires, the father planned to train his son in the business and to employ him there as his representative when he returned to Scotland. The Robertson family had an extensive background in finance and foreign trade, and typified a particular echelon of early nineteenth-century Scottish and British society. Robertson senior had been employed at the Bank of Scotland in Edinburgh. His wife, although Scottish in background, was born in Hamburg, where members of her family, the Parishes, were prominent in

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Baltic commerce.[1] William Robertson, another aspiring merchant, followed his brother out to Buenos Aires in 1813. Together, the two young men continued their father's quest to develop a mercantile firm in South America. Using Buenos Aires as a base, they aimed to form a network of partnerships and family connections typical among British merchants of this period to trade with British, South American and European Continental ports.[2]

Warfare in both Europe and in South America spurred the Robertsons on their voyage. In 1806, the Napoleonic Empire crested following smashing military victories against the British-subsidised Fourth Coalition led by Prussia, Austria and Russia. In an eighteen-month campaign, Napoleon overran his continental enemies, first Austria at Ulm in October 1805, Russia at Austerlitz in December 1805, then Prussia at Jena-Auerstädt in November 1806 and finally Russia once more at Friedland in mid-1807. The treaty of Paris of February 1806 closed the North Sea and Baltic ports including Hamburg to the British and annexed the kingdom of Hanover to France. In the Berlin Decree of November 1806, Napoleon imposed the Continental System to block trade between Britain and mainland Europe. As European commerce plummeted, British merchants and manufacturers scoured the Americas for alternative markets, seeking advantages from Horatio Nelson's victory over the Spanish and French fleets in the recent battle of Trafalgar.[3] In light of recent events, Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord

[1] J.P. and W.P Robertson. *Letters on Paraguay. An account of a four years' Residence in that Republic under the Government of the Dictator Francia*. In two volumes. London: Murray, 1838. and *Letters on South America, comprising travels on the banks of the Rio Parana and Rio de la Plata*. In three vols. London: Murray, 1843.

[2] For recent literature, see Aaron Graham, "Mercantile Networks in the Early Modern World," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 56, 2013, 279–295. Also Patrick K. O'Brien, "Merchants and bankers as patriots or speculators? Foreign policy and monetary policy in wartime, 1793–1815," in John J. McCusker and Kenneth Morgan. *The Early Atlantic Economy*, 250–277. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Peter Mathias, "Risk, credit and kinship in early modern enterprise," in McCusker and Morgan, *Atlantic Economy*, 15–37; Vera Blinn Reber. *British Mercantile Houses in Buenos Aires, 1810–1880*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979; Stanley Chapman. *Merchant Enterprise in Britain. From the Industrial Revolution to World War I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; D.C.M. Platt. *Latin America and British Trade, 1806–1914*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1972 outlines the topic in the early nineteenth century. A biography of J.P. Robertson appears in *Standard* (Buenos Aires) 21 Mar. 1897; see also R.A. Humphreys, "British merchants and Latin American Independence," *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 51, 1965, 151–174. On the Robertsons in Buenos Aires, see Wylie to Hancock 7 Mar. 1809, University of Glasgow. Archive of John Wylie. 28/1/1.

[3] For the British context in 1806–1807, see O'Brien, *Merchants and Bankers*; François Crouzet, "America and the Crisis of the British imperial economy, 1803–1807," 278–315, in McCusker and Morgan, *Atlantic Economy*. British exports to continental Europe report-

President of the Council, proclaimed "the end of the old world [and] we must therefore look to the new."[4]

In September 1806, the British public learned of the capture of Buenos Aires three months previously by Sir Home Riggs Popham, an audacious naval commander. In messages home Popham announced the opening of the city to British trade and invited merchants and manufacturers to use it as a gateway into Spanish South America. Starved of trade, he reported the "Buenos Ayreans" eagerly awaited the merchants' arrival. As a foretaste of the fortunes to be made in South America, he sent a large cache of silver to England seized from the Spanish viceroy. Thirty years later, John Robertson recalled the riches he and his father anticipated when they reached Buenos Aires. "The natives, it was said, would give us uncounted gold for our manufactures while their warehouses were well stocked with produce, as their coffers filled with precious metals."[5]

On news of Popham's feat, the British government equipped large naval and military forces to consolidate his victory. In the initial plan proposed by War Secretary William Windham, one fleet would reinforce Popham and the other sail round Cape Horn to Chile to attempt further conquests on the Pacific coast. The plan scarcely looked practical. Expecting the two forces to move inland and join forces, Windham seemed to overlook the barrier posed by the Andes where mountains like

edly fell from £10.3 million in 1805 to £2.2 million in 1808; and re-exports from £14.4 million in 1802 to £7.8 million in 1808. Martin Robson. *Britain, Portugal and South America in the Napoleonic Wars: alliances and diplomacy in economic maritime conflict*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2010, 14.

[4] Earl Fitzwilliam to Lord Grenville 3 November 1806. Quoted in John D. Grainger. *The Royal Navy and the River Plate, 1806–1807*. Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996, 140. Grainger (p. x) attributes to Fitzwilliam the dictum associated with George Canning in the 1820s about the "new world being called in to balance the old." For broader context, see Adrian J. Pearce. *British Trade with Spanish America, 1763–1808*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007, 211–230; Carlos Marichal. *Bankruptcy of Empire. Mexican Silver and the Wars between Spain, Britain, and France, 1760–1810*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. The British expeditions to Buenos Aires marked an abrupt commercial switch to the Americas, although within a long-term gradual transition over the eighteenth century. By one estimate, British trade with Continental Europe fell from 74 per cent of total trade in 1714–1717 to 33 per cent in 1803–1807. Cain and Hopkins. *British Imperialism*, 90.

[5] Robertson, *Paraguay*, 94. The standard British history of the Napoleonic wars dismisses Popham as a treasure hunter and prize seeker. See J.W. Fortescue. *A History of the British Army. Vol. V 1803–1807*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1921, 367. "British troops, which should have been employed in Europe, were diverted far overseas by the avarice and self-seeking of [a] charlatan, Home Popham."

Aconcagua climbed beyond 20,000 feet.[6] Elsewhere in Britain, Popham's appeal met enthusiastic responses. The city of Manchester, for example, proclaimed the "commercial advantages [of capturing Buenos Aires] are extensive beyond calculation and in the present state of continental trade… hold out a peculiar degree of importance."[7] Throughout Britain, manufacturers began contracting agents to transport goods to South America. The young men they hired, who were often their own relatives, began commissioning ships, loading them with textiles and hardware, and preparing them to follow the flotillas into the South Atlantic.

As the British started making their plans, the position in Buenos Aires changed. Popham controlled the city for only forty-seven days until 12 August, when a Spanish militia attacked and forced his men to surrender. When the news reached Britain in November, the government resolved to deploy all its forces to the Plata to retake Buenos Aires. As the warships departed, the hundreds of merchants following them included the Robertsons, who sailed in December on the *Enterprise* from the Scottish port of Greenock. Adding up the entire naval and merchant personnel, auxiliaries and camp followers, the British expedition totalled up to 25,000 people.

* * *

In 1806, Buenos Aires had many features typical of Spanish colonial cities. Its racially mixed population numbered between 40,000 and 60,000. Porteños, as the city's inhabitants were known in South America, included white Spaniards and white Creoles, some with high standing in trade and

[6] Instructions to British commanders in late 1806 and early 1807 are reprinted in Grainger, *Royal Navy and the River Plate*, 159–163. For summaries of the planned campaign in the Southern Cone, see Christopher D. Hall. *British Strategy in the Napoleonic War, 1803–15*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992, 146; Charles J. Esdaile. *Napoleon's Wars. An International History, 1803–1815*. New York, Viking, 2007, 265.

[7] Quoted in Grainger, *Royal Navy and the River Plate*, 102. British objectives were listed by the prosecutor in the court martial of Sir John Whitelocke: "new markets for our manufactures…new sources of treasure…the [current] state of Europe, and the attempt to exclude us from our accustomed intercourse [by Napoleon]." See John Whitelocke. *The trial at large of Lieut. Gen. Whitelocke, late Commander in Chief of the forces in South America,* by a general court martial, held at Chelsea Hospital, on Thursday, 28 January, 1808, and continued by adjournment to Tuesday, 15 March, taken by Blanchard and Ramsay, short-hand writers to the court, and published from their notes; with a correct copy of the defence, as delivered into Court, and the Right Honourable, The Judge Advocate's reply; Also all the documents produced in defence. London, 1808, 5.

government, and in larger numbers mixed race Creoles either born locally or migrants from adjacent regions. Imported Africans working mostly as artisans and house servants constituted the largest ethnic group. At around one third of the population, the presence of blacks reflected the recent major expansion of the slave trade in Buenos Aires.[8] Contemporary descriptions of the city highlighted the ethnic variety of the city's population. They noted slave laundresses at work on the riverside, numerous water and milk carriers on wooden carts in the streets, and beggars who plied their trade by horseback. The shallow riverbed of the Plata estuary enabled fishermen to wade out hundreds of yards by horseback and drag their catches ashore.[9]

Viewed from the river, Buenos Aires stood on a thirty-foot-high bank tapering away into marshland to the leftward, south-eastern direction. In 1806, the city stretched twenty-two squares along the river, about a mile and a half. It contained a few churches with spires, a cathedral, a fort and a barracks, and La Residencia, currently the city gaol although long the domicile of Jesuits until their expulsion from the Spanish Empire in 1767. Extending about a mile westward behind the waterfront, nondescript flat-roofed buildings faced one another on straight narrow streets laid out in the Spanish American gridiron fashion.[10] A few years later in 1818, James McIntyre, a visiting Scot, described the houses in Buenos Aires as of "one storey and flat on the roof. Those of better order contain a place for walking on the top…to enjoy the prospect of the river and surrounding country."[11] Four slaughter houses or mataderos stood at the city's southern edge, grotesque sites replete with cattle skeletons and rotting carcasses, plagued by carrion birds and foul

[8] Alex Borucki, "The Slave Trade to the Rio de la Plata, 1777–1812: Trans-Imperial Networks and Atlantic Warfare," *Colonial Latin American Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2011, 81–107; Marisa Pineau ed. *La ruta del esclavo en el Rio de la Plata: aportes para el diálogo intercultural*. Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero, 2011. Borucki (pp. 85–88) estimates the arrival of 70,000 slaves in the Rio de la Plata (Buenos Aires and Montevideo combined) in 1777–1812, with numbers peaking in 1800–1806. The lower population figure of 40,000 for Buenos Aires, and a slave population of only 6772, is based on estimates by Emilio Ravignani quoted by Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 28.

[9] Descriptions of Buenos Aires include one by watercolourist E.E. Vidal. See *Picturesque Illustrations of Buenos Ayres and Monte Video Consisting of Twenty-four Views Accompanied by Descriptions of the Scenery and of the Customs, Manners etc. of the Inhabitants of those Cities and their Environs*. London: R. Ackermann, 1820. Vidal frequently cites Félix de Azara. *Descripción e historia del Paraguay y del Rio de la Plata*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Bajel, 1943.

[10] A detailed map of Buenos Aires of 1814 by Pedro Cerviño is reproduced as Map 16 in Fortescue, *British Army*, vol. 5.

[11] McIntyre, 1818–1821 NLS Ms. 11,000. (National Library of Scotland).

odours. A place of little consequence until thirty or forty years previously, Buenos Aires grew and prospered following the Spanish imperial reforms of the late 1770s making it capital of the new viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata. Subsidies and trade from Potosí, the site of the silver mines of Upper Peru, flowed into the city attracting a new population and enriching its economy.[12]

* * *

In 1806, the Spanish authorities in Buenos Aires suspected an outside attack was imminent, but believed it would come from Brazil, reactivating hostilities between Spain and Portugal from five years before.[13] Connections with the British, past and present, were slender. Almost a century before in 1713, the Treaty of Utrecht authorised the British South Sea Company to sell slaves in Buenos Aires. The traffic continued for about twenty years but yielded little profit in a country with neither plantations nor heavy demand for slave labour. Continual friction between Britain and Spain in Europe undermined the company's berth in Buenos Aires, and in 1739 it was expelled.[14] In later decades, the only notable contact between the British and the Plata occurred in 1763 when Spanish cannons destroyed the *Lord Clive*, an East India Company warship, killing most of its crew, at Colonia del Sacramento directly across the estuary from Buenos Aires.[15] In the late eighteenth century, Buenos Aires contained only a minute British population, the likely survivors from the 1763 conflict. When Spain declared war on Britain in 1780 during the American Revolution, the authorities ordered

[12] Lyman L. Johnson. *Workshop of Revolution. Plebeian Buenos Aires and the Atlantic World 1776–1810*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011 discusses slavery and housing along with economic conditions. Johnson opts for the figure of 60,000 against the traditional figure of 40,000 for the population of the city. According to Vidal writing around 1818, the population of Buenos Aires "used to be estimated at 40,000 [but] is now reckoned at about seventy thousand." Vidal, *Buenos Ayres*, 9. Population counts in the mid-1820s reveal figures of 70,000 respectively for the city and its surrounding rural area. See Miron P. Burgin, *The Economic Aspects of Argentine Federalism*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1946, 26, (quoting the *Registro Estadístico*).

[13] The Portuguese plan "is and always has been no less than to take away your Majesty's entire empire in South America." Félix de Azara, "Informe sobre la petición hecha por el virrey de Buenos Aires para contrarrestar a los portugueses." In Azara, *Del Paraguay y del Rio de la Plata*, 239.

[14] Sergio Villalobos R. *Comercio y contrabando en el Río de la Plata y Chile, 1700–1811*. Buenos Aires: Editorial de la Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1965, 31–37, noting the meagre profits of the early eighteenth-century slave trade.

[15] The episode is outlined in *The Sunday Times* (London) Jan. 29, 2017. Multiple web sites report impending treasure searches on the sunken wreck.

"all subjects of the King of England" in Buenos Aires to register as enemy aliens. Threatening anyone who disobeyed with the loss of their property, the edict flushed out only seven middle aged men of British origin.[16]

* * *

In 1806, Spaniards and Porteños had no inkling that a decade of secret planning and discussion in Britain preceded Popham's assault on Buenos Aires. Military strategists began mulling an attack on the city in 1796, the year republican France defeated Bourbon Spain, forcing it into an alliance against Britain.[17] Among various British plans, two projects in 1800 by Sir Thomas Maitland, a Scottish military officer employed by the East India Company, stood out. One of them aimed to capture Buenos Aires alone, while the second, more ambitious and less plausible, proposed attacking both Buenos Aires and Chile, the latter from India, as a prelude to campaigns against Spanish Peru. Maitland emphasised any invasion of Buenos Aires could only succeed if it won the support of the Porteños, dividing them from the Spaniards. To achieve that, the British would have to promote a movement for independence. If successful, the plan promised extraordinary rewards. Victory would "open an immense source of commercial benefit and at the same time make the government of Spain tremble for the fate of its possessions in the New World."[18]

Maitland and other British schemers focused on Buenos Aires as the port of exit for silver mined in Upper Peru at Potosí. When Spain switched alliances in 1796, the British grew anxious to prevent South American silver being diverted to the French. Under their own control, it would serve several purposes such as funding new military campaigns in

[16] Archivo General de la Nación: Justicia. Legajo 9, Expediente 183, 1780.

[17] British projects first appeared in the 1740s. See Carlos Roberts. *Las invasiones inglesas del Rio de la Plata (1806–1807) y la influencia inglesa en la independencia y organización de las provincias del Rio de la Plata*. Buenos Aires: Jácobo Peuser, 1938, 22. Invasion plans in the late 1790s are detailed in Klaus Gallo. *Las invasiones inglesas*, 45–48. Other sources include Bartolomé Mitre. *Historia de Belgrano y de la independencia argentina*. Vol. 1. New edition Buenos Aires: Losada, 1947, 160–163. A listing of invasion plans appears in Andrew Graham-Yooll. *Ocupación y reconquista, 1806–1807: a 200 años de las Invasiones Inglesas.* Buenos Aires: Lumière, 2006, 17–28; also Robson, *Britain, Portugal*, 83. For wider context, see Michael Duffy. "World-Wide War and British Expansionism, 1793–1815," 184–207 in *Oxford History of the British Empire* edited by P.J. Marshall. *Volume 2. The Eighteenth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

[18] See Rodolfo H. Terragno. *Maitland y San Martín*. Bernal, Province of Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1999, reproduces Maitland's two plans in English and elucidates his sources.

Continental Europe and relieving pressing current bullion shortages in Britain. Silver greased the wheels of British trade in India and China, where precious metals were in great demand. Pursuit of silver explained the interest of the East India Company in the Rio de la Plata manifest in the *Lord Clive* episode.[19] Various groups in Britain perceived other benefits from the takeover of Buenos Aires. Naval men regarded the city as a potential base to protect shipping routes to the Pacific around Cape Horn. Leather and candle-makers viewed the cattle hides and tallow in the Plata as a major new source of raw materials.[20] Finally, control over Buenos Aires would strengthen the British merchant marine by opening new avenues of trade to shipping.

In the late 1790s the Spanish Crown again reformed its imperial trade regulations to take account of the wartime disruption of Spanish exports to the Spanish colonies. Although it terminated the former blanket exclusion of British goods from colonial markets, it upheld the existing ban on transporting them in British ships. Sales of British goods in Spanish America increased but ships from neutral countries alone—principally commissioned in the United States—were allowed to deliver them.[21] Any British subjects who ventured into the Plata continued to face a hostile reception. In 1804, for example, the merchant John Mawe arrived in Montevideo, the city across the estuary from Buenos Aires. Although he arrived with all the necessary paperwork, he was arrested and incarcerated aboard a prison ship. "I was an Englishman and on that account could not be too harshly treated."[22] William Jacobs, another British merchant engaged in Spanish American trade, urged the British government to seize

[19] For context, see C.A. Bayly, "The First Age of Global Imperialism, c 1760–1830," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1998, 32–36, linking shortages of resources in Britain to the fall of silver production in Mexico and the tribute levied by Napoleon on defeated European states. On Spanish silver subsidies to the French, see Roberts, *Invasiones Inglesas*, 57–59, Pearce, *British Trade*, 209–250. In October 1803, Spain agreed to pay an annual subsidy of £2.8 million to France. See also John Lynch, "British Policy and Spanish America, 1783–1808," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, May, 1969, 1–30; A.W. Ward and G.P. Gooch. *Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy: 1783–1919*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923, 333–334. Specie payments in Britain were suspended in February 1797.

[20] For an example, see *The Times* 13 Sept. 1806.

[21] The system is described more broadly in Pearce, *British Trade*, 246. During Popham's trial, Thomas Wilson reported he had traded with Buenos Aires since 1798 in neutral vessels. He wanted the British to take over Buenos Aires to allow the use of British ships. See Sir Home Popham. *A Full and Correct Report of the Trial of Sir Home Popham*. Second Edition. London: J. and J. Richardson, 1807, 180.

[22] John Mawe.

Spanish colonial ports to prevent such incidents. He accused US nationals employed by the Spaniards in the carrying trade of damaging British shipping interests and causing unemployment in the textile industry. He claimed that capturing Buenos Aires would benefit both British trade and the British shipping industry, and inflict a major blow against several enemy or unfriendly powers: Spain, France and the United States.[23]

In this fashion, Buenos Aires became "an object of particular interest… to the first commercial nation in the world."[24] When the three-year truce in the war between Britain and Spain negotiated under the treaty of Amiens ended in 1804, Popham urged Prime Minister William Pitt to authorise an attack on Buenos Aires. He enlisted the support of Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville, the powerful secretary of war who was closely connected to the East India Company. Dundas too regarded Buenos Aires as "the most important position on that side of South America" because of its role in the silver trade.[25] At the time, Pitt was manoeuvring to persuade Spain to resume its earlier alliance with Britain, and failed to reach any decision. Possibly too, he hesitated to launch the attack Popham urged against Buenos Aires in light of British defeats in the Americas of recent years, notably the disastrous Caribbean campaigns at Saint Domingue in the mid-1790s.[26] Some influential figures shared Pitt's concerns. Believing British military resources were insufficient to seize entire Spanish colonies, they opted to deploy British naval superiority to capture coastal bases alone. Popham himself conceded that "the idea of conquering South America [was] totally out of the question." Seeking trade rather than territorial conquest, he urged seizing control over "all its important points, alienating [them] from [their] present European connexions, fixing on some military position and enjoying all its commercial advantages."[27]

How the British proposed to govern Buenos Aires if they won control remained uncertain. Standard practice in pursuit of maximum gain at min-

[23] Quoted in Germán O.E. Tjarks and Alicia Vidaurreta de Tjarks. *El comercio inglés y el contrabando*. Buenos Aires: J. Héctor Matera, 1962, 5.

[24] Vidal, *Buenos Ayres*, iii.

[25] Dundas quoted in Popham, *Trial*, 163.

[26] David Geggus, "The cost of Pitt's Caribbean Campaigns, 1793–1798," *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 23, No. 3, 1983, 699–706 estimates losses of more than 30,000 British troops.

[27] "Memorandum by Sir Home Popham," in "Miranda and the British Admiralty," in *American Historical Review*, Vol. 6, No. 3, 1901, 513. Quoted in Gallo. *Great Britain and Argentina*, 20–32. See also John Street. *Gran Bretaña y la independencia del Rio de la Plata*. Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1967, 20–46.

imum expense pointed to temporary occupation—in effect mere pillage. When war concluded, the British would barter away their conquests for concessions by Spain elsewhere. South American exiles in London like Venezuelan insurgent Francisco de Miranda pressed for a different course, that of attacking the Spanish colonies to trigger independence movements. Pitt showed little enthusiasm for this approach, fearing it could lead to a proliferation of Francophile South American republics.[28] A possible third option lay in seizing Buenos Aires as a permanent British colony. This practice remained rare, since governments feared the expenses of possession might exceed the profits of occupation. Throughout the Americas, Trinidad, captured from Spain in 1797, provided the single example of recent times in which the British converted a captured foreign colony into a permanent possession. The island represented an exceptional case. Easy and inexpensive to defend, it lay close to the wealthy mainland market of New Granada. It therefore combined prospects of low costs with exceptional profits from contraband.[29]

Popham himself viewed Buenos Aires as a second Trinidad. He described it as "the finest country in the world…the greatest acquisition to Great Britain she ever had" because of its position in the silver trade.[30] Its fertile, temperate rural hinterland on the pampas led him to suggest forming British agricultural settlements near Buenos Aires. A publication in Britain in 1806 celebrating his victory argued that "free and voluntary labourers could be employed [to colonise the area]. Poor emigrants from the Highlands of Scotland, and from Ireland, would find a real asylum."[31]

[28] On Pitt's opposition to British support for independence movements, see Popham, Trial, 169–171; also, Karen Racine. *Francisco Miranda. A Transatlantic Life in the Age of Revolution*. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2003.

[29] Islands captured and bartered by the British in the eighteenth century wars are listed in Paul M. Kennedy. *The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery*. Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing, 1982, 129–130.

[30] Popham to Marsden 30 April, 1806, in Grainger, *Royal Navy and the River Plate*, 36–50.

[31] Quoted in "Summary Account," an anonymous publication of 1806 following news of Popham's conquest. In Malyn Newitt ed. *Revolution and Society in the Rio de la Plata, 1808–1810: Thomas Kinder's Narrative of a Journey to Madeira, Montevideo and Buenos Aires*. London: Signal Books, 2010, 13. The emphasis on a "free" colony reflected current debate before the abolition of the slave trade by Britain in 1807. An agrarian colony won support among members of the 1807 expedition. "Were the Pampas of Buenos Ayres a few years in the hands of the British, truly might they be called the Garden of the World." George Monkland. *Account by a Junior Officer George Monkland of the Secret Expedition to the River*

In early 1806, the debate and uncertainty in Britain found reflection in a newspaper commentary published in Philadelphia. Six months before the attack on Buenos Aires, returning US merchant sailors reported Popham had already taken the city. The information originated from a brief halt he made at Rio de Janeiro in late 1805, where he divulged his intention to attack Buenos Aires. A Philadelphia journalist speculated whether the British intended to seize new colonies in Spanish America or whether Popham would attempt to provoke a movement for Spanish American independence.[32]

* * *

A year before Popham's attack on Buenos Aires, Pitt ordered him to sail to southern Africa (via Brazil) to support a planned British attack on the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope. When he completed his mission, he should then proceed east to India. After British forces won a swift victory at the Cape in early 1806, Popham ignored his orders to sail east and turned west, (an action that resulted in his later court martial).[33] With assistance from Sir David Baird, the British commander at the Cape, he recruited a few hundred men from the 71st Highland Regiment, to whom he added a few hundred more men from the British garrison on the island of St. Helena. Mostly Scots and Irish, his troops included men of varied backgrounds, among them Chinese artillerymen previously in Dutch service at the Cape. While retaining naval control over the force, Popham placed his soldiers under Major General William Carr Beresford, formerly Baird's second in command at the Cape.

Writing from St. Helena in April 1806 to correspondents in Britain, Popham laid out several rationales for his prospective voyage to the Rio de la Plata. One message portrayed the expedition as a mere reconnaissance. He would report on "the true situation of the country…and the extent to which its exportations may be carried [by British merchant ships]; with [an estimate of the] scale of the consumption for the manufacturers of

Plate under the Command of Brigadier General Crauford and the Subsequent Withdrawal under the Command of Lieutenant General Whitelocke. Mimeo.

[32] Charles Lyon Chandler, "United States merchant ships in the Rio de la Plata (1801–1808) as shown by early newspapers," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, February 1919, 29.

[33] The standard narrative in English of the invasions of 1806–1807 appears in Fortescue, *British Army*, I: 310–318, 368–436.

Great Britain." A second missive intimated a more aggressive intent. This time Popham emphasised the weaknesses of Spanish defences in the Plata and the opposition to Spanish rule among many Porteños. He quoted an American skipper named Thomas Waine, a man familiar with Buenos Aires, who informed him the city could be taken easily and held at minimal expense. According to Waine, the Porteños were plotting to overthrow Spanish rule and would welcome British support. "If the trade is thrown open, all the inhabitants would willingly acquire and keep the place for the British nation without troops, which would be a mine of wealth." Waine likely foresaw British rule over Buenos Aires enabling American shippers to develop a new carrying trade with the Cape of Good Hope.[34] In other messages, Popham noted that opening the Rio de la Plata to British trade would offset the decline of trade in continental Europe. He described Buenos Aires as "the best communications centre and emporium of the trade of all its provinces and the channel through which a great proportion of the wealth of the kingdoms of Chili and Peru currently passes."[35]

Leading his troops ashore outside Buenos Aires in late June 1806, Beresford found Spanish defences in disarray. Viceroy Rafael de Sobremonte fled into the interior on the pretext of raising troops, allowing the British force to march into the city almost unopposed. Once established, Beresford proclaimed a new government under His Britannic Majesty, although to mollify the Spaniards he allowed current office holders to retain their posts. He promised to respect the Catholic Church and the property of local residents, including their slaves. He ordered tariffs lowered to the level "enjoyed by all others of His Majesty's colonies."[36] By refusing to clarify how long British rule would last or what form the future government would take, however, he left the future uncertain. As prominent Porteños quizzed British officers about their future plans, Beresford's eva-

[34] Waine is mentioned in Popham, *Trial*, 39–40.

[35] Popham, *Trial*, 35–50. "The manufacturing forces in England have, from the posture of affairs on the Continent, an additional claim to the energies of all officers who have the means of opening any new channels for the consumption of their goods."

[36] On Beresford's measures, see Roberts, *Invasiones Inglesas*, 111–121. He ordered a lowering of export duties by 50 per cent and duties for British and Creole shippers to 12 per cent; Americans would pay 17½ per cent. His enactments never took effect, but fell short of imposing "free trade" in the sense of uniformly low duties. See Tjarks and Tjarks, *Comercio Inglés*, 7. Another author reports that Beresford lowered tariffs on British imports from 34½ to 12½ per cent. Judith Blow Williams, "The Establishment of British Commerce with Argentina," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1935, 47.

sive responses convinced them the British would remain only until the end of the Anglo-Spanish war. They recognised the obvious dangers of collaborating with the occupiers when Spanish administration would be eventually restored.[37]

As the Creoles grew disillusioned with the British, the Spaniards enlisted their support in raising forces to launch a counterattack.[38] Aware of their now tenuous position, the British realised 1600 troops would not be enough to hold a city the size of Buenos Aires.[39] The shallow Plata estuary prevented Popham from moving his ships close to the shore to protect the troops or provide them with an escape route.[40] Too late the British commanders acknowledged they should have done more to win over the Creoles. In Popham's words, "the inhabitants generally have sought so long for independence [that] had we proclaimed it, they would never have been persuaded to take up arms against us."[41] Six weeks after the capture of Buenos Aires, Spanish troops and Creole militia converged on the city as crowds of armed citizens and slaves filled the streets to support them. Confronted by overwhelming forces and facing a battery of cannon at point blank range, Beresford surrendered. The British troops were bun-

[37] Major Alexander Gillespie claimed that during Beresford's occupation he collected a list of fifty-eight Creoles sympathetic to the British including three men appointed to office in the revolutionary junta of 1810. Alexander Gillespie, *Gleanings and Remarks; Collected during Many Months of Residence at Buenos Ayres, and Within the Upper Country; With a Prefatory Account of the Expedition from England, of the Surrender of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, under the Joint Command of Sir David Baird and Sir Home Popham by Major Alexander Gillespie, Illustrated with a Map of South America, and a Chart of Rio de la Plata, with Pilotage Directions*, Leeds: B. Dewhurst, 1818, 288.

[38] Mitre, *Belgrano*, I:181; Street, *Gran Bretaña*, 20–46 and Roberts, *Invasiones Inglesas*, 118, 182 on orders to Beresford in August 1806 to hold Buenos Aires as a British colony and on Creole reluctance to collaborate with the British occupation.

[39] "Our effective army which was destined to conquer a city of more than 40,000 in population…consisted of only seventy officers of all ranks, seventy-two sergeants, twenty drummers, and 1466 rank and file, making a gross total of 1635." Gillespie, *Gleanings and Remarks*, 43.

[40] Aboard the *Narcissus*, Popham complained about the "shoalness (*sic*) of the water, adverse winds and currents, continual fogs, and the great inaccuracy of the charts." Quoting Popham to Marsden 6 July, 1806. In John Fairburn. *An Authentic and Interesting Description of the City of Buenos Ayres and the Adjacent Country; Situate on the River Plate, on the East Side of South America*. London: John Fairburn, 1806, 52. On navigation in the Plata, see Clifton B. Kroeber. *The Growth of the Shipping Industry in the Rio de la Plata Region, 1794–1860*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957, 14–15 and frontispiece map.

[41] Popham to Howick 9 Sept. 1806, quoted in Grainger, *Royal Navy and the River Plate*, 77.

dled out of the city, made prisoners of war and threatened with reprisals. Many spent the following year living in outlying villages under loose guard before eventually being released.[42] A few including Beresford himself escaped to British-held Montevideo, although others were marched hundreds of miles inland to Córdoba, Tucumán and Salta in the far northwest. Only the few troops sent due west to Mendoza ever reappeared as a recognisable military force. About a decade later, fifty-five former British soldiers in Mendoza formed a company of light cavalry that joined the forces of General José de San Martín in Chile during the wars of independence.[43]

* * *

In Britain, Pitt's unexpected death in January 1806 brought the succession of the Whig-dominated coalition known as the Ministry of the Talents. When Popham's defeat became known later in the year, the new government ordered two naval forces to the Rio de la Plata. The first under Sir Samuel Auchmuty sailed directly, while the second under Brigadier-General Robert Crauford went via the Cape of Good Hope.[44] John Robertson and his father followed Auchmuty on the eighty-day transatlantic voyage. On their arrival, they found his forces besieging Montevideo in a plan to make it the base for a second attack on Buenos Aires. After three weeks of combat, Spanish resistance in Montevideo collapsed. Hundreds of merchants and salesmen including the Robertsons then piled into the town along with hundreds of soldiers and sailors. In his account of the occupation of Montevideo in 1807 published about thirty

[42] On the prisoners who spent the year in the village of San Antonio de Areco, forty miles from Buenos Aires, (where they played the first known cricket match in South America), see Gillespie, *Gleanings and Remarks*; also, William Gavin. *The Diary of William Gavin, Ensign and Quarter-Master, 71st Highland Regiment, 1806–1815*. In *Highland Light Infantry Chronicle*, 1921. Details of the musters prior to the repatriation of the troops appear in Archivo General de la Nación. División Colonia. Sección Gobierno. Interior, Legajo 60. Records show some prisoners being sent to Salta in the far north and 172 (from the multi-ethnic St. Helena Regiment) departing for Tucumán.

[43] Accounts of the expedition include Ian Fletcher. *The Waters of Oblivion. The British Invasions of the Rio de la Plata, 1806–1807*. Tunbridge Wells: Spellmount, 1991; Peter Pyne. *The Invasions of Buenos Aires, 1806–1807: The Irish Dimension*. Liverpool: University of Liverpool. Institute of Latin American Studies. Research Paper 20, 1996.

[44] Crauford's voyage is described in Anon. "Journal of the Secret Expedition which sailed from Falmouth, November 12th 1806 under the Command of Brigadier General Crauford, with a Narrative of the Army after arriving in the Rio de la Plata." *Standard* 1 May, 1910.

years later, Robertson recorded happy memories of the city in spite of its extreme congestion. He attended soirées where women mothered him and girls flirted with him and taught him Spanish.[45] Conditions in Montevideo proved unsatisfactory because the British merchants could not sell anything. They set up stalls and small shops but found few customers as Spanish forces closed all access to outside markets, including Buenos Aires. As another witness to the British occupation of Montevideo, John Mawe reported the interlopers spent weeks vainly waiting for buyers before having to auction off their goods at giveaway prices.[46]

In early 1807, the Whig ministry appointed Sir John Whitelocke supreme commander of British forces in the Plata, ordering him to lead a second attack on Buenos Aires. He was instructed to seize the city as a temporary British possession, with no indication ever appearing that the government contemplated permanent occupation or considered granting independence and self-government.[47] In light of Whitelocke's previous undistinguished career in the Caribbean, critics suspected political favouritism determined his appointment and as predicted, he proved a calamitous choice.[48] Contemplating the situation from Montevideo, Whitelocke had various approaches available to him to subdue Buenos Aires. He could have tried a mere show of force in the hope that intimidation alone would lead to surrender. Alternatively, he could have laid siege to the city, or attempted to flatten resistance by a sudden rush attack. Ignoring all these options, he opted for slow advance and a plan that fatally diluted his forces. He landed his troops at Ensenada de Barragán, an inlet port about fifty miles south-east of Buenos Aires, leaving his men to drag their supplies and weapons across streams and marshland in winter conditions. Days elapsed until, tired, wet and hungry, they reached the western outskirts of Buenos Aires. Whitelocke's subordinates then persuaded him to divide his

[45] Robertson, *Paraguay*, 95 passim.

[46] Mawe, *Travels*, 16. British merchants who set up shops in Montevideo are listed in Juan Carlos Lizuriaga. *Las invasiones inglesas en su bicentenario. Testimonios, revisiones y perspectivas*. Buenos Aires: Torre de Vigia, 2007, 91.

[47] On division in the Whig government, see Grainger, *Royal Navy and the River Plate*, 157–169; Esdaile, *Napoleon's Wars*, 260–270. One group led by William Windham, the Secretary for War, continued to favour an attack on Chile while Prime Minister Lord Grenville proposed attacking Mexico.

[48] Several authorities name the Duke of York as Whitelocke's patron. Complaints of favouritism are picked up in the 1808 essay by James Mill. See William Burke (pseudonym of James Mill). *Additional Reasons, for our Immediately Emancipating Spanish America, deduced from the Present Crisis*. Reprint edition. New York: Biblio Bazaar, 2011.

troops into small detachments. Placing them at the entrances of around a dozen of the narrow, straight streets leading into the city, he ordered them to advance in single file.

On 5 July 1807, Whitelocke's forces walked into Buenos Aires with fixed bayonets but with no usable firearms because their officers failed to give them flintlocks and ammunition. When interrogated about this bizarre procedure, the general claimed he ordered it to facilitate swift advance and to minimise the risks the troops would fire on one another. His decision made sense only if the invaders were confident they could enter the city without meeting resistance—an unlikely prospect because skirmishes with Spanish forces had already occurred during the march from Ensenada de Barragán. Moving troops into the city in detachments disrupted communications and chains of command. It exposed them to cannon fire along the straight streets and to attacks from the flat rooftops. With neither axes nor crowbars to force their way into houses, the troops had no means of halting attacks from above.[49]

Entering the city, the British forces met fierce resistance. An officer recalled how "the whole of the male population [including the slaves] was this day in arms, the female too…even children were employed in throwing hand grenades."[50] "Onwards we rushed," recorded another soldier, "scrambling over ditches and other impediments…At the corner of every street, and flanking all the ditches, they had placed cannons that thinned our ranks every step we took."[51] Shattered by grapeshot and musketry and showered by "hand-grenades, stink-pots, brick-bats, and all sorts of combustibles," within hours the invaders lost more than 2500 men dead, wounded and captured, almost half their strike force. As hundreds of officers and men surrendered, the advance crumpled.[52] The men who surrendered included Crauford's column, who captured the Santo Domingo convent before being flushed out in a counterattack. Some were shot down carrying gold ornaments from the convent's church. Others were

[49] See Whitelocke, *Trial*, for planning and tactical issues. The fullest account in English is Fortescue, *British Army*, 5:387–410. The plan came from second-in-command General Leveson Gower. Whitelocke accepted it against his own proposal for a siege and a bombardment.

[50] Monkland, *Account*.

[51] John Howell. *Journal of a Soldier of the 71st, or Glasgow Regiment Highland Light Infantry, from 1806–1815*. Edinburgh: William and Charles Tait, 1819, 40–45.

[52] 401 British troops were killed, 649 wounded and 1924 captured. See Fortescue, *British Army*, 5:428.

threatened with summary execution unless they returned a prized crucifix they had looted; it was soon found lying on the ground.[53] As the attack failed, Whitelocke surrendered and agreed to withdraw. The victorious Spaniards allowed him to take his men back to Montevideo to regroup before evacuating that city too. The remains of his army then straggled back to the British Isles followed by the salesmen and shopkeepers, including the Robertsons, who accompanied the expedition.

* * *

On his return to Britain, Whitelocke faced an onslaught of condemnation from the press including attempts to goad him into suicide. His court martial followed. The case against him alleged incompetence in the way he led and supplied his troops. He should have known that ambushers would attack his men from the roofs, but he ignored the danger and "divided his forces into several brigades and parts…firing not to be permitted on any account."[54] A procession of witnesses related the ensuing debacle until Whitelocke himself finally addressed the tribunal. He attributed his failure to the exceptional strength of Porteño resistance. "The nature of the fire to which the men were exposed was violent in the extreme: grape-shot at all the corners of the streets, musketry, and grenades, bricks and stones from the top of the houses. Every householder with his Negroes defended his dwelling, each of which was in itself a fortress; and it is perhaps not too much to say that the whole male population of Buenos Ayres was employed in its defence."[55]

He claimed his enterprise was doomed from the start. Had he won the battle, resistance would have persisted. He now realised "we had not one…single friend in the whole country. [Buenos Aires] must be occupied as a hostile country with every inhabitant as an open and concealed enemy under many disadvantages from a military point of view."[56] Senior officers from the expedition supported his claims. Sir George Murray, commander of the naval forces, agreed that "had we succeeded in taking Buenos Ayres…we could not long have kept it." A respected veteran of the

[53] Recounted in Vidal, *Buenos Ayres*, 46–47.

[54] Whitelocke, *Trial*, 2–4. On the lack of flintlocks, see testimony of Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Duff (p. 122).

[55] Whitelocke, *Trial*, 16–17.

[56] Whitelocke, *Trial*, 518.

American war of independence and the recent conqueror of Montevideo, Auchmuty testified that 15,000 British soldiers, far more than the British government would ever countenance, would be required to garrison Buenos Aires.[57] In this way, Whitelocke and other senior officers deflected discussion away from questions about his competence to issues concerning the resources needed to defeat and hold Buenos Aires. The court martial found him guilty of most charges against him but acquitted him of unbecoming military conduct—cowardice. Dismissed from military service, he escaped the firing squad his enemies demanded.[58]

Captured flags and battle standards on display in the Santo Domingo Church in Buenos Aires together with several hundred British deserters testified to the fate of the two British expeditions.[59] Desertion became rampant under Beresford and Whitelocke alike. The former ordered a Dutch soldier shot for absence without leave. After his defeat, some members of his force reenlisted in the Spanish army to combat Auchmuty in Montevideo.[60] Whitelocke cited desertion as one of the major reasons he never could have held Buenos Aires had he ever captured it. He blamed high desertion on the easy life on offer in the city. "The more the soldiers became acquainted with the plenty the country affords, and the easy means of acquiring it, the greater the evil [of desertion]."[61] Following the invasions, some deserters became city tradesmen while others drifted into rural areas. Years later, visitors encountered them in different parts of the country, often degraded by drink.[62] Francis Bond Head maintained "those

[57] Whitelocke, *Trial*, 564; Grainger, *Royal Navy and the River Plate*, 332.

[58] Whitelocke, *Trial*, 16–17. Pyne, *Invasions*, 43 estimates Beresford's force at 1571 and Whitelocke's at 5786 with a total of 25,000 men in 100 ships. The attack on Buenos Aires in 1807 included about 10 per cent of the total 259,000 men in Great Britain under arms. See Ward, *British Foreign Policy*, 359.

[59] Gavin estimates 96 men from the first expedition stayed in the Plata when the others returned home. Assuming a similar rate of defections, possibly 400 more men deserted from Whitelocke's force. Gavin, *Diary*, x.

[60] Newitt, *Kinder*, 127.

[61] Quoted in Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 57. For endorsements of Whitelocke's views, see Real-Admiral Stirling quoted in Grainger, *Royal Navy and the River Plate*, Vol. 322, 332–328 for details on returnees to Britain; also AGN. División Colonia. Sección Gobierno. Interior, Legajo 60.

[62] Of the "hundreds" of former soldiers who stayed in Buenos Aires following the departure of the British forces, few avoided sinking "to the lowest scale of misery and degradation." Sir Woodbine Parish. *Buenos Ayres, and the Provinces of the Rio de la Plata; Their Present State, Trade, and Debt; with Some Account from the Original Documents of the Progress*

who deserted from General Whitelocke's army have passed their days in disappointment and regret, their constitutions more or less impaired."[63] Not all the deserters suffered this fate. Joseph Andrews, another visitor to the Plata, reported meeting a former soldier in Córdoba, who had long ago lost all contact with his family in Scotland. The man "was much pleased to see us, and once more to shake hands with a countryman. He said he was very happy, having a good wife and five children and also some thousands of dollars to leave them."[64]

One other British connection survived Whitelocke's defeat. On arrival in Buenos Aires, Beresford's forces encountered around forty British women, former transported convicts from the *Lady Shore*, a British frigate that had sailed for Australia in 1797.[65] As the ship approached southern Brazil, French prisoners on board touched off a successful mutiny and steered the ship into Montevideo.[66] Many of the female escapees subsequently moved across river to Buenos Aires as servants and after becoming Catholics married there. The story became widely known in Britain in 1818 following publication of the memoirs of Major Alexander Gillespie, a member of Beresford's expedition. He related that in August 1806 several of the women cared for wounded British soldiers and berated them as cowards when they surrendered. Gillespie met Mary Anne Clarke, who was said to have seduced and murdered the captain of the *Lady Shore*.[67] The best known of the escapees, Clarke, later met Charles Darwin when

of Geographical Discovery in Those Parts of South America during the Last Sixty Years. London: J. Murray, 1839, 290.

[63] Sir Francis Head, Bart. *Rough Notes Taken during some Rapid Journeys across the Pampas and among the Andes*. 4th ed. London: John Murray, 1846, 164.

[64] Joseph Andrews. *Journey from Buenos Ayres, through the Provinces of Cordova, Tucuman and Salta to Bolivia, to Potosi, thence by the Deserts of Caranja to Arica, and Subsequently, to Santiago de Chile and Coquimbo, undertaken on behalf of the Chilian and Peruvian Mining Association, in the Years 1825–1826*. 2nd. Ed. New York: Ams Press, 1971. 107–108.

[65] For the ship's manifest containing the names of transported convicts, see HO 11/1/219, 219–222.

[66] In 1798 British missionaries captured by the French and taken to Montevideo encountered some of the women from the *Lady Shore*, judging them prostitutes. "As they had lived in England, so did they here, and becoming odious some were sent into the country, and we were cautioned to keep at a distance those who remained in town." By this account, the murderer of the captain of the *Lady Shore*—a man, not Mary Clarke—was executed for the crime in Montevideo. William Gregory. *A Visible Display of Divine Providence. The Journal of a Captured Missionary…in the Years 1798 and 1799*. Greenburg, Pennsylvania: John M. Snowden, 1804, 194–195.

[67] Gillespie, *Gleanings and Remarks*, 51.

he disembarked in Buenos Aires during the voyage of the *Beagle*. Her numerous sympathisers proclaimed her innocent of all charges against her, including the murder of the ship captain. They called her a British patriot unjustly condemned to lifelong banishment.[68]

* * *

Despite their failure, the attacks on Buenos Aires of 1806 and 1807 disrupted the Spanish colonial order, destabilising relations between Creoles and Spaniards. Numerous contemporaries stressed the links between the British invasions and the revolution of 25 May 1810 leading into independence. In late 1810, for example, Thomas Kinder, one of the early British merchants in Buenos Aires, attributed "the present freedom of the country" after the revolution to Beresford's arrival four years earlier. Despite their brevity and their failure, the incursions had opened a new chapter in the country's history.[69]

The Porteño militia created in 1806 to confront Beresford provided one striking illustration of the ties between invasion and revolution. The body originated as separate volunteer regiments of Spaniards, Creoles and mixed race groups that soon fell under the command of Santiago Liniers, a French-born naval officer employed by the Spanish Crown. A few months after defeating Beresford, in early 1807 Liniers replaced the disgraced Sobremonte as viceroy and then went on to defeat Whitelocke. Despite his victories, he served as viceroy for only two years. In 1808, his standing plummeted when French armies invaded Spain to overthrow the Bourbon monarchy. Now widely regarded as a suspect enemy alien, Liniers lost control of the militia, which passed to Cornelio de Saavedra, the locally born commander of the Legión de Patricios, the battalion composed of Creoles. The Creoles thus gained control over a recently formed, prestigious military force, which in 1810 led the revolt to overthrow the colonial administration.[70]

[68] Maxine Hanon. *Diccionario de británicos en Buenos Aires. (Primera época)*. Buenos Aires: The Author, 2005, 214–216. For Charles Darwin's comments on Mary Clarke, see Richard Darwin Keynes ed. *Charles Darwin's Beagle Diary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 116. On her life, see Juan M. Méndez Avellaneda. *Las convictas de la Lady Shore*. Buenos Aires: Dunken, 2008.

[69] Kinder, *Narrative*, 156.

[70] Tulio Halperín Donghi, "Revolutionary Militarization in Buenos Aires," *Past and Present*, No. 40, July, 1968, 92.

Financial issues provided another connecting link between the invasions and the revolution. In 1806–1810, demand for funds to support the militia ballooned while the revenue required contracted. By mid-1807, as Whitelocke threatened Buenos Aires, the militia had already doubled in size from the previous year. In 1808, it expanded further following the French occupation of Spain, which prompted fear of a third attack on Buenos Aires, this time by the French. Militia service became a form of public sector employment attracting hundreds of volunteers among the city's artisans and shopkeepers. As its numbers grew and Liniers's authority dwindled, the force became a power in its own right electing its own officers and issuing collective demands.[71] Falling revenue during this period instanced the renewed collapse of Spanish colonial trade from 1804 as Anglo-Spanish hostilities resumed. The position worsened in 1808 as the British navy blockaded Spanish ports. From 1808 too, customary subsidies to Buenos Aires from the silver mines of Potosí terminated following an uprising against the colonial government of Upper Peru.[72]

How then to raise the revenue needed to support the militia and the administration? The single available option lay in opening Buenos Aires to new sources of trade and then taxing trade, but that step required suspending the colonial regulations that established a commercial monopoly for Spaniards. Friction sparked when Spanish merchants refused to alter the rules as Creoles insisted on change. Led by Manuel Belgrano, a senior official in the city chamber of commerce, Creole demands mushroomed into calls for political as well as commercial reform. *The Southern Star*, a broadsheet first issued in Montevideo in 1807 during the British occupation and later published in Spanish translation in Buenos Aires, influenced the climate of reform. Belgrano recalled that constitutional monarchy as it was practised in Britain was "much heard of during the English invasions" and wanted its adoption in Buenos Aires. Political and commercial liberalisation in unison would allow the country "to cease being a [repressed] colony and to pursue enlightenment, civilisation, advancement, and

[71] On politics before the revolution, see Tulio Halperín Donghi. *Politics, Economics and Society in Argentina in the Revolutionary Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, 126–156. Johnson, *Workshop of Revolution*, 243–247 dates a sharp decline in living standards of skilled workers to the expansion of the slave population in the late 1790s. He notes (p. 220) "the dramatic series of wages increases after 1806" coinciding with the expansion of the militia.

[72] Raúl O. Fradkin. *La Argentina colonial. El Rio de la Plata entre los siglos XVI y XIX*. Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 2009, 88, 201–216 assesses the relationship between the Potosí subsidy and the outbreak of revolution in 1810.

progress."[73] For a time, the Creole reform party became known as *carlotismo* because of its connection with Princess Carlota Joaquina, the wife of King João VI of Portugal. Following a French invasion of Portugal in 1807, Carlota lived with her husband in Rio de Janeiro. On the fall of her brother Ferdinand VII of Spain, likewise to the French in the following year, she demanded recognition in Buenos Aires as regent of the Spanish viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata. The Creole reformers briefly perceived Carlota as a potential constitutional monarch. They abandoned the idea as suspicions grew that the Portuguese, their old enemies, were seeking to exploit her to extend their rule into the Rio de la Plata.[74]

In Britain, support for military action in Spanish America tapered and evaporated. The Castlereagh Memorandum, a policy statement on relations with Spanish America composed in March–May 1807, circulated among members of a new cabinet led by the Duke of Portland, mainly comprising Pitt's protégés, which in February replaced the Talents ministry. As the new secretary of war, Viscount Castlereagh objected to the "hopeless task of conquering [Spanish America] against the temper of its population," thus disowning Whitelocke's campaign even before he reached the Rio de la Plata. He argued British interests in Spanish America were confined to preventing French dominance over the region and developing British trade, and that both could be achieved without further military action. Castlereagh's statement became particularly notable for opposing any attempt to establish new British colonies in Spanish America, temporary or permanent. Other members of the Portland cabinet shared his opinion. Spencer Perceval, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for example, condemned colonies as "a source of weakness and [unnecessary] expense."[75] Castlereagh renewed the argument that the British lacked the

[73] Quoted in Street, *Gran Bretaña*, 121.

[74] On *carlotismo* see Halperín Donghi, *Argentina*, 139, discussing the issue in the light of Portuguese designs on the Banda Oriental. For an account using British sources, see J. Street, "Lord Strangford and the Río de la Plata, 1808–1815," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 33, No. 4, Nov. 1953, 477–510. A broader restatement appears in Robson, *Britain, Portugal,* 210; also, Anthony McFarlane. *War and Independence in Spanish America*. London: Routledge, 2014, 45–46.

[75] Perceval in Paul Langford. *The Eighteenth Century, 1688–1815.* London: A. and C. Black, 1976, 237. On opposition in Britain to forming colonies, see Bernard Semmel. *The Rise of Free Trade Imperialism. Classical Political Economy, the Empire of Free Trade and Imperialism, 1750–1850.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970. In 1782, Josiah Tucker opposed "foreign dominions [preferring to trust] solely to the goodness and cheapness of our manufactures, and to the long credit we can give them, for procuring their vent." (p. 20).

resources to lead a struggle for Spanish American independence. If the contest erupted, they could do little more than remain offshore as "auxiliaries and protectors" of the revolutionaries. If new states emerged among the former colonies, the British government could only encourage them to become moderate constitutional monarchies, the political system deemed most favourable to British trade and property.[76]

Leaders of British public opinion too opposed renewed invasions of Spanish America. In his tract *Additional Reasons for our Emancipating Spanish America* published in 1808, Scottish political economist James Mill urged considering British relations with Spanish America from within a global framework. In his view, developing British trade in the Americas as insurance against any damage to it by French expansion in Asia and India. He agreed with Castlereagh in condemning recent "ruinous and inglorious attempts to subdue Spanish America," but differed from him by urging active British support for emancipation. Had the British supported independence in Buenos Aires in 1806 and 1807, they would have "conquered millions of new [Spanish American] friends ready at the moment to enter into an important community of interests with us, and capable of affording many of those valuable commercial advantages denied to us in Europe." According to Mill, the retrograde Spanish colonial system left vast wealth untapped that the British could help to develop after independence. He urged the closest ties "with countries twice as large as Europe, rich and varied in their productions, and inhabited by several millions of civilised people addicted to European habits and to the use of our manufactures." Supportive and progressive in spirit, Mill's ideas could also be interpreted as a strategy for British dominance. He perceived that reliance on foreign trade for revenue and manufactures, as in Buenos Aires, left Spanish Americans vulnerable to new forms of external control. If they could be induced to become "friends" of the British, they could also be manoeuvred into becoming permanently dependent clients.[77]

[76] On the Castlereagh Memorandum, see Street, *Independencia*, 81–98; C.K. Webster. *Britain and the Independence of Latin America, 1812–1830. Select Documents from the Foreign Office*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938, 9; William W. Kaufmann, *British Policy and the Independence of Latin America 1804–1828*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951, 44; Roberts, *Invasiones Inglesas*, 371; C.J. Bartlett, "Castlereagh, 1812–1822" in T.G. Otte. *The Makers of British Foreign Policy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002, 33–70.

[77] See Burke (Mill), *Additional Reasons for our Emancipating South America*. An important, under-acknowledged aspect of Mill's argument in "Additional Reasons" asserted that ties between Europe and Latin America were based on imported European goods and there-

Amidst such debate, British policy remained undefined. Still excluded from trade in Europe, some merchants continued to urge a third attack on the Rio de la Plata. At times, his mind "by no means settled on this point," Castlereagh himself appeared persuaded to launch new attempts to seize Spanish American ports. His ally Arthur Wellesley, the future Duke of Wellington, proposed another attack on the Spanish colonies this time intended to precipitate movements for emancipation.[78] In July 1808, all such issues were resolved when the Portland ministry sent its forces to Portugal. When the British decided on confronting the French head-on in Iberia, they shelved plans to invade Spanish America. Rather than seeking to capture Spanish America, they now saw trade with this region, and throughout the Americas, as a means to help fund the forthcoming campaigns of the Peninsular War.[79]

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Within six months of Whitelocke's defeat, the British merchants seeking access to Spanish America found a springboard into the Rio de la Plata from Brazil. Their opportunity arose in late 1807 when the French invaded Portugal in an attempt to tighten the Continental System. The flight of

fore rested on cultural links formed by consumption. The idea is explored in Benjamin Orlove. *Allure of the Foreign. Imported Goods in Post-Colonial Latin America*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997. See also Mario Rodríguez. *"William Burke" and Francisco de Miranda. The Word and Deed in Spanish American Emancipation*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1994; Mill, Jeremy Bentham and Francisco de Miranda are addressed in Joselyn M. Almeida, "Esa gran nación repartida en ambos mundos; Transnational Authorship in London and Nation Building in Latin America," 53–80, in Almeida ed. *Romanticism and the Anglo-Hispanic Imaginary*. Amsterdam and New York: Radopi, 2010.

[78] On Castlereagh's policy, see Robson, *Britain, Portugal*, 187, 197–201. Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood urged occupying "strategic points from which to establish commerce with Spanish America. In this way British influence could be established without requiring the burdens of direct rule over the whole continent" (p. 197); also John Bew. *Castlereagh. A life. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012*, 22. Platt, *British Trade*, 28, shows the growing Latin American share of British trade, rising to 40 per cent in 1808–1810.

[79] Humphreys, *British Merchants*, 157. On Spanish debates on opening up colonial markets to the British, see Michael P. Costeloe, "Spain and the Spanish American Wars of Independence: The Free Trade Controversy, 1810–1830," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 61, No. 2, May 1981, 209–234; also François Crouzet, "Toward an Export Economy: British Exports during the Industrial Revolution," *Explorations in Economic History*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1981, 48–93, discussing accelerating exports of cotton goods, 1790–1820. For Mexican parallels, see Guadalupe Jiménez Codinach. *La Gran Bretaña y la independencia de México*. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991, 355.

the Portuguese royal family from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro under British protection was followed by another migration of British merchants to Rio and to the northern Brazilian port of Bahia. Such men included the Scot John Wylie, one of the disappointed hucksters who went to Montevideo in early 1807. Like many others, he settled in Rio in the hope of later reaching Buenos Aires and making contact with the silver trade. "Was it not on the faith and the hopes of our ultimately getting round to the Plata that we came out here [to Rio]?" he put to his partners, describing an opening of trade in Buenos Aires as "the best opportunity we may ever have in our lifetimes."[80] Wylie's sense of new horizons created by access to Brazil extended to the British government. Foreign Secretary George Canning foresaw merchants forming a chain of South American trading "factories" and developing Rio into an "an emporium of British manufactures destined for the consumption of the whole of Spanish America."[81] Following the plan, British goods would flow into Rio for distribution throughout most of the hemisphere.

In Rio, the British merchants faced many of the same issues as those who months earlier went to Montevideo, (and were mostly the same people). The great challenge lay in matching abundant British supply with limited South American demand. Wylie informed his associates he had taken too many goods with him to Rio, although "every other [merchant] is in the same mess and some of them still deeper in the mud."[82] John Mawe too, another veteran of the occupation of Montevideo in early 1807 who reappeared a year later in Rio, observed how the market became "greatly overstocked with English manufactures…Supply exceeded demand by a tenfold degree and the excess gave rise to auctions where goods were sold at an unprecedentedly low price…Females of the obscurest class appeared dressed in the most costly extremes of English fashion." He urged suppliers to limit the quantity of goods they sent, keeping them modest in quality and as diverse as possible. John Luccock, another merchant in Rio, concluded that excess supply destroyed the market for the Yorkshire woollens he imported. Brazil was "not a market for superior articles. The respectability is very thinly scattered [and] the consumption

[80] Wylie to Hancock 7 Feb. 1809. UGD 28/1/1. For broader aspects of Wylie's South American career, see Manuel Llorca-Jaña, "British Merchants in New Markets: The Case of Wylie and Hancock in Brazil and the River Plate," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 2014, 215–238.

[81] Canning quoted in Robson, *Britain, Portugal*, 205.

[82] Wylie to Hancock, 7 Feb. 1809. UGD 28/1/1.

is very limited…The people [were] neither showy nor expensive." He advised suppliers to include Midlands hardware with the woollens and cottons among the cargoes they shipped.[83] The excess of British goods enabled Portuguese merchants who purchased them in Rio to avoid paying in gold and silver, and to substitute cotton, coffee, rice and tobacco, or sometimes hides and tallow sent north to Rio from Buenos Aires and Montevideo.[84]

Constraints on trade in Rio encouraged the merchants to seek other outlets in Spanish America.[85] Scattered, shallow markets throughout the region encouraged mercantile firms to evolve as extended partnerships using connections of the kind intended by the Robertson family in 1806 and practised by Wylie in 1807. As Rio emerged as the South American mercantile command centre, merchants set up agencies in other ports enabling them to shuttle goods from one market to another as demand dictated.[86] Wylie specified the goods he could sell using this system. They included velveteens, a cotton fabric with a short weft resembling velvet but of inferior quality. He sold the simple cloths known throughout Spanish America as *bayetas* along with dimities, a fabric of plain weave in checks or stripes. He informed his suppliers that demand for cheap cottons dominated the market. "There are no descriptions of goods whatever that will sell so readily or leave profit equal to those of cotton…It is the pat-

[83] Herbert Heaton, "A Merchant Adventurer in Brazil 1808–1818," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 6, No. 1, May 1946, 1–23 (on John Luccock). An unrivalled contemporary authority on Rio, Luccock also provided data on the early trade with Buenos Aires. See John Luccock. *Notes on Rio de Janeiro, and the Southern Parts of Brazil, Taken during a Residence of Ten Years in that Country, from 1808 to 1818*. London: Samuel Leigh, 1820, 138–146.

[84] Mawe, *Travels*, 100–13. "Gold quickly disappeared: for the monied Portugueze [*sic*] cautiously withheld their specie, and, by the alternatives of barter, got rid of their own produce at a very high price"; also 325–329. The return trade is discussed in Wylie to Hancock, 7 Feb. 1809 UGD 28/1/1.

[85] Platt stressed shallow markets and constraints imposed by poverty and transportation as limiting factors on demand for British goods. See Platt, *British Trade,* 1–22, 36, 67.) His view is challenged by Llorca-Jaña, *British Textile Trade*, 271, looking primarily at the 1830s and 1840s. Covering 1807–1810, the Wylie Archive supports Platt. François Crouzet. "Angleterre-Brésil, 1697–1850: un siècle et demi d'exchanges commerciaux," in Crouzet, *International Commerce*, 287–317, also endorses Platt, using data on Brazil. As stressed by Llorca-Jaña, increases in Spanish American consumption in the later nineteenth century resulted from falling prices of British goods.

[86] In 1809, Wylie discussed the optimal number and distribution of his firm's agents with his partners in detail, emphasising that access to one port-city alone would never create a profitable business. See, for example, Wylie to Dalglish 30 May, 1809. UGD 28/1/1.

terns of the work at all times which command a ready sale in these countries, and not the quality of the cloth; therefore, the cheaper they are brought into the market, the better."[87]

British trade in Rio de Janeiro acquired greater stability as merchants began re-exporting to Spanish American markets while imitating long-established Portuguese practice by using Rio, the navigational midpoint to southern Africa, as a base for markets in Africa and Asia. In 1810, Lord Strangford, the British minister plenipotentiary in Rio, negotiated a treaty with the Portuguese government also resident in Rio to lower import duties on British products. The agreement permitted merchants to disembark goods assigned for re-export duty-free on an offshore island and to recoup duties paid on any unsold goods in Rio later re-exported.[88] Commerce of this type between Rio and Montevideo began around mid-1808. In trade with Montevideo, the British had to accept very unattractive terms, to reflect the same urgent need for revenue there as prevailed in Buenos Aires (and throughout Spanish America during the Napoleonic wars). The Montevideo tariffs pursued maximum revenue. Officials valued incoming goods at artificially high prices and then imposed duties of up to 24 per cent.

Trade with Buenos Aires began as an extension of commerce between Rio and Montevideo. Merchant Thomas Kinder described the way cross-river traffic from Montevideo to Buenos Aires functioned in its earliest form: "Launches or balandras [single mast smacks] drawing about four feet of water and carrying about 40 to 80 tons" shipped goods loaded in Montevideo along the northern bank of the river to Colonia del Sacramento, the port-village directly opposite Buenos Aires. From here goods crossed to Spanish purchasers stationed in unofficial landing points near Buenos Aires. Goods were then sold to a second group of Spanish merchants who travelled to Buenos Aires from the far interior and the Pacific coast during the summer season.[89]

[87] Wylie to Hancock and to Dalglish, 7 February, 15 Aug., 27 Sept. 23, Dec. 1809. UGD 28/1/1 and 28/1/2.

[88] Heaton, *Merchant Adventurer*.

[89] Newitt, *Kinder*, 145, 162–163, 182–185. Kinder listed thirty-one British ships engaged in contraband between November 1808 and November 1809. Also Tjarks and Tjarks, *Comercio Inglés*, 13–21, 32, who quote British merchant Alexander Mackinnon on Spanish complicity in smuggling British goods; also Goebel, *British Trade*, 309, reporting that British vessels landed smuggled goods valued at £1 million. Numerous authors note that established

Recognising the advantages of bypassing Montevideo with its extortionate duties and selling directly in Buenos Aires, British merchants were soon made aware too of the hazards of attempting the direct connection across the river. In late 1808, John Luccock sailed directly from Rio to Buenos Aires. On arrival he was arrested and held for six weeks, betrayed as a smuggler by the crew of the Portuguese vessel he chartered.[90] Shallow underwater banks in the Plata estuary posed other serious dangers, leaving the costs of sailing directly to Buenos Aires not far short of landing goods in Montevideo and paying duties. Wylie urged his suppliers never to send goods directly to Buenos Aires. He described it as "the worst place in the world for a ship to lay off [because ships had to remain] about ten miles off the town…[A] vessel of more than fifteen feet of draught is not safe to come up the river. The [expense of] unloading a vessel [in Buenos Aires] will come to as much as the [value of the] freight in many instances."[91]

Commerce in British goods in Buenos Aires evolved as a melange of legal and illegal trade. In early 1809, Wylie reported that Viceroy Liniers had granted licences to "two or three Spaniards to import a certain quantity of [British] manufactures suitable for the troops and along with them they find no difficulty to introduce many articles, [namely contraband], not stipulated in the licence." Weeks later as controls relaxed, he reported "smuggling is carried on with the greatest facility there in the open and winked at by the government." By mid-year, British goods were being openly traded for silver, to confirm Wylie's opinion of Buenos Aires as "by far the best market. [At that time], goods were being admitted without any risk whatever by paying a certain percentage to the customs officers." Sensing a windfall opportunity, he set sail on the nine-day voyage from Rio with a shipload of goods, abandoning his rule never to attempt the direct connection to Buenos Aires. The gamble paid off as he arrived safely and sold his cargo at a handsome profit. At the time he believed he could have sold ten times more goods "for the same profit, so great is the demand here."[92] Reports of the fortunes to be made in Buenos Aires attracted swarms of other British dealers, most of whom Wylie knew per-

Spanish merchants, members of the "Cádiz monopoly," profiteered from contraband when colonial restrictions against imported foreign goods were maintained.

[90] Luccock, *Rio de Janeiro*, 138.

[91] Wylie to Hancock 9 Feb. 1810. UGD 28/1/2.

[92] Wylie to correspondents 7 March, 26 April, 19 May, 15 July, 14 August, 1809. UGD 28/1/1.

sonally. "We have a great many of our Montevidean friends [of 1807] here, and almost all the English who were in Rio have come too."[93]

In September 1809, the discredited Liniers stood down as viceroy when an appointee of the Legitimist regime in Spain opposing the French invaders replaced him. Under orders to restore the Spanish trading regulations, the new viceroy, Baltazar Hidalgo de Cisneros, soon recognised the urgent need for revenue made them quite impractical. As Wylie noted, he would have to allow trade with the British since "they have no other means of raising money to pay the troops."[94] In a desperate attempt to keep British merchants out of the city, in late 1809 Spanish merchants loaned funds to the government, a second time they had done this. As they were exhausted, Cisneros had no option but turn to British supplies. Imitating recent practice in Montevideo, he sought maximum revenue from minimum trade. Under his rules, British merchants had to deliver incoming goods to the customs sheds for assessment directly on arrival and sell them immediately to Spanish dealers. They could wait around for payment for up to four months but then had to leave Buenos Aires. When they departed, they could remit only one third of their profits in silver and the remainder in less desirable cargoes of hides and tallow. Attempting to justify his rules, Cisneros sent several lengthy messages to the commander of a patrolling British naval ship.[95]

His explanations failed to satisfy waiting British merchants. "We have what is called 'free trade'," Wylie complained, "but unfortunately for us this free trade is not half as good as the contraband trade we carried on before…Were we to pay the duties, I am almost convinced we would never have [recouped] more than two thirds of our own money." Intending to resume smuggling, he hesitated when informers betrayed a fellow smuggler to the authorities, who confiscated his money and possessions. Merchants who complied with Cisneros's rules could not extract statements from customs officials of how much they owed in duties, a practice raising suspicions that when the bill arrived, it would engulf all their profits.[96] Other merchants complained at being ordered to leave Buenos Aires

[93] Wylie to Barlow 29 Nov. 1809. UGD 28/1/1.

[94] Wylie to Barber 22 Aug. 1809. UGD 28/1/1. Revenue figures for 1809 are listed in Annex to letter of 2 June, 1810. FO 72/157 showing military expenditure at 55 per cent of total revenue.

[95] See Cisneros to Doyle 2 Nov. 1809. ADM 1/20.

[96] Wylie to Correspondents 2, 27 Sept., 1 and 29 Nov. 1809. He further noted the government increased valuations of British goods up to 60 per cent. See Wylie to Correspondents

before being paid.[97] Under these pressures, a group of them appealed to the British government. In late 1809, Alexander Mackinnon, another prominent Scottish dealer, organised a petition requesting "active and permanent protection [to guarantee] amicable intercourse."[98] With the Peninsular War now in full swing and Spain locked into alliance with Britain, the British government refused its help. Foreign Secretary Canning ignored Mackinnon's petition.

In early 1810, conditions improved for the British as Spanish buyers arrived in Buenos Aires from as far away as Lima willing to purchase textiles with silver. This outcome vindicated Wylie's opinion of Buenos Aires as "a country of much greater consumption than the Brazils, and where sales can be made on a much greater scale."[99] He added that "many people have come down from Chili and Peru and the other towns of the interior bringing with them their goods, hard doubloons and dollars and have bought very largely indeed but at low prices. The quantity of goods that have been carried off, and are daily going away [is astonishing. Goods are being bought] not for speculation, merely to satisfy the consumption."[100]

In February, Wylie reported warnings by Cisneros he would allow the British merchants to operate in Buenos Aires for only four more months. He predicted that if the viceroy maintained this stance, the Creoles would revolt. "The country in all probability will become independent of Spain, and from what I can learn the viceroy expects as much."[101] Wylie left Buenos Aires in April. Having once more sold off every item he could muster, he departed with another large profit that he once more smuggled out of the country. On 25 May 1810, Saavedra ordered the Porteño militia to seize power.[102] Wylie had seen revolution brewing for months. In

28 Feb., 3 and 9 Mar. 1810. UGD 28/1/2. Instability and uncertainty characterise the overall picture.

[97] For one such case, see Jackson to Doyle Jan. 180. Jan. 1810. ADM 1/20.

[98] Mackinnon to Canning 2 Nov. 1809 FO 95/7/7. Conditions for British merchants in Buenos Aires in late 1809 are detailed in Tjarks and Tjarks, *Comercio inglés*, 32–53.

[99] Wylie to Correspondents 2, 28 Feb., 3 Mar. 1810. UGD 28/1/2.

[100] Wylie to Correspondents 22 Jan., 9 Feb. 1810. UGD 28/1/2.

[101] Wylie to Wallis 10 Feb. 1810 UGD 28/1/2.

[102] Had they left Buenos Aires in May, merchants would have had to abandon their goods to be "sold at 40 percent beneath the prime cost." De Courcy to Croker, 3 May 1810. In Gerald S. Graham and R.A. Humphreys. *The Navy and South America, 1807–1823. Correspondence of the Commanders-in-Chief on the South American Station*. London: Navy Records Society, 1962, 46. Standard accounts of the prologue to the May Revolution include R.A. Humphreys. *Liberation in South America. The Career of James Paroissien*. London:

late 1809, he predicted a "Creole reaction, a political alteration [which] in my opinion is at no great distance."[103]

* * *

Having launched their coup d'état, Creoles set about demolishing colonial institutions. The first ruling junta under Saavedra abolished Cisneros's regulations and other constraints on foreign trade. Tariffs reductions followed, although for several years policy followed an erratic course dictated by revenue needs. If duties climbed above certain levels, smuggling resumed.[104] As British textiles flooded in, silver flowed out, to demonstrate that the merchants "seek where procurable specie and not produce [namely hides and tallow] in return for the British articles which they sell."[105] Trade followed the seasonal pattern observed by Wylie in 1809–1810, with demand peaking during the summer months from November to March as Spanish merchants crossed the Andes and the pampas to Buenos Aires.

For some time, business flowed smoothly. In September 1813, Captain William Bowles, whose vessel *Nautilus* lay anchored in the estuary, reported "every appearance of a disposition inimical to Great Britain has entirely subsided and [British] subjects have received every species of justice and protection…These provinces look entirely to English assistance and protection."[106] Initially, British merchants organised caravans of goods into the interior. They abandoned the practice as civil war disrupted the river and the land routes, enabling Spaniards to slowly regain control over

Athlone Press, 1952, 28–40. The book focuses on a British doctor who came to Buenos Aires as an emissary of Princess Carlota Joaquina to be caught up in the prelude to revolution.

[103] Wylie to Dalglish 8 Dec. 1809 and Wylie to Sherriff 23 Jan. 1810. UGD 28/1/2.

[104] Reductions in duties in 1813 mostly to a flat rate of 25 per cent were reported by Robert Staples, the unofficial consul. See Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 65–66. An overview of tariff policy appears in Report to Bowles by a British Merchant 22 Dec. 1819. Cited in Graham and Humphreys, *Navy and South America*, 292.

[105] See Graham and Humphreys, *Navy and South America.*: De Courcy to Croker, 3 Nov. 1811, p. 69; for naval transportation of silver, pp. 58, 69–70, 93; Reports to Bowles by a Merchant 25 Dec. 1819, 288. Shipping estimates appear in Kroeber, *Shipping Industry*, 122–123. See also Lucio R. Picabea, "Los británicos en Buenos Aires en 1810," in Alberto David Leiva. *Los días de mayo*. San Isidro: Academia de Ciencias y Artes de San Isidro, 1998, 268–285.

[106] Bowles to Commander of "Brazils" squadron, 22 Sept. 1813, ADM 1/1557.

commercial connections with the interior. Paying trade duties and buying government bonds, British merchants in Buenos Aires tried to enhance their standing by supporting local charities, such as one to support crippled revolutionary soldiers, and by donating books to the newly formed Biblioteca Nacional.

Shortly before the revolution in 1809, Mackinnon, the elected "president" of the British merchants, urged Canning to appoint a permanent consul to represent them before the viceroy. He requested a person of weight and authority, partly to discipline young tearaways in the city, who while engaged in trading were giving the British a bad name. He described their antics as "horsewhipping before breakfast, pulling noses at dinner, boxing after by way of dessert, and by daylight duelling by pistol." He reported they were hobnobbing with the "mutineers of the Lady Shore Botany Bay transport," with whom they organised "sumptuous banquets and a ball."[107] In 1811, his fellow merchants nominated Robert Staples as consul. A distant relative of Lord Castlereagh, his connections with the Rio de la Plata began in Montevideo in 1807. Representing Montgomery and Staples, a Belfast firm, he founded the first beef salting plant or saladero in Buenos Aires. The absence of formal diplomatic ties between London and Buenos Aires during the independence wars obliged Staples to perform his duties unofficially. Masonic lodges provided another point of contact between the merchants and local political leaders, if in shadowy, indistinct form.[108] Almost throughout, ties appeared close and amicable. In 1811, John Parish Robertson claimed the British exercised a "beneficial though quite indirect influence over public affairs and public opinion at the seat of government."[109] Mariano Moreno, a leading figure in the 1810 revolution, emerged as a prominent early supporter of the British. In early 1811, Mackinnon expressed appreciation "for his great attentions and effectual protection," and provided him with a letter of introduction as he departed to Europe to represent the revolutionary junta. The mission ended unaccomplished, as Moreno died on board ship.[110]

Revolutionary governments sought ties with the British partly to gain naval protection from their enemies, as occurred in 1813 when 2000

[107] Mackinnon to Canning 2 Nov. 1809. FO 95/7/7.

[108] Masonic lodges are mentioned in standard accounts of the revolutionary era. See Street, *Gran Bretaña*, 49; Halperín Donghi, *Argentina*, 216.

[109] Robertson, *South America*, 2: 105, 235, 286.

[110] Mackinnon to Wellesley 10 Jan. 1811. FO 72/126.

Spanish troops landed in Montevideo.[111] Based in Rio de Janeiro, British ships patrolled the Plata estuary, transported silver and combated privateers and Spanish loyalists. In the absence of full diplomatic relations, naval commander Bowles served alongside Staples to represent the merchants before the government. His presence encompassed the single occasion of serious friction between them. In 1818, looming trade recession threatened the capacity of Supreme Director Juan Martín de Pueyrredón to supply the army led by San Martín in Chile.[112] He proposed levying a forced loan of 150,000 pesos on British merchants. Bowles denounced the proposal as a threatened attack on property typical of the arbitrary procedures of "old Spain." He accused Pueyrredón of "imbibing from Spanish education the most mistaken and short sighted idea of commerce."[113]

American diplomats in Buenos Aires, appointees of Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, objected to Bowles's intervention. US consul John Murray Forbes complained about an excessive, obtrusive British presence of the sort later labelled "informal empire." He argued the British "practically control the public institutions…England derives from [the Plata] all the advantages of colonial dependence, without the responsibility or expense of civil or military administration."[114] Other visiting US diplomats accused British merchants of seeking a political takeover. They claimed the British "hold out the idea, that if [the Porteños] were placed under the guardianship of some other nation for twenty or thirty years, there would be no doubt of their ultimate success…The drift of all this was not hard to be discovered…It meant the guardianship of England."[115]

The Americans exaggerated. Despite making several appeals to the British government for assistance, the merchants never received it. In his

[111] See Bowles to Commander of the "Brazils" squadron 22 Sept. 1813. The issue is discussed more broadly in McFarlane, *War and Independence*, 168–174.

[112] The value of British exports fell from £738,000 in 1818 to £390,000 in 1819. See Llorca-Jaña, *British Textile Trade*, 310–312.

[113] Details in Bowles to Commander of "Brazils" squadron, 31 July, 1818. ADM 1/23, which followed the government decree of 4 July; also Bowles to Pueyrredón 19 July, 1818. FO 72/215; also Robertson, *South America*, 2: 286; Graham and Humphreys, *Navy and South America*, 243–245.

[114] Quoted in E. Pratt, "Anglo-American Commercial and Political Rivalry on the Plata, 1820–1830," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1931, 315.

[115] H.M. Brackenridge. *Voyage to South America Performed by Order of the American Government in the Years 1817 and 1818 in the Frigate Congress*. 2 vols. London: T. and J. Allman, 1820, I: 289.

position as a naval commander based some distance away, Bowles could remonstrate but not act. In Britain, Castlereagh, who succeeded Canning as foreign secretary serving throughout the period from 1812 to 1822, invariably kept his distance. Committed to trade alone, he avoided any South American political entanglements himself while obstructing interference by other European powers. At the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, for example, he blocked hostile moves by France and Russia against Buenos Aires.[116] Facing a desperate political situation in 1819, Pueyrredón appealed for French support. The French foreign minister offered troops and proposed the eighteen-year old Duke of Lucca, a relative of the French Bourbons, as constitutional monarch in Buenos Aires. As trade and revenue improved and Pueyrredón fell from office, the Buenos Aires legislature turned down the offer. Forced to choose, it decided the country preferred its independence as a republic not a monarchy.[117]

* * *

In 1807, John Parish Robertson and his father abandoned Montevideo with Whitelocke's forces, but only months later the son returned to Rio de Janeiro alone His memoirs recalled his sojourn there with distaste. "where I contemplated despotism in all its forms; unrestrained vice in many of its debasing effects; and appalling slavery under some of its most odious aspects…I liked neither the climate nor the people of that place."[118] He objected to the treatment of women in Rio, whom he portrayed as being in thrall to their spouses and male relatives, contrasting their lot with the comparative freedom of women in Montevideo and Buenos

[116] Bew, *Castlereagh*, 449–456, 481.

[117] A translation of the French offer appears in Bowles to Croker 22 Dec. 1819 ADM 1/25. The episode is recounted in William Spence Robertson. *France and Latin-American Independence*, New York: Octagon Books, 1967, 143–144.

[118] Robertson, *Paraguay*, I: 148–170. Numerous contemporaries contrasted the treatment of slaves in Rio and Buenos Aires. Woodbine Parish, British Consul in Buenos Aires from 1824, noted "the independent air of the people of Buenos Ayres, a striking contrast with the slavery and squalid misery of [Rio de Janeiro]." Parish, *Buenos Ayres*, 104. General William Miller objected to the slave trade in a passing visit to Rio. See John Miller. *Memoirs of General Miller in the Service of the Republic of Peru. Vol. 1* London: John Murray, 1828 I: 433. John Beaumont reported the settlers he recruited in 1825 refused a halt at Rio in fear of enslavement. See J.A.B. Beaumont. *Travels in Buenos Aires and its Adjacent Provinces of the Rio de la Plata: with observations intended for the use of persons who contemplate emigrating to that country, or, embarking capital in its affairs.* London: James Ridgeway, 1828.

Aires. Robertson abandoned Rio in mid-1809, settling first in Montevideo and then in Buenos Aires where he worked for John Wylie, a fellow Scot, briefly disembarking merchandise shipped from Brazil.[119] As Wylie left Buenos Aires in April 1810, Robertson embarked on an independent career.[120] Still only eighteen or nineteen years old and entirely without capital, he became a long-distance peddler, acquiring cheap, shoddy articles in Buenos Aires on credit, and transporting them hundreds of miles north up the great Rio Paraná to Corrientes and Asunción del Paraguay. In these areas of mostly indigenous population, markets were even smaller than in the coastal cities. Robertson obtained his goods from a French one time sailor in Buenos Aires, who dealt in dated European cast-offs, "a cocked hat, a dress sword, silk stockings, gold lace, epaulettes and a pig tail."[121] Returning downstream to Buenos Aires, he carried cattle and horse hides in a box-like craft called a piragua.[122] His position improved when he formed a partnership with Thomas Fair, a man like himself from the Scottish border country.[123] By 1813, he considered prospects good enough to invite his brother to join him in another partnership. William Parish Robertson then arrived from Scotland following a tense transatlantic voyage evading US privateers during the War of 1812.

Writings by the two brothers illustrated what the early British merchants and settlers discovered about the Rio de la Plata, its history, its revolution and its future, and how they interacted with its people and their fellow foreigners. José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia, the long-term dictator of Paraguay who seized power soon after the revolution in Buenos Aires, became a principal figure in their portrayals of the continental interior. John Robertson chronicled the violent phases of Francia's rise to power and his bizarre enactments that included allowing white Spaniards to marry only women who were black or of mixed race.[124] After a two-year

[119] Robertson is mentioned numerous times in Wylie's correspondence of 1809 and early 1810. The link was based on the ties between Wylie and Robertson senior formed in Montevideo in 1807. See 7 Mar., 30 June, 15 Aug., 9 and 27 Sept. 1809. UGD 28/1/1; also 10, 28 Feb., 9 Mar. 1810. On 22 May, having left Buenos Aires in late April, Wylie noted that Robertson "is to remain with us, by his father's express orders," for three years, with an annual salary of £100. UGD 28/1/2.

[120] Details are noted in Llorca-Jaña, *British Merchants*, 228.

[121] Robertson, *Paraguay*, 2:1.

[122] On river craft on the Paraná, see Kroeber, *Shipping Industry*, 146, note 12 mentioning various river boats including piraguas as large as 145 tons.

[123] On Fair, see Hanon, *Diccionario*, 310.

[124] Robertson, *Paraguay*, 2:34.

contact with the Robertsons, Francia turned against them in a fit of rage when supplies he had ordered went astray, denouncing them as "hucksters of rags, mountebanks and peddlers." He threw them out of Paraguay, threatening to incarcerate them for life if they dared return. The dispute occurred when John Robertson fell victim to a band of rural fighters loyal to José Artigas, leader of the revolutionary forces in the Banda Oriental surrounding Montevideo, and the Paraná. Making off with the weapons and fancy goods intended for Francia, Artigas's men were glimpsed "strutting about in Bond Street overcoats and leather breeches." As a captive, Robertson remained in a perilous position for several weeks. He gained his freedom following a personal appeal to Artigas by the captain of a British patrol vessel.[125]

As described in their second book *Letters on South America*, in 1815–1816 the brothers embarked on the new business of buying cattle hides in Corrientes, the province south of Paraguay on the left bank of the Rio Paraná. Once more, they were trafficking in an area of civil war and banditry controlled by Artigas's followers, who were mostly indigenous peasants from the former Jesuit missions in the north. The brothers joked how they took to bribing the fighters with "occasional largesses of money and casks of bottled porter," and on one no doubt apocryphal occasion with some "plon puddin ingles" [*sic]*. In exporting cattle hides from Corrientes to Buenos Aires, the Robertsons profited from the willingness of ranchers to sell cattle in large numbers to prevent their confiscation by Artigas's forces.[126] An outline of their accounts in the *Letters* showed they sold hides in Buenos Aires at near-double the price they bought them in Corrientes. The mark-up did not appear excessive considering the risks of transporting goods downriver through hostile country.[127]

The *Letters* read at times like sacred texts of economic liberalism. The Robertsons profited from a high turnover of goods, a method diametrically contrary to the neo-mercantilist practices of the Spaniards, who dealt in low volume, high prices and contrived scarcity. They described the contrast as follows: "While the colonial system existed, all manufacture and other European goods sold here at three times their present prices; while

[125] Robertson, *Paraguay*, III, 82–99. On this episode, see John Street. *Artigas and the Emancipation of Uruguay*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, 269–274.

[126] On rural Corrientes, see Tulio Halperín Donghi, "La expansión ganadera en la campaña de Buenos Aires (1810–1852)," *Desarrollo Económico* Vol. 1, No. 1–2, Apr.–Sept. 1963, 67.

[127] Robertson, *South America*, I:262. In Corrientes, the brothers paid 3½ pence per pound and sold hides in Buenos Aires at 5½ pence; in England, hides fetched 9–10 pence.

the produce of the country was given in exchange at a fourth part of what is now paid for it…We reversed the plan of the Old Spaniards, we gave high prices for hides, and took low ones for goods [we sold]."[128] While Spaniards bartered goods, Scots purchased cattle hides with Spanish doubloons, namely silver coins minted in Upper Peru they obtained in Buenos Aires. They believed cash transactions produced better returns for buyers and sellers alike: "We had the double satisfaction of proving that, while our operations were enriching us, they were spreading prosperity throughout the country which yielded us its willing and abundant harvest."[129] The *Letters* quoted the wife of a Spanish merchant who denounced the use of cash because it disrupted a world of social relations based on deference. She complained British merchants had "entirely ruined and destroyed our commerce. Before they arrived here, the poor people were content to come to our doors and say 'Bread for Yerba. Segars [*sic*] for Sugar.' And then indeed we had good bargains, and the lower classes knew their own places…These times are gone…The Englishmen ruin our trade and innovate upon our customs. Were I the Governor [of Corrientes], I should banish them from the province."[130]

The Robertsons documented the cultural hybridization of the foreigners living in the Paraná region. In Corrientes, John Robertson encountered a deserter from Beresford's forces, a former sergeant from the Scottish Highlands. The man had nearly forgotten English but "was never able to acquire either the Spanish or the Guarani [indigenous to Paraguay and Corrientes] so composed a jargon of four languages," (English, Scots Gaelic, Spanish and Guaraní).[131] Another story referred to Pierre Quesnay, the Frenchman from whom John Robertson had obtained the junk articles he sold in Paraguay. Attired in leftovers from the reign of Louis XVI, he would welcome the brothers in another unique argot. "He had not been able to preserve his French, and still less had he been able to catch the Spanish idiom…He had got between the two, into a sort of deep and muddy rut."

Hybridization found striking expression in descriptions of Peter (Pedro) Campbell, a former tanner, another deserter from Beresford's army and recognisably Irish because of his "Hibernian brogue, mangled Spanish,

[128] Robertson, *South America*, I: 176.
[129] Robertson, *South America*, I:264.
[130] Robertson, *South America*, I:53–54.
[131] Robertson, *Paraguay*, 263.

carroty locks and bright blue eyes." Having lived in the back lands of Corrientes for a decade, Campbell appeared "transformed into a more fearful looking gaucho than any native one I had ever beheld." He became one of Artigas's top lieutenants, renowned for his prowess in hand to hand combat with the gaucho knife or *facón*. On approaching the brothers for work, he donned the tattered remnants of his European clothing, eager to create a good impression by assuming a more respectable appearance. The brothers appointed him their head cattle buyer. He helped them make a fortune by touring the estancias, buying and slaughtering cattle, and carting hides to the river for transportation downstream. Campbell operated in polyvalent worlds between his European origins and his life in Corrientes, although his South American affiliations ultimately prevailed. When Artigas suffered his final defeat and fled to Paraguay in 1820, Campbell departed with him, never to be seen again.[132]

In 1816, civil war forced the Robertsons and other British merchants back into Buenos Aires. Still young men in their twenties, they began assembling an archetypal British mercantile firm of the type their father had planned ten years earlier. Working with John Fair, they set themselves up as consignees of imported manufactured goods.[133] In 1817, John Robertson returned to Britain in pursuit of goods and credit. He sought the patronage of John Parish, his maternal grandfather, the richest member of the Parish clan, who lived in the opulent city of Bath.[134] Three years later, he headed back to South America, this time in pursuit of San Martín's revolutionary armies into Chile and on to Peru, intending to set up outlets in Pacific ports. William Robertson remained in Buenos Aires corresponding with some of the largest merchant bankers of the day in Britain and

[132] Robertson, *South America*, I:30–38 and 3:192. Campbell evokes the definition of "marginal man" by sociologist Robert Park in 1928: "A cultural hybrid, a man living and sharing intimately in the cultural life and traditions of two distinct peoples; never quite willing to break even if he were permitted to do so, with the past." Quoted in Richard Kolm. *The Change of Cultural Identity. An Analysis of Factors conditioning the Cultural Integration of Immigrants*. New York: Arno Press, 1980, 58.

[133] Studies include Reber, *British Merchant Houses*; Hilarie J. Heath, "British Merchant Houses, 1821–1860: Conforming Business Practices and Ethics," *Hispanic American Historical Review,* Vol. 73, No. 2, 1993, 261–290, a work with data similar to those in the Rio de la Plata; Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise*. A summary appears in Rory M. Miller, *Britain and Latin America in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. London: Longman, 1993, 79–86.

[134] Robertson, *South America*, 2: 2–20.

continental Europe, "the Barings, the Gladstones, the Parishes…and other great merchants and financiers."[135]

James Hodgson, a man born in west Yorkshire in 1793, provided another example of the venturesome early British merchants. After an exploratory voyage to Buenos Aires in 1815 dabbling in land sales, he decided to become a textile importer. He returned home to search out Lancashire and Yorkshire manufacturers wanting to sell goods in South America. In 1817, he set out once more as "a general commission agent in Buenos Ayres," remaining this time for twelve years. Like the Robertsons, he started out bereft of capital. "I have nothing to stand by but my character," he announced.[136] He established a general store in Buenos Aires, one of many in the city during this period, and began building a network of clients. His main problem, one he shared with all the British merchants, was having to wait up to eighteen months from the time he sent his orders to England to when he received payment for the British goods he had sold in South America.[137] Hodgson stressed the importance of honest dealing and prompt payment, qualities vital to his credit standing. The expression *la palabra del inglés* ("an Englishman's word is his bond"), of ubiquitous usage in nineteenth-century Latin America, epitomised his practices. During his early years in Buenos Aires, Hodgson blamed Artigas for obstructing access to the markets of the interior. Pinning his hopes on his defeat, he followed John Robertson and others by supporting the revolutionary armies in Chile and Peru.[138] When constructing his business networks, he courted various wholesalers in the interior before fixing on Mariano Fragueiro, a merchant landowner in Córdoba. For the next twenty years, Fragueiro remained his conduit to the markets of north-west Argentina.[139]

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[135] Robertson, *South America*, 2:39, 101, 202–232. Multiple contacts are a feature common to British mercantile groups in various parts of Latin America. See George E. Carl. *First Among Equals: Great Britain and Venezuela, 1810–1910*. Ann Arbor, Mich. Syracuse University, 1980.

[136] GHR 5/1/1. 30 Aug. 1817. (The Archive of James Hodgson, John Rydal Library, University of Manchester).

[137] Hodgson to Hodgson (a cousin) 17 Feb. 1818. GHR 5/1/1.

[138] GHR 5/1/1, letters of 6 Apr. and 28 Dec. 1818, 26 Feb. and 10 Mar. 1819, and 14 June 1820.

[139] GHR 5/1/1. Letters of 10 Aug., 10 Sept. 1819, 11 Jan. and 10 Apr. 1820.

By the early 1820s, the British merchants of Buenos Aires formed part of a complex transatlantic network tied to British, Western European and North American ports. Their South American bases originated in Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo and Buenos Aires on the Atlantic coast. On the Pacific side, they extended north from Chile into Peru, between Valparaíso and Lima and then beyond to other cities opened to British trade as Spanish resistance collapsed. Among the Pacific emporia, Valparaíso stood out. Only a village until 1817 when San Martín crossed the Andes to liberate Chile, it grew rapidly between 1820 and 1823 as trade tripled.[140] With a British population of about 400 in the early 1820s, Valparaíso became a cameo of the mercantile communities of Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires. Visitors to any of these ports rarely spoke well of the early British settlers. "Englishmen of the lowest description and worst characters," Robert Proctor, the first British consul in Chile, called them.[141] Maria Graham, a visitor to Valparaíso in 1822, reported the town's British shopkeepers had established a "preponderance of the English language over every other in the chief street. [Valparaíso seemed like] a coast town in Britain." She too aspired for "better specimens of English here for the honour of our nation and the benefit of Chile."[142] Hosting around twenty British firms by the mid-1820s, Lima too became the site of a boisterous expatriate commercial community.[143]

Often formed by the men, commonly Scots, who first arrived in 1808–1810, British merchant houses in Buenos Aires became the envy of their trading competitors.[144] Dealers from the east coast of the United States competed successfully with the British in the carrying trade using

[140] Figures in William Duane. *The Two Americas: Great Britain and the Holy Alliance*. Washington D.C.: E. De Krafft, 1824, 9, showing values increasing from US $88,000 in 1820 to $2.3 million in 1823.

[141] R.A. Humphreys. *British Consular Reports on the Trade and Politics of Latin America, 1824–1826*. London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1940, 91.

[142] Elizabeth Mavor. *The Captain's Wife. The South American Journals of Maria Graham, 1821–1823*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1993, 79,109.

[143] Celia Wu. *Generals and Diplomats. Great Britain and Peru, 1820–1840*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 36–37, 72. Platt enumerates the British mercantile houses in Latin America around the mid-1820s at: 60 Rio, 40 Buenos Aires, 10 Montevideo, 18 Bahia, 20 Lima, 16 Arequipa, 14 Mexico City, 4 Cartagena. See Platt, *British Trade*, 42.

[144] A French author of the 1830s attributed the weakness of French commerce to the absence of French merchant houses. Arsène Isabelle. *Voyage à Buenos-Ayres et a Porto-Alegre par la Banda Oriental. Les Missions d'Uruguay et la Province de Rio-Grande-do-Sul de 1830 à1830–1834*. Havre: Imprimerie de J. Morlent, 1835, 348.

quality ships built with New England pitch pine. Americans brought cargoes from Asia and the United States, and re-exported British goods, but in the absence of home produced manufactures never developed trading houses to rival those of the British. French trade too trailed British. In one Englishman's dismissive opinion, French dealers could sell women's finery alone plus a few other "nic-nacs in which the French so excel."[145] According to an American report, between 1813 and 1823, British trade in Buenos Aires almost tripled from US $2.0 million in 1813 to US $5.8 million in 1823.[146] As their wealth grew, British merchants in Buenos Aires bought up showy houses formerly belonging to the Spanish mercantile families they had displaced.[147] Reputedly worth an impressive £1 million in 1819, property owned by British merchants conveyed the impression of wealth, strength and permanency.[148] Some of the merchants married into Spanish-Porteño families. "Many of our compatriots have married beautiful Porteñas," recorded Woodbine Parish, the British consul during the late 1820s, "which has contributed to the great fondness with which the sons of the country view the English."[149] Any unpleasant memories of the failed British attempts to conquer Buenos Aires seemed long forgotten.

[145] An Englishman. *A Five Years' Residence in Buenos Ayres during 1820–1825: containing remarks on the country and inhabitants, and a visit to Colonia del Sacramento; with an appendix containing rules and police of the port of Buenos Ayres, navigation of the River Plate &c, &c.* London: G. Hebert, 1825, 49–52 on the Americans and the French. The author is widely acknowledged as George Thomas Love, founder and editor of the *British Packet and Argentine News.*

[146] Duane, *Two Americas*, 9.

[147] A contemporary sketch of the merchant community appears in An Englishman. *Five Years' Residence*, 34–41.

[148] Bowles to Croker 13 Dec. 1819. In Graham and Humphreys, *Navy and South America*, 260.

[149] Woodbine Parish, reported in Octavio C. Batolla. *Los primeros ingleses en Buenos Aires, 1780–1830.* Buenos Aires: Muro, 1928, 54. (My retranslation).

CHAPTER 2

Diplomats, Settlers and Travellers

Everything here depends on commerce, and the interruption of it produces a rapid decay, menacing the political institutions of the State, and its laws and integrity.
Lord John Ponsonby

As the Spanish American wars of emancipation concluded in 1824, the British Government extended diplomatic recognition to three newly formed republican states: Mexico, Gran Colombia and the United Provinces of South America, the last of them the principal successor of the colonial Viceroyalty of the Rio de la Plata.[1] Recognition enabled consulates to be established in Spanish American ports to support British merchants and trade treaties to be concluded. Parliament passed the required legislation during a period of intense international competition for influence in the newly established states. The United States issued the Monroe Doctrine exhorting the European powers not to attempt to re-colonise any part of Spanish America or Brazil. Foreign Secretary George Canning, who led the campaign in Britain for diplomatic recognition, supported American opposition to re-colonisation but insisted on British rights "to

[1] Bolivia, Paraguay and the Banda Oriental (modern Uruguay), former components of the viceroyalty, became independent states.

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D. Rock, *The British in Argentina*, Britain and the World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97855-0_2

link once more America and Europe" by trade.[2] He shared American fears that the recent French occupation of Spain would be followed by French expansion into Spanish America. Determined that "if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies," he instigated the Polignac Memorandum, in which the French foreign minister pledged not to seek colonies in the Americas if Britain made a similar commitment. Since British policy had observed this rule since the Castlereagh Memorandum of 1807, Polignac's statement became tantamount to a unilateral concession by France. By deft diplomatic manoeuvre, Canning claimed success in pursuing British objectives while containing American pressure and neutralising the French.[3]

Recognition of the Spanish American republics partly reflected hopes that transatlantic trade would compensate for another threatened closure of European markets, as around 1806. John Lowe, a well-informed British merchant and publicist, alerted Canning to the need to strengthen commerce with the Americas. He reported Russia had imposed new tariffs against British goods and Portugal recently granted preferences to the French; Austria "has not only shut us out of the Piedmontese states, but

[2] Quoted in J. Fred Rippy, *Rivalry of the United States and Great Britain over Latin America (1808–1830)*. New York: Octagon Books, 1964 (First Edition 1929), 247. Arthur P. Whitaker. *The United States and the Independence of Latin America*. Second Edition. New York: Norton, 1964, 438–501 states the traditional American view of the Monroe Doctrine. A revised view appears in Jay Sexton. *The Monroe Doctrine: Empire and Nation in Nineteenth Century Latin America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2011. For a British perspective, see R.A. Humphreys, "Anglo-American Rivalries and Spanish American Emancipation," *Proceedings of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 16, No. 5th Series, 1966, 131–156. See also Webster, *Britain and the Independence of Latin America*; Kaufmann, *British Policy*; Charles Lyon Chandler "U.S. Trade with Latin America at the Promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 38, No. 3, 1924, 466–486. Dorothy Burne Goebel, "British-American Rivalry in the Chilean Trade, 1817–1820," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1942, 190–202, notes an instance in which the British seized trade from Americans.

[3] E.M. Lloyd. "Canning and Spanish America." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. London: Royal Historical Society, vol. 18, 1904, 96. On French policy, see Harold Temperley. "French Designs on Spanish America, 1820–1824." *English Historical Review*, Vol. 40, No. 157, Jan. 1925, 34–53; Webster, *Independence*, 19–71; Robertson, *France and Latin-American independence*, 274. On the Polignac Memorandum, Harold Temperley. *The Foreign Policy of Canning, 1822–1827. England, the Neo-Holy Alliance, and the New World*. London: Frank Cass, 1966, 99–132.

extended its influence, to our prejudice, in the kingdom of Sardinia."[4] Lowe urged a major commercial reorientation towards Spanish America, seizing advantage of independence. "Shall we not exult on the score of humanity that the yoke with Spain is broken, and that millions of men are likely to be added to the pale of civilised nations, and to become worthy of all the blessings of liberty, and enjoy all the advantage of national civil institutions?"[5]

A petition to support diplomatic recognition circulated by Member of Parliament Sir James Mackintosh attracted signatures by numerous leading London merchants to override opposition by King George IV, who objected to recognising all republics on principle.[6] As leader of the Whig opposition in the House of Lords, the Marquess of Lansdowne argued recognition would create a fund of goodwill towards Britain in Spanish America fostering trade automatically: "To what degree," he asked, "might that increased demand [for British goods] extend, when [Spanish America] becomes more settled, and when the connexion with this country shall be confirmed on a more settled basis?" He predicted a repeat of events forty years earlier following the recognition of the United States. Once "the cause of so much dread, and the object of such unavailing resistance, [the United States] was no sooner [recognised] than it became the source of prosperity and increased commerce to this country."[7] Prime Minister Lord Liverpool concurred. "There could be no commerce more important to this country [than] that between Great Britain and the different states of the Americas whether in the northern or in the southern part of the continent."[8] Following passage of the Act of Parliament enabling recognition, Canning issued his resonant, long-remembered pronouncement: "I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old."

[4] John Lowe. *A Letter to the Right Hon. George Canning, M.P. on the Policy of Recognising the Independence of the South American States*. London 1823. At this point half British exports went to Continental Europe. See Geoffrey Jones. *Merchants to Multinationals. British Trading Companies in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 19.

[5] Lowe, *Independence*.

[6] As noted in *El Argos* (Buenos Aires) 26 Aug. and 28 Sept. 1824.

[7] *A Report of a Speech Delivered in the House of Lords on the 15th of March, 1824, by the Marquess of Lansdowne*. London: John Murray, 1824, 30, 32.

[8] *Substance of the Speech delivered in the House of Lords on the 15th of March, 1824 by the Earl of Liverpool on the Marquess of Lansdowne's Motion for the Recognition of the Independence of the Late Spanish Colonies in South America, by the British Government*. London: John Murray, 1824, 4.

Favourable impressions of Spanish America in Britain in the mid-1820s recalled James Mill in 1808, who proposed supporting emancipation and cultivating ties as a means to open the area to British contact. Almost twenty years later, merchants, potential investors, leading public figures and the press reached the same conclusion. Diplomatic relations would enable the British to discover and explore an almost unknown continent closed to outsiders for centuries of Spanish rule. Books published by London firms like Rudolph Ackermann and John Murray reflected intense curiosity and a sense of expectation about the region. As mid-twentieth-century historian R.A. Humphreys observed, "it is doubtful whether there has ever been so general a demand in England for information about this vast area and, proportionately, so liberal a supply, as in the eighteen-twenties."[9] Enthusiasm in Britain for Spanish America and Brazil found expression in theatre, public exhibitions and graphic arts.[10]

Several authors published books about the Rio de la Plata. They began with Major Alexander Gillespie, who in 1818 narrated his experiences as an officer in Beresford's army in 1806 and his months in captivity following the British surrender. The preface of his "Gleanings and Remarks" urged another attempt to seize Buenos Aires to compensate for the loss of the North American colonies forty years before. He claimed British people would find the Plata a comfortable place to live and do business. As a liberal society in the making, "no country in the world offers a more enviable situation at the moment." He prophesied trade with Buenos Aires would surpass that with Boston or Philadelphia.[11] Alexander Caldcleugh, a member of the British legation in Rio de Janeiro, wanted closer contact with the Plata "owing to the great field being thrown open to British enterprise by revolutionary changes and the adoption of a liberal and enlightened policy."[12] The area continued to attract interest as a potential area of British settlement. The London *Times* singled out its "climate congenial to European constitutions" that resembled the colonies in Australia and

[9] Humphreys, *Consular Reports.*

[10] See Rebecca Heinowitz. *South American and British Romanticism, 1777–1826. Rewriting Conquest*: Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2010, 148 *passim.*

[11] Gillespie, *Gleanings and Remarks*, Preface.

[12] Alexander Caldcleugh. *Travels in South America, during the Years 1819–20-21; Containing an Account of the Present States of Brazil, Buenos Ayres, and Chile.* London: John Murray, 1825, 1. On these themes, see Mary Louise Pratt. *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992; Ricardo D. Salvatore. "Re-Discovering Spanish America: Uses of Travel Literature about South America in Britain." *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1999, 199–217.

the Cape of Good Hope, while emphasising the gulf between liberal Buenos Aires and the conservative and clerical outlook elsewhere in Spanish America.[13] General William Miller, a widely known veteran of the wars of independence under San Martín, urged British farmers to settle on the pampas. "A feeling of regret arises involuntarily in the mind of an Englishman, as he contemplates the fertile tracts chiefly tenanted by beasts and birds, whilst his own country swarms with the industrious poor."[14]

In 1824, William Duane, editor of the *Aurora* of Philadelphia, sketched a grudgingly admiring synopsis of British policy towards South America. The sub-continent represented "a theater so vast, rich and various, that it is probably in England alone it is properly and fully estimated." He claimed the British had once planned to take over Spanish America piecemeal using the same methods as in eighteenth-century India. When defeat in Buenos Aires soured the prospect, they opted for indirect control through trade and now anticipated immense benefits from it. "The market of North America is preferable to England over that of all Europe…The market of South America is already equal to that of North America at the commencement of the French Revolution, and must augment in greater proportion, as its products are more various, abundant, and desirable universally."[15]

Duane classified different areas of Spanish America by the extent of the damage they suffered during the wars of emancipation. By this standard, he considered the United Provinces superior to everywhere else because the effects of war were slight, confined to the far north-west near the border with Bolivia.[16] He based this opinion on *The Present State of the United Provinces of South America* by two American diplomats published by Congress in 1818. The report contained a lengthy appendix by someone identified only as "A British Merchant"—John Lowe in all likelihood. The appendix placed the Plata region on a pedestal: "There is no country which better deserves the attention of Britons than the provinces of the River Plate. They contain an immense extent of fertile land, blessed with a salubrious climate, and fitted for the growth of every species of product. Under a liberal government, they must soon teem with inhabitants and

[13] Quoted in Frank Griffin Dawson. *The First Latin American Debt Crisis. The City of London and the 1822–25 Loan Bubble*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990, 13.

[14] John Miller. *Memoirs of General Miller in the Service of the Republic of Peru. Vol. 1* London: John Murray, 1828, 58, 151.

[15] Duane, *Two Americas*, 35.

[16] Duane, *Two Americas*, 9.

wealth…To England therefore they open up the prospect of a constantly increasing market for the sale of her goods."

Listing the conditions that gave the United Provinces pride of place, the report singled out the slave system as one major point of difference. Although the slave trade grew rapidly in Buenos Aires in 1795–1810 leaving slavery as pervasive as anywhere else in the Americas, contemporaries were agreed the institution developed less extreme, visibly oppressive forms than elsewhere. In 1806 and 1807, Creole leaders showed no hesitation in arming hundreds of slaves to combat the British invaders. In Buenos Aires, the unusual practice of renting out slaves for wages was widespread. Although many British residents of Buenos Aires employed slaves in their homes, they regarded slavery as destined for extinction.[17] John Robertson condemned the treatment of slaves in Rio but scarcely mentioned the subject in Buenos Aires.[18] According to Consul Woodbine Parish, in the Rio de la Plata "slavery was always more a name than a reality."[19]

Secondly, "British merchant" claimed the Catholic Church occupied a lower standing in the Plata compared with other parts of Spanish America. He did not mean that clerics were powerless. In Buenos Aires in 1806, they helped galvanise resistance against Beresford's men. During the occupation of Montevideo in the following year, they led an outcry against British Protestant missionaries, who distributed bibles and arranged bible readings. Such practices were forbidden by Catholics, for whom priests alone interpreted the Scriptures. When the British withdrew from Montevideo, the clerics ordered all copies of the New Testament in Spanish translation incinerated.[20] Following the 1810 revolution, priests in Buenos Aires occasionally blocked the interment of non-Catholics in

[17] Hanon, *Diccionario*, 285 (on Joseph Downs) provides an example.

[18] An Anglican missionary recalled the abuse of slaves during a visit to Rio de Janeiro in 1814. See Captain Allen F. Gardiner. *A Visit to the Indians on the Frontiers of Chile*. London: R.B. Seeley, 1841, 6. In Robertson, *Letters*, 117: "A Biscayan shipwright had several slaves, male and female, all of whom he fed and dressed coarsely, except the latter, and she at once served as cook and matrimonial locum tenens." In Córdoba, John Miers reported an incident when an innkeeper beat a female slave. John Miers. *Travels in Chile and La Plata, including Accounts respecting the Geography, Geology, Statistics, Government, Finances, Agriculture, Manners and Customs and the Mining Operations in Chile Collected during a Residence of Several Years in These Countries*. Two volumes. New York: Ams Press, 1970, I: 72; also Johnson, *Workshop of Revolution*, 39–43.

[19] Parish, *Buenos Ayres*, 115.

[20] In 1808, John Luccock reported buying an expensive, poorly translated copy of the New Testament in Spanish in order to learn the language. Luccock, *Rio de Janeiro*, 163.

consecrated ground, forcing Protestant British merchants to dispose of their dead in the Rio de la Plata. This issue explained the eagerness of the early merchants to establish their own cemetery. Despite such incidents, the atmosphere of religious tolerance in Buenos Aires contrasted with Santiago de Chile, for example, where "the town is full of priests, [and] the people are consequently indolent and immoral."[21] Many Porteño revolutionary leaders regarded Protestantism as a progressive and modernising force. In the early 1820s, James Thomson, a Scottish Baptist missionary and educator, resumed the distribution of bibles in Spanish translation donated by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Touring the United Provinces without mishap, he met a hostile reception when he crossed into Chile and later travelled up the Pacific coast to Gran Colombia.[22]

Finally, "British Merchant" claimed that a more egalitarian and therefore more attractive society to British people prevailed in the United Provinces than elsewhere. An area in which a wage economy and opportunities for geographical mobility existed even for slaves, social conditions in the Plata contrasted with those in Chile and Peru that were reminiscent of serfdom. When he arrived in Buenos Aires in 1824, Consul Parish dispelled lingering hopes in Britain that Buenos Aires would evolve into a constitutional monarchy. "Their population is thin; the habits of the people are plain and unaddicted to show or expense; with moderate fortunes, a great equality exists…With such a people, the expense and ostentation of a court would ill agree."[23] Writing in 1818, "British Merchant" believed relative social equality in the Plata would prevent the rise of dictatorship, a trend already underway in many parts of Spanish America. "The people are so much on a level, the country is so extensive and so thinly inhabited, the military establishment is so small [that if] a man were found to usurp despotic power, his attempt would most assuredly fail." Dictatorship appeared possible only if political order failed. In that event, he predicted centrifugal forces would gain ascendancy leading the country to become "the patrimony of an equal number of petty tyrants."[24]

[21] Head, *Rough Notes*, 14, 102.

[22] See James Thomson. *Letters on the Moral and Religious State of South America Written during a Residence of Nearly Seven Years in Buenos Ayres, Chile, Peru, and Colombia*. London: J. Nisbet, 1827.

[23] Quoted in Humphreys, *Consular Reports*, 7.

[24] C.A. Rodney and John Graham. *The Report on the Present State of the United Provinces of South America*. New York: Praeger, 1969, 4, 43. (First published by the US Congress in 1818).

Soon after 1818, a situation supervened of the sort "British Merchant" anticipated. On the fall of Juan Martín de Pueyrredón in 1819, political order collapsed and the now incongruously named United Provinces became fiefdoms of local warlords, the so-called caudillos. After months of upheaval, the situation stabilised towards late 1820. In Buenos Aires, now a self-governing province, General Martín Rodríguez, a cattle rancher and Indian fighter, became governor. In early 1821, he appointed Bernardino Rivadavia secretary of government and foreign affairs of the province. He became a form of local prime minister empowered by agreement to negotiate treaties with foreign powers on behalf of all fourteen of the country's provinces.[25]

* * *

Born in 1780 into an upper class Creole family, Rivadavia grew up in the atmosphere of liberal reform of the immediate pre-revolutionary period disseminated by Manuel Belgrano and his circle. Despite these associations, he possessed close connections with the Spanish Bourbon administration, as signalled by his marriage to the daughter of a former viceroy. An interstitial figure anchored in two contrasting systems and periods, he combined the attitudes of Bourbon despotism with support for liberal representative government. Having enlisted in the militia against Beresford and Whitelocke, he realised effective government required trade with the British. For a lengthy period, Rivadavia's liberal proclivities predominated. He first held office in 1811–1812 when measures he supported such as banning the slave trade and lowering tariffs foreshadowed his progressive policies a decade later.[26]

After a brief stint in government, Rivadavia settled in Europe for five years to lead a diplomatic mission seeking support for the 1810 revolution. In London, he became acquainted with entrepreneurial financiers, notably through the firm Hullett and Co, who encouraged him to ponder approaches to economic development as yet unknown in Spanish America.[27] As he saw the potential for foreign investment to revive mining and develop agrarian colonisation, he acquired a marked Anglophile outlook. Addressing

[25] For an overview, see Luis Alberto Romero. *La feliz experiencia, 1820–1824*. Buenos Aires: La Bastilla, 1976.

[26] Klaus Gallo. *The Struggle for an Enlightened Republic: Buenos Aires and Rivadavia*. London: London University. Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2006, 8.

[27] Ties between Rivadavia and Hullett and Co. leading to the mining ventures of the 1820s are explored in Ricardo Rees Jones. *Bernardino Rivadavia y su negocio minero—Rio de la Plata Mining Association*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Librería, 2008.

British merchants at a banquet in Buenos Aires a few years later, he toasted the "most capable government in the world: the British, and its most moral and educated people."[28] As Rodríguez's chief minister, he endorsed anti-clerical measures and encouraged Protestant schools using class monitors of the type proposed by Joseph Lancaster, the Quaker educator of this period.[29] He favoured immigration by Protestants as a way to supplant what he perceived as anachronistic Catholic legacies.[30]

In London, Rivadavia made contact with Jeremy Bentham, sending two of his children to a Benthamite school in Birmingham.[31] Like his close friend James Mill, Bentham developed strong interest in Spanish America during the wars of emancipation. When fighting concluded, he began drafting republican constitutions while urging Spanish Americans to abandon any thought of reviving monarchy. Outside Britain, Rivadavia became one of Bentham's leading disciples. "I have never ceased to reflect on your principles in the field of legislation," the pupil informed his master in 1823. He cited his introduction of a semi-circular chamber for the legislature of Buenos Aires, a layout Bentham proposed for the British House of Commons to dilute confrontational party politics.[32] The University of Buenos Aires, one of the major artefacts of the Rivadavia era, was designed as one of the "beneficial and liberating institutions" in conformity with Benthamite aspirations.[33]

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[28] Octavio C. Batolla. *Los primeros ingleses en Buenos Aires, 1780–1830*. Buenos Aires: Muro, 1928, 102. (My re-translation).

[29] Rivadavia shared the outlook of Bernardo O'Higgins, the liberal leader of Chile, who praised the Lancaster system as "the surest means of extirpating those principles formed amongst us during the [Spanish colonial] time of darkness." Mavor, Captain's Wife, 105.

[30] Ricardo Piccirrilli, *Rivadavia y su tiempo*. 3 vols. 2nd. ed. Buenos Aires: Peuser, 1960, II, 193–353.

[31] Carlos S.A. Segreti. *Bernardino Rivadavia: hombre de Buenos Aires, ciudadano argentino: biografía*. Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2000, 233.

[32] "Je n'ai cessé pas de méditer vos principes en matière de legislation" in the original, as quoted in Humphreys, *Consular Reports*, 9.

[33] On ties between Bentham and Rivadavia, see Miriam Williford. *Jeremy Bentham on South America: An Account of His Letters and Proposals to the New World*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980; Gallo, *Enlightened Republic*, 24–41; Jonathan Harris. "Bernardino Rivadavia and Benthamite 'Discipleship'," *Latin American Research Review*, 33, no. 1, 1998, 129–149; Gabriel Paquette. "The Intellectual Context of British Diplomatic Recognition of the South American Republics, c. 1800–1830." *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2004, 75–95. In Argentina, the legal revolution, which Bentham presaged, was delayed until the 1860s when the models were mainly French.

In 1821, British merchants in Buenos Aires enthused about Rivadavia's appointment. "It is wonderful to observe the different aspect which affairs in general have taken," wrote William Robertson. "Everything breathes activity and public spirit; and public prosperity is the natural result."[34] "Since the present Executive Government came into power," he added, "it has pursued one undeviating line of protection to ourselves individually and encouragement to the community of Great Britain."[35] At mid-decade, British trade with Buenos Aires climbed higher than with all the other Spanish American states combined, spurting to around half the total with Rio de Janeiro, the re-export emporium.[36] Convinced trade would expand indefinitely, Robertson reported that imported "plain and simple calicoes" were now reaching far-flung markets throughout the United Provinces and Upper Peru.[37] "We may therefore not only calculate on our trade continuing to maintain its present superiority over all the others, but on its increasing, most probably, in a better ratio. England is the great mart for the producer of Buenos Ayres; and British imports…are consumed over the whole country and by all classes."[38] British imports of the early 1820s included books published in London by the firm of Rudolph Ackermann, among them translations of manuals of good citizenship known in Spanish America as *catecismos*.[39]

[34] Quoted in Humphreys, *Paroissien*, 106.

[35] Statement by William P. Robertson, 17 Aug. 1823. FO 6/1.

[36] "The River Plate to the British manufacturer has been the most important of all the markets opened to him by the emancipation of the Spanish Americans; and the value of the British trade there exceeds all the aggregate of all other foreign countries put together." Parish, *Buenos Ayres*, 290, xix. A table for British exports to Latin America, 1812–1830, appears in Humphreys, *Consular Reports*, 344–349. Alexander Caldcleugh reported that British trade more than tripled from £388,000 in 1816 to £1.1 million in 1823. Caldcleugh, *Travels*, 161. Revised statistics are published in Llorca-Jaña, *British Textile Trade*, 310–312.

[37] Carlos Assadourián and Silvia Palomeque. "Las relaciones mercantiles en Córdoba (1800–1830). Desarticulación y desmonetación del mercado interno colonial en el nacimiento del espacio económico nacional," 151–226 in María Alejandra Irigoin, Roberto Schmit, Carlos Sempat Assadourián. "*La desintegración de la economía colonial: comercio y moneda en el interior del espacio colonial, 1800–1860.*" Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2003.

[38] Memorandum to FO in Parish to FO 30 July 1824. FO/4.

[39] Eugenia Roldán Vera. *The British Book Trade and Spanish American Independence: Education and Knowledge Transmission in Transcontinental Perspective*. Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2003.

While continuing to profit from trade, the Robertson brothers were drawn into banking and finance. In 1822, William Robertson joined a consortium of Porteño and British merchants to found the Banco de Buenos Ayres, the country's controversial first bank. During its four-year existence, the institution raised only one-third of its proposed capital but allowed an insider group including the Robertsons to collect high dividends and borrow at subsidised rates. The bank collapsed, leaving numerous depositors with major losses.[40] In 1824, the government of Buenos Aires appointed John Robertson to a delegation to the City of London to negotiate a loan from Baring Brothers. It planned to reduce high-interest provincial debt swollen by military spending from the wars of emancipation.

The terms of the Baring loan met strong criticism in Buenos Aires. The province would receive scarcely half the £1 million it now owed and the negotiators, including Robertson, received enormous commissions. As conditions stood in 1824, some of this criticism appeared excessive. That the province received less than 60 per cent of the sum contracted reflected its standing as a distant, largely unknown first-time borrower. As additional security, Barings insisted a large proportion of the loan stayed in London to cover the first two years of repayment. The province faced annual payments of £65,000, around 13 per cent of its revenues in 1824 and paid interest of 8.7 per cent.[41] The loan could be considered expensive, although repayment lay well within the means of the province as long as economic conditions remained stable (which they did not). The commissions appeared far more objectionable. The negotiators claimed they

[40] Samuel Amaral, "Comercio y crédito: El Banco de Buenos Ayres (1822–1826)." *Revista America*, No. 4, 1977 notes that J.P. Robertson became the largest borrower from the bank. The workings of the Banco de Buenos Ayres are explained in Agustín de Vedia. *El Banco Nacional. Historia financiera de la República Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Lajouane, 1890, 55–71.

[41] For estimates of annual repayments as a percentage of provincial revenue, see Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 142; Burgin, *Argentine Federalism*, 50–58; also Philip Ziegler. *The Sixth Great Power: The History of One of the Greatest of All Banking Families. The House of Barings, 1762–1929*. New York: Knopf, 1988, 101. Studies include Samuel Amaral. "El empréstito de Londres de 1824." *Desarrollo Económico*, Vol. 23, No. 92, Jan-Mar 1984, 559–588; and D.C.M. Platt. "Foreign Finance." The last two articles argue the fairness of the terms of the loan and the commissions. Carlos Marichal. *A Century of Debt Crises in Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989, 28–29, 37, 44, addresses objections by Argentine nationalists to the loan. For discussion of the loan compared with others to Latin American states, see Dawson, *Latin American Debt Crisis*, 79–80.

earned their generous rewards by securing better than expected terms. In fact, the better deal reflected a fortuitous improvement in financial conditions in London rather than their negotiating skills. H.S. Ferns claimed the "Robertson group" netted £150,000 from the loan. Older authorities reported Robertson personally received £60,000, a sum at the time that likely could have bought him a grand English country estate.[42] Still only in his early thirties, the former peddler had become a magnate.

In 1824, Canning appointed Woodbine Parish as consular commissioner in the United Provinces. He ordered him to assess the local political situation and if all seemed well to establish a permanent British consulate. A man still in his twenties, Parish was related to the Parishes of Hamburg and Bath and therefore to the Robertson brothers. He owed his appointment to his other ties with Canning's associates in the British government as well as his membership of a mercantile clan already established in Buenos Aires.[43] Canning's instructions to Parish (duplicated to his other consular commissioners) bore signs of the recent international rivalries visible in the Monroe Doctrine and the Polignac Memorandum. They proclaimed with great emphasis that Britain had no intention of establishing colonies or protectorates in Spanish America—but neither should any other country. Thus the British government sought "friendly political and commercial intercourse that His Majesty could not be induced by any consideration to enter into any engagement which might be considered as bringing them under His dominion. Neither, on the other hand, would His Majesty consent to see them…brought under the dominion of any other power."[44]

Once established in Buenos Aires, Parish quickly decided the country met the standards of internal stability Canning required. Pronouncing himself British consul general, he proceeded to negotiate a trade agreement. The Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation of 1825 between the United Kingdom and the United Provinces, the first of its kind in Spanish America, remained in force largely untouched until 1933.[45] In

[42] Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 103.

[43] Parish was a former assistant of Joseph Planta, a senior official in the Foreign Office, who worked closely with Canning. See Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 115. On the family links, see Klaus Gallo. "Great Britain and the Recognition of the River Plate." *Working Paper*. Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, 1999, 8.

[44] Extract of Instructions to His Majesty's Commissioners, 15 December 1823. FO 6/1.

[45] The text of the treaty is reproduced in Parish. *Buenos Ayres*, 396 *passim*. The treaty included an agreement to promote mail communication through packet ships; the government of Buenos Aires renewed commitments to prohibit the slave trade.

many respects it restated the treaty of 1810 between Britain and Portugal applied to colonial Brazil, which in turn imitated treaties between England and Portugal as far back as the seventeenth century.[46] Under the 1825 agreement, the so-called most favoured nation principle ensured that tariff duties on British goods would never be higher than goods from other countries. The treaty exempted British merchants from the forced loans and military service of the kind Pueyrredón threatened to impose in 1818. They were granted religious freedom, a dispensation inherited from long ago agreements with Portugal. Under the treaty of 1642, for example, the King of Portugal had to "take care that the English shall have and enjoy as great a liberty in the practice of their religion…as shall be permitted to the subjects of any other prince or commonwealth."[47] In liberal Buenos Aires, religious freedom went further than among its Portuguese precedents. Here, British residents were to be allowed to build Protestant churches as opposed to being obliged to worship in private houses, as in more-conservative Rio de Janeiro. The existence of churches gave the British presence an appearance of permanence they would otherwise lack.

The treaty with Buenos Aires further differed from its 1810 predecessor in Portuguese Brazil by not allowing the British separate courts, a dispensation known as extraterritoriality. In later years, the absence of this privilege prompted British residents into numerous protests, mostly on the grounds of excessive delay under the local judicial system. Most of all, they objected to the absence of Habeas Corpus, an omission that could lead to indefinite periods of imprisonment without trial. Canning withheld demanding extraterritorial rights to protect the principle of reciprocity in the treaty granting the United Provinces equal standing with Britain. He could not insist on separate courts for British residents in Buenos Aires without providing the same privilege for citizens of the United Provinces in Britain, an impractical idea for a country of Britain's diverse overseas connections that Parliament would never accept. Canning believed equality under the treaty would strengthen the impression abroad of his determination not to rekindle colonial rule. In other respects, the treaty

[46] On the 1810 Anglo-Portuguese treaty, see Alan K. Manchester. *British Pre-eminence in Brazil. A Study of European Expansion*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933, 86.

[47] For texts of older Portuguese treaties, see Great Britain. Foreign Office. *Hertslett's Commercial Treaties*. Vol. 2. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1827, 6–44. For discussion, see L.M.E. Shaw. *The Anglo-Portuguese Alliance and the English Merchants in Portugal, 1654–1810*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998, 198.

afforded British residents substantial advantages over other aliens. Without a treaty, French residents, for example, became embroiled in perennial disputes over taxes and military obligations.

As Parish set up a consular registry, he realised there were now far more people from the United Kingdom in Buenos Aires than he had expected, some of them very wealthy. He informed Canning that "the magnitude of British interests here exceeds all others; half the public debt of the country and the best part of the valuable property in the place is in the hands of His Majesty's subjects."[48] In 1830, he estimated the local British and Irish population at around 4000, some 6 per cent of the populace, of whom 1400 were women and children. Buenos Aires became by far the most popular destination for British and Irish migrants throughout Latin America; and for a brief time, more British subjects lived there than any other European nationality except the French. In the 1820s, migrants to South America expressed strong preference for Buenos Aires against Rio de Janeiro, where they believed they risked military impressments and even enslavement.[49]

In the early 1820s, brigs and sloops of mostly between 150 and 300 tons transported up to fifty passengers each along with cargoes of textiles, hardware and ceramics.[50] Voyagers faced a cramped, monotonous transatlantic journey of up to three months. Recalling his voyage in 1808, John Luccock described the first stage out into the Atlantic to Madeira "as well known as the road from London to Falmouth." In less familiar seas further south, he halted at Cape Verde, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo, with the later phases of the voyage requiring weeks of sailing along the coast of Brazil. Hundreds of others followed the same path. Luccock's description of the final stage of the voyage from Rio to Buenos Aires, a tale of calms, currents and the local storms called *pamperos*, provided a vivid description of the treacherous waters of the estuary.[51] James Hodgson too illustrated the hazards of the Rio de la Plata. Returning from a voyage to

[48] Parish to Foreign Office 25 April and 31 December 1824. FO 6/4.

[49] Brazil lived up to its reputation for impressing foreigners in 1827 when 800 Irish settlers were drafted into the forces to fight against the United Provinces. See *British Packet* 10 Nov. 1827.

[50] Hanon's data include the names and tonnages of ships and the number of passengers on specific voyages. For data on ceramics, see Daniel Shávelzon. "Transferware Images of Latin America made by British Factories (1830–1930): The Case of Argentina." Centre of Urban Archaeology, University of Buenos Aires. (My thanks to Guy Thomson for this reference.)

[51] Luccock, *Rio de Janeiro*, 1, 145–146.

England in 1830, his ship became stranded on the so-called English Bank off Montevideo, one of numerous shallow water obstacles. By his account, "had we remained [stuck] only a couple of hours longer, the ship must have gone to pieces for there came on a gale of wind which [caused] such a sea she would have thumped her bottom out."[52] Larger ships had to lie at anchor nine miles out from Buenos Aires. From there lower-draught barges, and finally high-wheeled horse-drawn carts, carried passengers ashore.

Passenger fares from English ports to Buenos Aires at around £20 first class and £10 for lower classes ran much higher than to New York or Quebec, shorter and far more widely travelled destinations. The expense of travel to the Plata explained why employment contracts and subsidised voyages played a major part in the formation of the British community in Buenos Aires.[53] George Thomas Love, founding editor of *The British Packet and Argentine News*, argued that without financial support few British people would have gone to the Plata.[54] In 1826, for example, merchants Joshua and Joseph Thwaites contracted several Irishmen to work in Buenos Aires as servants. The contract would remain in force "for a period of five years…Wages may not exceed fifteen dollars a month." The contractors paid £21 per person for the ship passage, a substantial sum of £168 in all.[55] In the 1820s, contracted workmen included numerous Cornish miners. Enticed to Buenos Aires to explore the Andes for mines, many stopped there, ignoring their contracts when they discovered the

[52] Hodgson to Fielden 5 Nov. 1830 FDN/1/5.

[53] An Englishman, *Five Years' Residence*, 39 quotes £40 as the steerage rate on the more expensive mail packet boats. Jeremy Howat cites a figure of £36 (£40 on the return voyage) on packets from Falmouth against £25 to New York in the mid-1820s. J.N.T. Howat. *South American Packets. The British Packet Service to Brazil, the River Plate, the West Coast (via the Straits of Magellan) and the Falkland Islands, 1808–1880*. York: Postal History Society, 1984, 25, 72. Steerage rates on non-packet boats from Liverpool were lower. Hanon notes rates for 1848 at £15 per person cash; alternatively, £10 cash and an additional £7 payable in instalments (Personal communication). Advertising in provincial Irish newspapers in the 1860s, Liverpool shipping companies offered passages to Buenos Aires of £25 cabin class, £18 second class and £15 third class (*Westmeath Guardian and Longford News-Letter*, January 1863). Steerage rates to New York in the 1830s are reported at 70 shillings (£3.5) from Liverpool and 45 shillings (£2.25) from west Irish ports. See Eric Richards, *Britannia's Children*. London: Hambledon Press, 2004, 122.

[54] An Englishman, *Five Years' Residence*, 155.

[55] File of 15 April 1826. FO 446:3. The contracted wages in pesos would not have lasted very long in light of rising inflation.

dire extremes they faced in the distant mountains. Return voyages for passengers required sharing the ship with malodorous cargoes of hides and tallow. Judging by advertisements by departing skippers in the *British Packet*, rates on the return journey remained negotiable.

As many as 50 per cent of all British and Irish migrants to Argentina before 1850 arrived during the 1820s. Migration peaked in the second half of 1825 when about forty ships landed several hundred British passengers.[56] Migrants to Buenos Aires remained very few compared with those to North America, and a negligible proportion of the total 200,000 migrants from Britain during the 1820s. In 1819 alone, 80,000 people volunteered to migrate to the Cape of Good Hope with the help of government subsidies; 6000 eventually departed.[57] Judging from Maxine Hanon's data on Buenos Aires for 1815–1825, about half the migrants were English and Welsh from districts mainly in and around Liverpool and London. Lowland Scots made up about one quarter of the total, with the Irish at this point slightly smaller in number than the Scots. This distribution contrasted with the 1840s when Irish migrants climbed to around 50 per cent and briefly higher. Craftsmen and "mechanics" comprised one-third of migrants and self-declared labourers only one fifth: most migrants to Buenos Aires therefore claimed to possess some level of workingmen's skills. Merchants, sailors and farmers followed at about 10 per cent each. Among the mariners, bargemen and river pilots plying the Rio de la Plata and the Rio Paraná formed another substantial group.[58]

Settlers included many females, commonly daughters, servants or young women engaged to be married in Buenos Aires, as well as wives. Women who were planning to marry usually went out to prospective husbands known to their families from previous residences near their own place of birth. In a standard case, South Wingfield, a village in Derbyshire, sent three sisters named Kendall to Buenos Aires to become brides of British merchants. In another representative case, Richard Carlisle from the village of Chipping in Lancashire married a woman from Barley, another Lancashire village about 15 miles east. Carlisle and his brother ran

[56] For a description of arriving migrants, see Parish to FO, 23 January 1826. FO6/11.

[57] See W.A. Carrothers. *Emigration from the British Isles, with Special Reference to the Development of the Overseas Dominions.* 2nd. Ed. London: Frank Cass, 1966, 72; Richards, *Britannia's Children*, 111.

[58] British mariners are described in George Bruce. "Reminiscences of Argentina and Uruguay." Mimeo. (Gordon Bridger kindly furnished me a copy of this memoir).

a merchant firm in Buenos Aires for about thirty years.[59] Kinship, personal connection and geographic origin—the defining features of "chain" or "network" migration—played a principal part in the population movement.[60]

In 1810–1820, some young British men settling in Buenos Aires as prospective merchants married Creole or Spanish women. Such practices persisted at later dates but grew rare as ethnic endogamy became strongly established. Endogamy sometimes illustrated developing business alliances, as exemplified by William Parish Robertson who married the Scots-Porteño daughter of Daniel McKinley, a merchant from the Scottish border country like Robertson himself. Thomas Duguid, another Scottish associate of Robertson's, married a second daughter of McKinley's.[61] Endogamy grew more established from around 1818 as the influx of British women increased in momentum. Women played a major part in in strengthening the ethnic community and narrowing the range of contact with members of the host society. The Robertson brothers observed this trend. "With the increase in English families many of the female heads gradually withdrew from native society; while new arrivals, finding an ample sufficiency of English [people], looked for no other or farther society."[62]

Hanon identified 1501 British and Irish married men in Buenos Aires. Among them, 685 arrived already married and another 815 married in

[59] See Hanon, *Diccionario*, 167, 478.

[60] See Carrothers. *Emigration*, 72; Richards, *Britannia's Children*, 111; also Charlotte Erickson. *Leaving England. Essays on the British Emigration in the Nineteenth Century*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

[61] Hanon, *Diccionario*, 542. Scottish ethnic networks figuratively called a "reinvention of the clan" are discussed in T.M. Devine. *Scotland's Empire, 1600–1815*. London: Allen Lane, 2003, 238. Studies of European emigration emphasise that "emigrants were heavily dependent on the experience of people who had gone before…emigration tended to run in families." Dudley Baines. *Emigration in a Mature Economy. Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861–1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 177. A notable contribution to "chain" and "network" migration studies based on Argentine data is José C. Moya. *Cousins and Strangers. Spanish Immigration to Buenos Aires, 1852–1930*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

[62] Robertson, *South America*, 3:115. Britons resident abroad formed ethnic clusters even when no women were present. As noted by Thomas Kinder in Madeira, the British "associate merely among themselves and preserve their nationality unaltered." Newitt, *Kinder,* 100. In Buenos Aires too, British men alone, before many women arrived, formed associations and attended religious meetings. Women were not exclusively responsible for the strength of ethnic loyalties.

Buenos Aires. Of the latter, only 182 men (12.12 per cent) married non-Anglophone women. Her data demonstrate that British women arriving single nearly always married Anglophones. Furthermore, 70 per cent of the children of British and Irish migrants married within their respective ethnic communities.[63] Since female migrants remained far less numerous than male, some men failed to find British partners. The newspaperman Love commented on the ease with which women garnered husbands among the "numerous English bachelor mechanics, who are at a sad loss for wives."[64] Men unable to marry within the community grew disconnected from it, as some likely found Catholic spouses and raised non-English-speaking children who became integrated with the host society. Gender imbalance then diminished as migration from Britain declined and endogamy produced a second generation of Anglo-Porteño children, as they were then known, of both sexes. Gender imbalances reappeared among the Irish in the 1840s, and from the 1870s when a stronger inflow of British male migrants resumed.

* * *

Canning upheld a well-developed view of the way expatriate mercantile communities like the one forming in Buenos Aires should function.[65] Its members would remain British subjects under consular authority. The consul would administer a Protestant chapel part-subsidised by the British government and part-functioning as an instrument of metropolitan supervision.[66] The government expected the merchants to advertise British goods as well as sell them. They would promote "the habits and tastes that can only be supplied and gratified by English production, [ensuring that]

[63] I scanned marriages noted in Hanon's *Diccionario de británicos* to those that occurred in Britain or Ireland and those in Buenos Aires. In a sample of 83 married Anglo-Porteño women, 362 among 503 of their children married within the British and Irish communities.

[64] An Englishman, *Five Years' Residence*, 45.

[65] Conditions in Lisbon from 1650 to 1807 are explored in Shaw, *Anglo-Portuguese Alliance*. For additional context, see Philip D. Curtin. *Cross-cultural Trade in World History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984, showing the functions of merchant communities worldwide as cultural brokers and listing their methods of social control to prevent members "going native."

[66] Subsidised churches became a standard feature of early nineteenth-century colonial rule. See Rowan Strong. *Anglicanism and the British Empire, c1700–1850*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

England must be for many years the storehouse from whence a large and ever increasing population will draw many of its necessaries."[67]

Canning's instructions to Parish urged him to protect "not only the enjoyment of civil rights [of British residents] but the unmolested exercise of religious worship." To minimise friction with local Catholics, community members should practise their observances out of public view, avoiding "offensive or ostentatious displays. [They should] show deference and submission to government, under whose protection they live, with strict obedience to the laws, and the most scrupulous respect for the customs, usages and institutions civil and religious of the inhabitants."[68] Members of the community adhered to these precepts, which suited their own preferences, to the point of attracting criticism. The Robertsons complained about the "assured superiority [of the British community]. We are in every way too exclusive."[69] José Antonio Wilde, the son of an early British settler, recalled that in his childhood during the 1820s street urchins would insult the standoffish British women they met, whom they recognised from a distinctive bonnet they wore.[70]

As intended by the British government, religion played a major part in the community. James Dodds, a nineteenth-century Scots-Porteño community leader, encapsulated the history of the Scots as "largely a religious one, for it is unquestionably [their Presbyterian] Christian faith that has united Scotsmen into a community in these Republics."[71] The importance he placed on his own national church applied to all the nationalities of United Kingdom origin including Irish Catholics. Demand for religious services developed very swiftly, with merchants participating in informal services from the time they appeared in Buenos Aires. Services conducted by clergy began in 1825 when Parliament passed the Consular Chaplaincy Act committing the British government to match funds raised locally to construct churches and hospitals. The British Protestant Chapel, as it was first known, headed by the consul was founded immediately on passage of

[67] Ponsonby to Canning 20 Oct. 1826, in quoted in Webster, *Independence*, 157.

[68] Foreign Office to Parish 23 April 1824. FO 6/4.

[69] Robertson, *Letters from South America,* 2: 277; 3: 61.

[70] José Antonio Wilde. *Buenos Aires setenta años atrás.* Buenos Aires: La Nación, 1904, 78–79.

[71] James Dodds. *Records of the Scottish Settlers and their Churches.* Buenos Aires: Grant and Sylvester, 1897, vii. I thank Alejandro Cowes for a copy of this rare book, said to have been unpopular among Scots-Argentines for exposing their humble origins and destroyed whenever possible.

the Act. In 1832, an impressive Protestant church in classical style modelled on the Temple of Ephesus opened in the city centre, which Parish dubbed a "monument of British influence in Buenos Ayres."[72] An impressive Scots Presbyterian church, also half-financed by the British government, followed a few years later. As the head of a Protestant church modelled on Anglicanism, Parish, in sectarian spirit, sought to disqualify the Scots Presbyterians from receiving a government subsidy. He was overruled after a vigorous campaign in London by influential Scots.[73]

At the leader of the Scottish community, Rev. William Brown stressed the importance of education, as well as religion, for the protection of ethnic identity. "A new generation is springing up [speaking] the language of the natives," he warned in 1828. Unless steps were taken to contain the spread of Spanish by setting up a school, Scottish settlers "must gradually assimilate to [the Porteños] in manners and ideas… Must they, whether old or young, be suffered to fall a prey to this evil?"[74] In 1838, Brown founded the Scotch National School, later renamed St. Andrew's Scotch School. When he retired to Scotland in 1850 after twenty-five years' service in Buenos Aires, he emphasised the way he had pursued Presbyterian ideals by "the advancement of education…of a superior and improved description, and of a strictly religious character [at a price] within reach of the humblest."[75]

As its numbers swelled in the mid-1820s, the community became dominated by merchants representing about fifty firms, a number that grew from the mere dozen existing in 1811. Craftsmen, shopkeepers, sailors and labourers, many with wives and families, set up small stores and workshops for leather work, tailoring and carpentry; other migrants staffed hostels near the port. Streets grew crowded with British stores selling ironware and glass goods, cloths and pottery, and providing services like

[72] Parish to FO 20 Apr. 1831. FO6:32. See John E. Pinnington. "Anglican Chaplaincies in Post-Napoleonic Europe: A Strange Variation on the Pax Britannica." *Church History*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 1970, 327–344. The early history of the Consular church under Rev. John Armstrong is described in W.H. Hodges. *History of the Anglican Church of St. John (Pro-Cathedral), Buenos Aires, 1831–1931*. Buenos Aires: n.d., A list of marriages officiated by Armstrong appears in http://www.argbrit.org/SJMarrs/marrs1824-28.htm. Armstrong's school is discussed in Arthur L. Holder. "British Institutions in Argentina 1811–1923." *Standard* 3 Nov. 1923.

[73] See Dodds, *Scottish Settlers*, 182.

[74] Quoted in Dodds, *Scottish Settlers*, 146.

[75] *British Packet* 22 Dec. 1849. The emphasis on education by Scots Presbyterians is described in G.L. Bolton. *Britain's Legacy Overseas*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973, 97; also Devine, *Scotland's Empire*, 347.

dress making.[76] Women found employment as seamstresses or as household servants; they worked in stores and hostels and as tutors. The community bonded in numerous ways. The Commercial Rooms, the first British association in Buenos Aires founded soon after the 1810 revolution, became well known, partly because Mary Anne Clarke, the escaped convict, worked there for a time as a caretaker. In 1821, subscribers purchased land for a Protestant cemetery, which obtained recognition by the Porteño government under the 1825 treaty. Periodic banquets gathered leading members of the community together to celebrate events like the birthday of the reigning British monarch. Medical dispensaries funded by merchants and artisans treated the sick. In 1827, a cooperative philanthropic association formed in Buenos Aires to serve the entire English-speaking population, although the project failed through lack of funds.[77] The settlers founded a theatre, a library and a race track; the first cricket club in Buenos Aires dated from 1831.[78]

A British hospital was founded in Buenos Aires in 1844 following a lengthy campaign for a government subsidy under the Consular Chaplaincy Act. Long a major symbol of the British presence in Argentina, the institution began as a hospice for sailors afflicted by cirrhosis of the liver. During its first four years, 70 per cent of mortalities resulted from alcoholism, prompting its director to condemn the "depravity and drunkenness in the very depth of which a large portion of the labouring class of the British population is sunk."[79] In Buenos Aires, poor housing and an unvarying diet of coarse beef and yerba mate offset the area's usually comfortable climate and undemanding working conditions.[80] Whatever their precise situation, the lower order settlers struggled to survive. A visitor to the British cemetery in 1828 encountered memorials to young people who had died shortly after their arrival, commonly from drink: "Death even

[76] Woodbine Parish noted the British ironmongers, and the sellers of cutlery, earthenware and glass. Parish, *Buenos Ayres*, 340. For detailed lists, see Emilio Manuel Fernández Gómez. *Argentina: Gesta Británica: revaloración de dos siglos de convivencia*. Vol. 2. Buenos Aires: L.O.L.A, 1995, 157; Michael G. Mulhall. *The English in South America*, Buenos Aires: Standard Office, 1878, a work part based on oral history. The variety of British goods sold in Buenos Aires is exemplified by the store kept by James Hodgson. See GHR 3/17 (1826).

[77] Described in *British Packet* 11 Aug. 1827. Ethnic associations are detailed at length by Hanon, *Diccionario*, 21–66.

[78] *British Packet* 5 Nov. 1831.

[79] *British Packet* 8 July 1848.

[80] On labour, wages and diet see Johnson, *Workshop of Revolution*, 60–66, 182–197, (pre-1810 data).

here had already gathered to itself a portion of our countrymen of all ages and conditions; and melancholy to remark, the young far outnumbered those of riper years."[81] Under the terms of the metropolitan subsidy, the hospital could treat only men linked to British trade, essentially stranded sailors and bankrupt merchants. Under its rules, all women were classified as settlers and therefore excluded from its benefits. The restrictions were soon relaxed, although women remained a small minority of patients until the twentieth century.[82]

* * *

As the English-speaking community formed, soldiers of fortune like General William Miller passed through Buenos Aires to join the patriot armies fighting in Chile and Peru.[83] Among military men who settled in Buenos Aires, Irish-born Admiral William Brown (1777–1857) enjoyed highest standing. In 1814–1815, he commanded the revolutionary fleet in naval battles between the Porteños and the Portuguese. During the war of 1825–1828 between the United Provinces and the Empire of Brazil, Brown headed another diminutive Porteño naval squadron. Parish reported his "courage and activity…induced many English, Americans and other foreigners to join him as volunteers."[84]

Soon after 1810, British explorers and prospectors began scouring the country from the pampas to the Andes.[85] They included the Robertsons; as early as 1811 John Robertson grew familiar with the river route north

[81] *British Packet* 1 March 1828: See Jeremy Howat, "Register of Burials in the First Protestant Cemetery, 1821–1833." http://www.argbrit.org./STJBurials/Socorro1821-1825.htm. In 1827 alcoholics were excluded as beneficiaries of the British Philanthropic Society. A temperance society founded in the late 1820s collapsed as leading merchants refused to halt liquor imports. See Hanon, *Diccionario*, 39, 87.

[82] "It is only within the last five years that females have been admitted [to the hospital] in any number." (Lecture on the history of the British Hospital by Rev. J.W. Fleming at the English Literary Society. *Standard* 2 Sept. 1897).

[83] Noted British military figures are listed in Hanon, *Diccionario;* Fernández Gómez, *Gesta Británica*, 88; Núcleo de Estudios Históricos. *Antología de británicos vistos por ojos extranjeros.* Buenos Aires, 1941, contains a list of prominent British sailors who fought for the United Provinces during the 1820s.

[84] Parish to FO, 23 December 1825. FO 6/11.

[85] Discovery and exploration are discussed in wider contexts in Thomas Richard. *The Imperial Archive. Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire.* London: Verso, 1993; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes.*

from Buenos Aires up the Paraná to Paraguay. Familiarity with other long-established colonial routes due west to Chile and north-west to Upper Peru soon followed. Samuel Haigh became one of the early adventurers to cross the Andes into Chile through Mendoza. Twenty-two years old at the time of his voyage to South America in 1817, he typified hundreds of aspirant young men lured to the area by visions of riches. Working as a clerk in the City of London, he received an unexpected summons from a relative. "I found my wealthy kinsman seated at his desk upon a high counting house stool.…Great news had just been received from South America, no less than the opening up of Chile to foreign trade…that this was the time to push for a fortune; and as he and two partners contemplated sending out a cargo to get the cream of the market; if I would undertake its management, I should have an opportunity of filling my coffers with ingots of gold and silver."[86] Like nearly all the fortune hunters of this period, Haigh had no luck with mining in Chile, although he met San Martín and composed one of the numerous narratives of his campaigns.

Travellers like Haigh leaving Buenos Aires for Chile first passed through small villages and hamlets like San Antonio de Areco where British officers were held prisoner in 1806. Out on the pampas, they crossed shallow ponds and marshes, threading their way through thickets of giant thistles introduced from Spain in the eighteenth century to contain attacks by Native Americans. The road to Chile soon entered indigenous territory, although in the 1820s, unlike later times, Indians posed few dangers. After 300 miles across the plains, travellers reached the nondescript town of San Luis before entering Mendoza at the foot of the Andes. The route then ascended up to 12,000 feet before plunging into Chile along narrow paths and winding ravines. Travellers halted overnight in *postas*, supposed hostelries but usually dingy, flea-ridden huts, "not fit for an Englishman's dog" in one prospector's opinion. The keepers of the *postas* provided replacement horses and mules, cooked beef, water and nutritious yerba mate (Fig. 2.1).

Canning's policy of diplomatic recognition touched off a great speculative boom in Britain affecting nearly everywhere in Spanish America and triggering several hundred mining companies into life.[87] The rumoured mineral wealth of the continent, a resurrection of the El Dorado myth, became the dominant theme in the writings of British travellers. John

[86] Samuel Haigh. *Sketches of Buenos Ayres, Chile, and Peru.* London: Effingham Wilson, 1831, Preface.

[87] Notable discussions include Dawson, *Latin American Debt Crisis*; also Rees Jones, *Rivadavia y su negocio minero.*

Fig. 2.1 Crossing the Andes. (Source is Robert Crawford. *Across the Pampas and the Andes*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1884)

Miers, for example, travelled to the region attracted by the "immense fortune" he expected to make from copper mining in Chile. He sent equipment weighing 100 tons by ship round Cape Horn to Valparaíso, as he and his pregnant wife travelled to Chile by land from Buenos Aires. Leaving Mendoza, they encountered near-disaster as the woman gave birth in the high Andes. The couple spent days out in the wild, but fortunately Dr. John Gillies, a Scottish physician, had accompanied them. Resident in Mendoza as the honorary British vice consul, Gillies helped carry the woman and child out of the wilderness.[88] Miers exemplified the outlook of many British travellers of the period. He lauded the institutions of the United Provinces and "the rising spirit of illumination and freedom" sponsored by enlightened liberals led by Rivadavia but denigrated the local people, mocking their customs and religion. Using a common trope of the period, he equated the "melancholy, barbarous, Saracenic air" of a gaucho he heard singing and playing his guitar with the Bedouin tribesmen of North Africa. His attempt to establish a copper mine failed. His water-driven equipment proved ill-matched to conditions in the arid mountainous terrain and ended up being used in a flour mill.[89]

The year 1825 marked a highpoint of contact between the British and the Rio de la Plata. That year the Rio de la Plata Mining Association, one of a multitude of new British companies, commissioned Francis Bond Head of the Royal Engineers to explore the mineral resources of the Andes. The company claimed sole rights to several sites in the Andean province of La Rioja, although on a flimsy legal basis. The licences originated with Rivadavia who issued them in London on his own authority alone following the expiry of his term of office in Buenos Aires. In 1824–1825, the former chief minister handed out concessions to several companies to explore the same locations. When he arrived in Buenos Aires, Head found his rights disputed by a rival firm controlled by the Robertson brothers.[90]

[88] Miers, *Travels in Chile*, I: 164–186.

[89] Hanon, *Diccionario*, 591–592 (on Miers). For Maria Graham's liking for Miers, see Mavor, *Captain's Wife*, 100.

[90] John Parish Robertson addressed *The Times* from his current residence in England to press his own claims. See Rees Jones, *Rivadavia*, 211, 264–272 on the legal labyrinth and the duplication of concessions. For a specimen copy of a mining concession to the firm Hullett and Co., see Archivo General de la Nación. División Gobierno Nacional. Gran Bretaña: Hullett y Cia. (22 June 1825).

Head's journeys between Buenos Aires and Chile unravelling this legal tangle inspired the best book of the era on the Rio de la Plata by a British author. The popularity of *Rough Notes Taken during Some Rapid Journeys across the Pampas and among the Andes* derived partly from Head's feats as a horseman crossing the pampas and the mountains that won him the sobriquet "Galloping Head." Riding up to 200 miles a day, he completed the near 700-mile stretch between Buenos Aires and Mendoza in scarcely four days. In eighteen months he covered some 6000 miles by horseback, composing his *Rough Notes* by the light of the evening campfire. Head grew well known for his romantic depictions of the gauchos and of the wide open spaces of the pampas. "The whole country is in such beautiful order, that if cities and millions of inhabitants could suddenly be planted at proper intervals and situations, the people would have nothing to do but drive their cattle out to graze and, without any previous preparations, plough whatever quantity of ground their hearts might require." He portrayed the pampas as an idyll in which people lived in good health and complete liberty. There, out in the country, an old woman was "the only sick person I saw in South America. The temperate lives the people lead give them an uninterrupted enjoyment of good health, and the list of disorders with which the old world is afflicted is altogether unknown."[91] "Who has not read [Head's] book?" asked the Robertsons when composing their own volumes.[92] Head's subject matter, language and imagery found their way into the writings of other British authors including Charles Darwin and those of distinguished Argentine writers led by Domingo F. Sarmiento, the liberal essayist, champion of education and European immigration, and president of the republic.

Joseph Andrews, a naval captain formerly employed by the East India Company and the author of *Journey from Buenos Ayres*, dedicated his book to Canning, whose "political talent and foresight opened to Great Britain the full commercial advantages of the newly enfranchised states of South America." Andrews too won a following in the Plata, though with far less justification than Head.[93] His reputation rested on his paeans to the north-western province of Tucumán that attracted the attention of

[91] Head, *Rough Notes*, 4, 58.

[92] Robertson, *Paraguay*, I:194.

[93] On the influence of British writers in Argentina, see Adolfo Prieto. *Los viajeros ingleses y la emergencia de la literatura argentina*. 2nd ed. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003, 28, 110. Prieto notes frequent usages of Alexander von Humboldt's technique of "cool descriptive passages interspersed with romanticist outbursts or interjections."

Juan Bautista Alberdi, another leading liberal and Sarmiento's contemporary, who was born there. According to Andrews, Tucumán appeared "to an Englishman [like] the fiction of the Arabian nights, or some land of fairy imagination…Nothing that the mind could dwell upon could surpass the scene in beauty and luxuriance."[94] Attached to the Chilian (*sic*) and Peruvian Mining Association, another new enterprise, he too arrived in Buenos Aires to find that local British merchants led by William Robertson—the man with a finger in every pie at the time—held a monopoly on permits to explore the Andean provinces. On hearing that the last Spanish army in Upper Peru had surrendered, Andrews abandoned interest in the west and set off for Potosí.[95] He took the old colonial route to the mines almost 1500 miles in length. Travelling first by galley up the Rio Paraná to Santa Fe, he went inland by stagecoach to Córdoba. His route then ran north through a string of colonial towns—Santiago del Estero, Tucumán, Salta and Jujuy—before ascending the altiplano into Upper Peru, the last stage of the journey to Potosí. From Córdoba, mules provided his transport.

Rhapsodising about Tucumán, Andrews too invariably disparaged any common people he met. His ill-considered, intemperate remarks about the Catholic Church prompted a former Jesuit he encountered to rail against the "English heretics [who under] the pretence of mining would play the same game in America which they had played in India, and subjugate the whole country." Andrews's overweening outlook likely derived largely from his life in India. Tucumán resembled India in that its labour force appeared easily controlled and ripe for debt peonage. He encountered "an idle but extremely tractable peasantry [in Tucumán]. A couple of reales a day would procure any number of those that might be needed… At every mine a shop must be established, where necessaries are sold, and by this means alone, these people would pay back half the wages again to the proprietor."[96] During his stay in Tucumán, Andrews issued a tactless proposal about how future British control could function without the need to take over the country. In September 1825, he used the birthday

[94] Andrews, *Journey*, 226. Prieto, *Viajeros Ingleses*, 110, noting that Alberdi's discussions of Tucumán imitated the writings of British travellers.

[95] Review of Andrews in *Edinburgh Review*, 46:92 (October 1827): 498, referring to the author as "Captain Andrews, late commander of the *Windham* and a former employee of the East India Company."

[96] Andrews, *Journey*, I:206.

of George IV to offer a banquet to the governor and local gentry and to suggest closer ties between the United Kingdom and the United Provinces. His speech declared "the English are going to take possession of your country, not, indeed, by force of arms against the government [but] by placing it under the rule of a spirit of diligence, active labour, and sound moral feelings. They will take possession of your country when they settle amongst you by mingling British blood with that of the fair and lovely daughters of Tucuman." Pronouncements implying the British planned to take over everything, even the women, left Andrews with few friends in Tucumán. Women shunned him, clerics denounced him and lawmakers passed a resolution deploring his sentiments and inviting him to leave the province.[97] In his book, Andrews wrote up a mock dialogue between a Creole woman and her daughter, a young woman finding it difficult to win a husband because of the decimation of the male population during the independence wars. According to the daughter, "If the five hundred English they talk about should come, we shall perhaps some of us get husbands, and an English husband would be better than none…and they would have the pleasure a converting a young heretic."[98]

* * *

In the mid-twenties, the Robertson brothers used their enormous bounty from the Baring loan to set up an agrarian colony outside Buenos Aires. They intended to take advantage of the government's professed interest in European immigration to create another profitable business. In Buenos Aires, William Robertson joined a newly formed Immigration Commission to recommend the distribution of land grants to European settlers. Touring farms and villages in Lowland Scotland, his brother signed up more than 200 tenants and artisans with their servants.[99] Once assembled, he certified them sober and devout, "strong, young, healthy people, [their] propriety and decorum…speak clearly to the respectability and decency of their character and habits."[100] A diary kept by colonist William Grierson recorded that Robertson informed the future settlers they were heading for a newly

[97] Andrews, *Journey*, I:103, 177–178, 233.

[98] Andrews, *Journey*, I:196.

[99] Dodds, *Scottish Settlers*, 7–23, names members of the colony with their places of origin. They resembled generic designations of Scottish emigrants of the period as "small tenant farmers, cottars, indentured servants, weavers, craftsmen of all types." Devine, *Scotland's Empire*, 98.

[100] *British Packet* 16 August 1828.

free country in the Americas offering boundless opportunity. "We are the children of liberty," wrote Grierson entranced by the idea. Rhetorically addressing the people of Buenos Aires, he declared that "We came to you because you are free. We came to acclaim your emancipation."[101]

The venture soon met obstacles. As John Robertson sent the colonists on their way from Scotland in the *Symmetry*, a ship employed in the South American trade, William Robertson in Buenos Aires failed to obtain either a land grant or the promised subsidies. He was forced to lease land at Monte Grande, twenty miles south of the city.[102] With the settlers finally established and the colony underway, the *British Packet* newspaper published a few sanitised reports on their progress. During the first year, the Scots lived in huts or *ranchos*, but then came modest houses and family farms. "Each farmer became independent of the other, and the extent given to each was equal, while each built his house on his respective farm… A temporary but neat Scotch Kirk has been erected, and here on Sundays may be seen the colonists from all parts, gathering to celebrate public worship." Real life at Monte Grande differed from the official version. The settlers attempted to reproduce a Scottish village economy, growing crops and raising livestock but could make no profit.[103] They next tried milk and butter. Francis Head scoffed at the idea that Scottish milkmaids could ever handle giant feral Creole cattle, "creatures who looked so fierce that no young woman that ever sat upon a three-legged stool could dare to approach, much less than to milk them." The colonists hired gauchos to tie down the cows and the shops of Buenos Aires were soon full of butter. "But now for the sad moral of the story," Head continued. "After the difficulties had all been conquered it was discovered that…somehow or other, the gauchos and natives of Buenos Ayres liked oil better."[104] Suborned by higher wages available outside the community, colonists began to desert. Transporting, equipping and housing more than two hundred people stretched the Robertsons, rich as they were, to the limit.

[101] For the Grierson diary, see Iain A.D. Stewart. *From Caledonia to the Pampas. Two Accounts of the Early Scots Emigrants to the Argentine*. East Lothian, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2000.

[102] He acquired three *chacras* or small farms of 16,000 acres in total from fellow Scot John Gibson. *British Packet* 16 Aug. 1828. Monte Grande lies between Lomas de Zamora and Ezeiza, two outlying cities of contemporary Greater Buenos Aires. On the land purchase, see Iain A.D. Stewart. "Living with Dictator Rosas: Argentina through Scottish Eyes." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1997, 25–27.

[103] For reports on the colony, see *British Packet* August–October 1828.

[104] Head, *Rough Notes*, 163.

In its four-year existence, the colony repaid none of their outlays.[105] In the end, no one retained agreeable memories of the Monte Grande colony. A century later, Cecilia Grierson, a granddaughter of William Grierson, had nothing good to say about the scheme that brought her family to Buenos Aires. She accused the Robertsons of treating the settlers like serfs.[106]

In 1825, a second group of aspirant British colonists set out for Buenos Aires. The organiser of this project, John Barber Beaumont, a London entrepreneur, knew Rivadavia from his diplomatic service in Europe. Beaumont too recruited about two hundred prospective settlers, mostly English, whom he planned to settle due north of Buenos Aires on the Rio Uruguay at Gualeyguaychú in the province of Entre Rios.[107] Publicising the plan as a philanthropic venture, he declared his ambition to make "hundreds of families happy and independent…implanting on the fertile coasts of the River Plate, the people, customs and energies of industrious Englishmen."[108] The contracts Beaumont offered his prospective settlers failed to reflect his vaunted generosity and altruism. He promised them a mere 3 shillings and sixpence (£0.175) a week minus a one-third deduction for payment of rent.[109] His company, the Rio de la Plata Agricultural Association, commissioned three sailings from different British ports. Following the first sailing, some eighty settlers reached Entre Rios but only to find themselves stranded in a wilderness with neither food nor shelter. The settlement lurched towards disaster. Beaumont contracted incompetent local managers; promised government subsidies again failed to materialise; again too, Rivadavia had issued legally worthless land grants in Entre Rios on his own authority; lastly, the English townspeople who signed up to settle in Entre Rios, by their own account forty-six men, sixteen women and twenty-one children, proved quite unprepared for lives as wilderness pioneers.[110]

* * *

[105] The government of Buenos Aires eventually cancelled all its contracts with European colonisers on the grounds of expense. See Burgin, *Argentine Federalism*, 32–33. In 1827, John Robertson enquired about a British subsidy under the Consular Chaplaincy Act, but was refused. See Robertson to Parish 6 June 1827. FO 118/18.

[106] Cecilia Grierson. *Colonia de Monte Grande, Provincia de Buenos Aires. Primera y única colonia formada por escoceses en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Peuser, 1925, 57–61.

[107] *British Packet* 10 Feb. 1827.

[108] Hanon, *Diccionario*, 133–134.

[109] *British Packet* 10 Feb. 1827, quoting *London Spectator*.

[110] See petition to Woodbine Parish pleading for assistance 3 Aug. 1826. FO 6/17.

The two colonies of 1825 were formed at the very time war erupted between the United Provinces and the Empire of Brazil. The combatants were fighting to control Montevideo and the surrounding Banda Oriental, a territory annexed by Portugal during the wars of emancipation and incorporated into Brazil when it proclaimed independence in 1822. Already almost a century and a half old, this time the hostilities began when the government of Buenos Aires supported an invasion of the Banda Oriental by the "Treinta y Tres," a band of exiled *orientales*. Strong British commercial interests in Brazil and Buenos Aires alike deterred Canning from taking sides in the conflict. When both sides requested Canning's mediation he sent Lord John Ponsonby, an Irish-born diplomat, to South America. During lengthy stays in Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires, Ponsonby made strenuous efforts to resolve the dispute, although more than two years passed before it concluded.[111] As occurred during many of the Spanish American civil wars of this period, hundreds of British, Irish and American mercenaries fought on both sides.[112]

Weak by land, the Brazilians deployed their stronger navy to blockade Buenos Aires and stifle its foreign trade. Climbing to £1.2 million in 1824, British exports to Buenos Aires plunged in value to only £155,000 in 1827, setting off a destructive chain reaction. Plummeting government revenues prompted default on the Baring loan.[113] As military spending leapt, the government paid for the war in paper money vulnerable to rapid depreciation. British merchants then faced disaster when the government authorised the use of paper money to settle debts incurred in hard currency.[114] During his stay in Buenos Aires, Ponsonby reported a "most calamitous" situation. "Trade is absolutely destroyed; and, as the state of

[111] For full documentation, see Papers of John, Viscount Ponsonby GRE/E/607/12. Archives and Special Collections, Durham University. Selections are published in Spanish in Luis Alberto Herrera. *La misión Ponsomby* (*sic*). Volume 2. Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1971.

[112] See Brian Vale. *A War betwixt Englishmen: Brazil against Argentina on the River Plate, 1825–1830*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2000.

[113] Trade figures from Llorca-Jaña, *Textile Trade*, 310–311. Some of Llorca-Jaña's figures do not differ much from estimates quoted in Humphreys, *Consular Reports*, 344–349; see also, Williams, *British Commerce*, 27; Street, *Independencia*, 259. Older sources show British exports at £900,000 in 1824 and at £155,000 in 1826–1827 (the same figure as Llorca-Jaña for 1827). In either case, British trade fell by more than 80 per cent. On the suspension of payments on the Baring loan, see Peter E. Austin. *Baring Brothers and the Birth of Modern Finance*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2007, 25.

[114] A table of exchange rates appears in Juan Álvarez. Temas de h*istoria económica argentina*. Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 1929, 99. Burgin, *Argentine Federalism*, 60–69 estimated that in 1826–1830 the peso depreciated to 12.3 per cent of par.

the exchange will show you, [merchants'] capital in this country is diminished a great deal more than half."[115] Two years into the war in late 1827, a Committee of British Merchants under Thomas Duguid reassessed the value of British-owned real estate in Buenos Aires at ₤500,000, one-third of estimates three years previously.[116]

As it devastated the merchants, the blockade and financial crash inflicted terminal damage on the fledgling agrarian colonies. News of the blockade reached Britain in March 1826 as a second vessel chartered by Beaumont prepared to sail. With the proprietor's son aboard, the settlers departed expecting the blockade to have ended when they arrived on the Plata. Reaching Montevideo to discover the blockade remained in force, three quarters of the voyagers abandoned the enterprise. As he arrived in Buenos Aires, young Beaumont faced an exacting task. While the new colonists milled around the city haplessly, the earlier arrivals in Entre Rios issued desperate appeals for help. Bravely deciding to bring the earlier settlers back to Buenos Aires, the young man risked being press ganged into the army. Disregarding the danger, he crossed the Rio Paraná to return a few weeks later with the demoralised settlers.[117]

Beaumont's report of his experiences illustrated the way relations between the British and the Porteños, recently so amicable, shattered into hostility and recrimination. Narrating his efforts to hunt down his company's idle commissioners and his hazardous journey to Entre Rios, he lampooned all Porteño men as inept procrastinators "always thrusting in the provoking word Mañana, when one has particular occasion for dispatch." Like nearly every young Englishmen, he much preferred the "Creolean ladies [who] are charming creatures…affable, free and lively." His remarks about gauchos resembled Francis Head's. "Their frank independent carriage renders them more acceptable to the English traveller than the more polished inhabitants of the great towns."[118]

Beaumont depicted the decline and fall of the Rivadavia government as a burlesque. He referred to the administration and its leader in mock acid tone as "a dry and unpleasing subject…A cruel disappointment must be suffered by those who confide in them." Following his second stint in

[115] Ponsonby to Canning 2 Oct. 1826. GRE/E/339.

[116] Duguid to Parish 31 Dec. 1827. FO 118/18.

[117] For details, see Ponsonby to Canning 4 June and 30 Aug. 1827. It includes "The Representation Addressed to Mr. Parish by Sundry Persons of the Rio de la Plata Agricultural Association." GRE/E/607/339.

[118] Beaumont, *Travels*, 59.

Europe in 1824–1825, Rivadavia returned to office in early 1826 as first president of the United Provinces, a more elevated status than during his term as provincial first minister. He ruled the country under the Unitarist constitution of 1826. Nominally republican articles of government, they revived many features of late Spanish Bourbon rule by conferring authoritarian power on the president. When he became president, Rivadavia's Bourbon-like propensities superseded his former liberal orientations. Referring to his role when serving as president, Vicente Fidel López, a distinguished late nineteenth-century Argentine historian, called him a creature of the Spanish Enlightenment. He had never "transcended the idea that [Bourbon King] Carlos III and his counsellors had made Spain the most brilliant and attractive country in Europe."[119]

After a lengthy wait, Beaumont obtained an appointment with the president, "who I had so often shook by the hand in London, and joked with at my father's table." Having kept him waiting once more on the day of the appointment, Rivadavia entered the room striking an absurd pose imitating well-known portraits of Napoleon. "His Excellency slowly advanced towards me, with his hand clenched behind him; whether this too was done in imitation of the great well-known, or to gain something of a counterpoint to the weight and bulk which he bore before him, or to guard his hand from the unhallowed touch of familiarity, it might be equally difficult to determine…The submission [of my complaints] was frequently interrupted, or only replied to by His Excellency asking, with provoking coolness, 'How are the ladies? I hope your mother is well.'"[120]

Ponsonby called Rivadavia "a man of whom I can say nothing good beyond that might be due to a mayor of a small town."[121] Francis Head accused him of shady dealings. In mordant satire, he recalled how in 1824 Rivadavia had described the western mines to the directors of the Rio de la Plata Mining Association in London. He provided "a most brilliant account of the riches of the provinces of La Plata [showing] that the sweepings of the houses and even the manure of the mules produced gold, and that precious metal sprung [*sic*] up in the fields like weeds. We can affirm, without hyperbole, [that the mines] contain the greatest riches in the universe."

[119] Quoted in Piccirrilli, *Rivadavia*, 2:21.
[120] Beaumont, *Travels*, 59, 99, 157.
[121] Ponsonby to Canning 20 July 1827. GRE/E/607.

Having written so lyrically about the pampas, Head despised Buenos Aires. He found its lodgings expensive and vermin-ridden. Shopkeepers sold meat in a mangled state chopped up by an axe. Chickens fed on raw meat; "occasionally I have seen them hopping out of the carcass of a dead horse"; eggs tasted of beef, and "the pigs are also carnivorous." He advised British migrants to steer clear of Buenos Aires, citing the poor state of the settlers already there. "[Their] constitutions are evidently impaired by drinking…while their morals and character are much degraded. Away from the religious and moral example of their own country…they rapidly sink into habits of carelessness and dissipation. [They] are sickly in their appearance, dirty in their dress, and disreputable in their behaviour."[122] In Buenos Aires, some settlers fell victim to the disorder created by the war with Brazil. Beaumont recounted the tale of one of his father's colonists who rented a patch of land only to be set on by a band of desperadoes, who robbed him and left him for dead.[123]

Rivadavia resigned after scarcely one year in office. Ponsonby had repeatedly urged him to make peace without success. He listed the difficulties the president faced from the moment he assumed power. They included a total lack of preparation for war in Buenos Aires. Opponents of the new centralist constitution in the provinces refused to support the war. Ponsonby depicted the effects of the Brazilian blockade in near-apocalyptic terms. "The civilization and instruction and wealth of this Republic depend on a free communication with Europe…The blockade therefore will throw back all this people towards a state of barbarism. It will affect the whole immense tract of country to the Andes. It will also force the country into a sort of [permanent] warfare and pillage."[124] The country lacked the resources to prosecute a war with a powerful neighbour. In October 1826, for example, the army remained stationary for lack of funds, unable either to besiege Montevideo or execute a plan to attack southern Brazil at Rio Grande do Sul.[125] In mid-1827, Ponsonby

[122] Capt. F.B. Head. *Report Relating to the Failure of the Rio Plata Mining Association Formed under an Authority Signed by His Excellency Don Bernardino Rivadavia*. London: John Murray, 1827, 143; Head, *Rough Notes*, 162–164.

[123] See Hanon, *Diccionario*, 748–9.

[124] Ponsonby to Canning 20 July 1827. GRE/E/607.

[125] Descriptions of Rivadavia's difficulties appear in Ponsonby to Canning, 20 Oct. 1826 GRE/E/607/339; also Ponsonby to Canning 15 July 1827. GRE/E/607/339. Day to day events during the fall of Rivadavia are described in Ponsonby to Canning 27 July 1827. FO 6/13.

recounted Rivadavia's last days in office, which followed an ill-received peace proposal negotiated in Rio de Janeiro.[126]

On the fall of Rivadavia, the provincial governors once more took charge as occurred eight years previously on the political demise of Pueyrredón. The return of self-rule in Buenos Aires led to the election of Manuel Dorrego, one of the ex-president's leading opponents, as governor. As Parish and Ponsonby continued their efforts to make peace, the war with Brazil dragged on. Parish plied Dorrego with promises that when the fighting ended, the British would have "a hundred ships [ready] to come to Buenos Ayres and once more open the stream of prosperity to the country." Ponsonby threatened intervention. "Buenos Ayres is a weak country compared with Great Britain," he warned. "England can hurt the Republic more than another [foreign] state if its just resentment be provoked."[127] Action by Britain would not be averted by appeals for help to the United States. Ponsonby dismissed the concept of "America for the Americans" enunciated in the Monroe Doctrine. He claimed there were "ties between Europe and America which no governments can unloose, and while they exist, Europe will have the right…to interfere with the policy of America."[128] He applied similar pressure on Dom Pedro, the Emperor of Brazil, this time threatening him with slave uprisings, assassination plots and foreign invasion if he refused to make peace.[129] With the assistance of such "mediation" the war ended. Ponsonby had bluffed, realising the British government would never follow through on his threats. Following Canning's death in mid-1827, the new foreign secretary, Lord Aberdeen, ordered the British navy to halt any attempt by Brazil to renew the blockade, but offered no commitment to similar action in future.[130]

In late 1828 the army of the United Provinces trooped back from the Banda Oriental under its commander, General Juan Lavalle, an appointee

[126] Ponsonby to Canning 17 July 1827. GRE/E/607.

[127] Ponsonby to Parish, 27 Aug. 1828, GRE/E/32.

[128] See Parish to Gordon 10 Sept. 1828. FO 118/18; Ponsonby to Dorrego 8 Aug. 1828. Quoted in Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 194. The idea is repeated several times. In another version, Ponsonby dismissed "the crude theorists [who held] that America ought to have a political existence separate from the political existence of Europe." Ponsonby to Aberdeen 31 July 1828. GRE/E/32.

[129] Ponsonby to Gordon (British minister in Rio) 4 Jan. 1827, in Herrera, *Misión Ponsomby*, (*sic*), 2: 101–108.

[130] Aberdeen to Ponsonby 29 Oct. 1828. GRE/E/32; also FO 13/49 and FO 13/50.

and supporter of Rivadavia. Proclaiming their intent to overthrow the provincial government, Lavalle and his men captured and then executed Dorrego. The general seized power in the name of the Unitarios, a party label implying support for the 1826 constitution. As civil war erupted, in weeks Lavalle too lost control when the self-styled Federales of Buenos Aires, the late Dorrego's sympathisers, rebelled under General Juan Manuel de Rosas. During the efforts to repel the threat, Lavalle ordered the military enlistment of British townsmen. Threatening to banish anyone refusing to obey the order, he fell from power before he could enforce the order.[131] Parish blamed Rivadavia for this flagrant violation of the 1825 treaty. After resigning the presidency, he turned stridently anti-British, arguing the British navy should have bailed him out by dispersing the Brazilian blockade.[132]

By 1829, the British faced the enmity of both Unitarios and Federales. Among the latter, Anglophobia acquired an ethnic tinge. The *British Packet* reported that Rosas's troops had orders "that all foreigners should be shot, [along with] every man who from the colour of his hair …or by whose physiognomy it might be inferred that he was a Unitarian."[133] In April 1829, the Scottish colony at Monte Grande disintegrated in the aftermath of the battle of Puente de Márquez as troops from Rosas's army pillaged the settlement, murdering several colonists.[134] A child at the time in the Scots community, Jane Robson never forgot the "bands of ruffians" roaming the district who induced her parents to employ a former Irish soldier in Beresford's army for protection.[135] After the attack, most Scottish

[131] In 1820 some thirty British artisans in Buenos Aires volunteered to serve as light infantry, but in 1829 resistance to military service became general following its prohibition in the 1825 treaty.

[132] Parish to FO 20 Feb. 1829. FO 6/26. In July 1827, Ponsonby reported, "Rivadavia's newspapers are defaming His Majesty's legation…He ought to be the guardian of the laws but is encouraging the mob to disorder and violence. British subjects and their property could be their targets." Ponsonby to Canning 15 July 1827. Quoted in Herrera, *Misión Ponsomby* (*sic*). 2:149. (My re-translation).

[133] *British Packet* 11 April 1829.

[134] "A ruffian drew a pistol and shot John Robinson [*sic*: his correct name was John Robson] through the head, another stabbed him." See *British Packet* 28 March, 11 April 1829; also Hanon, *Diccionario*, 712.

[135] Jane Robson, "Faith Tried Hard," in Stewart, *From Caledonia to the Pampas*, 80–83. The Irishman protecting the family recounted "many curious tales of those adventurous times" during the British invasions.

families moved into Buenos Aires, where pastor William Brown formed the Presbyterian congregation of St. Andrew's.

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At the conclusion of the civil war of 1828–1829, the standing of the British in Buenos Aires bore no resemblance to that of a few years earlier. Trade had slumped and investment in loans, mines and colonisation halted. In 1822, 167 British ships anchored outside Buenos Aires, and in 1831 only 44.[136] The suspension of payments on the Baring loan left British bondholders incensed at the government of Buenos Aires. *The Edinburgh Review* expressed the general disillusionment in Britain at the fate of Canning's projects. "Everything involving the mention of South America was shunned as fatal, or abandoned with a horror fully as undiscriminating as the previous calenture."[137] Another commentator lamented the "miserable and contemptible trade [with Buenos Aires compared with] the magnificent predictions of former years and particularly the boast of Mr. Canning that he had been conjuring into the sphere of our commerce and manufactures the large Continent of South America."[138]

Neither the British merchants nor the British government had exercised any control over events. Britain's commercial stake in both the United Provinces and Brazil left the British government unable to take sides. In Buenos Aires, the British merchants failed to arrest the ruinous deluge of paper money. Ponsonby took two years to achieve his goal of bringing peace, and the the war ended more because out of exhaustion on both sides than as a result of his intervention. Francis Head concluded he had gone to the Rio de la Plata on a fool's errand "to work mines of gold and silver in a country which produced nothing but horses, beef and thistles."[139] He departed disgusted with Rivadavia and his clique whom he accused of reneging on solemn contracts. "Had we known the nature of the different countries, it would have been deemed imprudent to have forwarded to them the expensive machinery, to have given liberal salaries to every individual connected with the speculation, to have invited the natives to share the profits, to have entrusted the capital to solitary

[136] Shipping figures are listed in *British Packet* 3 Aug. 1833.
[137] *Edinburgh Review* 46:92, (Oct. 1827), 498.
[138] *British Packet* 3 Oct. 1829 quoting *Bell's Weekly Messenger*.
[139] Head, *Report*, 9.

individuals."[140] Ponsonby expressed horror at the murder of Dorrego, whom he had come to know well and respect.[141] Woodbine Parish abandoned plans to establish a network of vice consuls outside Buenos Aires. "I remain [here] unwillingly," he told Ponsonby in 1829, "an idle pensioner disappointed in every expectation I was led to form from my services in South America."[142] When Parish departed from Buenos Aires in 1832, the British government abolished his office of Consul General. John Parish Robertson's career in South America terminated among the multitude of merchant bankrupts. Abandoning Buenos Aires in 1830, he was followed by his brother a year or two later. In their book *Paraguay* written in Britain, the brothers rued the disappointments of "the thousands who have suffered by their connexions with Spanish America."[143] Animosity towards the British lingered in Buenos Aires. In 1833, a pro-clerical legislator denounced marriages between local women and "Protestants" as a conspiracy to take over the country. Condemning the merchants as money-grubbers, he accused the British government of blatant aggression in the recent seizure of the Falkland Islands. The distant southern islands remained "an integral part of the Argentine Republic, [which] have been occupied by violence."[144] War with Brazil thus provoked deep estrangement between Britons and Porteños. As the former claimed victimisation by crooked deals, the latter vented critiques of capitalism and accusations of imperialism.

[140] Head, *Rough Notes*, v.

[141] Ponsonby to Aberdeen 6 Jan. 1829 GRE/E/32.

[142] Parish to Ponsonby 16 Mar. 1829, GRE/E/5/446.

[143] Robertson, *Paraguay*, I:13. According to his biographers, John Robertson subsequently took a degree at the University of Cambridge, married a rich widow and devoted himself to writing his memoirs with his brother until his death in 1851. William Robertson spent some of his later career in Peru. He attracted publicity as Peruvian consul in Britain opposing the Anglo-French intervention of 1845.

[144] Translation by *British Packet* 6 April 1833. The marriage issue had several variants, not all hostile to Anglo-Creole unions. In early 1828, Tomás de Anchorena, a leading associate of Rosas, proposed to deny foreigners the right to own land who had *not* married Argentines. See *British Packet* 16 Feb. 1828.

CHAPTER 3

Empire Builders and Their Adversaries

We are not Algeria or India.
Juan Manuel de Rosas, *Governor of Buenos Aires 1847*

During the Napoleonic Wars British strategic planners cast a sharp eye on Montevideo, the second city of the Rio de la Plata, as a potential naval and mercantile base and an alternative entrance into the markets of Spanish South America. Its attractions included its fortifications on a small peninsula by the harbour and its greater proximity to the South Atlantic sea lanes. Merchantmen praised its sheltered anchorage and easier approaches, since ships halting there reduced their exposure to the sudden violent storms and treacherous shallows of the Plata estuary. In 1806 Popham ruminated an attack on Montevideo until news of Viceroy Sobremonte's silver hoard lured him to Buenos Aires. Sharing the enthusiasm for Montevideo, Generals Beresford and Auchmuty urged seizing it as a contraband depot.[1] Twenty years later, General William Miller, the veteran of the emancipation wars in Chile and Peru, contended that in 1806–1807 the British ought to "have confined their immediate object to Montevideo,

[1] For views of Montevideo as a strategic military centre, see Gillespie, *Gleanings and Remarks*, 46; and for the shippers' viewpoint, Kroeber, *Shipping Industry*, 36–42. A contemporary map of the fortified core of Montevideo appears in Fortescue, *British Army*, vol. 5.

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the key to the River Plate. From its position and strength, it might have been made the Gibraltar of the eastern coast of the Spanish possessions."[2]

In the event, the British occupied the city for less than six months in 1807 before abandoning it on Whitelocke's defeat in Buenos Aires. As they grew familiar with it, they discovered it was surrounded by enemies.[3] Founded in the early eighteenth century as a coastal citadel, Montevideo currently lacked the organic connections with the rural Banda Oriental like those between Buenos Aires and its hinterland.[4] In the nineteenth century, the city faced several rural uprisings concluding in prolonged sieges, the first in 1811 led by José Artigas. Relations with Buenos Aires were invariably poor since the two cities competed for trade and revenue. Rivalry intensified from 1810 when Montevideo remained loyal to Spain while Buenos Aires embarked on revolution.[5]

For nearly a decade Artigas clouded the picture. After overthrowing the Spanish administration in Montevideo in 1813, he proclaimed his rule over a territory known as *la patria vieja*, "The Old Country." It stretched far beyond the Banda Oriental into the back lands whence he drew many of his indigenous fighters. Extending north and west of Montevideo to the former Jesuit missions bordering Paraguay, his territory revived the dominion of the Jesuits until their expulsion in 1767. His supremacy over the area proved brief, surviving only two years until the Portuguese invaded from Brazil. A gruelling five-year conflict followed in which the Portuguese took the city, annexed the Banda Oriental, ultimately defeated Artigas and expelled him to Paraguay. In 1825–1828 hostilities resumed during the war between the United Provinces and the Empire of Brazil waged by blockade in the Rio de la Plata and by land mostly in the Banda Oriental. During the peaceful late eighteenth century, riverside areas near Montevideo became wealthy from cattle ranching, but progress then halted. Marauding armies destroyed the herds, villages were depopulated, trade in hides and salted beef collapsed and Montevideo hovered at the

[2] Miller, *Memoirs*, I: 58.

[3] The extent of British interest is shown in a lengthy historical memorandum among the Ponsonby papers. See "Montevideo 1811–1824." Memorandum of February 1826. GRE/E/607/157.

[4] On links between cities and rural areas see David Rock and Fernando López-Alves. "State Building and Political Systems in Nineteenth-Century Argentina and Uruguay." *Past and Present*, No. 167, May, 2000, 176–202.

[5] Street, *Independencia*, 184. The recent study is McFarlane, *War and Independence*, 181–218.

brink of extinction.[6] A visitor in 1820 observed "some broken walls and part of a chapel [as] all that remains. Previous to the struggle, there were fourteen thousand inhabitants within the walls; this now is reduced to five thousand."[7]

Despite the chronic conflict, the British continued to view Montevideo, with its harbour and citadel, as a potential base, as illustrated in a report to the Admiralty in 1819 by William Bowles. He prepared it at a time of turmoil in Buenos Aires, as Pueyrredón's government fell and the caudillos established ascendancy over the interior of the United Provinces. As British merchants faced threats of forced loans and military service, Bowles urged them to move to Montevideo where the navy could better protect them. He emphasised "the great advantage to British interests if, in the final arrangement of things, Monte Video should remain entirely independent of Buenos Aires and in the possession of a power likely to adopt a commercial system so fixed and liberal as to encourage foreigners to form their principal establishments on the left bank of the Plate. Our own trade in the event of hostilities breaking out [in Buenos Aires] may be protected at Monte Video and Colonia [del Sacramento] with a facility which the open anchorage of Buenos Ayres is not susceptible of."[8]

When he revived the plan six years later, Canning saw it as a way to defend British trade on the Plata and to protect the sea routes to the Pacific. He hoped to use the war of 1825 in the Banda Oriental to assist his designs. As his envoy Ponsonby set out for Brazil, Canning urged him to work towards a peace agreement applying the methods of the Congress of Vienna in 1815 in redefining the boundaries of Europe. He wanted Montevideo to become an independent city-state "in a position somewhere similar to the Hanseatic towns in Europe."[9] Ponsonby pursued this objective before and after Canning's death in August 1827. His influence lingered for the next twenty years or more, in the political arrangements he conceived for the region and in the way he saw it developing as a commercial appanage of the United Kingdom. He envisaged the Banda Oriental as an independent state that would form "a steady friendship with England, founded on a community of interests, and the necessity which

[6] As described by Street, *Artigas*, 214–216.

[7] Vidal, *Buenos Ayres*, 3.

[8] Bowles to Croker 31 Aug. 1819. In Graham and Humphreys, *Navy in South America*, 277.

[9] Canning to Ponsonby 28 Feb., 13 Mar. and 27 Nov. 1826. GRE/E/607/12.

shall be manifest to them for the encouragement and protection of England."[10] He opposed allowing control over Montevideo by either of its two large neighbours, Brazil or the United Provinces. He contended that whoever dominated Montevideo would control the entire region north of Montevideo to the distant Republic of Paraguay—the former *patria vieja*. If either of its neighbours gained permanent possession over Montevideo, it would "injure, if not control…the trade of England to China, India and all the eastern trade of the Pacific." Such dangers would increase if the dominant local power formed an alliance with the United States or France.[11]

On a broader level, Ponsonby revealed himself a canal age imperialist. He foresaw British trade and political influence stretching over the entire territory between the Andes and the Rio de la Plata. "Free navigation" of the Paraná and the Uruguay rivers enforced by Britain, would bring wider benefits, to "civilise and improve the whole of South America on this side of the Andes."[12] A first obstacle to the plan lay in the location of the Rio Paraná entirely within the jurisdiction of the United Provinces. Ponsonby proposed to redraw state boundaries in the Plata. He wanted to transfer Entre Rios and Corrientes, the two left-bank or littoral provinces of the Paraná, out of the jurisdiction of the United Provinces into that of Montevideo. "The formation of a system of federation [to include] the littoral states of the Plate and the Parana [would then enable] freedom of communication from the mouth of the estuary up to Paraguay." Once formed, the new federation would be "crowned by the guarantee of Great Britain [by naval and if necessary military power] as the keystone preserve of the system."[13]

Ponsonby saw British political dominance leading to the development of plantations in the South American heartland. He showed strong interest in Paraguay, an area rich in land and labour although currently atrophying

[10] Ponsonby to Dudley 18 Jan. 1828. GRE/E/607. For synopses of Ponsonby's activities, see Mariana Blengio Valdés. *Lord Ponsonby y la independencia de la República Oriental del Uruguay*. Montevideo: Fundación de Cultura Universitaria, 1987; Coronel Luis Eduardo Maldonado. *Lord Ponsonby y la independencia del Uruguay*. Montevideo: Proyección, 1987. Numerous proposals to make Uruguay into a British protectorate from the wars of emancipation are listed in Peter Winn. *Inglaterra y la Tierra Purpúrea*. Montevideo: Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, Ediciones de la Banda Oriental, 1997, 16.

[11] Discussion of these issues includes Canning to Ponsonby 18 Mar. 1826. GRE/E/607; Ponsonby to Canning 2 Oct. 1826. GRE/E/607/339; Ponsonby to Dudley 28 Dec. 1827 and 18 Jan. 1828. GRE/E/607.

[12] Ponsonby to Dudley, 18 Jan. 1828 in Herrera, *Misión Ponsomby* (*sic*), 2:188–191.

[13] Ponsonby to Canning 2 and 20 Oct. 1826 FO 6/13.

under Dictator Francia. His eye fell on the Rio Bermejo, a distant western tributary of the Rio Paraguay to the far north, suspecting it provided a connection to Salta in the far north-west of the United Provinces. On the map, the source of the Rio Bermejo appears close to the silver mines of Potosí. Ponsonby dreamt of silver ore flowing across the Gran Chaco down to the Rio de la Plata.[14] He had no cognisance of the vast, uncharted wilderness traversed by the Rio Bermejo. Later exploration revealed that nothing larger than a canoe would ever navigate its hundreds of miles of meandering shallows.[15] Ponsonby submitted his schemes to the Foreign Office repeatedly, although they attracted scant interest. Foreign Secretary Lord Aberdeen followed Canning in urging "friendly commercial and political intercourse." He showed no enthusiasm for policies pursued for hypothetical benefits likely to involve war with the United Provinces. Britain's presence would be confined to the seacoast and the Plata estuary (See Map 3.1).

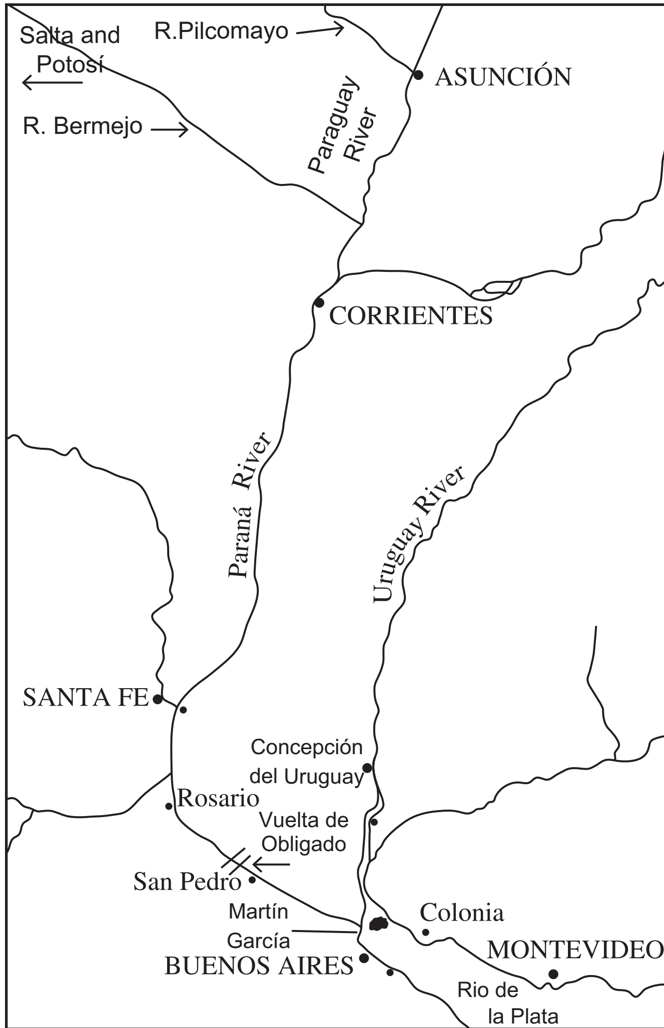
* * *

The República Oriental del Uruguay formed in 1828 became Ponsonby's main achievement following his three-year stint as minister plenipotentiary. Born on the ruins of the colonial Banda Oriental, the territory of the new republic extended south to north across the grasslands from the Rio de la Plata to Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil, and west to east from the Rio Uruguay to the Atlantic. It included the beaten down city of Montevideo, several small towns on the Plata estuary on either side of Montevideo between Colonia del Sacramento in the west and Maldonado in the east, and a string of villages along the Rio Uruguay. Under the peace agreement, Entre Rios and Corrientes, and jurisdiction over the Rio Paraná, remained within the United Provinces. Aberdeen refused any formal guarantee to protect the independence of Uruguay as sought by Ponsonby, informing him Britain "will enter into no engagement whatever."[16]

[14] Ponsonby to Dudley, 28 Dec. 1827. GRE/E/607; also Herrera, *Misión Ponsomby* (*sic*), 2:71–77.

[15] On navigating the Bermejo, see Pedro de Angelis, ed. *Diario del viage al Rio Bermejo, por Fray Francisco Morillo, del Orden de San Francisco*. Buenos Aires: Imprenta del Estado, 1837. Morillo traversed the river from the west in 1780–1781. Using his and other accounts, De Angelis compared distances along the old colonial land route and by river, attempting to calculate the respective costs of transportation. As routes to Buenos Aires, both were more than a thousand miles in length but many stretches of the Rio Bermejo were less than two feet deep.

[16] For the Ponsonby–Aberdeen correspondence, see FO 13/49 and FO 13/50.



Map 3.1 The Rio Paraná River Basin

Long wracked by conflict, Uruguay soon plunged once more into internal warfare. In 1830, the new republic framed a constitution that became an immediate dead letter as rival militias—Juan Antonio Lavalleja's Blancos, who came mainly from the back lands, and Fructuoso Rivera's

Colorados, a group more closely linked with the Montevideo area—competed for supremacy. The British looked on, hoping conditions would eventually improve. "England has in some measure made herself the guardian of the independence of Monte Video," wrote Peter Campbell Scarlett, a visitor in 1833, because it had "a better port and no worse government, and bids fair to become a city of greater trade and wealth than its opposite rival Buenos Ayres." He reported the British government sought a trade treaty with Uruguay but could find no one to negotiate with.[17]

After brief intermissions, civil war in Uruguay resumed in 1838 when Colorado rebels overthrew Manuel Oribe, the Blanco president. This coup marked the start of a fourteen-year conflict known by Uruguayans as the *guerra grande*, an era of chronic cattle rustling, farm burning, hostage-taking and the most prolonged siege of Montevideo in its history. European publics grew appalled at its atrocities including practices like trussing up captives, lying them prone side by side and cutting their throats.[18] British hopes of negotiating a naval base in Uruguay sank. "We have long ceased to pay [Spanish America] the attention it deserves," declared *The Times* in disenchantment in 1844. Freedom from Spanish rule "was supposed to have opened [the area] to liberty and civilisation… but the rank native growth of the soil has choked the seeds we hoped to plant there."[19]

British occupation of the Falkland Islands in 1833 was intended to provide a substitute for the naval base that had failed to develop in coastal Uruguay. In this venue, disputes over British sovereignty plagued the project from the start. For the past century or more, Britain and Spain (and on occasion France) issued competing claims to the islands by right of discovery and prior occupation. In 1774, the British abandoned a site they occupied for a few years on East Falkland, the largest island of the

[17] Peter Campbell Scarlett. *South America and the Pacific: comprising a Journey across the Pampas and the Andes, from Buenos Ayres to Valparaiso, Lima and Panama, with Remarks upon the Isthmus, to which are annexed plans and statements for establishing steam navigation on the Pacific*. London: Henry Colborn, 1838, 56, 61. According to Scarlett, the Uruguayans, "object to enter into a binding contract, from a petty dislike to fulfil its conditions, however advantageous to themselves, with a country that has the power to enforce the execution of them." (p. 134).

[18] See J.A. Murray. *Travels in Uruguay, South America: An Account of the Present State of Sheep Farming and Emigration to that Country*. London: Longmans, 1871, 82–84.

[19] *The Times* 8 Jan. 1845.

archipelago. For the next half-century or more, they displayed no interest in the islands, encouraging first the Spaniards and from 1810 their Porteño heirs to claim they had forfeited whatever weak claims they had ever possessed.[20] In the late 1820s, British interest in the Falkland Islands revived following the emancipation of Chile and Peru and the expansion of Pacific trade. In 1829, for example, a merchant named Beckington urged the British government to establish a "little Gibraltar" on the Falklands supported by whaling and fishing on the shipping route between Rio de Janeiro and Valparaíso.[21] Woodbine Parish raised the matter with the Foreign Office, observing the islands "may perhaps be thought of as of much greater value than formerly."[22] An Admiralty report of 1831 judged East Falkland a "far preferable place to touch at than any port in the Brazils or the River Plate," with good soil, fuel and pasture, and ample means to protect sailors against scurvy.[23] When urged to render a decision, the British government vacillated. Aberdeen could see the advantages of occupying the islands, but admitted his uncertainty whether Britain had any right to "possession of a settlement which had been relinquished for a time, although never [explicitly] abandoned. The question is of much delicacy, involving important consequences and demanding therefore the most mature deliberation."[24]

In 1828, Governor Dorrego in Buenos Aires licensed a settlement on East Falkland led by Louis Vernet, a French-born entrepreneur. When the province issued its articles of government, Parish protested in view of "His Britannic Majesty's rights of sovereignty." He claimed that when the last British settlers had departed from the islands in 1774, they observed all the formalities in order to protect British claims. "The marks and signals of possession and property were left upon the islands. When the governor took his departure, the British flag remained flying."[25] Vernet's settlement looked fragile, unlikely to survive. Once established, his colonists began disrupting the activities of American vessels engaged

[20] On the disputes of the 1770s, see Barry Gough. *The Falkland Islands/Malvinas. The Contest for Empire in the South Atlantic*. London: Athlone Press, 1992, 11–26.

[21] Beckington to Peel 11 July 1829. FO 6/499.

[22] Parish to Aberdeen 15 Mar. 1829. FO 6/499.

[23] "Description of East Falkland Island," 1831. FO 6/449.

[24] Aberdeen to Parish 8 Aug. 1829 FO 354/4.

[25] Parish to Guido 19 Nov. 1829. FO 354/4.

in sealing, whaling and fishing. Provoked too far, the Americans retaliated. In 1832, the USS *Lexington* launched a raiding party against the settlement, virtually destroying it. In Buenos Aires, US officials concluded that British control over the islands provided the best way to protect US interests. Francis Baylies, the US representative, endorsed British claims for sovereignty. A purported expert on territorial rights in the Americas, he claimed the American Revolution conferred the same rights as on the British in British-controlled territories, thus making Americans "co-heirs with Britain in the Americas." Baylies proposed paying token compensation to Buenos Aires to eliminate that issue permanently.[26] As US policy took this direction, new Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston took action. He requested the Admiralty to direct a British warship to seize the islands. In early January 1833, crew members from HMS Clio landed to proclaim British authority. Soon afterwards, nearly all Vernet's colonists embarked for the mainland.[27] British policy manifested strong concern about US attitudes but little for the claims of Porteños. News of the episode stirred strong feelings in Buenos Aires. The *British Packet* reported heated, indignant reactions, as people heaped "odium [on] the shoulders of John Bull. [The British takeover] constituted the chief conversation all over town."[28] Animosity simmered for months. Clerics campaigned for a ban on marriages between British merchants and Porteño women, while Governor Juan Ramón Balcarce claimed the British seized the islands to force a resumption of payments on the Baring loan.[29]

For many years, the situation rested there. British rights of possession grew firmer on a basis of *Uti Possidetis*—possession is nine tenths of the law—although a decade elapsed before British settlement of the islands commenced. In the early 1840s, the *Colonial Magazine* listed the Falkland Islands as a potential destination for emigrants, and the British government offered a few assisted passages. Population ascended more rapidly from 1852 on the introduction of sheep breeding and the formation of

[26] Fox to Palmerston 15 Oct. 1832. FO 6/449.

[27] Palmerston to Admiralty 30 Aug. 1832.

[28] *British Packet* 19 Jan. 1833 citing hostile reactions to the British takeover of the islands in the Buenos Aires press.

[29] "Speech of the governor links Falkland Islands with British creditors." 27 June 1833. *Index and Register* FO 605.

the Falkland Islands Company. Reaching around 500 by 1860, the population climbed to around 1500 by 1881 before reaching its all-time maximum of 3275 in 1911.[30] Irregularly although persistently, Argentine governments issued protests against what they considered an illegal alien occupation. In 1888, to cite a case in point, Vice President Norberto Quirno Costa declared that Argentina "maintains and will always maintain its sovereign rights to the Falkland Islands." Prime Minister Lord Salisbury refused to discuss the matter.[31]

* * *

In 1832–1833 Charles Darwin, the young naturalist on board *HMS Beagle* during the ship's worldwide expedition, disembarked on the banks of the Plata, the shores of Patagonia and on the Falkland Islands. Landing on the southern pampas, he had a chance encounter with General Juan Manuel de Rosas, then the ex-governor of Buenos Aires who was leading an expedition against indigenous tribes in the south. During their meeting, Rosas's lengthy exegesis on the necessity of strong government impressed Darwin. "I was altogether pleased with my interview with the terrible General," he wrote.[32] He foresaw events two years later, in 1835. At that time, Rosas won re-election as governor on a mandate of unrestricted power, backed by the Mazorca, his secretive band of violent enforcers. Nominally, he ruled as only one of fourteen provincial governors of equal standing, but in practice dominated the country by controlling the customs revenues—the only resources available to fund government, form alliances and raise armies. To maintain the fiction of decentralised authority and equality among the provinces, the country was renamed the Confederación Argentina.

British residents first encountered Rosas's movement in the late 1820s in the guise of the Los Colorados del Monte (akin to "The Red Bushwhackers"), a militia of gauchos armed with lances and the oversized knives or *facones* used to slaughter cattle. Xenophobia and anti-urbanism appeared endemic to the movement, although, as he argued to Darwin, Rosas claimed extreme force was needed to rebuild authority in the aftermath of the Rivadavia era.[33] During his first term as governor in 1829–1832,

[30] Richards, *Britannia's Children*, 193.

[31] Argentine appeals in 1888 are collected in CO 78/78. See also Quirno Costa to Jenner 13 Apr. 1888 in FO 118/209.

[32] Darwin Keynes, *Darwin's Beagle Diary*, 205.

[33] John Lynch. *Argentine Dictator: Juan Manuel de Rosas, 1829–1852*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1981.

continuing instability compounded by financial disorder fostered acute anxiety and insecurity. The steep fall in trade during the war with Brazil left paper money, and therefore inflation, as the only way to raise a military force to resist the Unitarios. Rosas nevertheless tried to protect British merchants, who provided his main source of revenue from foreign trade. Despite its illiberalism, Woodbine Parish argued the Rosas regime treated the British better than other Spanish American governments. It respected the 1825 treaty, notably by protecting freedom of religion. The handsome newly built British Protestant Chapel a few hundred metres from the central Plaza de la Victoria completed under Rosas stood out as "new foreign secretary Lord Palmerston requested the Admiralty to direct a British warship to seize the islands."[34]

When Darwin visited Buenos Aires, British residents continued to suffer after-effects of the war with Brazil. Property and personal wealth sank in value as the *British Packet* advertised fire sales of the property of merchants who were leaving the country.[35] Thomas Lindsey, a once wealthy tailor and cloth merchant who died in 1835, was thought to be worth hundreds or more, although when tallied and auctioned his estate realised only £81.[36] In 1836, British shareholders of the Banco Nacional, an entity founded ten years earlier to succeed the Banco de Buenos Ayres, received no compensation when the government seized possession.[37] "Nothing can improve here for any length of time," lamented Consul Charles Griffiths. "I with many others am heartily weary of this country."[38] In the 1830s, British migrants fell to only a few hundred, with men from Gibraltar representing many of the new arrivals. Such migrants were commonly Genoese in disguise who sought acknowledgement of British nationality to win exemption from military service.[39] Trembling in fear of the Mazorca,

[34] Parish to FO 20 Apr. 1831. FO 6/32. From its beginnings, the chapel was also known as the British Episcopal Chapel of St. John. See *British Packet* 12 Mar. 1831.

[35] "A Country House and Grounds for Sale" announced a typical advertisement. *British Packet* 27 Aug. and 5 Nov. 1831.

[36] Griffiths to Bidwell 25 Mar. 1839. FO 6/71. Griffiths took charge of Lindsey's estate because he died intestate with no known heirs. Article XIII of the 1825 treaty determined that in such cases the consul would sell the estate with the proceeds going to the British Crown. Griffiths mentioned the sum of £2000 he expected might be raised from the auction.

[37] Bernard Jonas to Aberdeen 20 Dec. 1842. FO 6/85. On the takeover of the bank, see Burgin, *Argentine Federalism*, 182. As noted by Burgin and other authors, this bank did little but issue paper money for the government.

[38] Griffiths to FO 13 Nov. 1833. FO 6/38.

[39] Hanon's data show 1867 arrivals in the 1820s, 430 in the 1830s and 977 in the 1840s. She provides no data on departures. The names of migrants from Gibraltar appear in the register of British residents held at the British consulate in Buenos Aires.

Griffiths provided the community with little protection. His correspondence harped on the failure of the 1825 treaty to incorporate habeas corpus, which left British subjects accused in criminal cases left on remand for indefinite periods.[40] In this gloomy atmosphere, some British residents pondered migrating to Australia but found they could not afford the voyage. With no escape from Buenos Aires, they joined the rest of the population in paying Rosas ritual obeisance. Community events of this period concluded with sycophantic toasts to the governor, *La Estrella de Esperanza*, "The Star of Hope," as one toastmaster addressed him.[41]

* * *

Surviving merchants in Buenos Aires reduced costs and diversified their businesses. Returning to Buenos Aires in 1830, James Hodgson branched out into insurance and ship brokerage. Avoiding expensive Liverpool middlemen, he formed direct links with textile producers near Manchester. Issuing circulars to advertise his services, he assembled a network of clients throughout the British Isles and in continental ports led by Antwerp and Bordeaux. His contacts in the Americas ranged from Baltimore to Valparaíso and included obscure places like Cobija, a new port on the Pacific intended to become a maritime outlet for independent Bolivia. Hodgson's diverse connections instanced the way from the 1830s foreign trade from Buenos Aires grew more Western European and less exclusively British, with the appearance of merchants from Hamburg, Barcelona and Genoa.

When ordering textiles from Lancashire and West Yorkshire, the principal items of his import business, Hodgson sent his suppliers detailed descriptions of the goods he required. He expected delivery of his orders in Buenos Aires within six months of their receipt in Manchester.[42] Owen Owens and Son, a firm of Manchester merchants, became one of his principal suppliers, assembling the goods he ordered from local manufactur-

[40] For one such case, see William Hardy to FO 16 Nov. 1844. FO 6–97. Hardy wrote to the Foreign Office from the debtors' prison in Buenos Aires with a story of being hoodwinked by "the glowing representations of a swindling shipbroker." According to his story, 129 travellers endured a gruelling voyage from Newcastle-upon-Tyne but their sponsors declared bankruptcy as they landed. The immigrants were made responsible for the promoters' debts and arrested. Perhaps coached by Consul Griffiths, Hardy dwelt on the lack of the safeguards of English Common Law in Buenos Aires.

[41] *British Packet* 19 Dec. 1835.

[42] GHR 5/2/2, 28 June 1830.

ers. The exporters shipped around thirty different types of textiles ranging from higher quality ginghams, calicoes and fancy muslins to "dometts" or domestics, a low-quality grey-coloured cloth now widely manufactured in New England as well as in Lancashire. Owen Owens shipped Hodgson's cloth to South America in up to a dozen large bales per cargo in lengths totalling hundreds of yards. On their arrival from England, Hodgson sold his goods, together with a jumble of other items re-exported from Rio and Montevideo, to about half a dozen wholesalers in Buenos Aires and Córdoba. They were well-known personages of social pedigree headed by Mariano Fragueiro, Hodgson's now well-established associate in Córdoba, who distributed British goods in the north-western provinces.[43] When remitting profits to his suppliers, Hodgson could not employ the discredited paper money of Buenos Aires or send silver coin, whose export terminated around 1825 in shortages and prohibitions. He either remitted bills of exchange, the closest equivalent to hard currency, or shipped his customers' earnings in the form of cattle hides.[44]

In the 1830s, the volume of British textiles imported into Buenos Aires climbed, as prices fell. Data published by Manuel Llorca-Jaña indicate that earnings from British textile exports to the Rio de la Plata remained similar in 1840 to those in 1820 while volumes at least doubled—a striking illustration of the rising productivity of British manufacturing during the early factory era.[45] As prices fell, the South American market widened enabling

[43] Local wholesale merchants mentioned in Hodgson's correspondence included Pedro Gacha, Simón Pereira, Lázaro Elortondo and Jaime Llavallol.

[44] Hodgson and Robinson Archive GHR/5/2/1 (Incoming Correspondence) 7 July 1829. Bills of exchange became less acceptable amidst the failures of mercantile firms in the early 1830s. See letter to Thomas Ellis and Co of Sheffield 2 Aug. 1831, ("Confidence in bills is greatly shaken in consequence of the recent failures here"). GHR5/2/1 Letters 1831—1846, Vol. 5, 2 Aug. 1831. The following year "threatened indeed [to] be a ruinous one for us [because] of claims being made against us by parties in England [for] indemnities for the loss in exchange." Letter to Joseph Green GHR/5/2/1 Letters 1831–1846, Vol. 5, 20 Jan. (also 27 Mar.) 1832.

[45] Figures for British textile exports in 1820 show a total value of £630,000 falling to £340,000 in 1830; recovery in the later 1830s brought exports to within a range of £600–£800,000, although the figure for 1840 (during the French blockade) totalled only £614,000. Llorca-Jaña's claim (p. 272) of a threefold increase in British exports to the Plata by value is valid only by comparing the low point with the high point (1816 at £312,000 and 1841 at £919,000). He also illustrates a doubling in the yardage of cotton exports in the 1830s compared with the 1820s. See Llorca-Jaña, *British Textile Trade*, 32, 215 on prices and quantities, and tables on 24, 272–273, 310–312 for values. The author calls these figures "staggering" and "spectacular" (p. 273). He restated conclusions in Albert H. Imlah.

Hodgson and other British merchants to displace domestic producers. They were mainly female household weavers living in the north-west and north-east provinces of the confederation. Perceiving local producers as his major competitors, Hodgson sent specimens of their products to his English manufacturers, urging them to imitate them at lower cost.[46] Many British textiles mentioned in his correspondence had Spanish names—*bayetas de medio pellón*, *faxuelas* or *dos Frisas*—to highlight the efforts of British manufacturers to reproduce and compete with locally made products.[47] Native producers better defended their markets for woollen goods made mostly into ponchos and blankets.[48] Despite the influx of British imports, cotton manufacturing too survived in remote communities. A half-century later in 1880, Eliza Clemens, a visitor from Philadelphia, travelled to western Catamarca, a manufacturer of cotton textiles since early colonial times. There, she discovered that "a loom [remained] a part of the furniture of almost every house" in the distant province.[49]

Hodgson confronted the same narrow markets and limited demand as previous British merchants like John Wylie. He pleaded with his suppliers constantly to avoid swamping him with goods. Depreciating paper money created another major difficulty for him by affecting the relative prices of imported and domestic products. Depreciation assisted domestic producers but ruined importers, as illustrated by the wave of bankruptcies of the

Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica. Studies in British Foreign Policy in the Nineteenth Century. Second edition. New York: Russell and Russell, 1969, 103–105, noting a fall of 83 per cent in textile prices in 1814–1843.

[46] GHR *Letters* 1831–1846 Vol. 5, 28 Jan. 1834.

[47] The listing appears in yearly "Detailed Accounts." OWN 3/1/3 covering the 1830s. (See Owen Owens Archive, John Ryland Library, University of Manchester). Other categories included white counterpanes, muslins, valencias, shawls, striped cotton, cashmere shawls, flat linings, Cambaise, white flannel, and so on. The fullest list of products compiled by Wilfrid Latham in 1844 appears in OWN 3/2/4/10.

[48] Such products included *ponchillos*, *gergas*, *sayaletas*, *balandranas*, *picotes* and *cordellates*. See Fradkin, *Argentina Colonial*, 68–76. *Picotes* are described as "ponchos or blankets using cochineal or grain as dye." Argentina. Superintendente del Censo. *Primer censo de la República Argentina verificado en los días 15, 16 y 17 de septiembre de 1869*. Buenos Aires: Oficina del Censo, 1872, 267. In Belén, Catamarca in the 1870s, "women weave handsome ponchos of vicuña wool, besides producing dyes in large quantities, and a certain homemade cloth called '*cordillate de Belén*.'" M.G. and E.T. Mulhall. *Handbook of the River Plate. Comprising Buenos Ayres, The Upper Provinces, Banda Oriental, and Paraguay*. Buenos Ayres: Standard Printing Office, 1869, 233.

[49] E.J.M. Clemens. *La Plata Countries of South America*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1886, 267.

late 1820s that near-engulfed Hodgson himself.[50] Disruptions to trade in the interior became another major potential problem. The first such interference occurred in 1817–1818 when the occupation of the lower Paraná by Artigas's forces closed access to Santa Fe and Córdoba. A second came during the civil war of 1829 that brought Rosas to power. Unable to send supplies to Fragueiro in Córdoba that year, Hodgson commented, "we have therefore been deprived of the principal branch of our trade."[51] Import tariffs in Buenos Aires had little apparent effect on his business. After his re-election in 1835, Rosas raised duties and widened tariffs. Hodgson urged his suppliers to send their goods out before the increases took effect, although afterwards he scarcely mentioned the subject.[52] In the 1830s, Hodgson's activities suggested that inflow of British textile increased rapidly to the detriment of domestic producers. Only the periodic disruption of trade by civil war and the impact of currency depreciation on relative prices of local and imported products imposed significant constraints.

* * *

In the 1830s, rising French trade attracted French artisans and farmers mainly from the Basque country to Montevideo. There, despite the recurrence of civil war, they led the city's resurgence.[53] French migrants also settled in Buenos Aires, although less securely than in Montevideo. By failing to extend diplomatic recognition to republican Buenos Aires, the Bourbon and Orléans monarchies of 1815–1848 failed to win the treaty protection for French subjects enjoyed by the British. Local French officials committed some egregious political errors, as in 1829 when a community

[50] Llorca-Jaña illustrates the impact of depreciation in the late Twenties as earnings from British exports to the Plata fell from £850,000 in 1825, to £371,000 in 1826 and to only £155,000 in 1827; likewise, in the Forties, exports plummeted from £785,000 in 1844 to only £187,000 in 1846, in this case largely due to the effects of the Anglo-French blockade. See *British Textile Trade*, 310–311.

[51] Hodgson to Robinson 22 June 1829. GHR 5/2/1. Comments attributed to D.C.M. Platt that "expensive European luxury goods hardly put cheap domestic cloth off the market" simplifies market dualism. Wide substitutions occurred as the volume of imports increased and prices fell. See Brown, *Argentina*, 245, note 18 citing Platt.

[52] A standard discussion is Juan Carlos Nicolau. *Industria argentina y aduana, 1835–1854.* Buenos Aires: Devenir, 1975. As calculated by Llorca-Jaña, tariff rates on printed cottons fell from a rate of 2.4 pence per yard in 1815, to 0.9 pence in 1835 and to only 0.3 pence in 1853. *British Textile Trade*, 238–241, 270, 279.

[53] Jürgen Schneider. "Le commerce français avec Amérique Latine pendant l'âge de l'independance." *Revista de Historia de América*, no. 84, 1977, 63–87.

leader urged his fellow countrymen to enlist with the Unitarios against the Federales, "the rabble of the country" as he called the latter. His call to arms contrasted with Woodbine Parish's advice to British subjects to steer clear of any involvement.[54] Having backed the wrong horse in 1829, French settlers paid the price as. Rosas plagued them with high taxes and threatened them with conscription in the militia, a rag-tag force of gauchos and impressed convicts notorious for oppression and human degradation.[55]

In 1838, French residents in Buenos Aires grew particularly apprehensive. Following the outbreak of the Guerra Grande in Uruguay, French naval forces struck at Rosas by another blockade of Buenos Aires. Under the rules of the blockade, incoming foreign vessels had to disembark their cargoes in Montevideo and pay duties. They could then take their goods across river to Buenos Aires, although only on payment of a second round of duties.[56] In a replay of events during the war with Brazil a decade earlier, the blockade prompted a renewed spate of paper money issues and severe inflation in Buenos Aires. As Rosas grew incensed at the Orléans monarchy, fears increased he would exact his revenge by reprisals against French settlers. When discussions commenced to end the blockade in 1840, Hodgson reported the French feared being taken as hostages. "Uncertain as to the result of the negotiations and literally fearful of having their throats cut," many of them fled to Montevideo.[57]

Before the French blockade began, Hodgson converted his pending remittances into hides and shipped them to Antwerp, although profits fell to reflect high shipping costs. He sent his Buenos Aires currency to Montevideo for conversion into sterling bills of exchange, though once more with disappointing results in light of poor exchange rates.[58] Other British merchants faced similar difficulties. In 1841, petitioners appealed to the British government for a larger subsidy to support the Protestant church in Buenos Aires. Local merchants could no longer support the church because "many of the heads of commercial houses have withdrawn themselves from the city and the fortunes of all foreign residents have

[54] Parish to FO 29 April 1829 FO 6–24.

[55] On the militia, see Ricardo Donato Salvatore. *Wandering Paysanos. State Order and Subaltern Experience in Buenos Aires during the Rosas Era*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

[56] Hodgson to Correspondents 21 April 1838. GHR/5/1/7, reporting additional duties of 8–12 per cent.

[57] Hodgson to Owen Owens 26 Oct. 1840. OWN 3/2/4/4.

[58] Hodgson's reactions during the French blockade appear in GHR/5/1/7.

been much diminished by the depreciation of our money and the frequent occurrence of political convulsions."[59]

After the French blockade, conditions worsened as severe economic depression in Britain—a harbinger of the Hungry Forties—induced manufacturers and exporters to dump goods on markets abroad, including Buenos Aires. In 1841, Hodgson appealed to his suppliers to halt shipments completely. "At times we are almost tempted to recommend you never to send another piece of goods to this place," he wrote.[60] Imports into Buenos Aires simply had to fall, he reiterated a few months later. "With a diminished consumption and a string of imports constantly pouring in from Liverpool, [prices] will rally [only] should they get up on your side."[61] In 1842, it was "impossible to depict how bad our market is."[62] By then, with civil war seeping throughout the entire north-east region as an offshoot of the Guerra Grande, access to markets in the provinces became his major concern. He could no longer sell the popular imported cloths known as Assorted Dos Frisas, "they being solely suited to Entre Rios and Corrientes."[63] As trade on the Rio Paraná halted, he lost all contact with Mariano Fragueiro and therefore with his other leading markets in Córdoba and the north-west.[64]

As these restrictions bit deeper, Hodgson learned that Simón Pereira, a leading Porteño wholesaler, who was Rosas's nephew and quartermaster, had invited British consignees like himself to deliver a huge order of scarlet cloth for army uniforms. Hodgson met part of the order but Pereira then failed to pay the bill.[65] As his financial difficulties mounted, in early 1843 he abandoned his business in Buenos Aires blaming Rosas for his troubles.

[59] Episcopal Church leaders to FO 14 Dec. 1841. FO 6/80.

[60] Hodgson to Owen Owens 24 Oct. 1840. OWN 3/2/4/4, 25 Jan. 1841 3/2/4/5.

[61] Hodgson to Owen Owens 2 Dec. 1841. OWN 3/2/4/6.

[62] Hodgson to Owen Owens 25 Feb. 1842. OWN 3/2/4/6. Partners of the London merchant house, G.F. Dickson and Co., issued similar lamentations. "Such a time as the present I do not remember in Buenos Ayres." See, G.F. Dickson and Company, 1 Mar. 1844. London Metropolitan Archives.

[63] Hodgson to Owen Owens, 21 May 1842. OWN 3/12/4/6.

[64] Jackson to Owen Owens 10 Oct. 1840. OWN 3/2/4/1. Hodgson to Owen Owens 14 June 1842. OWN 3/12/4/6.

[65] Hodgson reported his share of the order as follows: "We yesterday agreed with Don Simon Pereira for the 11 bales of Saved List Cloths and Baize which appertain to his order of 20,000 yards…at $12.4 per yd. to be paid for at 60 days from the delivery of the goods, he guaranteeing the exchange on them at 2 and seven eighths [British pence per paper peso]." Hodgson to Owen Owens 1 Jan. 1842. OWN 3/12/4/6.

"So long as General Rosas holds despotic power…it is vain to expect commercial enterprise can extend or prosper."[66] Ruing the "evil state of our market at present, this country altogether is in such a precarious and unsettled condition, as well as likely to remain so for many months to come."[67] Hodgson was not the only victim of the Pereira deal. Richard and John Carlisle, fellow English North Countrymen and principals of a merchant house similar to his for the past twenty years, were also left unpaid for cloth they delivered. They too returned to England.[68]

Adversity prompted merchants to scour the region for new markets, a practice that led to another efflorescence of imaginary projects like Ponsonby's more than a decade before. In 1844, a member of the firm G.F. Dickson and Co. sailed north up the South Atlantic coast to Rio Grande do Sul in a forlorn search for new business.[69] Wilfrid Latham, a member of a Liverpool merchant house, who succeeded Hodgson as the consignee for Owen Owens in Buenos Aires, became fixated on eastern Bolivia. He exhumed Ponsonby's dream of connecting the continental interior with the Rio de la Plata. He became convinced the Rio Pilcomayo, north of the Rio Bermejo, provided a route from Bolivia to the Plata to enable development of sugar and tobacco plantations.[70] The death of Francia in 1840 altered perceptions of Paraguay, to encourage hopes his successor, Carlos Antonio López, would reopen the country to foreign trade.[71] In Montevideo, the Uruguayan Colorados and the exiled Argentine Unitarios, their allies, began plotting a military alliance with López to overthrow Rosas. Their propaganda proclaimed Paraguay's enormous economic potential once it was reconnected with the Rio de la Plata. Desperate merchants responded. The Dicksons for one had always

[66] Hodgson to Owen Owens, 7 Jan. 1843. OWN 3/12/4/7.

[67] Hodgson to Owen Owens 28 Oct. 1843. OWN 3/12/4/7.

[68] Pereira made part payment to Hodgson for ₤500, with another portion of his payment in cattle hides. See Hodgson to Owen Owens 1 Jan. and 28 Mar. 1842. OWN 3/2/4/6. For later stages of the dispute, see Hodgson to Owen Owens 13 Jan. and 7 Mar. 1844. OWN 3/2/4/8. Dickson reported that Pereira owed half a million pesos, some £5200, to the Carlisle brothers. See Dickson Archive 1 Mar. 1844. Pereira was reported bankrupt but survived with government help.

[69] See Dickson and Co, 1 Mar. 1844.

[70] Latham to Owen Owens 1846. OWN 3/2/4/6. Like the Bermejo, the Pilcomayo running south-east into the Rio Paraguay south of Asunción (and from the Rio Paraguay into the Rio Paraná) proved impassable. The river remained unexplored until the 1880s. For descriptive data, see Kroeber, *Shipping Industry*, 12.

[71] Dickson 27 July 1844.

viewed Paraguay as a hopeless case, in which people lived "in the most abject poverty, reduced to an aboriginal state." Henceforward, they looked at Paraguay with greater optimism.[72]

Linking Paraguay with Montevideo required seizing control of the Rio Paraná from Rosas. In 1842, an expedition led by Giuseppe Garibaldi, the later hero of the Italian Risorgimento who was currently under contract to the Colorados, tried to achieve it. Moving forces to the islet of Martín García at the mouth of the Paraná, he prepared to move upriver. Rosas's troops defeated the manoeuvre, forcing Garibaldi into retreat. To prevent any more incursions, his men laid a boom of chains and sunken ships across the river at Vuelta de Obligado, a hundred miles upriver at a point where the river narrows. It was believed that bluffs overlooking the waterway, a twist in its course and a strong downward current would provide protection against any renewed moves from the south.[73] Rosas then took the offensive. In early 1843—around the time James Hodgson left Buenos Aires—forces under his ally Oribe crossed from Entre Rios into Uruguay. Moving swiftly, they headed for Montevideo to lay siege to the city. On this occasion, the siege of Montevideo lasted nine years. In the 1820s, Gen. William Miller had described Montevideo as the Gibraltar of South America. In the 1840s, French novelist Alexandre Dumas dubbed it "The New Troy."

* * *

In the early 1840s, the great rivers of the region led by the Rio Paraná thus became a major focus of attention. In Montevideo, a group of British merchants supported the quest of the Unitarios and Colorados for links between Uruguay and Paraguay in the hope it would foment a profitable new river trade. Samuel Fisher Lafone, an Englishman of Huguenot descent, became its leading figure; Liverpool-born, although long resident in Montevideo, Lafone retained close ties with his place of birth through his brother, who supplied him with British-manufactured goods.[74] He began his South American career in Buenos Aires in 1825 as a twenty year old merchant clerk. He crossed to Montevideo in 1833, at a time Buenos Aires remained mired in recession amid rumour he was fleeing

[72] Dickson 28 Jan. 1843.

[73] *Index and Register* 3 May 1842. FO/605. "Montevideo forces a way into the Paraná by taking over Martín García."

[74] On Lafone, see Peter Sims. "Networks and the British Merchant Community of Uruguay, 1830–1875: Outline and Case Studies." http://www2.lse.ac.uk/economicHistory/seminars/sims.pdf

from debt. He also escaped a furore over his recent marriage.[75] While still living in Buenos Aires, he eloped with María Quevedo y Alsina, daughter of a former Spanish merchant, and secretly married her in a Protestant ceremony. Not uncommon, elopements were usually forgotten, although on this occasion Lafone chose the wrong moment. Strenuous objections by the bride's father coincided with the British capture of the Falkland Islands and the campaign by Catholic clerics against marriages between foreign Protestant merchants and local women. As the father threatened to immure his daughter in a convent, Lafone hastily remarried her in a Catholic church, which reluctantly committed him to raising the couple's children as Catholics.[76]

He then spent twenty years in Montevideo building a business of scale and variety. His activities included transporting Canary Islanders and Basques to Uruguay. He sought to revive the interest of the British Admiralty in Montevideo by establishing shipping links with the Falkland Islands. In light of these services, he received a large Crown land grant on a southern peninsula of East Falkland still known as Lafonia.[77] He began developing Punta del Este, a peninsula east of Montevideo, that in later times became one of the prime vacation resorts throughout Latin America.[78] Attracting a few British settlers to Montevideo, in 1844 he received a subsidy under the 1826 Act of Parliament to build a Protestant chapel on the city shoreline.[79] As in Buenos Aires twenty years before, the founding of the chapel pointed once more to the preferred method of the time to administer small British settler communities abroad.

Long hostile towards Buenos Aires after his experience in 1833, Lafone became a vocal supporter of Uruguayan self-government, a prominent

[75] Conflicts between Lafone and Thomas Armstrong over unpaid bills are reported in *British Packet* 16 Feb. 1831; also *Diario de la Tarde* 20 June 1831.

[76] Lafone married Maria Quevedo y Alsina three times in one year, first in the unauthorised service denounced by the Catholics clerics, secondly in the Catholic service forced on him, and lastly in the consular church. The story is retold in David George. *Historia de la Iglesia Anglicana en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Epifanía, 2010, 11–12.

[77] The contract between Lafone and the Crown representatives is preserved in TS 25/215. Its failure may be followed in C 15/195/F29.

[78] Lafone became part-purchaser of Gorriti Island, off Punta del Este. In 1879, a proposal was made to cede the island to Britain as a naval base but was never completed. See Winn, *Inglaterra y la Tierra Purpúrea*, I: 219.

[79] On the origins of the Montevideo chapel, see Edward Every. *The Anglican Church in South America*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1915, 42.

financial backer of the Colorados and an outspoken critic of Rosas.[80] He demanded "the complete independence [of Uruguay], security for our persons, our property, and our future commerce from the tyranny, caprice and influence of Rosas and his myrmidons."[81] As interest in Paraguay stirred in the early 1840s, he revived another of Ponsonby's plans, this time to establish a so-called Federation of the Littoral as a British protectorate policed by naval patrols. William MacCann, an authoritative British writer on the Rio de la Plata of the period, named his friend Lafone as a leading proponent of Greater Uruguay. The two agreed "a British war steamer should continually ascend and descend these rivers, giving to English merchants the countenance and protection they so absolutely need."[82]

Lafone joined intrigues in Montevideo to impose another blockade on Buenos Aires. If they succeeded, he expected some major benefits. Merchants like him would increase the sales of goods they imported from Europe. Restrictions on competition from across the river would benefit his meat salting plant outside Montevideo. He became a leading figure of the Sociedad Compradora de los Derechos de la Aduana (SCDA—Association for the Purchase of the Customs Revenue), a tax farming scheme formed in Montevideo in 1844. The hundred or so foreign merchants who joined this scheme agreed to advance funds to the government in return for the right to collect and share out half the customs revenues.[83] How to instigate another blockade? During the early 1840s, the British public faced a barrage of negative press reports about Buenos Aires dwelling on the evils of the Rosas regime. Emanating from the Unitario press in Montevideo, they were collected and translated by Thomas Pownall Dale,

[80] On Lafone, see Hanon. *Diccionario*, 492–494; Arnoldo Canclini. "Samuel F. Lafone: apuntes para su biografía." *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, No. 49, 1999, 123–162, containing details of his British background, his marriage and religious outlook. Winn, *Inglaterra y la Tierra Purpúrea*, I:66–71 describes the early British population of Uruguay.

[81] Montevideo merchants to Ouseley 30 May 1846. FO 6–123.

[82] William MacCann. *Two Thousand Miles' Ride through the Argentine Provinces: being an account of the natural products of the country, and habits of the people, with a historical retrospect of the Rio de la Plata, Monte Video and Corrientes.* Vol. 2. London: Elder, 1853, 292.

[83] On the SCDA, see Peter Sims. "Crisis and Speculation: British Merchants and the Uruguayan Civil War, 1839–1851." Paper presented at the European Historical Economics Conference, Dublin 2011. A more comprehensive account is Sims. *Social Networks and Entrepreneurship. The British Merchant Community of Uruguay, 1830–1875.* Ph.D. diss. London School of Economics, 2014, 163–175.

Lafone's brother-in-law, the acting British consul in Montevideo. He forwarded them to the Association of Mexican and South American Merchants (ANSAM) in Liverpool for circulation to the British press and the Foreign Office. For several years, the ANSAM carried some influence with the Foreign Office and British public opinion. In 1842 it persuaded the diplomats to conclude a trade agreement with Uruguay known as the Ellauri-Mandeville treaty extending the terms of the 1825 treaty with Buenos Aires to Montevideo.[84]

In British eyes, trade with Montevideo had advantages over Buenos Aires beyond its easier access from the Atlantic. Montevideo merchants paid for their goods in hard currency, so-called sterling dollars of silver, a practice abandoned in Buenos Aires.[85] In Montevideo, the prevalence of silver currency indicated the political primacy of foreign merchants, whereas in Buenos Aires, the constant use of paper money denoted the greater prominence of local interests, notably the landed classes and a spendthrift government. In the former city, the formation of the SCDA showed the strength of the merchants, while in the latter city, as shown during the late 1820s, paper money was used to support the government, to reduce indebtedness to foreign merchants and (as this book's next chapter shows) to finance land leases.[86] Montevideo and Buenos Aires funded their governments differently. Tax farming schemes like that in Montevideo did not exist in Buenos Aires. There, governments used import duties for revenue and when revenue diminished employed entities like the Banco Nacional to print paper money.

[84] The Ellauri-Mandeville treaty with Uruguay was only "a transcript of that concluded long before with the Argentine Republic." *British Packet* 20 Aug. 1842. Pressure on the British government from Uruguay through the ANSAM and other associations is detailed in Winn, *Inglaterra y la Tierra Purpúrea*, I:62, notes 22, 23 and 24. See "Memorial of the Merchants and other British subjects residing in the Territory of the Uruguayan Republic," 15 April 1842.

[85] Underlining the difference, see Hodgson to Owen Owens 16 Nov. 1840. OWN 3/2/4/4. Effecting remittances in hides required additional expense on insurance.

[86] Uruguayan monetary practices are noted in David Joslin. *A Century of Banking in Latin America, to Commemorate the Centenary in 1962 of the London and South America Bank Limited*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963, 53–58. The economic power of landowners in Buenos Aires is widely referenced in Burgin, *Argentine Federalism* and Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*. Discussing the 1880s, A.G. Ford contrasted the loose money practices of Buenos Aires with the monetary orthodoxy of Australian and New Zealand banks, where "finance" commanded similar dominance as in Uruguay. See A.G. Ford. *The Gold Standard, 1880–1914: Britain and Argentina*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962, 94, 133. Discussion of differences in monetary policies between the two countries appears in Rock and López-Alves, *Argentina and Uruguay*.

Although British merchants constantly deplored the use of paper money in Buenos Aires, they could do nothing to check it. Long into his retirement in the 1860s, James Hodgson pondered the profits he would have made had he been able to remit his earnings in "gold and silver coin of standard weight and fineness…In former days we have suffered so severely from the depreciation of this Buenos Ayres paper money, that we have lost all confidence and faith in it as well as in those who have the manipulation of it."[87]

As propaganda by the ANSAM intensified, *The Times* of London began to promote the cause of Montevideo against that of Buenos Aires. It offered two main reasons, that Montevideo settled its debts in specie and that it supported opening the rivers to British trade.[88] As foreign secretary once more in 1841–1846 under Sir Robert Peel, Lord Aberdeen lavished praise on Montevideo: "Our commerce with Montevideo is rapidly increasing and is very much more considerable than with Buenos Ayres…Our trade with Montevideo is very important and it is through the liberal policy of that republic that we may hope for its extension in South America."[89]

* * *

In late 1844 Aberdeen appointed William Ouseley, formerly head of British legation in Rio de Janeiro, as minister plenipotentiary at Buenos Aires. He instructed him to attempt to induce Rosas to abandon his alliance with Oribe, which he believed threatened the independence of Uruguay and therefore the future of British trade. Resorting to the standard free trade discourse of the day, Aberdeen contended that terminating the siege of Montevideo would meet everyone's interests by promoting commerce, peace and general happiness. If Ouseley failed to achieve this objective, the foreign secretary authorised him to join with the French "to unite their influence, and, if need be, their force" to pressure Rosas into

[87] Hodgson to Slatter 21 May 1864. GHR 5/1/10.

[88] *The Times* 17 Feb. 1845 reproduced the Unitario propaganda known as the *Tablas de Sangre* ("Tablets of Blood"). The newspaper claimed Rosas's disruption of trade cost £5 million in British exports, a sum amounting to at least 7 years of British exports to the Rio de la Plata. The true scale of repression under Rosas, also commonly exaggerated, is examined in Gabriel Di Meglio. *¡Mueran los salvajes unitarios! La Mazorca y la política en tiempos de Rosas*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2007.

[89] Quoted in David McLean. *Diplomacy and Informal Empire. Britain and the Republics of the La Plata, 1836–1853*. London: Academic Press, 1995, 190, 201. Prime Minister Peel supported Aberdeen's position. See Winn, *Inglaterra y la Tierra Purpúrea*, 1:63.

conformity by another blockade of Buenos Aires. The use of force was to be strictly limited. Aberdeen stressed the British government had "no intention of carrying on any operations by land" or of seizing control of the Rio Paraná to impose freedom of navigation.[90] Current relations with the French likely influenced his directives, which amounted to a show of power rather than its actual deployment. In recent years, rivalry between the two powers in the eastern Mediterranean had escalated to the point the French threatened to invade Britain. Aberdeen hoped a successful joint enterprise in South America in the interests of British trade would improve relations.[91]

In Buenos Aires, Ouseley spent weeks appealing to Rosas to withdraw his forces from Uruguay but with no success. Political divisions proved far too entrenched to allow a simple switch from enmity and discord to peace and harmony. If Rosas retreated, he could expect an immediate invasion of Buenos Aires by his enemies. While determined to prolong the siege, Rosas revealed his apprehensiveness that the Europeans would land troops in the province of Buenos Aires. During discussions with Ouseley, he reminded him of the events of 1806 when Beresford's forces were forced into surrender after losing contact with their naval support. He warned him another invasion by Europeans would incur the same fate. If foreign troops disembarked anywhere near Buenos Aires, the Mazorca would round up British and French settlers in the city as hostages.[92] His warnings left an impression. French commanders grew fearful of an attack on the local French community, while a British officer wrote home on "how impossible it is for us to punish the Argentine people without immense loss of property, and perhaps life too, to ourselves."[93]

The menace of hostage-taking left most British residents in Buenos Aires unperturbed. Some recent Irish settlers fled to Montevideo but nearly all the long-established community members stood their ground. Incensed at Ouseley, they objected to the entire Anglo-French intervention. As the Dicksons warned, "England and France must abstain from interfering otherwise instead of protecting their subjects they will ruin them."[94] Close ties between leading British merchants and members of the

[90] *Instructions to Mr. Ouseley for his Guidance in the Anglo-French Intervention in the River Plate.* From the Archivo Americano. Montevideo: South American Print Office, 1845, 2, 8.

[91] A recent summary is Rebecca Berens Matzke. *Deterrence through Strength. British Naval Power and Foreign Policy under the Pax Britannica.* Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 2011, 30.

[92] Ouseley to FO 4 Aug. 1845. FO 6–104.

[93] Kent Archives Office. (My thanks to Charles Jones for this citation.)

[94] Dickson 28 Jan. 1845.

Rosas government became evident during Ouseley's stay in Buenos Aires. The Dicksons, for example, reported a visit by Felipe Arana, Rosas's foreign minister, to complain about the diplomat's activities.[95]

In late July 1845, Ouseley abandoned Buenos Aires for Montevideo, inviting the British residents to follow him. Very few of them stirred. Instead, leading merchants—Thomas Gibson, Thomas Armstrong, Edward Lumb and Richard Newton—petitioned Aberdeen to abandon the intervention. They informed Aberdeen that if they left Buenos Aires they would face ruin, losing their homes, land and any opportunity to collect their debts. "It is utterly impossible for us to leave the country," they claimed. "Many of us who are engaged in trade with Great Britain hold large stocks of British goods consigned to us for sale. [We] have heavy outstandings [*sic*] in a paper currency daily depreciating… Others have their entire fortunes in [Buenos Aires] and the country districts." They noted that Rosas had always respected the 1825 treaty, urging Aberdeen to take particular note of its Article XI. It stated that if diplomatic ties between Britain and the former United Provinces were ever disrupted, "the subjects or citizens of either of the two contracting parties…shall have the privilege of remaining and continuing their trade, without any manner of interruption, so long as they behave peaceably, and commit no offence against the laws." They reminded Aberdeen of the benefits to British interests under the treaty. "The privilege we have in commerce, pastoral or agricultural pursuits, inland navigation or any other brand of industry…places us on a better footing than the natives themselves since we enjoy all the best rights without any of the serious burthens."[96] First published in Britain by the *Morning Post*, a newspaper tied to Palmerston and the opposition Whigs, the petition appealed to Aberdeen to reappraise his policy. The appeal had a major impact, as support for Buenos Aires began to stir in Britain and enthusiasm for Montevideo to abate.[97]

In Montevideo, Ouseley joined his French counterpart, Antoine Louis Deffaudis, in preparing to blockade Buenos Aires. As in 1838–1840, the blockading fleet intended to force incoming shipping into Montevideo, where goods would pay duties on both entry and departure for Buenos

[95] Dickson 26 June 1845.

[96] Petition from Merchants and Landowners to the Foreign Office, 31 July 1845. FO 6/108.

[97] The pro-Porteño position is set out in Anon. *British Diplomacy in the River Plate*. London: Whitaker, 1847. The pro-Montevideo faction continued to agitate in Britain led by John O'Brien, a former Irish mercenary tied to the SCDA.

Aires. Ships with cargoes from Buenos Aires also faced an obligatory halt in Montevideo and payment of duties. Stacked in favour of the SCDA in Montevideo, the requirements prompted widespread criticism by outsiders. US diplomats complained about "our merchants [having] to pay duties on exports and imports in Montevideo, as well as [in Buenos Aires]. The proceeds from the Montevidean customs belong to a company of English merchants who make advances to sustain the government and the present objective of the blockaders is to secure them from loss."[98]

The French used revenue from the blockade to strengthen their forces defending Montevideo against Oribe, but the British suffered major losses as shippers and merchants scaled down their business.[99] By one estimate, British exports to Buenos Aires fell from £592,000 in 1845 to only £182,000 in 1846.[100] Facing growing criticism, Aberdeen retreated. He refused Ouseley's requests for military reinforcements, claiming he would use them to "foment disaffection and disturbance in a country with which we are not at war."[101] He modified his opinion of Rosas, whom events had revealed in "favourable contrast to much that has been reported of him."[102] He turned against the pro-Montevideo lobby in Britain led by the ANSAM. "We have been a great deal misled," he commented. "The agents of Montevideo have been indefatigable."[103] As the financial losses mounted and the British government withdrew its support, the blockade unravelled.

Ouseley grew entangled in regional politics. In October 1845, he joined Deffaudis in authorising an Anglo-French naval expedition from Montevideo to impose "freedom of navigation" on the Rio Paraná. The fleet was destined for Asunción, a river voyage of almost one thousand miles. Once there, its commanders were ordered to assemble a coalition of Rosas's enemies to sail south to confront him. The river expedition of 1845 became further significant by bringing steamboats to this region of

[98] US Consul Graham to State Department. Quoted in Clifton B. Kroeber. "Naval Warfare in the Rio de la Plata Region, 1800–1861." Madison: *Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*. 1956, 104.

[99] Anon, *British Diplomacy*, 26. "The result of the present blockade has been to annihilate our valuable direct trade with Buenos Ayres."

[100] Tulio Halperín Donghi. *Guerra y finanzas en los orígenes del estado argentino (1791–1850)*. Buenos Aires: Belgrano, 1982, 238. Llorca-Jaña reports the same figures on British trade as Halperín: 1844 £785,000; 1845 £582,000; 1846 £187,000. See *British Textile Trade*, 310–311.

[101] Ouseley to Aberdeen 29 Mar. 1846 FO 6/116; Aberdeen to Ouseley 5 May 1846. FO 6/114.

[102] Aberdeen's exchanges with Ouseley from late 1845 are contained FO 6/114 to 118.

[103] McLean, *Diplomacy and Informal Empire*, 80.

South America. Two years earlier, prominent Unitario Florencio Varela, an exile in Montevideo and editor of the influential *El Comercio del Plata*, went to Europe to canvass support for Montevideo and to commission the purchase of steamboats for use in trade with Paraguay.[104] During this period, the ANSAM intensified its propaganda to promote Montevideo on behalf of Merseyside merchants and ship builders. It commissioned Thomas Baines, a leading Liverpool publicist, to stress the "strong and rapidly increasing interest [of] the port of Liverpool in the preservation of the threatened independence of the Republic of Uruguay."

Baines forged a grandiose vision of Montevideo as the nodal point of a new great thoroughfare of British trade forged by steamships. He claimed tropical regions deep in the South American interior thought to be accessible by river would soon become sites for vast cotton, tobacco and timber plantations. Steamboats manufactured on Merseyside would provide a way to link the Andes with the Rio de la Plata and the Atlantic along the waterways across the Chaco led by the Bermejo and the Pilcomayo. As they reached the sources of the Paraná and Paraguay rivers to the far north, Baines predicted the steamboat pioneers would encounter the north-flowing tributaries of the Amazon. As the hub of this future great network of internal trade, Montevideo would soon become "as flourishing as New Orleans [and] the commerce of the River Plate [come to] rival that of the Mississippi."[105]

In his book *Steam Warfare on the Parana*, Lauchlan Mackinnon, a serving naval officer during the Anglo-French intervention, expatiated on "the wonderful power of steam…not only in warfare but also in speed of transit." By his reckoning, steamboats would reduce the duration of the journey between Montevideo and Corrientes, a distance of some 800 miles by river, from three months to only two weeks.[106] Wilfrid Latham, the

[104] On Varela's journey to Europe, see Juan E. Pivel Devoto and Alcira Ranieri de Pivel Devoto. *Historia de la República Oriental del Uruguay*. 3rd. edition. Montevideo: Medina, 1966, 52. Support for the project appears in *El Comercio del Plata* 4 Oct. 1845, 5 Mar. 1846.

[105] Thomas Baines. *Observations on the Present State of the Affairs of the River Plate*. Liverpool: Liverpool Times Office, 1845, 9–10. On Merseyside steam ship building, see Kenneth Warren. *Steel, Ships and Men: Cammell Laird, 1824–1993*. Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1998, 30–31. In the 1840s the Laird company, an early developer of steamships at Birkenhead, was "ahead of the market, especially in building in iron" and actively seeking foreign markets.

[106] Lauchlan Bellingham Mackinnon. *Steam Warfare on the Parana: A Narrative of Operations, by the Combined Squadrons of England and France, in Forcing a Passage up that River*. London: Charles Ollier, 1848, vol. 1, 1, 183. Early military use of steam boats is explored in Daniel R. Headrick. *The Tools of Empire. Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981, noting the importance of the Yangtze expedition of 1842 in early fluvial steam navigation. Gunboats, usually powered

imaginative Liverpool merchant in Buenos Aires, envisioned steamboats connecting newly developing plantations in El Oriente, Bolivia with the Plata.[107] In Montevideo, Samuel Lafone foresaw steam powered gun boats patrolling the rivers as the littoral became a British protectorate.[108] Similarly enthused, Ouseley urged Aberdeen to send him "four or five steamers not only for the navigation of the rivers generally, but to enable Her Majesty's servants to keep prompt and secure communication."[109]

To reach the upper Paraná, the Anglo-French fleet first had to overcome Rosas's boom at Vuelta de Obligado, a position defended by forces which included British mercenaries. In a pitched battle on 20 November 1845 the attackers eliminated the obstruction with the loss of around a score of their men in a total of 1100 soldiers and marines. Casualties on the opposite side climbed to at least 250, and by some counts more than twice that number. A British officer reported a "horrible and disgusting scene…Hundreds [of Rosas's troops] lay about cut in two, arms and legs cut off, and dreadfully mutilated…[T]he woods are literally strewn with the dead."[110] The one-sided clash provided an opportunity to test steamships as weapons of war. As reported to Aberdeen, "the English steamers, from the weight and power of their metal, had a most important share in the fighting."[111] The expedition then moved upriver with an international flotilla of merchants in pursuit, its ports of call extending as far as Asunción. In Paraguay, Ouseley's strategy collapsed as the army he hoped to create failed to materialise. The López government refused to make war on Rosas, while Unitario forces under General José María Paz in Corrientes proved weaker than expected. In failing too as a commercial venture, the

by paddles in this period, were defined as "iron men of war of light draught but of sufficient strength to enable guns of very heavy calibre" (pp. 31–32).

[107] Latham to Owens OWN 3/2/4/6. [1846]

[108] MacCann, *Argentine Provinces*, II: 292.

[109] Ouseley to Aberdeen 12 Oct. 1845. FO 6/105.

[110] Report by Captain Reginald Levinge in *The Westmeath Guardian and Longford News-Letter* 26 March 1846.

[111] A lengthy account of the fighting, principally a cannonade directed at Rosas's defensive positions, appears in Ouseley to Aberdeen 20 Dec. 1845. FO 6/107. A French military historian inflated the encounter as "un fait d'armes, le plus glorieux de l'histoire de la Marine sous la règne de Louis-Philippe." Jean-David Avanel. *L'Affaire du Rio de la Plata, (1838–1852)*. Paris: Economia, 1998. 73. From the opposite viewpoint, a recent Argentine Revisionist view portrays the battle in similarly hyperbolic terms as "a great epic." See Pacho O'Donnell. *La gran epopeya. El combate de la Vuelta de Obligado*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Norma, 2010.

1845 expedition exploded the myths that had dominated British views of the South American heartland for the past generation. Near-subsistence peasant communities on the river provided no market for European imports. Throughout the entire length of the Paraná north of Santa Fe, the port of Corrientes alone had landing wharves.[112] The region produced and exported cattle hides, yerba mate and ñandubay hardwood. Traders would rope the timber together making rafts known as *jangadas*, using them to float hides and yerba mate downriver to Buenos Aires where merchants resold it to cattle ranchers as fencing.[113]

Scoffing at the notion of ever developing the Paraná into a commercial artery remotely resembling the Mississippi, Rosas's supporters claimed Paraguay too afforded near-zero opportunities for trade. "One Liverpool cargo would suffice to supply all [its] wants for an entire year," they claimed.[114] A handful of British merchants exploring Corrientes speculated that the upper Paraná might have a commercial future one day but it certainly had none at present. "The state of continual warfare in which the province has existed for more than seven years has impoverished the people generally; add to this the absence in the army at present of many of the most industrious labouring classes, whose families depended entirely upon them for subsistence, has increased their poverty to such a degree as to paralyse all mercantile transactions, since they are destitute of money to purchase the necessaries of life." The merchants predicted it would take at least eighteen months, and likely much longer, to dispose of the cargoes brought upriver.[115]

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[112] Kroeber, *Shipping Industry*, 146, n. 14.

[113] Osvaldo Barsky and Julio Djenderedjian. *La historia del capitalismo agrario pampeano. Vol. 1. La expansion ganadera hasta 1895.* Buenos Aires, Siglo Veintiuno, 2003, 78.

[114] *British Packet* 16 July 1842

[115] Merchants to Ouseley 27 Jan. 1846. FO 6–117. Other reports of conditions in the upper Paraná appear in *British Packet* 6 Feb. 1847. For a contrary opinion on the river trade arguing it expanded rapidly from 1846, see David McLean. "Trade, Politics and the Navy in Latin America: The British in the Paraná, 1845–1846." *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*. Vol. 35, No. 3, Sept. 2007, 351–370. His argument is correct for the lower Paraná particularly on Rosario, but overstated concerning the upper Paraná beyond Santa Fe. On steamers in the coastal trade, see Kroeber, *Shipping Industry*, 43–108; Reber, *British Mercantile Houses*, 123; Brown, *Argentina*, 98–104.

Having authorised the Paraná expedition despite his instructions to the contrary from Aberdeen, Ouseley floundered in contradictions as he sought to justify his actions. In one message to the foreign secretary, he described the aim of the expedition as "purely commercial," but then in another claimed it was intended to cut supply links between Oribe's forces outside Montevideo and southern Brazil. First admitting he aimed to forge a military alliance with Paraguay, he then claimed he wanted to assist British ranchers in Corrientes (whose presence he invented) to find markets for cattle hides.[116] First and foremost, he revealed his obsession to destroy Rosas. He told Aberdeen that if larger European forces had been available, he would have launched them against Buenos Aires, regardless of any risks to British residents. Without troops, he had to use "indirect modes" of attack, by which he meant recruiting forces in Paraguay and the upper Paraná.[117] He wanted British troops to occupy southern Uruguay to disrupt the flow of supplies from Rosas in Buenos Aires to Oribe on the outskirts of Montevideo. He urged a formal declaration of war on Rosas. "Unless a powerful country like Great Britain declares war on General Rosas, the population over which he exercises his unmerciful control will not dare to throw off his yoke."[118] He condemned the "madness" of Rosas manifest in his "love of despotism. Power is the only ruling passion of General Rosas and has dictated all his actions for almost twenty years."[119] Offering no support, Aberdeen denounced the Paraná expedition as an "aggression upon the territory of the Argentine Confederation."[120] He reprimanded Ouseley for promoting "untoward and anomalous hostilities [and failing to] recognise [due] proportion between advantage [to British interests] and the expense of military interference." He accused him of being swayed by "the feuds and factions" in Uruguay among

[116] Ouseley to Aberdeen 26 Aug., 12 and 29 Oct. 1845. FO 6/105.

[117] In July a naval commander advised Ouseley against landing troops on the mainland because the British had sufficient military resources to take the island of Martín García only. See Inglefield to Ouseley 2 July 1845 FO 6/108. On proposals for British military occupation of the Banda Oriental, see Ouseley to Aberdeen 25 Oct. 1845 FO 6/105.

[118] Ouseley to Aberdeen 18 Oct. 1845. FO 6/105.

[119] Ouseley to Aberdeen 27 Feb. 1846. FO 6/116. Ouseley is not difficult to ridicule. Ferns called him "a silly and hysterical man…a social climber and a man in whom personal spite and vanity had the upper hand." Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 270

[120] See Aberdeen to Ouseley 14 Feb. 1846. FO 6/114.

people like Samuel Lafone: "You have merged the mediator in the partisan and [given] so many proofs of the prejudicial counsels which surround you."[121]

Despite his egregious errors of judgement, Ouseley made one constructive contribution to future British policy. On his arrival in the Plata, he pondered whether to revive Ponsonby's plan to convert Entre Rios and Corrientes into independent republics or to form a single independent state on the left bank of the Rio Paraná—the *patria vieja* once more. He abandoned such plans as he realised that dismembering the Argentine Confederation would leave the Empire of Brazil all-powerful. He concluded that British interests would be best served by upholding the Argentine Confederation, whose vast territory and established commercial networks provided the optimal framework for British trade. From this point, the long succession of proposals by figures like Bowles, Canning, Ponsonby and Lafone to use Montevideo as a base replacing Buenos Aires began to peter out.

British policy changed following the general election of mid-1846 as Palmerston won reappointment as foreign secretary. He quickly urged the Admiralty to abandon the blockade against Buenos Aires.[122] He sent Lord Howden, another Irish-born diplomat like Ponsonby, to patch up relations with Rosas. Howden denounced the merchants of Montevideo like Lafone as "unprincipled villains, mere speculators in war…powerful in England from having so much of the press under their orders and in their pay."[123] In Parliament, Benjamin Disraeli, currently a rising political figure, indicted the Anglo-French intervention as a waste of public money that had stirred a pointless conflict with a "second rate revolting colony of Spain [*sic*]."[124] As occurred in 1806 and 1807, British governments were brought to recognise that any attempt to use of force in the Rio de la Plata was destined to fail.

During his final years as governor of Buenos Aires until 1852, Rosas revelled in his victory over the intervention. He told William McCann he would never countenance a European "protectorate [over the Plata], or

[121] Aberdeen to Ouseley 4 March, 5 May, 2 July 1846. FO 6/114.

[122] On legal issues relating to the blockade, see Palmerston to Ouseley 4 Dec. 1846. FO 6/114, in which Palmerston conceded the blockading powers had no right to halt American ships sailing directly to Buenos Aires.

[123] Quoted in McLean, *Diplomacy and Informal Empire*, 190.

[124] *British Packet* 7 April, 1849.

detract one iota from the liberty and national independence of which [we] are very jealous." He had demonstrated to the outside world he could resist European imperialism. The Argentine Confederation would never become an imperial territory: "We are not Algeria or India."[125] Although Rosas fought hard in defence of local sovereignty, his revenue needs left him still dependent on trade, principally with Britain. In 1847 a "Memorandum to Lord Howden" published in the *British Packet* set out Rosas's position on the issue. A British resident of Buenos Aires who signed himself "Anglo-Porteño"—in all likelihood one of the pro-Rosas signatories of the petition to Aberdeen in 1845—put his name to a document summarising the governor's opinions. It stated Rosas would accept the country remaining commercially dependent on Britain but would never let it become a British colony.

The memorandum urged the British government to recall that the chief aim of the 1825 treaty lay in developing trade. Its methods included encouraging British settlers in Buenos Aires to provide "a broad and secure basis for the predominance of British interests and the permanent interests of British commerce." Anglo-Porteño described such settlers—people like himself—as "the true pioneers of British commerce. More permanently fixed in the country and mixing more freely with the native population, we are in reality diffusing British tastes and habits; in other words paving the way and creating a demand for British manufacture." Urging renewed British settlement, he proposed a far closer future relationship between the two countries utilising the vast land reservoir of the pampas. By supplying farm products to Britain, the Confederation could evolve into a British "colony" of a new type the British would never have the trouble and expense either to administer or garrison. "Great Britain might reap here all the essential benefits of a colony without cost or responsibility, without shedding a drop of human blood, or encroaching on a single right of the native population." Anglo-Porteño predicted that at some point in the future war in Europe would disrupt the flow of food and raw materials into the United Kingdom, and when that happened the pampas could become a major source of supply. Published in 1847, the statement foretold events during World War I and World War II, generations into the future, when Argentine meat and grains helped feed the British population. All this could happen, declared Anglo-Porteño, if the

[125] MacCann, *Argentine Provinces*, II: 27.

British respected Argentine sovereignty: for both sides, maximum trade and complete independence offered optimal benefits.[126]

* * *

The early 1850s brought radical change to the Rio de la Plata, in the first instance by revolution. A new era began with the revolt of General Justo José de Urquiza of Entre Rios, formerly Rosas's great ally against Lavalle and the Unitarios. Urquiza challenged the restrictions on the river traffic that damaged his province and his extensive cattle businesses. Switching sides, he began recruiting allies to overthrow the Rosas regime. With support from Brazil, he first defeated Oribe to raise the siege of Montevideo and in early 1852 led his army into Buenos Aires to overthrow Rosas. The ex-governor fled to England under British naval protection, where for the next quarter-century, with some assistance from Palmerston, he embarked on a new life as a gentleman farmer.

With Rosas in exile, disputes over the rivers concluded. In 1853, Urquiza concluded treaties with Britain, France and the United States instituting free navigation on the Paraná and the Uruguay.[127] In subsequent years, steamships made a major impact on the lower Paraná, spurring the development of Santa Fe province by the rapid growth of Rosario and that of European agrarian colonies.[128] Entre Rios too benefited as goods and passenger traffic appeared on the Rio Uruguay. Author Robert Cunninghame Graham recalled the early days of the steamships on the Uruguay. "At night, [they] gave the appearance of a section of a town that floated past the wilderness. Streams of electric light from every cabin lit up the yellow turgid river, and the notes of a band occasionally floated across the water as the vessel passed. Sometimes a searchlight falling on a herd of cattle…made them stampede into the darkness, dashing through

[126] Anglo-Porteño to Lord Howden. *British Packet* 3 July, 1847.

[127] Discussion of the treaty of 1853 appears in Anon. *Memorandum del gobierno de la provincia de Buenos Aires sobre los tratados celebrados por los ministros de Francia, Inglaterra y los Estados Unidos con el general Don Justo José de Urquiza sobre la libre navegación de los rios Paraná y Uruguay*. Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la Tribuna, 1853.

[128] Standard works include Ezequiel Gallo, *La Pampa Gringa: la colonización agrícola en Santa Fe, (1870–1895)*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1983; and Julio Derenderdjian. *Gringos en la pampa: inmigrantes y colonos en el campo argentino*, Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2008. On the Rio Uruguay, see Roberto Schmit. *Ruina y resurrección en tiempos de guerra. Sociedad, economía y poder en la oriente enterriano posrevolucionario, 1810–1852,* Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2004, 141–143.

brushwood or floundering through a marsh, till they had placed themselves in safety from this new terror of the night."[129] Despite the steamship traffic, the upper Paraná, where the indigenous Guaraní peasantry predominated and European colonies were few, suffered little change.

The year 1853 marked completion of the Argentine federal constitution, although nine years more of division and instability passed before it took full effect.[130] During this decade, the idea of a powerful central government to end the civil wars and develop a national market commanded growing support. British diplomats proved mistaken about the way the transition would be accomplished. Expecting Urquiza to pressure Buenos Aires to accept a national government dominated by Entre Rios, in 1854 they recognised the government he proclaimed in the city of Paraná, Entre Rios. They proved wrong as the province of Buenos Aires resisted union in this form leaving it in a subordinate position. Flexing its financial power thanks to retaining control over the customs, it rendered the Paraná government virtually penniless and then moribund. At length in September 1861, a Porteño army under General Bartolomé Mitre, a former companion of Garibaldi in Montevideo, defeated Urquiza in the battle of Pavón. As the Paraná regime collapsed, Buenos Aires took control of the entire country. Formerly governor of Buenos Aires, Mitre became president of the newly styled República Argentina for a six-year term under an amended version of the 1853 constitution.[131]

Throughout this period, non-intervention in the Rio de la Plata remained an article of faith of British policy. "I am not to interfere with the internal dissensions of any state, yet at the same time to afford every reasonable protection to the lives and properties of British subjects," recited a patrolling naval commander in 1857.[132] As the Foreign Office shied away from the Plata, the Admiralty reduced the size of naval patrols from more than twelve ships until 1845 to eight or less afterwards.[133]

[129] Robert Cunninghame Graham, "Los Pingos." In *The South American Sketches of R.B. Cunninghame Graham*, edited by John Walker. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1978, 158.

[130] On "national organisation," see Tulio Halperín Donghi. *Proyecto y construcción de una nación (Argentina, 1846–1880)*. Buenos Aires: Ariel Historia, 1995; Nicolas Shumway. *The Invention of Argentina*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991; William H. Katra. *The Argentine Generation of 1837: Echeverría, Alberdi, Sarmiento, Mitre*. Madison, Wis.: Associated University Presses, 1996.

[131] For details, see David Rock. *State Building and Political Movements in Argentina, 1860–1916*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, 11–53.

[132] Rear-Admiral W.J. Hope Johnstone to FO, 23 March 1857. FO 6/202.

[133] Tables showing the distribution of British naval ships worldwide appear in John F. Beeler. *British Naval Policy in the Gladstone-Disraeli Era, 1866–1880*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997, 28–51.

Policing the area became less necessary since the liberals (a generic label for the numerous factions of the era), who assumed power in the early 1860s, provided the British with all the backing and security they required. As Mitre and his successor Sarmiento defeated the enfeebled warlords in the interior, in 1869 Congress passed a Civil Code drafted by Dalmacio Vélez Sársfield to assist law enforcement in the outer provinces.[134] Thomas Hinchliff, a visitor of the early 1860s, captured the determination with which the country's new rulers—a form of warrior intelligentsia—pursued their quest for mastery. He noted "the unquiet spirit of these intriguing doctores [who believe] they have a holy mission to redeem the provinces from barbarism and caudillos."[135]

Montevideo suffered another period of stagnation and neglect. When the French abandoned the city in 1848, they left it "indigent in character and position."[136] The British too scaled back their interest in the city, using it henceforth as a mere stopping point and later on a coaling station on the way to Buenos Aires. In later decades, Montevideo attracted substantial British investment and revived, although its British population remained "few in number and not wealthy."[137] His vision of a Greater Uruguay in the framework of the *patria vieja* dispelled, Samuel Lafone retreated into obscurity. In 1867 a visitor found him working with his son at a copper mine in remote Fuerte de Andalgalá in Andean Catamarca.[138] Reconciled with Buenos Aires during his later years, he died there in 1871, a victim of the great yellow fever epidemic of that year.[139]

With Montevideo tethered, the great merchants of Buenos Aires consolidated their commercial hegemony. Already in 1852, British consul

[134] On Vélez Sársfield, see Abelardo Levaggi. *Dalmacio Vélez Sársfield. Jurisconsulto*. Córdoba: Facultad de Derecho y Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de Córdoba, 2005.

[135] Hinchliff, *South American Sketches* 161, 176

[136] French policy is discussed in Iwan Morgan, "Orleanist Diplomacy and the French Colony in Uruguay." *The International Historical Review*, no. 2, May 1983; also Avanel, *Rio de la Plata*. Also, David Rock. "The European Revolutions in the Rio de La Plata, 125–141." In *The European Revolutions of 1848 in the Americas*, edited by Guy Thomson. London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1998.

[137] Commentary on Montevideo appears in *South American Journal* 22 Jan. 1910. See also Robertson to Stanfordham 17 Apr. 1913. In RBTN: Catalogue of the Papers of Sir Malcolm Robertson, Box. Churchill College, University of Cambridge.

[138] Henry Charles Ross-Johnson. *A Long Vacation in the Argentine Alps, or, where to Settle in the River Plate States*. London: R. Bentley, 1868, 119–130.

[139] "Sam Lafone died too…probably Yellow Feaver [*sic]* in Buenos Aires), leaving three girls." Memoir by Maria Helena Williamson (née Krabbé) edited by John A.F. Lough, mimeo. (My thanks to Tim Lough for a copy of the unpublished memoir.)

Frank Parish (a son of Woodbine Parish) described them as "monopolising the wealth of the country in the capital and erecting an emporium of goods to supply the whole confederation."[140] At the time of Rosas's fall, continental European and American merchants shared primacy with the British. When Charles Darbyshire joined the firm of Bradshaw, Wanklyn and Jordan in Buenos Aires as a clerk in 1852, he reported only a dozen British businesses in the city.[141]

The major British survivors included Thomas Armstrong and Edward Lumb, leading importers since the 1820s, who in the 1850s and 1860s diversified their businesses. They moved into land, stock market investments, currency speculation, railways, cattle and beef salting plants. A Protestant Anglo-Irishman, Armstrong enhanced his standing in the mid-1840s by generous donations to the new British Hospital.[142] During Mitre's presidency, he bought estancias near Rosario and financed the new Central Argentine Railway.[143] He became a director of the Provincial Bank of Buenos Aires, the leading source of credit for cattle ranchers and sheep farmers. Yorkshire-born Lumb first grew visible in 1832–1833 as Charles Darwin's host in Buenos Aires, when he took his guest to meet Mary Clarke of *Lady Shore* fame. Lumb worked in Buenos Aires for half a century as a partner in the Liverpool firm of Nicholson, Green and Co, gaining prominence as the owner of several riverfront warehouses storing hides and wool.[144] One of Rosas's leading backers, he could well have been "Anglo-Porteño," the author of the prescient 1847 memorandum. In later days, he secured railway concessions from Congress and sold them to

[140] F. Parish to FO 30 Sept. 1852. FO 118/75.

[141] Charles Darbyshire. *My Life in the Argentine Republic*. London: Frederick Warne and Co., 1918, 20. Numbers are a contentious issue. Reber, *British Mercantile Houses*, 56, shows forty-five British merchant houses in 1852 but her data do not indicate how numbers altered during depressions. On recession-led "shakeouts," see Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, 80–84.

[142] On Armstrong, see Eduardo Zalduendo. *Las inversiones británicas para la promoción y desarrollo de ferrocarriles el siglo X IX: el caso de Argentina, Brasil, Canadá e India*. Buenos Aires: Instituto Torcuato Di Tella, 1968, 397, note 88.

[143] Zalduendo includes a map of landholdings near Rosario in the early 1860s showing that Armstrong, Samuel Lafone and Mariano Fragueiro all had estates close to the projected railway. See *Inversiones Británicas*, 291.

[144] An outline of Edward Lumb's career appeared in a report of the hundredth birthday of his son Carlos Lumb. Lumb senior was named one of the first wool exporters from Buenos Aires in the 1820s. See *Standard* 25 Oct. 1928.

British companies.[145] Together, Armstrong and Lumb developed close ties with Bernardo de Irigoyen, a leading landowner and political figure in the province of Buenos Aires.[146] When the two merchants died in the mid-1870s, each left estates valued at more than £200,000. Lumb's last will and testament revealed that he owned several enormous estancias and a dozen urban properties in Buenos Aires, including his warehouses adjacent to the customs sheds.[147]

In a memoir published forty years after her father's death, Lady Anne Lumb Macdonell, who was born in Buenos Aires in 1850, recalled her upbringing. She remembered the exotic cargoes he imported, notably Chinese silks and ceramics. Of the family's rambling home on the *calle* Florida in the city centre, she depicted "a house of threads and patches, and of no style at all. I remember the very spacious veranda, the old earthen tiled roof, lovely gardens, splendid vines, a peach orchard, fine nectarines." In 1870, Anne Lumb married Hugh Macdonell, the head of the British legation, who received one of her father's warehouses as a dowry. Macdonell remained at his post into the following year when the yellow fever epidemic felled up to 15,000 people in Buenos Aires including 200 British residents.[148] Soon after, the couple departed for Britain. For Anne Lumb Macdonell, the daughter of a Yorkshire-born South

[145] Mario Jorge López and Jorge Waddell, eds. *Nueva historia del ferrocarril en la Argentina. 150 años de política ferroviaria*. Buenos Aires: Fundación del Museo Ferroviario, 2007, 24.

[146] On ties between Irigoyen and British merchants, see José Bianco. *Don Bernardo de Irigoyen. Estadista y pionero, (1822–1906)*. Buenos Aires: Rosso, 1927, 151. Many of Armstrong's business activities are detailed in his will. See Tribunales. *Sucesiones* 3680 and 3681. Archivo General de la Nación (Tomás Armstrong). Armstrong's estate was valued at £235,000, as noted by Reber, *Merchant Houses*, 113. His obituary appeared in the *Standard* 9 June, 1875.

[147] Testamentaria de los cónyuges Sr. Don Eduardo Lumb y Sra. Doña Ysabel Yates de Lumb. Cuenta de Liquidación, División y Adjudicación. Legajo 6584. Archivo General de la Nación. The widow bequeathed 32.2 million pesos (*moneda corriente*). The sterling equivalent, at more than £200,000, is derived from tables in Álvarez, *Historia Económica*, 112–113. Álvarez shows 31.95 pesos *moneda corriente* per *peso fuerte*, and an exchange rate between the peso fuerte and the pound sterling of 4.88.

[148] He reported poignantly on the disaster. "In some cases the patients had been abandoned for several days and were dying from the neglect, in others the panic was so great that no one would approach the infected houses or remove the dead, instances even occurred of children sharing the bed infected by their sick and sometimes dying parents." See "Separate" 19 June 1871. FO 6/302. Dodds, *Scottish Settlers*, 360–376 lists British victims of the epidemic.

American merchant, marriage to a British diplomat became an entrée into a gilded life in the capitals of Europe.[149]

Norberto de la Riestra, a bicultural Porteño financier and one of Mitre's leading supporters, became another important figure of the mid-century period. His early career included a spell in Liverpool in Lumb's firm, a period in which he established ties with Barings in London. In 1857, he headed a delegation from Buenos Aires to London to settle the defaulted loan of 1824. Historian D.C.M. Platt sensed corruption in this deal, claiming Riestra urged his friends to buy up the debt to profit as insider traders when the settlement became public.[150] Despite its odour of malfeasance, the settlement resolved the thorny issue of the Baring debt. In later years, payment of interest and principal on the restructured loan grew easier as trade revenues increased. Most important, the settlement reopened the sluice gates of foreign investment.[151]

In the 1860s, Riestra functioned as a fixer and broker between the government and the British merchants. Various incidents in his career illustrated his standing and influence. In 1863, his British friends urged his appointment as manager of the newly founded London and River Plate Bank, arguing his ties with Mitre would enable them to "secure the rights…for the bank at Cordova, Rosario and Gualeyguay."[152] They proposed him as a candidate for governor of Buenos Aires, although other political leaders demurred because of his close ties with Mitre: with one of them president and the other governor of the country's richest province, opponents feared the rise of an all-powerful duumvirate.[153] Acting for Mitre during war with Paraguay in the late 1860s, Riestra importuned loans from Barings.[154] He had close dealings with David Robertson, Member of Parliament, director of Barings and first chairman of the Buenos Aires Great Southern Railway. Robertson regarded Riestra as an ally of great importance. Commenting in 1872 on Mitre's success in set-

[149] Macdonell. *Reminiscences.*

[150] Platt, *Foreign Finance*, 32–33

[151] Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 320,

[152] Fair to Robertson 29 Sept. 1862. Barings Archive HC 4/1/19.

[153] *El Nacional* 22 April 1863.

[154] Riestra to Barings 28 Mar. 1866, 26 Aug. 1867, HC 4/1/45. For Riestra's career, see his obituary in *Standard* 4 July 1879; also, Fernando Arturo Bordabehere. *Norberto de la Riestra: su obra en bien de la patria*. Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1980. British merchants awarded Riestra a silver statuette of Canning for his contributions to settling the Baring debt conflict.

tling a border dispute with Brazil, he hoped "this successful outcome may lead to [Mitre] being the next president of the Argentine Confederation [and] with him…our friend Riestra…would certainly be his foreign minister."[155]

The Argentine liberals of this era, men who had opposed Rosas, betrayed a pronounced Anglophile outlook. Juan Bautista Alberdi, whose tract *Las bases* laid out the guidelines of the 1853 constitution, urged his countrymen to learn English, "the language of liberty, industry and order." "How can we absorb the example and civilising influence of the Anglo-Saxons without command of their language?"[156] In 1862, Foreign Minister Rufino Elizalde saluted the British for "awakening the energies of the earth [and promoting] aspirations for liberty."[157] Day to day encounters with British people in Buenos Aires elicited less laudatory reactions. Porteños commonly criticised the British people they knew as money-grubbers and drunks. In the late nineteenth century, the expression "*el borracho inglés*" ("drunk as an Englishman") became an established local idiom.

In the 1850s, Scots and Irish ranchers were accused of taking land confiscated illegally by the Rosas regime, and targets of plunderers, military deserters and intrusive officialdom.[158] During the sporadic civil strife of 1857–1862, Consul Frank Parish, himself an Anglo-Porteño, failed to prevent the sons of British settlers—Argentine citizens under local law—being drafted into military service. To avoid this fate, men of military age had to pay £60 for a substitute or leave the country.[159] During war with

[155] Robertson to Barings 1 Nov. 1872 HC 4–1-29.

[156] Quoted in Manuel Horacio Solari. *Historia de la educación argentina*, Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1949, 153; Juan B. Alberdi. *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización de la República Argentina*. 5th edition. Buenos Aires: Rosso, 1960.

[157] *Standard*, 27 February 1862. (Opening of the San Fernando Railway.)

[158] During purges of Rosas's supporters in 1852, the consul registered a complaint by a British settler for dispossession of land he had occupied since 1824. Consul to FO 19 Oct. 1852. FO 6/172. Another lengthy case involving an Irish sheep farmer is discussed in Parish to FO 25 June 1860 FO 118–96.

[159] See Clarendon to Parish 9 Feb. 1855 FO 118/83; also Parish to FO 3 Aug. 1857 FO 118:83; Parish to FO 30 Sept. 1857. FO 6/202. Payment for military substitutes is mentioned in Parish to FO 9 Sept. 1855. FO 118/83, when the going rate was £60. In a judgement in 1842, British law determined that dual nationality did not entitle British subjects born abroad to British protection. During the American Civil War, thousands of Irish subjects of the United Kingdom were refused exemption from military service. See Daniel Feldman and M. Page Baldwin. "Emigration and the British State, ca 1815–1925," in

Paraguay of 1865–1870, press gangs in the port of Buenos Aires ignored the exemption of British subjects from military service under the treaty. At that time, sailors were "drugged and carried off to the barracks where some were kept in close confinement or put in the stocks, others again beaten or deprived of food and water until they consented to be enlisted."[160] Consuls often accused magistrates of improperly dealing with the property of British subjects who died intestate. The treaty stipulated that in such cases the consul appointed curators to deliver property to next of kin in Britain, but local courts, usually sympathetic to cohabiting partners and children, ignored the rule.[161] Transgressions against the treaty grew most common in the provinces. In the mid-sixties, an honorary consul in Córdoba (a man incidentally on the way to forgetting his English) complained that his work consisted "almost entirely in reclamations (appeals) in cases of enrolment of British subjects in the Army and National Guard, forced contributions (taxes), wrongful, and when warranted indefinitely protracted imprisonment, and the arbitrary seizure of the property of British subjects…In no instance have I succeeded in obtaining redress for these excesses."[162]

* * *

In the early 1870s, the British community of Buenos Aires differed little in structure and composition from half a century previously. A narrow apex of merchants sat above a base of shopkeepers, hoteliers and artisans—typically carpenters, builders or coach makers. In 1858, Frank Parish claimed the British "represent far more wealth than all the other foreigners combined." He overlooked the lower-order community members including numerous women who worked as servants, seamstresses and launderers.[163] Mid-century city censuses revealed British and Irish households on

Citizenship and Those Who Leave. The Politics of Emigration and Expatriation. Edited by Nancy L. Green and François Weil. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007, 144. On legal aspects of citizenship, see Gershon Safir. *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998, 16–17.

160 Ford to Stanley 15 Jan. 1868. FO 118/129.

161 Several times in the mid-sixties, Honorary Consul Mackie Gordon in Córdoba cited the 1825 treaty to demand possession of the goods of British men who died intestate, having lived with Argentine women in remote rural areas. See Gordon to FO 29 Mar. 1865. FO 118/117.

162 Gordon to FO, 29 Mar. 1865 FO 118/117.

163 Argentine Republic: Buenos Ayres. *Report Relative to British Consular Establishments: 1858 and 1871. Part V Presented to the House of Commons by Command of Her Majesty.*

either side of the Avenida de Mayo, the dividing line between the wealthier quarter of Catedral al Norte and poorer Catedral al Sur. Many British households consisted of extended families living in large rented houses, parts of them sublet to bachelor clerks or recent migrants. High rates of ethnic endogamy persisted as shown by household data in 1855 listing numerous married women, daughters of British settlers, who bore first names of British and Irish origin.[164]

Anglo-Porteño's hopes of spurring greater British migration to Buenos Aires remained unfulfilled. At between 10,000 and 12,000 in the late 1850s, the English-speaking population (perhaps 10 per cent of its members North American-born) had increased three times over from Woodbine Parish's era. Even so, it now trailed far behind several other Western European nationalities headed by Italians.[165] Dublin-born newspapermen Michael and Edward Mulhall, founders of the *Standard* newspaper in 1861 and of the *Handbook of the River Plate* in 1863, campaigned for more English-speaking settlers. "Unmarried shepherds" ideally Irishmen, headed their list followed by cooks and housemaids. They were glibly described as women who "often get married to the above class of sheep farmers." The Mulhalls welcomed "speculators, wide awake, practical men," anyone with business acumen, but discouraged English-born urban middle class types—surveyors, newspapermen (potential competitors with themselves), graduates, clerks and shop assistants. One group above all merited blanket exclusion, namely "unemployed gentlemen…fast young men [likely to be] locked up for drunkenness, and finally dying in delirium tremens."[166]

London: Harrison, 1872. (Enclosure in FO 6:376). On lower level social groups, see Deborah Lynn Jakubs. *A Community of Interests. A Social History of the British in Buenos Aires, 1860–1914.* Ph.D. Diss., Stanford University, 1985, 118, 131.

[164] See Jorge F. Lima González Bonarino. *La ciudad de Buenos Aires y sus habitantes 1860–1870. A través del cadastro de Beare y el Censo Poblacional.* Buenos Aires: Instituto Histórico de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2005, 32. The study identifies families and their addresses. It shows a preponderance of British and Irish on the north side, with a few additional clusters in the south. As an example (p. 275) calle Parque 88–90 contains the largest group of British residents: a doctor, merchant, engineer, bookkeeper and ship captain with dependants and servants. Names and locations of British and Irish shops and businesses in Buenos Aires are listed in http://www.arg.brit.org.uk. *British settlers in Argentina* by Jeremy Howat Data are based on M.G. and E.T. Mulhall "Handbook for 1863 presented in order of addresses."

[165] John P. Bailey. "Inmigración y relaciones étnicas. Los ingleses en la Argentina." *Desarrollo Económico*, 18, no. 72, Jan.-–Mar. 1979, 539–558. Bailey estimated return rates among Britons at 50–80 per cent.

[166] Mulhall, *Handbook*, Preface. No one wanted British migrants from overstocked liberal professions: "briefless barristers, swarms of engineers, architects, printers, surveyors," as listed in Semmel, *Free Trade Imperialism*, 87.

The Mulhalls found no support in Britain. Official bodies such as the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission discouraged migration to the Rio de la Plata except contracted employees working in trade and shipping—the same groups singled out by Canning fifty years earlier. In the early 1870s migration to the Plata grew controversial when legation minister Macdonell dismissed the British settlers of recent years as "an idle, intemperate and worthless lot…gentlemen farmers [who] work only three hours a day." He advised British subjects to steer clear of the Plata unless they possessed a written contract that offered a high wage and a place to live.[167] A parliamentary report published in 1872 incorporated his objections by describing the Argentine Republic as a country in which "no security of life [prevailed]. The English emigrant will find no encouragement; no similarity of language or religion; no liberal land laws…no ready access to markets, and but scant and merely nominal protection for life and property."[168]

Constantine Phipps, a junior legation member under Macdonell, compared passenger fares from British ports to Buenos Aires, New York and Quebec and wages in the three cities. He was curious to determine whether the much higher shipping rates to Buenos Aires ultimately paid off in higher incomes. He also tried to weigh the impact of continental European migrants on the incomes of British residents in Buenos Aires, while commenting on conditions facing migrant women. He concluded Buenos Aires had nothing better to offer than in Britain itself, and far less than the United States or Canada. He drew attention to the inability of British workers to compete with continental Europeans in the labour market. The Italians now flooding into Buenos Aires were far more "thrifty" than the British. They accepted menial tasks, hoarded their earnings and lived as bachelors in communal dormitories (where hundreds perished months earlier during the yellow fever epidemic). The acid test of a successful migrant lay in his ability to support a wife and family. Phipps thought most French migrants, whom he considered an intermediate group between the British and the Italians, would pass the test but few British.[169]

[167] Macdonell to FO Enclosure in Despatch 32, 16 May 1872. FO 118–136.

[168] United Kingdom. "Correspondence Reporting the Treatment of British Subjects in the Argentine Republic, 1870–1872," *Parliamentary Papers*, 1872, vol. 70, 87–120. A rejoinder from Buenos Aires listed the large number of British estancieros living in Argentina and cited positive reports about the country in Mulhall's *Handbook of the River Plate*. See enclosure in FO 6/318 (1873).

[169] Mr. Constantine Phipps, "Report on the Condition of the Working Classes and Immigrants in the Argentine Republic," enclosed in no. 79, 15 July 1871, FO 118/148. For discussion of Phipps, see Rock, *State Building*, 74–76. He and his "pretty wife" are mentioned in Lumb Macdonell, *Reminiscences*, 81.

Contemporaries endorsed Phipps's conclusions. One argued that British workmen "never speak well of this country, and in their hearts regret that they ever left their native land."[170] As a forty-year resident in Argentina from the 1860s, Arthur Shaw reiterated the advice to British settlers not to go to Buenos Aires without a work contract. In his view, the country "can never equal or approach the colonies of the British Empire."[171] Two quite opposite types of migrant alone could settle in Argentina—either very rich Englishmen with the means to buy an estancia or poor Irish labourers working in unskilled occupations.[172]

Phipps completed his study shortly before the economy of Buenos Aires collapsed into depression and an era of major transformation for the British community began. By the 1870s, old-fashioned British merchants in the mould of James Hodgson could no longer survive. Transoceanic cargoes arriving by steamship required new forms of organisation and credit. They spawned more highly specialised institutions: banks, insurance, land companies, along with brokerage firms and merchant retailers. A century later, Charles Jones took note "a world poised between two distinct periods of British enterprise in South America, commercial partnerships and more capital intensive corporations."[173] Beginning with services to Rio de Janeiro in 1850, transatlantic steamship connections led by the Royal Mail Steam Packet intensified in the 1860s. The emergence of Montevideo as a coaling station and until 1870 British Admiralty subsidies enabled this trend.[174]

[170] L. Dillon. *A Twelve Months' Tour in Brazil and the River Plate with notes on Sheep Farming*. Manchester: Alex Ireland and Co. 1867, 54.

[171] Arthur E. Shaw. *Forty Years in the Argentine Republic*. London: Ethan Matthews, 1907, 192.

[172] Emigration Board to FO 28 Aug. 1870 FO 6/300.

[173] Charles A Jones. *British Financial Institutions in Argentina, 1860–1914.* Ph.D. Diss. University of Cambridge, 1973, 63–64. Winn observes a similar transition in Uruguay, noting the decline of British merchant houses on the death of the founders of firms and changes in the organisation of international trade. See Winn, *Inglaterra y la Tierra Purpúrea*, I:174–175. The transition in mercantile organisation is widely noted. See S.D. Chapman. "British based investment groups before 1914." *Economic History Review*. 38, No. 2, 1985, 231, Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, 98, 115; Reber, *British Mercantile Houses*, 4–6. It appears overstated in light of later references to British importers, as in *Kelly's Directory of Merchants, Manufacturers and Shippers of the World, 1903*. The so-called multi-agency system based on the early nineteenth century mercantile model continued into the 1920s. See Roswell C. McCrea, Thurman W. Van Metre, George Jackson Eder. *International Competition in the Trade of Argentina*. Worcester, Mass., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1931, 435.

[174] Robert E Forrester. *British Mail Steamers to South America, 1851–1865. A History of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company and Royal Mail Lines*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashfield, 2014.

In the late 1870s, the British Hospital mirrored the ongoing transition, as it appealed to underling clerks and employees for financial support. Until now the great merchants had "subscribed liberally [to the hospital] but their number is so considerably reduced that active members must be sought in more subordinate positions."[175] Business leaders of the new generation focused on finance, railways and land, as epitomised by father and son Thomas Fair and John Fair. As one of the early Scots in Buenos Aires and a former partner of the Robertson brothers, the elder Fair typified the first generation of merchants who worked for lengthy spells as consignees before retiring to Britain.[176] John Fair, who was born in Buenos Aires in 1822, returned in 1857 to take over his father's landed property before embarking on a career in railways, banks and land management. He pioneered the first railway in Uruguay and became a director of the London and River Plate Bank.[177]

English-speaking artisans followed the old merchants into oblivion. As Phipps observed in 1871, they faced competition from continental Europeans working for lower wages. In 1879, the *Standard* listed numerous crafts and professions it claimed the Anglophones had once dominated but in which they were now disappearing. "Twenty years ago the British element in Buenos Ayres was found pre-eminent in all the highways of its trade and commerce… Our builders, coopers, saddlers, carpenters, blacksmiths and our shoemakers were British, whilst as we ascended in the scale, we found our apothecaries, farmers, import and export houses, discounters and capitalists, shipping houses and brokers, all chiefly of the same nationality."[178] Merchants, shopkeepers and artisans comprised the first British community of the Rio de la Plata; railway managers, engineers and bankers led the second.[179]

[175] *Standard* 2 Aug. 1879.

[176] The elder Fair's career is outlined in Hanon, *Diccionario*, 310.

[177] See obituary of John Fair, *Standard* 24 Dec. 1899; also S. Damus. *Who was Who in Argentine Railways. 1860–1960.* Ottawa: DIA Agency, 2008, 131–132, referring to Fair's account of negotiations to set up the Great Southern Railway in 1862. His career in Uruguay is noted in Winn, *Inglaterra y la Tierra Purpúrea*, 178.

[178] *Standard* 13 March, 2 Aug. 1879.

[179] *Register of British Subjects*, vol. 4. From 20th June 1870 to 30th June 1885, shows a decline of "ovejeros" (shepherds) and the rise of "clerks." The first stationmaster appeared on the list in 1873. (Data in the British consular register, Buenos Aires.)

CHAPTER 4

Ranchers and Shepherds

The Pampa was a Sleeping Beauty, waiting in her inaccessible retreat
for an obliging prince to wake her.
Philip Guedalla

The *pampa húmeda* totals half a million square miles separated by the Rio Paraná into two roughly equal portions. Observing its almost unbroken vistas, author W.H. Hudson described "a perfect ring of misty blue colour where the crystal blue dome of the sky rests on the level green world."[1] For his part, geographer Victor Martin de Moussy perceived the area as a vast lake on which the huts of rural dwellers lay scattered like an archipelago.[2] Before the railway age, oxcarts and mules crossed the pampas with few difficulties, with shallow streams or rivers and marshlands called *cañadas* and giant thistles or *cardos* posing its few obstacles. Travellers observed herds of feral cattle, horses and deer. They remarked on the absence of stones in the alluvial soil and of trees except for the ombú, a species of giant herb. They saw ostriches and rheas, pink flamingos in the wetlands, along with armadillos, iguanas, nutrias, pumas and scores of bird species. Packs of wild dogs called *cimarrones* roamed until being exterminated in

[1] W.H. Hudson. *Far Away and Long Ago*. Foreword by John Galsworthy. London: T.M. Dent and Sons, 1945, 46.

[2] J.V. Martin de Moussy. *Description Géographique et Statistique de la Confédération Argentine*. Vol.3. Paris: Didot, 1873, 5.

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D. Rock, *The British in Argentina*, Britain and the World,
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the 1890s.[3] Hare-like rodents called vizcachas left shallow burrows that could snap the fetlocks of horses. Oblivious to such hazards, the Scottish aristocrat Cunninghame Graham, an Argentine cowboy in his youth, recalled the pampas as "a great galloping ground, the greatest God ever made."[4]

Until the early 1830s, the province of Buenos Aires governed only a slice of the pampas, a territory 300 miles long and 100 miles wide running north-west to south-east along the Rio Paraná and the Rio de la Plata to the Rio Salado. Cattle ranching and migratory labour marked the main features of its sparse, underdeveloped rural economy. Totalling around 70,000 by 1830, the male and female rural population known respectively as *gauchos* and *chinas* included three principal social types: *agregados*, *labradores* and slaves. By far the largest group, the agregados, the so-called "additions" as casual workers, were commonly migrants. They included men and women who rode south-east several hundred miles every year from distant provinces like Quechua-speaking Santiago del Estero or Guaraní-speaking Corrientes. Those who remained in Buenos Aires over the entire year worked on cattle estancias in winter rodeos before moving closer to the city for summer harvest work. Facing seasonal unemployment, such people often camped on the land as squatters. Landlords learned to ignore them because attempts to move them on provoked cattle rustling. The merchant James Hodgson, who owned land in Córdoba, acknowledged that on the pampas property rights were "too misunderstood to be enforced." He ordered his ranch manager to ignore squatters on his estates or if they became a nuisance to try to ease them out gently.[5]

The labradores, a much smaller group of agrarian peasant families, lived on communal lands in villages mostly near the city. In communities such as Luján, San Isidro and San Antonio de Areco, institutions like the *ejido* widely employed elsewhere in Spanish America were also used here to produce corn, fruits and vegetables. After independence, rural slavery survived in the form of a small tied labour force on the estancias to oversee grazing cattle. Outside the city slavery became even less well-defined than

[3] *Cimarrones,* a term also applied to wild cattle, are noted in Herbert Gibson. *The History and Present State of the Sheep-Breeding Industry in the Argentine Republic*. Buenos Aires: Ravenscroft and Mills, 1893, 21.

[4] Walker, *Cunninghame Graham*, 23.

[5] Hodgson to Slatter 8 Dec. 1856. GHR 5/1/9.

within. A proclamation in 1813 freed all children of slaves, although the practice lingered for another half-century. In 1860, a constitutional amendment abolished slavery throughout Buenos Aires, although it dragged on longer in the interior among small numbers of slaves commonly brought south from Brazil.[6]

British visitors and travellers held divided opinions on the gauchos. A majority imitated the Argentine liberals, who slighted all country denizens as delinquents. Alberdi for one upbraided the Spanish colonisers for filling "our America with gauchos, prostitutes, sicknesses and impiety."[7] The term gaucho became almost interchangeable with other derogatory expressions like *chusma* meaning rabble, ragtag or riffraff. John Miers, the aspirant copper miner who crossed the United Provinces into Chile in 1817, applied epithets like "cunning, roguish and savage" to all the rural people he met. In their mud and straw huts, the *chinas* elicited particular disdain. Félix de Azara, a late colonial Spanish official, described them as "*descalzas, puercas, andrajosas*," barefoot, sloppy and ragged.[8] Eighty years later, Sir Horace Rumbold remarked on the "dreary and repulsive homes, [in which the women living in them were] steeped in either ignorance or slovenliness."[9]

Francis Head by contrast depicted rural people in an elevated vein. According to his *Rough Notes*, "[t]he whole country bears the stamp of the Omnipotent Creator and it is impossible for anyone to ride through it without feelings it is very pleasing to entertain." He compared the upbringing of a gaucho boy with that of a young eagle. From the moment they were born, the two enjoyed untrammelled liberty as they prepared for their future lives as hunters. From early childhood, gaucho boys played with knives and lassos; at four years old they were mounted, helping to corral the cattle, and soon afterwards breaking in horses or, bolas in hand, galloping off in pursuit of game. Head related the fierce sense of independence of the gauchos to their primitive rusticity. "Vain is the endeavour to explain to him the luxuries

[6] Mention of slaves recurred into the 1860s, as in the case of a young man purchased in Brazil for "half a crown" and brought to Argentina. See Richard Arthur Seymour, *Pioneering in the Pampas; Or, The First Four Years of a Settler's Experience in the La Plata Camps*. London: Longman, Green, 1869, 168.

[7] Juan Bautista Alberdi. *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización de la República Argentina*. 5th edition. Buenos Aires: Rosso, 1969. Quoted from an unpublished English translation by David J. Mas.

[8] Azara, *Del Paraguay y del Rio de la Plata*, 4.

[9] Rumbold, *Silver River*, 91–92.

and blessings of a more civilised life; his ideas are, that the noblest effort of man is to raise himself off the ground and ride instead of walk." He rejected the orthodox view of gauchos as men steeped in idleness. Anyone encountering one of them "will find that he is anything but indolent, and his surprise will be that he is able to continue a life of so much fatigue. [He] has no luxuries, but the great feature of his character is that he is person of no wants; accustomed constantly to live in the open air, and to sleep on the ground."[10] Half a century later, Cunninghame Graham glamorised the gauchos, recalling a group of them he once encountered attired in their Sunday finery, "gorgeous with silver trappings on their horses, dressed in ponchos of vicuña wool, loose black merino trousers like Turks, and riding boots of patent leather stitched in patterns with red and gold thread."[11]

* * *

The British began to interact with the pampas and its people soon after 1810 as merchants purchased land, either as individuals or in partnerships. The early buyers included some prominent names of mostly Scottish and Protestant Irish background: Thomas Fair, Thomas Armstrong, Joseph Thwaites, John Gibson, Peter Sheridan, John Harrat, Daniel Mackinley and Thomas Gowland. Quilmes, a riverside locality about fifteen miles south of the city, became the focus of their activities.[12] Among them, John Gibson of Glasgow stood out as a bold, ambitious land speculator. He sometimes bought units of intermediate size by local standards known as *chacras* like the land at Monte Grande he sold to William Robertson in 1825 to set up the Scottish colony, although he preferred much larger units. His main purchases lay across the Rio Salado frontier near the Samborombón, a river that empties into its large eponymous bay near the mouth of the Rio de la Plata. Great tracts almost devoid of livestock and people, Gibson's properties included an estate known as the Rincón del Tuyú his younger brothers later subdivided into estancias and developed into a family business.[13] In less than

[10] *Head, Rough Notes*, 10, 16, 27–32.

[11] Graham, "A Vanishing Race," in Walker, *Cunninghame Graham*, 42.

[12] The early purchases near Quilmes are noted in Guillermo Banzato. *La expansion de la frontera bonaerense: posesión y propiedad en Chascomús, Ranchos y Monte, 1780–1880.* Quilmes: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 2005, 146–147.

[13] Details concerning this estate, once known as Los Portugueses and originally sold by the Spanish Crown in 1774, are noted in Thomas Gibson to Herbert Gibson, 1890. In Gibson Archive. *Various Documents and Letters.* Old Publications 1774–1842. Vol. 2. National Library of Scotland (NLS) 10,326; also Banzato, *Frontera*, 58.

five years he amassed about 60,000 hectares (150,000 acres) in at least five locations. He borrowed heavily from the Banco de Buenos Ayres, the questionable institution of which the Robertson brothers became founding members. Friends warned Gibson about the bank. "You must be very cautious…Should the bank stop paying there is no doubt that a great many would be obliged to stop too, and you might be a great sufferer."[14] Indeed, the collapse of the bank in 1826 crushed him. Still a young man, he died two years later on his way home to Scotland, one of the numerous bankrupts of this period.

The indirect victim of a disreputable financial institution, Gibson also failed to recognise the risk of buying land on credit in a frontier region with highly unstable land prices. At home in lowland Scotland where supply remained fixed, land commanded a fairly stable value; in frontier Buenos Aires, supply was elastic, leaving prices vulnerable to steep fluctuations. Vast areas known as *tierra fiscal* remained in the domain of the state; when the government released land, sudden increases in supply caused prices to plunge. One of Rivadavia's best known reforms, the *ley de enfiteusis* of 1822, sought to set up controlled distribution of state land in the form of leases (*enfiteutas* in Spanish). He intended to use revenue from the scheme for port improvements and to assist repaying the Baring loan. Like much of his programme, the measure perished—or strictly speaking altered beyond all recognition—on the outbreak of war with Brazil in late 1825. As foreign trade collapsed and revenue needs grew desperate, the government began releasing land willy-nilly, while allowing leases to be purchased at a high discount with paper money. The planned scheme disintegrated as land leases were bought and sold on the open market.[15]

Amidst the high inflation of the late 1820s, amassing low cost leases and setting up cattle ranches became a choice means to protect and store wealth. Ranchers in possession of leases typically allowed their herds to multiply during the Brazilian blockade before sending their cattle to the

[14] Richard Newton to John Gibson, in Gibson Archive. *Various Documents and Letters.* Vol. 3, Sept. 1825. John Gibson's activities are described in Ian A.D. Stewart, "Living with Dictator Rosas," 25–27. See also *Standard* 8 Dec. 1903 for an obituary of Thomas Gibson, the last of thirteen siblings in this family of whom John Gibson was the eldest. The article outlines the family's early business dealings in Buenos Aires.

[15] For leaseholds, see María Infesta de Güerci. *La pampa criolla: usufructo y apropriación privada de tierras públicas en Buenos Aires, 1820–1850.* La Plata: Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 2003, 103. In later periods too, lengthy credits were commonly available and loans repayable in depreciated treasury bonds. See Gibsons, *Various Documents and Letters*, Vol. 2.

slaughter houses in Buenos Aires. Very low cost land enabled profits from cattle hides despite the prolonged fall in prices of hides in post-Napoleonic Europe.[16] The leasehold system spelled disaster for speculators like Gibson, who had bought land, but provided a lifeline for British importers caught by currency depreciation and the disruption of foreign trade. As Thomas Duguid informed Woodbine Parish in 1827, most of his fellow British merchants took the opposite course to Gibson's. Where Gibson bought land, they bought cattle, investing three times more in livestock than in ranch land.[17]

Leasehold peaked in 1828, the year Dorrego, the anti-Unitario leader of the Porteño cattle ranchers, became governor of Buenos Aires, and once more in 1834 when Rosas's expedition across the Rio Salado (glimpsed by Charles Darwin) enabled the province to seize huge areas of frontier territory. With the spread of leasing, ranchers showed little concern about the boundaries of their estancias. Surveyors measured along streams and rivers alone where competition for possession existed, ignoring dry areas to the rear. Many ranchers acquired a mix of properties, part freehold and part leasehold. Scottish rancher John Miller for instance owned several estancias in the Ranchos district about one hundred miles south-west of Buenos Aires. They included one he bought in 1822 prior to the *ley de enfiteusis* and another he leased in 1829. Searching for revenue once more during the French blockade of 1838–1840, Rosas ordered

[16] Hide exports from Buenos Aires in 1810–1823 totalling 7.2 million are detailed in the Ponsonby papers GRE/E/22/13, of which around half were exported to Britain. Exports rose from a yearly average of 600,000 hides in the 1820s to 1 million in the 1840s and climbed to 2.6 million in 1851. Among many studies, see Tulio Halperín Donghi. "La expansión ganadera.en la campaña de Buenos Aires (1810–1852)." *Desarrollo Económico* Vol. 1, Nos. 1–2 (Apr.-Sept. 1963):57–110; Roberto Cortés Conde. "La expansión territorial en la Argentina." *Desarrollo Económico*, Vol. 8, No. 29 (Apr.-June 1968):3–30; Maria Alejandra Irigoin. "La expansión ganadera en la campaña de Buenos Aires, 1820s–1860s: ¿Una consecuencia de la financiación inflacionaria del déficit fiscal?" In Raúl Fradkin and Juan Carlos Garavaglia. *En busca de tiempo perdido. La economía de Buenos Aires en el país de la abundancia, 1750–1865.* Buenos Aires: Prometeo, 2004, 7–34; María Elena Infesta. "La enfiteusis en Buenos Aires, 1820–1850," 93–120. In Marta Bonaudo and Alfredo R. Pucciarelle. *La problemática agraria. Nuevas aproximaciones.* Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1993. On the estancias of Buenos Aires, see Carlos A. Mayo. *Estancia y sociedad en la pampa, 1740–1820.* Buenos Aires: Biblos, 1995; Samuel Amaral. *The Rise of Capitalism on the Pampas. The Estancias of Buenos Aires, 1785–1870.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; Juan Carlos Garavaglia. "Un siglo de estancias en la campaña de Buenos Aires: 1751–1853." *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 79, No. 4 (1999), 703–734. Brown, *Argentina, provides informed commentary.*

[17] Duguid to Parish 31 Dec. 1827 FO 118/18. Amaral estimates that in 1820 land totaled only 11 per cent of the cost of setting up an estancia and cattle 66 per cent, a ratio reversed in later times as land values climbed. Amaral, *Capitalism on the Pampas*, 73.

mandatory conversion of leases to freehold for a fee. Numerous conversions followed, although with little benefit to the exchequer because of poor administration or plain corruption.[18] In Miller's case, the distinctions between leasehold and freehold were lost. On his death in 1848, his properties were sold off with no concern for their differing legal origins.[19]

* * *

Although tiny in number compared with the Argentines, the ranchers of British origin evolved into an identifiable subgroup within the British ethnic community. In 1845 the petitioners to Lord Aberdeen referred to some of their fellow-signatories who had "their entire fortunes in…country districts." In 1847, Anglo-Porteño included "agriculturists," by which he meant cattle ranchers and sheep farmers, among "the mass of British settlers." Most people managed their estates from Buenos Aires, dividing their time between rural business and the import trade.

James Hodgson became one of these sedentary, town dwelling cattle ranchers. While dealing with his commercial clients, he tried to stay abreast of modern methods of estate management with specialist literature he ordered from Britain. He ran his rural properties from his city shop, never once in almost twenty years venturing out to visit them. When he returned to Manchester in 1843, he sent out written instructions to an estate manager that took more than three months to deliver. Irish-born Peter Sheridan, a successful, widely respected rancher, set up an estancia also in the Ranchos district although he too lived mainly in Buenos Aires. He was credited with introducing some of the first merino sheep to Argentina and first subdividing his estancia into sheep runs known as *puestos*.[20] On his death in 1844, his property containing sixteen puestos holding more than 40,000 sheep. An inventory of his possessions listed a half-built brick house with minimal furniture. Two thatch-covered sheds stood nearby, a corral fenced by Paraguayan hardwood, an old plough, a cart and two sets of worn harnesses.[21]

[18] Barsky and Djenderedijan, *Expansion ganadera hasta 1895*, I:123–124.

[19] Tribunales: *Sucesiones*, 6811 (Juan Miller), 1854. Archivo General de la Nación.

[20] Merino sheep included French Rambouillets and German Saxons, later followed by Lincoln Longwools. Breeds are discussed in Barsky and Djenderedijan, *Expansión Ganadera*, I:175, 302–315. A summary of new breeding practices appears in Matthew E.S. Butler. "The British Role in Argentine Ranching Modernisation and Livestock Technology, 1830–1950." Ph.D. diss., Cambridge University, 2010, 32–47.

[21] Tribunales: *Sucesiones* 8178 (Pedro Sheridan), 1845. Archivo General de la Nación. Testamentary documents relating to Sheridan were exceptionally detailed and written up in English in impeccable calligraphy likely on behalf of heirs in Ireland.

The British ranchers included Londoner Richard Blake Newton, best known for introducing barbed wire to Buenos Aires (although only to fence his garden rather than to corral his cattle and sheep). His principal property near Chascomús south-east of the city developed into a great sheep farm with seventeen puestos. Newton amassed so many sheep that on his death in 1868 his heirs refused to count them because of the expense it would entail.[22] El Espartillar, another great ranch near Chascomús, outshone even Newton's. Ownership rotated among several Scots before passing to John Fair, who over many years developed it into a model establishment. By the late nineteenth century, El Espartillar Estancia Company, an area of about 300 square miles, contained forty-six puestos.[23]

In the 1830s, three of the late John Gibson's brothers formed a vertically linked business of ranchers and merchants. While one brother remained in the city, two others lived at Los Yngleses, a subdivision of the originally enormous property acquired by their late sibling. Following Rosas's expedition in 1833, the frontier quickly advanced beyond the estancia, although until the railway arrived forty years later it remained more easily accessible by riverboat along the Rio de la Plata. In the late 1830s, Los Yngleses prospered as the brothers imported steam vats to boil sheep carcasses for animal fats. While remaining cattle ranchers, they embarked on wool production with merinos purchased from Peter Sheridan. Containing about 9000 sheep by 1844, the estancia employed forty-four men seasonally in cattle branding and other local men and women in sheep shearing. Family correspondence reveals intense discussions on how to house seasonal labourers, organise sheep runs and introduce *medianería*—sheep farming on shares—the tenancy system that became standard throughout rural Buenos Aires. The Gibsons imported Scottish families to grow potatoes, paying their passages on condition the women and children assisted with sheep shearing. In the mid-1840s, they maintained close contact with Samuel Lafone in Montevideo, who became

[22] Tribunales: *Sucesiones* 7217 (Ricardo Newton), 1868. Archivo General de la Nación. Newton died with stated assets of 14.7 million pesos, about one third of Edward Lumb's bequest totaling 43 million pesos.

[23] Banzato, *Frontera*, 61; Eduardo Míguez. *Las tierras de los ingleses en la Argentina, 1870–1914*. Buenos Aires: Belgrano, 1985, 46; Gibson, *Sheep Breeding*, 216. Fair's obituary described the size of the estancia at 62 square miles. *Standard* 26 Dec. 1899; also, Butler, *British Role*, 107.

their main source of sterling bills of exchange and their means to circumvent the Anglo-French blockade of 1845.[24]

Despite their efforts to steer clear of politics, the Gibsons could not escape entirely. A rural revolt against Rosas in 1839 known as the Revolución de los Libres ("Rebellion of the Free") threatened their property and livelihood. Sparked by military levies and taxation during the French blockade of the late 1830s, the movement centred on the Chascomús district close to their property.[25] The brothers lost numerous cattle when government troops billeted themselves on their land. In 1847, a neighbour accused them of exporting edible fat (*sebo*) to Montevideo when government regulations allowed only exports of inedible candle wax or tallow (*grasa*). Under Rosas, infractions of this kind carried the death penalty, and the Gibsons spent many anxious weeks establishing their innocence.[26] Their travails continued after Rosas's fall. Like several other British ranchers, in 1858–1859 they faced lawsuits over land they were accused of acquiring illegally under Rosas. In one case, the heirs of landowners executed after the 1839 uprising accused the Gibsons of taking land confiscated from their families. In another, plaintiffs challenged their title to Los Yngleses, and in yet another they were accused of failing to follow due procedure when converting land leases to freehold. None of the charges against them, and similar ones against other British landowners, were upheld. Securing the dismissal of the suits, Consul Frank Parish took the opportunity to reaffirm the infrangible property rights of British subjects under the 1825 treaty.[27]

While able to amass gigantic estates, landowners were not legally permitted to bequeath them to a single heir. Legislation following the 1810 Revolution abolished devices such as primogeniture and entailment and instituted equal subdivision of inherited property. In the 1820s and 1830s, men like Richard Newton leased and then owned land in such large quantities that on his death it could be subdivided into equal portions large

[24] Gibsons, *Various Documents and Letters*, Vol. 2.

[25] Jorge Gelman. *Rosas bajo fuego. Lavalle y la rebelión de los estancieros*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2009, 74–79.

[26] Thomas Gibson's obituary in *Standard* 8 Dec. 1904.

[27] Christie to FO 28 April 1858 FO 118/88; Parish to FO 29 Dec. 1858. FO 6/211; also the discussion in María Alejandra Irigoin. "Del dominio autocrático al de la negociación. Las razones económicas del nacimiento de la política en la década de 1850." *Anuario del Instituto de Estudios Histórico-Sociales*, 14. Tandil, 1999, 17–20. All these cases illustrated the way by the late 1850s land grew more valuable and competition to own it increased.

enough to meet the needs of all fifteen of his children. Ricardo Newton maintained his father's standing as a leading stock breeder, although the family then retreated from prominence as the effects of multiple subdivision left their mark.[28] The Gibsons preserved their estate at Los Yngleses through a system of joint ownership by multiple heirs. As reported by visitors in 1914, the estancia by then became congested by the presence of numerous family members from various generations.[29]

James Hodgson's career as an estate owner illustrated the pitfalls of rural business. In 1826—one of the least apt years throughout the nineteenth century—he boasted he had acquired "some of the finest arable land in the world" when he purchased 800 acres (325 hectares) near Quilmes.[30] When the market collapsed shortly afterwards, he sold out at a heavy loss, becoming another victim of the error of buying rather than leasing land. He then leased a much larger estate across the Rio Salado south of the village of Dolores, although this venture too failed. Having spent a tidy sum boring wells, he sold the lease in 1833 after failing to find a ranch manager prepared to live in an area vulnerable to Native American marauders. He ought to have held on to the land, because only months later Rosas's expedition pushed the frontier far southward, leaving the area safe for ranchers and shepherds. Dolores became one of the richest and most expensive parts of Argentina.[31]

In 1827, Hodgson purchased an enormous tract—a score of potential estancias lumped together—in the Rio Cuarto district of Córdoba, a distant western territory near the route from Buenos Aires to San Luis and Mendoza. An opportunity to pay for it in paper money drew him into the deal. With the help of his Córdoba associate Fragueiro, he spent literally a "penny an acre" buying 160,000 hectares (£166 for more than 400,000 acres). Pondering his next move, he requested Fragueiro to recruit a crew for a business breaking in and selling horses. He referred to the men he wanted as *esclavos* but illustrated the decadent, ambiguous state of slavery by offering to pay them "wages" as if they were free workers. Failing to find any of the men he needed, he considered creating a colony of British settlers and importing pedigree sheep. Hodgson lacked resources for such an

[28] Carmen Sesto. *La vanguardia ganadera bonaerense (1865–1900)*, Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 2005, 78 noting Ricardo Newton's contributions to building herds of Aberdeen Angus, Herefords and Shorthorns on dispersed estancias.

[29] See *Buenos Aires Scotch Church Magazine,* 1914.

[30] Quoted in an archivist's introduction to the Green/Hodgson/Robinson Archive.

[31] Hodgson to Green GHR/5/2/1, *Letters 1831–1846*, vol. 4.

ambitious scheme, but his day-dreaming illustrated the popularity of the colonisation business in the mid-1820s. Plans to develop sheep farming and wool too were already well advanced some two decades before the major growth of the Argentine sheep industry.[32]

At length, Hodgson persuaded a Scot named Stewart to move to Córdoba as his manager. More disappointment followed when drought and raiding parties killed off his cattle and civil war disrupted his contact with Stewart. The interruption continued for more than a decade, a period in which his grand estate in Rio Cuarto yielded zero returns. Years later, he tracked Stewart down only to find he had married a local woman and could no longer write in English. He chastised him for allowing his native language to lapse. "[Its] mere use of would do your heart good. It will recall to your memory the associations, principles, precepts and feelings of your youth and native land."[33] He grew disillusioned with the land business. When his British suppliers consulted him about investing their profits in land, he advised against it urging them to remit their profits by buying and exporting cattle hides.[34]

Hodgson retained his estate in Córdoba for about forty years, more than half of them while he was living in Manchester. Sensing the time had finally arrived to profit from wool, in the late 1850s he procured another Scottish manager, agreeing a contract with him to farm sheep on half shares. He forwarded the man a battery of instructions, his own textbook guide to sheep farming in Argentina. It included advice to build a look-out tower for security, and to court the local Catholic priest, a potential ally in dealing with gauchos. Once more, Hodgson mistimed his move, as civil war flared in Córdoba and labour grew scarce as men were drafted into the militias. In 1860, he paid two Scottish families to migrate to Córdoba, spending twice as much on transporting them to Argentina as he had paid buying the land thirty years before. As they arrived, a competitor offered them better terms and they promptly decamped. If Hodgson had bought his estates for almost nothing, by producing nothing they remained worthless. His error lay in selling land in Dolores and buying it in faraway Córdoba.

[32] For correspondence with Fragueiro concerning the Córdoba estate, see *Letter Book* 1825–1829 GHR 5/1/3.

[33] Hodgson to Charles Stewart 12 Oct. 1839. GHR/5/2/1, *Letters 1831–46*, vol. 4.

[34] GHR/5/2/1. Letters of 1 March, 1 June and 7 July 1829 to Yates and Co, sellers of nails.

* * *

In 1848 William MacCann, a former Liverpool merchant and friend of Samuel Lafone, toured southern districts of rural Buenos Aires. He visited Newton's estancia near Chascomús observing the wire garden fence, unique at the time throughout Argentina. He painted a picture of hardy enterprise and bourgeois contentment. Meeting numerous Scots, he encountered still larger numbers of young Irish labourers. Judging from Maxine Hanon's data, in the 1840s the Irish comprised at least half the total migrants from the United Kingdom, compared with only one-fifth in the 1820s. According to Eduardo Coghlan, a leading authority on the so-called Irish-Porteños, Irish migrants climbed to an annual maximum of about 700 in 1849, a larger number than in any single year from the United Kingdom since 1825. By his count, Irish migration totalled 7000–10,000 people throughout the nineteenth century.[35]

Abandoning their homeland as potato blight descended on their homeland, and as sheep encroached on their tenancies and sub-tenancies, the Irish became closely tied to another sheep farming economy in Buenos Aires. Writing in the late 1950s, Irish diplomat T.J. Horan observed it seemed "one of history's little ironies that our emigrants came to Argentina to assist in building up a system and a class [of landed gentry], the creation of which in Ireland has led to their own emigration."[36] Departing from Ireland in distress, the Irish arrived in Buenos Aires at a fortuitous time of great opportunity. Land remained plentiful and relatively cheap, sheep farming prospered, and *medianerías*, halves of the wool crop as opposed to *terciarías*, the thirds or less of later years, remained on offer.

More than four fifths of the Irish migrants to Buenos Aires originated in Leinster, the south-eastern quadrant of Ireland, where members of the Protestant gentry owned the land and their Catholic tenants farmed or sub-

[35] Eduardo Coghlan. *El aporte de los irlandeses a la formación de la Nación Argentina*. Buenos Aires: El Vuelo de Fénix, 1982. Coghlan based his estimates on the Libros de Entradas de Pasajeros, 1822–1880. They revealed 5300 incoming Irish of both sexes throughout the period to a maximum of 708 in 1849. Coghlan believed the figure understated the number of migrants by as much as half. An informative source with a strong Irish nationalist bent is Thomas Murray. *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*. New York: P.J. Kennedy, 1919.

[36] T.J. Horan, "The Irish in Argentina." Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, 1958. File 313/248.

let it to labourers and peasants. Within Leinster, the migrants were concentrated in specific districts. MacCann remarked that the Irish he met in places like Chascomús were "nearly all from Westmeath," one of the Leinster counties of the Irish Midlands.[37] As many as 70 per cent of Irish migrants to Buenos Aires originated in County Westmeath and adjoining County Longford; another 15 per cent came from County Wexford on the south-east coast.[38] All three jurisdictions lie within easy reach of the port of Dublin, the outlet to Liverpool across the Irish Sea and to the outside world.

The Westmeath area, where a newly built canal facilitated access to Dublin, was already a major emigrant zone. In 1844 a local journalist noted how "migration on an extensive scale is at present, and has been for some time past, going on throughout the county. The various modes of conveyance, both by road and canal, are daily thronged with passengers, en route to the new world."[39] Links between Westmeath and Buenos Aires likely derived from the Irish troops once quartered in the towns of Mullingar and Athlone, who joined the British expeditions of 1806 and 1807.[40] In later years, the connection flourished as a result of kinship, common origin and personal contact—once more, categories typical of network migration. As an 1857 commentator noted, "the persons who have sailed [to Buenos Aires] have all gone out at the earnest solicitations of their friends."[41]

Irish migration increased in tempo during the potato famine of 1846–1849, a disaster that deeply affected Westmeath and its surrounding counties.[42] Nevertheless, any simple link between the afflictions of the Irish poor and migration to Buenos Aires appeared unlikely when the cheapest passage to South America cost £10 compared with only £3 from some western Irish ports to Quebec.[43] Migrants to Buenos Aires mainly

[37] MacCann, *Argentine Provinces*, I:70.

[38] Statistics on emigration at the intra-county level based on Coghlan appear in Edmundo Murray, *Devenir Irlandés: narrativas íntimas de la emigración irlandesa (1844–1912)*. Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 2004, 29–34.

[39] *Westmeath Guardian and Longford News-Letter* 18 Apr. 1844.

[40] See Healy, *Migration from Ireland*, 299.

[41] Quoted in *British Packet* 17 Jan. 1857.

[42] On the famine in Westmeath, see Seamus O'Brien. *Famine and Community in Mullingar Poor Law Union, 1845–1849: Mud Cabins and Fat Bullocks*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999.

[43] Juan Carlos Korol and Hilda Sabato use the expression "driven by hunger" to characterise Irish migration, terminology perhaps figuratively but not literally correct. See *¿Cómo fué*

comprised people of a higher standing than the Irish poor at the brink of starvation. They included persons like Edward Robbins of Westmeath who arrived with £80, enough to rent land or start a business.[44] He belonged to the intermediate tenant classes of Leinster of the type, according to the *Westmeath Guardian*, "we would wish to see remaining at home—the industrious, hardworking farmer driven by stern necessity from the land of his forefathers."[45] Commonly subletting land to the poor, the potato blight struck such people indirectly in the guise of collapsing incomes from sub-tenancies. They also fell victim to new Irish poor law regulations that obliged each parish to support its own destitute population from local funds. As demand for relief surged, poor law taxes crippled groups of relatively high social standing, often impelling them to migrate.[46] The *Westmeath Guardian* denounced "the call of the rate collector on thousands of small farmers, who are already on the eve of being applicants for relief themselves."[47] Women of similar origin to the men comprised around 40 per cent of migrants to Buenos Aires.[48] Although set during the 1870s, the novel *You'll Never Look Back* narrated experiences common to many young Irish women. On arrival at Buenos Aires, a priest took them under his wing and began searching for husbands.[49] Once he had found an appropriate match, he allowed the couple a brief courtship in

la inmigración irlandesa en la Argentina? Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1981, 7. Figures on shipping rates appear in O'Brien, *Mullingar*, 55.

[44] Murray, *Devenir Irlandés*, 57.

[45] *Westmeath Guardian* 11 May 1847. (Quoting the *Westmeath Independent*.)

[46] The general principle stated that "Irish property has to pay for Irish poverty." See James S. Donnelly, Jr. "The Administration of Relief, 1846–7," and "The Administration of Relief, 1847–51," In W.E. Vaughan, *New History of Ireland*, Vol. 5. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989. *Ireland under the Union*. Vol. 1, *1807–1870*, 294–306 and 315–331.

[47] *Westmeath Guardian* 30 Nov. 1848. The newspaper later cited a local landlord, whose own tenants formerly cost him £50 a year to support in the workhouse now became liable for £600 in poor rates under the rules of the new Poor Law. *Westmeath Guardian* 20 Dec. 1849. See also O'Brien. *Famine and Community in Mullingar*, 55, noting how Buenos Aires became a targeted migrant destination.

[48] The figure of 40 per cent females is based on a select survey of Irish migrants of the famine period, 1846–1851 (surnames Hoare to Mooney). The proportion fell to less than 25 per cent during the wool boom of the early 1860s. Data from "Irish Emigrant Ships to Argentina." See http://www.irishargentine.org/passenger.htm#top.

[49] Kathleen Nevins. *You'll Never Look Back*. Boston: Bruce Humphries, Inc. 1946, 22, 135. The book is fiction based on a personal memoir. On its author, see Edmundo Murray. *Becoming Gauchos Ingleses: Diasporic Models in Irish-Argentine Literature*. Palo Alto:

Buenos Aires before packing them off to married life on distant sheep stations.[50]

By the late 1850s, parts of rural Buenos Aires became showpieces of Irish settlement whose inhabitants remitted funds generously to Ireland.[51] Self-improvement followed a prescribed pattern. Newly arrived young Irishmen first found well paid work on estancias; savings then enabled them to buy sheep and rent puestos; finally, a few former medianeros used their savings to buy land.[52] Hanon cites several instances of Irishmen, James Gaynor of Westmeath, for example, who started out as labourers and ended as great ranchers.[53] The four Duggan brothers of Westmeath headed by Thomas Duggan, a wool and hides broker, achieved a standing similar to that of Armstrong and Lumb, the two wealthiest British merchants.[54] Duggan's quarter million hectares placed him among the six largest landowners in nineteenth-century Argentina.[55] The will of his brother Daniel Duggan published in 1896 lists fourteen urban properties and five estancias among his assets.[56] In their *Handbook of the River Plate*, the Mulhall brothers swelled with pride at the schools, chapels and travelling libraries created by their countrymen in rural areas. In the city, well-endowed Irish urban associations included a convent and an orphanage.[57]

Academic Press, 2009, 70. Irish women were known for independent decisions to migrate even before the Irish famine. See Richards, *Britannia's Children*, 299.

[50] In the late 1860s, Mulhall estimated the Irish community of Buenos Aires, including locally born children, at 30,000, a near fourfold overstatement. See Mulhall, *Handbook*, 15. Using the 1869 census, Korol and Sabato submit the more plausible estimate of around 8500. See *Inmigración Irlandesa*, 49.

[51] Quoted in *British Packet* 17 Jan. 1857. Migrants in general tended to be better off people as noted in migration literature. See Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 26–28.

[52] For an overview, see Hilda Sabato. *Agrarian Capitalism and the World Market. Buenos Aires in the Pastoral Age, 1840–1890.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990, 107–108.

[53] Hanon, *Diccionario*, 344.

[54] On Duggan, see Martín Parola. "Los estancieros irlandeses." In *The Southern Cross, 1875–2000. Ciento veinte cinco años latiendo, uniendo e informando con la Comunidad Argentina Irlandesa*. Buenos Aires: Southern Cross, 2000, 15. By this account, Thomas Duggan was an Irish nationalist who entertained Sir Roger Casement, the former British diplomat executed during World War I.

[55] See Sesto, *Ganadera*, 64.

[56] Tribunales: *Sucesiones* 5542 (Daniel Duggan), 1896. Archivo General de la Nación.

[57] Mulhall, *Handbook*, 3.

Some Irish puestos lay in the southern Chascomús area, near Dolores or farther south near Tandil, where MacCann reported Irish labourers earned the highest wages.[58] Their largest concentrations lay in counties (*partidos*) north-west of Buenos Aires such as Las Heras, Merlo, San Pedro, San Andrés de Giles, Suipacha and Mercedes. In some districts, the Irish climbed to around 10 per cent of the total population and to 45 per cent of landowners. Coghlan described Las Heras, with its two hundred estancias, as the largest Irish colony in South America.[59] Irish writer William Bulfin, a one-time ranch hand in Buenos Aires, claimed travellers could cross wealthy Las Heras entirely on Irish-owned land. "Over the richest sheep runs, you may gallop every hour of the longest day in summer without crossing a single rood of land that is not owned by some son of the Emerald Isle or by his children."[60]

If Irish migrants commonly climbed into the medianero class, few went much farther. Although they typically earned far more in Argentina than in Ireland, they remained in the same status as tenants. Life as a medianero proved monotonous, exhausting and sometimes dangerous. A diary kept by John Brabazon recalled his arrival in Argentina as an eighteen year old from Westmeath in 1845. He first spent several years mainly digging ditches. Pondering a move to the United States where most of his family lived, he eventually decided to stay in Argentina. Opting to become a medianero, he bound himself to a way of life, typical of the pampas, that obliged him to move from one puesto to another. He recounted his stay at a hotel in Buenos Aires kept by an Irishwoman, who found him an Irish wife. In the poignant conclusion to his tales, he returned to his lonely shack one day to find that marauders had murdered the young woman.[61]

Rural life became particularly hazardous in 1865–1875 during the war of the triple alliance against Paraguay and its aftermath. Assaults on

[58] Details in MacCann, *Argentine Provinces*, 1:99.

[59] Eduardo Coghlan. *Hace cien años. Disertación pronunciada en la Asociación Irlandesa de Mercedes (Pcia. de Buenos Aires) el 31 de mayo de 1969.* Mercedes: Asociación Irlandesa de Mercedes, 1969; Korol and Sabato, *Inmigración Irlandesa*, 90 assess the size and distribution of the Irish population based on cadastral maps. Rumbold claimed the Irish-owned "entire districts" in the province of Buenos Aires. *Silver River*, 112.

[60] William Bulfin. *Tales of the Pampas. Cuentos de la pampa*. Buenos Aires: L.O.L.A, 1997, 135. (From "The Course of True Love.")

[61] Eduardo A. Coghlan, *Andanzas de un irlandés en el campo porteño (1845–1864)*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Culturales Argentinas, 1981, 88, 104, 113. The English original of the Brabazon diary is reportedly held at the Embassy of the Republic of Ireland in Buenos Aires.

Europeans by gauchos became a form of protest against military conscription, from which all European settlers became exempt under the 1853 constitution, and against foreign encroachment on the land. Brabazon recorded how Irish puesteros ceased offering drinking water to passing gauchos for fear of attack.[62] The worst incident occurred near Tandil in 1872 when the instigations of a Chilean mystic known as Tata Dios produced a violent outburst in which forty European settlers were murdered. Soon after, Macdonell warned against British migration to Argentina partly because "no security of life" prevailed.[63]

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From his arrival in Buenos Aires in 1843 until his death in 1871, Dominican priest Antony Fahy became the dominant figure in the Irish community. He welcomed the new arrivals, found them lodgings and sometimes provided loans.[64] Each year, he travelled hundreds of miles by horseback visiting his dispersed rural parishioners. He set up the practice of marrying off newly arrived young women to sheep farmers, winning approval from McDonnell in this respect, who criticised English and Scottish priests for failing to follow his example.[65]

Fahy acquired his standing in the Irish community following several years of hardship. As he arrived, the Anglo-French blockade disrupted trade, leaving numerous Irish residents unemployed and himself virtually destitute. Several times he petitioned the Foreign Office for a subsidy under the Consular Chaplaincy Act, but with no success since the Irish Catholic Church had no standing in the United Kingdom as an estab-

[62] Coghlan, *Andanzas*, 110. Incidents included the murder of the Southams, an old man and his granddaughter, near Rosario in 1873 and the assault on Michael Lenihan and his wife in 1874 following the uprising that year led by Bartolomé Mitre. On these incidents, see Joel to FO 13 Aug. 1873 FO 118/149 and Cowper to FO 26 Jan. 1875 FO 6/330. Joel to FO 12 Dec. 1875 FO 118/154 reports the execution of the culprit in the Southam murders.

[63] The Tata Dios insurrection is explored in John Lynch. *Massacre in the Pampas, 1872. Britain and Argentina in the Age of Migration*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998; Richard W. Slatta. *Gauchos and the Vanishing Frontier*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, 169–174.

[64] On the necessary attributes of ethnic leaders, see María M. Bjerg. "The Danes in the Argentine Pampa: The Role of Ethnic Leaders in the Creation of an Ethnic Community, 1848–1930," in Samuel L. Baily and Eduardo José Míguez. *Mass Migration to Modern Latin America*. Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2003, 151.

[65] Macdonell to FO Enclosure in Despatch 32, 16 May 1872. FO 118/136.

lished church meriting state support. Fahy warned the Foreign Office his parishioners were about to join up with Rosas to oppose the British. He alone, (with appropriate support), could prevent "the [Irish] shamrock [becoming] separated from the [English] rose."[66] He compared his situation with that of the English and Scottish priests, whose congregations were smaller but at that point far better off than his.[67] In desperation, he argued Buenos Aires was about to become a British colony and the British needed his help to govern the country. "The fact is that the Province will be very soon overseen by British subjects, principally Irish, and I think policy would suggest the propriety of securing the allegiance and friendship of those of those who can render some service to the State."[68]

As a co-organiser of the British Hospital in 1844, Fahy feared the Mazorca would target him for assassination as a British agent. Finding no help at the Foreign Office, he declared allegiance to Rosas. Soon afterwards he had to endorse the government's sentence of death on Camila O'Gorman, a pregnant teenager of part Irish background who was condemned and shot for eloping with a Catholic priest. As a tide of excoriation from Europe swept over Rosas, Fahy defended the governor as "an upright Magistrate, who extends…enlightened protection to all the inhabitants of this country…who has restored the reign of order and the splendour of the Catholic Religion."[69]

Fahy strengthened his position by forming a close tie with merchant Thomas Armstrong, a fellow Irishman.[70] Their connections became visible

[66] Fahy to Wilfrid Latham 27 Aug. 1845 FO 6/104. Latham, a Catholic, became an intermediary in Fahy's contacts with the Foreign Office.

[67] Fahy to Palmerston 20 Oct. 1846. FO 118/126.

[68] Fahy to Palmerston 20 March 1847. FO 118/135. Fahy was aware the British government occasionally subsidised Roman Catholic priests in Caribbean colonies and hoped it would do the same in Buenos Aires. Some discussion appears in Dermot Keogh, "Argentina and the Falkland Islands: The Irish Connection," in C.A.M. Hennessy and John King. *The Land that England Lost: Argentina and Britain: A Special Relationship*. London: British Academic Press, 1992, 130.

[69] Fahy to *Dublin Review*, in *British Packet* 10 Nov. 1849. Supporting Rosas led Fahy into disputes with his superiors in Dublin. See Helen Kelly. *Irish "Ingleses." The Irish Experience in Argentina 1840–1920*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009, 106–108; *Letter of the Rev. Anthony D. Fahey* (*sic*). London: Alfred Boot, 1850. The controversy is reported FO 118/155.

[70] The two men originated in different parts of Ireland, the priest in western ultramontane Galway and the merchant in eastern King's County, (now County Offaly). Born a Protestant, Armstrong married into a Catholic family in Buenos Aires likely removing any sectarian obstacles to his relationship with Fahy.

in 1847 when Fahy persuaded Armstrong to contribute to Irish famine relief.[71] Henceforward, the priest became a crucial link in a financial chain between Armstrong and the Irish sheep farmers. Taking deposits from the shepherds, Fahy turned them over to Armstrong in his capacity as a director of the Banco de la Provincia de Buenos Aires. The bank then issued loans and credits to the farmers, again utilising the liaison between Armstrong and Fahy. The nexus persisted for more than a quarter-century, to provide Armstrong with a lucrative source of business and buttressing Fahy's standing in the Irish community. His reputation soared on his death in 1871 when an inventory of his possessions revealed he had performed his duties without material reward.[72] He was remembered as "the father of the Irish settlers in this province, the man to whom many wealthy estancieros owe their riches, the counsellor, the guide, the friend of the Irish immigrant."[73]

* * *

Most Irish settlers in Buenos Aires remained moderates on the contentious issues of Irish politics.[74] Attempts from North America in the 1870s to propagate the radical Fenian Brotherhood had little success.[75] Privileges conferred by the 1825 treaty steered the Irish away from questioning their British connections. In local politics, the Irish became conservatives, as illustrated in the presidential election of 1880 when numerous Irish estancieros supported Bernardo de Irigoyen, the former business associate of Armstrong and Lumb.[76] That year too, Chaplain Patrick Dillon, Fahy's successor as community leader, was elected to the Chamber of Deputies, becoming the single subject of the British Crown during the Victorian era to serve in Congress. Dillon followed Fahy in remaining staunchly pro-British. In 1875, he founded the periodical *The Southern Cross* for the

[71] Fahy to Primate of Ireland June 1847, in *British Packet* 1 Jan. 1848.

[72] Tribunales, *Sucesiones* 5756 (Antonio Fahy), 1871. Archivo General de la Nación. On Fahy's posthumous stature, see James Martin Ussher. *Padre Fahy. Biografía de Antonio Domingo Fahy, O.H.* Buenos Aires, 1952.

[73] *Southern Cross* 25 Mar. 1875.

[74] A Patrick's Day celebration in Buenos Aires in 1837 included toasts to Daniel O'Connell with others to the British Royal Family and to Rosas. *British Packet* 1 April 1837.

[75] On the weakness of Fenianism in Argentina, see Rumbold, *Silver River*, 172.

[76] On the Irish *partidos* in the elections of 1880, see *Standard* 6 Feb. 1880 recording the support of Irish estancieros for Irigoyen's candidacy. Also, Hilda Sabato. *Buenos Aires en armas. La revolución de 1880.* Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2008, 59, 93.

explicit purpose of warding off Fenian influences. A typical editorial claimed "no one can sow discord between the Irish and English residents in the Plate. We are united in friendly relations with each other."[77] During this period, the newspaper bracketed its pro-British editorials against its reports of the Irish migrants, who after thirty years in Buenos Aires returned to Westmeath or Longford laden with gold sovereigns.[78]

Irish migration to Argentina tailed off in the 1850s before reviving briefly during the American Civil War as Irish emigrants opted for South America to avoid the military draft in the United States. During this period, Liverpool steamship companies advertised in Westmeath for passengers to Buenos Aires, although with limited success.[79] After the Civil War, the steep fall of wool prices in Buenos Aires followed by the displacement of sheep by cattle and agriculture, ended nearly all Irish migration.[80] In 1879, the Argentine government commissioned John Dillon, a brother of Patrick Dillon, to travel to Ireland to seek new settlers. He returned empty-handed, reporting that Argentina had become "completely unknown to the poorer classes that emigrate. They know nothing whatever of South America."[81]

A surviving Irish ethnic presence found one illustration in the late-century growth of Venado Tuerto, a part Irish community in southern Santa Fe west of the original Irish estancias of Buenos Aires. The town developed on land captured from native peoples during the landmark military campaign of 1879. In 1881, Eduardo Casey, the son of an Irish estanciero in Las Heras and a leading land investor, acquired seventy-two square leagues, about half a million acres, from the government of Santa Fe. Confident that railways would soon enrich the area, he auctioned the land in lots to settlers who included numerous Irish-Porteños.[82] From the 1870s, the descendants of Irish settlers migrated into the port-city, becom-

[77] *Southern Cross* 28 Jan. 1875.

[78] *Southern Cross* 5 June 1878. Stories of rich Irishmen going home to Westmeath are recounted in Darbyshire. *Argentine Republic*, 20.

[79] For advertising by steamship companies, see *Westmeath Guardian* 4 Feb. 1864.

[80] See "Anglicus" in *Standard* 17 Mar. 1876.

[81] John Dillon in *Standard* 8 Jan. 1882.

[82] On Casey and Venado Tuerto, see Eduardo A. Coghlan. *Los irlandeses. Apuntes para la historia y la genealogía de las familias irlandesas establecidas en la República Argentina en el siglo xix*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Irlandesa, S.A. The Southern Cross, 1970, 9–10. Casey's career is traced in Roberto Landaburu. *Irlandeses. Eduardo Casey. Vida y obra*. Venado Tuerto: Asociación Venado Tuerto, 1995. The land acquisition is narrated in *Standard* Jan-Feb. 1881, and its distribution to settlers in *Standard* March 1883.

ing integrated with other groups by intermarriage and public education. Attempts to halt this trend failed. In 1895–1905, Bulfin, a fervent Irish Nationalist and the current proprietor of *The Southern Cross*, campaigned to strengthen Irish ethnic identity. Addressing the Irish-Porteños, he called them Argentines "only by birth [since] your blood and colour will for another few generations be Irish and white."[83] He formed a small Irish Republican group in Buenos Aires but failed to mitigate the pressures leading to cultural integration. From 1912, Irish surnames appeared among the affiliates of the Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), then the main political vehicle of the Porteño middle class.[84] Largely unstirred by the Easter rising in Dublin of 1916, most Irish-Porteños focussed on the concurrent Argentine presidential election ending in the UCR's victory.

* * *

Leaders in trade and urban business, English migrants to Argentina commanded little respect as farmers. In rural areas, the term "gentleman" applied to an Englishman carried derogatory connotations. Writings by W.H. Hudson satirised libertine Englishmen who complained "rum is about the only decent thing in this rotten old country."[85] Regarding the Irish as the best settlers from the British Isles in Argentina, diplomat Horace Rumbold considered the English the worst. Too many "took to drowning their cares in whisky or caña or fell into the arms of the native chinas."[86]

[83] Bulfin quoted in Kelly, *Irish Experience*, 182. His approach included biological racial theories and anti-Semitism. See Che Buono (Bulfin's pseudonym). *Rambles in Eirinn*. London: Sphere Books, 1981, 213–214, (a reference pointed out to me by Roy Foster).

[84] For the Irish surnames in local organisations of the Radical Party (UCR), see David Rock. *Politics in Argentina, 1890–1930. The Rise and Fall of Radicalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, 57–59.

[85] See W.H. Hudson. *The Purple Land; being the Narrative of One Richard Lamb's Adventures in the Banda Oriental, in South America, as Told by Himself*. New York: Three Sirens Press, 1904, 49, 61. Hudson was not alone in such criticism. A former sheep farmer noted that "Drunkenness, our national vice…is taken note in this country much to our discredit…Many Englishmen out here do drink to a dreadful extent, and give just cause to the natives to despise them for their intemperance." Dillon, *Brazil and the River Plate*, 45.

[86] Rumbold, *Silver River*, 112, 115. Englishmen who turned to crime are noted in Thompson to FO 16 July 1867. FO 118–130. A similar type of British emigrant is discussed in Patrick A. Dunae. *Gentlemen Emigrants. From the British Public School to the Canadian Frontier*. Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1981, 58–59, 71, relating the issue to "the younger son question" and to the emigration of young men educated in second tier

English migrants, some matching the stereotypes, grew most conspicuous in 1865–1868. Planning to set up as sheep farmers, they often arrived better funded than other groups, with means to buy land, at least in more distant Santa Fe and Entre Rios if no longer in moneyed Buenos Aires.

High wool prices during the American Civil War induced by cotton shortages drew Englishmen to Argentina along with other Europeans. Travelling comfortably by steamship, they arrived after only a month's voyage, one third of the time of the sailing ships. Steamship companies advertised Argentina and Uruguay as countries in which land and livestock were cheap and abundant. They pronounced the area virtually English-speaking, although to hedge their bets stressed too that Spanish was the simplest of all foreign languages, "capable, during a short residence, of being more easily acquired than any other."[87] The Mulhall brothers issued similar pronouncements in the *Standard* and the *Handbook of the River Plate*. Henry Ross-Johnson, an adventurous young English barrister, recounted how he first learned about the Rio de la Plata from a copy of the *Handbook* in his club. It told of its "scant population and absurd wars, its herds and flocks, its superb climate, prairies and fruitful mountains, its great mountains bursting with minerals."[88]

Anglo-Porteño merchant Wilfrid Latham became another promoter, who in the 1860s displayed the same enthusiasm for Argentine wool as for the trade he imagined developing from Bolivia along the Rio Pilcomayo twenty years earlier. In 1866, he published a book on sheep farming in the Plata with outdated statistics fostering a quite false impression of the current situation. The book appeared the year after the end of the American Civil War. With wool prices plummeting, working on "halves" as medianeros no longer enabled settlers, as Latham claimed, to "become purchasers

British public schools. Benjamin Disraeli's "Crystal Palace" speech of 1873 promised an imperialist policy partly to meet the employment needs of upper class youth. George Chesney, a prominent commentator of the 1870s, saw the main value of imperial India to Britain in its capacity to absorb "a portion of that supply of English youth which seems always to be tending to exceed the supply for it." "The Value of India to England." Quoted in P.J. Cain. *Empire and Imperialism. The Debate of the 1870s*. South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 1999, 288.

[87] *[The] River Plate (South America) as a field for emigration, its geography, climate, agricultural capabilities, and the facilities afforded for a permanent settlement*. London: Bates, Hendry and Co. 1866, 21.

[88] Ross-Johnson, *Long Vacation*, 6. Hans Fugl, considered the founder of Danish rural settlements in Argentina, provided an analogous case. He discovered the Rio de la Plata reading the *Berlingske Tidende* in Copenhagen. See Juan Fugl. *Abriendo surcos. Memorias de Juan Fugl*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Altamira, 1959, 23.

of land and owners of thousands of sheep."[89] Ross-Johnson's visit to a sheep station near Rosario owned by an Englishman in 1866 depicted failure in the making, where a "gentleman by birth [was] resigned to live in…squalid filth and misery" with no profits in prospect.[90]

A notable account of wool "pioneering" by an English author was set in southern Córdoba province in 1865–1868 during construction of the Central Argentine Railway between Córdoba city and Rosario. Richard Seymour, a clergyman's son from Warwickshire, planned to farm in Entre Rios with a friend, Francis Lyttleton Holyoake-Goodricke, a son of the reigning baronet in nearby Studley Castle. "Frank," a younger son of the family, exemplified the English upper class sheep farmers of the time. Preceding Seymour, he set up as a medianero in Entre Rios and then moved two hundred miles north-west with Seymour to Fraile Muerto ("Dead Monk") in southern Córdoba, a popular district among English settlers. Pooling their resources, they purchased a polygon-shaped segment of wilderness thirty-seven miles in circumference from the government of Córdoba.[91] They paid sixpence (£0.025) an acre, six times more than James Hodgson forty years earlier when purchasing his estate in Rio Cuarto but only a fraction of the current price of land, at £4 an acre, in the best parts of Buenos Aires (like Dolores).[92]

Seymour's land lay in a more eastern location than Hodgson's close to the projected railway, with the disadvantage of being more vulnerable to Native American raiders. Ominously, contemporaries referred to the British settlers in Fraile Muerto as "gentlemen," although Seymour's

[89] Latham, William. *States of the River Plate*. London: Longmans, Green, 1868, 177–193. Failure to foretell the post-war recession explained Latham's error. In 1863, Thomas Hutchinson, the British consul in Rosario, estimated that renting one square league in Entre Rios at £60–£100 would support 8 puestos and 10,000 sheep; he claimed sheep numbers could be expected to double every three years, and more than quadruple in 5 years. He predicted possible profits of £8000 over 5 years, but his projections too extended into the period of recession and falling prices after 1864. See Thomas J. Hutchinson. *Buenos Ayres and Argentine Gleanings, With Extracts of a Diary of Salado Exploration, 1862 and 1863*. London: E. Stanford, 1865, 238–242.

[90] Ross-Johnson, *Long Vacation*, 38–41.

[91] The details of this land purchase are explored Juan D. Delius, with José S. Lloret. "History of the Camps around the Ancient Estancia Monte Molina, Southeastern Córdoba Province, Argentina." (http://www.pampa-cordobesa.de). Míguez reports the size of the estancia as 4 square leagues (more than 26,000 acres). Míguez, *Tierras Inglesas*, 26–28.

[92] Latham's stated price of £1600 per square league in Buenos Aires in 1866 yields the price of £4.14 an acre. (See *States of the River Plate* note 102).

sojourn consisted of back breaking toil relieved by occasional duck shoots and horse racing. He too complained about the English "loafers" who latched onto working settlers. As his story proceeded, Indian marauders struck and British settlers nearby were killed. Investigating the attack, Seymour and Holyoake-Goodricke "rode up close to the ditch where a dreadful scene of devastation met our eyes. The fort was in ruins, all burnt and blackened…We suddenly perceived in the ditch three bodies."[93]

Seymour described the devastated condition of rural society during the war of the triple alliance with Paraguay of 1865–1870. He travelled during a wave of cholera epidemics, while witnessing the columns of chained men drafted to serve on the battle front. Rampant in Rosario in early 1868, cholera failed to deter running gun battles between rival factions contesting the forthcoming presidential election, (ending in Sarmiento becoming president later in the year). As Seymour wrote, "I was not sorry to spend a night outside a town where both cholera and revolution were going on at the same time."[94] He listed the difficulties he and his partner faced as a result of collapsing wool prices. "The close of the American war, which had for some little time enabled the normal supply of cotton to be again transmitted to Europe, was the chief cause of the depression; and the great temporary rise in the price of wool, in consequence of the war, having caused numbers of settlers throughout the world to begin sheep farming."[95] Pedigree sheep imported from Britain all died, forcing the partners to switch to grain in an attempt to utilise the new rail connection. Exhausted by the ordeal, Seymour returned to England.[96] British settlement at Fraile Muerto lasted around twenty-five years until disappearing in the 1880s.[97]

[93] Seymour, *Pioneering*, 71. Foreign Office archives contain several petitions from settlers at Fraile Muerto, one signed by Seymour, demanding protection against attacks by Native Americans. See Hutchinson to FO 31 Oct. 1866 and petition of 10 Nov. 1866. FO 118/117; also Buckley to Reardon 26 Oct. 1866; British settlers to Buckley 10 Nov. 1866. FO 118/121. In 1867, the settlers blamed marauding gauchos assisted by Native Americans for the attacks.

[94] Seymour, *Pioneering*, 158.

[95] Seymour, *Pioneering*, 146. Sabato, *Agrarian Capitalism*, 28, notes the peaking of wool prices in 1864, which fell to a low point in 1869. Seymour listed other problems such as the absence of timber for fencing and the poor location of his estancia.

[96] "Seymour who wrote 'Pioneering' has married an heiress in England, and hung up his hat." George Reid. *South American Adventure: Letters from George Reid*. London: V. Boyle, 1999, 169.

[97] As recorded in Delius, *Monte Molina*.

Hundreds of young men who tried sheep farming in Entre Rios fared no better than Seymour in Córdoba. In 1868, George Reid, another upper middle class English migrant, rented some "camp" or grazing land from a fellow British subject near the town of Gualeyguaychú on the Rio Uruguay. He worked on the share system, having been advised to buy livestock but not land.[98] Supervising his flock on unfenced terrain kept Reid constantly in the saddle, and despite his youth exhaustion overwhelmed him too. The ongoing war with Paraguay left horses in short supply, and any peons he hired soon vanished. Southern Entre Rios appeared crowded with British migrants, whom Reid described as "clerks in offices in England, small shopkeepers [along with] a very high class of gentlemen, men that you would pick out anywhere as swells."[99] Blaming the Mulhalls for enticing such people out to Argentina, he wanted "to prevent young fellows without money from coming out here, and going body and soul to the devil." Reid left Entre Rios with no more money than when he arrived, realising that "nowadays one cannot expect to make a fortune here in a few years and then clear out." "Certainly it is an accursed country in the three years I have known it," he concluded. "I have seen cholera, a drought, a pestilence among sheep, a war, and now a winter drought, the worst of all."[100]

Among several abortive British agrarian colonisation ventures of the period, the "Lincolnshire Farmers" scheme of 1872–1873 became the direst. It began after the triple alliance war when the new government of Paraguay contracted a loan of £1 million with London banks, and handed the money to a colonisation company. The firm gathered a few settlers in London slums, labelling them "Lincolnshire farmers" from the richest agricultural county in England in an attempt to attract others.[101] Stranded in forests near the Rio Paraguay, dozens of settlers died. Frederick St. John, the British minister in

[98] Reid was advised to rent and "on no account to buy, titles are uncertain and even if they were not it does not pay so well to invest in land as in stock." Quoted in Andrew Graham-Yooll. *Uruguay: A Travel and Literary Companion*. Buenos Aires: L.O.L.A. 2008, 102–104.

[99] Reid, *South American Adventure*, 27, 47.

[100] Reid, *South American Adventure*, 43, 188.

[101] A list of the "Lincolnshire Farmers" shows a large proportion of settlers from boroughs of central and east London; a group of Germans appeared on the list and scarcely a dozen people from Lincolnshire. The entire group included numerous women and children. See Jeremy Howat and Mary Godward. "The Lincolnshire Farmers—a Disastrous Emigration Scheme. http://www.argbrit.org/Lincolnshire-Farmers. The website includes the names and origins of settlers and details about their later lives.

Buenos Aires, set up a fund to bring the survivors to Rosario and Buenos Aires where they arrived jaundice-ridden, "yellow as guineas."[102]

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The Welsh community formed in 1865 in the far-southern territory of Chubut became the best known British agrarian settlement in nineteenth-century Argentina, celebrated for the unique feat of transplanting the Welsh language to a foreign venue. Michael Daniel Jones, a Welsh nationalist, militant Congregationalist and leader of the Welsh Emigration Society, spent several years planning the colony, while Anne Jones, his wealthy wife, made a major financial contribution to its success. Jones's writings bore an affinity with those of Lajos Kossuth, the Hungarian nationalist leader during the 1848 European revolutions.[103] Jones followed his mentor in seeking to connect the Welsh with an imagined ancestral rustic culture free of English dominance and of encroaching industrialism. Having considered several venues as a site for the Welsh colony, he selected Patagonia because of its extreme isolation, believing it offered the best opportunity to set up his distant ethnic paradise. He recruited around 150 settlers, including forty-one from the small South Wales town of Mountain Ash, then the site of several developing coal mines.[104]

Myth-making to motivate a sense of shared memory and common identity obtruded more strongly among the Welsh than among other communities from the British Isles. *Y Wladfa*, as the community in Patagonia became known, found inspiration in North American as well as in Central European nationalist lore. The Welsh spun foundational folk tales around the *Mimosa*, the ship that transported the settlers to Patagonia, similar to those associated with the *Mayflower*. Narratives of the colony's early history placed the same emphasis on religion and moral righteousness as the

[102] The extrication of the settlers from Paraguay is narrated in the British minister's memoir. See Frederick St. John. *Reminiscences of a Retired Diplomat*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1905, 165–168.

[103] Kossuth's influence on Jones is mentioned in Bill Jones. "Gales, la Patagonia y la emigración." In *Una tierra lejana. La colonización galesa del Chubut. Fotografías de John Murray Thomas, Henry E. Bowman, Carlos Forester y otros*. Buenos Aires: Fundación Antorchas, 2003, 13.

[104] Other settlers originated in coal and slate mining communities, and from among Welsh residents of Liverpool. See Susan Wilkinson. *Mimosa. The Life and Times of the Ship that Sailed to Patagonia*. Talybout: Y Lolfa, 2007, 149.

Puritan settlements of Massachusetts. The Welsh too viewed themselves as protagonists of a pioneer epic comparable with those in North America. Community folk tales claiming the colony practised precocious forms of democracy and gender equality overlooked the long dominant figure of Lewis Jones, whom Michael Jones appointed to lead the colony. As its principal figure for forty years, Lewis Jones scouted out a site for the settlement in Chubut. He led negotiations in Buenos Aires with the Argentine government to establish it and helped brace its members against the hardship and discord of their early years.

Within months of being founded, the settlement almost collapsed. A score of settlers petitioned the Foreign Office to send a ship to Chubut, where "we are like slaves in bondage or prisoners," to resettle them in the Falkland Islands.[105] Five years later, explorer George Chaworth Musters heard confident predictions the "Welsh Utopia [would] likely to end in starvation." He noted the dependence of the Welsh on the local indigenous population.[106] Fostering a picture of altruistic interaction between the Welsh and local Native Americans, Welsh lore glossed over the way supplies from the outside world, alcohol in particular, helped seduce the Indians into peaceful contact.[107]

In the mid-1870s, the community strengthened on the arrival of new Welsh settlers, who were mostly re-emigrants from the United States. Soon after, irrigation canals enabled wheat farming. Population grew, new communities spawned and a railway promoted by Lewis Jones enabled wheat exports to Buenos Aires. By 1888, a British skipper reported the colonists "seem well, are well fed and clothed, many of them with money in the bank and contemplating a visit home."[108] A less content atmosphere supervened as intrusive officials appointed in Buenos Aires began restricting access to the remaining vacant land in the Chubut valley. Growing numbers of non-Welsh settlers appeared and Welsh schools were obliged to teach classes partly in Spanish. Alienation grew severe as local young

[105] Undated petition (1866) FO 118/121.

[106] George Chaworth Musters. *At Home with the Patagonians. A Year's Wanderings over Untrodden Ground from the Straits of Magellan to the Rio Negro*. London: John Murray, 1871, 315.

[107] Letter of 14 July 1866. FO 118/120. "The Cacique offers friendship to the Welsh settlers and proposes to enter into trading relations with them."

[108] Captain Kennedy to Admiralty 18 Mar. 1888. CO 78/78.

men forced into military service suffered ill-treatment.[109] During the late 1890s, Lewis Jones and other elders petitioned the British government to declare Chubut a protectorate but with no success.[110] Visiting Chubut in 1915, British Consul Spencer Dickson encountered a group still highly resistant to integration, although by then, in his opinion, previous high standards of education and religious observance were in decline.[111]

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As merchants and tradesmen as well as rural settlers, Scots retained close connections both with urban Buenos Aires and with Britain itself. Presbyterianism and Freemasonry played important parts in a community whose contrasts with the Welsh included less regimentation by community leaders and less susceptibility to nationalist lore. A report to William Ouseley in 1845 emphasised how rural Scots retained "their distinctive British habits and institutions…Scattered widely apart though they are over an extensive surface, they maintain by intercourse with one another the feelings and habits of a home community. They educate their children to the extent they are able in the home principles and manners, and they come together at stated times from a circuit twenty or thirty miles in diameter for the purpose of divine service."[112]

[109] An assessment of the Welsh colony appears in Shaw, *Argentine Republic*, 180–1. Jones, *Gales*, displays nineteenth-century photographs. See Geraint Dyfnallt Owen. *Crisis in Chubut. A chapter in the history of the Welsh colony of Patagonia*. Swansea: Christopher Davies, 1977, 36–50, on friction with the Argentine government in the late 1890s. Resistance to Spanish in Welsh schools is discussed in Lilia Bertoni. "Nacionalidad o cosmopolitanismo. La cuestión de las escuelas de las colectividades extranjeras a fines del siglo xix." *Anuario*, IEHS, Tandil, 1996, 179–202. Proposing legislation to make Spanish compulsory in the schools, Congressman Indalecio Gómez described the Welsh as a group more resistant to integration than any other foreign community in Argentina.

[110] *Standard* 23 Sept. 1902. Complaints focused on the inability to obtain land titles and corporal punishment inflicted on Welsh-Argentine conscripts.

[111] Report by Consul Spencer Dickson 15 Apr. 1915. FO 118/326. Animosity persisted between the Welsh and the Argentine government. In 1915 the British Minister Sir Reginald Tower overheard a government minister calling the Welsh "ignorant…mentally and physically degenerate." See Sir Reginald Tower. *Annual Report for 1915*. FO 371–2601. Leading works tracing twentieth-century issues are Glynn Williams. *The Welsh in Patagonia. The State and Ethnic Community*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991, and Lublin, *Memoir and Identity*, continuing the story into the twenty-first century.

[112] Enclosure in Ouseley to FO 30 May 1845 FO 6/123. The anonymous memorandum is reproduced in Wilbur Devereux Jones. "The Argentine British Colony in the Time of Rosas." *Hispanic American Historical Review*. Vol. 40, No. 1, Feb. 1960, 90–97.

The Scottish estancias and settlements lay mostly in and around Quilmes and farther south in Chascomús. The former constellation included survivors and descendants of the settlement at Monte Grande that in 1829 suffered near-destruction. James Brown, a hard-working, moderately successful individual, who arrived on the *Symmetry* in 1825 and died at Quilmes in 1850 aged 49, typified the group. "After bringing up and suitably educating a numerous family, he has left by his death a handsome occupancy," reported his obituary.[113] W.H. Hudson, who grew up near Quilmes, knew people like Brown in childhood but showed little affection for them. Haughtily, he dismissed them as "typical of the lower middle class, who read no books and conversed, with considerable misuse of the aspirate, about nothing."[114] From the mid-forties, sheep farming drew some of the Quilmes people into the Chascomús district, with two brothers named Bell credited as the initiators of the southward move. Like many prominent Scots in Argentina, including the Robertson brothers, the Bells originated in the border country near Berwick. Thomas Bell went to Buenos Aires in the mid-1820s before returning to Britain to set up as a merchant in Liverpool. Between the early 1840s and the mid-1850s he hired up to twenty-five young Scots a year on three year contracts for estancia work in Quilmes and Chascomús. Like many of the Irish, the new Scots migrants arrived in Argentina at an opportune time during the rapid expansion of the wool trade. As Bell reported, by 1855 "many of the first [men he had] sent out have at this day land and flocks of sheep and cattle of their own."[115] In 1853, his brother George Bell formed an estancia near Chascomús on land once owned by Prudencio Rosas, the brother of the deposed governor. Part of the ranch, "La Adela," remained a focal point of Scots-Argentine rural society throughout the nineteenth century.[116]

The settlers recruited by the Bells produced two notable Scots-Argentine dynasties, the Dodds and the Drysdales. James Dodds (1823–1896), another Berwickshire man, found employment with George Bell in Chascomús where he married into his family and inherited La Adela. Assisted by siblings and nephews, Thomas Drysdale founded a family firm in Buenos Aires to import hardware. He became one of the greatest land-

[113] Dodds, *Scottish Settlers*, 230.

[114] Hudson, *Far Away and Long Ago*, 211.

[115] Quoted in *British Packet* 10 March 1855.

[116] On George Bell in Chascomús, see Marta Valencia. *Tierras públicas, tierras privadas. Buenos Aires, 1852–1876.* La Plata: Editorial de la Universidad de La Plata, 2005, 321.

owners in Argentina in possession of a prodigious 320,000 hectares (nearly 800,000 acres)—twice as much land as James Hodgson bought in Córdoba. He began acquiring it in the early 1870s in units of around 7000 hectares, although most of it appeared during the following decade following the 1879 military campaign: it was therefore mostly distant, former frontier land.[117] Drysdale became a leading philanthropist and founder of a Presbyterian Sunday school. "There is not a [British] charity in this country that is not his debtor," averred the *Standard*.[118] On his death in 1890, his nephew Juan Drysdale inherited an importing business long considered one of the largest in South America.[119]

Like other groups, the Scots employed religion as a principal cohering force. Like the Irish under Fahy, rural dwellers relied on pastoral visitations from Buenos Aires, which they financed by donating sheep. For some thirty years, the popular James "Padre" Smith, who succeeded William Brown as head of the St. Andrew's Church in Buenos Aires, rode out to Chascomús at regular intervals "donning oil skin, sou'wester or poncho," in Dodds's phrase. Afterwards, he progressed to other Scottish estancias farther south including a cluster in the Rio Sauce Grande zone near Bahía Blanca.[120] Scots-owned estancias, some said to be part Gaelic-speaking, spread north and west into Entre Rios and Santa Fe.[121] Presbyterian worship in Chascomús began in the 1840s in an adobe hut known as the Rancho Kirk. In 1857, the Scots built a sturdier church and

[117] On Drysdale's land acquisitions, see Valencia, *Tierras Públicas*, 195. The author refers to the land purchaser as Juan Drysdale; possibly the figure of 320,000 hectares refers to family holdings, not Thomas Drysdale's alone. Sesto, *Ganadera*, 78, shows the Drysdale holdings as only 104,995 hectares in the late 1890s after Thomas Drysdale's death, to suggest the landholdings diminished sharply during the depression of the 1890s. The data suggest high velocity of land holding.

[118] On his Sunday school see *Standard* 1 Apr. 1880.

[119] *Standard* 6 Apr. and 3 May 1893.

[120] The Scots farther south are listed in Mulhall, *Handbook*, 133–134. On James Smith, see Hanon, *Diccionario*, 756; also "Padre Smith. A 1908 report by James Begg." *Standard* 20 Apr. 1940. Smith had an easier life than pastors of other small Protestant groups. In early twentieth century Tres Arroyos, the Danish pastor in the community worked part time as a labourer. See María Bjerg. *Historias de la inmigración en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Edheza, 2009, 139. See also Monacci, *Colectividad Británica en Bahía Blanca*, 15; Lynch, *Massacre*, 31.

[121] See *Buenos Aires Scotch Church Magazine*, 1914.

opened a cemetery in Chascomús. Another church bearing Masonic arms on its foundation stone appeared in 1872.[122]

Education heavily emphasising the use of English became another observable feature among Scots. Dodds's book included anecdotes about so-called camp schoolmasters, who were typically English "gentlemen" touring the Anglophone estancias as a way of making a living. Referring to them ironically as "a boon and a blessing," Dodds recalled the "considerable dramatic talent and poetic genius" of the well-educated but eccentric wanderers who turned up on his estancia. He believed the system had worked well, since children educated in this way "now hold high positions in our mercantile community, on our railways, as estancia managers, as successful commercial travellers."[123] As a product of the system, Hudson reported less favourably. "What delightful people they were," he mocked, "and how far their little weaknesses…their love of the bottle, their meannesses, their grand and low cunning…only served to make them more charming."[124] Camp schoolmasters remained in use as late as 1914 on the Gibson estancia, where the system enabled the "younger people [to] speak [English] tolerably well."[125]

* * *

In old age, Jane Robson (born Jane Rodgers) recounted her life as a girl, wife, mother, pioneer rancher and sheep farmer in the Scottish rural settlements south of Buenos Aires. She arrived in Argentina in 1825 at the age of three aboard the *Symmetry* and four years later witnessed the destruction of the Monte Grande settlement, when her father barely escaped being murdered. As she grew up, her family continued to live outside the city on a chacra named La Caledonia. When her father died in 1849, disputes over his inheritance revealed a dysfunctional family of six siblings, including a sister who eloped with a non-Scot and a mother deranged by alcohol. The family lived modestly, selling La Caledonia in 1858 at only one tenth of the price of the estancias of wealthy Anglophone

[122] R.M. Merchant. *St. Andrew's Scots Presbyterian Church. Chascomús 1857–1957*. Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos MacCorquodale, 1957, 32.

[123] Dodds, *Scottish Settlers*, 292–295.

[124] Hudson. *Far Away and Long Ago*, 28.

[125] *Buenos Aires Scotch Church Magazine*, 1914.

landowners like Sheridan or Newton.[126] As described in her personal memoir, Robson grew up adept at country living, crossing swollen rivers by horseback and navigating the giant thistles near her home. She once rode through one of Rosas's military camps wearing light blue, the colours of the Unitarios banned from public display by Rosas. When the British Hospital was founded in 1844, she objected vociferously to its refusal to treat female patients.

Jane Robson and her husband Hugh Robson, another child from the Monte Grande colony, began married life in 1840 as medianeros but quickly amassed large flocks of sheep. In the mid-1850s, they leased a small estancia near Chascomús to which they obtained the freehold in 1867.[127] As medianeros and then landowners, the Robsons used family labour wherever possible. They employed creole housemaids for domestic work, hired gauchos to assist with the livestock and Europeans for seasonal sheep shearing—British, Irish and French workers during the Rosas period and mostly Italians afterwards. Such Europeans acquired the traits of native rural dwellers, moving from one employer or locality to another as casual labourers, while alternating between town and country.[128] Living on the estancias, they occupied communal sheds adjacent to the *casco* or main family dwelling that in this period usually consisted of a single-floor structure with mud walls and a thatched roof. As strong Presbyterians, the Robsons clung to a church dominated by ethnic networks and providing strategic personal connections. Accumulating land and livestock almost throughout her life, by 1910 Jane Robson, now long widowed, owned almost 1500 hectares of some of the best grazing and agricultural land in the country. "With the passing of the years," she commented, "we had gradually bought a good deal of land around our house." Her memoir captures the personality of a woman of determination adept at self-advancement.[129] The monument on her grave is one of the largest in the Presbyterian cemetery at Chascomús.

[126] Tribunales. *Testimonios* 7820, (Diego Rodgers), 1849. Archivo General de la Nación.

[127] Hugh Robson is shown as the purchaser of 111 hectares under the provincial land law of 1867. See Valencia, *Tierras Públicas*, 341.

[128] As described in Sabato, *Agrarian Capitalism*.

[129] The Robson estancia fell short of the nineteenth-century standard measurement known as the *suerte de estancia* of 1875 hectares. For her memoir, see Jane Robson, "Faith Tried Hard" in Stewart. *From Caledonia to the Pampas*. The document reads like an oral history translated from Spanish, to suggest that by old age Robson's English had lapsed. A photograph of Jane Robson as one of the last survivors of the Monte Grande colony appears in *Standard* 24 Nov. 1906.

Robson and her husband belonged to the upper tier of the Scots community. Below them stood those of intermediate rank, typically skilled workers, local traders and estate managers. George Bruce, the son of a seaman from Edinburgh who was born in Buenos Aires in 1840, provides an example. Attendance at St Andrews Scotch School until the age of twelve qualified him for employment with an English-speaking artisan. After an apprenticeship as a cabinet maker, he worked in numerous occupations. In the early 1860s, he became a sheep farmer on shares. He then latched onto the construction of the Great Southern Railway, becoming a hardware and timber dealer in Chascomús, before becoming an estancia manager in Uruguay. His memoir expressed regret that he never achieved his foremost ambition—one shared by nearly everyone after 1850—of owning an estancia in the province of Buenos Aires.[130]

* * *

Ethnic friction became much stronger in rural than in urban society. Remarking on the rural Scots, the roving merchant and author MacCann observed that "some affect to look down on the natives with an air of superiority, and seem to expect that they should, with a becoming humility, look up to them."[131] Jane Robson viewed all "natives" with hostility, never forgetting her experience as a child at Monte Grande when gauchos murdered the brother of the man she married. In her view, the "taking of life and property was held very lightly" by the gauchos. She considered them all "untrustworthy…worse than useless."[132] Endogamy remained a cardinal rule in the British and Irish communities, urban and rural. Breaking the taboo led to permanent ostracism, particularly for women. A daughter of James Dodds, who married an Argentine against her father's wishes, and Jane Robson's younger sister suffered this fate.[133] Nationality

[130] Bruce. "Reminiscences." Mimeo. See also G.A. Bridger. *Britain and the Making of Argentina*. Southampton and Boston: WIT Press, 2013, 113.

[131] MacCann, *Argentine Provinces*, I:93. Bernard Porter argues that "settlers were most 'racist' because they needed native labour and land…and traders (like MacCann) the most relaxed, because they treated with the natives equally." See *The Absent-Minded Imperialists. Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, 23.

[132] Robson, "Faith Tried Hard," in Stewart, *Caledonia to the Pampas*, 32.

[133] Arnold E. Dodds. "James Dodds (1823–1896). Berwickshire's Grand Old Man. A Record of his Descendant." Mimeo, refers to a daughter "who married against her father's wish a certain Señor Alejandro Moreno…Grandfather never forgave her."

law in both Argentina and Britain penalised British and Irish women who married Argentines. Under Argentine law, women surrendered their property to their husbands, while under the Naturalisation Act of 1870 women who married foreigners forfeited British nationality.[134] Indigent British-born widows who had married outside the community lost all access to British charities. In the 1880s, Rev. James Fleming, the head of the British and American Benevolent Society, strictly enforced this rule.[135] From the end of the nineteenth century, orphans and illegitimate children of British and Anglo mothers were placed in the Allen Gardiner Memorial Homes in Córdoba. Founded in 1897 by Rev. W.H.T. Blair, it housed up to fifty children of "the lapsed or unfortunate of our race." An unstable man forever longing to escape his charges, Blair remained at his post until 1922.[136] At a much later date in 1963, a visitor found children at the Homes living in squalid conditions under hapless caretakers.[137]

Despite their efforts to limit contact with other ethnic groups, most members of the Anglophone communities became cultural hybrids. Irish nationalist Bulfin claimed that in Argentina "the brogue of Leinster and Munster remained intact. [The] struggle to preserve the traditions of the motherland is constant and earnest."[138] He exaggerated since hybridity became almost unavoidable, assuming multiple forms. At its most extreme, it produced situations like Stewart's, the Scot James Hodgson sent out to Córdoba in the late 1820s, who apparently forgot all his English. In the 1850s, a traveller remarked on the Irishmen he met in rural Buenos Aires in native dress, "gauchos in ponchos and chiripas."[139] Dodds published some hybrid doggerel from his Presbyterian congregation in Chascomús:

[134] *Standard* 11 Oct. 1893. On nationality issues, see also Consul to FO, 17 Apr. 1906 FO 369/1. Other anomalies adversely affected women: those who married Argentines had to petition for Argentine citizenship, and a woman therefore risked becoming stateless if she married in this way. British nationality could be transmitted only by paternal descent in the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century. All Anglo-Argentines therefore bore British or Irish surnames.

[135] *Standard* 27 Apr. 1907. On Fleming's treatment of widows who married outside the community, see J. Monteith Drysdale. *One hundred Years Old, 1838–1938. A Record of the First Century of St. Andrew's Scotch School, Buenos Aires.* Buenos Aires: English Printery, 1938, 220.

[136] *Standard* 16 July 1922.

[137] See Keith S. MacInnes, Visit to the Allen Gardiner Home. FO 118/876 (1963).

[138] Bulfin. *Tales of the Pampas*, 136.

[139] C.B. Mansfield. *Paraguay, Brazil, and the Plate. Letters Written in 1852–1853.* 2nd ed. New York: Ams, 1971, 156.

"The people chat in native Scots tongue/But Castilian words intermingling/One grumbles while he cuts tobacco/That all his horses are so flaco (thin)/Some tell how many sheep they've lost/By secas (droughts), temporals (storms) and frost."[140] Walter Larden, a visitor in the 1880s, objected to the way Spanish verbs were co-opted into English. "In Argentina, the English residents use, in the case of verbs without number, such forms as 'he golpear'd his foot against a stone (knocked it)', or 'they revocar'd the wall (plastered it)'."[141] Less judgemental, W.H. Koebel observed how a typical British rural settler "discovered the merits of the poncho and took to sipping [yerba] mate through the bombilla. His speech became more interlarded with local phraseology. William Brown became Don Guillermo…When [he] rode into a paddock it was into a potrero he went…If the tick disease smote his cattle, it was from the gran malo that they suffered."[142] All such experiences plainly contradicted notions of inherited ethnicity. To survive in Argentina, British identity required protection, reaffirmation and self-insulation.

* * *

Intriguing life stories illustrated the complexity of cultural hybridity. Cecilia Grierson (1859–1934) started out as a child in an Anglophone world that became Hispanic during her adolescence. She achieved high standing in her Hispanic world but clung to the remnants of her former associations. She was the granddaughter of William Grierson, the Scottish diarist on board the *Symmetry* in 1825, and the daughter of his second son. The son abandoned the Scottish cultural cocoon by marrying an Irish Catholic, but thereby excluded his daughter from the inner circle of the Scots community. Although born in Buenos Aires, Cecilia Grierson lived as a child on a remote sheep station near the village of Gualeyguay, Entre

[140] Dodds, *Scottish Settlers*, 291.

[141] Walter Larden. *Argentine Plains and Andean Glaciers: Life on an Estancia, and an Expedition into the Andes*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1911, 114.

[142] W.H. Koebel. *British Exploits in South America. A History of British Activities in Exploration, Military Adventure, Diplomacy, Science, and Trade, in Latin America*. New York: The Century Company, 1917, 479. The subject is complex. For discussion, see Andrew Wallace-Hadrill. *Rome's Cultural Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, ix, 5–39. Literature on the topic expresses no consensus on categories and terminology. "Creolisation," for example, is sometimes expressive of a new linguistic form and sometimes of only partial appropriation or "contamination" by another culture.

Rios, near the site of the Beaumont colony of 1825.[143] She differed from most British settlers such as Jane Robson in her view of the Argentine rural population. Rather than disparaging the peons, Grierson treated them with maternal affection and a sense of noblesse oblige. She aspired to reform and sanitise them, to persuade them to live more decently. She left Entre Rios aged fifteen in 1874 amidst a destructive rebellion in the province led by former governor Ricardo López Jordan. In Entre Rios, she recalled speaking English and being taught some French by her mother before knowing any Spanish, but after settling in Buenos Aires Spanish became her primary language.[144]

People remembered Cecilia Grierson for her achievements in the 1880s when she embarked on studies leading to her graduation as the first formally trained female physician in Argentina. Years later, her former professor at the University of Buenos Aires recalled her amidst hostile male classmates. She arranged her hair boyishly, a practice he described as "posing as one of the enemy."[145] In her long career, she became best known for her work in obstetrics and domestic science.[146] A friend complimented her *feminismo equilibrado y práctico*, by which she meant her work training young women for home or factory work.[147] A chair in the university became her great ambition, which eluded her "only because of my sex" she claimed.[148] Having lived for a lengthy period in an exclusively Hispanic world, she eventually sought to reconnect with Anglophone society in Buenos Aires and with Britain itself. In 1894, she addressed the prestigious English Literary Society in her halting English.[149] Searching for British institutions to introduce in

[143] Grierson claimed she lived in Entre Rios throughout her childhood, although she is listed as living in Buenos Aires in 1869 with her mother's family, named Duffy. See González Bonarino, *Buenos Aires*, 117.

[144] While training as a teacher in her adolescent years, she reported she "took the examination while retaining a command of three languages, Spanish being the one I knew least well." Liceo Nacional de Señoritas de la Capital Dra. Cecilia Grierson. *Su obra. Su vida:* Homenaje a la Dra Cecilia Grierson. Buenos Aires: Tragant, 1916, 47.

[145] Quoted in Asunción Taboada. *Vida y obra de Cecilia Grierson. Primera médica argentina*. Buenos Aires: Triada, 1983, 83.

[146] As listed in the *curriculum vitae* she prepared on her retirement in 1916 when she was denied the state pension she requested. See Grierson's papers at the Universidad de San Andrés, Buenos Aires.

[147] Anon. *Cecilia Grierson: Homenaje póstumo*, Buenos Aires: López, 1937, 9, 42, 38.

[148] Grierson, *Obra*, 59.

[149] She spoke on "The Education of Women and her Influence (*sic*)." See *Standard* 11 Oct. 1894.

Fig. 4.1 Cecilia Grierson

Buenos Aires, she opted for the St. John Ambulance association founded in Britain in 1868. In 1900, she became Argentine delegate to the International Congress of Women meeting in London. Addressing the assembly, she acknowledged that "my native tongue is Spanish. Still, I have the greatest admiration for my British ancestors" Fig. 4.1).[150]

Grierson's Spanish-speaking friends considered her apparent cultural integration one of her most attractive qualities. "[She was] not like the English who never adapt to our ways except after several generations," declared one admirer. "[She appears] like a well-rooted Argentine, intimately at one with our nationality."[151] Despite such appearances, Grierson venerated her lineage and betrayed a marked Eurocentric outlook. In 1916, she complained in stereotypical British-style about what she considered a national malaise in Argentina, "our habit of leaving everything for tomorrow, never putting all our energies into something to finish it off in the shortest possible time; failing to be '*thorough*' [*sic*], as the English would say." Grierson's fissured cultural identity continued into her retirement on a remote farm in Córdoba. In a book exemplifying her conflicted outlook, in 1925 she published a centennial history of the Monte Grande colony. On one side, the book betrayed opinions typical of

[150] The speech is published verbatim in *Standard* 6 June 1900.
[151] Anon, *Grierson*, 9.

progressive Argentines of the day. Characterising the colony as "feudal," she upbraided the Robertson brothers accusing them of banning the use of Spanish among the colonists and prohibiting intermarriage between Scots and Creoles. On the other side, she proudly recorded her descent from the Scottish aristocracy.[152]

William Henry Hudson provided an example of hybridity of even greater complexity. He was born in 1841 in a hut on a tenancy known as Los Veinte Cinco Ombúes between Quilmes and Monte Grande about twenty-five miles south of Buenos Aires,[153] Hudson had Scottish and Welsh ancestors, although his parents were New Englanders from Boston. The few hundred Americans from east coast ports in Buenos Aires mixed comfortably with the much larger English-speaking community of British origin, thanks in part to the unifying influence of Methodism. Americans participated fully in Anglophone associations led by the British Hospital.[154] Hudson's upbringing led him to venerate rural Argentina but to regard the city-port with distaste.[155] His mother fostered his bond with English literature by a painstakingly assembled private library. In youth too, Hudson became an expert ornithologist. He corresponded with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. and once challenged a judgement by Charles Darwin on a particular bird specimen found in the Rio de la Plata.[156] As a young adult of limited means in the early 1860s, he led the peripatetic, unstable existence typical of the rural population. Some of his writings were set in Uruguay, others in the Rio Negro valley of northern Patagonia and some in far north western Jujuy on the Bolivian border. At the age of thirty-three in 1874, he left Argentina for London to pursue life as an author, remaining there until his death in 1922. In later life, he won a high reputation throughout the English-speaking world for writings on birds, flora and landscapes. One recent study of Hudson describes him as a pioneer environmentalist.[157]

[152] Grierson, *Colonia de Monte Grande*.

[153] Hanon places Los Veinte Cinco Ombúes on land owned by John Davidson, a Scots immigrant who arrived in 1832. See Hanon, *Diccionario*, 256. Davidson's descendants included Viscount Davidson, a chairman of the British Conservative Party. The link is noted in *Standard* 3 April 1942.

[154] The 1869 national census shows about 1100 *norteamericanos* in urban and rural Buenos Aires and almost 11,000 *ingleses*.

[155] For anti-urbanism, see David Rock. "Intellectual Precursors of Conservative Nationalism in Argentina, 1900–1927." *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 67, No. 2, May 1987, 271–300.

[156] Ruth Tomalin. *W.H. Hudson. A biography*. London: Faber and Faber, 1982, 239–242.

[157] Dennis Shrubsall and Pierre Coustillas. *W.H. Hudson. The First Literary Environmentalist: 1841–1922. A Critical Survey*. Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 2007.

Hudson authored stories about mid-nineteenth-century rural society in the Rio de la Plata reflecting his upbringing in two separate linguistic and cultural worlds.[158] Late in life, nearly a half-century after leaving Argentina, he sprinkled his correspondence with his friend Cunninghame Graham with the Spanish slang of his youth.[159] He remained sympathetic to the Federales decades after they grew extinct in Argentina, displaying affection for Rosas, whom he called "certainly the greatest and most interesting of all the South American Caudillos." His autobiography *Far Away and Long Ago* recalled that Rosas "was abhorred by many, perhaps by most; others were on his side even for years after he vanished from their ken, and among these were most of the English residents of the country, my father among them."[160] Like Cecilia Grierson, he grew up in close proximity to the gauchos but achieved far greater intimacy with them. "I would sit around a fire, sipping mate, listening to their tales and sad ballads…I chose English to chronicle the gaucho life."[161] Years later he retold these stories in novels and short stories. Hudson developed an elegant English style inflected with Spanish cadences, as spoken in the Rio de la Plata. For instance, a character in his work *The Purple Land* claimed that on the pampas social rank never impaired contact and communication: "Here the lords of many leagues of land sit down to talk with the hired shepherd, a poor bare foot fellow in his smoky rancho, and no caste or class difference divides them, no consciousness of their widely different position chills the warm current of sympathy between them."[162]

[158] Felipe Arocena. *William Henry Hudson: Life, Literature, and Science. Translated by Richard Manning*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland and Co., 2003, 8 aptly refers to Hudson as living on "cultural frontiers."

[159] Richard Curle, ed. *W.H. Hudson's Letters to R.B. Cunninghame Graham*. London: The Golden Cockerel Press, 1941.

[160] Hudson, *Far Away and Long Ago*, 112, 126. Hudson also wrote warmly about Bartolomé Mitre, one of Rosas's main opponents. "I remember well…how we all loved and reverenced [*sic]* him after an interview we had with him." Curle, *Hudson*, 109. (Letter of 7 August 1921.)

[161] Jason Wilson. *Living in the Sound of the Wind. A Personal Quest for W.H. Hudson. Naturalist and Writer from the River Plate*. London: Constable, 2015, 209.

[162] Quoted in David Miller. *W. H. Hudson and the Elusive Paradise*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1990, 108. Expressions typical of *platense* Spanish are "no caste or class difference divides them" and "warm current of sympathy." The notions of classlessness and easily bridged social divisions became pervasive ideals in liberal Argentina. Jason Wilson has argued Hudson proposed Argentina as a classless society, a country in this respect far superior to class-ridden Britain. See "Charles Darwin and W.H. Hudson," in Hennessy and King,

In *The Purple Land*, Hudson narrated the picaresque adventures of a young Englishman in Uruguay, a "country so stained with the blood of her children"—and therefore coloured purple—that Hudson likely visited in the 1860s. Fellow writer Jorge Luis Borges aptly described this book as a cross-cultural view of the libertine world of the rural Rio de la Plata.[163] Having first appeared to lament the failure of the British to take over the country in 1807, Hudson ended his tale with a paean to its independence. He extolled Uruguay as a "perfect republic, [where] freedom of intercourse [was] tempered only by that innate courtesy and native grace of manner peculiar to Spanish Americans."[164]

Hudson possessed extraordinary ability to capture the spiritual outlook of the gauchos.[165] Short stories like *El Ombú* and numerous passages of *The Purple Land* reproduced the narrative techniques of gaucho storytellers and balladeers. He resurrected the invisible, supernatural world of the gauchos in a cosmography he called animism: "the mind's projection of itself into nature, its attributions of its own sentient life and intelligence to all things."[166] His *Marta Riquelme*, for example, a fantasy set in Jujuy, explored the mysterious bird-woman, one of the favourite subjects of gaucho legend.[167]

* * *

Argentina and Britain, 173–189. Wilson has also noted the gaucho influences on Hudson. See Wilson, *Personal Quest*, 53–61: "Scattered through his writings are fragments of gaucho oral lore… [Hudson became a] a translator of the vanishing gaucho way of life for the English." (p. 61). "The whole novel *The Purple Land* is a translation." (p. 125).

[163] As noted in Jennifer L. French, "'Literature Can Be Our Teacher?' Reading Informal Empire in *El inglés de los güesos*." 187–208, in Matthew Brown ed. *Informal Empire in Latin America. Culture, Commerce and Capital*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008, 78.

[164] Hudson, *Purple Land*, 244. As noted by Tomalin, *Hudson*, 228, the book became a favourite text of T.E. Lawrence, ("Lawrence of Arabia"), a link that evokes the commonly made nineteenth-century analogy between the gauchos and the Bedouin.

[165] The close contact between Hudson's family and the Hispanic rural people is exemplified in the story of his mother breast feeding the orphan child of a gaucho. Alicia Jurado. *Vida y obra de W.H. Hudson*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1989, 26. The incident is mentioned in Hudson, *Far Away and Long Ago*, 275.

[166] Hudson, *Far Away and Long Ago*, 178 (on snakes); 194 (on animism, also defined as "the tendency or impulse or instinct, in which all myth originates, to animate all things; the projection of ourselves into nature; the sense and apprehension of an intelligence like our own but more powerful in all visible things"). The definition recurs in W.H. Hudson. *Idle Days in Patagonia*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1893, 119.

[167] Miller, *Hudson*, 92–93, noting Hudson's fascination for the subject. Miller argues that bird symbolism implies an emphasis on the supernatural and on metamorphosis from woman to bird as a means to convey renewal and continuity of life.

The highpoint of British and Irish settlement on the pampas occurred during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Family-owned ranches later moved beyond Buenos Aires, first into adjacent Santa Fe and Córdoba and then into Patagonia. Francisco "Perito" Moreno, an Argentine surveyor who mapped large sections of the boundary with Chile in the far south, complimented the British for settling this remote part of the country. In Patagonia, "the furthermost settler I have come across has been a Briton: they claimed the land for Argentina."[168] In 1869, Punta Arenas, a small Chilean port on the Straits of Magellan, became the starting point of a remarkable year-long expedition by George Musters, one of the failed gentlemen sheep farmers on the pampas of the mid-1860s. Searching for new pastures, he traversed the entire length of Patagonia from the Straits to Rio Negro. His journey, some 2000 miles in length, took him along the spine of the southern Andes through alpine scenery and magnificent lakes. Along the way, he encountered Native American people who knew Spanish and some English from contact with British and American sealers. Riding with a party of Tehuelche, he provided a graphic portrait of a people approaching extinction as "the inroads of disease and liquor are, as usual, doing the work of extirpation of the race."[169] He travelled among them quite fearlessly. The Tehuelche "certainly do not deserve the epithets of ferocious savages or brigands of the desert. They are kind, good tempered and impulsive children of the desert." At the time of his journey, he estimated a mere 1500 Tehuelche inhabited the vast space he traversed.

In coastal Patagonia and on Tierra del Fuego, Anglican missionaries set up stations supported by the London-based South American Missionary Society (SAMS). They followed the disastrous expedition to Tierra del Fuego in 1850 led by Captain Allen F. Gardiner. A former naval officer and the founder of the SAMS, during his early career Gardiner organised several unsuccessful missionary ventures in southern Africa and the Pacific coast of South America before fixing on Tierra del Fuego.[170] Judged by

[168] "British Explorers in the South," in *Standard* 29 Nov. 1923. Moreno spoke in 1905.

[169] Musters, *Patagonians*, 184–185.

[170] See Captain Allen F. Gardiner. *A Visit to the Indians on the Frontiers of Chile*. London: R.B. Seeley, 1841. Citations of his unpublished journals appear in Anon. *The Martyrs of the South: A Brief Sketch of the Late Captain Allen F. Gardiner, RN: His Missions, His Companions, and the Death of the Party in Tierra del Fuego*. New York: Carlton and Porter, 1852; John Marsh and Waite H. Stirling. *The Story of Commander Allen Gardiner, R.N., with Sketches of*

Charles Darwin "probably the lowest of the human race," the Fuegian people attracted Gardiner as a challenge to his missionary skills. He persuaded a few Fuegians to accompany him to the Falkland Islands to teach them English, intending to use them as interpreters.[171] He then returned to Tierra del Fuego with them along with a small group of British followers. Step by step, his journals narrated the ensuing disaster. As the missionaries came ashore, the trainees deserted and hostile natives drove his party into an area invisible to passing ships. One by one the men starved, with Gardiner himself the last man to die.[172]

Other missionaries followed, notably Thomas Bridges, who lived with his family on Tierra del Fuego for almost fifteen years. Settling on the future site of the city of Ushuaia, Bridges compiled a dictionary of Yamana, the main indigenous language of the island.[173] His son Lucas Bridges made contact with the secretive inland Ona peoples, an experience that inspired the book *Uttermost Part of the World*, a compelling account of wilderness and ethnographic discovery.[174] Around 1900, the small Anglican missions failed as sheep and cattle ranchers from the mainland sparked destructive conflict with the indigenous peoples.[175] Anglicans then switched their attention to the Chaco at the opposite end of the country.[176]

Missionary Work in South America. 4th edition. London: James Nisbet, 1877. An informative narrative is Arnoldo Canclini. *Allen Gardiner. Marinero, misionero, mártir*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Marymar, 1979.

[171] Cited in Marsh and Stirling, *Gardiner*, 23.

[172] A narrative of Gardiner's mission, including publications of his journals, appears in George Pakenham Despard. *Hope Deferred, not Lost: A Narrative of Missionary Effort in South America, in Connexion with the Patagonian Missionary Society*. London: Seeley's, n.d. (1854?) "[Gardiner's] fate should not end [missionary] endeavours. We hope to see Christians of all denominations endeavouring to obtain a footing on those inhospitable shores." *Scottish Guardian* 7 May 1852, (reproduced on pp. 458–459).

[173] Thomas Bridges. *Los indios del ultimo confín: sus escritos para la South American Missionary Society*. Ushuaia: Zagier and Urruty, 2001.

[174] E. Lucas Bridges. *Uttermost Part of the Earth. A History of Tierra del Fuego and the Fuegians*. New York: Rookery Press, 2007, (first published in 1948).

[175] Later chroniclers reported "dark tales of brutality and rapine…committed by men of British birth and extraction…The estancieros paid £1 a head for every macho, or Indian male, killed…An ear had to be cut off and shown." See Reginald Lloyd, ed. *Twentieth Century Impressions of Argentina*. London: Lloyd's Bank, 1911, 827. Quoted in Andrew Graham-Youll. *Imperial Skirmishes: War and Gunboat Diplomacy in Latin America*. Oxford: Signal Books, 2002, 126.

[176] W. Barbooke Grubb. *The Paraguayan Chaco and its Possible Future*. London: Royal Geographical Society, 1919, 169. The Anglican missions in the Chaco survived until 1948 when Catholic opposition forced their abandonment.

Wool farming began in Patagonia during the 1870s as migrants of mostly Scottish origin, often former employees of the Falkland Islands Company, established enormous flocks of sheep on state land, at first near the Straits of Magellan and later in the San Julián area of Santa Cruz territory.[177] The first flocks originated in the Falkland Islands; later, great sheep drives southward from Rio Negro lasting up to two years increased their numbers; later still, Corriedale sheep from Australia became dominant.[178] During World War I and its aftermath, British estancieros in Patagonia attracted controversy. Accused of profiteering as wartime wool prices soared, after the war they faced an uprising of sheep shearers and rural workers—migrant Chileans, Spaniards, Russians and others—as wool prices fell. In late 1921 sixty British hostages reported being "taken from our houses and work at the point of the rifle and revolver, driven like cattle for eighteen days and for distances up to two hundred and ten miles, herded in a single shed and finally placed as a screen for four hours between the revolutionists and the fire of the national forces."[179] Following their release, they joined other estancieros in demands for reprisals. Colonel Héctor Benigno Varela then led an eighteen-month campaign in which 1500 insurgents were killed. When an Anarchist assassinated Varela in Buenos Aires, the British estancieros in Patagonia set up a monument in his memory.[180] Rebel Patagonia thus became a remote venue depicting the turmoil and vengeful aftermath of the Great War.[181]

[177] See *Standard* 23 Aug. 1892, 2 Nov. 1895 and 2 June 1901 on the movement of population from the Falkland Islands to Rio Gallegos. On sheep farming around San Julián, see John Locke Blake. *A Story of Patagonia*. Lewes: Book Guild, 2003.

[178] On sheep drives in Patagonia, see Lucía Gálvez. *Historias de inmigración. Testimonios de pasión, amor y arraigo en tierra argentina (1850–1950)*. Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Morma, 2003, 104–107.

[179] See cables and petitions from Patagonia 25 Nov., 2 and 10 Dec. 1921. FO 118/543.

[180] *Standard* 23 Sept. 1923.

[181] The standard work hostile to the British estancieros, is Osvaldo Bayer. *La Patagonia rebelde*. 3 vols. Buenos Aires: Galerna, 1972–1974.

CHAPTER 5

Bankers and Investors

The controlling and directing agent of the whole process is the pressure of financial and industrial motives.
J.A. Hobson

In the early 1870s, legation minister Hugh Macdonell warned of widespread disorder threatening the lives and property of British residents. His concerns followed the yellow fever epidemic of early 1871 that killed thousands in Buenos Aires and left the city in the hands of looters. They included a string of rural homicides in incidents headed by the Tata Dios massacre in Tandil on New Year's Day 1872. He might have mentioned several other disasters and setbacks of recent years. The war with Paraguay of 1865–1870 brought heavy casualties, cholera and yellow fever, gaucho rebellions and impressments of British subjects for war service. Insurrections in Entre Rios starting in 1870 prompted the flight of European sheep farmers and their families—people like Cecilia Grierson. Similar episodes persisted after Macdonell's departure. In the 1874 election, former president Bartolomé Mitre, the favourite politician of British investors and railway men over the past fifteen years, lost his bid to return to office and led a revolt to reclaim the presidency. When the uprising failed, his cavalry men pillaged European property. In British eyes, the murder of Irish sheep farmer Michael Lenihan and the near-murder of his pregnant wife in 1875 became the ugliest incident in another crop of atrocities. As he repatriated the destitute widow, Consul Cowper angrily called on the government to

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D. Rock, *The British in Argentina*, Britain and the World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97855-0_5

hunt down and punish the criminals. He commented that "[m]urder, rape and theft may be amusing pastimes to the gauchos, cutting throats and disembowelling with dexterity may be sources of pride to them, but it is scarcely a credit to a government to encourage them by impunity, as if these were the ordinary athletic sports of the country."[1]

Against this background, the cheerful greeting of another legation minister Francis Clare Ford on his arrival in Buenos Aires in late 1878 provided a sharp contrast. According to Ford, there were "few countries in the world in which a livelier interest is entertained both by the government and the people of Great Britain than the Argentine Republic. The richness of its soil and the salubrity of its climate have attracted a vast number of Her Majesty's subjects to its shores, and I believe they have found in it, under the auspices of an enlightened and patriotic government, a happy and congenial home."[2] Ford arrived with a revised view of Argentina shaped by recession-plagued Britain, currently a country of "stagnation and a negation of hope," in one contemporary lament. "Month by month English exports have been declining and month by month producers are content to take lower prices."[3]

Pulling Britain out of depression required priming factories back to life by building new markets. The currently favoured strategy consisted of constructing railways overseas and supplying them from Britain.[4] Despite its recent instability, railway financiers and entrepreneurs looked at Argentina with fresh eyes as a potential target. With encouragement and careful management, they believed it could make a transition into prosperity and expansion. In 1877, the London periodical *Money Market* claimed "[n]ever was the Republic richer than today. [With] the number of its flocks and herds, its new industries, and the improved means of transport, the future of the country is great."[5] By settling Italian farmers in the littoral and connecting them to the ports by rail, there would be no "limit to the growth and expansion of the Argentine nation." Progress required little more than "able and enlightened statesmen at the head of affairs…

[1] The fate of the Lenihans is recounted in Cowper to FO 26 Jan. 1875 FO 6/330.

[2] Quoted in *Standard* 30 Nov. 1878.

[3] H.L. Beales. "The 'Great Depression,' in Industry and Trade." *Economic history Review* Vol. 5, No. 1, 1934, 68, quoting A.J. Wilson. *Resources of Modern Countries.*

[4] W.W. Rostow. "Investment and the Great Depression." *Economic History Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1954, stressing how orders for rail-iron contributed to recovery.

[5] *Money Market Review* cited in *Brazil and River Plate Post* 23 Feb. 1877.

supported by the influx of British capital and the stream of the hardy sons of sunny Italy's soil."[6]

In Santa Fe, such progress was already underway. Writing from Rosario in 1877, Vice Consul Barnett described southern parts of the province as "an immense farm which is yearly increasing in its yield due to capital, industry, intelligence and a splendid climate." He reported the progress of a nearby agrarian colony. "We drove some six leagues through a sea of wheat about two feet high…They have two hundred reapers and eleven steam threshers ready for the harvest. There are 1,400 inhabitants mostly Italians, French and Spaniards and all possess good brick houses. These colonists have, I should say, done very well…In case the other colonies give in proportion what this one promises, we should export a quantity of wheat this year."[7] His forecast proved correct since the year 1877 marked the first ever wheat exports from Argentina.

Despite such encouraging signs, the republic continued to wrestle with political problems. They were led by the unbalanced relationship and the friction between the province of Buenos Aires and the national government. Retaining full control over the Buenos Aires customs house, the province overshadowed the fledgling national administration formed in 1862. In 1876 subsidies from the province provided no less than nine-tenths of the national government's revenues.[8] The province had long possessed the means to function as an independent state and participated in the union grudgingly, propping it up by subsidies, to avoid military attack by the other provinces. "It is a great pity [the Porteños] should be part of the confederation," wrote Nicholas Bouwer, the Dutch-born agent of Baring Brothers, the British merchant bank, "although if it were otherwise Buenos Ayres would suffer more by having riotous neighbours always ready to make incursions into her territory." If political separation recurred (as during the decade 1852–1862), Buenos Aires "will be constantly at war with the other provinces who are dependent on her."[9]

Economic and financial issues further clouded the picture. The Atlantic-wide depression starting in 1873 provoked a steep contraction of Argentine foreign trade, a slowing of European immigration and a suspension of

[6] J.E. Wadsworth, consul of Argentina in Leeds, quoted in *South American Journal* 26 May 1888, (referring to President Miguel Juárez Celman).

[7] Barnett to West 8 Oct. 1877. FO 118–169.

[8] St. John to Derby 15 Aug. 1876 FO 6/334.

[9] Bouwer to Barings 19 Dec. 1877 and 29 April 1878 HC 4-1-65.

foreign investment. Railway construction dwindled and terminated as projects authorised and commenced before the depression were completed.[10] Conditions grew most severe in 1876 when destitute people appeared on the doorsteps of the European legations, including the British, begging for assistance.[11] Another currency collapse ended a decade-long attempt to establish fixed rates and a gold standard. As trade deficits grew and gold reserves shrank, *curso forzoso*, "forced currency"—paper money without gold or silver backing—resumed.[12] Once more as in the late 1820s, monetary depreciation hurt foreign merchants and investors. Once again traders remonstrated against attempts to pay them in paper money for goods supplied at gold prices. The London financial press complained that British interests bore all the losses from the depression while the provincial bank of Buenos Aires bailed out Porteño landowners. Under such conditions, "only the landed classes profit."[13]

Despite the severity of the decline, Bouwer maintained an optimistic outlook. So long as the government took the proper steps, recovery and prosperity would follow. Policy followed the directions he indicated. By maintaining payments on the foreign debt, the government protected its credit standing. As he cut public expenditure, President Nicolás Avellaneda pledged to endure "hunger and thirst" to avoid default.[14] Despite his efforts, a suspension of payments loomed in July 1876 until tense, last minute negotiations enabled the government to secure a loan from the Banco de la Provincia de Buenos Aires.[15] All was now safe, Bouwer assured

[10] A cessation of construction in 1878 illustrated the lengthy period between raising the capital and constructing the railway; the investment having been made around 1873–1874 at the conclusion of the previous growth cycle. See Zalduendo, *Inversiones Británicas*, 321. Trade figures appear in José C. Chiaramonte. *Nacionalismo y liberalismo económico, 1860–1880*. Buenos Aires: Solar Hachette, 1971, 195; Ernesto Tornquist and Co. *The Economic Development of Argentina in the Last Fifty Years*. Buenos Aires: Tornquist, 1919, 276.

[11] St. John to FO 29 July 1876. FO 6/334.

[12] Roberto Cortés Conde. "Los regímenes de cambio en el mundo. El patrón oro y la experiencia argentina." Mimeo. "The crisis resulted from the loss of gold [reserves] unmatched by an equivalent reduction in money in circulation."

[13] *Standard* 31 Jan. 1878, quoting the London *Mercator*.

[14] He pledged, "[t]here are two million Argentines prepared to economise to the point of suffering hunger and thirst in order to respond to the supreme need to maintain our commitments to foreign [capital] markets."

[15] The negotiation leading to the loan of 1876 is explored in Mariano Szafowal Samonowerskj. "¿Et tu, Banco de la Provincia, contra me? El caso del empréstito de 10 millones pesos fuertes que el Banco de la Provincia de Buenos Aires le otorgó al gobierno

his superiors. With the loan in hand, any risk of default ended because the provincial bank was backed by the customs revenues, a tie that would protect it "from pretty well any loss." He emphasised the "favour in which [the bank's] notes are held, the country people preferring them to gold … The whole province of Buenos Aires must come to grief before the bank can fail." With the major financial issue resolved, stability would follow and the republic would regain the capacity to attract new foreign loans.[16] Baring Brothers began purchasing Argentine government bonds, a sign of its confidence the country would surmount the crisis. As the London *Bankers' Magazine* later recalled, it proved "a good stroke of business to buy up some of the bonds to restore confidence in Argentine credit, and to resell the bonds at a profit."[17]

A dispute between the London and River Plate Bank and the government of Santa Fe provided another opportunity for Avellaneda to court British investors. Three years after its foundation in 1862 the bank established a branch in Rosario, with an informal understanding it would lend to the provincial government and provide local landowners with loans and mortgages. Head office in London subsequently ruled out such business as too risky, prompting the Santa Fe government to create a bank of its own. Ten years later, the conservatively managed London bank continued to turn a profit but the depression, along with several years of prodigal lending, left the provincial bank insolvent. In 1876, provincial officials demanded an emergency loan from the London bank, and when the bank refused impounded some of its deposits. They cited "fiscal privilege," a practice inherited from the independence period authorising straitened governments to compel merchants, and by extension banks, to loan emergency funds. In British eyes, such action amounted to a "forced loan" prohibited under the 1825 treaty. Notifying Frederick St. John, the British minister in Buenos Aires, the manager of the London Bank in Rosario appealed for his help.[18]

nacional en 1876." In Pablo Gerchunoff, Fernando Rocchi, Gastón Rossi. *Desorden y progreso. Las crisis económicas argentinas, 1870–1905*. Buenos Aires, Edhasa, 2008, 310–319.

[16] Bouwer to Barings 13 Jan. 1877 HC 4-1-65. Bouwer's activities are detailed in H.S. Ferns. "The Baring Crisis Revisited." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1992, 243–247.

[17] *Bankers' Magazine*, Vol. 50:2, 1890, 1261, referring to bond purchases by Barings in 1876.

[18] Accounts of the incident include Joslin, *Banking*, 44–50; Ezequiel Gallo. *El gobierno de Santa Fe y el Banco de Londres y Rio de la Plata (1876)*. Buenos Aires: Instituto Torcuato Di

St. John's memoirs recalled how he received a request "for a gunboat to be sent up the Plate River to Rosario and there take on board the remaining treasure and valuables in the vault of the private bank. I immediately complied." Avellaneda and Foreign Minister Bernardo de Irigoyen (the former business partner of leading British merchants) persuaded St. John to recall the gunboat, promising they would induce the Santa Fe authorities to return the impounded funds. St. John claimed some Porteño newspapers misreported his orders to the gunboat commander, stating he had sent not one but two gunboats to Rosario. They wrongly asserted he ordered their commanders not only to rescue the London bank's remaining funds but also to secure restitution of the confiscated funds, if necessary by force. According to the press, forced restitution constituted imperialist aggression. In an ensuing public debate, Avellaneda took the British side, blaming the government of Santa Fe for threatening the country's standing with foreign investors. If allowed to stand, "fiscal privilege" would become "fatal to all progress."[19] The incident provided another instance of the political pre-eminence of the province of Buenos Aires. The president settled the dispute by loaning funds to Santa Fe but had to use money borrowed from the Buenos Aires bank. As things stood, the national government performed as little more than a clearing house for subsidies from Buenos Aires to other provinces. St. John's memoirs expressed satisfaction with his successful defence of British interests. He recalled that when "[t]he whole of the money was restored…the British community gave me a banquet, which, in splendour and cordiality, surpassed everything I had ever experienced."[20]

One by one remaining obstacles to smooth relations with the British were overcome. Bouwer saw another major sign of progress in the way local insurrections by diehard Federales, a leading feature of politics in the sixties and early seventies, weakened and disappeared. In 1878, he reported on a brief uprising in Entre Rios that proved the last of several outbreaks begun eight years previously by former governor López Jordán. On this occasion, the national government brought in troops by rail and steamer to quash the revolt, thus deploying its recently acquired access to the arte-

Tella, 1972; Jones, *British Financial Institutions*, 216. See also FO 6/333 (St. John to Derby).

[19] The text of Avellaneda's rebuttal of "fiscal privilege" appears in *Brazil and River Plate Post* 8 Jan. 1877.

[20] St. John, *Reminiscences*, 169–170.

facts of modernity to strengthen central authority. According to Bouwer, "[t]hese feeble attempts at revolution [were] nothing more than the last flickering of the revolutionary spirit of the gauchos which, strong and uncontrollable at one time, is now passing away."[21] The failure of a campaign for trade protectionism in Congress provided more encouragement to the British. In 1876, Vicente Fidel López, a distinguished historian and a disciple of German economist Friedrich List, urged the introduction of high tariffs. If enacted his proposals might have damaged British trade, but after prolonged debate his campaign failed. In subsequent years, duties on British goods, notably railway materials, declined rather than increased.[22]

In 1879, confidence soared after the Conquest of the Desert, the military expedition that seized gigantic expanses of new land in the western and southern pampas. As its leader, minister of war Gen. Julio A. Roca won credit for its success, although knowledgeable observers bestowed great praise on Adolfo Alsina, vice president under Avellaneda and minister of war until his unexpected death in late 1877. At that time Bouwer commented that "the frontier question, although not entirely settled, has been so carefully worked out by [Alsina] that any officer with clear judgement ought to be able to follow it up."[23] The plan consisted of digging a giant fosse to contain the Native Americans along the frontier. Long dependent on trade with Argentine settlements and on capturing cattle and horses (and occasionally women), the Indians found themselves penned behind the line. Starved of resources and forced into surrender, many suffered long years of cruel captivity. As Alsina's successor, Roca took credit for a military campaign that could hardly fail. Having first sent troops across the frontier to mop up a few pools of resistance, he travelled by train to the frontier town of Azul to lead his men into almost empty territory. Subsequent military campaigns subjugated the surviving Native American peoples of the far south including the Tehuelche, George Musters's companions during his trans-Patagonia expedition of 1869.[24]

In early 1880 Henry Edwin Egerton, the secretary of the British legation, emphasised "the marvellous progress [of] a state which has the

[21] Bouwer to Barings 30 Oct. 1878 HC 4-1-65.

[22] On López and the tariff, see Chiaramonte, *Nacionalismo*. Tariff changes of this period assisted shoemakers using local leather and the newly developing sugar cane economy in Salta and Tucumán, but also favoured imported British railway goods.

[23] Bouwer to Barings 1 Jan. 1878. HC 4-1-65.

[24] The campaign is described in Perry Richard Owen. "The Argentine Frontier: The Conquest of the Desert, 1878–1879." Ph.D. diss., University of Georgia, 1971.

brightest future of any on the southern continent. [Argentina] will become the land of promise of the Latin race…the United States of South America."[25] He cited a speech by Finance Minister Victorino de la Plaza, who four years earlier negotiated the all-important loan from the provincial bank to the national government. De la Plaza extolled the power of railways to build unity and prosperity, calling them "arms of steel that will hold the Argentine provinces in their embrace forever." Using the rhetoric of Social Darwinism, he described his countrymen as members of an "energetic race [bound for] grand destinies."[26] Investment bankers in London concurred. It seemed to them too an "undoubted fact that the Argentines strive to be the Yankees of South America."[27]

In the final act of the transition, the so-called Revolution of 1880 transformed relations between the national government and the province of Buenos Aires. The episode originated in the provincial election of early 1878 bringing Carlos Tejedor, an extreme supporter of Porteño primacy, into power as governor. Having won supremacy in Buenos Aires, he planned to become president in 1880, a victory likely to yield even more benefits to his native province. Two sides, Provincials and Nationals, prepared for an armed showdown. While Tejedor drilled his provincial militia, Avellaneda strengthened the national army. Minister of War Roca, a rival contender for the presidency, sent arms to the outer provinces, ordering the governors to recruit troops and organise military training. He converted Avellaneda's loose ad hoc coalition known as the League of Governors into a more powerful election organisation called the Partido Autonomista Nacional (PAN). In April 1880, Roca and the PAN scored an overwhelming victory in the presidential election. Weeks later in June Tejedor proclaimed a rebellion but it suffered resounding defeat. In fierce fighting on the bridges across the Riachuelo on the southern side of the city, Roca's regular forces defeated the Porteño militia.[28]

As he came president in October 1880, Roca terminated the condominium in which the province prevailed over the nation. Legislation transferred control over customs and revenues to the national government and converted the city of Buenos Aires into the national capital, excising its

[25] Egerton to Salisbury 31 Mar. and 7 Apr. 1880. FO 6/359.

[26] The speech is quoted in *Standard* 14 Apr. 1880.

[27] *The Bankers' Magazine* Vol. 50:2, 1890, 1253.

[28] The formation of the coalition is traced in Rock, *State Formation*, 64–72. See also Paula Alonso. *Jardines secretos, legitimaciones públicas. El Partido Autonomista Nacional y la política argentina de fines del siglo xix*. Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2010. A recent account of the 1880 rebellion is Sabato, *Buenos Aires en Armas*.

links with the province. Months later, the new administration restored currency convertibility. Roca called the measure a matter of "primary interest to the country. [Paper money] drives away foreign capital, disrupts business and inflicts enormous losses on the treasury…The day we are free of inconvertible paper will bring an enormous flood of foreign capital."[29]

* * *

Philip Guedalla, a British visitor of the 1930s, contended that "the magic wand [to transform the Argentine pampas] was waved by the first grimy hand that pulled the starting lever of a locomotive."[30] Railway construction in Argentina, less than thirty years old when Roca became president, began amidst campaigns by the mid-century liberal intelligentsia headed by Alberdi. "In the same manner that before we placed independence, liberty, religion at the forefront, today we must put free immigration, liberty of commerce, railways, and unfettered industry," proclaimed his *Bases* of 1852.[31] Visionaries like American entrepreneur William Wheelwright dreamed of a rail link from Buenos Aires to Copiapó on the Pacific and of steamship connections from Chile to Australia and New Zealand. In 1857, Porteño entrepreneurs, with Norberto de la Riestra at the forefront, set up the Ferrocarril del Oeste, the Western Railway, the first in Argentina.[32] Its track ran from the city centre through the village of San José de Flores towards the sheep farming camps, many of them owned or tenanted by Irish settlers. Although locally owned and controlled, the Western had many British components including its first locomotive, known with affection as "La Porteña," said to have been culled from the battlefields of the Crimea. Alongside Riestra, British merchant Daniel Gowland served among the company's first directors. The Western employed imported British engineers and labourers and utilised British-made iron rails and rolling stock. "A roaring engine," reported Thomas J. Hutchinson, a traveller on board in 1862, "dragging a train of carriages behind it, through streets so narrow that one can almost touch the houses on either side, is rather startling." Despite his apprehensions, he pronounced the railway safe.

[29] Roca to Congress May, 1881. Quoted in *Brazil and River Plate Mail* 26 June 1881.

[30] Philip Guedalla. *Argentine Tango*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932, preface.

[31] Alberdi, *Bases*, 24.

[32] Zalduendo, *Inversiones Británicas*, 269 reports the Western paid excessive 9 per cent profits to an inner ring of shareholders led by Riestra that led to financing problems and a takeover of the company management by the province.

At this point, the Western transported 3000 passengers daily together with grains, wool and hides.[33] Its success alerted British onlookers—merchants in Buenos Aires led by Lumb and Armstrong and financiers, engineers and exporters in Britain—to the potential of railways in Argentina for investment and trade. The ease and cheapness of construction on the pampas and an awareness of the potential productivity of the land provided compelling reasons for rail planners to focus on this part of the world. "The land is so level," reported Robert Crawford, one of the early surveyors, "earthworks are reduced to a minimum, while unimportant rivers, few and far between, call for no great works of art to span them. With such surroundings, the countries of the River Plate should be the paradise of shareholders."[34] Prefiguring later practices, speculators bought up land along the planned route of the Western Railway, profiteering from appreciation as rail services commenced.[35]

When Hutchinson travelled to Rosario as British vice consul in 1862, the Central Argentine Railway, soon to become a leading British company, existed only in blueprint. He discussed the project with Allen Campbell, an American surveyor plotting the route, who advertised the intended contribution of the railway to "peace and union [whose] benefits were to be felt in the remotest extremities of the republic."[36] The political and strategic objectives noted by Campbell contributed to the company's early travails. Constructed very slowly because of recurrent shortages of funds, the line north-west from Rosario to Córdoba, ultimately completed in 1870, passed through barely inhabited, largely unprofitable frontier territory like the area near Fraile Muerto where Richard Seymour raised sheep. Low levels of traffic inhibited the company's efforts to raise capital. Imitating a practice widely used in the United States, it received land grants along its proposed route but exploited them poorly, leaving very small population clusters at points too distant from each other to promote commercial contact. In 1880, the *Standard* reported that high land prices or rents led to many farms and ranches on railway land being abandoned.[37] In its early days, the company thus failed to strike a proper balance between

[33] Hutchinson, *Buenos Ayres*, 35.

[34] Robert Crawford. *Across the Pampas and the Andes.* London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1884, 44.

[35] Hutchinson, *Buenos Ayres*, provided several examples of fortunes being made from buying land following the development of the Western Railway.

[36] Hutchinson, *Buenos Ayres*, 84.

[37] *Standard* 19 Aug. 1880.

land and labour. French economist Paul Leroy Beaulieu argued for incremental development along a forward moving frontier of the type proposed by Edward Gibbon Wakefield used in parts of Australia. The current scattered nature of settlement along the Central Argentine would vitiate "the maxim that the railway is the great pioneer."[38]

Henry Woodgate, another early surveyor, recalled his work fifty years before preparing the route along a branch line of the Central Argentine from Rosario to Sunchales, a distance of 150 miles. The area contained more than 200 estancias and chacras but little population. Woodgate travelled in an ox-drawn wagon resembling a gypsy caravan, purchasing the land he sought along the way. As he recalled, his main difficulty derived from the vara, a Spanish colonial unit of land measurement still in use, whose length varied between 32 and 36 inches in different districts. Expecting their remaining holdings to appreciate as the railway arrived, most landowners sold out quickly, although for some years their hopes remained unrealised.[39] The few early beneficiaries of the Central Argentine included leading British merchants Armstrong and Lafone, and Bernardo de Irigoyen, who snapped up the land along the proposed route immediately outside Rosario. Irigoyen reportedly sold his portion to the railway company for six times what he paid for it.[40]

In 1862, Hutchinson mentioned other companies in the planning stage including the Buenos Aires Great Southern Railway, soon to become the largest and most profitable of all the British railway companies in Argentina. It began with a proposal to build a line south from Buenos Aires to Chascomús and Dolores. Its early British backers included Lumb, John Fair, Consul Frank Parish and David Robertson, the Barings director and Member of Parliament, who became the company's first chairman of directors. In 1861, Lumb acquired a railway concession from the government of Buenos Aires, reputedly by paying bribes, and sold it on to a British company led by Robertson ready to start construction. Fair recalled he joined the board at Robertson's invitation in 1862. His participation made the enterprise into a joint venture between Anglo-Porteños like

[38] Cited in *La Prensa* 24 Oct. 1889. In 1889, Foreign Office files reported on a proposal for a "Gibbon Wakefield Colony" in Entre Rios but furnished no details. See *Correspondence Respecting Emigration to the Argentine Republic*. FO 881/5963.

[39] H.H. Woodgate. "Reminiscences of a Land-Buyer." *Central Argentine Railway Magazine* March 1922.

[40] Winthrop R. Wright. *British-owned Railways in Argentina. Their Effects on Economic Nationalism*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974, 44.

himself and metropolitan financiers like Robertson. The two men were tied by their common background in the Scottish border country in Berwickshire. In 1862, Fair and Parish haggled with Governor Mariano Saavedra about financial backing for the railway from the province. They wanted the governor to guarantee a company profit at the rate of 7 per cent on £750,000. When Saavedra insisted on reducing the amount under guarantee to £700,000, Fair persuaded several leading landowners to guarantee the remaining £50,000 at 7 per cent. The deal made them collectively liable for up to £3200 a year.[41]

Standard railway concessions of the 1860s and 1870s offered guaranteed profits of 7 per cent based on construction costs of £6400 per mile. In practice national and provincial governments accepted costs of up to £11,000 per mile, making the guarantees far more attractive and lucrative. Negotiating railway concessions became a fine art of nudging proposed construction costs upwards to extract higher guarantees. Until a regulatory framework developed from 1890, companies set their own rates, commonly citing currency depreciation as their rationale for increasing them.[42] Under shrewd leadership and management, railways afforded excellent profits. Capital shortages occurred in phases during both the 1860s and 1870s to reflect rising London interest rates. During these periods, company directors reassured their backers that "further investment of British capital [would follow] so soon as the money market is in easier conditions," as occurred towards 1880.[43] At that point, more favourable political and economic conditions in Argentina coincided with falling profitability of railways in Britain, making it more attractive to invest in the Argentine railways.[44]

During its early years, the Great Southern Railway had few shareholders. Mostly wealthy London gentry, they were people living on rents or inheritances, well paid lawyers and physicians, senior civil servants and

[41] As described in Fair's obituary. See *Standard* 24 Dec. 1899.

[42] Details of the concessions and construction appear in Zalduendo, *Inversiones Británicas*, 310, 319, 336. The literature includes Wright, *British-owned Railways in Argentina*; Colin M. Lewis. *British Railways in Argentina, 1857–1914. A Case Study of Foreign Investment*. London: Athlone Press, 1983; López and Waddell, *Nueva historia del ferrocarril*.

[43] *Brazil and River Plate Mail* 23 Apr. 1866.

[44] On conditions in Britain leading to falling profits, see R.J. Irving. "The profitability and performance of British railways, 1870–1914." *Economic History Review* New Series, Vol. 31, No. 1, 1978, 46–66.

military officers, Members of Parliament and titled aristocrats.[45] Retaining their confidence required protecting the reputation of the Argentine Republic, a still virtually unknown entity in Britain. Contrary to Macdonell's claims that Argentina was a dangerous place for the British, Chairman Robertson contended that personal security was "the same as [in] a British colony."[46] In the late 1870s, the new *Brazil and the River Plate Mail* published in London, the first British periodical specialising in South American business news, rebutted hostile reports on Argentina in British newspapers impelled by speculators. Articles in *The Times, The Daily Telegraph* and others regularly challenged the country's financial and commercial stability. As a typical ploy, they accused Argentine consuls in London of publishing bogus trade figures overstating the country's economic growth and therefore the prospects for investors.[47]

From the start, the railway companies evolved as exclusively British concerns, offering little scope for Argentine participation, both financial and managerial. Few Argentines owned railway shares throughout the companies' history until the late 1940s. Advertising for capital in London alone, the railways raised funds only from people with access to the London financial markets. In Buenos Aires, high ranking Argentines competed for sinecures as so-called local directors on the railways, although such positions gave them little influence in London. In Buenos Aires, companies faced strong criticism if they provided subpar services or raised suspicion of profiteering. In 1880, Rumbold, then head of the British legation in Buenos Aires, denounced one company in particular as an "expression of the way things ought not to be done," calling it dilapidated, unpunctual and expensive.[48] He was likely referring to the Eastern Argentine Railway, a second rate concern competing for traffic with the Rio Paraná steamboats

[45] On shareholders, see Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 411. From this enumeration, the shareholders appeared typical of the investor constituencies identified as "elites and gents" analysed in Lance Edwin Davis and Robert A. Huttenback. *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860–1912.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 200. Data on the mid-1890s provide evidence of concentrated ownership. See C.A. Jones. "Who invested in Argentina and Uruguay?" *Business Archives*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1982, 1–24.

[46] *Brazil and River Plate Mail* 22 May 1876.

[47] An example appears in *Brazil and River Plate Mail* 23 Jan. 1877. British speculators attacked the fiduciary standing of the Argentine government in attempts to downgrade prices of Argentine bonds.

[48] Rumbold, *Silver River*, 134. See also Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 412–413 on high rates and company greed.

between Entre Rios and Corrientes. With little scope for profit, the company relied heavily on its government guarantee. When the impecunious Avellaneda administration suspended the guarantee in the mid-70s, the directors of the Eastern retaliated by an anti-Argentina campaign in the London press.[49]

A second phase of railway development began in 1882. On the British side, now ex-consul Frank Parish, an apostle of Argentine railway building since the 1850s, led the way. As Robertson's successor as chairman of the Great Southern Railway, he concluded an agreement with Dardo Rocha, the governor of Buenos Aires, in which the province contracted the company to construct a new line across recently captured territory in the Conquest of the Desert. Rocha satisfied the company's demands for very low duties on imported construction materials and provided a twenty year guarantee against expropriation.[50] The directors then commissioned the Institute of Civil Engineers in London to survey the route, a task it swiftly accomplished. Labour contractors recruited 3000 men, "almost exclusively Italians," and eighteen months labour by shovel, wheel barrow, and mule followed.[51] The company completed the 200-mile stretch from Azul to Bahía Blanca in 1884 and that year paid 11 per cent on its ordinary shares.[52] Following major improvements on its previous performance, the Central Argentine relinquished its profit guarantee. Buying out several small companies, it linked its hub in Rosario with Buenos Aires. By the mid-1880s, railways carried passengers across the pampas from Buenos Aires to the far north beyond Tucumán and south to Bahía Blanca.[53]

Remaining distinctively British, the companies often impressed their customers for their smartness and punctuality while sometimes prompting unease at their foreign ways. Émile Daireaux, a French-Porteño commentator of the 1880s, criticised the "colonial" features of the railways. "The carriages and personnel are all English; the stations look like English cottages full of English families; the signals to stop and to go are all made in English. Travellers might well imagine they were living in a colonised

[49] On the Eastern Railway, see *Brazil and River Plate Mail*, 3 Feb., 9 June 1881.

[50] *Railway Times and Joint Stock Chronicle* 3 Mar. 1882.

[51] Construction progress is noted in *Standard* 1 Mar. 1882 and 29 Sept. 1883, and in *Railway Times and Joint Stock Chronicle* 3 June 1883; 29 Sept. 1883.

[52] *Standard* 25 Mar. 1884. Lengthy supplements detailing the work underway by gangs of men up to 400 strong appear in *Standard* 20–24 Feb. 1885.

[53] Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 405–406.

country (*un pays annexé*)."[54] In the earlier days, the London directors allowed their managers in Buenos Aires wide latitude, but over time external supervision grew more pronounced, increasing the sense of an obtrusive external presence.[55]

By 1890, railway track length had climbed to 5000 miles. As exports of Welsh coal for the railways climbed, a substantial proportion of trade between Britain and Argentina consisted of an exchange of raw materials, coal being shipped in one direction and grains and hides in the other. Adding coal, exports of rolling stock, steel track, signalling equipment and prefabricated building materials ended the eighty-year pre-eminence of textiles among Argentine imports from Britain.[56] Trade developed on exceptionally favourable terms for the British since tariffs, never high, disappeared completely to afford subsidies to imported British goods against those of other countries.[57] The *Railway Times* listed the goods and skills currently in high demand in Argentina. "Allowing one station for each twenty miles, there are some 500 stations to be erected. Provide one engine for every five miles of railway, and here is a demand for 2000 locomotives, with a proportionate quantity of carriages and rolling stock. Then drivers and stokers are required for the locomotives, guards for trains, attendants and porters at the stations, platelayers for the permanent way, masons and carpenters for the stations, clerks for the offices, and a host of other persons."[58] In this fashion, railway employees became diffused across the pampas. Encountering a British-born station master in rural Córdoba,

[54] Émile Daireaux. *La Vie et les Moeurs á la Plata*. Tome 1: *La Societé des Villes*. Paris: Hachette, 1889, 271.

[55] On company structure relevant to Argentine railways, see Myra Wilkins. "The Free-Standing Company, 1870–1914: an important type of British direct foreign investment." *Economic History Review*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 1988, 276; Colin M. Lewis. "Britain, the Argentine and Informal Empire: Rethinking the Role of the Railway Companies," in Brown, *Informal Empire*, 99–123 (notably 108–111). Charles Jones argued that the power shift to London created a more "imperialist" relationship in which the British developed greater power to direct Argentine economic development. See Jones, "'Business Imperialism' and Argentina, 1875–1900: A Theoretical Note." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Nov. 1980, 442. Argentines occasionally noted the switch away from local control. In former days, remarked an observer, British managers living in Argentina were in full charge, "not like now when only the clerks come and the owners stay at home." Santiago Calzadilla, 1891, cited in Moya, *Cousins and Strangers*, 492.

[56] Joslin, *Banking in Latin America*, 6; also Zalduendo, *Inversiones Británicas*, 302.

[57] Carlos Diaz Alejandro. *Essays on the Economic History of the Argentine Republic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970, 288.

[58] *South American Journal* 7 Jan. 1888, quoting *Railway Times*.

Charles Darbyshire praised his modest home and his "most productive garden, with any quantity of fruit and vegetables."[59] Railways attracted new population and more genteel living into former frontier areas. "Out goes the saddle and in comes the piano," pithily remarked Eduardo Casey, the founder of Venado Tuerto.[60]

* * *

Other British concerns followed on the heels of the railways.[61] In the 1880s, the Anglo-Argentine Tramway Company developed a large network in Buenos Aires. Employing horse drawn vehicles for a period, it later converted to steam trams.[62] The River Plate Trust, Loan and Agency Company founded in Buenos Aires in 1882 evolved into a profitable lender to land and urban utility companies.[63] British investment remained heavily tilted towards transportation, finance and public services led by gas, water and sewage works, sectors in which the late nineteenth-century British economy commanded a comparative advantage. The Fábrica Argentina de Alpargatas established in 1884 became one of the few British firms to manufacture products for the domestic market. It turned out thousands of pairs of espadrilles or alpargatas, low cost footwear with canvas tops and soles made from looped rope. Its utilisation of Bengal jute and imported machinery made the company, if unusual in several respects, into yet another component of the British overseas economy.[64] Liebig's Extract of

[59] Darbyshire, *Argentine Republic*, 106.

[60] Quoted in Barsky and Djenderijian, *Expansión Ganadera*, Introduction.

[61] A listing of leading companies, thirty in all, with data on capital and profits, appears in J. Fred Rippy. *British Investments in Latin America, 1822–1949: A Case Study in the Operations of Private Enterprise in Retarded Regions.* Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1966, 73, 159–167.

[62] On tramways, see Raúl García Heras. *Transportes, negocios y política: la compañía Anglo-Argentina de Tranvías, 1876–1981.* Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1994; also Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 356–357; James R. Scobie. *Buenos Aires. De la Plaza to Suburb, 1870–1910.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1974, 167, 174.

[63] At an annual general meeting of the Trust, the chairman noted its original intent was to revive the Mercantile Bank of Buenos Aires liquidated in the early 1870s. *South American Journal* 31 Jan. 1888. A detailed account of this transition appears in Charles A. Jones. *International Business in the Nineteenth Century. The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Bourgeoisie.* Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1987, 129–133, 172–173.

[64] Leandro Gutiérrez and Juan Carlos Korol. "Historia de empresas y crecimiento industrial en la Argentina. El caso de la Fábrica Argentina de Alpargatas." *Desarrollo Económico*, Vol. 28, No. 111, Oct.-Dec. 1988, 401–423. On the company's early years, see also *Review of the River Plate* 29 June 1963.

Meat, a vast slaughter house developed on the Uruguayan side of the Rio Uruguay at Fray Bentos. Supplied by estancias throughout the eastern border zone, the company processed up to 180,000 cattle a year. One pound of its meat extract could feed, with bread and potatoes, 120 men at a penny a serving.[65] In 1887, a visitor from the United States described Liebig's "as great a commercial octopus as the Standard Oil Company."[66]

Company-owned cattle ranches led by El Espartillar Estancia near Chascomús, once John Fair's property, replaced the family-owned enterprises of former times. Such entities included Las Cabezas Estancia at Gualeguay in Entre Rios, formerly the property of British merchant James Black, near the site of the ill-fated Beaumont Colony of the 1820s.[67] One hundred miles west of Rosario the Santa Isabel estancia provided another example of the transition. George W. Drabble, a leading British business figure in late nineteenth-century Argentina, bought the land in 1857 when it lay far beyond the frontier. He began developing it in 1882 soon after Roca's desert campaign, contracting Englishman Henry Neville Larden to work the land on shares. Larden remained for more than thirty years. His brother Walter Larden visited him in 1888 and again in 1908. On the first occasion, Walter Larden depicted estancia life in ways reminiscent of Richard Seymour twenty years earlier on the Córdoba-Santa Fe borderlands. "Things were in the rough. We had no milk or butter...there was hard biscuit instead of bread. Vegetables were a delicacy unknown." At that time estancias were "built like forts, with unfenced cattle runs." Beyond lay large lakes "fringed with pampa grass, where swans, flamingos, spoonbills, ibis, egrets, ducks of all sorts…That aspect of the pampas I thoroughly liked." Twenty years later, conditions had changed. By then, Henry Larden held title to a large portion of the estancia that became a vast grain farm worked by Italian tenants.[68]

Among the leading British companies, power grew more concentrated. By 1890, seven directors of the River Plate Trust, for example, held forty-five directorships in twenty-two different British firms principally with

[65] As noted in Davis and Huttenback, *Pursuit of Empire*, 94.

[66] W.E. Curtis in *Harper's Magazine* Nov. 1887. Quoted in *Standard* 8 Dec. 1887.

[67] The development of El Espartillar from the 1880s is noted in Rippy. *British Investments*, 164. The author also notes the later history of the Las Cabezas Estancia Company of Entre Rios founded in 1876, whose average profits exceeded 11 per cent throughout the period 1882–1949. El Espartillar and Las Cabezas are mentioned in Darbyshire, *Argentine Republic*, 40; also Jorge Navarro Viola. *El Club de Residentes Extranjeros: breve reseña histórica en homenaje a sus fundadores*. Buenos Aires: Coni, 1941, 116–117.

[68] Larden, *Argentine Plains*, 6, 43–44.

interests in Argentina. George Drabble (1823–1899) embodied the transition among the younger men of the 1870s who abandoned the import trade for the business of corporate investment. For more than twenty years until 1870, he worked as a merchant in Buenos Aires before returning to London to rise to becoming head of the Bank of London and the River Plate and to serve on the board of several Argentine railway companies.[69] By the end of the nineteenth century, the "River Platers," as the wealthy clique of London company directors running the railways and other companies became known, faced rising animosity in Argentina as agents of a lucrative monopoly controlling the arteries of the national economy.[70]

* * *

In the late 1870s, the Anglo-Porteño community that took shape after 1815 showed signs of decay. Its cemetery, once an object of diligent attention among the early merchants, grew neglected, full of "wild vegetation, rank weeds and degenerate blossoms."[71] Recession impoverished many community members. In 1880 the consuls of the United Kingdom and the United States founded the British and American Benevolent Society (BABS) to care for the destitute aged of their respective nationalities. Rev. James Fleming, the leader of the Scottish Presbyterian congregation, took control as its chairman. He viewed the joint international association as a means to "cement the union between two great members of a great family." On these semi-racial grounds, he rejected all applications for support by Anglophone widows who had married Argentines.[72]

Foreign investment rejuvenated the British community. Censuses in 1869 and 1895 revealed a sharp decline of unskilled men and an increase in middle and upper class groups. Clerks, managers, salesmen, surveyors, accountants, railway drivers and firemen, managers, stationmasters and engineers replaced

[69] On Drabble, see Damus, *Railways*, 111–114; Jones, *British Financial Institutions*, 4. Jones places Drabble fourth among twenty-five leading shareholders of businesses in the Rio de la Plata with a portfolio valued at £183,000 in 1895 in ten companies. See Jones, *Who Invested*, 11 (Table 7).

[70] Estanislao Zeballos, an early detractor, referred to the River Platers as the *Círculo Argentino* by which he meant a coterie of millionaires controlling the Argentine railways. See Fernando Rocchi. *Chimneys in the Desert. Industrialization in Argentina during the Export Boom Years*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006, 196.

[71] *Standard* 25 Nov. 1879.

[72] *Standard* 27 Apr. 1907. On Fleming's treatment of widows, see J. Monteith Drysdale. *One hundred Years Old, 1838–1938. A Record of the First Century of St. Andrew's Scotch School, Buenos Aires*. Buenos Aires: English Printery, 1938, 220.

the old merchants, craftsmen, female launderers and servants. Michael Mulhall of the *Standard* noted the rise of a new corporate identity replacing its mercantile predecessor. "We are all extinguished," he lamented, "leaving but a few landmarks such as our banks, our railways and tramways."[73] Marriage and consular registers illustrated the arrival of new young men on three-year contracts and good salaries. When their contracts ended, they typically took a spell of home leave before signing a second contract at better pay.[74] Deborah Jakubs's data show that substantial numbers of such men married "Argentines," although in all likelihood the women were the Anglo-Porteño daughters and granddaughters of earlier British settlers. The sharp decline of female employment indicates women grew better off, particularly when they married and were less easily pressured into the labour market.[75] The British Hospital illustrated other aspects of the transition. Between 1861 and 1884, patient numbers multiplied six times over to suggest the community grew in size and resources. In 1886, hospital leaders issued bonds paying 7 per cent to finance construction of a much larger building.[76] Increasing demand for hospital services likely derived from the poorer, ageing class of Anglo-Porteños.

British associations of the post-1870 period included several Masonic lodges, numerous sports clubs and the English Literary Society staging lectures and debates. These entities bore no resemblance to the mutual societies and early trade unions of other ethnic groups in the city.[77] Early meetings of the Literary Society founded in 1871 indicated the presence of some young men of liberal and progressive views. During a debate in 1877, the vote split evenly on a motion to approve the proclamation of

[73] *Standard* 13 Mar. 1879.

[74] For employment contracts, see Damus, *Railways*, 221.

[75] Jakubs, *British in Buenos Aires*, 30, 119–126, 160–170, 191, 206, 296. Additional data appear in the consular marriage register. See "British Consulate at Buenos Aires from: 6th May 1850 To: 11th December 1902." Examples of such marriages in the 1880s include men whose biographies are explored in Damus, *Railways*, 148–169 (Frank Foster, Malcolm Graham and Thomas Gregory provide examples). The 1890s witnessed several high society marriages between new British and older Anglo-Porteño families. In 1897, James Agar, whose family imported agricultural machinery, married Maria Bagley, whose family had manufactured biscuits; Harry Scott, a senior manager of the Southern railway married Frances Lumb of the old mercantile family.

[76] On the hospital, see *Standard* 22 Jan., 11 Aug. 1886.

[77] On Spanish and Italian associations, see Fernando Devoto and Alejandro Fernández. "Mutalismo étnico, liderazgo y participación política. Algunas hipótesis de trabajo." In Diego Armus, ed. *Mundo urbano y cultura popular. Estudios de historia social argentina*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1990, 136–139.

Queen Victoria as Empress of India: not everyone supported the recent appeal to imperialist sentiments launched by Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. A motion to support Irish Home Rule in 1887 espoused in Britain by William Gladstone's Liberal Party passed by a vote of 2 to 1 at the Literary Society, not only because of voting by Irish-Porteños.[78] The diary of young Walter Heald, who went to Buenos Aires in 1864 as a merchant's clerk, illustrated the variety and importance of club life. His first membership provided an entree into Anglophone society, his second into Freemasonry and his third into weekend football.[79] The Buenos Aires Rowing Club began in 1873 on the Riachuelo along the city's southern boundary. Rowing grew more popular as suburban railways connected Buenos Aires with the village of Tigre to the north on the waterways of the Paraná.

The Anglican Church promoted a stronger sense of national origin. In 1873 the British government terminated subsidies to Protestant and Presbyterian churches under the Act of 1825, forcing them to become self-supporting. Previously administered by the consul, the Protestant Church in Buenos Aires became incorporated into mainstream Anglicanism. In this guise, it received strong support from the South American Missionary Society (SAMS) founded by Allen Gardiner. As its congregations grew, handsome stained-glass windows embellished the church building. As the railway companies and their personnel moved beyond Buenos Aires, the SAMS built new churches headed by St. Bartholomew's Church in Rosario. Anglican "camp chaplains" emulated their predecessors, Irish Catholic Antony Fahy and Scottish Presbyterian "Padre" Smith, but travelled by steamship and railway not horseback alone.[80] Regional shifts in the composition of the English-born population accompanied the spread of Anglicanism. Migrants of specifically English origin increased,

[78] *Standard* 7 July, 1877; 21 May 1887.

[79] Walter Heald. *Private Diary of Walter Heald*. John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. Heald played a version of the game allowing kicking and carrying the ball. The creation of two British Masonic lodges in Buenos Aires, the Excelsior in 1854 and the Star of the South in 1864, both with strong sporting ties, are noted in Víctor Raffo. *Los orígenes británicos del deporte argentino: atletismo, cricket, fútbol, polo, rugby durante las presidencies de Mitre, Sarmiento, y Avellaneda*. Buenos Aires: Víctor Raffo, 2004, 56; on freemasonry, see also Navarro Viola, *Club de Residentes Extranjeros*, 59–66.

[80] The *Diocesan Magazine*, preceded by the *South American Missionary Magazine* of the 1880s and the *Ark of Faith* of 1896 document the growth of Anglicanism and the spread of small British enclaves outside Buenos Aires.

with a larger proportion from railway centres in midland and southern England as opposed to the textile towns of northern England.

Scots too remained prominent, well-represented among railway workers and engineers. Among their associations, a branch of the St. Andrew's Society founded in 1888 became the most prominent.[81] The Great Southern Railway created a cluster of British welders and carpenters in Barracas, the site of its repair yards, an unprepossessing district on the south side of the capital. There men worked overhauling locomotive boilers, casting iron under-frames for carriages and on tasks related to the maintenance of bridges, culverts and telegraphs down the line.[82] A Presbyterian Church and Sunday school in Barracas, and the relocation of St. Andrew's Scotch School to the district attested to the Scottish origin of many employees.

The city population of Buenos Aires climbed from 180,000 in 1870 to more than 500,000 in 1890. During this period, wealthy British residents abandoned congested core districts for suburbs formed by railways and tramways. They first threaded a way along the Western Railway to San José de Flores, a more elevated, healthier district about six miles from the city centre. Flores became a zone of quintas, a term for rambling suburban houses with lawns and gardens, and the site of St. Peter's, the first suburban Anglican Church in Buenos Aires. Sports clubs that began in Flores included the Buenos Aires Cricket Club and the Buenos Aires Athletic Society; polo too began its soon flourishing existence there.[83] The wealthy then moved on to Belgrano, another more elevated district connected with the city centre by rail and tramway. Company employees of lesser standing crossed south into the province of Buenos Aires. Of several small British clusters along the Great Southern Railway, Lomas de Zamora and Quilmes became most popular.

Small Methodist and Lutheran churches encouraged contact and some intermarriage between British, American and northern European residents, but unbridgeable religious and cultural differences barred closer ties with other groups. With the community now scattered in several parts

[81] See *Standard* 7 Sept. 1889, reported an attempt to calculate the Scottish population of Buenos Aires by comparing the number of Scottish weddings and baptisms against city-wide figures. The exercise yielded an estimate of the Scottish population of 3–5000.

[82] *Railway Times and Joint Stock Chronicle* 14 Apr. 1880.

[83] On polo, see *Standard* 29 Sept. 1875. On sports see Raffo, *Deporte*. Mention of cricket recurs throughout the nineteenth century but only from the 1860s on a regular, organised basis.

of the city, bonds formed by national origin clashed with the dispersive effects of residence, employment and social status. "There is no English society" in Buenos Aires, concluded one commentator in 1884.[84] "The curse of our British community is Individualism," repeated another member some years later. "It is not a community at all [but] a British Empire in miniature, containing every shade of political and religious opinion."[85] A few objectors could now be heard at the way the British stayed aloof from the rest of the population. Estanislao S. Zeballos, an often critical social commentator, characterised the British community in Buenos Aires as a group of "independent beehives." Although separated geographically across the city, to his taste as an Argentine patriot they appeared collectively far too introverted and insular.[86]

* * *

As recovery from the depression of the mid-seventies gathered pace, British financiers and entrepreneurs scrambled for Argentine railway and tramway concessions. With the defeat of Tejedor in mid-1880, positive reports of the country swept through Britain.[87] Legation secretary Egerton urged every effort to seize the opportunities on offer. He advised sending specialist sales technicians to Buenos Aires "by syndicates of various interests, mining, timber, railway wagons, agricultural and other machinery, trains, carriages, wire, rail and other iron interests."[88]

Encouraged by the resumption of currency convertibility in 1881—the monetary regime that made profits more secure, readily quantifiable and easier to forecast—British funds and supplies began pouring in. Around mid-decade, the new Buenos Aires and Pacific Railway, mainly an amalgam of smaller networks, refocused rail construction from the southern to the western pampas. The company proposed a new line across rural Buenos Aires from Mercedes to Junín while developing the latter town into a railhead. Junín subsequently acquired the reputation among British railwaymen as the Crewe of Argentina, if always a dispiriting place that "poses few attractions and causes many fits of depression."[89] Other proj-

[84] *Standard* 7 Dec. 1884.

[85] *Standard* 23 Mar. 1917.

[86] Zeballos as guest speaker at St Andrew's Society, in *Standard* 1 Dec. 1906.

[87] See *The Engineer*, quoted in *Standard* 29 Sept. 1881.

[88] Egerton to Granville 19 June 1881. FO 6/365.

[89] *Diocesan Gazette and Magazine* (1915), 73. For the town's beginnings as a railway centre, see *Standard* 6 July 1884. Calling it "Crewe" compared it with the major railway junction in north-west England.

ects undertook to construct tramways, water and gasworks.[90] Throughout the 1880s, discussion continued of ways to improve port facilities in Buenos Aires to meet the growth of steamship traffic. Two prominent local engineers, Eduardo Madero and Luis A. Huergo, competed to build a deep-water port. Both intended to contract British construction firms but proposed different sites, one abutting the central Plaza de Mayo and the other to the south by the Riachuelo. Madero triumphed in 1884 with the support of the British merchants and shippers who owned warehouses near the Plaza de Mayo district. The usually cautious Bank of London and the River Plate invested in this major project, departing from its practice of avoiding ventures on which investment returns would be long delayed.[91]

As Roca sought to increase the pace of economic growth, observers pondered whether he could avoid the boom and bust of the early seventies. At that time, "speculation was rife. Lands, houses, property of all kinds in banking and finance changed hands like magic…Commercial credit had been pushed to insanity and [then in the end] no one could pay," as soaring interest rates plunged the country into recession.[92] During the early eighties, employees of the River Plate Trust saw ominous similarities with the previous decade in the way land speculation became rife and big operators like Eduardo Casey borrowed vast sums. In 1882, Casey acquired Curumalán, an estate of half a million hectares in southern Buenos Aires.[93] Trust staff expressed astonishment at the tripling of land prices in some areas in barely three years. "Hundreds and hundreds are making fortunes by buying land one day and selling the next."[94] The speculators were by no means all Argentines. In 1881 a consortium in Liverpool

[90] The sequence of foreign investment is explored in Irving Stone. "British Long-term Investment in Latin America, 1865–1913." *The Business History Review*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 1968, 323. Stone's figures refer to Latin America as a whole, although investment occurred preponderantly in Argentina. They illustrate major increases in government loans, railways and ports and docks in 1875–1885, a period in which British investment in Argentine railways tripled from £5 to £15 million.

[91] On the port, see Scobie, *Buenos Aires*, 72–90, who suggests British support helped Madero without playing any decisive role. Port improvements in the Riachuelo district followed a few years later. On the London Bank's investment in the Madero project, see its annual report for 1890 in *Bankers' Magazine* 1891, vol. 51, 138.

[92] *Brazil and River Plate Mail* 23 Feb. 1875.

[93] Casey's story leading to his bankruptcy in 1890 and eventual suicide is told in Landaburu, *Irlandeses*.

[94] Memorandum of 15 Oct. 1883. C.A. Jones. *The River Plate Trust Company Archives*. Oxford: Oxford Microfilm and Publishing Services Limited. N.D. Vol. 1.

boasted its members had paid only £22,000 for an estancia of 22 square acres (*sic*) and sold it for £72,000. "What do English investors who put their money in consols (British government bonds) at 3 percent think of this result?" wondered *The Brazil and River Plate Mail*.[95]

From the start not all was well, as Roca's currency convertibility measure weakened and failed in less than four years. Under its rules, money supply had to match gold reserves, but the former soon surged far beyond the limit. Nicholas Bouwer blamed politics.[96] He recalled that soon after Roca defeated Tejedor, the national government seized control of customs and revenues but left the provincial bank, reputed one of the largest financial institutions worldwide at the time, under provincial jurisdiction.[97] The bank's resources remained available for political projects, including attempts to undermine the PAN, the coalition of governors sustaining Roca. Having appeared to have quashed the standoffs between the national and provincial governments, the Roca administration witnessed another round of conflict. This time the struggle lay between the president and Dardo Rocha, his former friend and ally during the Porteño rebellion of 1880. The latter became governor of Buenos Aires in 1881 and national senator for the province in 1884. This time, the rivals grappled with each other by offering loans and subsidies to potential followers in the provinces. While Rocha drew support from the Banco de la Provincia, Roca exploited the Banco Naciónal, a more recently founded, smaller and weaker entity. Ignoring his pledge to preserve sound money, the president used his bank to issue paper money to enable subventions to his supporters. Amidst the politicking, the *South American Journal* perceived "too heavy expenditure all at once…trying to do everything in a day." It complained Roca let himself be manipulated by "projectors of every description [and was becoming] too influenced by concession hunters."[98] The rivals jousted for several years, although the president finally carried the

[95] *Brazil and River Plate Mail* 4 Apr. 1881. The *Mail* refers to non-existent square acres. It meant square leagues, in which case the purchasers acquired around 150,000 acres.

[96] See Bouwer to Baring 1, 14 Feb. 1884. HC 4-1-65. Bouwer talked figuratively of a "quintupling" of the money supply. Cortés Conde reported an increase from 18.7 to 24 million gold pesos in 1883 and a reduction in gold reserves from 9.4 million to only 4.5 million in 1884. See Cortés Conde, *Patrón Oro*.

[97] *Bankers' Magazine*, Vol. 47, 1887, 48.

[98] *South American Journal and Brazil and River Plate Mail* 10, 24 Jan. 1885. The two periodicals merged in 1884. The *Journal* subsequently defined its target readers as Contractors, Engineers, Consuls, Railwaymen, Tramway and Gas Companies.

day by mustering the larger number of provincial governors. Once firmly committed to Roca, they staged elections to support his candidates for national and provincial offices.[99] After this setback, the province of Buenos Aires once more weakened politically. The election of the more compliant Máximo Paz as governor of Buenos Aires in 1887 signalled another victory of the national government.

In early 1885, convertibility—the ability to exchange paper currency for gold at a fixed value—ended amidst a short recession and the struggle between Roca and Rocha. As reserves were exhausted, Roca decreed a reversion to inconvertible currency. Carlos Pellegrini, then minister of war, spent months in Europe raising loans to reconstitute the reserves. At length he succeeded, although Congress and the press objected to having to pledge the customs revenues to foreign bankers. They felt belittled, arguing Pellegrini's proposals placed Argentina in the same category as feeble little Uruguay or an inconsequential Caribbean or Central American state: in these countries the foreign bankers made sure of collecting their dues by putting their men in the customs sheds.[100]

The Pellegrini loan made it possible to resume currency convertibility but for never publicly explained reasons inconvertibility persisted. When questioned, Finance Minister Wenceslao Pacheco promised to rectify the anomaly but avoided taking action. In hindsight, his intentions were clear. To admit he intended to allow inconvertibility indefinitely risked discouraging European investors because changes in the value of money rendered their returns less predictable and secure. By promising to end inconvertibility but then postponing action, the minister preserved the means to expand domestic credit. He aimed for the best of all worlds: maximum foreign investment and maximum domestic credit; in combination, they would become the rocket propellants of economic growth.

"Railways, gas, electricity—so completely is the face of the country changing," observed the *South American Journal*. Consulted in early 1885 about the wisdom of retaining inconvertibility, Francisco J. Bruno, a Spanish-born financier living in London, expressed the same view as many other forward-looking experts of the day. He argued that with its

[99] On the Roca-Rocha duel using the power of the banks, see Gerchunoff, Rocchi, Rossi, *Desorden y Progreso*, 44–75. Other data on the interplay of finance and politics appear in Rock, *State Building*, 118–119.

[100] On the Pellegrini negotiation, see Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 403 and Ferns, *Baring Crisis Revisited*, 249, claiming Roca's control of the Argentine Congress prevented opposition to the Pellegrini agreement ending in its rejection.

vast land reserve Argentina possessed limitless potential for growth. Its banks could therefore print however much paper money they wanted, ignoring any depreciation. Since the economy had such enormous potential for growth, it would soon absorb the monetary excess. Paper money would then appreciate, restoring its par value. According to Bruno, "[w]ithin three years the country will have reached such a point that the inconvertible currency will have recovered its nominal value…A country which has so many natural resources is bound to get richer."[101] Many foreign investors took the same view, although not all. Some reputable observers expressed misgivings about a policy of high borrowings, rising foreign debt and inflation. The doubters included Bouwer, the *Standard* and the two leading dailies *La Prensa* and *La Nación* in Buenos Aires; The *Times* and the *Bankers' Magazine* among others in London took a similar position.[102] With this sharp division of opinion drawn, the stage was set to demonstrate which side would prove correct.

* * *

The contest between President Roca and ex-Governor Rocha concluded with the election of Miguel Juárez Celman, recently governor of upcountry Córdoba and the incumbent president's brother-in-law (the two men having married sisters). He took office as president in October 1886 only to resign in disgrace in August 1890, having brought the country into a financial cataclysm. The episode known as the Baring crisis stemmed from his crash programme of economic growth combining heavy foreign investment with rapidly expanding domestic credit. The administration overestimated the country's ability to increase production and exports at the pace required to service debt and preserve monetary stability. It exaggerated the potential of the drier outer provinces like Córdoba, where the president's political base lay, to match the productivity of the rich alluvial areas of the province of Buenos Aires. European investors made the mistake of believing the government's claims and endorsing its policy by a massive inflow of new funds.[103]

As foreign investment tripled in only five years, the *Bankers' Magazine* recalled how "[a] great wave of prosperity was sweeping over Argentina.

[101] *South American Journal* 21 Mar. 1885.

[102] *Standard* 11 Feb. 1886.

[103] The distribution of benefits by provinces and regions is explored in Gerchunoff, Rocchi, Rossi, *Desorden y Progreso*, 122–162, showing how the Littoral provinces led by Córdoba cornered the lion's share.

Fig. 5.1 President Miguel Juarez Celman

Public works were demanded on all sides. European financiers were coming, cap in hand, vying with each other to obtain concessions for railways, docks, water-works, tramways, municipal improvements."[104] The "fever of progress" in the parlance of the day consumed the entire government and propertied society. Congress joined the throng by authorising sixty-seven major railway concessions in only three years (Fig. 5.1).[105]

Soon after the inaugural of Juárez Celman, Pacheco, who was retained as finance minister, introduced the law of guaranteed banks, a measure submitted to public scrutiny as a copy of long-established practices in the United States. It authorised newly formed provincial banks to issue paper currency on condition that equivalent sums in gold—meant to register the growth of production and earnings—were deposited and retained in the national treasury.[106] Abuses to the system appeared almost immediately. Rather than earning gold by increasing production, some of the new

[104] John Proctor. "Argentina: Her Past and Present." *Bankers' Magazine*, Vol. 51, 1891, 458. Ferns, *Baring Crisis Revisited*, 249 estimates foreign investment at £45 million in 1885 and £150 million in 1890. See also J. Fred Rippy. "The British Investment 'Boom' of the 1880s in Latin America." *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 1947, 281–286, estimating British rail investment in Argentina alone at £65 million by 1890.

[105] Zalduendo, *Inversiones Británicas*, 327.

[106] A comparison with the US system to regulate paper money issues appears in Roberto Cortés Conde. *Dinero, deuda y crisis. Evolución fiscal y monetaria en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1989, 199–202.

provincial banks borrowed it from abroad in order to issue paper money. Such practices merely increased the money supply and added to the foreign debt. The national government abandoned its own rule that gold deposited in the national treasury had to remain there for two years. Officials began authorising withdrawals on the grounds of paying down the foreign debt. When doing this, they failed to withdraw a matching quantity of paper money from circulation. As the balance between gold holdings and paper money was abandoned, the banking law was reduced to a mode of printing money. As the quantity of paper currency increased relative to gold, it depreciated by a measure known as the gold premium. Climbing to an average of 35 per cent in 1887, the gold premium reached 48 per cent in 1888 and ascended to 94 per cent in 1889. The last figure indicated that paper money roughly doubled in quantity compared with gold holdings.[107]

The gold premium resurrected an anomaly reminiscent of earlier periods of rampant paper money issues. In the *Bankers' Magazine*, John Proctor emphasised the way it favoured rural producers and exporters who sold goods at gold prices while paying their local debts in depreciating paper money. "Many who have made their contracts based on paper but who can sell their produce abroad in gold, are reaping a fine harvest out of exchange. Speculation in gold affords a handsome income to members of the rich at the cost of a great mass of the poorer population, which is fleeced at every turn."[108] Landowners received another bounty from land bonds known as cédulas issued by mortgage banks, principally the Banco Hipotecario de la Nación and the Banco Hipotecario de la Provincia de Buenos Aires.[109] The *Bankers' Magazine* reported how "series after series [of cédulas] were quickly manufactured and shipped in reams to satisfy the

[107] On the derailing of the Guaranteed Bank law of 1887, see Proctor, *Argentina*, 459. The government's abandonment of the controls over gold reserves is noted in *La Prensa* 10 Oct. 1888. The reasons for the "gold premium" are debated. Some authorities argued it resulted from a rising trade deficit prompting an outflow of gold, and others from the increase in the money supply. For discussion, see Ford, *Gold Standard*, 142.

[108] Proctor, *Argentina*, 463.

[109] Competing issues of cédulas became a feature of "the disordered, anarchic competition between the nation and the province for European funds." They marked another phase in the interregional conflicts of previous decades. See Gerchunoff, Rocchi, Rossi, *Desorden y Progreso*, 85–122.

wants of the gullible Europeans."[110] As purchasers of cédulas, Europeans expected high dividends from newly formed estancias brought into production. They remained unaware their funds often flowed into distant, less productive parts of the country. Thus "[s]wamps and salt plains had as good a chance [of attracting investors in land bonds] as flourishing farms." Many purchasers wrongly assumed that cédulas carried government-backed guarantees like the railway bonds of previous decades. The British press issued several warnings on this subject, but events showed they were disregarded.[111]

Abuse extended to the treatment of immigrants whose numbers soared to 220,000 in 1889, equal to those of the entire 1870s, before plummeting into net emigration in late 1890 and 1891. Under Juárez Celman, contractors toured Western Europe promising free passages and accommodation to prospective migrants.[112] They included the Irish-Porteño John Dillon, who eight years after his previous unsuccessful attempt returned to Ireland to recruit new migrants. This time he persuaded 1700 people to board ship for Argentina.[113] Irish emigrants of this period, most of whom sailed to Buenos Aires in early 1889 from Queenstown, County Cork, on the SS Dresden, differed from their Leinster predecessors of forty years earlier. They included families with small children from Dublin slums and from the impoverished counties of the west and south of the island, principally County Limerick.[114] "Nine out of ten had come without a penny and had large families dependent on them," reported an onlooker. Arriving in Buenos Aires alongside thousands of other migrants from continental Europe, they found the primitive government-run "Hotel de

[110] Proctor, *Argentina*, 458. "Gullible" Europeans included people like a former employee of the Gibson estancia near Chascomús. David R. Gull, an Orkney Islander, went out to Los Yngleses in 1865 to manage sheep. Returning to Scotland, in the 1880s he lost all his money, having invested it in cédulas. The story is recalled in the *Standard* 15 Feb. 1923.

[111] For warnings about cédulas, see *South American Journal* 5 Feb. 1887, 21 Jan. 1888. As a sample of some of the other abuses, landowners were allowed cédula credit of up to 50 per cent of the assessed value of their land: they submitted the assessments, predictably inflated and falsified. Secondly, many cédulas were issued in paper currency, meaning they depreciated with the rise of the gold premium. Thirdly, no cédulas had government guarantees.

[112] On subsidised immigration in 1888–1891, see Juan A. Alsina. *La inmigración en el primer siglo de independencia*, Buenos Aires: F.S. Alsina, 1910, 51.

[113] Dillon's activities are reported in *South America Journal* 4 Feb. 1888.

[114] 1772 passengers are listed in "Irish Emigrant Ships to Argentina." My survey of the first 500 names revealed 269 males, 226 females and approximately 43 families with 2 or more children.

Inmigrantes" completely swamped. Seeking refuge outside, "hundreds of them were sleeping on the flags of the courtyards."[115]

Weeks later many of the so-called Dresden Irish embarked by rail to the Rio Napostá, a wilderness area in the far south of the province on the way to Bahía Blanca. Abandoned in open country with scarcely any food or shelter, some died. Months later the survivors straggled back to the capital using rail passes supplied by charities in Buenos Aires. There they remained, in a situation resembling that of the "Lincolnshire Farmers" twenty years before.[116] In all, about 3000 migrants from the United Kingdom arrived in 1889. Most had to "indulge in a little quiet starvation," as a diplomat described their lot.[117] British officials reiterated past warnings against migration to Argentina. Their long list of deterrents included political instability, debased money, high rents and job competition with continental Europeans working for lower wages.[118]

In a prolix annual report to Congress of mid-1888, the president proclaimed the current high rate of economic expansion would continue indefinitely. Reporting a year later in mostly similar style, he acknowledged the glut of immigrants and the depreciation of the currency were causing problems but dismissed them as "insignificant when compared with the advantages the Republic has derived from the opening of the banks throughout the provinces, and from the stimulus industry has received."[119] Although numerous observers in Argentina and Britain alike continued to share the president's confidence, doubters like the *Standard* saw pending disaster. As early as 1887, it warned "the country is seized with John Law's mania [for paper money] and everybody grows rich without labour...

[115] Letter from Lomas de Zamora. In *Correspondence Respecting Emigration to the Argentine Republic*. FO 881: 5963, 31, n.d. (1889).

[116] See Bridgett to Pakenham, 19 Mar. 1891. FO 118/220, reporting the return of the settlers to Buenos Aires by rail; also Michael John Geraghty, "Argentina: Land of Broken Promises," *Buenos Aires Herald* 17 March 1999. Reproduced by http://www.irlandes.org/dresden.htm (Irish Society of Latin American Studies). The *SS Dresden* story, as commemorated by descendants of the immigrants, is accessible in http://descendientesdresden.blogspot.com.

[117] A phrase used in Jenner to Wallace 26 Apr. 1889. FO 118–213. Data on British and Irish migrants in 1889–1890 are contained in FO 118/213 (1889) and FO 118/220 (1891). The British legation estimated total British and Irish migrants at 5697 in 1889. See also FO 881/5963 "Correspondence concerning Emigration to the Argentine Republic."

[118] "General Information for Intending Emigrants to the Argentine Republic." London: HM Stationery Office, August 1890. FO 6/423.

[119] Quoted in J.H. Williams. *Argentine Trade under Inconvertible Paper Money, 1880–1900*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1920, 64.

When the day of reckoning must come, as it certainly must, the smash will be tremendous."[120] Two years later the predicted financial catastrophe loomed. By mid-1889, the London *Financial News*, for example, concluded Argentina had "no hope" of rescue or recovery. It described its citizens and the foreign investors as "people [who] have gone off their heads."[121]

The banking law enabled provincial banks to issue credit but provided no guidance on how to reduce it. As debt mounted, imports ballooned and balance of payments deficits widened, to require ever larger infusions of foreign borrowing to bridge it. Default loomed as liabilities payable in gold expanded but revenue collected in paper money shrank, to reflect the effects of the gold premium. Provinces and municipalities incurred massive debt. In 1886–1890, government expenditure in Santa Fe increased six fold, in Córdoba four fold and in Entre Rios three fold.[122] In early 1890, impending bankruptcy in the province of Buenos Aires under Governor Paz forced the sale of the Western Railway to a British syndicate. The deal included a commission of £1 million to an inner circle of London financiers, a payment that sparked complaints in Argentina over the next twenty years.[123] A proud symbol of the wealth, prestige and progress of the province, the Ferrocarril del Oeste was being sold for a song, lamented the *Standard*. As a British syndicate took over the railway, it transferred some of its most profitable sections to the Great Southern Railway, leaving the old company with barely 300 miles of track.[124] The sale of the Western failed to prevent the province of Buenos Aires collapsing into insolvency. Excessive foreign borrowing and the abuse of credit attacked the core of

[120] *Standard* 7 June 1887. The reference to John Law recalls the infamous early eighteenth-century Scottish financier. See Robert Minton. *John Law. The Father of Paper Money*. New York: Association Press, 1975.

[121] *Standard* 22 June, 19 July, 22 Aug. 1889.

[122] *La Prensa* 25 Sept. 1890.

[123] The province sold the railway to a Syndicate headed by Sir Alexander Henderson for 41 million gold pesos. The syndicate then sold it to a British company for the 41 million plus an additional 5.8 million gold pesos (£1 million) paid as commission to the Syndicate in deferred shares. At a later date, the British company added this commission to the sum it claimed as "recognised capital" (the basis for calculations of its profits). The Argentine government refused to accept the commission as recognised capital because the province did not receive this money in the 1890 transaction. Details are published in *Review of the River Plate* 27 May 1910.

[124] *Standard* 21 Mar. 1890. The hiving off of the Western Railway is described in *The Times Book on Argentina*. London: Times Publishing Co Limited, 1927, 75.

the banking system, prompting the bankruptcy of the Banco Nacional and the near-demise of the recently all-powerful Banco de la Provincia. As the former perished, the latter endured years of struggle to recover.

In August 1888 the Bank of England raised its discount rate. The measure aimed to correct a deficit in the British balance of payments by attracting funds back to Britain currently flowing abroad—to Argentina in particular.[125] As new British funding tailed away, breakdown in Argentina became imminent. In mid-1890, Baring Brothers triggered the long expected crash when it advertised for subscribers to fund the Buenos Ayres Water Supply and Drainage Company. Amid the current less favourable financial climate in Britain, the project failed to attract sufficient investors. Having underwritten numerous contracts with many British firms to provide supplies for the project, items like lead and iron-piping, Barings became liable for the capital shortfall. It too lurched into insolvency with debts of £5.7 million. At the brink of disaster in late 1890, Barings escaped as the Bank of England sponsored a consortium of British banks to provide emergency loans.[126] While blaming the Argentine government for the debacle, authoritative commentators like Proctor of the *Bankers' Magazine* condemned Barings and other British banks as the "evil geniuses all through the drama. Posing as the pioneers of progress, but seeking solely their own interests, they have engulfed in a common ruin both borrower and lender, and themselves into the bargain. Without their assistance Argentina would not have gained her present unenviable notoriety. Her development might have been much slower, but it would have proceeded on much more solid lines."[127]

On the eve of the crash in mid-1890, European bankers offered the Argentine government loans on condition it stopped issuing paper money and cédulas. Since it no longer retained control over the provincial banks, the administration was obliged to demur. In late July, opposition to Juárez Celman in Buenos Aires spilled out in rebellion and street fighting as sniping and cannon fire left 1500 dead among government troops and rebels. Government forces ultimately prevailed, but the rebel manifestoes lambasted the president to such powerful effect that he resigned a few days

[125] *South American Journal* 11 Aug. and 30 Oct. 1888.

[126] The fate of Barings is traced in Ferns, *Baring Crisis Revisited*, 251–273; also Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 458; Marichal, *Debt Crises*, 149–150. The *South American Journal* reported financial problems at Barings in November 1888 soon after the rise in bank rate by the Bank of England. See *South American Journal* 22 Nov. 1888.

[127] Proctor, *Argentina*, 464.

later. "[He] has set the example, living in luxury like a satrap…In four years he has made himself a millionaire…He has lived off the property of the state, and helped himself from the public treasury."[128] Juárez Celman's opponents accused him of dictatorship, although he was guiltier of sowing anarchy, as witnessed by his loss of control over the provincial banks. His term of office ended prematurely not because he commanded too much power but because he had no power at all.[129]

A new government under Carlos Pellegrini, the former vice president, fought to forestall default on the foreign debt. Finance Minister Vicente Fidel López, the former leader of the protectionist campaign of the late 1870s, slashed expenditure, appealed for purchasers of new government bonds, borrowed whatever meagre sums he could and deferred debt repayments. Scrambling for revenue, he raised tariffs by making duties payable at high gold rather than low paper money rates. He authorised the central government to assume provincial and municipal debt to prevent a landslide of local defaults. In December 1890, a group of British bankers under Lord Rothschild offered to reschedule the Argentine debt, although on harsh conditions. They proposed deferring immediate debt repayments in return for higher interest rates on the debt at a later date. The terms of the proposal required external supervision of customs revenues. They insisted the Argentine government pay Baring's debt to the water supply company. The Rothschild formula protected foreign holders of national debt and most railway guarantees, about 75 per cent of creditors, but abandoned creditors of provinces and municipalities and cédula holders.[130] Pellegrini accepted Rothchild's terms as his only means to avoid a public default. If that happened, "we shall be a country with neither credit nor honour…Should we fail to meet our obligations, it will take thirty years to recover. If we surmount the crisis honourably, our reputation will soar."[131]

[128] "Manifesto of the Revolution." Enclosure No. 5 in Pitkin to Blaine. Record Group 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts: Argentina [R-G-84]. U.S. Department of State, Washington D.C.

[129] On politics and government under Juárez Celman, see Alonso, *Partido Autonomista Nacional*, 221–345. The president's position bore some resemblance to twentieth-century Latin American populist leaders, whose inflationary policy and promotion of sectional interests drained away their authority to leave them ripe for overthrow by military coup.

[130] On the Funding Loan of 1890, see Gerchunoff, Rocchi, Rossi, *Desorden y Progreso*, 178–182.

[131] Pellegrini interview with *La Nación* 15 Nov. 1890. Facsimile in Gerchunoff, Rocchi, Rossi, *Desorden y progreso*, 315.

In the event, recovery took at least five years as debt repayments claimed large percentages of national expenditure and export earnings.[132] Pellegini's determination to brook no opposition to his programme resulted in intermittent bouts of repression, principally through censorship and the imprisonment of dissenters. Instability grew most severe in 1893 in Santa Fe when the regular army interceded to crush a revolt of immigrant farmers.[133] The crash had mixed effects on British companies and local British residents. On the railways, the Great Southern had limited losses since wheat production, its chief source of revenue, continued to increase. In the early 1890s, wheat farming once more illustrated the perverse effects of the gold prices: exporters continued to receive payment in old prices, while harvest workers earned depreciated paper money. Since costs of production fell much farther than prices on foreign markets, wheat production continued to surge.[134] The Central Argentine Railway fared less well than the Southern, as declining traffic forced it into major economies.[135] Ox carts returned on some sections of the line as producers tried to circumvent high freight rates. Pondering new ways to reduce costs, the company considered importing labour from India although eventually took no major action.[136] Alpargatas, the espadrille maker, suffered steep losses from a combination of falling consumer demand and rising costs of imported jute.[137] The Juárez Celman and Pellegrini presidencies of 1886–1892 damaged workers including those recruited in Britain, who were being paid in paper money. In 1888, workers in the Barracas repair yards went on strike in a demand for gold-based wages, although by 1891 women, children and unemployed men in Barracas were queuing at soup kitchens.[138] Distress among the aged and poorest of the British community imposed heavy burdens on the BABS and other charities. In 1891, the

[132] On the costs of servicing the debt, see Gerchunoff, Rocchi, Rossi, *Desorden y Progreso*, 254.

[133] The standard history of the rebellion in Santa Fe is Gallo, *La pampa gringa*.

[134] Leading studies of economic conditions in the early 1890s include, Williams, *International Trade*, 95–140; Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 439–458; Ford, *Gold Standard*, 119–40; on wheat, see James R. Scobie. *Revolution on the Pampas: Social History of Argentine Wheat, 1860–1910*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964.

[135] *Railway Times* 28 Mar. 1891.

[136] Reported in *Standard* 4 June, 4 Aug. 1891. A few workers from British India went mostly to sugar plantations in north-western provinces of Argentina.

[137] Gutiérrez and Korol, *Alpargatas*, 419.

[138] The strike is reported in *La Prensa* 30 Oct. 1888, and the soup kitchen in *Standard* 17 May 1891.

BABS dealt with more than 1000 and the Salvation Army with 15,000 cases of want and homelessness.[139]

The crash provoked a backlash against the British to echo the one in the late 1820s under analogous conditions following the fall of Rivadavia. Porteños overthrew Juárez Celman on the grounds of his irresponsibility and incompetence, although many viewed British greed as a major contributory cause of the disaster. They resented the demands of the debt collectors led by Rothschild and the corruption visible in the sale of the Western Railway. Insults against British companies and banks persisted for years.[140] Strong ill-feeling surfaced on the British side too. In 1890, bond and cédula holders who lost money in the crash demanded the British government impose the appointment of their own nominee as director of the Argentine customs in order to redress their losses. Others wanted the full force of British power to be deployed against Argentina. In Egypt a decade previously, a similar financial disaster under Khedive Ishmael Pasha prompted British military intervention under Sir Garnet Wolseley. The influential *Fortnightly Review* argued Argentina "needs to be treated like Egypt. Dr Celman, its late president, was its Ishmael Pasha. Who will be its Lord Wolseley?"[141] Following Pellegrini's agreement with Rothchild in late 1890, Prime Minister Lord Salisbury declined to take action. In his view, the British government bore no responsibility to protect private investors from losses arising from their own misjudgements: "England has declared most solemnly that if British subjects lend their money to a foreign government…they must not expect the British Nation to use its influence to protect their dealings."[142] He cited the Monroe Doctrine as another reason to oppose intervention, not because he feared hostile action by the United States but because it would damage Anglo-American investment and trade. Preserving economic ties with the United States far outweighed any incentive to rectify losses in Argentina.[143]

[139] *Standard* 4 Mar., 2 Oct. 1891.

[140] Examples appear in the *Review of the River Plate* 25 Feb. 1893. Bullying treatment of the British Compañía de Aparatos de Sanidad del Rio de la Plata in Rosario in October 1893 is recorded in FO 118/227. In one incident, British workmen were forced at gunpoint to clear out military latrines.

[141] *Fortnightly Review* quoted in *Standard* 26 Nov. 1890.

[142] *Standard* 14 Sept. 1891.

[143] Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 465, 488. Salisbury's position is noted in *Standard* 14 July 1891 and 21 Feb. 1893.

As an alternative to intervention, segments of the British press urged forming a pro-British dictatorship in Argentina. A centralised regime led by Roca would instil "direction, purpose, strength."[144] Such ideas contradicted the entire constitutional order of nineteenth-century Argentina based on federation. Leading nowhere, they also misjudged Roca, whose career marked him as a deal-maker not an aspiring despot. A perceptive contributor to the *St. Andrew's Gazette* published in Buenos Aires in 1894 recognised the lack of any basis for British intervention. If it were attempted, it would face unremitting hostility from both Argentines and European immigrants. The author argued the British had "increased their hold financially [during the Baring crisis but], morally they have lost ground; commercially they have scarcely held their own. It is idle to talk of annexation by a European power [because] the United States would never allow it."[145] This outlook prevailed. In the judgement of the *South American Journal*, intervention "would be equivalent to asking England to declare war against the United States."[146] Aggressive imperialist sentiment directed against Argentina thus remained contained. In Britain, the Baring crisis provided an extreme case of investor self-delusion, and in Argentina of reckless government and self-destructive financial manipulation.

[144] *Review of the River Plate* 4 Mar. 1893.
[145] *St. Andrew's Gazette* 28 Feb. 1894.
[146] *South American Journal* 25 Feb. 1899.

CHAPTER 6

Employees and Educators

In this immense, fertile and temperate country with hardly six people to a square mile, what limit can we set to the growth of wealth and population?
James Bryce

In 1897, British community leaders assembled in Buenos Aires to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. "Argentines without number will applaud the event," declared *La Nación*, the upper-class newspaper tied to Bartolomé Mitre. "The British community is associated with every initiative, enterprise and individual or collective effort that has furthered our economic and social development in the last fifty years."[1] The following year, Julio A. Roca won re-election as president (Fig. 6.1). At a banquet in his honour arranged by British businessmen in Buenos Aires, he lauded Britain as "the seat of liberty and common sense…peace and free trade."[2] Soon after his inaugural, he settled an irksome boundary dispute with Chile, a success that led the *St. Andrew's Gazette* to applaud him as a peacemaker who had assured everyone "a chance to make a living."[3]

[1] *La Nación* 22 June 1897.
[2] *Standard* 25 Aug. 1898.
[3] *St. Andrew's Gazette* 1 Jan. 1899. On the Chile issue, see George v. Rauch. *Conflict in the Southern Cone. The Argentine Military and the Boundary Dispute with Chile, 1870–1902.* Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1999.

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Fig. 6.1 Roca inspects his cavalry

As Roca left office six years later in 1904, ties between Britain and Argentina stood at their acme. The *Review of the River Plate* described Argentina's prospects as "really brilliant from every point of view. Peace, large harvests, good prices."[4] Dazzling statistics attested to the great tracts

[4] *Review of the River Plate* 30 Dec. 1904.

of land opened up to livestock and agriculture and the resultant expansion of agrarian production. Railways had again more than doubled in length. Several hundred thousand new European immigrants had settled, scores of new towns were founded and Buenos Aires basked in its reputation as "the Paris of South America."[5] The following year, the *Review* proclaimed "to-day we have close on 300 million sterling of British capital in the Plate and the British community here ranks as the richest and most influential of the foreign communities in South America."[6] Eminent statistician George Paish calculated that apart from the United States, Canada and Australia, British investors "have submitted the largest amount of capital to Argentina. In that fertile and progressive state, we have embarked no less than £269 million."[7] Some of Paish's contemporary critics argued for doubling his estimates, because he failed to count firms unlisted on the Stock Market and omitted large British holdings of Argentine government debt. Another estimate of British investment in 1912 totalled £244.1 million for the value of companies quoted on the Stock Market and a like amount for unquoted companies, making a grand total of nearly £500 million.[8] Whatever the true figure, Britain invested enormous sums in Argentina before World War I. As noted by Michael Edelstein, "Never before or since has one nation committed so much of its national income

[5] Photographs of early twentieth-century Argentina appear in Lloyd. *Argentina*, an encyclopaedic publication providing a testimony to British interest in the country of this period.

[6] *Review of the River Plate* 1 May, 1905.

[7] George Paish. "Great Britain's Capital Invested in Other Lands." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 72, No. 3, 1909, 464–495; and "Great Britain's Capital Investment in Individual Colonies and Other Countries." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 74, No. 2, 1911, 167–200 (Quotation is p. 181). In 1910, *The South American Journal* estimated investment in Argentina at £280,732,026 (quoted in Every, *Anglican Church*, 154). For other contemporary estimates, Townley to FO, 21 July 1906 FO 368/86; *Standard Supplement* 1 May, 1910; Alberto B. Martínez and Maurice Lewandowski. *The Argentine in the Twentieth Century*. London: T. Fisher and Unwin, 1911; Martínez. "Foreign Capital Investments in Argentina," *Review of the River Plate* 7 June, 1918.

[8] See "British Capital Investment in Argentina in 1912" quoted in Sir Reginald Tower. "Report for 1912." FO 371–1573. On the other side, downplaying the British presence, Platt argued in the 1980s to reduce Paish's figures because he failed to subtract funds from continental Europe and made inadequate allowance for the fluctuating values of capital invested. See D.C.M. Platt. *Britain's Investment Overseas on the eve of the First World War. The Use and Abuse of Numbers*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986. Discussions include Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, 119–125; Rippy, *British Investments*; Jones, *Who Invested?* 1–2; Irving Stone. *The Composition and Distribution of British Investment in Latin America*. 1865–1913. New York: Garland Pub. 1987.

and savings to funding capital formation abroad or derived so much of its income from foreign assets."[9]

In London, Roca's eminence outlived his second six-year term as president. Another banquet on his behalf in 1906 arranged by Lord Revelstoke, the head of Barings, attracted more than 250 senior business leaders. On this occasion, former Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne applauded the ex-president for keeping the peace and supporting British business (by measures including the deportation of trade union militants under the Residence Law of 1902). Lansdowne revived the comparisons between Argentina and the United States of the 1880s. Apart from Canada, the British held only two countries in the Americas in high esteem. Regard for the United States reflected ancestral ties and present-day trade; respect for Argentina stemmed from the country's pulsating energy and prodigious expansion.[10] Travel writer and diplomat James Bryce likewise dubbed Argentina "the United States of the Southern Hemisphere, [where] all is modern and new; all belongs to the prosperous present and betokens a still more prosperous future?"[11]

During Roca's second term as president, the Great Southern Railway prospered as never before. The company completed another trunk line west from Bahía Blanca into the La Pampa and Neuquén territories bordering Chile. In Britain, the company attracted a new generation of investors, making it by far the largest British concern throughout Latin America.[12] Abandoning its repair yards in Barracas, it established much larger premises further south at Remedios de Escalada, a locale commonly known as Talleres. The switch of a few miles from a location translatable as "Sheds" to another named no less drably "Workshops" prompted the terminal decline of the Scots community of Barracas and its Presbyterian Church.[13] Throughout the entire country in 1905, the company owned more than 1100 viaducts and bridges and 249 stations in addition to thousands of miles of track.[14] Smaller railways also expanded and by 1910 seventeen British railway companies in Argentina employing a total of

[9] Michael Edelstein. *Overseas Investment in the Age of High Imperialism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, 3.

[10] The banquet speeches are paraphrased in *Standard* 12 Aug. 1906.

[11] Bryce, *South America*, 315, 347.

[12] Wright, *British-owned Railways*, 83.

[13] On the demise of the Barracas Scottish Church in *Standard* 17 Feb. 1914.

[14] *South American Journal* 1 July, 1905.

120,000 men were listed on the London Stock Market.[15] Observing rail construction on the pampas, a contributor to *The Railway Magazine* witnessed hundreds of Italians and others at work with shovels and wheelbarrows in gangs of ten laying new track. They worked at piecework rates measured by the cubic yard of earth they shifted.[16] In Buenos Aires, the Anglo-Argentine Tramway Company employed almost 10,000 men, having mushroomed by buying out its rivals.[17] Fourteen British land companies valued at £12.1 million included massive properties in distant Rio Negro and Mendoza as well as in Patagonia. Five British banks headed by the now venerable London and River Plate Bank represented another large slice of capital investment. The River Plate Trust company, a perennial profit maker, opened branches in various cities while diversifying into electrical and mechanical engineering imports, property holding and accountancy.

During Roca's second term, British trade with Argentina finally surpassed that with Brazil.[18] On top of textiles, railway supplies and Welsh coal, imports from Britain included manufactured goods used in water and sewage plants and farm work: drains, pipes, sinks, traps, windmills, galvanised roofing, pumps and corrugated iron. A trade exhibition in Buenos Aires in 1905 showcased goods from the English Midlands ranging "from a needle to an automobile."[19] As the first automobiles appeared in Buenos Aires, British firms sold tyres, axles and springs.[20] British merchants and shopkeepers continued to congregate in the heart of Buenos Aires. In 1903, *Kelly's Directory* listed dozens of "Commission Merchants

[15] Tower, *Report for 1912*. The 1914 census counted 120,243 railway workers, of whom 35,357 were employed by the Central Argentine Railway.

[16] J.F. Ashby. "Railway Building in Argentina." *The Railway Magazine*, May 1911, 385–388; also June 1913. Roland C. Hume, owner of an engineering firm, described the construction of a line from Salta to Chile in the 1920s in which labour conditions likely resembled those in Buenos Aires in earlier years. In Huaytiquina, workmen were on "piecework in a free for-all and lawless community, and with no adequate living quarters to shield them from the extreme cold…As there was no police force in the region, the army kept order…Their orders were to keep the peace, but not necessarily the law." "Looking back at the laying of the Huaytiquina railway line." Mimeo. Biblioteca Max von Buch, Universidad de San Andrés, Buenos Aires.

[17] García Heras, *Tranvías*, 20–21.

[18] On trade see Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, 105–116, showing British exports (p. 111). Tables on 150, 156 compare British imports from Argentina and Brazil.

[19] *Standard* 19 Nov. 1905.

[20] *South American Journal* 7 Jan., 25 Feb., 1 July 1905.

and Agents" in the city. It classified fifty-seven firms as "Importers General" and thirty-nine as "Representatives of Foreign Houses" working on commission. It contained several hundred names all told including long-prominent family firms of mainly Scottish extraction like Agar, Cross and Co. and J. and J. Drysdale. Compared with the few dozens of the pre-1880 period, the several hundred British merchants now in Buenos Aires sold a far greater volume and range of goods: bicycles, boots and shoes, carriages, china, furniture, groceries, haberdashery items and paper; in 1903, twenty-nine British merchants in Buenos Aires imported Brazilian coffee.[21]

Top-quality chilled beef shipped to London became the great innovation. A dozen factories, the so-called frigoríficos, divided into rival British and US firms formed the core of the Argentine meat packing industry. They appeared following the introduction of meat freezing and chilling technology from Chicago and the invention of new kinds of refrigerated shipping. The industry also resulted from heavy investment in the cattle estancias of Buenos Aires enabling breeding of high quality Shorthorn cattle. Daniel Kingsland, a former inspector at the Deptford meat market in London, encouraged the development of specialist ranches close to the city in order to fatten the cattle before slaughter: the rise of the cattle fatteners, known as *invernadores*, marked another crucial phase in the industry's emergence.[22] The Sociedad Rural Argentina, the association of leading stock breeders founded in 1868, invited British experts to its annual show at Palermo Park to judge the livestock on display. According to Robert Bruce, author of *Fifty Years among Shorthorns* and a regular judge at the show, the pedigree stock on show "beggars description. They're simply magnificent."[23] Out in the camp, numerous Argentine ranchers employed British agricultural specialists. Anglican Bishop Edward

[21] The firms, with names and addresses in Buenos Aires, are listed in *Kelly's Directory of Merchants, Manufacturers and Shippers of the World, 1903*, which contains a comprehensive listing of businesses but no indication of their size. See http://www.argbrit.org/kelly/kelly1903C.htm. My thanks to John Titford for this citation. Changes in the organisation and the functions of salesmen are discussed in Roswell C. McCrea, Thurman W. Van Metre, George Jackson Eder. *International Competition in the Trade of Argentina*. Worcester, Mass., Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1931, 414–415.

[22] Carmen Sesto. *La vanguardia ganadera bonaerense (1865–1900)*, Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 2005, 281–340. Simon G. Hanson. *Argentine Meat and the British Market*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1938.

[23] Bruce quoted in *Standard* 6 Oct. 1917.

Every who met many of them, characterised them as "full of life and strength." He judged them men of English public school background, often graduates of Oxford and Cambridge universities with subsequent training in agricultural colleges.[24]

For several years, British engineers and workmen lived in Ingeniero White, the port area of Bahía Blanca, a city sometimes called "the Liverpool of Argentina" as it became a gateway into the wheat lands of the southern pampas. About 600 employees "mostly from northern [English] railway towns" according to Every, set up the local railways, tramways, electricity and water systems. Many arrived with wives and families, who lived in homes built or rented by British companies.[25] The Southern Railway led the development of Bahía Blanca. In 1905 alone, 138 new locomotives disembarked at its port. Imports included 56 passenger coaches, more than 2000 forty-ton railway wagons and 50 goods vans, in addition to large numbers of barges, elevators and steam tugs to service the port.[26]

British companies in Argentina included two major firms more typical of tropical regions in Africa and Asia. In the far north-west of Argentina, remote Jujuy became the site of Leach Hermanos (later Leach's Argentine Estates Ltd.), owners of the Ingenio La Esperanza sugar plantation. Rochdale-born Roger Leach, formerly an employee of a sugar importing firm in Liverpool, founded the company in the 1870s. His successors brought English brides to Jujuy along with managers, botanists and irrigation engineers, who spent their weekends in their exotic setting playing cricket and golf. Drawing its permanent work force from the local population, Leach's co-opted Mataco tribesmen from the Chaco as temporary workers in the sugar harvests. This practice gave the company a questionable reputation. It was accused of mistreating the Matacos and using unscrupulous labour contractors to procure them. Its critics included Anglican missionary Barbrooke Grubb, a witness of the destruction of the indigenous peoples of Tierra del Fuego. Blaming the company, he contended many Matacos on the plantations of Jujuy died of contagious disease led by measles.[27] Leach's also had ardent supporters. Particularly

[24] Edward Every. *Diocesan Magazine* 1907, 66.

[25] Edward Every in *The Anglican Church in South America. Issued under the Direction of the Bishop of the Falkland Islands*, Oct. 1907. See also Monacci, *Colectividad británica de Bahía Blanca*; and Lloyd, *Argentina*, 505–510.

[26] *South American Journal* 7 Oct. 1905.

[27] W. Barbrooke Grubb and H.T. Morrey Jones. *A Church in the Wilds. The Remarkable Story of the Establishment of South American Missions among the hitherto Savage and*

during later years, the company won approval in Jujuy for improving the health and living conditions of its permanent staff.[28]

Hundreds of miles east of Jujuy in northern Santa Fe and eastern Chaco, La Forestal Land, Timber and Railway Company was founded in 1906. It harvested quebracho colorado, a hardwood used for fencing, house construction and railway sleepers and to extract tannin for leather making. The company amassed a territory of 1.8 million hectares, half the size of Belgium. It stripped virgin forests bare, employing hundreds of Guaraní indigenous labourers, often former cultivators of yerba mate, as loggers. Quebracho meaning "Break-Axe" required intense physical effort to fell the trees and to load them onto ox-carts for transportation to railheads. A rail network 400 miles in length conveyed the logs to processing plants, and steamboats then took them south along the Rio Paraná to Buenos Aires. A settlement at Villa Guillermina, Santa Fe, where Guaraní-speaking European senior employees dressed formally for dinner, became the company's headquarters. Following World War I, wages fell and quebracho prices slumped leaving La Forestal facing severe unrest among its workforce. As occurred in "Rebel Patagonia" under analogous conditions, the army repressed dissent.[29]

* * *

As British firms proliferated, they enjoyed the goodwill and support of political leaders. Presidents of Argentina during the constitutional era from 1862 had contrasting backgrounds and clienteles, and sometimes literally

Intractable Natives of the Paraguayan Chaco. London: Seeley, Service, and Co. Ltd., 1914, 201. An outline of the company's history appears in *Review of River Plate* 12 Dec. 1924 (Supplement). In later years, the *South American Journal* published reports of its annual general meetings. Critical studies include Ian Rutledge. *Cambio agrario e integración: el desarrollo del capitalismo en Jujuy, 1550–1960*. Buenos Aires: Centro de Investigaciones en Ciencias Sociales, 1987.

[28] See Jobino Pedro Sierra y Iglesias, *Un tiempo que se fué. Vida y obra de los hermanos Leach en el Departamento San Pedro, Provincia de Jujuy (Argentina)*. San Pedro de Jujuy: Universidad Nacional de Jujuy, 1998. This local author expressed great regard for the company's treatment of permanent workers but expressed no sympathy for the Matacos, calling them "the most ignorant of the savages…expensive, lazy, drinkers" (pp. 54, 67).

[29] Information on the La Forestal strikes remains slim. See *Standard* 14 May 1920, recording thanks by the company's local board of directors for the army's help in putting down recent uprisings. In 1923, the press recorded the departure of manager Vernon Lindip, who "after the war had to raise a private army to deal with Bolshevikii (*sic*)." *Review of the River Plate* 16 Feb. 1923.

Fig. 6.2 Bartolomé Mitre

waged war on one another. Their shared vision of national development driven by foreign investment nevertheless inclined them all to become strongly pro-British. President in 1862–1868, Mitre became a model for his successors, partly for the way he utilised Norberto de la Riestra as a bridge between the government and British financiers and entrepreneurs. An eminent historian of the Argentine independence movement, Mitre's narratives included the British military incursions of 1806 and 1807. He wrote about them in moderate tone exalting the patriots without denigrating the invaders. His histories were often better received than some of his political activities, such as the rebellion he led in 1874. Mitre's writings were instilled into schoolchildren over several generations. Still a grand figure in the early 1900s living on into his eighties, he took pride in a remote British ancestor (Fig. 6.2). Throughout his near-sixty-year public career he described Britain as "the principal factor of progress whose influence has at all times been beneficial for the fortunes of the Republic."[30]

[30] *Standard* 3 Aug. 1905.

Sarmiento, the second president of the constitutional era in 1868–1874, a person of indomitable energy famous for his prolific writings, viewed Britain through the romantic prism created by Sir Walter Scott. He too sought British funds and Western European migrants and like Mitre deployed military force against gaucho rebels with little compunction. As his successor in 1874–1880, Avellaneda serviced the foreign debt punctiliously while bowing in deference to the country's foremost financial benefactor. In a speech in 1875, he glamorised the disciplined coordination and physical power he witnessed at the annual regatta of the Buenos Aires Rowing Club, calling them unique British virtues. "The entire world owes them a debt for their daring explorations by land and sea to open empty lands. They could not attempt such enterprises had physical training from an early age not accustomed their bodies to fatigue…I can now understand how in India [during the 1857 Mutiny] twenty thousand servants and employees could confront two hundred thousand Sepoys to protect British rule over a country of fifty million people until military reinforcements arrived."[31]

Pellegrini, who served out the deposed Juárez Celman's term in 1890–1892, stood out as one of the most intriguing figures of the era. As president during the Baring crisis, he too struggled to avoid default on the foreign debt but remained far too independent-minded to be dismissed as a British lackey. In late 1890, for example, he accused British banks in Buenos Aires of hoarding and speculating in gold and attempted to tax them.[32] Suspected as a supporter of protectionism, he faced criticism as a secret opponent of British trade.[33] The charge was unwarranted. Lifelong, Pellegrini viewed Britain as a source of inspiration and a model for emulation. Education at Harrow School inculcated some of the traits of the British upper class. Late in life he pondered establishing English-style public schools in Buenos Aires.[34] He admired the way the British played sport,

[31] *Standard* 1 Nov. 1875. A Spanish version of the speech extolling the British is reprinted in *Standard. Eightieth Birthday Number*, 1940.

[32] Ferns, *Britain and Argentina*, 456, 462.

[33] Lengthy discussion of Pellegrini appears in FO 6/464. See also Ezequiel Gallo, Jr. *Carlos Pellegrini. Orden y reforma*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1997. The political context of protectionism is explored by Donna J. Guy. *Argentine Sugar Politics: Tucumán and the Generation of '80*. Tempe, Ariz.: Centre of Latin American Studies, Arizona State University, 1980.

[34] He wanted a private school imparting "intellectual and moral education [to create] worthy citizens of a liberal and cultured democracy." *Standard* 11 Sept. 1906.

Fig. 6.3 Carlos Pellegrini

which had made Britain "into a manly nation that everywhere provides proof of its extraordinary strength."[35] He venerated the early British ranchers of Buenos Aires during the Rosas period—men like the Gibsons, Newton or Miller. Shortly before his death in 1906 he made a passionate appeal for democracy, arguing his countrymen should emulate the "Anglo-Saxons," the only people in the modern world who had made democracy workable (Fig. 6.3).[36]

Whether as president or the power behind the throne, his position for most of the 1890s, Roca too supported the British. The backstage power he wielded found illustration in late 1893. That year Jabez Spencer Balfour, a former British Member of Parliament, fled to Argentina following the collapse of his corrupt business empire. He found refuge in distant Salta province where he remained for more than a year with an English mistress under local protection. Attempts to return him to Britain by the British government failed because President Luis Sáenz Peña commanded too little authority in Salta. In early 1895, the position changed as Sáenz Peña resigned and Vice President José Evaristo Uriiburu, one of Roca's

[35] Quoted in *Standard* 20 Nov. 1897.

[36] The speech is reproduced in English translation in *Standard* 29 Nov. 1906.

supporters, took over. A mere nod from Roca to the governor of Salta ended Balfour's sojourn, who found himself handcuffed to the British consul on board a train for Buenos Aires to be returned to Britain to face trial and conviction.[37]

Following Roca's second presidency ending in 1904, his immediate successors, mostly very old men, followed his example. Manuel Quintana, president in 1904–1906, for example, had a past career as a lawyer for the railway companies. British minister Sir Walter Townley viewed Roque Sáenz Peña, president in 1910–1914, as "somewhat old and past his prime, but he is an honest man and a devoted supporter of British interests."[38] In the parade of presidents until 1916, only Juárez Celman—who ironically relied on British investors more than anyone else—betrayed flashes of contrariness. They included allowing Norberto Quirno Costa, his vice president, to raise the issue of the Falkland Islands with Lord Salisbury, the first such incident at this level for several decades.

Outside the top political inner circle, senior lawyers closely connected with government and Congress constituted a second layer of support for British companies. As salaried employees of the railways, the "local directors" were considered essential to business in Argentina, although not everyone respected them. Some regarded them as conduits of corruption, principals in the "insidious partnerships of imperial, financial, and commercial interests that go into the making of 'informal' empire."[39] Sir Reginald Tower, legation minister in Buenos Aires in 1910–1919, argued critics of the local directors disregarded "the factor of personal relations which counts for little in the City of London but is all-powerful in Buenos Aires." He acknowledged the "large number of people of all classes whose occupation it is to intervene on behalf of others and whose profession it is to maintain a wide circle of connections. Remuneration for these services is not from the Argentine point of view corruption."[40] Riestra, with his ties to Mitre on one side and to Barings on the other, became the prototype

[37] For a fuller account, see David Rock. "Victorian Globalization in Microcosm: The Rise and Fall of Jabez Spencer Balfour." In Fernando López-Alves and Diane E. Johnson eds. *Globalization and Uncertainty in Latin America*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 27–46. On the British background to the case, David McKie. *Jabez. The Rise and Fall of a Victorian Rogue*. London: Atlantic Books, 2004.

[38] Townley to FO 31 Dec. 1909 FO 371/824.

[39] R.E. Robinson in Clarence R. Davies and Kenneth E. Wilburn, Jr., with Ronald E. Robinson. *Railway Imperialism*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1991, 4.

[40] Tower to FO, 17 Feb. 1918.

of such figures. Others included Santiago O'Farrell, an Irish-Porteño conservative political leader in Buenos Aires, who became a local director of various railway companies. Manuel Montes de Oca, a long-time chairman of the local board of the Buenos Aires Pacific Railway, became a figure of comparable importance. Ezequiel Ramos Mejía of part Scots descent, minister of public works in 1910–1913 under Roque Sáenz Peña, played a similar role, remaining a stout supporter of the British railway interest into the early 1930s. When invited to address the St. Andrew's Society of Buenos Aires, he responded that "nothing could be more agreeable than to sit under the fecund shade of the British flag."[41] With the backing of high society and the press, the British had little incentive to be concerned about their standing with the rest of the population. In retrospect, they would have been well advised to win the goodwill of broader constituencies. Leading British companies employed thousands of Argentines, European immigrants and their descendants, groups of growing political weight and influence who had no say at all in company affairs. Too late, decades later, the companies realised their shallow roots in local society left them vulnerable to nationalist opposition as the power of their upper-class local allies ebbed away.

For now, as the flow of British investment attained maximum force, ties between the two countries could scarcely have been closer. In August 1906, legation minister William Haggard informed the Foreign Office that the centenary of the first British invasion had passed almost unnoticed in Buenos Aires. "Over and over again enlightened Argentines have said to me that the greatest misfortunes in the history of the country were the defeats of Beresford and Whitelocke."[42] The only distant cloud on the horizon appeared in a campaign in Britain for tariff reform and imperial preference led by Joseph Chamberlain. If the British shut themselves away within the Empire as Chamberlain urged, Argentina could lose its markets and foreign capital. The Argentines had an ally in Sir Charles Dilke, one of Chamberlain's confidants, who stressed the importance of British business in Argentina. If the protectionist campaign gained supremacy in Britain, he wanted Argentina to receive special treatment. He emphasised its friendly government, citing an incident in 1899 when Roca donated 800 horses to

[41] *Standard* 2 Dec. 1902.

[42] Haggard to FO 13 Aug. 1906. FO 371/4. Haggard himself claimed that had British rule prevailed from 1806, a century later Argentina would have become a country of 40 to 50 million people replete with British migrants and their descendants.

the British army in South Africa.[43] The scope and wealth of the British community became another compelling reason to treat Argentina as a special case. "In that republic there were more British residents of a class likely to educate their children in the old country and spend their gains in the United Kingdom than in the Indian Empire." For Dilke, in that respect Argentina was worth more to Britain than India. He proposed inviting the republic to become an honorary member of the British Empire, enjoying the same rights to trade with Britain as the colonies and dominions.[44]

During this period, the standing of the British drew upon subjective, ethereal qualities. While eschewing formal imperial ties with Argentina, they sought to invest themselves in a mystique of superiority and preeminence. High society fêtes at the legation, for example, brought a taste of the glitter and monarchic pomp in Britain under Edward VII.[45] In a paean to the king, author and politician Joaquín V. González, one of Roca's associates, extolled him in absurdly grandiloquent prose. On succeeding to the throne in 1901, he had renounced the sybaritic excesses for which he was notorious. Henceforward, "his language echoed with the grandeur of hundreds of his ancestors, [who embodied] the vastest government ever known to man, at the side of which the Roman Empire was merely a poor province."[46]

The *Standard* cited examples of the way the British used sports to cultivate emulation, a quality close to deference. In the mid-1890s, the newspaper commended British residents for making Buenos Aires "thoroughly sportive," a reference to the way English and Scottish games played mostly in private clubs were seeping into the wider community.[47] Citing Rudyard Kipling, a journalist proclaimed that in Britain competitive sport had produced "a virile people" and in the British Empire "the willing obedience of subject peoples in all parts of the world."[48] When played in public, sports were apt to leave their impact on local onlookers. In Bahía Blanca, memories of the weekend activities of British railway engineers—even cricket with its obscure rituals and sometimes languorous pace—left pleasant memories.[49] In 1907, the *Standard* observed that in Bahía Blanca local

[43] On this transaction, see *La Vanguardia* 11 July 1899.

[44] Quoted in *Standard* 6 Nov. 1904.

[45] The most extravagant of these legation events is reported in *Standard* 10 Nov. 1904.

[46] Reproduced in *Standard* 12 Mar. 1910.

[47] *Standard* 12 Nov. 1896.

[48] *Standard* 12 July 1902.

[49] As described in Monacci, *Colectividad británica*; also Laura Llal. *Historia de la Asociación Bahiense de Cultura Inglesa, 1942–1992*, Bahía Blanca, 1993.

peons copied the British style of riding on horseback with knees high in the stirrups.[50]

First attached to rowing in the 1870s, the use of sports as subliminal nationalist propaganda switched to football. By 1900 the game had been played in Argentina for several decades. In the 1860s, the *Standard* reported matches such as "Lancashire versus the World," (an indicator of the importance of the textile trade), and "Liberals versus Conservatives" (illustrating the varied outlook of the British community at that time).[51] Eduardo A. Olivera, who as a boy in the 1870s played football at his English private school, credited Joseph A. Gybban Spilsbury, an Anglican clergyman and founder of a school in Flores, as its local initiator.[52] The game long remained a purely British pastime. In 1913, a retired railway man recalled how "the boys in the street used to laugh at us for walking from our houses to the football field in our jerseys and knickers, and how they shouted out 'Gringo Inglés' when we used to ride in our stirrups when trotting."[53]

The explosive popularity of football in Buenos Aires from the late 1890s resulted from the presence of thousands of young male immigrants and the spread of the Sábado Inglés, the "English Saturday" granting working people a free half-day at the weekend. Around this time, James H. Fitzsimon, an Irish-Porteño Inspector-General of Secondary Schools, brought football into the national schools, an innovation ratified in 1900 by Osvaldo Magnasco, Roca's minister of education. In the early 1890s, British residents set up the first football league, although they soon lost control of it. In 1902, non-English-speaking members pressed the association to conduct half its proceedings in Spanish. Only three years later the English segment vanished as the entity metamorphosed into the Asociación Argentina de Fútbol.

Football revived as a form of national self-promotion as British community leaders attempted to re-introduce it in a superior, more prestigious form. In 1904, Francis Hepburn Chevallier Boutell, general manager of the River Plate Trust, organised a tour by Southampton Football Club to play exhibition games against teams of British railwaymen.[54] Advertising

[50] *Standard* 23 Feb. 1907. *Central Argentine Magazine*, 1913.

[51] The latter match is reported in *Standard* 5 Dec. 1869.

[52] Eduardo A. Olivera. *Orígenes de los deportes británicos en la República Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Rosso, 1932, 31–35.

[53] *Central Argentine Magazine*, 1913.

[54] Southampton Football Club went to Buenos Aires in 1904, followed by Nottingham Forest in 1905; Everton played Tottenham Hotspur in an exhibition match in 1909.

the matches in upper-class Spanish language newspapers like *La Nación*, as well as in the local Anglophone press, he aimed to attract members of high society to matches trying to highlight the superior cachet of the game when played by Englishmen. Press interviews with leading players presented them as glamorous superior beings like modern football stars.

Chevallier Boutell represented a new type of British ethnic leader tied to a company and to Freemasonry rather than to a church. His chief aims included strengthening ties between the British community and the Argentine upper class. In 1905, he persuaded Miguel Alfredo Martínez de Hoz, an immensely wealthy landowner and noted Anglophile, to sponsor a second football tour by an English team. Martínez de Hoz's family owned Chapadmalal, a great estancia located near the developing coastal resort city of Mar del Plata. Emulating the British nobility, he employed an English horse trainer on his estate, "a North Country man, who has under his orders quite a large number of Englishmen. Indeed the visitor might easily imagine himself in England [at Chapadmalal], as from master to man, nothing but English is spoken: the hours of labour, the cooking, even the baking of bread, are all in the English style."[55] Martínez de Hoz spent the English horse racing season at his London home at Eaton Square, Belgravia, one of the wealthiest corners of Europe. Like Carlos Pellegrini, his close British connections reflected his upbringing. In 1885 at the age of only 8, he sailed to England without his parents to attend a Catholic public school. Two of his sons followed him, except that they went to Eton College.[56] Martínez de Hoz financed the second football tour. Other English teams toured Argentina during later years, although Chevallier Boutell never succeeded in forming a high-class English-only league.

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[55] Lloyd, *Argentina*, 458.

[56] Interview with Martínez de Hoz in *Standard* 29 May 1910. The family also kept on good terms with Germany and therefore fell under suspicion in 1914. One of Martínez de Hoz's sisters married Baron Hilmar von dem Busshe-Haddenhausen, a former German minister in Buenos Aires. (See Tower to FO 10 Feb. 1919 FO 371/3503; *South American Journal* 9 Dec. 1938 reporting the baron's death). British authorities placed another relative, Florencio Martínez de Hoz, on the Statutory List during World War I. See Philip Dehne. *On the Far Western Front. Britain's First World War in South America*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2009, 169.

As trade and investment with Argentina soared, the British-born population remained almost stagnant. Census returns revealed numbers doubled between 1869 and 1895 to 21,708, but rose by only 6000 or so during the next twenty years to 27,692 in 1914. Stasis partly reflected high rates of return among migrants, including numerous former company employees returning home in retirement with their savings. In 1856–1946, Argentine government figures listed 75,900 British and Irish entering the country and 54,000 departing, leaving net migration at less than 22,000.[57] The late nineteenth century provided several indicators of the transience of British residents. As reported by the 1895 census, home ownership among the British remained very low at 12.3 per cent, far less than other European groups.[58] Many British people remained in Argentina merely in pursuit of money. "The main object of most of us in coming to this country was simply to make money," announced an anonymous Scot boorishly in 1899. "The reason for our remaining is that we occupy a better position financially, and very often socially, than we should occupy at home."[59] The standard toast at community functions back to the Rivadavia era underlined the situation of many British residents as sojourners. Revellers ended their festivities tipping their glasses three times over, to the British monarch, to the President of the Republic and to "The Land We Live In."

Labour markets and employment practices further circumscribed the inflow of British migrants. In the early 1870s, Constantine Phipps stressed the deterrent effects of wage differentials and contrasting life styles between British and Continental European workmen. British working men arriving "on chance," as hunting for work became known, had to compete with numerous other ethnic groups in a common labour pool at a very low standard of living. British companies sought hardy and well trained engineers, typically Scots of "grit and perseverance," who met their specialised needs. They required experienced engine drivers, tough foremen and floor managers to handle unruly young men of Mediterranean origin working in track-laying and repair shops. They recruited other professionals such as accountants, draftsmen, architects, surveyors and even

[57] Presidencia de la Nación. *Cuarto censo general de la Nación*. Vol. 1: *Censo de población*. Buenos Aires: Dirección Nacional del Servicio Estadístico, 1947, lvii. Demographers do not consider the figures reliable. They are included only for illustrative purposes.

[58] República Argentina. *Segundo Censo de la República Argentina, Mayo 10 de 1895*. Vol. II: *Población*. Buenos Aires: Taller Tipográfico de la Penetenciaría Nacional, 1898, 114.

[59] *St Andrew's Gazette* 1899.

solicitors. Yet they wanted such men in limited numbers. They selected them carefully, rejecting everyone else.

Most imported employees were English-born men of middle-class background. Frank Parish, the long serving chairman of the Southern Railway, purchased *Herapath's Railway Journal*, a specialist periodical, to advertise for personnel, men he interviewed personally.[60] He selected those showing ambition for self-improvement like Thomas Gregory, a man born in Sheffield in 1863, who rose to become a traffic superintendent in Buenos Aires. Gregory worked in England until the age of 21. "Feeling that progress on the Midland Railway would be slow," he resigned to accept a three-year engagement with the Great Southern.[61] Arthur Coleman, a South Wales man born in 1866, likewise worked in Britain in his youth until after taking examinations in London he won a contract from Parish in 1887. Having served for a period at the company terminal at Plaza Constitución in Buenos Aires, he went to Bahía Blanca as general manager where he remained for the remainder of his career. In this prestigious position, he acquired an enormous mansion where in 1925 he entertained Edward, Prince of Wales. Coleman struck up an acquaintance with Agustín P. Justo, an army lieutenant at the time, who in 1932 became president of Argentina. He became a prominent opponent of trade unions. From 1905, he served in Bahía Blanca as a leader of the Union for the Protection of Free Labour, a strike breaking organisation of particular ill-repute during the World War I period.[62]

The railway companies recruited untrained adolescents known as English Learners appointed largely on the strength of their education at English public schools. Samuel Abbott, a Resident Engineer on the Great Southern in the 1880s, was considered "head and shoulders taller than any other man in the River Plate" owing to his professional expertise but also because he "came to us from one of the best schools in England." His sudden death from typhoid in 1889 prompted the company to bestow £5000 on his widow, while urging other senior employees to take out life insurance policies rather than count on similar treatment.[63] At a lecture in England in 1914, Chevallier Boutell, a master of the nuances of the English class system, sought to attract men into service by calling those

[60] Parish's techniques are detailed in Damus, *Railways.*

[61] *Review of River Plate* 2 Sept. 1920.

[62] Arturo H. Coleman. *Mi vida de ferroviario inglés en la Argentuna, 1887–1948.* Bahía Blanca, 1949, 97, 415 (on Justo). An outline of Coleman's career also appears in Damus, *Railways*, 80–83.

[63] *Railway Times* 12 Oct. 1889.

who went to Argentina as "the superior article."[64] He and his fellow directors at the River Plate Trust were convinced that adolescents of social pedigree could be honed into loyal and accomplished company servants. Attracting them to Argentina enhanced the company's kudos in Britain against competitors for managerial staff in the British Empire.

Recruitment from British public schools helped resolve the chronic issue of employing the younger sons of wealthy families cut off from family fortunes under the law of primogeniture. Previously, they were the types mocked and caricatured by W.H. Hudson, resented by hard working sheep farmers like Richard Seymour, and scoffed at tongue in cheek by James Dodds.[65] Around 1870, men of such backgrounds started to appear among the employees of British companies in Argentina.[66] Not everyone regarded them very highly. One objector argued that "education in public schools is perfectly useless for the conduct of business." He complained that men of this type were looking for sinecures and opportunities for non-stop sports rather than challenging, strenuous lives in faraway places.[67] Sources occasionally pointed to quasi-racist attitudes among men of this type towards the Argentines. Former railway man Arthur Shaw, author of *Forty Years in the Argentine Republic*, recalled an Irish engineer he knew, John Coghlan by name, who became prominent in the early development of the railways. Shaw held Coghlan in high esteem for being "most diplomatic in his treatment of the natives…at a time some of our countrymen did not behave with particular politeness to [them]."[68]

In-house company literature provided more detailed insights into the lives of such men. One named Baines, who scaled the career ladder to become Chief Cashier on the Central Argentine Railway, arrived in Buenos Aires in 1881 from Dulwich College in south London. He won respect as a sportsman because "he can ride hard and shoot straight as every Briton ought to do." Another man named Lucas appointed in the 1870s came from Bedford School, an institution with strong connections with service in British colonies as well as with Buenos Aires.[69] Men of lower standing,

[64] *Standard* 10 Mar. 1914.

[65] Dodds, *Scottish Settlers*, 292.

[66] Based on "Planilla de Sueldos" in FCO. *Personal Permanente de Dirección, July 1890-Oct. 1909*, in Museo Ferroviario, Buenos Aires.

[67] *Standard* 26 Nov. 1901.

[68] Quoted in Damus, *Railways*, 80.

[69] "Which is the best public school in England?" asked a correspondent with the *Standard*. Responses included Bedford Grammar School, and there were "quite a number of Bedford boys in Buenos Aires." *Standard* 9 Jan. 1907.

often from northern England or Scotland, were educated in schools of lesser status with a stronger vocational emphasis. Edward Woods, "an ardent and energetic Freemason," who became Chief Draughtsman on the Great Southern, was educated at a Mechanics Institute (in Manchester or Liverpool), while another, Wells, had five years of experience on the Midland Railway in England before joining the Central Argentine in 1902.[70] During World War I, J.P. Crouch, a Lancashire man from the railway town of Horwich who became Chief Engineer in Rosario, won great respect for his handling of labour militants in the repair yards. His inferior social status found implicit reflection in his inadequacies as a cricketer: "Stupendous scores he never made/ He perished ever with despatch/No bowling genius he displayed/But once, in a forgotten match/ He made a catch."[71]

In remote parts of the country, some British railway employees acquired high standing. In Tucumán, local people nominated a Welshman named Hughes, a traffic superintendent, as a candidate in municipal elections (an offer he declined). H.H. Pelly, a railway bridge and station builder in Córdoba, won respect for his knowledge of wheat farming.[72] Freemasonry commonly appeared in discussions of the men's social ties. Advertisements for positions in British firms featured Masonic symbols, to suggest Freemasons alone need apply.[73] The strong influence of Freemasonry in Buenos Aires found another striking illustration in May 1910 when Chevallier Boutell conducted a Masonic funeral service to honour the late Edward VII.[74]

Glimpsed shortly before World War I, some of these men were veterans who had worked under contract in Argentina for twenty or thirty years and experienced the collapse in salaries during the Baring crisis. Their successors appointed in the later 1890s fared better. In 1899, the gold premium disappeared for fifteen years following creation of a Currency Conversion Board and the successful enforcement of fixed exchange rates. Engineers and managers contracted around 1900, who worked in

[70] *Central Argentine Railway Magazine*, 1913. See Sylvester Damus. *Materials for the History of the Argentine Railways*. http://www.diaagency/railways. The persons mentioned in the text, Baines, Lucas and Woods, appear in Damus's listings.

[71] *Central Argentine Company Magazine*, 1914.

[72] *Central Argentine Company Magazine* June and December 1919, (commemorating Hughes's death from malaria).

[73] As, for example, in *Review of the River Plate* 24 Dec. 1920.

[74] *Standard* 21 May 1910.

Argentina for twenty years (including during the war), typically started out with monthly salaries of 600 pesos and retired on 1000–2000 pesos. The higher figure converted to an annual income of around £3000, ten to twenty times greater than the earnings of a typical working man in Buenos Aires.[75] Employees often lived in Buenos Aires rent free, with servants and clubs at hand, and on retirement usually returned to Britain. According to the *Standard*, numerous former senior managers from companies in Argentina congregated in affluent Wimbledon in south-west London.[76]

Companies encouraged young British employees to marry in Argentina, to increase the likelihood they would remain in service throughout their working lives. "We are very pleased to see our young colleagues sowing their wild oats," declared the *Central Argentine Railway Magazine*.[77] The author assumed spouses would be ethnic Britons, quite correctly in most cases, although Arthur Coleman in Bahía Blanca married a non-Anglo woman with no damage to his career. "Mixed" marriages resulted in integration, a transition visible in Coleman's case, who became "Arturo," remained in Bahía Blanca after his retirement and published his autobiography in Spanish. In 1908, Consul George Mallet of Rosario too married "a lady of colour." Colleagues in Buenos Aires voiced no objections except to observe he would find it very difficult to achieve promotion in the consular service.[78]

Employment registers from the Western Railway, the company that became British in 1890, listed a few men with Anglophone names working in lower ranks as drivers and firemen. They included one named McCarthy, a fireman in Rosario, who was singled out because he joined the national railway strike of 1912. Between 1908 and 1920, McCarthy's monthly pay rose from 225 to 320 pesos, a modest amount in light of wartime inflation.[79] Lower ranking employees faced strict discipline and retribution for errors or misconduct. The registers of the Western Railway contained a few Anglophone names on a

[75] Consul Spencer Dickson, *Report on Rosario*, (1914) FO 118/342. Annual salaries were reported at between £1000 and £3000. Adoption of a railway pension law applying to all employees in 1915 proved detrimental to the privileged British employees and possibly affected recruitment. Old company pensions were assimilated into the state administered system from 1915 and transferred to full government control on railway nationalisation in 1948.

[76] *Standard* 21 Feb. 1910.

[77] *Central Argentine Railway Magazine* 1913 (May).

[78] Consul to FO 26 Feb. 1908. FO 369/120.

[79] *Archivo del Ferrocarril Oeste*.

blacklist of drivers and firemen sacked for ostensibly minor infractions like filling out forms incorrectly and excessive use of coal.[80] On occasion, an authoritarian backstairs company culture came to light. During a strike on the Central Argentine Railway in 1904, for example, a senior manager ordered junior clerks to report the conversations and viewpoints of fellow employees.[81]

* * *

In 1914, the population of Buenos Aires city ascended to 1.5 million, placing it among the three largest cities of the Americas alongside New York and Chicago. Urban expansion strengthened trends long visible in the British community while introducing several novelties. The community grew more divided on class lines and physically dispersed; meanwhile, members grew more isolated from other ethnic groups, despite living in close proximity to them. Lower level company employees continued to settle in the southern suburbs, while the well-heeled senior staff congregated in Belgrano, now a district of "lordly mansions and Gothic villas."[82] Cricket clubs around the city indicated the distribution of British residents. By 1905 there were three clubs in the south and two in the north. In the west, the oldest club in the country survived in Flores, a district now largely abandoned by the British, and an impressive new one appeared at the Hurlingham Club.[83] First accessible only by horseback, the Hurlingham Club founded in 1888 evolved into an exclusive, luxurious resort for golf, polo and cricket, which excluded all outsiders by an unwritten rule of English Only.[84] Outside the club precincts, faux English houses with gabled windows, trim hedges and verdant lawns appeared. Weekend sports and weekday bridge parties fostered an atmosphere "as English as you would wish to find."[85]

[80] For data on salaries and company disciplinary practices, see FCO. *Personal Permanente de Dirección*; FCO. *Registro Maquinistas y Foguistas*; FCO *Fojas de Servicio. Personal de Vías y Obras*.

[81] *Standard* 9 Mar. 1904.

[82] *Central Argentine Magazine*, May 1914.

[83] For British sport, alongside a discussion of Freemasonry, see *Review of the River Plate* 28 Feb. 1919; also, 31 Dec. 1920, 30 Sept. 1921; 18 Dec. 1923. Another outline appears in *Review of the River Plate* 21 May 1965.

[84] See http://www.hurlinghamclub.org.ar/historia.php. A history appears in *British Community Council Bulletin* April 1964.

[85] *Standard* 6 Oct. 1914.

Club life, together with the British Hospital and the British schools, provided occasional glimpses of the British female population in Buenos Aires. Women became less visible for a time from the 1870s as they withdrew from working as servants, ironers, seamstresses or laundrywomen, appearing to retreat into closeted married life. Before 1900, the ethnic female population predominantly consisted of Anglo-Porteñas of predominantly Celtic and northern English origin. Since censuses classified everyone born in Argentina as Argentine citizens, the Anglo-Porteñas remained hard to quantify. The 1895 census revealed a ratio of British-born men to British-born women of 3:1, with the latter totalling around 7000. Female migrants then increased, reducing the gender ratio to about 5:3 by 1914. In 1895–1914 women gained over men in the small net increase of the British population. The 1914 census reported women outnumbering men in a few districts.[86]

Female migrants were of various types. Shortly before World War I, nurses arrived in Buenos Aires on three-year contracts to work at the British Hospital. They started out earning a pittance of 40 pesos a month, less than half the wage of many male day labourers. The hospital matron reported such women stopped work as soon as their contracts expired and promptly married.[87] In 1906, the British legation announced openings for "cooks, housemaids, nurses or nursery governesses" at rates of pay supposedly double those in Britain. Not mentioning Spanish, it advised anyone who applied that "some knowledge of French is very useful" for the instruction of children in the genteel households in which they would be placed.[88] Single women who migrated to Buenos Aires used a newly founded branch of the Young Women's Christian Association as a temporary abode while they looked for employment. Educated and middle class, they mostly sought positions either as clerks or as governesses, or sometimes as wives. A notice in the *Standard* in 1906 announced, "Two young ladies of independent means wish to communicate with Anglo Porteños with a view to matrimony."[89] The white slave traffic to Buenos Aires of this period ensnared a few British women, mainly from Whitechapel, then the main Jewish quarter of London. In the early 1890s, the Foreign Office recorded several such cases.[90] In 1920, the Jewish Association for the

[86] The 1914 national census shows a small preponderance of women in two of the twenty parishes of the capital. In Lomas de Zamora, the numbers were 521 men and 382 women. See Tercer Censo. Vol. 2: *Población*, 130–150.

[87] *Standard* 3 Feb. 1914.

[88] Harford to FO 13 Feb. 1906 FO 368/2.

[89] *Standard* 18 Jan. 1906.

[90] FO 6/425 and 427 (1892).

Protection of Girls and Women reported having set up a branch in Buenos Aires twenty years earlier, claiming it had stamped out the traffic.[91] Likely its claims went too far. On the eve of World War II, the *Standard* published the obituary of Rosalie Robinson, an Australian-born woman long resident in Buenos Aires and well-known for boarding incoming ships in pursuit of victims of the traffic.[92] Reports by single women about life in Argentina were replete with complaints about broken agreements and unreliable short-term employment. Clerical work too paid women only half the already meagre wages of men.[93] None of the major British companies employed women as stenographers or telegraphists until after World War I.[94]

Women provided some amusing vignettes of the period. "Be careful where you go" warned one woman in 1910. A prospective governess, she expected to live in grand style on an estancia like Chapadmalal. Instead, she was enticed far out into the camp to "a miserable rancho surrounded by ducks, turkeys, and fowls," a quite intolerable place for many reasons including the lack of vegetables.[95] The memoirs of Victoria Ocampo, the eminent twentieth-century author, recalled her English governess, "Miss Ellis," who appeared every day in "an immaculate blouse smelling of lavender." She rewarded the children with "butterscotch and crackers and at Christmas made them a plum-pudding to give them added strength to assimilate the dates of Hastings, Bannockburn and Trafalgar. The whole of English history with its kings and battles tasted of butterscotch and plum pudding." Ocampo credited her writing career to her governess. "One day I was feeling so injured about some punishment inflicted upon me that I wrote an article in English against the British Empire."[96]

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[91] Cohen to Macleay 2 Jan. 1920. DO 118/531. The traffic then resumed, with British women among its victims. See *Standard* 14 Apr. 1927.

[92] *Standard* 1 Sept. 1939.

[93] *Standard* 15 Feb. 1906.

[94] Data from FCO (Ferrocarril del Oeste). *Fojas de Servicio. Personal de Vías y Obras*, Museo Ferroviario. The Register of British Subjects vol. 7, 13 May 1913 to 24 Dec. 1919 shows a few female professions led by governess and telegraphists. The category of "Artist" appeared in the 1920s.

[95] *Standard* 5 May, 1910.

[96] Quoted in Bea Howe. *A Galaxy of Governesses*. London: D. Vershoyle, 1954, 156. Ocampo told this story at her appearance at the British women's club in Buenos Aires founded during World War II. See The Twentieth Century Club. *Album*, no. 1, 6 Oct. 1944. (The collection is held at the Biblioteca Max von Buch, Universidad de San Andrés, Buenos Aires). The life of an English governess in rural Argentina in later times is depicted in the 1986 film *Miss Mary*.

In 1893 community leaders led the construction of Prince George's Hall, "a sumptuous building in classical style" in the city centre to serve as a community meeting place.[97] Roca inaugurated the edifice with a speech remembered for his gaffe: "*Nosotros, que debemos tanto a los ingleses*," ("We, who owe so much to the British"), he began.[98] Another consortium purchased land for a new cemetery in the Chacarita district, separated in aloof British fashion from the metropolitan cemetery. Until 1914, British members shared the site with other Protestants including Germans, but from that point dark coloured hedging left the German section invisible. From the turn of the century, the British community became a target of increasing criticism for the pretentious caste-like qualities its members now assumed. Thomas Turner, a dyspeptic businessman ruined by the Baring crisis, perceived a society of "gossiping unlovable people, who go to church to hatch scandal, and slander everybody from the pastor to the consul."[99] Hiram Bingham, the American anthropologist who revealed the site of the Peruvian Inca citadel at Machu Picchu, objected to the sense of proprietorship of British residents. "They talk familiarly of 'BA' and the 'River Plate,' disdaining to use the Spanish words…To hear them you might suppose they were speaking about something they owned, and you would not be very far from the truth."[100] The community grew notably more conservative. In a poll of British party political allegiances of 3400 male community members in 1910, 2625 declared themselves Conservative Unionists against only 586 Liberals.[101] Considering themselves de facto colonial administrators, legation personnel in Argentina sometimes requested salaries at the higher rate paid by the Colonial Office. As

[97] The building was named after Prince George, son of the then Prince of Wales and later King George V, who visited Argentina with his elder brother in 1881. It was constructed by a joint stock company that issued 7 per cent debentures (like the hospital in the previous decade). See *Standard* 6 July, 1893 and 3 Dec. 1895. It was destroyed by fire in the early 1950s.

[98] *Review of the River Plate* 21 Dec. 1895, 59.

[99] Thomas Turner. *Argentina and the Argentines: Notes and Impressions of a Five-Year Sojourn in the Argentine Republic, 1885–1890.* London: Swan, Sonneschein and Co., 1892.

[100] Quoted in Donald Boyd Easum. "The British-Argentine-United States Triangle. A Case Study in International Relations." Ph.D. Diss. Princeton University, 1953, 57.

[101] *Standard* 30 Nov. 1910. The vote was 2625 Unionist, 596 Liberal and 29 Labour in a poll of 3387 men.

Minister Haggard informed his superiors in 1903, in "this important English settlement, [I am] in the position of a governor of a British colony."[102]

Social interactions revealed extreme competition for rank and status. In gatherings at Prince George's Hall, the top men jostled for primacy and basked in the deference of the lower orders. At the height of the Boer War in 1900, it was agreed to establish a Permanent Committee to discuss ways to assist the British cause, but rows erupted on who should serve on it. Men of rank elbowed aside those of perceived lower status—junior employees, the Irish, the women and the Anglo-Argentines. The last group, it was claimed, "[owing to their] education and surroundings cannot in all matters be animated to the full extent by British sentiment."[103] Those thrust to the rear objected to the "prominence of pushful [*sic*] managers of English limited companies who arrogate to themselves the right to speak on behalf of the British community."[104] "I note without any surprise," a woman remarked indignantly, "we are debarred from hobnobbing with managers and other little tin gods."[105] A 1910 commentator saw a community in deterioration. "We are no longer pioneers. We no longer glory in labour. The question now is not 'What can you do?' It is 'Who are you?'"[106] Stronger awareness of class and social rank followed the growth of the large companies led by the railways. It provided a palpable contrast with the more flexible, easy going mercantile world of former times.

Men denied employment in British firms complained most loudly. According to one, people in Britain thought of Argentina as a land of milk and honey. They were unaware how "the milk is very, very carefully skimmed. The cream is appropriated by a comparatively few persons, and the residue shared among so many of the rank and file that a not inconsiderable number take to absorbing cocktails instead, while as for the honey [it is] shipped to Europe to be divided amongst the company directors and shareholders."[107] Another critic condemned the nepotism of aristocratic company directors in London whom he satirised as "the Duke of

[102] Haggard to FO 9 Sept. 1903 FO 6/480.

[103] *Standard* 18 and 25 May 1900; 7 June 1906.

[104] *Standard* 3 June 1906.

[105] *Standard* 3 and 7 June 1906.

[106] *Standard* 30 Nov. 1910.

[107] *Standard* 9 Feb. 1910.

Ditchwater, the Marquis of Mudpuddle, the Earl of Fitzbooby, [or] the Hon. Chevallier de la Bouteille, a more or less distant relation of Lord Cusenier." The jibe at Chevallier Boutell, whose un-British name derived from his Huguenot ancestry, exposed his excessive regard for alcohol and smirked at his name-dropping claims to kinship with Lord Kitchener, Britain's leading military figure. This critic ridiculed the middle managers and supervisors in British companies who spent their lives "cringing and fawning to superiors [while behaving like] regular tyrants to inferiors." Calling such men "Septimus Snobby," he identified them as younger sons of upper-middle-class families with a public school background. A man of this type genuflected to his superiors but was "allowed to lord it over the whole office, slight his inferiors and insult Argentina and the Argentines with impunity…Snobbies are the class of men who make the British hated over the face of the earth."[108]

The acid diatribes reflected the impact of the contract system, the passports to rank and privilege. Without a contract, men faced backbreaking toil with few prospects of advancement. A "shrewd Scotsman who has spent twenty years in the country" emphasised that wages in Argentina stood far below those in Britain. Men trying to become more competitive in the labour market by learning Spanish on the job faced obstruction by gangs of the same nationality, notably Italians, who monopolised occupations to the exclusion of outsiders. British migrants could rarely find any employment in British companies, which preferred "to train up native-born boys," namely the bilingual Anglo-Argentines.[109]

"This is no country for the young Englishman with no other profession but clerking," declared the *Review of the River Plate,* although "they continue to arrive on almost every steamer."[110] Shortly before World War I, so-called chancers arrived in larger numbers than at any time since the late 1880s. Their numbers were small compared with the thousands arriving from Mediterranean and Eastern Europe although large enough to form a pool of British unemployed.[111] In early 1914, a consul reported finding work for 700–800 British migrants in a total of more than 3000 men wanting it, but only as harvest labourers. "The result has been that miners,

[108] *Standard* 17 July 1910.

[109] *Standard* 18 Jan. 1903 (Quoting *Westminister Gazette*).

[110] *Review of River Plate* 30 Oct. 1908.

[111] Identified by the BABS charity as "English working men and lower grade clerks who find themselves on arrival unable to secure suitable work and are consequently destitute." Cassels to Tower 19 July 1912. FO 368/314.

engineers, mechanics, electricians, carpenters, tailors, smiths, even clerks and dentists have been sent to work in the fields."[112] Petty crime and robbery committed by unemployed British newcomers led some into confinement in the city penitentiary. Remanded for months before being brought to trial, they appealed to the legation for help, detailing the sordid conditions, sexual assaults and violence they faced.[113]

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The fight for employment and social status affected the descendants of British subjects born in Argentina. They were now known as the Anglo-Argentines or Anglos, the term Anglo-Porteño having fallen into disuse. The native British often treated the Anglos as competitors and inferiors. In 1912, Crouch, the chief engineer of the Central Argentine Railway in Rosario, objected to them because they always "take the jobs."[114] Like the chancers, Anglos currently had no hope of gaining one of the prized contracts to work for a major British company, although they proved ideal for lower level positions requiring bilingual communication.

Argentine nationality law classifying Anglos as Argentine citizens made them liable to military service. Years earlier during the civil wars of the period 1858–1862, Frank Parish, then British consul and himself an Anglo, waged an unsuccessful campaign to win their exemption. In the late 1890s, friction over military service erupted among the Welsh in Chubut and in 1907 in Buenos Aires as legislation extended the draft from three to twelve months. Anglo conscripts complained of being singled out for corporal punishment, citing clubbing by rifle butts and being forced to stand to attention in the sun for hours at a time. They objected to serving alongside mestizo and indigenous peasants from the northern provinces. Letters to the *Standard* in 1906 and 1907 demanded the formation of segregated white battalions.[115]

The Anglo population expanded from the 1880s with the growth of British companies and imported British personnel. The 1895 census provides a very rough guide to the size of the group at that time by enumerating resident

[112] Mackie to Tower 3 March 1914 FO 118/342.

[113] The petitions from prisoners appear in FO 118/297, 313, 314, 324 and 328 (1910–1913).

[114] Report by Consul Dickson, 1912. FO 118–342, quoting Crouch.

[115] Discussion of the Welsh appears in Report by F.S. Clarke 22 Feb. 1901 FO 118–252. For opposition to the military draft in Buenos Aires, see *Standard* 16 June 1906 and 6 April 1907.

"Protestants," of whom the British and the Anglos formed the largest proportions. In the federal capital, the census reveals an *Argentine* (substantially Anglo-Argentine) Protestant population of 2200 and a total *foreign* (largely British-born) Protestant population of 8000. By this very approximate measure, Anglo Protestants totalled 27 per cent of British Protestants. Applying the percentage to the entire British population, in 1895 Anglos totalled 5882 (27 per cent of 21,788) or approximately 6000. During the next twenty years, their numbers increased on the arrival of new company employees and the birth of larger numbers of children. By 1914, a figure of 10–15,000 Anglo-Argentines looks plausible. In the 1920s Francis Duckworth, a visiting British schools inspector, estimated the group at around 40,000.[116]

As their numbers increased, the Anglos became more socially diverse. At the top, children of wealthy merchants and senior corporate managers went to Britain for their education. If they returned to Argentina, they arrived with little memory of Spanish. The *Standard* noted that monolingual English-speaking Argentines met resentment and dislike.[117] Anglos of lower rank who remained in Argentina were bilingual. Around the turn of the century, they included two separate groups often quite different from each another. Anglo-Porteños remained poor, ill-educated, culturally and linguistically hybrid, while Anglo-Argentines were typically better educated and middle class. Friction between them occasionally surfaced, although intermarriage between Anglo-Porteño women and British-born men diluted it.[118] Throughout this period, young Anglo-Porteño women stayed alert to the prospect of finding marriage partners among the pool of young British employees of superior class background and good career prospects arriving to work on contract.[119]

[116] See Francis R.G. Duckworth. "The British Schools in Argentina. Report on a Visit of Inspection May 2nd – July 13th 1927," 2. FO 118/596.

[117] "Native Argentines are often bitter about [the English monolinguals] and complain that Britishers do not assimilate." *Standard* 6 Mar. 1914. Obituaries of prominent Anglos of this type grew common in the 1950s. They included Horace Hale (1880–1957), educated at Eton College and Balliol College, Oxford; Robert Carr Drysdale (1887–1958), who attended Wellington School and University College, Oxford; Eric Forest Greene (1903–1954), who was educated at Harrow. Among women, Elizabeth L'Estrange Wallace, Lady McCallum, (d. 1957) was born in Buenos Aires and educated at St. Winifred's School, Eastbourne. See *Review of the River Plate* 26 Jan. 1954 (Green); 30 Mar. 1954 (Hale); 28 Apr. 1956 (Drysdale); 20 Aug. 1957 (McCallum).

[118] Lloyd, *Argentina*, 339 reported on such friction.

[119] For a description of the way marriageable women and their families sized up potential husbands among newly arrived British men, see J.A. Hammerton, *The Real Argentine,*

Cecilia Grierson, an unmarried woman, illustrated the difficulties the Anglo-Porteños faced in establishing a niche in the late-nineteenth-century community. In 1895, Chevallier Boutell stymied her efforts to form a branch of the St. John Ambulance Association in Buenos Aires. He dismissed her as the "the Argentine lady doctor" unqualified to introduce a British institution into the country by gender and as a virtual non-English speaker by language too.[120] Reginald Tower, the wartime legation minister, shared the prejudice against people like Grierson. "Second and still more third generation Anglo-Argentines are prone to lose their [British] national spirit and adopt the language, habits and thoughts of the Argentine people."[121]

Among Anglo-Porteños, Herbert Gibson of the Scots-Argentine sheep ranching family enjoyed an exceptional standing in British eyes because of his prominence in organising Allied wheat supplies during World War I. For this service, he received a baronetcy, a very unusual honour for someone living outside the British Empire and Commonwealth. Gibson exhibited idiosyncratic traits. Born in Scotland, he became an extreme rarity by adopting Argentine citizenship when he moved to Argentina to manage the family estancia. Argentine law then obliged him to renounce his British nationality, which created complications when he was later awarded his Crown title. In another unusual move, he became mayor of a small town near the family estancia as a member of the Unión Cívica Radical, the leading anti-Establishment political party. A prolific diarist who wrote in Spanish, he embodied some intriguing features of biculturalism. A speaker at his obsequies in 1934 claimed "it was second nature to him to quote a passage from Shakespeare or from *Martín Fierro*," the celebrated gaucho epic poem by José Hernández.[122]

Gibson sought to enhance the status of the Anglos using the notion of biologically transmissible lineage. He claimed such people remained authentically British by virtue of descent, despite living outside British jurisdiction.[123] The Anglos wanted acknowledgement of their British identity to share the social status of the British and to qualify for employment in British firms. Schoolchildren's essays of the period argued that the "imperial idea" defining Britishness applied to "all born in Britain, all born

Notes and Impressions of a Year in the Argentine ad Uruguay. New York: Mead and Co. 1916, 274.

[120] The incident is noted in *Archivo de Cecilia Grierson* Serie I, 11 May 1895.

[121] Tower, *Annual Report for 1911*.

[122] *Standard* 30 Dec. 1934.

[123] *Standard* 25 May 1915.

in our colonies, and all born of British parents in foreign countries."[124] As Cecilia Grierson discovered, lineage represented a necessary but insufficient condition for recognition as a community member. Gaining full acceptance required far more: marriage, membership of British associations, attendance at British churches, playing English sports and imitating upper-class English language usage.[125]

The clergy encouraged awareness of such issues. The Presbyterian Sunday school in Barracas of the 1880s marked a conscious attempt to reduce language contact between Scottish and Spanish-speaking children.[126] Anglican Bishop Edward Every, who arrived in Argentina in 1903, urged parents to make English compulsory at home. Some parents carried out his injunction by "thrashing [children] when they spoke Spanish."[127] Whatever the tactics, it proved impossible to exclude Argentine intrusions entirely. During World War I, Thomas Colvill-Jones, a twenty-year old Anglo-Argentine volunteer from Hurlingham, began training in England to become a fighter pilot with the Royal Flying Corps. He wrote home contentedly as he discovered he could speak "our native lingo" to a fellow Anglo-Argentine, if to the consternation of a British fellow flyer. "A chap beside us asked if we came from Scotland because we were talking such broad English." During his brief time in England before going to France he visited the Anglo-South American Club in London where he could speak Spanish and sip yerba mate. Soon after he crossed the English Channel. Within weeks he was shot down in France, dying from his wounds.[128]

* * *

Families unable to afford educating their children in Britain sought local alternatives. St. Andrew's Scotch School remained the single survivor of its kind from the early days of British settlement, although new schools burgeoned from the 1870s. Victoria College founded in 1872 near the

[124] *Standard* 30 June 1918

[125] Discussion of lineage and national identity begins with Fredrik Barth ed. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1969.

[126] On the Sunday School, see *Barracas Scotch Church Magazine* Sept. 1886, which counted close to two hundred attendees at that time.

[127] Hammerton, *Real Argentine*, 240.

[128] Lorraine Colvill-Jones. *Your Ever Loving Son: The Story of the First Argentine Ace of the First World War*. Buenos Aires: Grupo Abierto Libros, 2008, 43. A reported 250 kilos of yerba maté was sent to England in 1918.

Liebig factory on the Rio Uruguay, stressed sports and masculinity, in tune with British imperial values. Advertisements proclaimed "the wish of the promoters of this College is to turn out men. They offer health and manliness."[129] Anglican cleric Gybban Spilsbury, a linguist fluent in several indigenous languages as well as a football lover, founded Flores Collegiate School, among the first to cater to children of British businessmen.[130] St. Andrew's School continued to advertise "a good and cheap education," but stagnant enrolment and glaring mediocrity bore witness to the declining fortunes of the old Anglo-Porteños. "Its glories are departed," sighed a correspondent with the *Standard* in 1881.[131] The school revived following a decision to link up with the Great Southern Railway in Barracas. Consulted by the school's Presbyterian leaders, eminences at the University of Edinburgh recommended the appointment of Alexander Watson Hutton as the school's principal.[132]

The best known British educator in Argentina, Hutton began with a brief, unhappy stay at St. Andrew's where he objected to the stultifying confinements of sectarian education.[133] He left after only a year (taking the assistant mistress with him and marrying her). He founded the Buenos Aires English High School, which became, with its 200 pupils of both sexes, one of the largest private schools in the country, a popular and respected institution beyond Hutton's retirement in 1910.[134] He adopted a conventional curriculum, preparing girls to become mothers and housewives and boys for office work in British companies. Open day in 1902, attended by one thousand parents and former pupils, focused on the work of the girls. "Specimens of embroidery, knitting, sewing and darning con-

[129] *Standard* 18 June 1872.

[130] The school is noted in *Standard* 19 Jan. 1881. See also Olivera, *Deportes Británicos*, 31. The author, an alumnus of the Flores school, reports that it mixed the children of British businessmen with those of the Argentine elite like himself.

[131] *Standard* 6 Jan. 1878, 19 Jan. 1881.

[132] Hutton was reportedly selected from among one hundred candidates. See *Standard* 16 July 1882.

[133] Hutton cited "too much clerical influence" as his reason for leaving St. Andrews. *Standard* 9 Nov. 1895. "He had been treated like a parish school-master. He would be second to no committee." Monteith Drysdale, *St Andrew's Scotch School*, 48–49, 115.

[134] The school offered places tor about 150 day students, girls and boys, and 50 boarders from the "camp." *Standard* 19 June 1892. In 1894, the newspaper reported 167 private schools of all backgrounds in Buenos Aires, of which 69 taught boys, 27 girls and 69 were co-educational. The English schools totalled around 30. *Standard* 27 Dec. 1894.

vince the beholder that the young ladies are trained to become British housewives in the truest and noblest sense of the word."[135]

Hutton embraced bilingualism. A newspaper heading reported: "Become Bi Linguist [*sic*]. Mr. Watson Hutton's Advice to Boys."[136] In another concession to the milieu, his pupils learned the metric system alongside imperial weights and measures. These adjustments, and making space in the curriculum for classes in Spanish, opened the school to pupils of multiple backgrounds. While protecting his enrolment, Hutton aspired to "bridge over that chasm which all too often separates persons of different nationality."[137] Numerous Irish surnames among his pupils demonstrated his success in linking up with the Irish-Porteños as well as with the Anglo-Argentines. He recruited Cecilia Grierson for a time to teach Domestic Science, consisting of "cookery, dress making, waiting at table, mending stockings and sewing on buttons."[138] As president of the English Literary Society in 1894, he invited her to speak on "The Education of Women," a task she performed with gusto in Spanish. Watson Hutton sponsored a debate on the motion "Social and political rights should not depend on sex."[139] Admitting children up to the age thirteen or fourteen, by 1901 he claimed his school had educated "scores, nay hundreds of ladies, now comfortably settled, hundreds of gentlemen now independent in life."[140]

Hutton claimed that he introduced association football to Argentina, having preferred soccer to rugby to reduce the risk of injury. "Personally, I have never encouraged Rugby and leave it to those who play the game to defend it." Drawing on his old boys, he founded the Alumni, the best known early football team in Argentina, serving for several years as president of the Argentine Association Football League.[141] Gybban

[135] *Standard* 20 Dec. 1902 (19th Exhibition of the BAEHS).

[136] *Standard* 3 June, 1933.

[137] *Standard* 18 Dec. 1901. A government requirement to teach some classes in Spanish appeared around the turn of the century but at that time irregularly enforced.

[138] *Standard* 7 Oct. 1908.

[139] See *Standard* 21 June 1894.

[140] "18th Exhibition of the BAEHS," *Standard* 18 Dec. 1901.

[141] *Standard* 17 May 1893. In 1910, the *Illustrated Review* of Buenos Aires reported that "to him belonged the credit of having introduced in the Republic, if not indeed into South America, the popular form of football known as 'Association'. "More historical data on the school is available in http://www.baehs.com.ar. The name Alumni resulted from the efforts of some principals to call their teams by the names of their schools, a practice that that led to squabbling about unfair advertising.

Spilsbury likely pre-empted Hutton as the first sponsor of school football, although Hutton popularised it in its modern form. He built the first school swimming pool in Buenos Aires, set up the first girls' tennis court and created one of the first gymnasia. As the *Standard* noted, "athletics are carefully attended to at Mr. Watson Hutton's school. He fully understands the importance of bodily training and gives it a place of honour."[142]

On his retirement, Hutton claimed "he had done everything in his power to mould [his pupils] both physically and mentally to take their places as leading citizens of this great Republic."[143] A banquet in his honour in 1929 illustrated his success in tying various cultural strands together. Addressing the assembly in either English or Spanish, former pupils extolled their classmates who had become prominent in public life and business or returned from World War I with decorations. The school's cultural mix became manifest as matronly Irish-Porteñas married to Argentines presented him with bouquets.[144] Hutton's commitment to his adopted land coexisted with a staunchly British outlook. He venerated Thomas Arnold, the headmaster at Rugby School, revered in Britain as the founder of school sports. He persuaded the ultra class conscious Chevallier Boutell to send his children to his school. In 1907, he supported forming a branch of the British Empire League in Buenos Aires to honour the visit of Robert Baden-Powell, the hero of the siege of Mafeking during the Boer War and the founder of the Boy Scout movement. In Hutton's outlook, standard British imperial themes—commitment, will power, integrity, the games ethos and military heroism—coexisted with strong patriotic attachments to Argentina.[145]

By 1914, around thirty British schools existed in Buenos Aires, some founded by railway companies. A majority lay in the southern suburbs where the lower ranking railway staff lived. The southern schools included several girls' institutions headed by Quilmes High School founded in 1907. Elsewhere, St. Andrew's Scotch School and others admitted boarders. James Fleming, the illiberal leader of the Presbyterians, argued for boarding children in Buenos Aires to "save to the British Empire and

[142] *Standard* 20 Dec. 1902. School sport made a debut in Rosario soon after 1900 in the school founded by Isaac Newell, another early British educator, whose team became Newell's Old Boys.

[143] *Standard* 21 Apr. 1910.

[144] *Standard* 22 Sept. 1929.

[145] *Standard* 22 Sept. 1929.

British traditions the numerous families in the Camp who, though of British lineage, are in danger of growing up in total ignorance of the language and ideals of their fathers."[146] Founded by entrepreneurs like Hutton, most schools operated on a shoestring. Like Northlands, a girls' school established soon after World War I by Winifred Brightman, they began in annexes of private homes before moving to rented premises.[147]

St. George's College, an Anglican institution for boys, embodied British ethnocentrism at its most extreme. It was founded in 1897 by J.T. Stevenson, a South African-born cleric who arrived in Argentina as a parish priest in Quilmes, where he perceived an opportunity to form a preparatory school for sons of businessmen unable to afford English boarding schools.[148] St. George's anticipated the ethos of the Boy Scout movement, stressing "obedience, loyalty, responsibility…what a boy is, is vastly more important than what he knows."[149] Fundraising enabled the construction of a neo-Gothic Anglican chapel on the school premises. Cricket, the game most redolent of rural and conservative England, took pride of place in sports. Boys remained at the school until age 14, at which point Stevenson envisioned them entering public schools in England. A few went to Britain, although most remained in Argentina to work in British companies. Around 130 of the school's former students—a substantial proportion in a total of only 300 to 400—served in World War I. Fifteen war dead from the school included one of Stevenson's sons.[150]

Two prominent Anglican clergymen left a mark during this period. Edward Every served most of his thirty-year sojourn as Bishop of the Falkland Islands and South America. He made the Anglican church in Buenos Aires his base, although his work largely consisted of excursions to Anglican communities and families throughout the continent. In *Twenty-five Years in South America*, he reflected on a "life of constant travel, such as are granted to few others, over an area which formed the greatest

[146] Rev. James William Fleming quoted in Monteith Drysdale, *St Andrew's Scots School,* 25.

[147] "Northlands and Antecedent Events, 1881–1961." Mimeo. (An outline school history obtained from a visit to the school).

[148] Fundraising for St. George's took place in April 1897. Stevenson's opponents included people who preferred a non-sectarian to an Anglican school. They called their proposals "imperialist," by which they meant more representative of a range of groups. See *Standard* 13, 28 April 1897.

[149] Stevenson quoted in *Standard* 13 Dec. 1914.

[150] J.T. Stevenson. *The History of St. George's College, Quilmes, Argentina, 1898–1935.* London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1936.

Anglican diocese in the world."[151] Every's diaries and published writings provide a unique record of the British settlers scattered across the continent, although his bigotry jarred heavily even by the standards of the day. Amidst the nonsense lay occasional flashes of insight. In August 1914, Every stood almost alone in Buenos Aires in foreseeing the catastrophe World War I would become.

The career of William Case Morris formed a striking contrast with Every's. Steeped in Spanish-speaking Porteño society, Morris ignored the British community except when it came to raising money. He was the son of a "Lincolnshire farmer" of the early 1870s. Raised in impoverished circumstances, still on the breadline he began his career as a Methodist. He founded the Gospel Temperance Society in the Boca, the tough riverside seafaring community in Buenos Aires, converting to Anglicanism when the South American Missionary Society offered to fund his work.[152] In 1898, Morris formed the Escuelas Evangélicas Argentinas, a network of orphanages that attracted the support of prominent local figures including Mitre and Roque Sáenz Peña.[153] By 1925, up to 70,000 children had passed through the Escuelas, an institution regarded by many Argentines as the foremost personal achievement throughout the country by anyone of British origin.[154] From 1917, Morris used the *Standard* to issue blunt Christmas appeals for funds, which continued until his death fifteen years later. "100,000 [pesos] are needed at once," he demanded. "Six thousand, two hundred children require our immediate help."[155]

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In far flung suburbs, British people in Buenos Aires became models of dispersed pluralism. Their common identity seemed confined to the use of English, poring over gossip in the Anglophone press and attending a few annual sporting events. Trivial disputes over rank and precedence marred their few collective activities, although amidst the internal division a strong underlying sense of common nationality remained latent. In 1900, Chevallier Boutell amassed a large crowd at Prince George's Hall for a

[151] Edward Every, *Twenty-five Years in South America*, London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1929, 1. Every quoted his diary in the *Diocesan Gazette and Chronicle*, a periodical held at St. John's Cathedral Church in Buenos Aires.

[152] Morris's activities in the Boca are noted in *Standard* 23 May 1894.

[153] An early report on Morris's *Escuelas* appears in *Standard* 4 July 1901.

[154] Alston to FO 13 Aug. 1925. FO 111/584.

[155] *Standard* 5 Dec. 1917.

lantern slide show of photographs from the Boer war. The *Standard* reported the ensuing flurry of flag-waving. "When the features of our beloved Queen were shown, the audience rose and burst into song with the National Anthem."[156] The death of Edward VII in 1910 brought 3000 people to a memorial service. Official mourning for the late king disrupted British participation in the Argentine Centenary celebrations of May 1910, although the community embarked on fund raising over several years to commemorate the event. It concluded six years later when a handsome clock tower modelled on the Albert Memorial in Belfast was unveiled on the Plaza Retiro adjacent to several major rail terminals.[157]

Reacting to German trade competition, from 1906 the legation sought to instil greater cohesion in the community, although with little success. The branch of the Empire League sponsored by Watson Hutton and others found scant support. Aware of Porteño suspicion towards an entity containing the word "Empire," in 1912 minister Tower renamed it the British Society of the Argentine Republic. Cliques, misogyny and snobbery once more dogged its progress. Shortly before the outbreak of war, Tower set up a chamber of commerce. It too met opposition and indifference until it received a subsidy from the British government to draw up a statutory list to help stifle wartime German trade.[158] As war erupted in August 1914, various men's and women's organisations formed, although for some time division and dispersal once more weakened them.

Quite unexpectedly, the British declaration of war against Germany and Austria produced an immediate flood of volunteers. A proud chronicle of the *Activities of the British Community in Argentina during the Great War* published in 1920 reported how with startling speed on the outbreak of war scores of men volunteered for service. They manifested the same naïve enthusiasm and confidence in swift victory of the war's early stages visible in Britain itself. In late August a boat train with the first contingent of volunteers echoed with cheerful banter and strains of God Save the King. "'Back in a Year' said some. 'See you there soon,' shouted others [followed

[156] *Standard* 7 Oct. 1900. The event doubled as an appeal for the support of Irish-Porteños at a time the Irish nationalist William Bulfin sought to stir up anti-British feeling in Buenos Aires.

[157] *Standard* 21 May 1910 on commemorating the death of the king. On fundraising for the Clock Tower, see Tower. *Annual Report for 1912*. FO 371/1573. FO 118/411 summarises expenses on the project totalling £46,400, of which the railways contributed only £12,600 and other large British firms £5000. A sizable proportion of the funds thus came from individual donations.

[158] Tower, *Annual Report for 1913*. FO 371/1897. On the wartime Statutory List, see Dehne, *On the Far Western Front*, 103–120.

by] a final rendering of 'It's a long way to Tipperary'."[159] The published official story overplayed the spontaneity and disinterestedness with which men rose to the challenge. Many early volunteers were ranch managers, agronomists and livestock specialists from estancias. With the entire rural sector currently mired in recession, these men possessed little incentive to remain in Argentina. Many sought letters of recommendation for cavalry commissions, and on arrival in Britain joined a regiment called King Edward's Horse later attached to the Canadian infantry.[160] Tower reported on the large outflow of public school educated men among them. Commonly men in their late twenties, some possessed military backgrounds.[161]

In November 1914, Tower reported 200 men from the railway companies had volunteered, a number that quintupled during subsequent months.[162] Granting them "special leave to proceed to England to join the army," the companies provided them with small allowances and promises of reemployment on their return.[163] The ease with which the men departed suggests the companies might well have welcomed, during recession, the opportunity to make staff economies. Another category of volunteers consisted of men who had gone to Buenos Aires in recent years looking for work. Many of them resembled deportees more than volunteers. Conducting physical examinations of such men, John O'Conor, senior medical officer at the British Hospital, afforded them scant respect. He reported his efforts to "give the deserter, the beachcomber and the jailbird a chance of redemption by accepting the offer to go home and fight for the country…We have done everything in our power to clothe the many human derelicts."[164]

In late 1915, Tower reported 5500 men had joined the British forces from Buenos Aires. He submitted one hundred recommendations for

[159] Arthur L. Holder. *Activities of the British Community in Argentina during the Great War 1914–1919*. Buenos Aires: Buenos Aires Herald, 1920, 117, 207. Tower, *Annual Report for 1914* counted 2850 volunteers.

[160] Holder, *British Community*, 26.

[161] Letters from men seeking commissions in British forces appear in FO 118/344. Public school men, from institutions including Malvern College, Marlborough, Wellington and Rossall, gave their ages as between 23 and 29 to indicate they were born in 1885–1891.

[162] Holder, *Activities*, 119, reported the railway contingent at 1062, of whom 116 were killed in action.

[163] *Central Argentine Railway Magazine*, June 1921.

[164] O'Conor's reports appear in FO 118/361.

commissions for men "largely of the ranching class with English public school training and with all the advantages, both physical and mental, derived from their active open-air life."[165] The men from South America dispersed throughout the British forces. In early 1917, the Committee for the River Plate Contingent in London estimated their total number at around 7000, while in 1918–1919 the British Society in Buenos Aires recorded 4852 returnees, some of whom arrived with British wives. Judging from such figures, about 30 per cent of the volunteers either opted to stay in Britain after the war or were killed in action. Documented fatalities totalled 10–12 per cent, the same proportion as in the British forces at large. The Argentine war dead included young men typical of the British officer class like Gilbert Swale Robertson, a former resident of Quilmes and an alumnus of St. George's College and of Oxford University, who died in 1915 during the battle of Loos. Captain John Vincent Holland, who received the Victoria Cross for action on the Somme in September 1916, headed the list of local war heroes.[166] Harold Riley of Santa Fe was awarded the Military Cross for installing and exploding two of the great subterranean mines in the battle of Messines Ridge in June 1917.[167]

Anglo-Argentines numbered 82 of the total 528 British war dead, or 15 per cent. Applying the same percentage, Anglo-Argentine volunteers, at 15 per cent of 7000 volunteers, totalled around one thousand.[168] As Argentine citizens who ignored their obligations at home in order to fight for the British, the Anglos ran the risk of facing military tribunals on their return. Following several years of "great anxiety" on this issue, the matter was buried in 1922 when President Marcelo T. de Alvear exempted all war veterans from military service in Argentina.[169] Throughout the war, the British legation refused passports to women volunteers, although 251 women somehow went to Britain to sign up as nurses and as secretarial and munitions workers.[170]

[165] O'Conor to Tower, 27 Jan. 1915. FO 118/366.

[166] Holder, *Activities*, 45.

[167] Report on Riley 3 Mar. 1920. FO 118/531. 231 troops from Argentina received the Military Cross.

[168] On war casualties, see Holder, *Activities*, 26, 250.

[169] On concerns about the military tribunals, see Report 9 June, 1916, FO 118/409; on the solution of the issue, see *Review of the River Plate* 3 Nov. 1922.

[170] Holder, *Activities*, 249; also *The British Magazine*, 4, no. 1, 1919, 470.

Relations between British and German residents, formerly close and amicable, plunged into a bitter divorce. On the outbreak of war, Germans working in British firms were dismissed. Joint institutions led by the flourishing Anglo-German hospital in Rosario were closed. The British consulate and the chamber of commerce disrupted German businesses, aiming not only to prevent trade with the enemy but also to seize control of German commerce.[171] In early stages of the war, Britain respected Argentina's neutrality, although standards slipped from April 1917, when the United States entered the war. Under British direction, the Allies rationed coal and shipping to Argentina, while attempting to control meat and grain supplies and foreign exchange dealings. In late 1917, the British warned that any lack of cooperation by the Argentine government would be "published to the Argentine public [*sic*], and that British coal and other exports will be diverted into other directions."[172] The Allied Wheat Commission formed in mid-1916, the body in which Herbert Gibson played a major part, took over grain purchases. In late 1917 the Allies secured several million tons of wheat at below free market prices, with payment delayed until after the war.

The Allies mustered the support of most of the local press. Drawing on the canonical Anglophile version of history created by historians led by Mitre, propaganda issued by the railway companies emphasised that "at the dawn of the Republic someone offered us a helping hand. It was the hand of England."[173] In his essay *Germany against the World*, Francisco Barroeteveña, a lawyer prominent during the struggle against Juárez Celman in 1890, trumpeted British and French contributions to the country: "a life of freedom, opportunities to imbibe the ideas of Magna Carta

[171] Philip Dehne. "From 'Business as Usual' to a more Global War: The British Decision to attack Germans in South America during the First World War." *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 3, 2005, 516–535.

[172] General Report No. 48 CAB 24/147/23. Several other authors reiterate the point. "The Argentine grain trade in wartime was subject to the most draconian foreign manipulation." Roger Gravil. *The Anglo-Argentine Connection 1900–1939*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985, 126. According to Dehne, "If interfering in the flow of trade in another country is imperialism, then this was an imperialist moment for Britain, with imperialist intentions." Dehne, *Britain's First World War in South America,* 157. On the wartime wheat conventions see Dehne, *Britain's First World War in South America,* 152; also Bill Albert. *South America and the First World War. The Impact of the War on Brazil, Argentina, Peru, and Chile*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, 55–68, 252.

[173] *Central Argentine Railway Magazine*, May 1918.

and the Rights of Man, free trade, and self-government."[174] German counter-measures proved inept. In September 1917, the British intercepted telegrams to Berlin from Count Karl von Luxburg, the German minister in Buenos Aires, urging the sinking of Argentine merchant ships. The incident provoked pro-Allied demonstrations in Buenos Aires leading to the mob destruction of the elegant Club Alemán.[175]

Slow to start, British fundraising gained high momentum. In early 1915, sympathisers had shipped more than 300 horses. Late the same year, raffles, auctions and entertainments raised funds for a warplane.[176] In 1916, British war bonds were sold in Buenos Aires, and in 1917 a large quantity of clothing and food was sent to Britain along with funds to repatriate wounded local volunteers, some of them from distant parts of Argentina.[177] Fundraising peaked in September 1918 during an event called "Our Day" led by Chevallier Boutell that raised £100,000. Opulent Belgrano led the list of local contributors; northern and southern suburbs followed, each with about two-thirds of Belgrano's total. Then came Bahía Blanca, Rosario and Quilmes.[178] The British Red Cross took most of the funds, with a quarter of them being used to support returning volunteers and disabled veterans.[179]

As war ended, volunteers returned with a strong sense of comradeship with other British peoples. In 1922, Hilary Howard Leng, head of a high-ranking banking and insurance company, claimed the experience had forged a new sense of imperial brotherhood. "We can have no greater cause for pride than that we are a small integral part of that Empire upon whose shores the sun never sets."[180] To judge from current affiliations with the Royal Colonial Institute in Buenos Aires, imperial sentiment

[174] Francisco Barroeteveña (pseud. "Almafuerte"). *Alemania contra el mundo*. Buenos Aires: Otero, 1916. Segments are quoted in *Standard* 19 Sept. 1917.

[175] Events are reported in *Standard* 13 Sept. 1917.

[176] *Standard* 28 Nov. 1915.

[177] *Standard* 7 Dec. 1917, (listing origins of wartime contributions).

[178] "Our Day" results are summarised in *The British Magazine*, 4, no. 1, 1919.

[179] The Returned Volunteers Employment Bureau purportedly "helped hundreds." Discussion of the uses of the funds appears in *Standard* 20 May 1921 and FO 118/543 (28 May, 1921).

[180] *Review of the River Plate* 24 Feb. 1922. Leng is recalled with affection by a former British ambassador. See Sir David Kelly. *The Ruling Few, or, The Human Background to Diplomacy*. London: Hollis and Carter, 1953, 129. His large company represented bankers including Barings and J.P. Morgan in Buenos Aires, plus several major insurance companies like the Union Assurance Company found in Britain in 1714. Its activities are described in

attained a higher level in Argentina than in any other country.[181] The post-war began in optimism. The chairman of Harrods, the wealthy London department with a branch in Buenos Aires founded in 1914, predicted roaring sales because of "an abundance of money there, the Argentines having made fortunes during the war."[182]

R. Monte Domecq ed. *Argentina. Publicación ilustrada con informaciones generales, edición 1929–1930*. Buenos Aires: Monte Domecq, 1930, 182.

[181] *Review of the River Plate* 3 Nov. 1922.

[182] *Review of the River Plate* 24 Jan 1920, quoting Sir Woodman Burbridge, chairman of the company.

CHAPTER 7

Partners and Competitors

Two worthy gentlemen walking in arm in a wide field of common interest along a spacious sunlit esplanade.
Winston S. Churchill *on Britain and Argentina, 1928*

The Argentine railways prompted huge purchases of Welsh coal and a galactic variety of imported locomotives, coaches and goods wagons, first iron and later steel rails, tinned plate to assemble coaches, signalling equipment, piping, hydraulic machinery and prefabricated galvanised roofing—nearly all of it made in Britain. The Juárez Celman administration of 1886–1890 demonstrated the great impact of railway investment on Anglo-Argentine trade. On the eve of the Baring Crash, Britain supplied 40 per cent of Argentina's imports, a large proportion tied to railways and textiles, the older staple. From 1900, trade climbed much higher as railway expansion gathered pace and the two countries created a smoothly calibrated exchange of manufactures and agrarian products. Beyond promoting trade earnings, railways remitted profits to Britain and stimulated the expansion of British shipping.[1] "With the railways in British control

[1] On shipping, see Juan E. Oribe Stemmer. "Freight Rates in the Trade between Europe and South America, 1840–1910." *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 21, No. 1, Feb 1989, 23–59.

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D. Rock, *The British in Argentina*, Britain and the World,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-97855-0_7

the commercial position of the United Kingdom is safe," concluded H.O. Chalkley, a long-serving commercial attaché.[2]

Shortly before World War I, Foreign Secretary Sir Edward Grey referred to British foreign investment as the "fertilising stream" of trade. "Isn't Argentina the model?" he suggested, calling its ties with Britain "intimacy, independence and comparatively little work for the Foreign Office."[3] Besides railway equipment and coal, British exports to Argentina included all the artefacts of the late steam age from water wheels to tractors and compressors. Factory engineered precision metal and glass goods followed, along with expensive household items like Sheffield cutlery and the elegant wares of the English Potteries.[4] Noting that French imports exceeded British in one category alone, that of upper class female apparel, legation minister Edward Monson echoed an observation by newspaperman Thomas Love sixty years previously. In the mid-1880s, trade commissioners arrived in Buenos Aires from the United States to size up the Argentine market. At the time Americans supplied little more than New England timber and the same simple furniture and household goods of previous decades. Monson doubted any of their products would trouble British exporters.[5] In 1891, more than 4000 British steamers entered the port of Buenos Aires "but none carried [our] colors," lamented US officials. That year too, 1060 British sailing vessels navigated the shoals of the Rio de la Plata compared with only 57 American.[6] The value of British exports to Argentina near-quintupled from £7 million in 1895 to £32 million in 1909.[7] Argentine exports to Britain, first hides, then grain led by wheat, and from the early 1900s chilled beef from the frigoríficos followed a parallel, steeply ascending course.

Commercial dominance on this scale could not endure under liberal trading conditions. From the 1890s expanding immigrant communities and rising incomes in Argentina led imports to diversify. Although the volume of British commerce continued to climb, the British share of imports fell from a 40 per cent high in 1890, to 35 per cent in 1900 and

[2] Minute of H.O. Chalkley, 6 June 1918. FO 371/3131.

[3] Grey quoted in *South American Journal* 28 May, 1910.

[4] Argentina became Britain's seventh-largest market for coal. Cutlery and pottery remained large British exports remaining at around 10 per cent of the total long into the twentieth century. See *The Economist* 23 Mar., 27 Apr. 1946.

[5] Monson to FO 10 Jan. 1885. FO 6/386.

[6] Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics. *Argentine Republic*. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894, 130.

[7] *South American Journal* 28 May 1909.

to 30 per cent in 1910. Intense rivalry developed as German and American competition appeared. German goods became well established as salesmen toured the country offering attractive prices and custom-made products.[8] In Buenos Aires, Germans sold iron and steel manufactures, electro-technical products, armaments, textiles and cement, the last servicing the enormous construction boom of 1901–1913. The Compañía Alemana Transatlántica de Electricidad, the branch of a Berlin firm founded in Buenos Aires in 1898, dominated the expanding market in electricity.[9] Americans developed an overwhelming lead in motor vehicles—for which Argentina became by far the largest market in Latin America. When the British share of imports fell to 32 per cent in 1905, US commentators celebrated a "closing of the gap."[10] The *New York Sun* claimed US products would have reduced the British lead even more except for the dominance of British importers in Buenos Aires who bought British goods almost regardless of cost (Fig. 7.1).[11] In 1910, Italian journalist Genaro Bevioni conceded Argentina had once been a British "feudality," but nowadays "the struggle between the United States, England, Germany and Italy to conquer the Argentine market is simply epic."[12]

[8] Forbes, *German Informal Imperialism*, 380–381; McCrea, *International Competition*, 419.

[9] Forbes, *German Informal Imperialism*, 394, describing the formation of the Deutsche-Überseeische Elektricitäts Gesellschaft. See also Compañía Alemana Transatlántica de Electricidad. *La Compañía Alemana Transatlántica de Electricidad en ocasión del primer centenario de la independencia de la República Argentina*. Berlin: Georg Büxenstein and Co. 1916.

[10] *South American Journal* 4 Nov. 1905. Figures showing percentage shares of the Argentine market among leading external suppliers appear in Vicente Vásquez Presedo. *Migración de factores, comercio exterior y desarrollo, 1875–1914.* Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1971, 74. Trade shares for 1908 are listed in Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics. *The Argentine Republic, General Descriptive Data prepared in June 1909.* Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1909, 15, showing the British share still larger than the combined shares of Germany and the United States, followed by France, Italy and Belgium. Trade shares for 1910–1914 appear in Virgil Salera. *Exchange Control and the Argentine Market*. Ph.D. diss.: Columbia University, 1941, 26.

[11] "England would lose out here very rapidly if it were not for her large financial investments." *Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics.* Vol. 31. Washington D.C. 1910, 507.

[12] Genaro Bevioni. *Argentina 1910. Balance y memoria*. Prologue by Roberto Lascella. Buenos Aires: Leviatán, 1995, 175; also Forbes, *German Informal Imperialism*, 390; Fernando Rocchi. "Britain versus Newcomers: The Struggle for the Argentine Market, 1900–1914." Paper presented at the Second Annual Argentina Conference. University of Oxford, St Antony's College, May 2001; Rocchi, *Chimneys in the Desert*, 90–91.

Argentina---How happy could I be with either were t' other dear charmer away!

Fig. 7.1 Britain and the US compete for Argentina's favours in 1901

As the British fought back, US competition prompted most concern.[13] Businessmen in Argentina deplored the appeals of James Bryce, the travel writer and former British ambassador in Washington D.C., for closer ties among the English-speaking peoples as self-destructive utopianism. When the British let them, the Americans muscled in on their business. A British salesman in Buenos Aires contradicted claims that men like him were

[13] According to Dehne, British apprehensions about the United States "paled in intensity when compared to fears of German infiltration into South American markets." Dehne. *On the Far Western Front*, 29–30. Judging from the *South American Journal*, whether before or after the war, Americans stirred far more British concern than Germans.

becoming lazy and incompetent. He argued "[we too] speak the language, belong to the clubs, and go among the people…We keep in touch both with trade itself and with all the social and political forces that in these countries so largely affect trade."[14] The exhibition held in Buenos Aires in 1905 promoted high-quality manufactured products from the English Midlands popular for many decades: gold and silverware, brass products, clasps and brooches, needles, leather ware, saddlery, tools, lamps. Newer articles included electrical fittings and a few early British automobiles. Catalogues in four languages attested to the organisers' familiarity with modern advertising.[15] At home too, the British regarded South American markets led by Argentina as a high priority. Lloyd's Bank of London issued its *Twentieth Century Impressions* series, lavishly illustrated volumes on countries around the world trading extensively with Britain. Of four books on Latin American countries, the longest and most elaborate published in 1911 was devoted to Argentina.[16] *The Times* issued a supplement on Latin American trade once more dwelling mostly on Argentina. It described current conditions in the region "as the most unique opportunity ever offered for increasing foreign trade, and British manufacturers are urged to take full advantage of it."[17]

As Britain's relative position in Argentina continued to decline, complaints about British business methods mounted. W.H. Koebel, an early twentieth-century British writer on Latin America, accused complacent company directors of sending out junior salesmen unable to speak Spanish or failing to supply spare parts for the goods they were selling.[18] The *South American Journal* criticised smug British claims that the superiority of their goods would always protect them against competitors who sold a "cheap class of goods which are all [they] can provide."[19] The British

[14] *South American Journal* 25 Feb. 1905.

[15] *South American Journal* 30 Dec. 1905.

[16] See Lloyd, *Argentina*.

[17] Quoted in *Bulletin of the International Bureau of the American Republics*. Vol, 30. Washington D.C. 1910, 7.

[18] W.H. Koebel. *Modern Argentina. The El Dorado of today, with notes on Uruguay and Chile*. London: Griffiths, 1907, 67.

[19] *South American Journal* 25 Feb. 1905. A persuasive approach to British "complacency" stressed the discouraging effects of foreign investment on variety and innovation since British firms abroad commonly serviced captive markets requiring minimal inventiveness. See C.P. Kindleberger. "Foreign Trade and Economic Growth: Lessons from Britain and France, 1850–1913." *Economic History Review*. New Series, Vol. 14, No. 2, 1961, 295. A counterview denying British lack of competitiveness appears in Rory Miller. "British trade with Latin

seemed unable to coordinate their efforts in order to defend themselves. In 1905, US-made tractors swept into the market to displace those of British manufacture. Some importers proposed forming a chamber of commerce as a means of self-defence but failed to enlist sufficient support.[20] The chamber of commerce formed in 1914 owed its existence to legation minister Tower.

Some years later, a US research team led by Roswell C. McCrea argued the lack of competitiveness in British manufacturing reflected the comparatively small scale of British firms. His group saw too many family-based units in Britain. Making quality goods, they employed workers resembling old-fashioned craftsmen quite unlike modern-day US style assembly line workers, who produced at lower cost and often in far greater volume. The authors speculated the situation arose from the way the pre-1850 British economy developed from networks of small merchants supplying goods to multiple markets of limited size.[21] Other critics claimed the British lagged behind German manufacturers by failing to link industry and science. Consequently, they failed to compete in many of the most dynamic early twentieth century fields like electrical machinery, machine tools and scientific instruments, or in producing the organic chemicals used to manufacture industrial dyes. German companies employed university trained scientists and technicians, while British firms all too often prided themselves on improvisation and amateurism.[22]

America (1870–1950)." In Peter Mathias and John A. Davis. *International Trade and British Economic Growth: from the Eighteenth Century to the Present Day*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996, 118–145.

[20] "German and North Americans' strenuous efforts to extend their business" motivated the proposal. See *South American Journal* 1 July, 1905.

[21] McCrea, *International Competition*, 328–331, 415, 419, 423. Several similar issues are addressed in Alfred D. Chandler Jr. "The Development of Modern Management Structure in the US and UK." In Geoffrey Jones and Walter A. Friedman. *The Rise of the Modern Firm*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited: 2012, 306–334. Also Stephen J. Nicholas. "The Overseas Marketing Performance of British Industry, 1870–1914." *Economic History Review*. New Series, Vol. 37, No. 4, 1984, 489–506; Roy Church. "Salesmen and the Transformation of Selling in Britain and the United States in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries." *Economic History Review*. New Series, Vol. 61, No. 3, 2008, 696. The issue of British "backwardness" and inability to assimilate American mass production techniques is strongly contested. See S.B. Saul. "The American Impact on British Industry, 1895–1914." *Business History* Vol. 2, No. 1. 1960, 19–38.

[22] D.B. Aldcroft. "Investment and Utilisation of Manpower in Great Britain and her Rivals, 1870–1914." 287–307, in *Great Britain and her World, 1750–1914. Essays in Honour of*

British firms exporting to Argentina grew more alert to competition as their rivals usurped some of the most profitable areas of trade. In 1910 the Argentine government startled British steel manufacturers by awarding a contract to construct navy ships to a US firm in New York. The commission entailed orders for 6000 tons of steel, for which the Americans quoted prices at £30 a ton less than the British. The *South American Journal* blamed unfair practices, "a private fund for advancing American interests to exercise influence with the government of Argentina" administered by Secretary of State Philander C. Knox. Germany too subsidised exports of ships, notably naval patrol boats. Subsidies explained why "we are not holding our trade [and] our commercial rivals are steadily and rapidly overhauling us."[23] The *Journal* cited worrying trends. In 1910, the British share of the Argentine market remained above 30 per cent but in recent years German trade had increased by 41 per cent, US by 35 per cent and British by only 14 per cent.[24] British business leaders appealed for help. Arthur G. Evans, chairman of a major steel company, urged deploying the Buenos Aires legation in the same proactive way as Americans and Germans: "The only one who does nothing and can do nothing is the British minister [in Buenos Aires] who has nothing to offer… [Consequently], the ratio of British trade has declined and if it were not for the artificial protection afforded by British capital control of railways and other companies, it would be much less."[25]

The pre-war international struggle in Argentina between competing monopolies resembled the conditions noted in 1917 by Vladimir Lenin in *Imperialism, the Highest State of Capitalism*. From 1910 the *South American Journal* warned of intrigues by a trust of US-owned meat packing plants to control Argentine meat exports to the United Kingdom.[26] Railway boards grew alarmed at the spread of the Farquahar Syndicate, a holding company founded in 1906 by US entrepreneur Percival Farquahar scheming to take over many South American railways. In Argentina, the syndicate offered to purchase and upgrade several state lines in the north and west. Reginald Tower feared the emergence of a gigantic trust that would seize control of Argentine grain farming. Denouncing a "wild

W.O. Henderson, edited by Barrie Ratcliffe. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1975.

[23] *South American Journal* 19, 26 Feb. and 13 Mar. 1910.

[24] *South American Journal* 16 July 1910.

[25] Evans to *Times*, cited in *South American Journal* 5 Feb. 1910.

[26] *South American Journal* 26 Mar. 1910.

Yankee scheme to own, buy up, and control the whole world," the British railways laid plans to keep Farquahar at bay by defensive mergers and changes in company rules to prevent him buying up railway stock.[27]

* * *

The Farquahar syndicate turned out too heavily dependent on European funding and crashed during the financial crisis of 1913.[28] Erupting fifteen months before World War I, the collapse terminated railway construction except for a few previously funded projects such as the grand terminus of the Central Argentine Railway at Retiro station in Buenos Aires completed in 1916. Foreign investment halted as the Bank of England raised discount rates to attract funds back to Britain. Soon after, the Great War devoured every available resource. The disruption of foreign investment proved terminal. During the post-war, the British government restricted capital exports, and taxation deterred the formation of new companies abroad.[29] By this point, the decadence of Victorian staples in Britain like textiles, railways and coal mining made domestic investment more attractive. Policy makers in Britain turned away from foreign investment as urged twenty years earlier in J.A. Hobson's *Imperialism, a Study* published in 1901.

Before the war, changing attitudes towards foreign investment grew visible in Argentina too, largely to reflect growing dissatisfaction with the railway companies. Reaching out fan-like across the pampas from Buenos Aires, by 1913 the network became a tailor made model for a primary export economy. Railways transported enormous quantities of wheat, corn, linseed, hay, wool and cattle hides to shippers in Buenos Aires, but failed to meet other perceived needs. The absences included linking the country's north with the south, adequately tying the far interior with national markets and providing better access to secondary ports.[30] Methods

[27] Tower. Report for 1912. FO 371/1573; *Review of River Plate* 28 June 1912.

[28] Simon G. Hanson. "The Farquahar Syndicate in South America." *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 17, No. 3, 1937, 314–326; also Charles Anderson Gauld. *The Last Titan: Percival Farquahar, American Entrepreneur in Latin America*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964.

[29] Policy details in John Atkin. "Official Regulation of British Overseas Investment." *Economic History Review*. New Series, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1970, 324–335.

[30] *Southern Cross* 15 Feb. 1918, quoting *La Nación*. Nationalist critics later called the system "colonial." See Scalabrini Ortiz, *Ferrocarriles argentinos* and Ezequiel Martínez Estrada. *X-Ray of the Pampas*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971.

of accountancy on the railways grew suspect. Critics claimed company accountants inflated working expenses to understate profits and remittances. They accused the companies of fixing freight rates to the detriment of producers.[31] Disconnectedness between distant British owners and local needs grew more pronounced and irritating. In 1897 the companies established joint headquarters at River Plate House near central London, a move that strengthened rumour in Argentina of "rings" and monopoly.[32] Anti-railway rhetoric grew sharper. A typical critique in 1905 blamed the "insatiable voracity" of the companies on their alien ownership.[33]

In 1907, Congress passed the Mitre Law in an attempt to balance incentives to promote new construction against needs to protect railway users. The legislation authorised the companies to import equipment and coal duty-free for the next forty years in return for paying a small tax for the upkeep or construction of bridges and feeder roads. Under the new rules, the government could order reductions in freight and passenger rates if profits climbed too high.[34] The legislation brought no greater stability as disputes recurred on the issue of "recognised capital," the basis for calculating revenues and profits. The companies wanted to claim expenses in Britain like directors' remunerations as investment, but the Argentine courts rejected such additions as "watered capital."[35] Looking back in 1921, economist Alejandro E. Bunge acknowledged that "until 1908 or 1910 our policies, which were adapted to British policies, were beneficial in all aspects. Our economic progress has been due largely to our strong commercial links

[31] On the abuses of the Central Argentine Railway, see *La Nación* 2 Aug. 1902, 4 Sept. 1904. Criticism of railways as a "ring" appears in N.L. Watson, *The Argentine as a Market*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1908, 6–8. A statement of railway profits appears in *South American Journal* 2 April, 1910. By these calculations, returns averaged 4.7 per cent with some ordinary shares at times paying 5 per cent and higher.

[32] On railways directors, see *St. Andrew's Gazette* Sept/Oct 1894 showing the continuing prominence of Frank Parish, George Drabble, John Fair and John Morris, the London head of the River Plate Trust, most of whom died around century-end. Damus, *Railways*, provides biographic data on managers and directors. On "interlocking" directorships, see Jones, *British Financial Institutions*, 135.

[33] As noted in the *South American Journal* 22 Feb. 1905.

[34] The legislation is outlined in *Review of the River Plate* 4 Oct. 1907. The text of the *Ley Mitre* (named after Emilio Mitre, son of Bartolomé Mitre) is published in Ernesto J. Tessone. *Legislación ferroviaria; sistemas—revisión de nuestra legislación—régimen legal de los ferrocarriles*. Buenos Aires: Lajouane, 1919.

[35] For discussion, see *Review of the River Plate* 27 May 1910 and 21 May 1915, with many later instances.

with Britain and other European states."[36] At that point, he thought conditions changed and the country required a stronger focus on the domestic market. By 1910, railways had connected all the best land with coastal ports, leaving new lines subject to diminishing returns. Isolated voices began urging railway nationalisation. Congressman Rogelio Araya, for example, claimed local control would produce better service (Map 7.1).[37]

Concerns multiplied on the outbreak of war, a calamity that exposed the vulnerability of an economy dependent on a distant foreign supplier. As it asphyxiated foreign investment, the war almost demolished foreign trade. Coal imports into Argentina plunged from 4 million tons in 1913 to 707,000 tons in 1917; imports of rails and rolling stock revealed similar trends, while shipping rates climbed 11-fold in 1914–1916 alone. By 1918 British exports to Argentina totalled less than half those of 1910 in quantity but cost three times more. On the railways, working expenses soared and profits plunged.[38] In 1913 shares of the Great Southern Railway, the premier company, stood at 30 per cent higher than in 1910 but at 30 per cent lower in 1920.[39] Coal shortages damaged the Primitiva Gas Company and the Anglo-Argentine Tramway Company, the leading British utility and transport firms in Buenos Aires, leaving the former in breach of its contract and the latter in default on its dividend payments.[40] Disputes with municipal authorities and consumers flared as British companies sought to offset rising costs by increasing rates.[41] Changes in the suffrage law under

[36] Quoted in Arturo O'Connell, "Free Trade in One (Primary Producing) Country: The Case of Argentina in the 1920s," in Guido Di Tella and D.C.M. Platt eds. *The Political Economy of Argentina, 1880–1946*. London: Macmillan, 1986, 75.

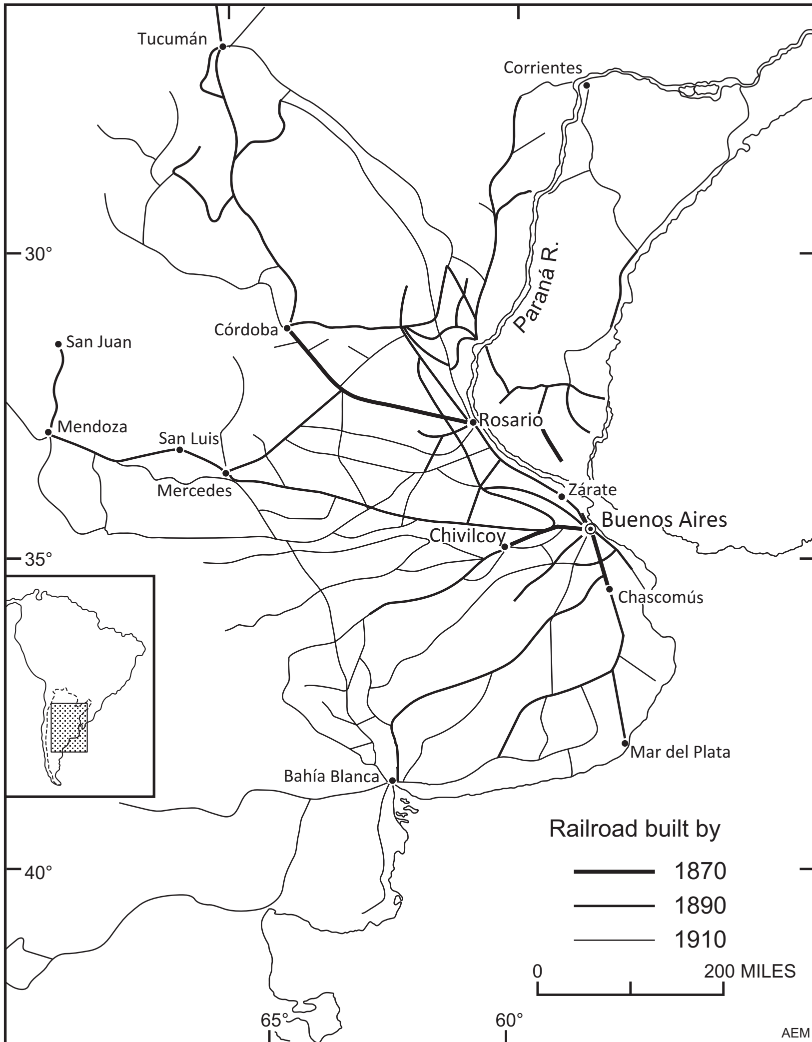
[37] Araya is discussed in Mario Justo López. *Yrigoyen, Alvear y los ferrocarriles británicos*. Buenos Aires Edhasa, 2012, 80–81.

[38] Shipping rates increased from 15 shillings (£0.75) a ton in 1914 to 170 shillings (£8.5) in 1916. See E. Tornquist and Co. *Business Conditions in Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Tornquist and Co. 1914–1919; also Albert, *South American and the First World War*, 74–75. On shipping, see *Standard* 31 May 1923 and Chamber of Commerce to Robertson 3 Aug. 1926. FO 118/589. "Coefficients of exploitation," namely railway expenses as a proportion of revenues, are noted in Paul B. Goodwin, Jr. "The Politics of Rate-Making: The British-owned Railways and the Unión Cívica Radical, 1921–1928." *Journal of Latin America Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1974, 259.

[39] A table of share quotations based on *The Times* appears in Goodwin, "Rate Making," 262; also López, *Ferrocarriles Británicos*, 186–188 for tabulations of wartime share prices.

[40] On the Primitiva Gas Company, see *Review of the River Plate* 9 May, 1919 and on the tramways 25 Apr. 1919.

[41] On complaints about municipal taxes, see *Review of the River Plate* 28 Aug. 1916.



Map 7.1 British railways in Argentina towards 1910

President Roque Sáenz Peña in 1912 aiming to protect and enhance voting rights in the male population complicated the picture.[42] In October

[42] The "Ley Sáenz Peña" is explored in Rock, *Politics in Argentina*, 34–39. Its chief features included using the military conscription list to create an accurate electoral roll and making the vote compulsory. It excluded voting by the large foreign born population and by women.

1916, the election victory of the Radical Party, (the Unión Cívica Radical) concluded a half-century of dominance by explicitly pro-British administrations. New President Hipólito Yrigoyen pledged "distributive justice," a Catholic-influenced approach that pursued greater sensitivity to neglected domestic groups, labour in particular, and diminished deference to foreign capital.

In 1916, Yrigoyen faced the task of reconciling a fledgling popular democracy with the presence of powerful local interest groups allied with large, well-entrenched British companies.[43] Soon after he took office, the railways faced severe labour conflict arising from wartime economic stresses. Labour relations were already poor following a month-long strike in 1912 by 5000 drivers and firemen. After the 1912 strike, the companies refused to reinstate some of the men they had dismissed and obstructed implementation of a railway pension scheme passed by Congress in 1915. Soured relations persisted as prolonged recession impelled the companies to lay off more labour. Severe disruption began in mid-1917 in the workshops Central Argentine Railway near Rosario where manager J.P. Crouch confronted a turbulent mass of disaffected immigrant workers. Strikers wrecked company property and rolling stock, uprooted sections of track and assaulted British workmen who refused to join the movement. The Radical-controlled local government became implicated as the British accused officials of failing to prevent damage to property and of attacks on British employees. Rosario consul Spencer Dickson reported "our people are openly attacked in the streets and the police look on and refuse to help them."[44]

In early 1918, the railway strikes swept into Buenos Aires. At this point the high unemployment of 1913–1917 rapidly receded following huge Allied purchases of Argentine meat and grains. Inflation soared as imports grew scarce and food more expensive in the wake of heavy foreign demand and high shipping costs.[45] While unemployment fell in 1918–1921, the cost of living rose sharply. The resulting combustible mix prompted the

[43] See Rock, *Radicalism*, 95–129.

[44] Dickson to Tower 16 Aug. 1917. FO 368/1613. The Rosario conflicts prompted British investigations of German collusion in the strikes, although no proof ever appeared. See Despatch No. 326, FO 368/1693 (Crouch to British Consul) and statutory affidavits in Despatch No.69 FO 368/1877.

[45] On wartime economic conditions, see Pablo Gerchunoff. *El eslabón perdido. La política económica de los gobiernos radicales (1916–1930)*. Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2016, 25, 68. On wartime inflation, see Rock, *Politics*, 104–106.

growth of militant trade unions and a rising incidence of strikes. Confrontation mounted, with government and unions on one side and railway companies and the government's political opponents on the other. For months, Yrigoyen cited "distributive justice" to resist pressure to end the strikes by force. Claiming the railway companies had profiteered for years, he urged them to raise wages while keeping rates stable. Railway disputes overlapped into party politics as government supporters attacked the companies for their alleged ties with previous administrations. Before Yrigoyen's election, "[they had] appointed ministers and even presidents and could count on the entire authority of the state to defend their privileges."[46] Critics denounced the railway local directors, who were mostly appointees of previous governments considered hostile to the new administration.[47] Unions tapped nationalist sentiment. La Fraternidad, the railway drivers' federation, objected to the companies paying income taxes in Britain while refusing their employees "any form of improvements [and denying] the State the right to exercise any form of control."[48] They claimed cuts in railwaymen's pay amounted to an illegal British war subsidy extorted from a country pledged to neutrality.

Pro-British groups countered by accusing Yrigoyen of abetting disorder and sabotage by German sympathisers. Allied diplomats threatened to divert shipping from Buenos Aires, although the urgent need for Argentine grain in Western Europe prevented any action.[49] With the foreigners inactive, Yrigoyen's domestic opponents took the lead in pressuring him to modify government policy. To this end, they fanned paranoia about the threat from labour, drawing on memories of the period before 1910, an era of general strikes, Anarchist direct action and heavy police repression.[50] They drew parallels between Yrigoyen's failure to control labour militants and the errors and weakness of Prime Minister Alexander Kerensky in Russia leading

[46] República Argentina. Boletín de Obras Públicas e Industrias. *La política obrera del actual gobierno en sus relaciones con los obreros del riel.* Buenos Aires, 1921, 4. The "ministers and even presidents" referred to men such as Ezequiel Ramos Mexía, minister of public works under Roque Sáenz Peña, and Manuel Quintana, a former railway lawyer, president in 1904–1906.

[47] For allegations of bribery and racketeering by local directors, see *La Época* 9 Nov. 1917 and 20 Aug. 1918; also Tower to FO 22 Nov. 1917. FO 371/3150.

[48] Memorandum of La Fraternidad 17 Nov. 1917.

[49] See Tower to FO, 13 Feb. 1918. FO 371/3150

[50] For pre-1910 labour history, see Juan Suriano. *Cultura y política libertaria en Buenos Aires, 1890–1916.* Buenos Aires: Manantial, 2001.

to the October Revolution. Montes de Oca, the chairman of the local directors of the Pacific Railway, compared strike leaders in Argentina with Bolshevik agitators in Russia. The two were alike in pursuing "the elimination of all order and discipline and the suppression of the fundamental principles [governing the country]."[51]

In early January 1919, conflict exploded in "La Semana Trágica."[52] It began with a gunfight between police and striking metal workers at the British-controlled Pedro Vasena plant in the impoverished Nueva Pompeya district of Buenos Aires. Shortages of imported scrap iron led the company to attempt to reduce wages of already low-paid workers.[53] When bystanders were killed in fighting near the plant, the city erupted in a great general strike. Thousands of young workers marched to the Chacarita cemetery, wrecking trams and cars and ransacking a church along the way. On the next day, heavily armed troops marched in to restore order, while so-called *niños bien*, "well-heeled kids" from upper class families, roamed the streets vigilante-style hunting for "agitators." The episode reached its climax in an onslaught against Jewish workmen and their families on trumped up charges of Bolshevist conspiracies. Prominent conservative politicians and military leaders formed La Liga Patriótica Argentina, a paramilitary organisation pledged to eliminate leftist opposition.[54]

The Semana Trágica had no visible British participants on either side, although inflammatory statements by government opponents like Montes de Oca tied to British companies prepared the ground for violence.[55] British ship owners participated in a strike breaking organisation known as the National Labour Association that in May 1921 mobilised blacklegs to

[51] Manuel Montes de Oca in *La Prensa* 22 Nov. 1917.

[52] For details, see David Rock. "Lucha civil en la Argentina: La Semana Trágica de enero de 1919," *Desarrollo Económico*, Vol. 11, No. 42, Mar. 1972, 165–215; also "La Semana Trágica y los usos de la historia." *Desarrollo Económico*, Vol. 12, No. 45, June 1972, 185–192.

[53] For the Vasena company, see *Review of the River Plate* 14 Nov. 1919. Before the war, it became one of three sizable industrial firms acquired by British interests. See Rocchi, *Chimneys of the Desert*, 90–91.

[54] On the Patriotic League, see Sandra McGee Deutsch. *Counterrevolution in Argentina 1900–1931: The Argentine Patriotic League*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986; Luis María Caterina. *La Liga Patriótica Argentina: un grupo de presión frente a las convulsiones sociales de la década del veinte*. Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1995.

[55] Lengthier examination of wartime and early post-war labour conflict appears in Rock, *Radicalism*, 125–200; also Goodwin. *Rate Making* and his *Los ferrocarriles británicos y la UCR*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones La Bastilla, 1975.

break a strike in the port of Buenos Aires. Fearing the disorder would lead to his overthrow, Yrigoyen succumbed to pressure. Abandoning "distributive justice," he made few further attempts to defend the unions. In mid-1921, troops harassed and repressed striking port workers, an action tolerated by the government. Further, the president countenanced military action against protesters at both extremes of the country, among shearers and shepherds in Patagonia and quebracho timber workers in the Chaco.

Events in 1917–1921 highlighted ties between leading British companies, the military and the Church, and their tension with government supporters. Discontent lingered in succeeding years. In 1921, for example, the Great Southern Railway announced a plan for suburban electrification. To attract British investors, it issued bonds paying high 6 per cent interest, a rate of return rarely seen for many years. To pay interest on the bonds, the company increased rates, citing its rights under the Mitre law of 1907. A storm of popular protest followed as objectors denounced the action as blatant imperialism nullifying the "unalterable and inalienable faculty of sovereignty…essential to the very existence of the State."[56]

World War I and its aftermath marked a first incandescence of nationalist opposition to British capital. David Kelly, a junior British diplomat in Buenos Aires in 1919 who became ambassador to Argentina during World War II, dated what he called "a cold war of niggling and obstruction" against British companies to his earlier period of service. Writing in the early 1950s, he claimed British companies and investors had launched Argentina on a course soon to make it one of the great countries of the world. In achieving this goal, the companies also set in motion forces that would ultimately destroy them. "The British investor and the British technician had produced a Frankenstein's monster of which I observed [both] the lusty youth in 1919 and the final maturity in the 1940s."[57]

* * *

As yet Kelly's apocalypse lay far in the future. By the eve of the Great Depression in 1929 Argentina had extended its already long lead as the

[56] Quoted in *Review of the River Plate* 26 Aug. 1921.

[57] Sir David Kelly. *The Ruling Few, or, The Human Background to Diplomacy*. London: Hollis and Carter, 1953, 114.

largest and richest economy in Latin America. With only 16 per cent of the region's population, it contained half its railways, telephones, automobiles, and imported three times more than any other country south of the United States. In 1923, Argentine imports totalled £172 million compared with second-running Cuba's £55 million and third-running Brazil's £50 million.[58] More than 2000 British firms conducted business in Argentina, which continued to rank as one of Britain's largest overseas markets. In 1930, investment in Argentina totalled a gigantic £435 million producing £21 million in annual remittances.[59] British people in Argentina, principally in Buenos Aires, comprised two-thirds of the entire British population living in Latin America, around 40,000 of a total 60,000.[60] 1923–1929 brought a return to the pre-war years of plenty as many large British companies reaped dividends of 15 per cent and higher. Leading successes included the meat processor Liebig's, the River Plate Trust, various land companies including La Forestal in the eastern Chaco, and Agar Cross, the large import house originating in Glasgow specialising in agricultural and electrical equipment.[61] In 1926 Vestey Brothers, a multinational empire already prominent in the Rio de la Plata in meat packing and ownership of the Blue Star shipping line, constructed Anglo Frigorífico on Dock Sur, Buenos Aires. As the second-largest meat packer in the country, the giant Anglo-South American Meat Company slaughtered up to 5000 animals a day.[62]

[58] Department of Overseas Trade. *Report of the British Economic Mission to Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1929, 22. A tabulated summary exhibiting Argentina's enormous salience in Latin America appears in Vernon L. Phelps. *The International Position of Argentina*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1938, 9. Argentina had two-thirds of the radios in Latin America and 65 per cent of education spending.

[59] *South American Journal* 15 Jan. 1925. On these figures, the rate of return totalled 4.82 per cent. On British firms in Argentina, see Roger Gravil. "Anglo-US Trade Rivalry in Argentina and the D'Abernon Mission of 1929." In David Rock ed. *Argentina in the Twentieth Century*. London: Duckworth, 1975, 45. On foreign investment, see *South American Journal* 25 July 1931. The same issue reported railway investment at £215 million in 1913 and £271 million in 1930, with yearly remittances rising from £7 to £12 million.

[60] Estimates from Rory Miller. "The British Communities and the Management of British Firms in Post-war Latin America." Mimeo. These figures show British population totals of 33–39,000 in Argentina, 7300 in Brazil, 6000 in Chile and 2400 in Mexico.

[61] *South American Journal* 25 May 1929. High profits of other leading British firms are noted in Rippy, *British Investments*.

[62] Hanson, *Argentine Meat*, 242–250. For an outline biography of William Vestey, the Liverpool-born entrepreneur who founded the company, see Richard Perren. "Biography of William Vestey." http://www.bluestarline.org.william-vestey.htm

On the railways, the four leaders—the Great Southern, the Western, the Pacific and the Central Argentine—also prospered. Having asserted government authority over their rates, Yrigoyen allowed the companies to increase them soon after the presidential election of 1922 had carried the Radicals to a second victory. The post-war period provided a striking contrast with pre-war, in that railway construction and new investment tailed off but railway traffic expanded. A 1929 report indicated the tripling of passengers and the doubling of goods since 1918.[63] Higher utilisation combined with lower investment implied major increases in profits. Railway dividends recovered to pre-war levels of 6–7 per cent, while in 1926–1927 the Great Southern paid out a record 8 per cent to its ordinary shareholders. By 1929, the leading companies had all accumulated reserves approaching double the 1913 level.[64] A corporate giant, the Great Southern appeared a rock-solid investment for the British middle class. Its few hundred shareholders of the 1870s climbed to around 100,000 in the late 1920s. The company transported more than 50 million passengers a year, four-fifths of whom passed through its grand terminal at Plaza Constitución. Its workshops at Remedios de Escalada, now extending over sixteen acres, employed almost 3000 men. Imported giant cranes and heavy metal castings enabled the company to repair, assemble or build virtually everything it utilised, including its rolling stock. The Central Argentine and Pacific railways carried out repair and construction work of similar scope in their yards near Rosario and in Junín respectively.[65]

Trade in railway supplies remained almost exclusively in British hands. In 1921–1930 purchases totalled £66 million and payments to shippers transporting goods to and from Argentina added £9 million. Over this period too, the companies remitted a massive £120 million.[66] The great capital inflow of pre-war thus gave way to a large post-war net outflow.[67] Argentine critics claimed that having ceased to be investors the British

[63] *Standard* 7 Nov. 1929. On post-war investment, see López, *Ferrocarriles*, 37, 253–255.

[64] Summaries appear in *South American Journal* 4 Jan. 1930.

[65] Outline histories of all the railway companies appear in *Times Book on Argentina*, 66–95.

[66] David Kelly, Foreign Office Minute 2 Feb. 1932 FO 371/15797. Quoted in Colin M. Lewis, "More 'anglo-criollo' than British: early 'British' investments in Argentinian railways and utilities," mimeo. See also Phelps, *Argentina*, 234 for year by year figures for 1921–1930. He called Britain a "mature" creditor on the grounds that by the 1920s the outflow of funds far exceeded the inflow.

[67] Figures appear in *South American Journal* 27 July 1931.

became rentiers.[68] While the remittances went into the pockets of the shareholders and directors, the railway trade boosted the weak post-war British economy, providing work for engineering firms and coal pits, two of its most fragile components.[69]

Aware of the importance of the railways and other British companies in Argentina to post-war recovery in Britain, the Foreign Office deployed great pomp and ceremony to protect them. The welcome accorded President-elect Marcelo T. de Alvear in London in July 1922 included an audience with George V and other marks of favour and goodwill. At a banquet in Alvear's honour in the City of London, the Lord Mayor described Argentina as "one of the principal nations of the world." Ignoring past friction with Yrigoyen, Prime Minister David Lloyd George stressed Argentina's contributions to the Allied victory as a food supplier. He recalled how during the war he and his cabinet took anxious note of the progress of the Argentine wheat harvests.[70]

For a time, relations grew calm, almost eventless. When asked to speak on Argentina in 1925, Foreign Secretary Austen Chamberlain appeared lost for words: "Anglo-Argentine relations have been so without incident, excitement and colour that I find it difficult to obtain material for an oration."[71] The following year, the *Standard* of Buenos Aires interviewed W. Lints Smith, general manager of the *The Times*, then visiting Argentina. When the local journalist complained the British press paid too little attention to Argentina, Smith replied that relations between the two countries flowed with such ease they rarely noticed one another. Britain and Argentina were "more complementary than any two other nations in the world because each can supply what the other needs in the most complete way."[72] Referring to British investment in Argentina, Chancellor of the Exchequer Winston

[68] See Jorge Fodor, Arturo A. O'Connell, Mario R. dos Santos. "La Argentina y la economía atlántica en la primera década del siglo xx." *Desarrollo Económico*, Vol. 13, No. 49, 1973, 8.

[69] See Derek H. Aldcroft. "Economic Growth in Britain during the Inter-War Years: A Reassessment." *Economic History Review*. New Series, Vol. 20, No. 2, 1967, 311–326, examining the growth of new British industry during the period. Despite 10 per cent unemployment in 1929, another authority describes the inter-war as "a period of growth almost as rapid as any of comparable length in British measured history." J.A. Dowie. "Growth in the Inter-War Period: Some more Arithmetic." *Economic History Review*. New Series, Vol. 21, No. 1, 1968, 94.

[70] *Review of the Plate* 21 and 28 July 1922.

[71] See *Standard* 5 Feb. 1925.

[72] *Standard* 8 July, 1926.

Churchill observed "never has there been a case of greater international, commercial, economic and financial interests or a greater development of goodwill without any political tie or bond."[73]

The highpoint of these warm interactions occurred in 1925 in the visit to Argentina by Edward, Prince of Wales to commemorate the centenary of George Canning's trade treaty. Attended by cheering crowds, the tour prompted a resolution by the Argentine Senate to raise a statue of Canning in Buenos Aires.[74] For a time, Canning's name enjoyed cult-like status among upper class Argentines (Fig. 7.2). Speaking in London in 1927, Montes de Oca emphasised that "We Argentines have been taught since our infancy to consider Great Britain as our great friend. The children in our primary schools learn the name of George Canning…When we open the book of our international engagements, we see there the first treaty ever entered into between our country and any other European power declared perpetual amity between Great Britain and Argentina."[75]

* * *

A less euphoric outlook supervened as the British once more grew apprehensive about competition from the United States. Although British trade eventually regained its pre-war volumes, it fell once more as a share of Argentine imports, drooping to only 17.6 per cent by 1929, a far cry from the 40 per cent of 40 years before. Throughout the decade—with little palpable difference before and after 1925 when Britain returned to the gold standard—the chamber of commerce blamed overpriced manufactured goods for the relative decline.[76] Members joined the chorus in

[73] *Standard* 8 Mar. 1928.

[74] Behind the scenes, relations were less cordial. Legation minister Sir Beilby Alston complained about "the uncouthness of the Argentines and nothing is truer than the saying 'you only have to scratch the skin to find the savage in this country.' It only shows you cannot trust these people like white people." Alston to FO 8 Sept. 1925. Private and Confidential FO 118/557. Documentation of the Prince's visit appears in FO 118/557 and FO 118/584 (August 1925). The statue of Canning, an undistinguished addition to the public monuments in Buenos Aires, took twelve years to build.

[75] *Standard* 6 Feb. 1927.

[76] On exchange rates and effects of the return to the gold standard on British exports, see *Review of the River Plate* 24 Aug. 1923 and *Standard* 17 Dec. 1925; on pleas for lower priced British goods, see *Standard* 5 Oct. 1922 and 17 Dec. 1925. Also D.E. Moggridge. *The Return to Gold: The Formulation of Economic Policy and its Critics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969; John Redmond. "The Sterling Overvaluation of 1925: A

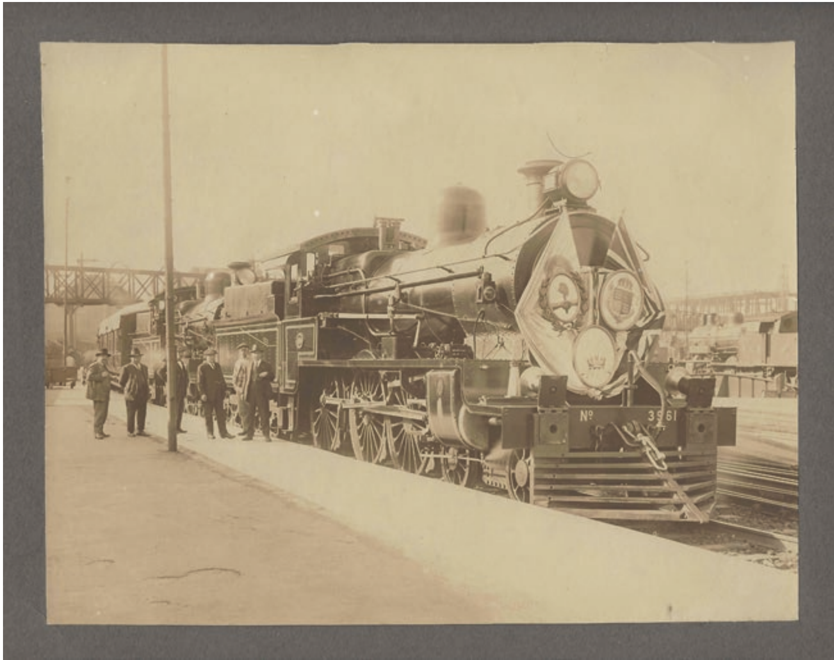


Fig. 7.2 The Royal Train in Argentina, 1925

Britain and abroad urging British mine owners to cut coal miners' wages and the British government to subsidise shipping freights to lower production costs. Despite such efforts, by 1929 coal cost £9 a ton in Buenos Aires, nine times more than 1914.[77] In 1925, legation minister Sir Malcolm Robertson declared ruefully "the days of our absolute supremacy, indeed our virtual monopoly, have gone, never to return. We have been ousted in many places, in many lines."[78] He complained about British prices being

Multilateral Approach." *Economic History Review*. New Series, Vol. 38, No. 4, 1985, 520–532.

[77] On wartime commerce, see Tornquist, *Business Conditions in Argentina*. On post-war coal prices, *South American Journal* 2 Nov. and 28 Dec. 1929; W.H.B. Court. "Problems of the British Coal Industry between the Wars." *Economic History Review*, Vol. 15, Nos. 1 and 2, 1945, 7.

[78] Quoted in Paul B. Goodwin. "Anglo-Argentine Commercial Relations: A Private Sector View. 1922–43." *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 61, No. 1, 1981, 32.

"immeasurably higher than those of our competitors" and chastised leaders of British companies who "stay at home and wait for business to come to them."[79]

Robertson expressed angry concern about US competition. During World War I, British statutory lists almost destroyed trade between Argentina and Germany. Since similar measures could not be applied against the United States, managers of British companies accused Americans of taking unfair advantage. "It was then [during the war]," complained one, "that our greatest competitor, the United States, crept in and seized our market [and] planted a firm and tenacious foot in the commerce of the republics, from which it is impossible to eradicate them."[80] By the mid-1920s, the US share of trade stood at the same level as the British, lower than during the war but much higher than before it.[81] American exporters had the advantages of rising US investment in Argentina and far better access to credit. Their greatest strength lay in the new consumer durable products they exported: vacuum cleaners, wirelesses, air conditioners and not least automobiles.[82] Edgar Vincent, Lord D'Abernon, the head of a British trade mission to South America in 1929, pointed out that "the average Argentine household thinks now in terms of [American-made] motors, gramophones and radio sets than of [British-made] Irish linens, Sheffield cutlery and English china and glass."[83]

Robertson pledged to resist what he called the Americanisation of the World. He warned the Foreign Office, "the United States under [President Herbert] Hoover means to dominate this continent by hook or by crook. It is British interests that chiefly stand in the way. These are to be bought

[79] Robertson to Austen Chamberlain 20 April 1928. RBTN: Catalogue of the Papers of Sir Malcolm Robertson. Box 5.

[80] Letter to *South American Journal* 21 Nov. 1925.

[81] On post-war trade shares, see Mario Rapoport. *Historia económica, política y social de la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Macchi, 2000, 158; Gravil, *Anglo-Argentine Trade Rivalry*, 43; Salera, *Exchange Control*, 166.

[82] On US trade competition, see *Review of the River Plate* 18 Jan. 1924; also *Report by Consul at Comodoro Rivadavia*, Sept. 1926 FO 118/588. A commentary on the automobile trade appears in *South American Journal* 3 Oct. 1925. Credit is emphasised in Jonathan R. Barton. "Struggling against Decline. British Business in Chile, 1913–1933." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 2000, 235–264; also Gravil, *Anglo-Argentine Trade Rivalry*, 45.

[83] Department of Trade, *Report of the British Economic Mission*, 68.

out or kicked out."[84] Attempts by US corporations to take over British companies followed the visit to Buenos Aires by Hoover, formerly US secretary of commerce and now president-elect, in late 1928. Around that time, the well-established British-owned Unión Telefónica sold out to the US International Telegraph and Telephone Company. A few other smaller British firms succumbed to takeovers, blaming their surrender on their debts to US banks or on double taxation in Argentina and in Britain.[85] The biggest US targets, the Primitiva Gas Company and the Buenos Aires Pacific Railway, held out by once more revising their statutes to protect their existing ownership.[86]

As occurred with the Farquahar Syndicate fifteen years previously, the US push proved short lived, collapsing from October 1929 following the Wall Street Crash. While the challenge lasted, it stirred deep anxiety in the British business community in Buenos Aires. Concern reflected fears Britain would adopt imperial preference, to surround the British Empire with tariff walls and to exclude foreign countries including Argentina from the British market. At this prospect, the *Standard* quailed. "Great as the Imperial interest is, we cannot think of England's vast stake in this Republic being abandoned."[87] Robertson too wondered whether the British government intended to abandon its South American connections, surrendering to US pressure. He inundated the Foreign Office with demands for support against US competition.[88] Other British commentators with Argentine connections shared Robertson's outlook. In a lighter tone, Philip Guedalla mocked the attitudes of Americans towards Latin Americans in the guise of Pan-Americanism, because "nothing [could be] more annoying to grown men than the standing offer of a ride in a perambulator."[89]

In 1931, Roswell McCrea and his associates published their lengthy study comparing US and British trade in Argentina. Exemplars of "Fordism," they argued Britain had to modernise its industrial sector—in the same direction as the United States—or continue to lose competitive-

[84] Manoeuvres by US companies are reported in *Standard* 27 Jan. 1929; also Robertson to FO 14 March 1929. FO 371/13460. Cited in Gravil, *Anglo-Argentine Connection*, 163.

[85] Gravil, *Anglo-Argentine Trade Rivalry*, 50. Examples of firms selling out on the grounds of war debts or double taxation are cited in *South American Journal* 2 Feb. 1929.

[86] On attempted takeovers, see Goodwin, *Anglo-Argentine Commercial Relations*, 35–36, 275.

[87] *Standard* 25 May 1929.

[88] Robertson to Vansittart 31 Jan. 1928. Robertson Papers Box 5.

[89] Guedalla, *Argentine Tango*, 40.

ness. They betrayed anxiety about current trends in Argentina, warning of "the competition that sooner or later will involve [the United States] in a struggle with the United Kingdom…American enterprise is encroaching upon British economic interests with such vigor as to provoke a feeling of alarm and even of deep hostilities on the part of the older nation." They feared men like Robertson would try to exploit the entrenched standing of the British in Argentina to distort the market in their own favour. The McCrea group claimed the British exaggerated the American threat since direct competition was confined to less than 30 per cent of the goods each country supplied to the Argentine market.[90] US gains did not therefore always imply British losses. Where overlaps occurred, notably in the newer sectors of trade, Americans remained confident of their superiority. Commenting on the British cars on show in Argentina in 1931, a US Assistant Trade Commissioner concluded dismissively, "there is little to fear of competition from that source."[91] That year, Argentina imported 361 British cars compared with 21,500 American. Using data assembled in 1927, the McCrea study highlighted growing local production of textiles, paper products and metallurgical goods. US firms conducted little business in older goods of this kind but British exporters relied heavily on them. In the authors' view, the British would soon face far more damaging competition from the domestic manufacturers than from US firms.[92]

* * *

Malcolm Robertson spent half his four years in Buenos Aires in 1925–1929 as legation minister and the other half as Britain's first ambassador to Argentina. His promotion signalled acknowledgment in London of the importance of Argentina as a British market. More active and forthright than any of his predecessors, the ambassador perceived himself as a missionary in a distant foreign land labouring for the salvation of the British unemployed. He supported the railways because they were tied to coal, ship building, iron and steel industries in depressed regions of

[90] Quoted in *South American Journal* 21 Mar. 1931.
[91] *South American Journal* 25 May and 16 June 1931.
[92] McCrea, *International Competition*, 324, 333, 435.

Britain.[93] He understood that more than a decade of minimal investment had damaged their local standing. In working to improve their image in Buenos Aires, he faced obstructions from the company directors in London. Railway directors were unpopular on almost every side, including Britain. Many Argentines regarded them as mere money-grubbers, unwilling to pay even occasional visits to the scene of their investments. Even *La Nación*, the most pro-British Porteño newspaper, judged them men long past their best. A journalist sketched an archetypal railway chairman as a man "well on in years grown grey in honest epoch-making toil; enjoying well-earned and well remunerated retirement in exchange for the utterance of periodic platitudes… It is easy to fill in the mental picture [of such a man] with his paunch, watch chain, spats, an ultra-solemn jowl, a pearl tie-pin and a knighthood, or at least an OBE (Order of the British Empire)."[94] Robertson pronounced the directors old, greedy and lazy, to which they responded by demanding his recall. He proposed transferring company administration to Buenos Aires, but the directors refused.[95]

The ambassador sought to advertise the United Kingdom more boldly. He argued that "indifference to the propagation abroad of a knowledge of our language, literature, arts and sciences…is in part responsible for our loss of trade."[96] He led the creation of the Asociación Argentina de Cultura Inglesa to teach English and to induct larger numbers of Argentines into Britain's literary and artistic heritage. Once afloat in 1928, the "Cultura" depended for some time on financial support from wealthy local notables like Montes de Oca and Martínez de Hoz. Never achieving any measurable impact on trade, it evolved nevertheless into an enduring, well-respected institution that in later years developed self-supporting branches in different

[93] Robertson's correspondence noted his concerns about British unemployment: "It is almost despairing to see the figures of unemployment rising." (Robertson to A. Chamberlain 10 Dec. 1929 FO 118/607). "British unemployment was the key to my activity in Argentina." (Robertson to Robertson 12 Mar. 1929 FO 118/619). For discussion, see W.R. Garside. *British Unemployment 1911–1939. A Study in Public Policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 10–13; also Sean Glynn and Alan Booth. "Unemployment in Inter-War Britain: A Case of Re-Learning the Lesson of the 1930s." *Economic History Review*. New Series, Vol. 36, No. 2, 1983, 328–348.

[94] *Review of the River Plate* 2 Mar. 1923, citing *La Nación*.

[95] *Standard* 6 June, 30 Dec. 1926; [London] *Evening Standard* 11 Dec. 1928. Foreign Office responses to Robertson's comments are noted in FO 118/617.

[96] Robertson to Astor 15 Sept. 1927. FO 118/603.

parts of the country.[97] Robertson urged British manufacturers to visit Argentina to reacquaint themselves with "an old friend of over a hundred years' standing whom you seem to have forgotten…[to] study this friendly market and supply what it needs [in a country whose] prosperity depends on the capacity of the British working man to purchase nearly half of all that Argentina produces."[98]

His greatest concerns lay with trade. At the forefront of this issue stood Britain's rising payments deficit with Argentina. During the 1920s, Argentine exports to Britain increased steadily as a share of total exports: only one-fifth of exports before World War I, they rose to more than two-thirds by 1930. Over that time, Argentine imports from Britain declined from more than 30 per cent to less than 20 per cent of the total. Amidst these trends, deficits on visible trade increased substantially, although Robertson overstated them by ignoring invisible earnings by Britain from shipping, banks, insurance, remittances and other items. When factored in, the "Invisibles" nullified around two-thirds of Britain's trade deficit, and in some commentators' opinion eliminated it entirely.[99] Robertson blamed the deficit on the United States. He saw Americans inundating markets the world over with goods while excluding goods from the United States by tariffs. Argentine exports to the United States, for example, never very secure in a market dominated by agricultural protectionists, fell sharply following an embargo on meat, ostensibly on sanitary grounds, in 1927. Conditions affecting Argentina were replicated in other leading British markets, to threaten Britain's future as a trading nation.

[97] On the early stages of the institution, see Department of Trade, *Report of the British Commercial Mission*, 53. Attempts to promote cultural links from Britain recurred during the 1930s as students from Oxford and Cambridge universities went to Argentina accompanied by Philip Guedalla. See *South American Journal* 12 Sept. 1931, 14 Jan. 1933.

[98] *Standard* 3 July, 1927. See Robertson to Astor 15 Sept. 1927 FO 118/603 proposing a British association similar to the Alliance Française. His plea to the British government for study scholarships appears in Robertson to A. Chamberlain 10 Dec. 1928. FO 318/607. Robertson's interest in cultural exchange persisted after his departure from Buenos Aires. In World War II he became president of the British Council founded in 1934.

[99] For trade figures, see Miller, *Britain and Latin America*, 194. Data from the early 1930s showed British trade deficits of £38 to £40 million against invisible earnings of £25 million (see Anglo-Argentine Trade Negotiations 15 Feb. 1933 in T 118/57). The issue is discussed in *South American Journal* 15 April 1936; see also Phelps, *Argentina*, 196–197; Salera, *Exchange Control*, 72, who claimed the British deliberately ignored invisible earnings when seeking trade concessions from Argentina. The issue recurred in later years, as for example in *Review of the River Plate* 28 Feb. 1955.

As the campaign for imperial preference regained momentum in Britain, Robertson revived Charles Dilke's proposal more than twenty years earlier to include Argentina in the system, treating it for trade purposes as a member of the British Empire. He popularised the slogan "Buy from Us so that We May Buy from You"—an appeal to Argentines for voluntary trade preferences favouring Britain.[100] His ally Herbert Gibson enlisted the powerful Sociedad Rural Argentina to support the campaign. Gibson addressed his fellow cattle ranchers bluntly, reminding them of their dependence on the British market and the crippling losses they faced if excluded from it by tariffs.[101]

The issue simmered during the Argentine presidential election of 1928, which ended with the return of Hipólito Yrigoyen to power. Once installed in October, the president invited a British delegation to Buenos Aires to discuss a trade deal. He hinted at purchasing supplies for the state railways in Britain (rather than in France and Belgium, the usual sources), and £5 million as the likely value of the agreement. Welcoming the proposal, Robertson ignored the legal and procedural hurdles it entailed. Any deal under Yrigoyen's personal authority was illegal. It would also contravene the rights of other countries to equal treatment under most-favoured nation agreements. Likely the president realised all this; likely too, his offer to Robertson was intended as a gesture or a sop to attract the goodwill of the Sociedad Rural. Robertson, however, treated the suggestion as an expression of plain speaking pro-British sympathy. "Almost the entire Argentine people are on our side," he claimed. "They have been brought to realise that we are infinitely their best customer."[102] Foreign Office officials led by Sir Robert Craigie remained sceptical. They suspected the offer was a mere show to shore up Yrigoyen's standing among the power groups

[100] See Robertson to FO 12 Dec. 1926 FO 118/591. The slogan had two renderings in Spanish. Argentines used the form "*comprar a quien nos compra*" as an exhortation, "Let's buy from those who buy from us." The unwieldy imperative form used by Robertson "*comprennos que nosotros podremos comprarles*" means "Buy from us so that we can buy from you," implying the British would continue buying from Argentina only if the Argentines increased their purchases from Britain.

[101] On the Argentine stock breeders, see Fodor and O'Connell, *Economía Atlántica*. Warnings about the threat to Argentina from imperial preference appeared in the earlier 1920s in writings by Alejandro E. Bunge collated in *La economía argentina*. Vol. 3. Buenos Aires: Agencias generales de librerías y publicaciones, 1928, 120–122; also Vol. 4, "Las relaciones comerciales anglo-argentinas," 150.

[102] See Craigie to Robertson 10 Aug. 1929. Robertson Archive, Box 5.

that had opposed him during his first presidency in 1916–1922 and continued to oppose him during his second from 1928.

Around mid-year 1929, Lord D'Abernon led a troupe of prominent businessmen to Buenos Aires to negotiate a trade agreement. Prolonged discussion between the two sides yielded an agreement in which Argentina agreed to purchase equipment for the state railways and to halve duties on imported British yarn, rayon and cloths. As it moved to the Senate for ratification, a focus of opposition against Yrigoyen, the deal stalled. Months later in September 1930, it vanished when a military coup overthrew the president and closed Congress. With the onset of the Great Depression, Yrigoyen's manoeuvres to enlist or neutralise his opponents had ended in failure.[103]

By then, Robertson too had left the scene. He resigned from the Foreign Office in late 1929, his differences with colleagues led by Craigie likely contributing to his decision. The tussle between them exemplified the wider ideological struggle in Britain leading into the Great Depression. Supporters of protection and trade preferences like Robertson, with its anti-American connotations, confronted liberal free traders like Craigie. The former demanded the active defence of British business interests. Craigie conceded a US takeover of leading British interests like the railways would be "a tremendous blow to our prestige," but argued would not necessarily spell disaster. He cited recent cases in Chile and Mexico where Americans paid high prices for British companies they purchased, enabling their former shareholders to invest elsewhere.[104]

* * *

As the depression destroyed constitutional government in Argentina, it inflicted major damage on British interests. The Empire Trades Exhibition in Buenos Aires in early 1931 highlighted its impact. Planning for the event began during Robertson's tenure as ambassador at a time the Argentine economy approached its pre-depression peak. Promoters of the exhibition spared no effort to achieve success, billing it as "the greatest advertisement of British goods in a foreign market ever attempted." The Prince of Wales returned to Buenos Aires to open the show, calling it "a clear indication of the great importance we in Great Britain attach to our

[103] For discussion, see Goodwin, *Anglo-Argentine Commercial Relations*, 37; Fodor and O'Connell, *Economía Atlántica*, 38–41; also Department of Trade, *Report of the British Economic Mission*, 5–23.

[104] Robertson to Craigie 11 March, 8 July, 12 June 1929. Robertson Papers Box 5.

business connections with this great country."[105] The exhibition attracted one thousand British firms, including representatives of forty car companies headed by Morris Motors and the Austin Motor Company.[106] W.R. Morris, the leading British automobile manufacturer of the period, had already shown interest in Latin American markets by endowing a Chair of Spanish at the University of Oxford.[107] While advertising long-established British products from white bleached cottons and worsteds to railway cars, the great show introduced many new ones, cars, pleasure boats and commercial airplanes, to suggest an ambition to challenge US leadership.[108] Attracting close to a million and a half visitors, the exhibition of 1931 proved a giant failure, producing near-zero sales.

The destructive impact of the depression became visible in every direction, notably the railways, where plummeting grain prices led to a complete collapse of revenues. Expecting a brief downturn, the companies consumed their reserves and sought loans to tide themselves over, but to no avail. In mid-1931, debentures issued by the Great Southern Railway offering a high 5½ per cent dividend attracted only a quarter of their intended subscribers.[109] The Pacific Railway paid dividends for a short spell but had to halt purchases of supplies, defer track and rolling stock maintenance and cut wages.[110] Company chairmen struck up a woeful chorus to warn of the effects of falling earnings on railway services.[111] In the most striking transition of all, by the mid-thirties the mighty Great Southern Railway had metamorphosed from its former high standing into moribundity, a company with once "sound securities [became one] with an extremely speculative and annually depreciating stock."[112] By early 1938, share prices of the Argentine railways averaged only 6 per cent of 1929.[113]

[105] *South American Journal* 11 Oct. 1930.

[106] For a listing and commentary of the vehicles on display, see *Commercial Motor* 17 Feb. 1931. In http://www.archive.commercialmotor.com/article/17th-february-1931/58/the-british-empire-at-Buenos.

[107] *Standard* 6 Feb. 1927.

[108] On the Imperial Exhibition, see Easum, *British-Argentine-United States Triangle*, 125.

[109] *South American Journal* 20 June 1931. For other examples, see *South American Journal* 15 Feb. 1930 (Great Southern) 12 July 1930 (Pacific Railway).

[110] *South American Journal* 4 Oct. 1930.

[111] Examples include *South American Journal* 14 Feb. and 14 Mar. 1942, plus many others.

[112] *South American Journal* 18 Jan., 8 Feb 1936.

[113] *South American Journal* 18 June 1938. Data on later years appears in Clarence H. Haring. "Depression and Recovery in Argentina." *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 14, No. 3, 1936, 518; Julian S. Duncan. "British Railways in Argentina." *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 4, 1937, 559–582. See p. 571 for railway stock values in 1929 and 1937.

The disaster prompted recriminations on every side, many against the railway directors whom even the *Standard*, once a pillar of loyalty, dismissed as superannuated aristocrats who placed dividends before service. "New blood is required. Armorial bearings and family connections are not enough," it proclaimed in 1933.[114] At the Foreign Office, David Kelly witnessed the directors' blustering complaints at British governments for lack of support—a not entirely unjustified criticism since the companies enjoyed little credibility there either. Kelly dismissed the lobbyists as relics "living on memories of Argentina before 1914."[115] In 1939, Ambassador Sir Esmond Ovey reiterated the companies' unpopularity in Argentina. "They are disliked, their past services largely forgotten. The shareholders are regarded as foreign parasites…especial odium is directed against the London Board of Directors, who are known to draw large salaries but are seldom, if ever, seen in Argentina."[116] Railway employees thickened the atmosphere of dissent. In the early 1930s, workmen and staff glumly accepted wage cuts to avoid mass redundancies, but resentment brewed as year after year the cuts remained in force.[117]

Railway directors, shareholders and employees clamoured for subsidies like those awarded to farmers by the National Grain Board, the Junta Nacional de Granos. In 1938 Sir Follett Holt, chairman of the Great Southern, demanded that the "people of Argentina through their government should take over some of the risks."[118] Nationalisation, a measure pondered on occasion since the late nineteenth century, loomed more starkly. The barrier lay in its expense, that it would require a huge foreign loan. In 1939, the Argentine government took over the Córdoba Central Railway, a narrow-gauge line of mediocre standing transporting timber and sugar from the far north. It wanted ownership of the line to give the state railway network a direct connection to Buenos Aires.[119] The purchase of this railway would not be followed by others, Holt informed the Foreign Office, listing the major obstacles. They included the near-incapacity of President Roberto M. Ortiz, a leading supporter of additional takeovers, now blinded by diabetes, and the impracticability of remitting funds to

[114] *Standard* 7 July, 1933.
[115] Kelly, *Ruling Few*, 293.
[116] Gorell to Barres 3 Feb. 1939. FO 371/22706, quoting Ovey.
[117] On a wage reduction scheme implemented by the Great Southern Railway, see *South American Journal* 11 Feb. 1933.
[118] See *South American Journal* 29 Oct., 5 Nov., 10 Dec. 1938; 12 Aug. 1939.
[119] The terms of sale of the railway are summarised in *South American Journal* 7 Jan. 1939.

Britain owing to foreign exchange shortages. As the 1930s progressed, a growing consensus in Argentina urged delaying nationalisation until 1947 when the Mitre Law expired and the companies lost their tariff exemptions on imported coal and supplies. At that time, they could be taken over at a fraction of the current price, although in a likely very rundown state.[120]

* * *

During the early phases of the depression, the weakness of British export industries remained on display. When Britain suspended the gold standard in September 1931, goods ought to have become cheaper on foreign markets, but in Buenos Aires remained stubbornly expensive. As one example, during the trade exhibition a British-made electric toaster cost 25 pesos, an American toaster only 16 pesos and one made in Germany only 7–16 pesos.[121] Even before the depression struck, British importers urged British government to address the uncompetitive prices of British goods. During D'Abernon's visit in mid-1929, Robertson met Arthur G. Pruden, a leading machinery importer, who demanded a tough stance to help promote British goods during the forthcoming negotiations. "We should threaten retaliation unless Argentina makes us concessions," he urged.[122]

Stronger tactics followed major political changes in both countries. In 1930–1931, General José F. Uriburu, who seized the presidency from Yrigoyen, clamped down on imports by an emergency 10 per cent tariff, inflicting more damage on British trade. Suspension of the gold standard in Britain in August 1931 was followed by the formation of a National Government pledging protectionism, a measure threatening Argentina. Next, in early 1932 in Argentina a conservative coalition known as the Concordancia under Gen. Agustín P. Justo took power. Finally, in mid-1932 the Ottawa conference agreed to institute preferential tariffs between Britain and the British Empire to the exclusion of outsiders, principally the United States but potentially Argentina too.[123]

[120] Paul H. Lewis. *The Crisis of Argentine Capitalism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990, 56, notes a 1942 memorandum by the companies accusing the government of running the railways down in order to acquire them cheaply after the war.

[121] *South American Journal* 21 Jan. 1933 quoting *Review of the River Plate*.

[122] Robertson to Crowe, 15 July 1929. FO 118/622.

[123] On the transitions in British politics, see W.R. Garside. "Party Politics, Political Economy and British Protectionism, 1919–1932." *History*, Vol. 83, Issue 269, 1998, 47–65.

Primed by the Sociedad Rural in late 1932, Justo despatched a trade delegation to London under Vice President Julio A. Roca Jr., the son of the late president and a leading cattle rancher. Both countries had major interests at stake. Argentine concerns lay with protecting ranchers and beef exports, while Britain wanted continuing access to the Argentine market and payment of remittances blocked by shortages of foreign exchange. Before his departure, Roca visited the British chamber of commerce where chairman Herbert Gibson warned him the time had arrived to "buy from those who buy from us." Indicating assent, Roca dwelt on the long connections between the two countries. "He reminded his listeners that Canning had worked for the recognition by Britain of the Argentine Republic, and that he deserved a statue in Buenos Aires as one of the Liberators of South America. British capital had made his country fertile, and the Argentines would not be lacking in gratitude."[124]

Roca possessed greater power of negotiation than his deferential tone acknowledged. The Argentine ranchers feared the loss of the meat trade, although the British could not halt meat imports without losing their only major source of supply. Underpinned by top-class livestock and by advanced meat packing and shipping facilities, ranchers and meat packers in Argentina alone could deliver beef to the Smithfield market in London in the required quantity and quality.[125] Any brake on Argentine exports to Britain would further threaten British companies. As British exporters realised when Uriburu raised import duties, the Argentine government's control over tariffs and exchange rates were powerful weapons. The effects of exchange control, another innovation under Uriburu, became visible in 1931 when several railway companies defaulted on dividend payments.[126] Pacific Railway Chairman Lord St. Davids explained to his irate shareholders that when "exchange is rationed, you cannot send your money out of Argentina…You can only get the proportion the government allows you… We do not know what we can pay, or when we can pay it."[127] With each side well-primed, the trade deal known as the Roca-Runciman treaty stood waiting to be struck. It followed Dilke's formula of providing Argentina with special dispensations in the British market with concessions by

[124] *South American Journal* 14 Jan. 1933.

[125] Hanson, *Argentine Meat*, 256 compares Argentina and Australia as meat producers stressing the former's superiority.

[126] The system is described in Phelps, *Argentina*, 64.

[127] Quoted in *South American Journal* 7 Nov. 1932.

Argentina to match them. Co-named after Walter Runciman, president of the Board of Trade, the agreement marked the inception of bilateral trade preferences to replace the liberal principle of most-favoured nation of the 1825 treaty. Under the old agreement, no country was allowed more advantageous conditions of trade than any other.

In the 1933 negotiations, meat questions were resolved quickly. Britain agreed to Argentine requests to continue beef imports at stable prices and in quantities up to 90 per cent of mid-1932 levels.[128] Argentina accepted the "Roca loan" of £13 million provided by Baring Brothers to settle arrears in remittances of recent years.[129] For future trade, the British insisted on applying the formula "buy from those who buy from us." Bickering followed, as Roca offered to allocate 20 per cent of total trade earnings to purchases of British goods. Leslie Burgin, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade and Britain's chief negotiator, wanted 40 per cent; a bargain was struck at 35 per cent.[130] Burgin, further demanded tariff reductions on roughly 25 per cent of Argentine imports in which British suppliers were dominant. Once more, Roca demurred. He claimed tariffs were necessary to the survival of national manufacturing. "It was impossible to involve [national manufacturers] in ruin," he argued. "There would be serious political agitations against reductions [in tariffs] by the work people whose occupation would be threatened." Burgin insisted. No agreement would be possible "unless the formulae regarding tariff reductions were definite and promised substantial reductions."[131] In the end, the Argentine government reduced or eliminated duties on goods from a list of 388 British firms trading in Argentina, and agreed to return imported British coal to the duty-free list. Argentina's commitment to the "benevolent treatment" of British companies exempted all British goods from the emergency tariff of 1931 and promised British firms shares in future public works contracts.[132] The exchanges between Roca and Burgin had two significant features. They revealed the strong concerns of the Concordancia, a government ostensibly

[128] Meat questions were discussed on 15 Feb. and 16 Mar. 1933. See T 188/57.

[129] Daniel Drosdoff. *El gobierno de las vacas, Tratado Roca-Runciman*. Buenos Aires, La Bastilla, 1972, 24–44 listing forty-nine British companies affected by blocked remittances. For details see discussions of 22 Feb. 1933. T 188/57. Negotiation of the loan sponsored by Barings was completed in October 1933. For details, see *South American Journal* 21 Oct. 1933.

[130] Discussions about Britain's share of foreign exchange are detailed in reports for 15 February, 13 March, 3 April 1933. T 188/57.

[131] Minutes of meeting of 28 March 1933. T188/57.

[132] Details appear in *South American Journal* 6 May, 1933.

dominated by meat exporters, with the future of manufacturing and its likely connection with political stability in Argentina. Second, they offered the most substantive tariff only to select British firms and not to British exporters en masse.

In 1933, the British government negotiated an entitlement for importers of British goods in Argentina to purchase foreign exchange at subsidised rates; goods from elsewhere paid higher free market rates.[133] Foreign exchange shortages (resulting from the collapse of export earnings during the depression) led to a list of priorities being drawn up in order to allocate the subsidies. Servicing the Argentine foreign debt headed the list and payments to importers of British goods came second. Freight charges appeared third and company remittances fourth. Under the scheme, British exporters and shippers became far more likely to receive foreign exchange at the subsidised rate than companies like the railways wanting to remit funds.[134] The scheme awarded British export firms and workers priority over British shareholders.

Preferences to the British were thus far from uniform, and were not available to all British interests. Last in line in the order of preferences for foreign exchange, remitters faced difficulties throughout the 1930s, as illustrated by the firm Lever Hermanos, the Argentine subsidiary of Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch soap maker. Discussing how to remit profits in 1935, company officials could only suggest appealing to the government for special terms, but held out no prospect of success. They pondered an archaic method of making remittances of the type employed by merchants like James Hodgson a century earlier. It required converting their funds into local raw materials, in this instance tallow, and exporting it. None of these ideas worked and by 1937 the subsidiary had accumulated 500,000 pesos, more than £31,000, in undistributed profits vulnerable to both depreciation and a devaluation of the peso.[135] Railway companies faced the same conditions as Lever and others for remittances, along with an additional major hurdle in the form of Argentine taxes. In 1938, Holt claimed the companies had suffered exchange losses of more than £25 million since 1930. He accused the Argentine government of diverting railway

[133] For a tabulation of official and free markets rates, with differences between them of up to 25 per cent, see Salera, *Exchange Control*, pp. 269–271.

[134] It was decided by Craigie and others “not to let grievances [of transportation companies] take precedence” (T188/57).

[135] Lever Hermanos. Report no. 7, 1937. Unilever Archive: UNI/RM/DC/2/2/4/7.

revenue into road construction in a deliberate effort to draw traffic onto the highways.[136]

The Roca-Runciman treaty cast a pall over Anglo-US relations. Primed by McCrea's team whose members anticipated the directions of future British policy, US critics deplored Britain's abandonment of competitive trading, blaming British policy for declining US trade. In the mid-1930s, Clarence H. Haring, a leading US commentator on Latin American affairs, described Argentina as a "satellite" of Britain, meaning a colony.[137] To vindicate US claims in part, the Roca-Runciman era provided some instances in which the British scored notable successes apparently at the expense of Americans. In 1936, British shipyards delivered several destroyers to the Argentine navy, to recapture a market they had lost twenty years earlier when US-made steel proved much cheaper than British.[138] Nevertheless, the overall record suggests a quite different picture that scarcely supported the US objections. Argentine imports from the United States fell most in 1929–1933 before enactment of the treaty, and then recovered to some degree as the rules of the treaty were applied. Comparative figures showed imports of British goods to Argentina fell from 345 million pesos in 1929 to 246 million in 1931 and to 210 million in 1933. Recovery to 291 million followed in 1935. Imports of US goods fell from 516 million in 1929 to 185 million in 1931 and to 107 million in 1933; in 1935, the figure rose to 160 million.[139] US trade economist Virgil Salera compiled these statistics. They showed that demand for US consumer goods fell as a result of the depression and falling demand, not the British trade treaty. Salera stood out among the US specialists of the period who blamed discriminatory British preferences for falling US trade. Looking at his own figures, he had to admit his "analysis had not unambiguously singled out the exchange-differential variable" as

[136] See *South American Journal* 3 July, 1938. For the controversy about railway exchange losses, see Salera, *Exchange Control,* 150. The claim of exchange losses was based on the argument that the companies had set up their businesses at the exchange rate of 11.45 pesos to the pound but now had to purchase sterling for supplies and remittances at rates of between 15 and 20 pesos.

[137] Haring, *Argentina*, 512. Salera, *Exchange Control*, contains another strong statement of US opinion.

[138] The sale of the destroyers is noted in *South American Journal* 18 June 1936. In 1910, the periodical recorded the advent of US primacy in this field, (see its numbers of 19 and 26 February, and 13 March).

[139] Salera, *Exchange Control*, 166, shows a comparative table of table of Argentine imports from Britain and the United States.

the cause of the decline in US trade.[140] One US economist, Vernon L. Phelps, noted the Roca-Runciman treaty supported some but not all British interests. In his view, the railways, discriminated against by exchange control and taxation, shouldered a substantial portion of the losses from the depression.[141]

Before the depression, McCrea's group predicted domestic manufacturers would soon become a major obstacle to British exports. In the 1930s, the prediction proved wrong. Although Argentine-owned textile factories increased from 5 in 1925 to 22 in 1937, imports of British textiles maintained their market share, most likely by exporting higher quality products. When the treaty came due for renewal in 1936, British textile manufacturers argued that recent sales to Argentina helped to protect the employment of half a million British working people.[142] Their support ensured the survival of the treaty against the opposition of British imperial interests favoured by other agreements following the Ottawa treaty.

The Argentine government deployed two principal methods to weaken any adverse effects of the treaty, one proven and the other suspected. First, currency devaluation, a practice introduced in 1933, raised prices of imported British goods and reduced the sterling value of remittances.[143] Reporting in 1935, Commercial Attaché Stanley G. Irving noted that although the devaluation aimed to assist grain farmers, it "had the effect also of increasing the protection of national manufacturing industries, and incidentally caused substantial losses to British as well as other foreign trade interests."[144] Secondly, the Imperialist press in Britain led by the *Daily Express* owned by Canadian business leader Lord Beaverbrook claimed the Argentine government failed to meet its agreement to spend 35 per cent of total export earnings on purchases of British goods. Allegedly, Argentina bought some goods elsewhere, likely in the United States. When the Roca-Runciman treaty was renewed in 1936, the single modification to the text reiterated this commitment: "Under exchange control, Argentina will ensure the full amount of sterling exchange from the sale of

[140] Salera, *Exchange Control*, 240.

[141] For discussion, note Phelps, *Argentina*, 227.

[142] Lobbying by textile interests is reported in *South American Journal* 22 Feb., 9 May, 13 June, 4 July 1936.

[143] As emphasised in Phelps, *Argentina*, 95. See Salera, *Exchange Control*, 149 for modifications to the exchange control system instituting the power to devalue the currency.

[144] Stanley G. Irving. Great Britain. *Department of Overseas Trade. Economic Conditions in the Argentine Republic*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, March 1935.

Argentine goods in the United Kingdom, after servicing the Argentine debt," was spent purchasing British goods.[145]

Since British exports to Argentina never regained their pre-depression levels, the Roca-Runciman treaty proved no panacea.[146] In the late 1930s, the benefits British exporters received from it dwindled. In 1937, exports to Argentina suffered from renewed recession followed by a second Argentine devaluation. As World War II loomed, Neville Chamberlain's government diverted resources into rearmament. Although it provided an easier path through the depression, the campaign to "buy from those who buy from us" never became a golden key to the recovery of British commerce.[147]

* * *

In the early 1930s, new adversaries confronted the British in the guise of Argentine nationalists. Affronted Argentines denounced the 1933 treaty as a rich cattlemen's charter devised by an unrepresentative regime in tow to British imperialists. They objected to being considered part of the British Empire whatever the advantages it gave them.[148] They argued that a favoured few monopolised the benefits of the treaty, leaving the rest of the population to face the depression unaided. Opponents of the treaty included many second-ranking ranchers with estancias north of Buenos Aires in Entre Rios and Corrientes, areas of lower quality cattle whose carcases were either sold on the domestic market or processed into frozen and corned beef. During World War I, the lesser-order ranchers prospered as British consumption switched to lower quality meat, although the post-war brought a severe, demoralising collapse in prices.[149] When depression recurred in late 1929, cattle owners foresaw another looming disaster. In

[145] *Agreement between His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom Relating to Trade and Commerce*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1936, 4.

[146] Joslin, *Banking*, 231.

[147] For judgements on the programme six years from its beginnings, see *Standard* 21 and 28 Apr. 1939.

[148] A single newspaper columnist in Britain is quoted wanting Argentina to become "a fully-fledged member of the British Empire." See R.A. Humphreys. *Latin American and the Second World War*, volume 1, 1939–1942. London: Athlone, 1981, 30. Other newspapers led by the *Daily Express*, owned by Max Aitken, Lord Beaverbrook, representing imperial interests, remained stoutly opposed.

[149] The impact of the post-war depression on provincial cattlemen in noted in *Review of the River Plate* 12 Aug. 1921; also Albert, *South America and the First World War*, 68–69; J. Colin Crossley and Robert Greenhill. "The River Plate Beef Trade" in Platt, *Business*

the Roca-Runciman agreement, the British agreed to continue importing the high-quality chilled beef produced by the *invernadores* of Buenos Aires, but offered nothing to ranchers of lower standing.

Brothers Julio and Rodolfo Irazusta were members of a ranching family in Entre Rios. They began their political careers as opponents of Yrigoyen, whom many in Entre Rios regarded as an overweening Porteño. During Yrigoyen's second term as president, the brothers moved to Buenos Aires to support Uriburu, the leader of the 1930 military coup. Working for *La Nueva República*, a radical right-wing periodical, they adopted the muck-raking tactics and conspiracy theories of Charles Maurras, a leader of neo-monarchist groups in France.[150] In 1930, the Irazustas helped propel Uriburu into the presidency but their hopes of instituting a long-term dictatorship failed. Losing his early support, the de facto president was stricken by illness and died soon after leaving office. Under Justo and the Concordancia, the Irazustas faced exclusion from political office while the depression threatened their livelihood as cattle raisers.

Opponents of the treaty included other groups of secondary cattle ranchers led by Lisandro De la Torre. A former conservative candidate for the presidency, he was founder of the small Progressive Democratic Party, who in the 1930s represented Santa Fe in the Senate. De la Torre targeted the frigoríficos of Buenos Aires led by Vestey Brothers, the owners of Anglo Frigorífico, and the Swift Meat Packing Company. He claimed the meat packers formed pools to force down the prices of cattle purchased from Argentine ranchers. Attempting to counteract price-fixing, the cattlemen of Santa Fe set up a locally owned meat packing cooperative near Rosario, whose leaders made bids for meat contracts from the British government. During the Roca-Runciman negotiations, the British agreed to an inquiry into the meat trade aiming to assist the ranchers but invoked issues concerning hygiene controls in the new plant to refuse to reapportion the meat contracts. Altering the contracts would require "taking away trade of an intricate and highly organised character already lawfully held by private firms." British officials advised anyone wishing to strengthen competitive pricing to purchase an existing frigorífico as opposed to building an unproven new one.[151]

Imperialism, 284–334. Exports of canned meat increased fourteen times over during World War I before declining steeply in 1918–1922.

[150] On the Irazusta brothers in *La Nueva República*, see David Rock. *Authoritarian Argentina. The Nationalist Movement, its History and its Impact*. Berkeley and Los Angeles. University of California Press, 1992, 76–84.

[151] Minutes of Meeting of 28 March 1933. T188/57.

Bizarre incidents followed when De la Torre led a Senate enquiry into the profits of the frigoríficos and accused ministers of collusion with price-fixing. Attempting to defy a demand to review its accounts, Vestey Brothers made a foiled bid to smuggle its books out of the country in boxes labelled "Corned Beef." The dispute reached a climax in June 1935 as De la Torre's intemperate attacks provoked an assassination attempt against him on the floor of the Senate. As shots rang out, De la Torre escaped but Enzo Bordabehere, his fellow senator from Santa Fe, fell dead.[152] With meat, expectations of disaster proved ill-founded as the Justo administration averted a repetition of the collapse of the early post-war period. It treated the provincial cattlemen in the same way as it dealt with thousands of threatened grain farmers, by forming a regulatory board, the Junta Nacional de Carnes, to maintain prices. The measure stabilised cattle ranching tied to the frozen and canned beef trade. In the later 1930s, exports increased and markets diversified. The 21,000 tons of frozen beef exported in 1934 climbed to 96,000 tons in 1938.[153]

In 1934 the Irazusta brothers published *La Argentina y el imperialismo inglés: los eslabones de una cadena* [Argentina and British Imperialism: The Links in a Chain], a tract impugning the ties between the Concordancia and the British. Julio Irazusta's contribution attacked the Anglophile vision of Argentine history to which Roca had appealed shortly before departing for London. He objected to the way the "official history," as it later became known, magnified Britain's role in the emancipation movement to leave an impression that independence arrived as a British concession. In light of Castlereagh's indifference to independence and Canning's support chiefly for the opportunities it offered to British trade, at least parts of Irazusta's argument were not without foundation. He spoiled them by overstatement. In an extreme version of "Whig" history—"the study of the past with one eye on the present"—he subsumed the entire Anglo-Argentine connection into a sequence of submissive concessions to the British by the Argentine ruling class. Irazusta argued the pattern began around 1810 and continued throughout the careers of Rivadavia, Mitre and Roca until 1933 under Julio A. Roca Jr. Rodolfo Irazusta's contribution to be book

[152] Accounts of the incident and the controversy surrounding it include Daniel Drosdoff. *El gobierno de las vacas, Tratado Roca-Runciman*. (Buenos Aires: La Bastilla, 1972), pp. 50–3.

[153] For a summary of trends quoting Central Bank sources, see Guido Di Tella and Manuel Zymelman. *Las etapas del desarrollo económico argentino*. (Buenos Aires: EUDEBA, 1967), pp. 430–2.

consisted of a critique of "liberalism," the principal ideological foundation of Anglo-Argentine relations. Its interest lay in some broad resemblances it contained with the writings of postcolonial authors in other parts of the world after World War II.[154]

A treatise by Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz on the railways published in 1940 applied similar techniques to those of Julio Irazusta. His *Historia de los ferrocarriles argentinos* [History of the Argentine Railways] depicted a procession of corrupt British company directors and conniving liberal elites.[155] The periodical *Reconquista* edited by Scalabrini Ortiz catalogued alleged British abuses in which the seizure of the Falkland Islands occupied a prominent position. In this form, *el revisionismo histórico*, the "revisionist" school of Argentine history, appeared. Suspect for its abuse of historical evidence, its conspiracy theories and its cult of dictatorship, the movement nevertheless commanded a major impact. It challenged orthodoxy, altered perceptions and forged an alternative vision of the country's past and future development.[156]

In 1940, British diplomat R.T. Hadow explained the nationalist movement as "resentment at Britain's monopoly of the higher posts in the railways, industry and economic life in general, [positions] to which the younger Argentines aspire."[157] Such analysis failed to perceive that the nationalists aspired to political power not managerial positions on railway companies. Discrediting the British formed part of a strategy to overthrow the Concordancia. Inept British companies like the Anglo-Argentine Tramway Company abetted their campaigns by continually demanding subsidies from the city government of Buenos Aires. Growing nationalist influence grew visible in reports of the "hostile attitude of cultured Argentines who have hitherto been pro-British. The 'inglés' was always considered in

[154] On affinities with later postcolonial writings see David Rock. "Argentina from Informal Empire to Postcolonialism." In *Informal Empire in Latin America: Culture, Commerce and Capital*, edited by Matthew Brown. London: Blackwell Publishing, 2009, 49–77.

[155] Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz. *Historia de los ferrocarriles argentinos*. Fourth Edition. Buenos Aires: Reconquista, 1940, 84.

[156] Standard texts of Historical Revisionism noted in this book are Rodolfo Irazusta and Julio Irazusta. *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico. Los eslabones de una cadena*. Buenos Aires: Tor, 1934, and, Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz. *Historia de los ferrocarriles argentinos*. Fourth Edition. Buenos Aires: Reconquista, 1940. For analysis, see Michael Goebel. *Argentina's Partisan Past: Nationalism and the Politics of History*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011; Tulio Halperín Donghi. El r*evisionismo histórico argentino*, Buenos Aires: Siglo Veinteuno, 1972.

[157] R.H. Hadow 5 Aug. 1940 in FO 371/24166.

Argentina as being 'muy simpático'," but no longer.[158] Officials began harassing residents of the Falkland Islands who travelled to Argentina on British passports. They insisted on young men from the islands submitting military enrolment papers.[159] Ambassador Sir Nevile Henderson raised objections to the way British businesses became targets of "public misrepresentation." He denied claims Britain had "sinister designs, allegedly aiming to establish a virtual hegemony over this country."[160] In 1940–1941, as Britain confronted the threat of German invasion, Buenos Aires ran awash with anti-British publications. Ambassador Ovey condemned them as "poisonous vessels of self-interested, malicious and untruthful propaganda," Nazi-financed and inspired.[161]

* * *

At the conclusion of World War I, British residents in Buenos Aires looked forward to another era of comfortable prosperity. Many settled in Vicente López, Olivos, Martínez and other northern suburbs, new residential developments part-sponsored by the Central Argentine Railway. Recalling his service in Argentina in 1919, David Kelly recorded a contented population proud of its wartime exploits. Relaxing in their secluded clubs and associations, the British "lived in their own garden suburbs and took their holidays in hotels owned and staffed by the British railways."[162] Steeped in cricket, men looked up to Belgrano Club bowler Herbert Dorning, whose feats in the North versus South match of 1923 prompted some artful alliteration. A demon spin bowler, he performed in a manner dubbed "doughty and determined, deemed dangerous, deadly, deep, deliberately deceptive and damaging, and even more dauntless on a damp day."[163] In 1925, the Prince of Wales declared that "no part of our national tendencies is destined to have a greater effect on the Argentine race than the remarkable enthusiasm for athletic sports which has spread throughout the

[158] *Standard* 17 Dec. 1935.

[159] "Nationality of Persons Born in the Falkland Islands." (1935) FO 118/664.

[160] Speech at the chamber of commerce cited in *Standard* 9 Oct. 1936.

[161] Ovey quoted in *Standard* 15 May 1940.

[162] Kelly, *Ruling Few*, 110. Also *Review of the River Plate* 3 Mar., 1 Sept. 1922 reporting the tenth anniversary of the British Society in the Argentine Republic and listing its affiliated associations. The British Society itself at the time had 2000 members.

[163] *Standard* 13 Feb. 1923. Dorning was by then in his fifties. His current bowling figures of 8 for 97 were less impressive than in 1901 when he achieved 9 for 14.

Republic."[164] The Central Argentine Railway provided first-class transport north to Alta Gracia in the Córdoba Hills, a picturesque region, "away from the rain and damp of Buenos Aires…ideal [for a] holiday with a car. 500 kilometres of perfect roads." Visiting Buenos Aires in 1931, Guedalla encountered "sudden visions of England that would have brought tears to [the] eye" of British romantic patriots. Perusing the *Standard* and the *Buenos Aires Herald*, he encountered the same trivia as throughout the community's history. He recorded "the triumph of the Hospital Ball, the Scottish Ladies' Whist Drive has passed off amid universal satisfaction at a place called Banfield, [while] 'Indignant' breathed his low lament about the morning train service from Temperley…For Argentina is, perhaps, the only country in the world where England has made herself thoroughly at home."[165] Stiff class distinctions and geographical dispersal persisted. In 1944 the *Review of the River Plate* described the British enclaves in similar terms as a half-century earlier as sets of "clubs, societies and suburbs, without any particular cohesion."[166]

In 1919–1920 a surging economy in Argentina and military demobilisation in Britain induced a burst of immigration, although it soon tailed off as the new arrivals, once more mostly clerks seeking employment on the railways, found few vacancies. The post-war period produced only one attempt to organise a British rural settlement. In 1932, the Victoria Colony enjoyed a transitory existence in Misiones in the far north-east. Its members suffered the same fate as the Lincolnshire farmers sixty years before. A few dozen plucky planters hacked clearings in the tropical forests to cultivate maize, beans, citrus fruits and yerba mate but abandoned the task less than two years later as jigger bugs and malaria lamed or devoured them.[167]

Resuming by 1921, a negative balance of British migration persisted until the end of World War II, even during the prosperous late 1920s.[168] Net

[164] *Review of the River Plate* 4 Sept. 1925.

[165] Guedalla, *Argentine Tango*, 53.

[166] *Review of the River Plate* 24 Nov. 1944.

[167] The venture was widely reported in the *Standard* and the *Buenos Aires Herald*, one supporting it, the other opposed. FO 118/663 and FO 369/2341 contain settlers' letters, many complaining about insects. See also Oliver Marshall. "Peasants or Planters? British Pioneers on Argentina's Tropical Frontier," in Hennessy and King, *The Land That England Lost*, 143–158.

[168] Unpublished annualised statistics issued of the early 1970s showed a slightly different pattern. They suggest the wartime negative balance began in 1916; post-war immigration peaked at 1923 in 1923; the years 1928 and 1929 showed small positive balances. See

emigration mounted during the depression amidst rising unemployment among office workers of both sexes and skilled employees. In 1933, the Toc H ex-servicemen's charity reported dealing with 1200 distressed British and Anglo families. That year the British Society set up a soup kitchen to support up to 2300 people, while the British and American Benevolent Society (BABS) repatriated 56 people, the largest in its history in a single year.[169] In 1923–1945, as many as 15,000 people departed, draining away possibly 40 per cent of the British-born population.[170] A census of the federal capital in 1936 showed a halving of the British-born population since 1914 to less than 5000. Among foreign nationals in the city, the British-born fell from eighth to sixteenth place.[171]

Net migration to Argentina therefore grew modestly until around 1910 before retreating at a similar pace during the inter-war period, to leave an ageing population. According to William McCallum, a community leader after World War I, deaths among Britons and Anglos outnumbered births from around 1929.[172] Contract recruitment from Britain survived after the war although on a much reduced scale.[173] When Lever Brothers set up its subsidiary near Buenos Aires in the mid-1920s, the company became one of the few to adopt the pre-war practice of allowing its contract employees to spend six months home leave every five years, providing first-class tickets for the journey.[174] Noting in 1929 that recruitment abroad had declined in recent years, an embassy official pointed to the

Entrada, salida y saldos de extranjeros. Mimeo. The figures indicated a positive balance of British migration after 1875 of 17,200 compared with 1.8 million Italians.

[169] Commentaries on unemployment stressing a wide range of affected occupations appeared in the *Standard* in 1932 and 1933 but rarely afterwards. On Toc H, see *Standard* 30 May 1933, on the British Society's soup kitchens 3 Dec. 1933, and on BABS 7 Apr. 1934.

[170] Data from *Entrada, salida y saldos de extranjeros.* Figures on arrivals and departures for 1938 from *Standard* 29 Apr. 1939.

[171] Census reported in *Standard* 30 Apr. 1936. The 1936 data overstated people who had either died or left the country by failing to note those who moved from the federal capital into adjacent suburbs in the province of Buenos Aires.

[172] McCallum in *Standard* 15 Oct. 1942.

[173] A later discussion about membership of the railway pensions scheme set up in 1915 found that no one had joined "except in a few cases of contract men engaged after the scheme came into operation." Pensions Association to FO 12 June 1958. FO 371/131971.

[174] Unilever comments on recruitment of British managers appear in reports for 1924, 1935 and 1939. See UNI/RM/DC/2/2/4/nos. 1, 8, 12.

growing supply of cheaper local trainees, mostly Spanish-speakers.[175] As one indicator of the transition, in-house railway periodicals were now published in Spanish.[176]

British companies attempted to favour qualified local English-speakers—if they could find them. In 1933 the Great Southern Railway set up programmes to train local engineers, a decision welcomed by the *Standard* because it would open up more employment for Anglos. The company would "secure employees who are acclimatised and can speak and write Spanish without the heavy charges of passages to and fro. It will also help to ease the mind of parents who in these days are worried about future occupations for their sons."[177] Data from the Western Railway show that many English-speaking employees of the inter-war period were Anglos, some from outlying provinces and adjacent republics.[178] Despite this trend, symptoms of ethnic community decline appeared. British rural churches like the Presbyterian chapel at Chascomús, along with its adjacent cemetery in which Scottish notables of the wool era like Jane Robson and James Dodds lay buried, fell into disrepair.[179] According to Edward Every, a resident in South America for more than thirty years, in 1930 the British community in Argentina "passed from the position of being easily first to being obliged to fight hard to hold any place at all."[180]

British schools exemplified the transition. In the mid-1920s, around forty of them existed in the capital and suburbs with an enrolment of 2400.[181] Community funded scholarships supported pupils from poorer families on the argument that "every child we are unable to educate is a child lost to the British community."[182] Ethnic schools provided avenues to employment in British firms, by this period for both sexes. School

[175] Memorandum to H.O. Chalkley 30 Sept. 1929. FO 118/616. The contract system did not die out entirely. It continued on a smaller scale, in the Anglo Frigorífico for example, into the early 1960s.

[176] See *Revista del Ferrocarril Sud* Jan. 1930. The May 1931 edition of the *Central Argentine Magazine* noted that it was the last of its kind published in English catering for a readership of retired railwaymen living in Britain.

[177] *Standard* 15 Dec. 1933.

[178] Data in FCO (Ferrocarril del Oeste). *Fojas de servicios. Personal de vías y obras*, n.d. Museo Ferroviario. Buenos Aires.

[179] On Chascomús, see *Standard* 3 April, 1944.

[180] Edward Every. *South American Memories of Thirty Years.* London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1933, 179.

[181] Green to Robertson 23 June 1926. FO 11/250.

[182] St. Andrew's Scotch School quoted in *Review of the River Plate* 7 Apr. 1922.

advertisements betrayed a growing bicultural presence. Pointing to its 17 hectares available for outdoor activities, Oates College in Hurlingham proclaimed "physical culture are [*sic*] practised every day."[183] Ambassador Robertson laboured with typical zeal to keep the Anglos loyal to the homeland. Imitating his predecessor Tower by adopting German practice, he sought school subsidies from Britain.[184] In 1927, he brought English schools inspector Francis Duckworth to Buenos Aires. He drafted a report supporting the ambassador's views, although the British authorities ignored it.[185]

The schools clashed with growing nationalist sentiment. Pressure to appoint locally born teachers began before World War I. By 1919 a director of St. George's College reported being unable to import British teachers because provincial regulations permitted Spanish-speaking staff alone.[186] In 1927, Ernesto Watson, a person of likely British background, deplored ethnic education as a barrier to integration and social mobility. With so few descendants of British settlers entering the national universities, none qualified for the liberal professions, the upper ranks of the civil service or high government office; no one educated in a British school would emulate Carlos Pellegrini, (who was quarter British), to become President of the Republic.[187] In the 1920s, British schools were obliged to teach half the curriculum in Spanish; in the 1930s, officials imposed even larger slices of Spanish language instruction.[188] Less able to attract Anglo fee-payers, the schools accepted larger numbers of children from other ethnic groups.

Schools therefore became touchstones of the strengthening pull of the host society. Principals sought to protect the core English curriculum with the claim that "the discipline of British thought and British ideals" would enrich the Argentine Republic, but parents and pupils grew less confi-

[183] Advertisement in *Standard* 2 July, 1931.

[184] Monteith Drysdale, *St. Andrew's Scotch School*, 195. The German State paid the salaries of teachers working abroad and counted such service towards their pensions.

[185] See Duckworth, "British Schools in Argentina." The report recommended stronger emphasis on English language teaching. It argued children were leaving school too early in order to find jobs in British firms and that teachers imported from Britain were underpaid. On the refusal to support the schools financially, see Percy, Board of Education to Perry, Foreign Office 27 Oct. 1927. FO 118/595.

[186] See Haxell to River Plate Trust (1919) FO 118/533.

[187] Ernesto Watson in *La Nación*, quoted in *Review of the River Plate* 14 Sept. 1927.

[188] Kelly to FO 21 June 1942. FO 371/33576.

dent.[189] Most schools produced "clever clerks," a form of education offering less security than formerly.[190] Parents wrestled with the issue of how to have children "grow up imbued with the tradition I inherited from my English or Scottish forefathers, and at the same time equipped to earn a living in this country."[191] Symptoms of socio-cultural strain multiplied. The privileged Anglophone elite who regarded senior positions in British companies a birth right met resentment as "insufferable young pups." Critics attacked the practice of educating children in Britain. A visitor wondered why "children who are to spend the rest of their lives in South America [are being] educated in another land?"[192]

By the late 1930s, the schools appeared to be in overt decline. Ovey reported that "all was not well. The system had grown up in a haphazard fashion…no longer up to the standards of the outside world."[193] Former pupil Jessie Owen recorded her years at Northlands, the school founded in 1922 by Winifred Brightman. Northlands was considered the premier British girls' school in Buenos Aires, but Owen recalled an atmosphere laden with ethnic friction. British-born girls "seldom learnt to speak Spanish fluently [believing] things Argentine [were] inferior...We [Anglos] were on the defensive, standing up for our Argentine heritage and yet realising we were being groomed to be British." She objected to having to learn Arithmetic using non-metric British monetary units and weights and measures. She considered the History she learned "narrow-minded and biased. What Britain did was [always] right." In afternoon Spanish-language classes, the girls learned History as taught in Argentine schools where they encountered alluring topics like "las invasiones inglesas," a subject ignored in morning classes. Owen looked back on her childhood at Northlands as a "colonial existence with no obligations to the land of our birth."[194]

During World War II, the community split visibly into English and non-English-speakers, as growing numbers of Anglos drifted into main-

[189] *Standard* 9 Mar. 1924 and 16 Dec. 1933.

[190] *Standard* 14 Dec. 1935.

[191] *Standard* 1 May, 1943.

[192] Monica Milward of the *News Chronicle*. Twentieth Century Club, *Album* no. 2, 6 July, 1946.

[193] *Standard* 26 Aug. 1937.

[194] Jessie Owen. *Friendship, Service and Gratitude. Northlands Schools, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1937–1949.* Mallorca: Imprenta Pronto, 2001. The school is commemorated in *Northlands. 85th Anniversary, 1920–2005.* Buenos Aires: Tiago Biaviz, 2005; also J.H. Price. "Northlands and Antecedent Events (1881–1961)." Mimeo.

stream society. Opting for integration and speaking Spanish by choice, they minimised their British connections. Since many remained nominal British nationals, they met criticism during the war for not enlisting for service in the British forces. Some shrugged their shoulders. "Why should they throw up their studies or their jobs to fight for England?"[195] In the mid-1940s, American Ysabel Rennie perceived a culturally bifurcated community. Referring to the Anglos she met, she reported how "their English broke down, and became odd, deformed."[196]

* * *

Despite such trends, a loyal and affluent community core remained. Henderson, ambassador in 1935–1937, recalled a "no more patriotic and generous community anywhere than the British in Argentina."[197] While acknowledging numerous British firms had disappeared in recent years, in 1942 the *Standard* claimed hundreds more had survived.[198] The strongest included Alpargatas that owed its strength to its position in the domestic market. Having formerly produced cheap espadrilles, the company diversified into rubber-soled shoes and tyres, climbing into the top twenty firms nationally.[199] In 1937 Alpargatas chairman Robert Fraser led a campaign to reconstruct the British Hospital. Under his leadership, fundraisers raised their targeted 3–4 million pesos (around £200,000) in three months.[200]

As World War II loomed, the British government instructed Ovey to launch a fundraising organisation. As in 1914, uncooperative associations obstructed his efforts.[201] Six months elapsed before the British Community Council (BCC) was formed as a federation of more than forty different groups of varied size and interests.[202] Attempts to democratise the BCC

[195] Incidents recorded in *Standard* 9 Apr. 1943.

[196] Ysabel F. Rennie *The Argentine Republic*. New York: Macmillan, 1945, 165.

[197] Sir Nevile Henderson. *Water under the Bridges*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1945, 199. Robert Fraser informed Henderson the community had raised £80,000 within a month to support the hospital.

[198] *Standard* 4 Jan. 1942 listing major British firms no longer in business. They included importers Juan and José Drysdale and three banks, the London and Brazil Bank, the British Bank of South America, and the Anglo-South American Bank.

[199] Gutiérrez and Korol, *Alpargatas*, 412–413. Profits were very high during the late 1930s without matching the peak of World War I.

[200] *Standard* 28 Aug. 1937–23 Jan. 1938. The official exchange stood at £1 = 16.48 pesos.

[201] Details are recounted in *Standard* 14 Dec. 1938, 29 Mar. 1939.

[202] Dodd to FO 13 Sept. 1939 FO 446/20.

failed as complaints erupted about secretive meetings conducted by self-selected pushy upstarts. Again, women demanded a stronger voice and greater respect, while resentful Anglos dismissed the company managers controlling the BCC as "nabobs [and] little men with prospective OBEs in mind."[203] In December 1939 the fierce Battle of the River Plate concluded with the scuttling of the German pocket battleship *Graf Spee* outside Montevideo. During the first months of the war, neither this event nor any other stirred great interest. Few men heeded requests by the BCC to register for war service, and fundraisers collected far less than in the hospital appeal two years previously. A year elapsed before the first million pesos (approximately £66,000) appeared.[204] Some Anglos found their dual nationality under British law an inconvenience, objecting to the voluntary assessment scheme devised by the BCC as a foreign tax. "We are not true Britons defending our homes," wrote one. "We are not represented in Parliament. We want to give but not as a tax."[205] By August 1940, donations had yielded only enough for three Spitfires, while more than a thousand persons deemed eligible by the BCC refused contributions.[206]

The BCC achieved much greater success from May 1940 following the evacuation of British troops from Dunkirk, when new locales sprang up in many parts of the country. Ovey remained ambassador until mid-1942, and during that time Lady Ovey, Paris-born Marie Armande Vignat, became the leading figure in British war work. "Our duty as women is to work, to sew, to knit, to produce as many garments and comforts for our soldiers and sailors as possible," she urged in elegantly staged embassy tea parties and soirées.[207] Prefiguring the glamorous style of Eva Perón, Lady Ovey typically appeared at these events "looking lovely in black velvet relieved with diamond clips." She set up a network of sewing guilds and the Fresh Egg Fund for British prisoners of war and enjoyed great success eliciting individual contributions. The largest derived from Federico Bemberg, a scion of a millionaire family of brewers, although his contributions ceased when the Oveys left Argentina. An embassy official recorded

[203] On the formation of the BCC, see *British Community Council Bulletin* July 1964. *Standard* 29 Apr. 1940. BCC politicking is recorded in *Standard* 9 June and 16 Oct. 1939; 29 Apr. 1940.

[204] Consul to FO late 1940. FO 446/11 reporting 1.5 million pesos raised, one-third of which went to the British Red Cross. Sources do not indicate how fundraisers dealt with exchange control regulations when remitting funds to Britain.

[205] *Standard* 8 July, 1940.

[206] *Standard* 31 Aug. 1940.

[207] *Standard* 15 June 1940.

that “I therefore asked our friend, ‘Don Federico, where is the wee cheque?’ ‘My friend,’ he replied, ‘where is Lady Ovey?’”[208]

In 1941 contributions to the BCC surpassed the total raised throughout World War I, and in 1944 climbed to more than six times those of 1914–1918.[209] In early 1945, Ambassador Kelly reported Argentina had donated £2.4 million and 12 million eggs to 20,000 prisoners of war.[210] Requests to the BCC from the Foreign Office to tap the support of groups outside the British community proved successful.[211] Anti-British propaganda by nationalists persisted but faced a strong pro-British counter-tide. Leading newspapers eulogised supposedly unique British virtues. “Strength of character,” wrote Colonel Aníbal F. Imbert in *La Prensa* in 1944, found its finest expressions in the “serenity, balance, courage, tenacity embodied by sport for pleasure: There sits the picture of the citizen of the British Empire.”[212]

Having discouraged volunteers from Argentina, in May 1940 the British government reversed course. A military attaché at the embassy reprimanded the “spirit of defeatism among a great many of the British community especially the younger ones.”[213] Days later a capacity crowd of 2500 filled Prince George’s Hall and soon after volunteers departed to join the British forces. By early 1941, 4000 men and 400 women had registered, of whom 900 had already left on active service.[214] Throughout the war, 1700 Britons and Anglos and more than 500 women served as volunteers; 200 persons, including some women, were killed in action.[215] World War II volunteers totalled less than 40 per cent of those of World War I, a decline reflecting the contraction of the British-born population. Recruits in 1939–1945 differed from those of 1914–1918, with the British transient population of former times gone along with most of the

[208] S.R. Robertson in *Standard* 30 Mar. 1949. The Bemberg family controlled most of the brewing industry of Buenos Aires. The death of Marie Armande Ovey is reported in *Standard* 10 Aug. 1954. “It fell to her to be an inspiration for the war effort to British women…with an elegance and flair for dress possessed by few, even among Parisiennes.”

[209] *Review of the River Plate* 5 May, 1944.

[210] Kelly’s letter to *The Times* reported in *Standard* 6 Mar. 1945.

[211] Marie-Noële Kelly, the ambassador’s Belgian wife, acknowledged the contributions of Argentine donors. See *Standard* 11 Sept. 1945.

[212] Imbert in *La Prensa*. Translation in *Review of the River Plate* 15 Dec. 1944.

[213] Col R.E. Miller in *Standard* 18 May, 1940; 25 May 1940.

[214] Reports of 2 Jan. 1941 in FO 446/18.

[215] Small discrepancies appeared among the officially stated number of volunteers. The final figure counted 1542 men and 534 women. *Standard* 8 July, 1952. War casualties were reported in *Standard* 5 May 1947.

contract men from the railways and the estancias. Middle-class Anglo-Argentine office workers stood in their place.

As occurred in 1914–1918, volunteers sailed without knowing whether their military service in Britain would be recognised at home. They reaped the benefit of Argentina's last-minute declaration of war in March 1945 since the government later granted all former Allied combatants exemption from home military service and conferred state pensions on wounded men and war widows.[216] As in 1919, volunteers returned with mixed impressions about their overseas service. In 1942, Argentine Ambassador Miguel Ángel Cárcano reported a late night encounter with elated volunteers strolling through central London singing the Argentine national anthem.[217] Volunteer airmen often serving with Canadian forces returned proud of their feats, but many ex-army personnel appeared jaded. With no knowledge of the Anglo-Argentines, British officialdom regarded them as suspicious aliens and even arrested some as spies. They were treated as common conscripts, denied the small privileges granted to Imperial and Dominion troops. Returnees complained that "nobody in Britain knows anything about South America, and now the war is over and our lads have done their stuff nobody cares."[218]

* * *

During the first stage of the war, the *South American Journal* urged efforts to export more British goods to Latin America, to steal advantages from the blockade of Germany. In 1940, the British government sent a trade mission to the region including Argentina under Lord Willingdon, a former viceroy of India. The export drive lapsed owing to shipping shortages and war production in Britain took precedence.[219] Three years into the war, British exports to Argentina totalled only 12 per cent of the pre-war level.[220] As in

[216] *Review of River Plate* 16 Nov. 1945.

[217] *Standard* 7 Oct. 1942.

[218] *Standard* 12 Nov. and 10 Dec. 1945. 613 Argentine men joined the British Royal Air Force mainly as air crew; 179 women joined the female branch of the force. See Christopher Speake. "From Buenos Aires with Love." *Aeroplane* Nov. 2007, 12–17. A heroic portrayal of the Argentine volunteers appears in Claudio Gustavo Meunier. *Alas de trueno=Wings of Thunder*. Buenos Aires: The Author, 2004.

[219] Discussion of export promotion on the outbreak of war appears in Mario Rapoport. "La política británica en la Argentina a comienzos de la década de 1940." *Desarrallo Económico* Vol. 16, No. 62, 1976, 203–228.

[220] *Standard* 26 April 1942. British exports fell 71 per cent in volume in 1939–1943 and earnings by half. See Peter Howlett. The Wartime Economy. In Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson eds. *Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain*, Vol. III, 15.

1914–1918, coal supplies fell steeply, along with oil formerly shipped to Argentina from British-controlled territories in the Middle East. In 1941, the Board of Trade imposed a licensing system for exports to Latin America after complaints in the United States the British were exporting American-made goods supplied under the Lend-Lease aid programme.[221] Strict controls over trade continued until the end of the war. Particularly before Pearl Harbor in December 1941, fear lingered among the British that US exporters would again supplant them. In Washington in mid-1943, British diplomats sought a "self-denying ordinance" to shield British markets in Latin America from US takeovers. To the consternation of the *South American Journal*, an old antagonist of US interests, the Board of Trade sometimes transferred orders to British firms in Latin America to the United States.[222]

Following the Nazi conquests of Western Europe in Spring 1940 and the closure of the port of Antwerp, sales of Argentine grain almost ended. Stockpiled maize became improvised railway fuel while the government discouraged wheat production by setting low prices. As railway freight declined, the companies faced another contraction in revenue, with net receipts by 1942 at only one-third of the late 1920s.[223] Great social and economic change now swept through rural Argentina. The decline of grain farming prompted a rising flood of migrants from rural areas into the capital city, and an expansion of cattle ranching. Since Britain provided an open market for meat exports, the wartime meat trade followed an opposite course from that of grains. As in World War I, British meat purchases switched from high-standard chilled to lower quality frozen and canned beef of the type produced throughout the pampas. In August 1940, the Ministry of Food calculated it would require 409,000 tons of meat from Argentina, one-fifth

[221] *South American Journal* 13 Sept. 1941.

[222] A contract for steel tubing turned over to the United States provided one example. See *South American Journal* 18 Nov. 1944. Discussion of the "self-denying ordinance" agreed between British Ambassador Lord Halifax and Secretary of State Cordell Hull in mid-1943 is discussed in Thomas C. Mills. "The electrification of the Central Brazilian Railway and British Interests in Latin America during World War II." Paper presented in *Britain and Brazil II, Political, Economic, Social, Cultural and Intellectual Relations, 1808 to the Present*. King's College, University of London, 10–11 March, 2016.

[223] *South American Journal* 19 Oct. 1940 reporting the Central Argentine Railway, the leading carrier of grains from Santa Fe and Córdoba, had once more defaulted on its payments to debenture holders. Net wartime railway receipts are tabulated in García Heras, *Frustrated Nationalization*, 137.

of expected annual consumption.[224] Meat exports soon far exceeded the original quota, climbing to 500,000 tons during the early war years. Adopting a practice used during World War I, meat contracts were drawn up annually. One of them running between August 1943 and September 1944 yielded exports of more than 800,000 tons, double the amount specified in 1940. Argentine meat played a major part in Britain's success in satisfying protein needs of the population.[225] The wartime beef trade evoked memories of "Anglo-Porteño" during the long-ago Rosas era. He predicted that one day, as Britain went to war, the pampas would feed its population.

Argentina supplied meat on credit under a system known as the blocked sterling balances, also used during World War I for wheat purchases. It began in October 1939 in the form of monthly agreements between the Bank of England and the Central Bank of Argentina, but soon extended to much longer periods. Twenty years after World War II, Sir Leslie O'Brien, a governor of the Bank of England then visiting Argentina, acknowledged "the cooperation which the United Kingdom received both from the Argentine government and the Central Bank at that critical time."[226] The arrangement retained an important feature of the bilateral trade system of the 1930s: Argentina would be paid in inconvertible sterling. It meant that after the war, its earnings could only be used to purchase British or sterling area (mainly British imperial) goods. Since Britain exported almost nothing during the war, earnings from meat accumulated unspent or "blocked" in special accounts at the Bank of England. The balances earned no interest but had gold guarantees, namely protection against a devaluation of sterling.[227] Clement Atlee, Britain's first post-war prime minister, claimed the system enabled "us to mobilise our domestic manpower for war with an intensity unsurpassed elsewhere…without having to pay for our imports of food and raw materials."[228]

Officials pondered drawing down the blocked balances by selling railway shares. Sir Montague Norman, head of the Bank of England, argued that to

[224] MOF to FO 14 Aug. 1940. FO 370/24201. The ministry estimated it would require 1 million tons of meat a year from all sources, domestic and foreign, in order to produce 47.5 million daily rations.

[225] *South American Journal* 26 Jan. 1944. The total included pork and lamb.

[226] O'Brien quoted in *Journal of the British Chamber of Commerce* August 1967.

[227] See Interdepartmental Committee on South and Central America 16 Aug. 1940. FO 371/24201. The discussion described the functioning of the system so far. See also García Heras, *Frustrated Nationalization*, 138.

[228] Quoted in Alec Cairncross. *Years of Recovery. British Economic Policy 1945–51.* London: Methuen, 1985, 355.

"mobilise the railways" might help in securing low meat prices and head off demands for payment by Argentina in scarce or unobtainable US dollars. He hoped a sale of railway shares would give shareholders a better return than selling them on the open market.[229] As chief adviser to the Treasury, John Maynard Keynes took a similar view, while manifesting his distaste for the directors of the railway companies. He urged selling off the companies quickly, "to present the present railway boards with a fait accompli [and] to rescue the [railway] shareholders from the guinea pigs they have elected as directors."[230] During World War I, the British government sold railway assets in the United States. Keynes argued "[t]his war may present similar opportunities for South America to make…a transition to national ownership which every self-respecting and prosperous country may expect to reach in due season."[231] Prejudice in British government circles against the railways grew visible during the negotiation of the Roca-Runciman treaty. Intensifying in later years, it bore witness to a growing determination in Britain to jettison the legacies of Victorian-age foreign investment.

With the sale of the railways under discussion in Britain, in late 1940 Argentine Minister of Finance Federico Pinedo mooted replacing the existing multiple company structure by a single holding company. His proposal formed part of the Pinedo Plan, his inventive first attempt at state economic planning in Argentina designed to prevent the severe economic disruptions of World War I. Advised by economist Raúl Prebisch, Pinedo sought ways to dispose of the Argentine grain surplus. Urging Britain to increase imports of grain, he offered to accept part-payment in railway shares and to pay dividends to holders of railway debentures from the sterling balances. His plan remained stillborn. Influenced by the anti-railway propaganda of nationalist critics like Scalabrini Ortiz, Pinedo's opponents in Congress rejected making any additional payments to the railway companies.[232] During later stages of the war the British govern-

[229] Norman to Duncan 29 Aug. 1940. FO 371/24201. Discussion of the issue in the British Civil Service began almost immediately on the outbreak of war. See interdepartmental discussions 6, 7 and 12 Dec. 1939. FO 371/22706; also Waley to Scott 3 Oct. 1939 FO 371/22708. Quoted in Nicholas Bowen. "The End of British Economic Hegemony in Argentina: Messersmith and the Eady-Miranda Treaty." *Inter-American Economic Affairs* Vol. 28, No. 14, (Spring 1975), 9. Similar arrangements were made with Brazil and Uruguay.

[230] Treasury discussion of 7 Sept. 1940. FO 371/24201.

[231] Keynes broadcast 12 Sept. 1940. FO 371/24201.

[232] Wright, *British-Owned Railways*, 224; Skupch, *Nacionalización*, 480; García Heras, *Frustrated Nationalization*, 141–143.

ment authorised using a portion of the sterling balances to pay down the Argentine foreign debt, although they ballooned nevertheless. From £18 million in 1942, sterling balances climbed to £44 million in 1943 and to £150 million in 1946.[233]

In 1940–1941, Pinedo and Prebisch tried to sell surplus Argentine grain to the United States; failing that, without success, they proposed the US grant Britain a subsidy to buy the grain.[234] Protectionism stymied their efforts in the United States. On the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, the United States concluded trade treaties with numerous Latin American states to strengthen ties, but negotiations with Argentina failed as the US Congress refused lower tariffs on Argentine farm goods.[235] In the truncated treaty of October 1941, the United States lowered duties on some secondary Argentine products but refused any substantial concessions on meat and grains. Failure to reach agreement with the United States compounded growing tension in Argentine domestic politics.

In early 1941, accusations of corruption and disputed elections destabilised the government of Ramón S. Castillo, prompting the resignation of its two main figures, Pinedo and Foreign Minister Julio Roca. Doctrinaire nationalists, prepared to trample civil liberties at home and oppose the United States abroad, replaced them.[236] From the outbreak of war between the United States and Japan in December 1941, US relations with Argentina deteriorated. In June 1943, a military coup overthrew Castillo but failed to bring better relations with the United States.

[233] As reported in *South American Journal* 30 Dec. 1944, Argentine debt held in London fell from £38 million to £11.5 million. See also Noel Fursman. "The Decline of the Anglo/Argentine Economic Connection in the Years Immediately after the Second World War: A British Perspective." Ph.D. Diss. University of Oxford, 1988, 429.

[234] British officials in Washington discussed with Prebisch purchasing larger quantities of Argentine grain with the help of a US loan. See Butler (Washington) to FO 17 Nov. 1940. FO 371/24203. The idea reappeared in Buenos Aires as Lord Willingdon, leading the British mission in Latin America, reported Pinedo's offer to buy out the debentures of the principal railway companies for £100 million and to employ the sterling balances to buy railway ordinary shares. Under this idea, railway stock belonging to the holding company would be slowly transferred to the government in a form of long-term plan of nationalisation the country could afford. See Willingdon to FO 12 Dec. 1940. FO 371/24203. For an overview, see Edgar J. Dosman. *The Life and Times of Raúl Prebisch*. Montreal: McGill/Queens University Press, 2008, 117–143.

[235] On the initial failed negotiations, see *South American Journal* 13 Jan., 3 Feb. 1940.

[236] On the transitions of 1941, see Rock, *Argentina*, 240–242 with supporting bibliography; also Dosman, *Prebisch*, 144–152.

Dominated by nationalists, successive military juntas imposed tight censorship and martial law, reaffirmed neutrality and refused to break relations with the Axis.[237]

The British tried to stay aloof. With hundreds of thousands of tons of beef arriving in Britain on interest-free unlimited credit, they had no reason to question Argentine neutrality. Staying out of the war enabled scarce resources of fuel and labour to be ploughed into the cattle economy as opposed to being requisitioned under US direction. Ships transporting meat across the Atlantic under a neutral flag enjoyed better protection from attack by Nazi submarines. British observers also expected Argentina's neutrality to mitigate US influence and to benefit post-war British business. Several times during the war, Americans objected strongly to articles supporting Argentine neutrality in the *South American Journal*, once accusing its editor of taking bribes from the Argentine embassy.[238]

British attitudes towards Argentina were likely to change only if the Argentines tried to seize control over the Falkland Islands or its dependencies comprising numerous isolated, largely unpopulated islands farther south. In 1943–1944 Navy and Colonial Office officials urged a show of force in the South Atlantic to deter action by Argentina, although they met strong opposition from Kelly and Victor Perowne, head of the Latin American section at the Foreign Office. Kelly warned "a row with the Argentines [could impair] our whole existing moral position [in Latin America] and our hopes of standing up to U.S. [business] competition." Perowne declared that ""[a]part from the British capital (£400,000) in Argentina and our import and export trade, [confrontation with Argentina] would…imperil our essential meat imports… There are plenty of Americans who would like to get us out of Latin America for good." It was agreed to send a ship into the South Atlantic. Its crew would greet any Argentines

[237] A large literature covers wartime US-Argentine relations. See Arthur P. Whitaker. *The United States and Argentina*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954; Harold F. Peterson. *Argentina and the United States, 1810–1960*. Albany: State University of New York, 1964; Michael J. Francis. *The Limits of Hegemony. United States Relations with Argentina and Chile during World War II*. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977. Joseph S. Tulchin. *Argentina and the United States: A Conflicted Relationship*. Boston: Twayne, 1990. Domestic politics are explored in Robert A. Potash. *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1928–1945: Yrigoyen to Perón*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969. For an overview, see David Rock. "Argentina 1930–1946: Economy and Politics in Depression and War." *Cambridge History of Latin America*, vol. 8. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 3–72.

[238] Accusations in July–August 1944 appear in FO 37707.

found on British-claimed territory with a show of friendship and fresh food supplies.[239]

Under US pressure in 1944, Britain reluctantly suspended diplomatic relations with Argentina but refused demands for stiffer sanctions.[240] In Parliament, Prime Minister Winston Churchill expressed regret that "in this testing time for nations, [Argentina] has chosen to dally with the evil, and not only the evil, but with the losing side."[241] In private, he forwarded data to US President Franklin D. Roosevelt warning of major cuts in British meat rations if Argentine supplies failed. He told Roosevelt, "I should call the Argentines isolationists rather than friends and supporters of the Axis."[242]

* * *

As war ended, British community leaders in Buenos Aires pondered the future. The importers, one of the hitherto dominant sectors, expected Argentina to resume agrarian exports while importing manufactured goods. For a time, the *South American Journal* took a similar view, arguing that after the war, "Anglo-Argentine interchange will have one rock-like basis…the exchange of British coal for Argentine grain and meat." It advised investors to buy Argentine railway stock to reap profits from the expected post-war boom in grains.[243] The rise of Argentine manufacturing challenged the established view. From 1942 the *Journal* described the growth of local manufacturing as "phenomenal," as various Latin American states including Argentina agreed trade treaties with neighbours to promote exports of manufactured goods.[244] Wartime expansion of manufacturing in Argentina led the British to ship steel into Buenos Aires and to

[239] On such issues, see dossiers in FO 371/30312; also minutes of 13 and 29 Jan. 1943. FO 371/33525.

[240] Kelly to FO 22 July 1944 FO 371/37707.

[241] Churchill, In http://Hansard.millbanks.system.com. Commons/1944/August 2/war-situation, 1484.

[242] The forecast for meat rations in discussed in R.A. Humphreys. *Latin America and the Second War, Volume 2, 1942–1945*. London: Athlone, 1982, 180–182, citing FO 371/377715. See also Churchill to Roosevelt 28 Aug. 1944. FO 371/37707. A recent discussion is Thomas C. Mills. *Post-War Planning and the Periphery. Anglo-American Economic Development in South America, 1939–1945*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012, 168–169.

[243] *South American Journal* 20 Mar., 15 May, 31 July 1943.

[244] On 1942 trends, see *South American Journal* 20 Dec. 1942.

contract local manufacturers to produce munitions.[245] As the *Journal* now conceded, the era of exporting railway supplies from Britain was numbered in light of "the strong national spirit…All the Latin American countries insist that [public utilities] are locally owned and controlled."[246] New models for the future began to evolve. In 1943, a visiting aircraft manufacturer predicted the collapse of British trade and influence unless "we wake up to the changes that are taking place in this country."[247] Perowne at the Foreign Office urged redirecting trade towards exports of machinery and equipment. F.F. Powell, a Bank of England expert, proposed joint ventures between British and Argentine firms, with the British supplying the equipment and technical expertise.[248]

As yet, British ethnic consciousness in Argentina remained strong despite the weakening of the community during the depression. In 1944, the British Hospital offered free medical services to all English-speakers. "You have rebuilt the hospital, now use it! If you can't afford it, it is free!" proclaimed press advertisements.[249] When the collapse of Nazi Germany in May 1945 ended fund raising for British prisoners of war, the BCC decided to support needy Anglos. Kelly saw resemblances between the initiative and the "great schemes for social welfare" launched by Roosevelt's Four Freedoms of 1941 and the Beveridge Report in Britain of 1942.[250] "Soon, I hope, we shall have finished the war," declared Clive Thompson, chairman of the BCC, "but we have another one before us—a war against want, a war against sickness, against ignorance, and against poverty."[251] His words echoed Roosevelt, Beveridge, the newly elected Labour government in Britain and lastly Colonel Juan D. Perón, the militant social reformer currently on the march into the Argentine presidency.

[245] *South American Journal* 2 Oct. 1943.

[246] *South American Journal* 6 May, 1944.

[247] H.M. Taylor quoted in *Standard* 16 Oct. 1943.

[248] On Perowne's views, see Rory M. Miller. "British Firms and Populist Nationalism in Post-war Latin America." Paper prepared for International Economic History Congress, Helsinki, 2006.

[249] Examples appear in *Review of the River Plate* 10 Mar. 1944. Free medical service led to heavy deficits and soon had to be abandoned. See *Review of the River Plate* 5 Jan. 1945.

[250] Kelly quoted in *Standard* 30 May 1945.

[251] Thompson in *Standard* 2 June 1945.

CHAPTER 8

Britain and Perón

The government refuses to be blackmailed into accepting outrageous terms by a quasi-fascist South American State.
Clement Atlee, *1949*

Juan Perón became president of Argentina in June 1946, eleven months after the Labour Party replaced Winston Churchill's wartime coalition government in Britain. During his election campaign, his trade union followers named their political movement the Partido Laborista, although with Perón's controversial figure at the helm it bore little resemblance to its British cognomen. Ernest Bevin, the former trade union leader who became foreign secretary in the Labour government, recognised affinities between the two movements in their commitments to state-led social reform. He also entertained strong reservations about Perón from his authoritarian background in the Argentine military and from the way he seized control over the Argentine labour movement by suborning or displacing its existing leaders. Bevin supported the close, longstanding commercial links between Britain and Argentina. "Our friendship with the Argentine has lasted a long time. It is intended by all of us to last forever."[1] On this basis, the British government hoped to continue importing meat from Argentina to aid Britain's post-war recovery in the same way it had supported the war effort.

[1] Bevin in *South American Journal* 27 July 1949.

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The Labour Party took power facing dire economic emergency. Britain financed the war by large domestic borrowing, sale of foreign investments and Lend-Lease from the United States. It amassed enormous debts in blocked sterling balances with countries like Argentina that exported food to Britain, along with others led by Egypt and India in which large military forces were stationed. Nearing £14 billion in 1945, borrowings totalled one quarter of the gross domestic product of the late 1930s. Adding war debts to the fall in GDP, net national wealth in 1945 shrank to scarcely half that of pre-war.[2] As another major issue, trade deficits, the largest with the three leading food producing nations of the Americas, the United States, Canada and Argentina, totalled one-sixth of national income. Of annual food imports, almost a third came from Argentina.[3]

On the surrender of Japan in August 1945, the Truman administration in the United States terminated Lend-Lease. For several months, Britain lurched towards insolvency until the promise of a US loan of $4.7 billion in December saved the day. The new arrangement had some attractive features like repayment over fifty years deferred for the first five years and a moderate 2 per cent interest rate. It imposed very onerous conditions too, some of which echoed the friction between Britain and the United States over trade during the inter-war period. Principally, the loan required Britain to restore the convertibility of sterling within eighteen months. When that happened, countries like Argentina with trade surpluses with Britain would receive payment for their goods in sterling exchangeable into dollars. Convertible sterling would enable them to utilise their earnings outside Britain, most likely in the United States, to the detriment of British trade. Further, the loan required Britain to repay wartime blocked sterling balances in convertible currency, enabling creditors to import still more from the United States, once more to Britain's disadvantage. More broadly, the US government aimed to restore the pre-1931 liberal trade and payments regimes, ending bilateral trade preferences like the Roca-Runciman treaty. With such conditions attached to it, many British commentators regarded the US loan as a poisoned chalice. *The Economist* summed up the resentment against an arrangement Britain sorely needed

[2] *The Economist* 5 Apr. 1947. During the war, Britain had "lived on imports provided by realising capital assets by £12 billion, by increasing its internal debts by £3 billion, by lend-lease totalling £5 billion, by a Canada grant of almost £1 billion." Sterling balances totalled £3.5 billion, the largest amounts to India and Egypt where large British military forces were stationed, with Argentina's share at £150 million.

[3] See *The Economist* 31 May 1947, 20 Mar. 1948.

but viewed with apprehension. It was "aggravating to find that our reward for losing a quarter of our national wealth in the common cause is to pay tribute for half a century to those who have been enriched by the war."[4]

An urgent need for economic recovery thus shaped early post-war relations between Britain and the outside world. Stability required converting manufacturing to peacetime production in short order, regaining foreign markets and imposing stringent controls on domestic consumption. In foreign trade, the Labour government prepared to apply practices figuratively called "Schachtian" after former Nazi Reichsbank president Hjalmar Schacht, the agent of ruthless pre-war German trade agreements. In Britain's case after the war, such methods implied foisting as many goods as possible on foreign markets and using every available means to reduce imports. As chief adviser to the Treasury, J.M. Keynes advocated such tactics against Argentina. "Britain should seek to refuse imports," he urged, "except where the country concerned would agree to spend the receipts on British exports. There seemed to be scope for such deals with countries for whose products Britain was the principal market, Argentina and her meat being a favourite example."[5] Food rationing and bulk buying, as practised during the war with Argentine meat, became central pillars of the effort to control imports.[6] Minister of Food John Strachey described bulk buying as "a cornerstone of policy, enabling Britain to secure available supplies in a world of shortages and to distribute them equitably to the public." The planners claimed such practices would stabilise supply and lower prices, although bulk buying in particular met sharp disapproval in the United States. Resolutions at the International Conference on Trade and Employment of October 1946 proposed to allow bulk buying only if "equality of treatment" was assured for other purchasers—a stipulation not far off banning it.[7]

[4] *The Economist* 15 Dec. 1945. On the loan, see Cairncross, *Years of Recovery*, 92–109.

[5] Quoted in L.S. Pressnell. *External Economic Policy Since the War*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1986, 70. This was a very curious statement by Keynes, more appropriate perhaps to 1933 when Britain wielded bargaining power over Argentina but hardly to the conditions of 1945.

[6] On post-war food rationing, see Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska. *Austerity in Britain. Rationing, Controls and Consumption, 1939–1955*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

[7] See *The Economist* 26 Oct. 1946 for US attitudes; also, Charlotte Leubuscher. *Bulk Buying from the Colonies. A Study of the Bulk Purchase of Colonial Commodities by the United Kingdom Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956. See *The Economist* 2, 23 Feb. 1946, 5 July 1947 for other discussions of bulk buying.

Argentina appeared poised for major transformation. Perón aspired to a "New Argentina" emancipated from past dependence on external markets. His long list of election pledges included industrial development, full employment and rising living standards, greater income equality and public ownership. Supporters defined his objectives as "inward-led development" by contrast with the country's former outward focus. It consisted in essence of shifting resources from the rural sector to urban manufacturers, consumers and workers. As defined by a sympathiser, "the primary objective of economic policy [requires] placing higher real incomes in the hands of consumers, as this provides the best means of insuring economic diversification and stability."[8] In London too, the *South American Journal* endorsed inward-led industrial development throughout Latin America in the hope of creating markets for British capital goods and new targets for foreign investors. During Perón's rise to power in 1943–1946, British companies such as Unilever and Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) with subsidiaries in Argentina shared the view that faster progress—and larger company profits—would ensue by expanding the internal market.[9] Perón's new approach, however, met blistering criticism and warnings that it entailed fundamental, dangerous errors. Objectors claimed that reallocating resources from the rural to the urban sectors on the scale he proposed would weaken the rural economy without guaranteeing the development of the urban. Building a manufacturing economy would lead to higher imports of fuel, other raw materials and capital goods to support it, thus increasing external dependency rather than reducing it. More imports required increasing agrarian exports to pay for them; without export earnings, critics argued, industry would stall and urban living standards stagnate. Following this road, they predicted Perón could lead the country into disaster.[10]

Perón became president following his tumultuous ascent as a member of the military juntas of 1943–1946, when he amassed support from trade unions and fought off multiple enemies, not least Spruille Braden, who in 1945 served as US ambassador in Buenos Aires. Calling Perón a "dangerous, uncontrollable megalomaniac" bent on fascist revolution, Braden

[8] Miron Burgin. In *Inter-American affairs 1943*, edited by Arthur P. Whitaker, 127.

[9] Miller, *British Firms*, 19.

[10] Critiques of Peronist economic policy appeared contemporaneously in the mid-1940s among foreign periodicals like *The Economist*. The classical analysis led by Raúl Prebisch is published as United Nations. Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL). *El desarrollo económico de la Argentina*. 4 vols. Mexico City: United Nations, 1959.

attempted to shipwreck his ascent to power.[11] Despite heavy pressure from Braden to join his campaign against Perón, the British stayed out of the melee. Ambassador Kelly accused Braden of spreading false rumours the British were intriguing to stymie US influence in Argentina. In December 1945, he rejected charges of collusion with Perón, reporting such claims were "undoubtedly fomented by all those who were jealous of the position of the British in Argentina, including some Americans." He scorned as "unscrupulous and highly partial propaganda" the so-called Blue Book instigated by Braden and the US State Department of February 1946 purporting to expose Perón's ties with the Nazis.[12] Anglo-American friction persisted beyond the Argentine election of February 1946. In *The Washington Post* in March, for example, journalist Drew Pearson accused Britain of supplying arms to Argentina via Spain in 1944, a charge British officials called "slander."[13]

Kelly observed the jingoistic displays of the Argentine military governments of 1943–1946 with distaste, referring to them, using Samuel Johnson's apothegm, as the last refuge of scoundrels. With Britain still dependent on Argentine meat, he believed British interests and property were best protected by maintaining political neutrality, the time-honoured practice enunciated by Canning and Parish in the 1820s.[14] Following his lead, British employers and managers distanced themselves from the confrontation between Braden and Perón. Firms objected to pay-outs like the

[11] On Braden and Perón, see United States, Department of State. *Memorandum of the United States Government among the American Republics with respect to the Argentine Situation*. Washington, D.C.: February 1946. An assessment appears in Robert A. Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945–1962. From Perón to Frondizi*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980, 35–46. Numerous studies of Perón's conflicts with the United States in 1943–1946 include C.A. MacDonald. "The Politics of Intervention: The United States and Argentina, 1941–1946." *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 12, Pt. 2, 1980:365–96. Braden was US ambassador to Argentina in May–October 1945 and Under-Secretary of State for American Republic Affairs until mid-1947.

[12] Kelly, *Annual Report, 1945*, 41.

[13] Washington Embassy to FO, March 1946. FO 371/51756. See also *Washington Post* 4 Mar. 1946.

[14] Kelly speech cited in *Standard* 1 Dec. 1945. His activities are detailed in *Annual Report, 1945*, 41. FO 371/51838. For a summary of issues, see Leeper to Bevin 30 Dec. 1946 "The Problem of Anglo-United States-Argentine Relations." In Paul Preston, Michael Partridge, James Dunkerley eds. *British Documents on Foreign Affairs. Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print. Part IV: from 1946 through 1950*. Series D: *Latin America*. Vol. IV, January–December June 1947, Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1999, 10.

year-end bonus or *aguinaldo* instituted in December 1945 that Perón forced them to grant their workers. He hurt them in the pocket and threatened them by his power over organised labour. He could exploit the unpopularity of certain British companies, notably the Anglo-Argentine Tramway Company, a common target of the nationalists over recent years. In early 1946, British employees in the tough industrial neighbourhood of Avellaneda were assaulted in the street following accusations of blacklegging during a strike. Antagonism against the Anglo Frigorífico owned by Vestey Brothers in neighbouring Dock Sur threatened to spill over into violence against British personnel. In 1947, the menacing incitement "Do your patriotic duty. Kill an Englishman" appeared among the graffiti near the plant.[15] In this climate, British firms grew very "careful not to associate [themselves] with certain extravagant opinions elsewhere," as the *South American Journal* alluded to Braden's campaign.[16]

* * *

For Britain, Argentina remained not only a leading source of food but also, as a wealthy country undamaged by war, a potentially major post-war market for manufactured goods. With meat, the two countries remained bound to one another since Argentina still lacked alternative markets and Britain alternative suppliers. The meat trade nevertheless seemed destined to produce friction as Argentina sought to maximise earnings to fund Perón's programmes, while Britain pursued low prices to support food rationing. It remained unclear how much meat would be available for export, an issue that would affect meat prices. Output largely depended on the allocation of land on the pampas between ranching and agriculture, an issue determined by the relative profitability of livestock and grains. Perón's planned benefits to labour would then increase domestic consumption of meat to reduce the surplus available for export, unless output grew sufficiently to satisfy both internal and external demand. With foreign trade in both countries under tight state control, market forces would play a limited part in determining meat production and exports. As Labour practised bulk buying, Perón too placed foreign trade under a state monopoly, the Institute for the Promotion of Trade, the so-called IAPI (Instituto Argentino para el Intercambio). This body took existing monopolistic forms in the Argentine rural sector—specifically the grip of com-

[15] *South American Journal* 9 Mar. 1946; Vestey to Bevin 1947 FO 446/33. The Spanish read "Haz tu deber patriótico. Matá un Inglés."

[16] *South American Journal* 22 June 1946.

mercial middlemen over grain producers—to new extremes. As sole purchaser of goods from ranchers and farmers, it could dictate prices and force them to accept lower than market returns. Controlling foreign sales too, the IAPI would then pursue maximum prices in European markets before channelling its profits into urban manufacturing and wages. High post-war foreign demand for foodstuffs was expected to prompt an upward surge in Argentine national income. As this occurred, income would also be redistributed from the rural into the urban sector.[17]

In the early post-war, railways posed other major issues. When the Mitre Law expired at the end of 1946, companies would lose the right to import coal and supplies duty-free, and without them rapid bankruptcy loomed. By the mid-1940s, the railway system had become increasingly unserviceable, with half the steam locomotives in use dating from 1913 or before. On the Central Argentine Railway, to cite typical conditions, one third of the rolling stock stood idle in need of repair.[18] Railway infrastructure awaited major renovation. US specialists later exposed the way low-cost way rail track was constructed before 1914, with two thirds of it on earth foundations.[19] Nationalising the railways using the sterling balances seemed possible and logical, although other major issues first had to be settled. The system required valuing before any deal could be struck, and a vast difference yawned between each side's estimates. Decrying the railways as broken down "old iron," the pro-government newspaper *La Época* contended they were worth £50 million at most. Company directors and shareholders by contrast wanted any future sale to reflect the system's "nominal value" determined by total investment throughout its history. This method of calculation yielded a figure of some £270 million.[20] Two approaches to running the railways were available when the

[17] The IAPI (*Instituto Argentino para la Promoción del Intercambio*) replaced the Trade Promotion Corporation founded in May 1941. Its origins lay in demands for state control over the meat trade in the mid-1930s. See Drosdoff, *Gobierno de las Vacas*, 153. The IAPI's responsibilities extended to the purchase, sale, storage, transport and distribution of goods. See Leeper to Bevin 20 June 1946. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, Vol. II: *Latin America June 1946–December 1946*, 26.

[18] *Review of the River Plate* 20 July 1945 quoted in García Heras, *Frustrated Nationalization*, Table 4, 154. See also *The Economist* 10 Feb. 1945. On conditions on the Central Argentine Railway, see BT 11/3296, "Report on the State Railways," 20 Apr. 1947.

[19] For the later US report on the nationalised railways, see *Review of the River Plate* 20 Sept. 1957.

[20] The press debate in Buenos Aires is summarised in Leeper to FO, May 1946. FO 371/51805. British valuations were not all so extravagant. The London Stock Market valued the system at under £100 million, a figure, *The Economist* conceded, that more adequately

Mitre Law expired. Argentina's cheaper option lay in forming a new partnership with the British owners along the lines proposed by Federico Pinedo in 1940. The Argentine government would then feed in a small quantity of resources for up to forty years to pay dividends and provide investment, while building up an increasing share of the system. The expensive alternative approach consisted of nationalising the railways but having to pay for them in one fell swoop.

Efforts immediately after the war to revive British exports to Argentina ended discouragingly. In early 1946, Perowne at the Foreign Office promoted the Argentine market as Britain's "most valuable in Latin America (and even in the world [*sic*])…Close and harmonious relations with the Government and the people of Argentina are, for these reasons, indispensable to us."[21] His department joined others in supporting the export drive, arranging to send a few railway supplies to Argentina, items like boiler tubes, wheels and axles.[22] In September 1946 Perowne hosted William McCallum, the wartime chairman of the British Chamber of Commerce in Buenos Aires. He arrived with news that Perón planned to spend up to £500 million abroad during the next five years on projects including the construction of an international airport and an oil pipeline to the far south at Comodoro Rivadavia.[23] Several large British firms like Fleming and Ferguson, a Scottish manufacturer of dredgers, and the Austin Motor Company moved swiftly to pre-empt US competitors. Others despatched salesmen to Buenos Aires to scour for business.[24] Despite some early successes, steel and shipping shortages handicapped the effort. Some British goods, among them cars, surplus aircraft, ships, cutlery and bicycles flowed into Argentina, but volume stalled at less than half the level of 1938, while coal exports remained at only one eighth of pre-war.[25] Board of Trade officials determined that British resources were insufficient to compete

reflected the system's poor condition and the estimated £200 million in profits it had produced during the previous eighty years. See *The Economist* 22 June 1946. In March 1947, the *South American Journal* assessed nominal value at £250 million and current market value at £120 million.

[21] Quoted in Fursman, *Anglo/Argentine Economic Connection*, 145.

[22] Foreign Office to Buenos Aires 13 July 1945. T 236/520.

[23] McCallum at Board of Trade 11 Sept. 1945. T 236/520.

[24] Messrs Fleming and Ferguson to Department of Overseas Trade 7 Jan. 1946, reporting their bid to supply dredger builders and their fears of unfair US competition. In July, the company reported its success in winning a contract worth £2 million. T 236/520.

[25] *The Economist* 15 Mar. 1947.

with US firms in the airport project. Within months, US sales soon dwarfed British by more than 4 to 1. The US government seized the opportunity to dispose of vast quantities of surplus wartime equipment, while private US firms flooded the market with a far wider range of goods and services than British.[26]

As Perón's programme took concrete form, British exporters faced a major hurdle in protectionism, whose impact first surfaced in November 1946 when import permits grew scarcer.[27] By promoting national products and restricting British imports, the five-year plan of 1946 fulfilled the predictions of the late 1920s by Roswell McCrea and his team. The government revived a system first employed in the late 1930s to classify imports into "essential" raw materials and machinery and "non-essential" consumer goods. Relegated into the second category, imports of many British goods, notably textile items, were blocked. Import quotas met the same objective. In early 1947, a British manufacturer reported that imports of toothbrushes into Argentina were limited to 1000 articles for the next six months, when his firm alone could have exported 2500.[28] In mid-1947, controls tightened limiting British exports to a small range of articles headed by coal and oil, while halting sales of manufactured goods. Visible trade deficits climbed to around £40 million a year, far higher than British post-war planners had anticipated. Although invisible earnings once again helped to contain the imbalance, the deficits on visible trade became a major bone of contention between the two countries. Argentina demanded settlement of trade debts in convertible sterling, while Britain required a lowering of trade barriers.[29] Conditions became a direct antithesis of the 1930s. Trade preferences had vanished to be replaced by an insurmountable battery of protectionist obstacles.

* * *

In the mid-1940s, the two countries agreed to negotiate bilateral trade by face to face negotiation, resuming practices first employed in 1929

[26] As reported by Kelly to FO 26 Mar. 1946. FO 371-51756. See also Bowen, *British Hegemony*, 14. Comparative UK-US trade figures are listed in Colin Lewis. Anglo-Argentine Trade, 1945–1965, in Rock, *Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, 120.

[27] On import permits, see *The Economist* 6 Sept. 18 Oct. 1947. Analyses of protectionism under Perón include James P. Brennan and Marcelo Rougier. *The Politics of National Capitalism. Peronism and the Argentine National Bourgeoisie, 1946–1976*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009, 21–51.

[28] Wagstaff to Davies 19 Feb. 1947 BT 11/2724.

[29] See British Chamber of Commerce, *Monthly Bulletin*, July and August, 1947.

during the D'Abernon Mission. During the Perón era, these exchanges proved enervating experiences for all concerned on both sides. John Lomax, the British Commercial Minister in Buenos Aires, recorded a life of "overwork and anxiety…The impression of this treadmill futility never left my mind as I flogged myself on its dreary round."[30] The saga began when the government of Perón's predecessor, Gen. Edelmiro J. Farrell, renounced the agreement of 1936 prolonging the Roca-Runciman treaty that remained in place at least formally during the war. Within days of his inaugural in June 1946, Perón invited British delegations to Argentina to settle pending issues between the two countries: the blocked sterling balances, the railways and a new meat contract. A new assertiveness grew visible in Buenos Aires soon after Perón's election when the British suggested a four-year agreement for an annual bulk purchase of 400,000 tons of meat. Argentines welcomed a long-term contract but refused to commit to fixed quantities. In a foretaste of the wrangles to come, they argued that the prices on offer were too low to encourage ranchers to increase production enough to satisfy both British and domestic demand. If the British wanted meat in such large quantity, they would have to pay more for it in order to fund rural investment.[31]

As leader of the British trade mission in mid-1946, Treasury official Sir Wilfrid Eady had the unusual distinction of being born in Córdoba, where his father built the Villa María and Rufino Railway in the late 1880s.[32] The sale of the railways and the disposal of the sterling balances topped his agenda. He wanted to trade one for the other and then negotiate a new meat contract. He prepared a lengthy memorandum to submit to Perón extolling the contributions of the railways to the country's development, hoping it would help persuade him to accept a price close to the system's "nominal value" as determined by past investment. He hoped for concessions on the sterling balances too, with the argument that Britain's wartime sacrifices of life and treasure had helped protect Latin America from Nazi domination. He would propose that Argentina write off a portion of the sterling balances.

[30] Sir John Lomax. *The Diplomatic Smuggler*. London: Arthur Barker Ltd., 1965, 260.

[31] For discussion, see *The Economist* 21 Sept. 1946.

[32] Eady's background is noted in a commemoration for his brother killed in action in World War II. See http://aagency.ca/railways/casualties2.htm. His role among British post-war planners—often at loggerheads with Keynes—is widely mentioned in Pressnell, *External Economic Policy*.

On his arrival in Buenos Aires, Eady discovered the Argentines entertained very different views from his own. Miguel Miranda, his opposite number as lead negotiator, had persuaded Perón against dissipating the sterling balances on decrepit railways, as he called them, and to use them instead to finance national manufacturing.[33] With the railways, Miranda preferred the partnership option requiring small annual outlays rather than spending a vast sum on nationalisation. He scorned the idea of writing off any of the sterling balances. Rather than owing the British anything for wartime services, the Argentines wanted credit for delivering meat during the war on a basis of deferred payments. "[They] believe they came to our help during the financial difficulties of the war by agreeing to hold sterling without collateral," reported Sir Reginald Leeper, who replaced Kelly as British ambassador in Buenos Aires. Now the war had ended, the Argentines wanted speedy repayment.[34] Miranda demanded coal, machinery, tinplate, chemicals and oil. Any sterling balances left over should be treated as a loan to Britain repayable in convertible currency, guaranteed against the devaluation of sterling and earning 2½ per cent annual interest.

Following the recent US loan to Britain, Eady felt impelled to make small concessions on convertibility but flatly rejected paying interest on the sterling balances. Any concession to Argentina of this kind would lead every other creditor country to insist on similar treatment. Parliament would reject any such arrangement. "If the Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House of Commons we were to pay 2 percent on all our war debts, he would be out of office that same night."[35] Miranda proved a tenacious, uncompromising negotiator with a sharp sense of Argentine national interests. A Catalan-born tinplate manufacturer, he exemplified the self-made industrial entrepreneurs who had appeared during recent decades. An outspoken economic nationalist, in 1945–1946 he became a dominant voice in economic policy as head of the Central Bank and of a newly established Industrial Bank. In mid-1946, he also became director of the IAPI (Fig. 8.1). Confronting Miranda alongside Eady, Ambassador Leeper slighted him as "slippery as an eel, [he] negotiates in the manner of an oriental bazaar."[36]

[33] *South American Journal* 20 April 1946.

[34] On the preliminaries to the negotiation in April–June 1946, see T 236/526. "Without collateral" was wrong, since blocked sterling balances were protected against devaluation.

[35] Verbatim report of the Eady and Miranda exchanges 22 July 1946. T 237/527.

[36] Leeper to Bevin 7, 28 Jan., 12 Feb. 1947 BT 11/3292. Miranda retorted with sarcastic public slights on British negotiators, as during a speech to the Chamber of Commerce in April 1947. See British Chamber of Commerce, *Monthly Bulletin* May 1947.

Fig. 8.1 Miguel Miranda addresses the British Chamber of Commerce

With negotiations on the sterling balances and the railways in deadlock, discussion turned to meat. Leeper reported recent statements by Perón to party followers complaining about the low prices paid by the British under the current meat contract. In the president's view, "the Roca-Runciman agreement under which Argentina sold her steers for only 200 pesos compared with U.S. prices of 1000 pesos could not be revived, neither could a situation where the price of [Argentine] wheat was only four times the pre-war price whereas the price of rubber, so necessary for the tyres of farm machinery, had increased twenty times."[37] Tackling the meat issue with all his earlier zest, Miranda announced a 30 per cent cut in Britain's current share of the meat surplus to allow for increases in domestic consumption.[38] He demanded the same price for meat currently being paid to the highly subsidised ranchers in the United States. This "world price," as he called it, stood three times higher than the one Britain paid under its

[37] Leeper to Bevin 2 Aug. 1946. T 236/521.
[38] Leeper to Bevin 18 July 1946. T 236/527.

1944 contract with Argentina.[39] Angry exchanges erupted as Eady and his colleagues accused Miranda of "profiteering at the expense of hungry countries."[40]

After weeks of stalemate, breakthrough followed meetings in early September between Perón and George S. Messersmith, the new US ambassador in Argentina, who was sent to Buenos Aires to repair the damage inflicted by Braden the previous year. Conferring affably with the president, Messersmith soon left unpleasant memories of Braden behind. Perceiving the British as a lingering obstacle to US interests in Argentina, his views did not differ from those of the State Department and American businessmen, although he addressed the issue quite differently. Hoping to release the grip of the British over the railways, he supported them in the trade negotiations. As he explained to Perón, the security of the western world, now under threat by Communists, required a strong British economy with access to affordable meat. He urged him to ponder how long he could pursue his own goal of enhancing Argentine national sovereignty outside the protective umbrella of the western alliance. To break the stalemate in the trade talks, he proposed replacing Miranda by Foreign Minister Juan Atilio Bramuglia, a wartime supporter of the Allies.[41]

Soon afterwards, Perón withdrew Miranda from the negotiations, enabling Eady and Bramuglia to conclude the agreement known as the Eady-Miranda treaty. Under its very limited provisions, sterling balances, currently valued at around £150 million, were to remain almost intact. The British undertook to drip feed convertible currency to Argentina at the rate of £5 million a year, revenue intended to enable the railways to be re-established as a bi-national partnership. Annual interest on outstanding sterling balances was restricted to ½ per cent, costing around £75,000 annually. A new meat contract met British needs. Argentina agreed to sell a larger quantity of meat than Miranda offered, and Britain had to pay only 10 per cent more for it than in 1944. Eady agreed to settle future trade deficits in convertible sterling, as promised under the US loan.[42] Messersmith accepted the terms of the deal, although the arrangement for the railways fell far short of his hopes. However, his intervention marked the starting point of a decisive transition in Anglo-US relations in

[39] *South American Journal* 20 July 1946.
[40] Leeper to Bevin 24 July 1946. T 236/527.
[41] Leeper to Bevin 2 Sept. 1946. T236/328.
[42] The agreement is summarised in *The Economist* 21 Sept. 1946.

Fig. 8.2 Sir Wilfrid Eady signs the 1946 treaty

Argentina, as past friction ebbed away. Having turned to the United States for assistance, the British stepped back from the confrontation, abandoning thirty years of intense commercial competition (Fig. 8.2).

After three months in Buenos Aires, Eady departed exhausted, content with the meat agreement but disappointed in most other respects. The railway deal offering low-cost modernisation and snails' pace nationalisation sparked no enthusiasm on either side except among British iron and steel firms hoping to revive the pre-war business in railway supplies. Some of them suggested that the proposed new company under the Eady-Miranda agreement be required to buy British goods.[43] Fresh from his ordeals, Eady opposed any such stipulations, arguing the Argentines were "touchy" about foreign "bondage" and warning such conditions would threaten the entire deal. He expected the new holding company to "retain a strong nucleus of British management personnel and this in itself will

[43] An example is Peat, Marwick, Mitchell and Co to Duncannon 30 Oct. 1946. T 236/4646.

keep the door open for British orders."[44] For several months, Miranda and Perón supported the partnership proposal. As expected, when the Mitre law expired at the end of 1946, the railway directors moderated their inflated demands for compensation exceeding £250 million. By early 1947, they appeared willing to accept Miranda's proposed valuation of 2 billion pesos, some £130 million.

The entire proposal collapsed as Argentine nationalists including figures like Scalabrini Ortiz and the railway unions clamoured for all-out nationalisation. Perón briefly resisted the pressure before bowing to it and signalling his acceptance, despite the major financial implications of the change.[45] Long willing to sell the railways, the British welcomed the new situation. To the relief of the US State Department too, negotiations for nationalisation quickly commenced. Leeper reported Perón was prepared to pay 2 billion pesos and nothing more. When the railway directors held out for an additional £18 million, the two sides simply adjusted the exchange rate on the deal, upgrading the value of the peso by about 12 per cent. Miranda objected, but Perón overruled him. The two sides agreed on a final figure of almost £150 million, consisting of £135.5 million for the railway network and rolling stock and an additional £14.5 million for railway properties, docks, tramways and warehouses. At market exchange rates, nationalisation cost more than 2.3 billion pesos. In early 1947, it was agreed the sterling balances would finance the transaction.[46]

When railway directors and shareholders voted on the proposal in mid-year, support for the sale proved almost unanimous.[47] "Very shortly, British investors will part with their properties on very favourable terms," concluded the *South American Journal* in language almost identical to its judgement on the Roca-Runciman treaty in 1933.[48] Miranda remained unhappy, pondering how to complete the deal without signing away £150

[44] Eady in Lintolt to Lomax. T 236/4646.

[45] On Nationalist pressure for full nationalisation, see Irazusta, *Perón* 42–46; also Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz. *Los ferrocarriles deben ser del pueblo argentino*. Buenos Aires: Unión Revolucionario, 1946. The popular campaign for nationalisation is detailed in Wright, *British-owned Railways*, 255–265. See also *South American Journal* 25 Jan., 8 Mar. 1947; *The Economist* 25 Jan., 15 Feb. 1947.

[46] The final tally is reported in Leeper to Bevin 28 Dec. 1946. FO 371/51806.

[47] Shareholders decided "a bird in the hand is worth ten in the grass of the Pampas." *Financial Times* 15 Jan. 1947, quoted in Wright, *British-owned Railways*, 262. On shareholder votes, see *South American Journal* 2 Aug. 1947.

[48] *South American Journal* 14 Feb. 1948.

million in sterling balances guaranteed against devaluation. As nationalisation neared completion in late 1947, he announced he could not meet the terms agreed, "his gold reserves were running down to a dangerously low level [and] he would be unable to use his gold-guaranteed sterling to pay for the railways. His own idea was that the Bank of England might advance a substantial part of the sterling he required to buy [them]."[49] In the event, Britain paid for its following year's meat and corn supplies with funds Argentina owed for the purchase of the railways. Of the £150 million required to complete the sale, £110 million derived from cancelled British payments for meat and maize and only £40 million from sterling balances. Accrued very recently after the war under new rules, these balances no longer enjoyed protection against a sterling devaluation.[50]

Only a few British commentators questioned the deal. "We have sold our major assets in the Argentine…which took 60 years to build up…for a few months of meat and feedstuffs," lamented one member of the Conservative parliamentary opposition.[51] Others regretted the forfeiture of an eighty-year old trade in railway supplies. Eady's claim that British-born employees in Argentina would revive purchases of British railway materials remained unmet. Miranda offered to buy railway equipment in Britain if the British paid more for meat.[52] As they demurred, he set up a system of open tenders, a method that exposed the post-war frailties of British railway suppliers in competition with others.[53] In late 1948, US companies snapped up the most lucrative orders to supply new diesel locomotives.[54]

As it liquidated Britain's largest asset throughout Latin America, the sale of the railways more than halved total British investments in

[49] Propper to Ministry of Food 22 Mar. 1948. MAF 38/378.

[50] Chancellor of the Exchequer Sir Stafford Cripps described details of the sale in Parliament. See *Hansard House of Commons Debates* 3 Feb. 1948, 1682–1687; also *South American Journal* 28 Feb. 1948.

[51] Oliver Crosthwaite-Eyre, Hansard vol. 447. *House of Commons Debates*, 23 Feb. 1948, p. 1719. Winston Churchill accused the Labour government of selling the railways to pay for Britain's false teeth, a reference to the contemporary debate on the formation of the British National Health Service. See Andrew Graham-Yooll. *The Forgotten Colony. A History of the English-Speaking People in Argentina*. Buenos Aires: L.O. L. A, 1999, 256.

[52] Lomax to Murray 10 May 1947 BIT 11/3296.

[53] Data on prices tendered by British firms and their competitors appear in BIT 11/3296 (1947).

[54] Balfour to FO 23 Dec. 1948. T 236/538.

Argentina.[55] Sir Stafford Cripps, chancellor of the exchequer during the later stages of the negotiation, viewed the sale as a necessity to ensure supplies of meat and grain over the following year without having to pay for them in convertible sterling.[56] The nationalisation of the Argentine railways occurred at a dire moment in Britain. In early 1947, coal shortages and harsh winter weather hampered factory output. Plunging exports destabilised trade, draining away the proceeds of the US loan. The greatest setback of 1947 occurred within weeks of the resumption of sterling convertibility under the terms of the loan. Only forty days later on August 20, the government rescinded the measure to prevent the loss of Britain's entire dollar and gold reserves.[57] At the height of the sterling crisis, Hugh Dalton, Cripps's predecessor as chancellor, denounced Miranda for opportunistically converting as much sterling as he could while the opportunity lasted.[58] In November 1947, the government reduced some food rations by up to 16 per cent to achieve additional dollar savings.[59]

* * *

In this dolorous situation in late 1947, another British trade delegation departed for Buenos Aires under Sir Clive Baillieu, a former head of the Confederation of British Industry. His selection reflected hopes that his background in industry would assist efforts to increase sales of British manufactures. The Labour government authorised him to finalise the sale

[55] *South American Journal* 21 Jan. 1949 reported a decline in British assets in Argentina to less than £90 million at par values—a sum far higher than their current stock market values. See also J. Fred Rippy. "British Investment in Latin America. A Decade of Rapid Reduction." *Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 32, No. 2, 1952, 283–292, showing a decline from £438 million in 1939 to £69 million in 1949 at par values. Of these totals, the Argentine railway property represented more than £250 million at par value although they realised only £150 million under the agreement of 1948.

[56] Cripps memorandum 9 Sept. 1948. PREM 8/1314.

[57] By one authoritative report, British losses during the forty days of convertibility exceeded the sum received under the 1945 US loan. See Alec Cairncross. *The British Economy since 1945*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, 54.

[58] Argentine efforts to benefit from the brief period of sterling convertibility are noted in Pedro R. Skupch. "Las relaciones económicas anglo-argentinas en lap postguerra: entre la convertibilidad y el bilateralismo." *Ciclos de la historia, la economía y la sociedad*, 18, no. 36, Buenos Aires, 2010, 17, quoting *The Financial Times* 25 Aug. 1947.

[59] On this measure, see *The Economist* 1 Nov. 1947, reporting a reduction in per capita rations from 2870 to 2700 calories a day—still some distance away from the threat of mass malnutrition.

of the railways and to purchase maize for animal feed. He faced other demanding tasks, framing another meat deal and winning an agreement to allow remittances by British companies. He arrived in Argentina soon after the suspension of convertibility had nullified commitments under the Eady-Miranda treaty to cover British trade deficits with convertible sterling.[60] He faced a barrage of complaint about convertibility and demands for higher meat prices in compensation. A member of his delegation recalled how "Señor Miranda on whose face no light shone, spoke testily about prices."[61] Tightening the pressure, Miranda delayed meat shipments and drove a hard bargain on maize: "If we would not buy grain at his price, he could easily go elsewhere."[62] Baillieu remained adamant on meat prices. He had a maximum figure beyond which he would not go until Argentina imported far more British manufactured goods.[63]

Miranda justified his demands for convertible sterling on the grounds of the sudden acute scarcity of US dollars in Argentina. As reported by *The Economist*, at the end of the war Argentine reserves totalled US $1.5 billion but in the next twelve months dwindled to $1 billion. With a continuation of the trend, the reserves would be exhausted by mid-1948 leaving it no longer possible to import from the United States.[64] The collapse in the reserves resulted partly from the cessation of US wartime procurements. An Argentine trade surplus with the United States topping $100 million in 1945 became a deficit of $300 million two years later.[65] While the reserves lasted, an avalanche of US imports poured in until mid-1947 when Miranda staunched the flow by tightening import controls. While eliminating the few remaining imports from Britain, the measure also limited the supply of "essentials" from the United States like construction

[60] Cairncross, a Board of Trade official at the time, suggests dollar payments were made to Argentina but kept secret to avoid other countries making similar demands. See Cairncross, *Years of Recovery*, 138. A 1950 Treasury discussion indicates the Andes treaty of 1948 concluded by Baillieu restored guarantees against devaluation voided by Britain's suspension of convertibility but not payment of convertible sterling. See T 236/3023.

[61] Baillieu to Miranda 21 Jan. 1948. MOF 38/378.

[62] Day to day events are listed in detail in Propper to Ministry of Food 22 Mar. 1948. MAF 38/378.

[63] Baillieu to Miranda 23 Jan. 1948 MOF 38/378.

[64] See *The Economist* 20, 29 Sept. 1947. On 27 July 1945, the periodical reported the Central Bank's figures for Argentine reserves at 4.7 billion pesos or £300 million, of which 1 billion pesos were in sterling and the remainder nearly all in US dollars. On 27 Apr. 1946, reserves of 5 billion pesos were recorded. (The price of the railways was 2.3 billion pesos).

[65] Argentine-US trade figures are noted in Jorge Fodor, "Perón's Policies for Agricultural Exports, 1946–1948: Dogmatism or Common Sense," in Rock, *Argentina in the Twentieth Century*, 146.

materials. Oil stocks too ran very low, forcing Miranda to stifle imports of automobile spare parts to curb demand. US Ambassador James Bruce reported that Miranda sought to compel Royal Dutch Shell to import petroleum by threatening new sanctions against British trade.[66] By late 1947, within eighteen months of Perón assuming power, Argentina faced economic crisis. Imports grew scarce, government deficits soared and manufacturing production and wages stagnated. Rising inflation prompted affluent Argentines to start hoarding dollars abroad.[67]

Miranda blamed the situation on the United States, principally its failure to acknowledge Argentina's major contribution to the defence of the West against Communism. He argued that Western Europe required an annual 30 million tons of grain to avoid food shortages becoming an opportunity for propaganda and agitation by Communists. Together, the United States and Canada barely provided enough grain to counter the threat, making supplies from Argentina crucial to western defence. He wanted recognition for these services in US dollars, and suggested various ways to achieve it. The United States could reopen its market to Argentine goods; it could subsidise European grain purchases from Argentina, or fund the British trade deficits with Argentina.[68] Above all, Miranda pressed for Argentina's inclusion in the European Recovery Program known as the Marshall Plan, the grand project to regenerate Western Europe currently under discussion in the United States Congress. He estimated the country could earn up to $800 million, a sum significantly greater than the $600 million (£150 million) spent on nationalising the railways.

Miranda's urgent pursuit of dollars provided an opportunity to end the renewed impasse in trade negotiations with Britain. He grew more receptive to Baillieu as he realised cooperation with the British would bring him closer to what he wanted from the Americans. For a second time in eighteen months, US officials were drawn into Anglo-Argentine trade negotiations. James Bruce's involvement began in late 1947 as he urged Baillieu to reject the high prices Miranda demanded for Argentine maize. He expressed his fears that acceptance of Miranda's terms would trigger an all-round increase in grain prices to jeopardise US efforts to supply and stabilise Western Europe. He suggested a way to help Baillieu "by playing in some way on Argentina's acute need of dollars. [He wanted] the United

[66] For oil issues, see Bruce to Secretary of State Aug–Dec. 1947. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947*, 273–297.

[67] *The Economist* 29 Sept. 1947.

[68] Baillieu to Treasury 24 Dec. 1947. T 236/538.

States government [to] use its strong position to assist us in achieving our objectives, which, he emphasised more than once, were common objectives."[69] Taking the cue, Baillieu urged an ultimatum from "the Americans to tell the Argentines that they will not get Marshall Aid if they refuse to fix up a satisfactory arrangement with us."[70] Indeed, Bruce then informed Miranda that a successful negotiation with the British would strengthen the case for Argentina's inclusion in the Marshall Plan by demonstrating how it could relieve pressure on stretched US resources.[71] At this point, Miranda abandoned his demands for sky-high meat and grain prices from Britain. Another Anglo-Argentine trade treaty followed, known this time as the Andes Agreement. With Bruce's help, the Baillieu mission, another prolonged ordeal, ended in success. To Baillieu's personal satisfaction, Miranda even promised to issue import permits to British suppliers of consumer "non-essentials."[72]

Unexpected consequences followed. When the US government instituted the Marshall Plan in April 1948, officials of the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA) appointed to administer it dampened expectations that Argentina would participate.[73] Tense meetings followed between Perón and Bruce, but months passed with no change of policy.[74]

[69] Propper to Ministry of Food, 22 Mar. 1948 MAF 38/378; also Leeper to Bevin 27 Dec. 1947. BOT 11/3794. Bruce enjoyed full access to Perón and other members of his government throughout his ambassadorship in 1947–1949. See *James Bruce papers*, Special Collections, University of Maryland Library. See also James Bruce. *Those Perplexing Argentines*. London: Eyre and Spottiswood, 1954, a cautious memoir published when Perón remained president.

[70] Hooper to Treasury 26 Dec. 1947. T236/539.

[71] On Bruce's intervention, see Skupch, *Relaciones Económicas*, 11 and *South American Journal* 7 Feb. 1948. Bruce used the Marshall Plan to force concessions from Perón in other areas. With the president facing pressure to expropriate US oil companies, Bruce informed him such action would "present new obstacles to obtaining congress's authorization for offshore purchases in dollars for the European Relief Program." Perón then withdrew his support from the expropriation plan. See Acting Secretary of State to Buenos Aires Embassy 5 Dec. 1947. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947*, 297.

[72] Final terms of the agreement are listed in *South American Journal* 28 Feb. 1948. The fullest Argentine account appears in Pedro R. Skupch. "Nacionalización, libras bloqueadas y sustitución de importaciones." *Desarrollo Económico*, Vol. 12, No. 47, 1972, 477–493.

[73] On Bruce's intervention, see Skupch, *Relaciones Económicas*, 11.

[74] United States, Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1948*. Vol. 9: *The American Republics*. Washington D.C. 1971, 285–290. Perón protested unconditional loyalty to the West, declaring his past anti-American statements were meant as a sop to Nationalists.

ECA's spurning of Perón raised suspicions that US officials took revenge on him for defying the State Department during the war, although they explained the matter differently. According to them, the bumper North American harvests of 1948 eliminated the shortages of 1947 when Argentine supplies were needed.[75] Americans took great exception to IAPI's persistent attempts to profiteer from European food shortages, using tactics like holding up promised supplies at the last minute to extort higher prices.[76] "We should not permit large amounts of dollar exchange to be paid to Argentina unless [it has a] reasonable policy on wheat," declared a State Department high official.[77] The British took the same view. Leeper claimed that "in this question of supplying food-stuffs to a hungry world, Argentina's aim was never to supply the most possible as quickly as possible but, on the contrary, to hold back supplies as a bargaining counter, and to stand out for the highest prices possible."[78] Commercial minister Lomax accused Miranda of "holding his customers to ransom… screwing the last cent out of starving Europe."[79]

Higher export earnings, notably from shipping, and the support of the ECA enabled Britain's swift recovery from the 1947 slump. With its dollar hoard gone, Argentina relied on supplies from Britain for a time, contributing to the British economic resurgence in 1948 while eliminating the last of the sterling balances.[80] Elsewhere, Miranda pursued bilateral trade deals wherever he could find them, although they seldom yielded any convertible currency and commonly increased animosity towards him. He grew notorious for his boast, "We have the best money in the world—food." His efforts foundered as ECA-subsidised grains poured into Western European markets.[81] The standing of Argentine commerce weakened. International wrangles erupted when the IAPI failed to pay for supplies

[75] A summary of US complaints appears in *The Economist* 25 Sept. 1948.

[76] Miranda's practice of withholding export licences to force up prices is reported as early as August 1946. See Leeper to Bevin 3 Aug. 1946. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs,* Vol. II, 47.

[77] Memorandum by Mr. Henry Dearborn, Division of River Plate Affairs. *Foreign Relations of the United States: 1948*. Vol IX. *The Western Hemisphere*. Washington, D.C. United States Government Printing Office, 1972, 281.

[78] Reginald Leeper, "Annual Report on Argentina, 1946," 30 Jan. 1947. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, vol. IV, 24.

[79] J. Garnett Lomax, "Report of January 1949," in Balfour to Bevin 26 Jan. 1949. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs,* vol. VII, 258.

[80] On shortages of capital goods in 1948, see Fursman, *Anglo/Argentine Trade*, 226–230.

[81] Quoted in *South American Journal* 4 Dec. 1948.

ordered from abroad. US banks refused Argentina credit, sometimes demanding IAPI's abolition; Belgium objected to exporting machinery to Argentina but receiving no payment; another dispute flared with Switzerland as Miranda refused to honour a grain contract until the Swiss paid in convertible currency.[82]

From late 1948, Miranda faded from view, his health broken after a heart attack, his career stuttering to a conclusion. As he departed, falling agrarian and pastoral production magnified Argentina's economic problems. For most of the period 1930–1945, disruptions in the rural sector affected grains rather than livestock, but under Perón both declined steeply.[83] Abroad, a near-consensus of opinion blamed the IAPI for falling production for paying excessively low prices to producers. A British Member of Parliament cited data from 1947 when the IAPI sold wheat in Europe at US$5 a bushel, but paid farmers only $1.70.[84] A British executive visiting Buenos Aires in 1947 predicted that "low prices paid for the current crops may eventually prove to be the fundamental weakness of the [government's] plan because the growers will have to move off the land and let its condition run down, thus destroying the foundation of the real wealth of the country."[85] Recession and foreign exchange shortages left a deepening social and political imprint. As inflation mounted and both wages and employment stagnated, Perón resorted to strident propaganda. His allegations of subversive conspiracies against him became an opportunity to tighten political controls. In September 1948, the president revealed a plot to assassinate himself and his wife. Ridiculing the claim, *The Economist* dubbed the incident Perón's burning of the Reichstag.[86]

Domestic tensions overlapped into foreign relations as controversy brewed over the Falkland Islands. On his arrival in Buenos Aires in mid-1946, Leeper doubted "whether the present Argentine Government has

[82] *The Economist* 25 Sept. 1948.

[83] A table of grain acreages along with price comparisons between meat and grain is shown in Diaz Alejandro, *Essays*, 172. Alternative US-derived figures showing similar trends appear in Daniel Lewis. "Internal and External Convergence. The Collapse of Argentine Grain Farming." In David Rock ed. *Latin America in the 1940s. War and Post-war Transitions.* Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994, 209.

[84] See A.J. Thornton-Knowsley. *Hansard* Vol. 475, 1950. House of Commons Debates, 12 May 1950, 475.

[85] "Mr. J. L. Heyworth's Report on His Visit to the Argentine, February 1947." UNI/RM/DC/2/2/4/22. (Unilever Archive).

[86] *The Economist* 25 Sept. 1948.

any real interest in the Falkland Islands question: certainly President Perón has not so much as mentioned it in his conversations."[87] Two years later, the position altered as pro-Perón activists campaigned to recover the islands as a next step towards "national liberation" following railway nationalisation.[88] In February 1948, Argentine naval vessels entered regions of the sub-Antarctic claimed by Britain as an intended assertion of Argentine sovereignty.[89] At a conference of American states in Bogotá in April 1948, Foreign Minister Bramuglia sought to enlist support for Argentine claims to the islands. When US delegates ignored his appeal, he refused to support motions for continental solidarity against Communism. Meeting Bruce, Perón admitted he had ordered Bramuglia to demand action on the islands. He described "the Falkland Island question as a matter of life and death for Argentina…British possession of the Falkland Islands might be described as a fishbone in the throat of every Argentine and the irritation would not be removed until the fishbone was disgorged."[90]

* * *

In early 1948, the British government played down the dispute over the islands by a routine statement reaffirming British rights. When the agitation grew more prolonged, it responded with a warning. Meeting Bramuglia in November 1948, Bevin "referred to rumours which I had heard about a possible move of the Argentine against the Falkland Islands…I thought it right to tell Dr. Bramuglia that if any attack were made on the Falkland Islands we should defend ourselves and that there would be hostilities." He complained the Perón regime had broken pledges under the final railway agreement affecting the 350 British railway employees who remained in Argentina following nationalisation. They were promised work on the same terms as before and the right to return to Britain with their pensions on retirement. Instead, the new railway authorities demoted or dismissed them or failed to pay their pensions.[91]

[87] Leeper to Bevin 6 Aug. 1946. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs,* vol. II, 66.

[88] Young to FO 13 Feb. 1948 BIT 11/3296. Incidents in 1943–1945 involving encroachments by Argentine naval vessels are noted in Kelly to Minister of Foreign Affairs, 11 Sept. 1945. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, vol. I, 14–15.

[89] *South American Journal* 21, 28 Feb. 1948.

[90] Bruce to Secretary of State 28 Apr. 1948. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1948*, 286.

[91] On the grievances of railway employees, see FO 371/74421 and 74442, including letters of complaint by men formerly under contract.

Bevin expressed other concerns about "statements which I have read in the press strongly critical and even hostile to this country." He was referring to the government-led celebration of railway nationalisation the previous March that included several anti-British speeches. Sir Orme Sargent, Bevin's civil service deputy, objected to the treatment of the Primitiva Gas Company and the Anglo-Argentine Tramway Company, two companies expropriated by the government for minimal compensation. He criticised a fiat by the Central Bank in July 1947 terminating all remittances by British companies. Blanket restrictions ended soon afterwards, although following a devaluation the value of remittances fell 20 per cent.[92]

Other points of friction surfaced. Threats of expropriation led the Cordova Land Company to sell off numerous estancias.[93] In July 1948 La Forestal, the logging company in north-east Argentina, declared dividends of 12 per cent but found it impossible to remit them. At the end of the year, the company closed its tannin factories in northern Santa Fe, leaving 6000 workers unemployed.[94] The Andes agreement of early 1948 allowed imports of British consumer goods—textiles specifically—but importers had to resort to the black market for import permits.[95] Sir John Balfour, a new British ambassador, perceived a mix of bureaucratic disorganisation and corruption. He blamed Miranda for the "unpredictable and illogical methods of issuing import and exchange permits resulting in a plethora of some types of goods, many of them non-essential."[96] Balfour's memoirs published in the 1980s recalled Miranda as "engagingly roguish, [with the] manner and the appearance of an animated toad [who] gabbled Spanish with an atrocious Catalan accent." During his term as ambassador, he reported the damage wrought by inflation on British retirees living on fixed incomes. He listed numerous hostile demonstrations against British occupation of the Falkland Islands. He claimed Allied veterans of World War II were being forced into military service in Argentina despite

[92] Bevin to Balfour 5 Nov. 1948. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs Latin America 1948*, vol. VI, 39. The changing rules are noted in *South American Journal* 31 July, 6 Nov. 1948.

[93] *South American Journal* 31 July 1948.

[94] *South American Journal* 24 Dec. 1948.

[95] Within two months of the Andes agreement, British textile exporters complained about denial of access to the Argentine market. *South American Journal* 24 Apr. 1948. For additional commentaries on import permits, see *The Economist* 29 May, 7 Aug. 1948.

[96] Balfour to Bevin 9 Nov. 1948. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, vol. VI, 44.

Fig. 8.3 Ambassador John Balfour with Juan and Eva Perón, 1949

being exempted from it (Fig. 8.3). He blamed all such abuses on "the bumptious regime headed by Perón and his wife."[97]

* * *

The tumults of the late 1940s scarred British and Anglo residents. Two principal trends became discernible, namely collapsing incomes as noted by Balfour and accelerating cultural integration. In mid-1945, the British Community Council (BCC) switched from raising funds for prisoners of war to local welfare schemes and supporting ethnic schools. Fundraising progressed well during Perón's first year in office: "every member of the community who was sick could get free treatment…those falling on hard times were given a helping hand whenever they needed it."[98] Difficulties multiplied in late 1947 as import restrictions, inflation and foreign exchange shortages developed. As donations to the BCC contracted, it

[97] John Balfour. *Not Too Correct an Aureole. The Recollections of a Diplomat*. London: Richard Russell, 1983, 122–126. See also Balfour to Bevin. "Report for 1948." 24 May 1949. FO 495/3.

[98] Colonel H.O. Lovell, *Standard* 9 May, 1947.

prioritised funding. The British Hospital topped its list, with the wounded veterans and widows from World War I second; the British and American Benevolent Society dealing with the indigent aged came third; schools were soon being forgotten: the old took precedence over the young. The looming prospect of railway nationalisation caused growing concern. The *Standard* predicted it would provoke "the displacement of a large section of the British community, which, in turn, buys British goods, British insurance and upholds British institutions. [Their sale] would go a long way towards getting the British out of South America."[99]

As feared, nationalisation in March 1948 inflicted a crushing blow. A British employee who continued working in Argentina complained to the Foreign Office that he and fellow workers "were pushed out of their jobs and forced to sell their houses and furniture…Their life savings had to be cashed and got over to [Britain]" at unfavourable exchange rates.[100] Disputes over railway pensions arising from foreign exchange shortages beginning in 1948 persisted long into the 1960s. Part of the blame fell on Sir Montagu Eddy, the last chairman of the Great Southern Railway who led the delegation of company chairmen to Argentina in 1947, for his careless approach in handling their interests.[101] The impact of nationalisation mushroomed more widely throughout the community, damaging its satellite institutions, schools, churches and clubs. Already in decline, many clubs and churches became lifeless remnants of a bygone age. Balfour encountered "dignified but mustily Victorian clubs… at which time seemed to have stood still."[102] A visitor of 1953 to the Presbyterian chapel in Florencio Varela near William Hudson's birthplace found only "a dilapidated building with its manse in an overgrown enclosure where all that seems virile and lasting is the centenarian cypress and a gaily flowering bush of red camellias."[103]

Recalling the impact of rail nationalisation as a child, Anglo-Argentine author Andrew Graham-Yooll called it "a huge jolt [that] broke up a network of social, schools, sporting and work-related activities."[104] Among the affected institutions, the schools stood out. A correspondent with the *Standard* reported "a great many people believe today that British schools are doomed and that gloomy prospects lie ahead for all British

[99] *Standard* 2 May, 1946.

[100] John Rennet in FO 371/167883 (1949).

[101] The issue is discussed at length in FO 371/119895 and 131971 (1958).

[102] Balfour, *Recollections of a Diplomat*, 148.

[103] *Standard* 7 Sept. 1953. On churches, see also 27 Apr. 1949, 22 Apr. 1950, 7 Sept. 1953.

[104] Andrew Graham-Yooll, personal communication Nov. 2016.

institutions."[105] In the late 1940s, fewer parents could afford school fees.[106] Parents complained more strongly about obsolete school curricula, with their myopic emphasis on English History and instruction in the imperial units of measurement. The authorities required still more classes to be taught in Spanish by locally born teachers. Bilingual Anglos flocked into teaching, but led to accusations the schools were now teaching Spanglish.[107] The *Standard* ridiculed children's malapropisms. "They are likely to say 'George perceives a good salary,'" (from *percibir,* to earn in local Spanish usage).[108] It published anecdotes to illustrate the accelerating integration of Anglo families and the way some community members downgraded the use of English. As one example: "'We speak Spanish to our baby,' a young Anglo-Argentine mother announced defiantly at a family gathering. 'He is Argentine born and only fourth generation British.'"[109]

The Perón government treated ethnic pluralism as a defiance of national identity. Its occasional fits of animus against the British mainly assumed the form of vituperative discourse in the press. It included the speech by Eva Perón, the president's wife, in March 1948 to celebrate the nationalisation of the railways. Here, she denounced the former companies as "imperialist consortia" from a nation that had become "a decadent anachronism."[110] Anglophobia grew visible in niggling restrictions like a case in 1950 when municipal authorities refused to renew a lease on land used for decades as a cricket field. During "El Año de San Martín" in 1950, the centenary of the founding father's death that Perón utilised for propaganda, trouble flared at St. George's College when an imported British teacher named Simpson defiled a school bust of El Libertador. The press rose in outrage. Simpson fled to Uruguay while an overseer, a so-called *interventor*, took charge of the school, where he confiscated textbooks showing the Falkland Islands as British territory.[111] Pressured to

[105] *Standard* 5, 12, 25 Apr. 1949.

[106] *Standard* 5 Apr. 1949. Figures in pesos spent on schools in 1948 totalled 252,000, of which 149 children received 185,000, 700 pesos a head, possibly just enough to pay minimum school fees.

[107] *Standard* 8 June, 1951. "Che" is Porteño Spanish for British "Mate" or American "Buddy."

[108] *Standard* of 23 Feb. 1956. The mispronunciations became a reminder of the writer Somerset Maugham's experience at his first school in England following his early upbringing in France. "He pronounced 'unstable' as though it rhymed with 'constable.'"

[109] The incident is reported in *Standard* 1, 5, 30 Oct. 1950.

[110] The speech is reported in *South American Journal* 15 Mar. 1948.

[111] Consul to FO 29 Oct. 1950 FO 118/800. The *interventor* also terminated corporal punishment at the school, a practice prohibited under provincial law.

atone for Simpson's conduct, pupils from the British schools trooped through Buenos Aires to honour San Martín. The *Standard* reported the teaching of English in many Argentine schools was being dropped.[112]

As the protectionist measures imposed by Miranda in 1947 squeezed importers of British background, other British firms faced renewed restrictions on remittances, higher taxes and interference by the Peronist-controlled trade unions. Graham-Yooll recalled such pressures resulted in the decline and collapse of numerous businesses, "people like the Macadam family, who had run large stores (forerunners of the supermarkets) or supplied provincial distributors with imported goods…I remember places such as Harrods, Gath and Chaves, Macadam, Thompson Muebles… which went into decline, as well as did offices of small merchants. Specialist importers of coal, heavy machinery etc. for which the proprietors could get import licences because the government needed such items seemed to fare better."[113] A profound sense of loss gripped the entire community. "Ten years is not a long time," lamented one of the *Standard*'s correspondents in 1948. "In this space we won the war but lost all or most of our assets. Our winnings consist of a legacy of charities belonging to better days and a mounting claim on a diminishing purse to meet the cost."[114]

* * *

During the earlier phases of the Perón regime, alongside Miranda, Eva Perón, "the Señora," became a principal target of British critics of the regime. She dominated the trade unions and controlled the Eva Perón Foundation, her vast, dubious empire of organised charity. Scarcely a month after Perón took office, Leeper recorded his impression of her as dishonest and disruptive, enmeshed in illegal dealings with Miranda.[115] "She has a certain harsh beauty," he wrote, "and behind it a ruthless though rather limited intelligence."[116] During a tour of Western Europe in mid-1947, Eva Perón expressed a desire to visit Britain. Government ministers recoiled from meeting and entertaining her. Food minister Strachey

[112] *Standard* 30 Oct. 1950.

[113] Graham-Yooll, personal communication.

[114] *Standard* 27 Apr., 2 Aug. 1949.

[115] See Leeper to Bevin 11 July 1946. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs,* vol. II, 42.

[116] Leeper to Bevin 7 Mar. 1947. Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs,* vol. IV. 33.

reminded cabinet colleagues that the goodwill of the Argentine government was "of life and death importance to us as a supplier of foodstuffs," but refused any involvement in the visit. Bevin too shrank from welcoming the first lady. It was "inexpedient not to offer some form of government hospitality. On the other hand, the character of her husband's government and her conduct during her recent visit to Spain, [namely her Fascist salute at a rally alongside dictator General Francisco Franco], would make it extremely embarrassing for the Foreign Secretary to entertain her."[117] A leading anti-fascist before the war as general secretary of the Trades Union Council, Bevin played a prominent organisational role in the struggle against Franco during the Spanish Civil War. A flood of letters and petitions, mainly from Labour and Communist party members and trades union officials, urged the Labour government to "prevent the Fascist Ambassadress from insulting the British working class by landing on our shores." A welcome means of escape presented itself when Eva Perón requested her visit to Britain be made official, thus entitling her to meet the Royal Family. Bevin cited prevailing austerity in Britain to refuse the required official invitation.[118]

Perón himself left a better impression, at least for a time. Following the Eady-Miranda agreement, he sent three shiploads of beef to Britain with an emollient personal message: "I wish to give a public demonstration of friendship to the noble English people who have been so intimately linked with us throughout the life of our country."[119] In May 1947, Leeper reported a cordial evening he spent with him and Miranda after which "I was sent home in Miranda's car feeling I was almost an honorary descamisado." With reservations, he complimented the president's performance up till that time. Considering him sincere, energetic and constructive, he judged his methods of enlisting the backing of the unions disreputable, involving coercion and bribery. His greatest error lay in appointing Miranda "Tsar of the Argentine Economy." According to Leeper, Perón showed too little recognition of the enormity of the issues facing post-war Europe. He perceived indecisiveness and shaky control over his followers in the way the president shifted his ground on the railways so easily and

[117] Memoranda of 19 June, 18 July 1947. PREM 8/407.

[118] Bevin to Leeper 9 July, 1947. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs,* vol. IV, 81. Documentation on the projected visit appears in FO 371/61146.

[119] *South American Journal* 29 Sept. 1946.

then conducted the negotiations for nationalisation. On those grounds, "I cannot regard him as a great man or even as a strong man."[120]

* * *

In September 1948 Chancellor of the Exchequer Cripps defined the aims of British commercial policy towards Argentina as achieving a balance of payments at the highest possible level of trade. He set a confused and impractical goal that pointed to British weakness and Argentine strength in bargaining between the two countries. He wanted meat and grain imports to continue as before, with meat at around 400,000 tons and grain at more than 1 million tons. He required prices of goods imported from Argentina to remain stable to protect British food rations, (and to prevent the IAPI winning higher prices than Commonwealth food suppliers led by Australia and New Zealand). On these assumptions, a balance of payments on visible trade required the doubling of British exports and the removal of all restrictions on remittances. Cripps's memoranda listed potential new export items such as goods vehicles, agricultural tools, paints and machine belting. Even if exporters succeeded in developing sales of these goods, the trade balance he sought would elude him until he could add consumer items like textiles of the sort the Argentine protectionists rejected. He pondered threatening to withhold coal as a bargaining tool, but feared retaliation against meat supplies. He could take little action except appeal for more import permits and the freeing of remittances. Finally, he acknowledged he could never achieve the balance of payments he sought except by reducing meat imports. Rejecting that option, he then wondered how he would deal with future payments deficits. He wanted to avoid paying anything at all in convertible sterling, but reluctantly concluded he might have to.[121]

In late 1948, meat shipments to Britain fell into arrears, a signal of falling production and rising costs of production in Argentina and of supplies leaking to small scale buyers paying higher prices.[122] Strachey's Ministry of Food pared per capita rations from a shilling a week (£0.05) to only ten pence (£0.04). Following an outcry in Parliament against the decision, in which

[120] Leeper to Bevin 9 May, 1947. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs*, vol. IV, 44. Leeper also objected to Perón's interference with the universities and the judiciary as he removed members of the Supreme Court almost at will.

[121] Cripps Memorandum 9 Sept. 1948 PREM 8/1314.

[122] Memorandum Cabinet Office 17 Dec. 1948. T 236/2163.

free market Conservatives denounced the entire principle of bulk buying and rationing, the government restored the former ration. As it offered higher prices to the Argentine suppliers, full shipments resumed.[123] Nevertheless, when the year-long Andes agreement concluded in March 1949, only 80 per cent of the covenanted 400,000 tons of meat had been delivered.[124] Disputes followed about the missing amount, for which the Argentines demanded another increase in prices and payment in convertible sterling. At this point, Cripps likely released some convertible sterling, keeping his decision secret. In an effort to escape dependence on Argentina, the government set up a form of meat reserve.[125]

As meat problems increased, the Labour government grew extremely hostile to the Perón regime. In cabinet, Prime Minister Clement Atlee compared Perón's failure to honour his contracts with Adolf Hitler's false promises in 1938–1939. According to Atlee, surrendering to Argentine pressure would prompt "even more extreme and unprincipled attitudes on future occasions; and whatever hardships the general public may suffer as a result of a cut in the meat ration, I think there would be general support for the government in refusing to be blackmailed into accepting outrageous terms by a quasi-fascist South American State."[126] Senior figures in the Labour Party submitted evidence supporting the government's outlook. During a visit to Buenos Aires, Richard Stokes MP urged his friend Cripps to "stick to what we want and show we mean it." He reported on the recent treatment of the Partido Socialista, Labour's sister party in Argentina. "The Socialist Party here has been practically suppressed. [Socialists] cannot print their newspaper, which had a circulation of 60,000 eighteen months ago. Letters have to be sent privately to the Party to avoid the police. There are no Socialist MPs in the Assembly, all their Trades Union leaders have to be supporters of the present regime. The education system is patterned on the Nazi system."[127] British economists scorned Perón's "mirage of industrialisation." In February 1950, Bank of England specialist F.F. Powell perceived terminal damage in Argentina as

[123] *South American Journal* 22 Jan. 1949. Sir David Robertson MP led earlier parliamentary criticism of state trading. See House of Commons Debates 5 Apr. 1949. Vol. 463, 1868–1992.

[124] *South American Journal* 26 Mar., 30 Apr. 1949.

[125] Cripps Memorandum 8 Mar. 1949 PREM 8/1314; also memorandum from Overseas Negotiating Committee 26 Mar. 1949. PREM 8/1314.

[126] Atlee Memorandum 28 Mar. 1949 PREM 8/1314.

[127] Stokes to Cripps 18 March 1949. PREM 8/1314.

a result of Perón's policies. He urged adjusting "our ideas to deal with an entirely new Argentine economy." No longer set towards the grand destinies everyone envisaged less than five years earlier, the country was lurching into turmoil and collapse.[128]

In mid-1949, the British cabinet ordered Strachey to explore ways to reduce dependence on Argentine meat. Bereft of any constructive suggestions, he responded with an encomium to the pampas likely inspired by the century-old writings of Hudson and Head. "There is nowhere in the world which offers the prospect of increased supplies as Argentina…A great part of that country is situated in a latitude which is friendly to the continuous growth of the most luscious pasture. Costs of production are low. Cattle can graze the whole year round without shelter. Vast areas are still only partly used…Our best hope of sufficient meat lies in the development of our trade with Argentina." He concluded in cliché. "The more cheaply we can buy our meat, the more [resources] will be available …to satisfy other needs."[129] Members of Parliament urged appealing to Perón to increase production, but Strachey responded he could do nothing. "The Argentine is, after all, a sovereign state and we cannot control its government."[130]

The Labour government found no alternative to negotiating another meat deal, the third in three years. Its main outcome—bartering meat for coal and oil—was known before negotiations started. Even so, the meetings dragged on once more for three months.[131] Well-worn issues dominated the discussion, this time conducted by Balfour, who kept a diary of his ordeal, and Bramuglia, who was obliged to make a daily report to a committee appointed by Eva Perón. Yet again, the Argentines wanted convertible sterling to cover the British trade deficit while the British demanded wider market access and scope for remittances. In one novelty, the negotiators haggled at great length over Argentina's demand for protection against a sterling devaluation—a not unreasonable plea at a time Britain stood only weeks away from the devaluation of September 1949. Cripps,

[128] Powell 11 Feb. 1950. OV 102/28. (My thanks to Rory M. Miller for this reference.)

[129] John Strachey. "Meat: Sources of Supply other than Argentina." July 1949. CAB 129/35/34.

[130] *Hansard* Vol. 463, 1949. House of Commons Debates 5 Apr. 1949, 1868–1992. (For Strachey, p. 1899.)

[131] Balfour produced a daily report of contacts between himself and Bramuglia. See Balfour to Bevin June 1949. In Preston, Partridge, Dunkerley, *British Documents on Foreign Affairs,* vol. VII, 283–298.

who caused the much of the delay in the negotiations, eventually agreed to a one-year dollar revaluation guarantee. It meant that if the British devalued sterling, they would pay higher meat prices by a like amount.[132]

As negotiation ended, spectators expressed relief. The *South American Journal* applauded the deal as the "solution" while Bevin called it the foundation for friendship with Argentina "forever."[133] To their disappointment, the agreement unravelled immediately, resuming its usual course towards a steep British trade deficit. In 1949–1950, British meat imports climbed to 380,000 tons valued at £92 million, while British exports of coal, oil, chemicals and tinplate to Argentina reached only £49 million. As the custodian of the country's foreign reserves, the Argentine Central Bank continued to prevent the allocation of import permits for British "non-essentials." On this occasion, the British retaliated. When the Atlee government devalued sterling in September, it refused to honour the revaluation guarantee until Argentina began importing "non-essentials" and freed remittances. Since payments in sterling for imported meat and grains remained unchanged, in dollar terms Argentine earnings fell 30 per cent. Meanwhile, Britain charged Argentina the full dollar price for oil.[134] Economic warfare intensified as Argentina imposed multiple exchange rates of such extreme forms and complexity that the term Schachtian returned to vogue. Under this system, the British bought meat and grain in Argentina in hugely overvalued pesos at the rate of 9.40 pesos to the pound sterling. Meanwhile, British firms remitting profits, and any firm importing British goods into Argentina, bought sterling in Buenos Aires at the rate of 25.2 pesos. Either way, the British would pay dearly.[135]

Food supplies became a prominent issue during campaigning for the British general election of February 1950. Strachey submitted another report to the cabinet, "Food—the Next Twelve Months" containing much the same disheartening news as his former submission. "We have on balance failed to improve the food situation appreciably since the 1945 election. All that has happened is that things got substantially worse in 1947 and we are

[132] Analysis appears in *The Economist* 4, 18 June; 2, 16 July; 1 Oct. 1949. In October, *The Economist* reported "Argentina has been rapidly running down its sterling holdings, and can now hold little more than negligible balances in London." If Argentina had no sterling, there would be nothing to revalue and the revaluation pledge would therefore cost nothing.

[133] *South American Journal* 2 July, 1949 for details of the agreement.

[134] *South American Journal* 15 Oct. 1949. Months later, *The Economist* reported that Argentina's sterling balances eligible for revaluation totalled £15 million while Argentine debts for coal amounted to £20 million. See *The Economist* 18 Nov. 1950.

[135] Details in *The Economist* 8 Oct. 1949.

now about back where we were in 1945." Argentina stood out among his concerns since recent opinion polls placed meat at the forefront of public complaints about food rationing.[136] The election returned Labour to power with the slender parliamentary majority of five, making a second election in the near future probable. During the eighteen months of the second Labour government of 1950–1951, Conservatives weighed in persistently against bulk buying and food rationing. They claimed Britain no longer needed to deal with Argentina. Shortages could be avoided by importing from Australia and New Zealand on the free market.[137] Labour demurred, arguing bulk buying assured low prices and a stable cost of living.

In subsequent months, the government faced an impossible task to keep meat prices low and stable. In the mid-year meat negotiation of 1950, the British offered Argentina lower sterling prices than in 1949, £90 a ton against the previous £97.5, amounting to a fall in dollar earnings from $400 to $250. As relations between the two countries deteriorated, the *Review of the River Plate* deplored "the hardening of a tragic estrangement."[138] In April 1950 Maurice Webb, Strachey's replacement as minister of food in the new Labour cabinet, referred to Argentine demands for higher meat prices as "blackmail." A term used privately by Atlee himself, it prompted the Argentine Senate to issue a formal resolution restating the Argentine claim to sovereignty over the Falkland Islands.[139] Economic war resumed, as Argentina suspended meat shipments and Britain cancelled deliveries of tinplate.[140]

The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 turned conditions in Argentina's favour, as meat prices surged in expectation of large canned beef exports to the United States. With the Perón government prolonging the suspension of meat exports to Britain, the Labour government anxiously awaited replacement supplies promised by Webb. As they failed to appear and

[136] "Food—the Next Twelve Months," 2 June 1949. CAB 134/322.

[137] *South American Journal* 4 and 25 Mar. 1950; *Meat Trades Journal* quoted in *South American Journal* 31 Mar. 1950 arguing for termination of the 1949 agreement with Argentina.

[138] *Review of the River Plate* 5 Jan. 1951. Fursman provides a balanced commentary. "By late 1949 the Anglo-Argentine relationship was adrift. Both sides believed they had a strong case, and that the situation was being unfairly manipulated by the other. A common framework for discussion was missing. Furthermore, they both felt themselves to be in a strong bargaining position. Far from seeking a constructive and mutually acceptable compromise, they were moving rapidly towards a trial of strength in 1950." See, *Anglo/Argentine Economic Connection*, 332.

[139] *South American Journal* 1 April, 1950.

[140] *South American Journal* 1, 28 Aug., 5 Aug. 1950.

the meat reserve neared exhaustion, confusion enveloped the British government and the upper civil service. Some acknowledged that Argentina had grounds for complaint for the failure to honour the revaluation pledge of 1949; others argued for cutting meat rations and blaming Perón.[141] Bevin tried to break the impasse. "I don't want any cuts," he declared. "Folks are miserable enough. Wish to goodness we could get more nice meat."[142] Meeting Argentine ambassador Carlos Hogan in late December, he agreed to pay compensation for the British devaluation eighteen months previously, although the unresolved issue of remittances delayed agreement once more.[143]

As Webb announced cuts in the meat ration in February 1951, a motion of no confidence in Parliament left Labour floundering. "State trading has collapsed," shouted opposition members. "A policy which reduces the meat ration is a policy in ruins."[144] Treasury Minister John Edwards set off post haste for Buenos Aires for talks, which on this occasion concluded swiftly. *The Economist* summarised their outcome as "A Bad Bargain in Beef…Britain appears to have made concessions all down the line."[145] Obtaining much less meat than ever before, Edwards agreed to pay 30 per cent more for it. He agreed to resume sales of oil, coal and tinplate in Argentina and abandoned attempts to sell British consumer articles. He succeeded in unblocking remittances to Britain, but paid them from funds Britain owed Argentina under the revaluation agreement.[146] While providing Perón with a major propaganda victory, the so-called Edwards Protocol of April 1951 further discredited the Labour government.[147] "The socialist planners have had the most painful lesson of their lives," concluded the *South American Journal*. *The Economist* denounced the agreement as "a monument to the follies of government trading."[148]

Labour's final skirmishes with Perón contributed to its fall in the general election of September 1951, as Conservatives harped on the

[141] Memorandum of Robert Hall, PREM 8/1314.

[142] Jones to Ricketts, 24 Nov. 1950, quoting Bevin. PREM 8/1314.

[143] Record of a conversation between the Foreign Secretary and the Argentine Ambassador on 28 Dec. 1950. PREM 8/1314.

[144] Speeches of Captain Harry Crookshank and Maurice Webb. Hansard, House of Commons Debate 8 February 1951, 1946, 1977.

[145] *The Economist* 25 Apr. 1951.

[146] *South American Journal* 28 April 1951. Chancellor of the Exchequer Hugh Gaitskell supervised the payment of £10.5 million to settle the exchange guarantees. This sum was then credited to Britain as payment of remittances. See Gaitskell in PREM 8/1314.

[147] Crookshank in Hansard, House of Commons Debate, 5 July, 1951, 2504–2560.

[148] *South American Journal* 28 April 1951; *The Economist* 25 April 1951.

failures of state planning to contain food prices.[149] Following the election, the Edwards agreement enjoyed no greater longevity than its predecessors. At the end of 1951, renewed meat shortages forced the new Conservative government to reduce rations once more.[150] Argentina now imported little more than coal and oil from Britain and continuously fell short of satisfying British demand for meat. Conditions deteriorated in 1952 as prolonged drought in Argentina prompted another steep decline in meat production.[151] The British chamber of commerce in Buenos Aires summarised that year's meat negotiation as the "longest and most arduous since the end of the war."[152] From it, Britain secured only 200,000 tons of meat at prices that in a single year rose from £146 to £250 per ton. At length in 1954 world meat supplies increased sufficiently for Britain to abolish bulk buying and meat rationing. The annual contretemps with Argentina became extinct.[153]

Although bulk buying perished in discredit, it had delivered millions of tons of meat and grains to Britain at low prices, contributing to post-war recovery. Argentina obtained supplies of scarce commodities, coal, oil and tinplate, from Britain it could not purchase in the United States. The Perón regime achieved several key objectives, as it halted remittances by British firms and imports of British consumer goods. Railway nationalisation provided the one glaring example in which, financially if perhaps not psychologically, Argentina lost more than it gained. Declining ties between the two countries grew manifest in many ways. Before World War II, Argentina exported up to 500,000 tons of meat to Britain and in 1955 only 100,000 tons. By 1957, meat imports from Argentina totalled only 14 per cent of total British meat consumption.[154] By this point too, Argentine trade with the United States and Germany far exceeded that with Britain.[155] The disarticulation of Anglo-Argentine ties seemed complete.

[149] On rationing and the 1951 election, see Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 231, 255.

[150] Conditions are reported in *The Economist* 26 Jan. and 29 Mar. 1952, Argentina's "black year" in which agrarian output sank to its lowest levels since the early twentieth century.

[151] See Ministry of Food Memorandum T 236/3326 (1952).

[152] British Chamber of Commerce in the Argentine Republic. *Report for the Year ended 30 June, 1953.*

[153] *Standard* 19 May 1954.

[154] *Review of the River Plate* 18 Feb. 1955, 4 Oct. 1957.

[155] By 1953 Argentina ranked fortieth as a British overseas market. For commentary, see *Review of the River Plate* 19 Mar. 1954; Fursman, *Anglo/Argentina Trade*, 4. Later commerce is discussed in Colin Lewis. "Anglo-Argentine Trade, 1945–1965," in Rock, *Argentina in the Twentieth Century,* 41–65.

CHAPTER 9

Epilogue: Pathways to Integration

War will convert most of the Anglo-Argentines into Argentines.
Buenos Aires Herald, *May 1982*

At the end of World War II, Anglo manufacturers like Robert Fraser of the Alpargatas firm, British exporters selling aircraft and machinery, and diplomats led by Victor Perowne argued Britain's future in Latin America lay in forging better links with rapidly developing domestic markets. In Argentina, several possible lines of advance appeared, all of which were attempted in later times, sometimes in combination. They included switching exports from consumer to capital goods to develop and reequip Argentine factories, most of which remained small scale and undercapitalised. Another approach particularly attractive to Anglo-Argentines lay in forming joint ventures between British and Argentine firms, an arrangement in which local business leaders controlled management and marketing while the British component supplied special skills, machinery and technology. Still another strategy proposed developing offshoots of large British companies of the type later known as the multinational subsidiary. In 1945, a small number of such firms already existed in Argentina. They included Lever Brothers, the soap maker, (renamed Unilever in 1930 when it became an Anglo-Dutch venture), Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI), the glassmaker Pilkington Brothers and the pharmaceutical firm Glaxo.

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Until the mid-1920s, Lever exported thousands of tons of soap to Argentina from its factory at Port Sunlight on Merseyside. The firm decided to form a subsidiary in Buenos Aires at a highpoint of its heavy overseas expansion, mostly to countries in the British Commonwealth.[1] It entered the Argentine market to escape anticipated tariffs, at a time the huge metal boiling pans used to manufacture soap could still be imported duty free. The attractions of Argentina included its rapidly expanding market and the easy access it provided to tallow, the rendered cattle fat used in soap making, from the numerous meat packing plants near Buenos Aires.[2] Lever Hermanos began modestly. From 1924, officials spent two years scouting out a factory site before settling on Avellaneda, a well-populated, rapidly expanding manufacturing centre south of the federal capital, where taxes were low and land cheap. They purchased a bigger site than needed for the factory, intending to sell off the surplus land to their workers for housing. The company labour force, a standard Argentine mix of Mediterranean and local migrants, grew quickly to several hundred, with an equal number of both sexes. The management failed to attract many workers to live on site, an area susceptible to flooding. For some years, it transported its employees to their homes, sometimes using armed vehicles to protect them from roaming gangs that robbed and murdered people for their wages.[3]

By switching to local raw materials, the company restricted imports to a minimum.[4] It sold its products through wholesalers, while travelling salesmen—a mere five at first—scoured the country for customers. Breaking into a market in which about sixty soap manufacturers already existed in Buenos Aires alone, and several hundred nationally, proved challenging. During its first decade, annual output of Sunlight Soap, the company's signature product, remained at a modest 2000 tons, about 10 per cent of the market. In 1937, visiting executives decided to concentrate on Lux Toilet Soap, a higher quality article popular with middle class con-

[1] See Charles Wilson. *The History of Unilever*, vol. 2. London: Cassell, 1970, 354–359; also vol. 3, 171. For a broader view, see John Stopford. "The Origins of British-based Multinational Manufacturing Enterprises." *Business History Review*, Fall 1974, Vol. 83, No 2. 303–335.

[2] For background on the move to Argentina, see Lever Hermanos. Report no. 1, for 1924. (Unilever archives: UNI/RM/DC/2/2/4/1).

[3] Lever Hermanos. Report no. 3, for 1927 (UNI/RM/DC/2/2/4/3).

[4] See Lever Hermanos. Reports nos. 14 and 17 (1941 and 1943) (UNI/RM/DC/2/2/4/14 and 17).

sumers.[5] Lux then shared the market for toilet soap with US-made Palmolive Soap. In the late 1930s, Unilever bought out J. and E. Atkinson, a producer of perfumery in Argentina, whose sales expanded to around half those of its soaps; smaller products like glycerine and detergent followed.

The 1920s also marked the arrival of ICI, a company that developed in Argentina through a succession of joint ventures. It began manufacturing alkali and chlorine before moving to ammunition, shells and gun cartridges in association with a local firm. It then linked up with Bunge y Born, a powerful Argentine conglomerate, to produce acids and fertilizers, although Dupont of Michigan became its closest and longest partner. In 1935, the tie with Dupont led to the creation of Duperial, a joint entity coupling the companies' names. It too remained small during its early years, in this case co-existing with 900 other small chemical firms.[6] Ties with Dupont terminated about twenty years later when the two companies agreed to operate separately in non-competing fields.[7] Like Lever Hermanos, ICI abandoned imported raw materials for local substitutes as quickly as possible. H.R. Mitchell, its ambitious president during the mid-1930s, aspired to form subsidiaries of ICI throughout Latin America, "which could expand and replace imports in the industrial economy in which the Government of each country was struggling to create."[8] Viewing Duperial as "the vehicle of industrial effort for ICI and Dupont in Argentina," he ordered its managers "to explore all opportunities for local manufacture [and to dissociate the firm] from trade as early as possible." He looked to construct a network of local allies, "Argentineans standing well in social and political circles. The developing economic nationalism makes it advisable to have well-known and trusty natives associated with our concern."[9]

In 1937, the *South American Journal* reported the arrival of one F.B. Grant in Buenos Aires to manage a new company named Vidrierías Argentinas S.A. (Argentine Glassworks Ltd), a joint venture between

[5] See reports by visiting executives, 1924–1937. Lever Hermanos. Reports Nos. 1-13 (UNI/RM/DC/2/2/4/1-13).

[6] Data from the industrial census of 1936, cited in *South American Journa*l 13 Nov. 1937.

[7] Jeff Pearcy. *Recording an Empire: An Accounting History of Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd. 1926–1976*. Glasgow: The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland, 2001, 13.

[8] W.J. Reader. *Imperial Chemical Industries. A History*, vol. 2, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975, Reader, *Imperial Chemical Industries*. 227.

[9] Reader, *Imperial Chemical Industries*, 2, 223–225.

prestigious Pilkington Glass of St Helens, another English manufacturing town near Liverpool, and Saint-Gobain, a leading Parisian glass maker. Pilkington's move followed its exclusion from European markets by cartels and its fears of suffering a similar fate in Latin America. Grant went to Buenos Aires to construct a factory at Llavallol south of the city near Lomas de Zamora. He intended to recruit 250 workers to manufacture rolled (bubbled) glass, a number expected to increase to 700–800 workers during the next five years. Pilkington too adopted a plan of import substitution. Starting out making safety glass for use in cars, several years passed before it turned to plate glass, the glass product in highest demand currently dominated by Belgian exporters. Pilkington began sheet glass production in 1941 when the Nazi occupation of Belgium disrupted the established flow of supplies.[10]

Glaxo started production in Argentina in the 1930s in another effort to prevent the company's exclusion by tariffs. For some time, it produced only babies' nappies at Quequén, a remote coastal site 300 miles south of the capital. Apprehensive about opposition from Argentine nationalists, the company appointed a locally born female chemist to chair the board. According to Charles Richardson, Glaxo's leading figure in Argentina, the appointee, in his opinion a person of little professional merit, occupied her position only to sign company documents.[11] Richardson ran the company until his death in 1941 although as a very small concern.

* * *

While manufacturing quite different products in factories situated some distance from each other in Greater Buenos Aires, the early British subsidiaries shared several basic features. They began as efforts to overstep tariffs. They differed from past British companies in Argentina in their emphasis on using local raw materials and in their conscious efforts to substitute imports. They were willing to associate with other firms, whether local or foreign, and aware of potential opposition from nationalists. At the end of World War II, British and Anglo modernisers foresaw such companies, and many more they hoped, moving to the forefront of the Argentine economy among the so-called *industrias dinámicas*.

[10] T.C. Barker. *The Glassmakers. Pilkington: the rise of an international company*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977, 389, 413.

[11] R.P.T. Davenport-Hines and Julie Slinn. *Glaxo.: A History to 1962*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 104.

At this point, the subsidiaries faced an uphill struggle, most recently in 1943–1946 as a result of price controls instituted by the military juntas preceding the election of Perón. Parent companies in Britain had few resources in the form of machinery or other capital to spare to strengthen them. For many years, remittances, the main lure for new investment, posed numerous problems as a result of exchange controls. Receiving very little financial support from Britain, the subsidiaries borrowed extensively from local banks, in Lever's case almost exclusively.[12] Under Perón, controls on supplies of tallow by the IAPI prompted fears of insolvency.[13] In 1947, a senior executive concluded, "our financial position has worsened in recent years because of the price of raw materials, loss of profit, and social law payments [to workers]." In 1952, a permutation of price controls and severe recession made conditions even more critical. By then, thirteen years had elapsed since Lever last paid dividends. It made some profit but remittances remained blocked, vulnerable to depreciation as inflation soared.[14]

The other British companies fared little better. Glaxo grew a little stronger from 1951 following a move to Chivilcoy, another small city much closer to the federal capital than Quequén. The firm sought to develop production of penicillin, but found itself impeded and outmanoeuvred by US manufacturer E.R. Squibb, which Glaxo accused of receiving special favours from Perón.[15] Of the quartet of British companies, Pilkington likely performed best following its wartime move into the sheet glass trade. In 1953, the *Review of the River Plate* described the practices many British manufacturing companies adopted in order to survive. It cited Maple and Co, a branch of a high-quality London furniture maker unable to import raw materials and machinery or remit profits. The firm adjusted by manufacturing furniture, upholstery and bedding using local raw materials. It made a healthy profit in pesos, but one hard to quantify in sterling in light of Argentine inflation and the multiple exchange rates employed under Perón.[16] During this period, Argentine nationalists argued that companies like Maple had severed their British ties and become Argentine. During the meat negotiations of 1950, Finance

[12] Lever Hermanos. Reports nos. 14, 17, 20, 21, 1941–1944 (UNI/RM/DC/2/2/4/14, 17, 21).

[13] Lever Hermanos. Report no. 22, 1947 (UNI/RM/DC/2/2/4/22).

[14] Lever Hermanos. Report no. 24, 1952 (UNI/RM/DC/2/2/4/24). Report no. 31, 1959 suggested the company imported some equipment around 1949 but none afterwards.

[15] Davenport-Hines and Slinn, *Glaxo*, 262.

[16] *Review of the River Plate* 8 May, 1953.

Minister Alfredo Gómez Morales demanded compensation for the devaluation of sterling of the previous year, but refused a requested quid pro quo to allow remittances by British companies. He argued that because such firms utilised so many local resources, their profits should remain in Argentina. In his view, British shareholders had received their due long ago and had no right to expect anything more.[17]

The drought-stricken harvest of 1952 forced Perón to alter policy. Rather than hurting foreign companies, he began courting them with tax exemptions and promises of greater freedom and security. While US firms and others began to expand operations, British firms responded sluggishly, mostly because of prevailing conditions in Britain. The Korean war commodity boom of 1950–1954 derailed the British balance of payments and led to inflation of up to 9 per cent. In 1953, British governments limited available credit to projects likely to boost short-term exports.[18] Conditions relaxed a little in 1954. British banks could now offer three year credits, although US banks offered five years or more. Sir Francis Glyn, chairman of BOLSA (Bank of London and South America, the heir of the Bank of London and the River Plate), faulted such restrictions for hampering British trade just when opportunities to export capital goods were increasing. He explained that buyers in countries like Argentina bought as much machinery as possible from abroad, but needed to make profits before having to pay for it: invariably, they purchased their supplies in countries offering the best credit terms.[19] Soon after Perón's downfall in September 1955, his successors appealed for financial assistance from Britain but were offered only short-term credit. For anything more, Foreign Office personnel reported, "the Argentines must obviously look to the United States."[20]

The later 1950s brought slow improvement. Pledging to become a future leader in the pharmaceutical field, in 1956 Glaxo began constructing a large new plant.[21] In 1957, British firms sold railway equipment in Argentina for the first time since before World War II, and won government contracts to construct a power station at Dock Sur, the site of the Anglo Frigorífico in the port of Buenos Aires. Barings Bank earmarked special funds for both projects.[22] A contract to sell Leyland buses followed in 1958

[17] Balfour to FO 7 July, 1950. T 236/3023.

[18] Conditions in Britain are noted in *The Economist* 24 Jan. and 7 Mar. 1953.

[19] For Glyn's views, see *The Economist* 13 Apr. 1954.

[20] Foreign Office to Buenos Aires 22 Nov. 1955. PREM 11/808.

[21] British Chamber of Commerce. *Monthly Journal,* Sept. 1956.

[22] British Chamber of Commerce. *Monthly Journal* May and Nov. 1957.

and delivery of the first Comet passenger jet in 1959. At an international sales exhibition in Buenos Aires in 1958, British participants included a leading British steel maker, several electrical engineering firms, the Rootes Group of carmakers and Perkins Engines, along with Glaxo and Unilever, in displaying British products.[23] Despite signs of renewal, achievements ran far short of the goals promulgated in 1945. In the late 1950s, Britain continued to export far more oil and coal to Argentina than manufactured products. With British exports to Argentina still at only one third of imports from Argentina, heavy trade deficits persisted. Finally, as the overall volume of Anglo-Argentine trade continued to dwindle, British goods placed at only half the percentage of the late 1930s as a share of Argentina's imports.[24]

* * *

During the presidency of Arturo Frondizi in 1958–1962, the entire multinational sector entered a new age. Frondizi began his term with a pro-labour policy, his payback to the exiled Perón whose secret support won him election as president. He abandoned the pact, breaking with Perón, as inflation and trade deficits soared. Recession, austerity and devaluation followed, in a sequence typical of the downward phase of economic cycles in Argentina during the past twenty years. The cycles began with the devaluation of the peso to spur exports. The economy then moved forward but only until foreign exchange shortages choked off further expansion and provoked an economic downswing. The 1959 recession eliminated two more scions of the old British connection. The *Standard* folded just two years short of its centenary and the once eminent River Plate Trust, Loan and Investment Company founded in 1882 abandoned business in Argentina.

As economic recovery began towards late 1959, Frondizi announced radical new policies to emancipate the economy from the boom and bust cycles. So-called *desarrollismo* ("developmentalism"), his crash programme of industrial expansion, lowered tariffs and widened opportunities for profit remittances to attract foreign investment in Argentina on a larger scale than since before World War I. The programme sought to develop or radically expand petrochemical, steel and automobile industries, to revive

[23] British Chamber of Commerce. *Monthly Journal* August 1958. The firms display goods included steel maker Arthur Balfour and Co, the electrical engineering firm Metropolitan Vickers, Hillman cars, diesel engines and machine tools.

[24] British Chamber of Commerce. *Monthly Journal*, Oct. 1958, Apr. 1959. British assessments ignored "Invisibles" that some commentators still claimed negated the trade deficit. See *Review of the River Plate* 28 Feb. 1955.

the rural sector by imported technology and to modernise public services.[25] British companies drawn into the scheme included the four original subsidiaries and several major newcomers including the English Electric Company and Lucas Industries, manufacturers of automobile components.[26] The British firms occupied a junior position in the project to reflect their relatively modest standing. In a publicity campaign to showcase the programme, the government selected only one British company, namely Glaxo, in a total of ten, of which half were US and German firms. At 10–15 per cent of the total, the British multinationals occupied a space similar to that of French, Italian and Swiss corporations.[27]

Although British participation remained secondary, the programme provided a major boost to British investment and trade "We are putting a lot of capital into this country, and this is a measure of our confidence in [its] future," announced ICI chairman Paul Chambers.[28] His company opened large new plants upriver from Buenos Aires at San Lorenzo near Rosario to produce sulphuric acid, carbon disulphide and other industrial chemicals. ICI subsidiary Duperial launched Argentina into the plastics era by developing vinyl manufacture. Lever too made new investments. Forty years after its creation, company officials reported the Avellaneda factory finally outgrew the "horse and buggy stage."[29] During the early 1960s, British exports to Argentina diversified into hydroelectric components, naval patrol boats and aircraft.

[25] Accounts of the Frondizi presidency include Clarence Zuvekas Jr. *Argentine Economic Policies under the Frondizi government, 1958–1962.* Ph.D. diss. Washington University, 1969; Lewis, *Argentine Capitalism,* 302–310; Gary Wynia, *Argentina in the Postwar Era. Politics and Economic Policy Making in a Divided Society.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978, 87–107; Laura Randall. *An Economic History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1978, 161; Richard D. Mallon, in collaboration with Juan V. Sourrouille. *Economic Policy Making in a Conflict Society. The Argentine Case.* Cambridge (Mass.), Harvard University Press, 1975, 19–24; Rock, *Argentina, 1516–1987*, 337–343.

[26] See Commercial Minister Denzil I. Dunnet in British Chamber of Commerce. *Monthly Journal*, October 1959.

[27] British Chamber of Commerce, *Monthly Journal* Sept. 1959. The government made a special appeal for investment by ten foreign companies of which three were US, two German, and one each from France, Italy, Switzerland and Britain. The scope of foreign investment is summarised in Wynia. *Argentina in the Postwar Era*, 91.

[28] British Chamber of Commerce. *Monthly Journal* May, June 1961.

[29] UNI/RM/OC/2/2/4/32 (Knox) and 38 (Nunan).

The multinationals developed in a strikingly different way from their predecessors led by the former British railways tied to the Argentine export economy. In 1860–1930, demand in Argentina for railway building materials, fuel, rolling stock, steel rails prompted a regular flow of supplies from Britain, stimulating employment in British factories and coal mines. By deliberate intent, imports by multinationals remained very small by comparison. The subsidiaries were designed to pursue profits abroad not promote the expansion of British factories or home employment, as occurred years earlier from the late 1870s. Investment too in the two types of company betrayed quite different features. Entirely British financed, old firms like the Buenos Aires Great Southern Railway paid interest and principal to Britain over many decades, while companies like Lever relied on local sources of capital. In 1959, for example, the subsidiary recorded it owed 4.4 million pesos to some twenty Buenos Aires banks, which were themselves mostly foreign subsidiaries drawing capital from local sources.[30] Investment in Lever Hermanos by Unilever, the parent company, remained small. When Frondizi's programme began in 1959, company officials in Buenos Aires were delighted to discover they would be allowed to import new equipment for the first time in years.[31] The profits of multinational subsidiaries appeared far greater than those of the railways relative to respective company size. In 1946, company directors calculated total investment in the railways from the early 1860s at £270 million, while *The Economist* estimated total railway profits over the same period at the lesser sum of £200 million.[32] Despite the lengthy era of exchange control in 1930–1955, Lever's accounts by contrast revealed remittances far outstripped investments. During the period 1927–1972, remittances totalled US $6.7 million and investments only $4.1 million. Another $3.2 million in remittances derived from royalties, namely payments by other firms for the use of company patents. At around $10 million in all, remittances totalled double the sum of investments, a striking contrast with the railways.[33]

Such heavy reliance on local finance by multinationals combined with high remittances courted strong local opposition. Argentine critics

[30] UNI/RM/OC/2/2/4/32 (Knox). The company owed most to the Banco de Boston, the Banco Holandés Unido and the Banco del Canadá.

[31] UNI/RM/OC/2/2/4/31 (Klijnstra and Knox).

[32] For this discussion of railway profits, see *The Economist* 22 June 1946.

[33] For this reports, see UNI/RM/OC/2/2/4/103 (Martin).

accused them of starving local producers of capital and credit, and of exporting the national wealth. Following the depression and the Perón era, the Argentine economy grew heavily tilted towards tariff-protected manufacturing. Multinationals allegedly threatened hundreds of thousands of workers congregated in weaker, more labour-intensive domestic firms.[34] They faced charges of monopsony from the manner they forced their local suppliers into competing against one another. Firms like Lever, which granted licences to local firms to use patented imported technology, were accused of extracting exorbitant royalties. Indeed, the multinationals overwhelmed their domestic competitors. Expanding at twice the rate of local manufacturers, they soon dominated sectors like rubber, chemicals, machinery and electrical goods. Among the largest companies in Argentina by the mid-1960s, half were foreign multinationals and the other half mostly insolvent local monopolies dependent on state subsidies.[35]

As the process progressed, the Frondizi era brought rising political tensions. If they were mainly tied to the political restrictions being applied against the Peronists, they also reflected the disruptive impact of the multinationals. The two issues became interlinked in that the Peronists dominated the main interests damaged by the multinationals, namely national manufacturing and the labour movement. Denouncing a destructive trend towards industrial concentration, radicals quoted Karl Marx, "the expropriation of capitalist by capitalist, the transformation of many small into few large capitals." Following Marx, they argued that revolution alone

[34] Guillermo O'Donnell. *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism. Argentina, 1966–1973, in Comparative Perspective*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988, 213. Further discussion of domestic financing of multinationals appears in Randall, *Argentina*, 165–166. Mallon and Sourrouille observed that multinationals adopted "minimum use of their own funds and maximum use of local financing, thereby generating claims for profit remittances abroad far exceeding the amount of capital brought in." Mallon and Sourrouille, *Economic Policy Making*, 90.

[35] On such issues, see Juan V. Sourrouille. "La presencia y el comportamiento de las empresas extranjeras en el sector industrial argentino." Buenos Aires: *Estudios CEDES*, 1, no. 2: 1978; also Mallon and Sourrouille, *Economic Policy Making*, 80. As noted in a more recent summary, "production [by the multinationals] for the highly protected domestic market generated a distorted structure of costs and relative prices, with low productivity and oligopolistic tendencies." María Inés Barbero and Fernando Rocchi. "Industry." In *A New Economic History of Argentina*. Edited by Gerardo della Paolera and Alan M. Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 285–286.

could halt the advance of monopoly capitalism.[36] Although it eschewed Marx, the British chamber of commerce in Buenos Aires shared the prevailing disquiet. Representing smaller local firms, some of its members felt threatened by the "offshoots of great international groups." They preferred to see British companies willing to pursue ties with local firms, working in conjunction with "Argentina's own investing public."[37] Attempts to form joint ventures of the type the chamber favoured commonly proved unsuccessful. SIAM Di Tella, a leading domestic manufacturer, began producing British buses and automobiles—popular models of the period like Leyland, Austin, Morris and Riley—under licence from the British Motor Corporation. As sales of such vehicles failed to compete with automobiles produced independently by foreign multinationals, SIAM Di Tella's losses contributed to the decline of British trade and investment.[38]

Lever Hermanos experienced the early 1960s as a short burst of overexpansion ending in travail. During the upward stage of the cycle, the company outpaced its local competitors to enhance its share of the market, but as the cycle turned down inflation, falling sales and high overheads prompted anxiety. "We had too large an organisation for too small volume in sales," concluded an insider. "As we had to keep our margins up and our costs were too high, we were pricing ourselves out of the market."[39] In 1962, sales of leading Lever products declined to less than two thirds of 1958, itself a mediocre year. The company stockpiled goods as a defence against inflation and halted advertising to reduce costs. It became a speculator, warehousing its products in preparation for shortages and rising prices. It faced major labour problems, as Communist union militants seized control over its workforce.[40]

Hopes among the *desarrollistas* the multinationals would overcome cyclical balance of payments deficits by increasing exports remained unfulfilled. Lack of exports—failure to overcome the so-called foreign exchange bottleneck—became one of the programme's most conspicuous weaknesses. Under Frondizi, the former economic cycle remained deeply entrenched.

[36] Karl Marx. *Capital*, vol. 1, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, 585–586. Issues are summarised in Mallon and Sourrouille, *Economic Policy Making*, 22–24, 70–76.

[37] British Chamber of Commerce, *Monthly Journal* May 1960; also April 1962.

[38] The first licensing agreements between SIAM Di Tella and various foreign automobile companies, including one with the BMC, are noted in Thomas C. Cochran and Rubén E. Reina. *Espíritu de empresa en la Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1965, 254–255.

[39] UNI/RM/OC/2/2/4/41 (Nunan) and 43 (Klijnstra).

[40] UNI/RM/OC/2/2/4/44 (Briggs).

Following a brief burst of expansion in 1960–1962, the flow of foreign investment ceased, the balance of payments tipped into deficit and severe recession ensued.[41]

* * *

During this period, signs appeared of continuing British interest in Latin America, including Argentina. In 1965, a committee of scholars under Sir John Parry urged the expansion of Latin American studies in British universities.[42] It proposed new university teaching posts, study centres and graduate student scholarships. Latin American studies in Britain took off alongside programmes for Africa and the Middle East. The study of Latin America grew in Britain while business conditions in Argentina remained adverse, partly to reflect the hope that the expansion of the former would aid the recovery of the latter.[43] Such hopes were never fulfilled. In the 1960s, severe recession in Argentina coincided with another credit squeeze in Britain. As exports to Argentina stagnated at only half the level of 1961 over much of the decade, an air of disenchantment supervened. In 1966, Sir George Bolton, another influential chairman of BOLSA, urged redirecting foreign investment into agriculture, arguing that Argentina had more to gain by responding to the future world food shortages he anticipated than attempting to revive manufacturing.[44] In 1967, friction in the meat trade underlined the impending demise of another former bulwark of Anglo-Argentine trade. With Argentine meat export surpluses at only a fraction of former times, Britain now drew its supplies from a wide range of domestic and foreign producers. When the government of Harold Wilson devalued sterling in 1967, it halted imports of Argentine meat citing an outbreak of foot and mouth disease.[45] Incensed Argentines sceptical about the official reasons for the ban blamed the decision on Britain's recent application to enter the European Common Market. If Britain joined the Market, agricultural protectionism threatened to limit or exclude food imports from non-European sources like Argentina.[46] Soon

[41] Zuvekas, *Frondizi*, 125.

[42] *Review of the River Plate* 30 Jan. 1965.

[43] On the Parry Report, see Rory M. Miller. "Academic Entrepreneurs, Public Policy and the Growth of Latin American Studies during the Cold War." *Latin American Perspectives*. Vol. 30, No. 20, 2018, 1–23.

[44] British Chamber of Commerce. *Monthly Bulletin* Aug. 1966.

[45] British Chamber of Commerce. *Monthly Bulletin*, Aug. 1966.

[46] On foot and mouth disease, see Abigail Woods. *A Manufactured Plague? The History of Foot and Mouth Disease in Britain*. London: Earthscan, 2004, suggesting political reasons for the 1967 ban on Argentine meat.

afterwards, French President Charles de Gaulle vetoed British membership of the Common Market. Ironically, his stated reasons included "the British tradition of obtaining cheap food from all parts of the world."[47]

British firms participated in a second, briefer wave of expansion of the multinational sector that followed the military coup of mid-1966 under Gen. Juan Carlos Onganía and the anti-inflation programme of 1967 sponsored by economy minister, Adalbert Krieger Vasena. This period marked another brief economic upswing, although it proved far more overtly destabilising and disruptive than its predecessor in the early 1960s. Reactions included outbursts of civil unrest and guerrilla activities, kidnappings and assassinations. In mid-1970, Onganía fell from power following the abduction and murder of Gen. Pedro E. Aramburu, who served as Frondizi's immediate predecessor as president in the late 1950s.[48] While economic expansion lasted, British exports recovered some of the lost ground of recent years. Trade climbed to 80 per cent of the previous high-point of 1960–1962, although still far below pre-war levels and far behind the United States, Germany and Italy.[49] Hoping for a stronger recovery, in late 1970 British businesses staged a major industrial exhibition at the Palermo Park in Buenos Aires, the first of its kind since 1931. 100,000 visitors attended the event, 340 British companies participated, many with past connections with Argentina, and immediate orders worth £15 million were expected. The Export Credit Guarantee Department, an entity responsible for funding British overseas trade long criticised in Argentina for its meagre support, this time offered easier credits and lengthier repayments.[50] The trade exhibition of 1970 became a repeat of its predecessor of 1931, failing completely. At only 5.1 per cent of Argentine imports in 1971, British exports remained unchanged from five years earlier.[51]

[47] *Guardian* 28 Nov. 1967.

[48] The numerous accounts of the Onganía era include Wynia, *Argentina*, 169–184, O'Donnell, *El estado burocrático*. Alain Rouquié. *Poder militar y sociedad política en la Argentina*. 2 vols. Translated by Arturo Iglesias Echegary, Buenos Aires: Emecé, 7th ed. 1983, Juan C. Pablo. *Política anti-inflacionaria en la Argentina, 1967–1970*. Buenos Aires: Amorrortu, 1970; William C. Smith. *Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989, 48–162.

[49] Comments on broader commercial trends appear in British Chamber of Commerce. *Britannia* May 1969.

[50] *Buenos Aires Herald* 17 Nov. 1970. The ECGD required deposits of 10 per cent as opposed to the usual 15 per cent, with repayments extendible over five years.

[51] British Chamber of Commerce. *Britannia* Apr. 1971.

British interests then became ensnared in the protracted political turmoil that began under Onganía, continuing and worsening throughout the 1970s and long into the 1980s. Its earlier symptoms included an intense nationalist reaction against multinational subsidiaries. In early 1971, a "Buy National" law re-instituting protectionism under President Roberto M. Levingston ended any prospects of success for the British trade exhibition within weeks of its occurrence.[52] As an illustration of the prevailing hostile environment, in 1973 the British engineering firm Balfour Beatty led a consortium bidding for a share in the great El Chocón-Cerros Colorados hydroelectric scheme in the southern provinces of Rio Negro and Neuquén. The group offered to construct 1100 kilometres of power lines, but its proposals met curt rejection despite offering local firms a substantial share in the deal.[53] In 1972, the renewed prospect of British admission to the European Common Market led Anglo Frigorífico to close its operations after a half-century of business in Argentina. The company departed leaving its vast premises derelict and its former workers deeply resentful. When Britain joined the Common Market in 1973, the meat trade plunged once more, with British purchases sinking to only 20 per cent of the now exiguous Argentine beef surplus. In 1975, a year of extraordinary economic dislocation in Argentina, the chamber of commerce recorded that minor products such as sugar derivatives earned far more in Britain than meat.[54]

Hostility to the multinationals grew sharper. May 1969 marked the outbreak of the *cordobazo*, an inchoate popular insurrection in Córdoba partly directed against FIAT, the Italian automaker. Several similar movements followed in Córdoba and elsewhere to create an atmosphere of impending popular revolution. As military government weakened, the Peronist movement revived. Transformed into a great popular mass, it returned to power in 1973. Following elections to end military rule, two

[52] British Chamber of Commerce. *Britannia* April 1971, and comments by departing Ambassador Michael Hadow in *Britannia* Dec. 1972. On Levingston and his economy minister Aldo Ferrer, see O'Donnell, *Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*, 211–212. In 1966, Ferrer declared himself a supporter of mixing national and foreign capital to ensure "a sufficient flow of foreign resources while preserving the position of national capital as protagonist." Aldo Ferrer. "El desarrollo de las industrias básicas y la sustitución de importaciones." In *Estrategias de industrialización para la Argentina*, edited by Mario S. Brodersohn. Buenos Aires, Editorial del Instituto, 1970. During his ministerial stint five years later under Levingston, Ferrer adopted a more radical nationalist position.

[53] British Chamber of Commerce. *Britannia*, May 1973.

[54] British Chamber of Commerce. *Summary* 1975.

proxy presidents served, as Perón himself prepared to return from an eighteen-year exile. Under Héctor Cámpora, president for only forty-nine days in mid-1973, opposition to the multinationals swelled to a climax. In Congress, some legislators incited retribution against them by threatening to publicise the identity of company officials, while others demanded total bans on remittances and the severing of all contact between multinational subsidiaries and local banks. In late 1973, the aged Perón returned to the presidency. Shifting to the right, he devoted his flagging energies to defenestrating the Montoneros, the main left wing faction of his movement, but survived in office only eight months. On his death in July 1974, his widow Isabel Perón, formerly vice president, lost control over a country now split between the Peronist left and the Peronist right. Argentina became the theatre of near-civil war, as guerrilla organisations led by the Montoneros confronted right-wing death squads headed by the Triple A, the Asociación Anticomunista Argentina.

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In March 1976, in the fourth coup d'etat in twenty-one years, the military seized power once more to overthrow the government of Isabel Perón. The self-styled Process of National Reorganisation under Gen. Jorge Rafael Videla deployed extraordinary violence to create a veneer of stability. Argentina's so-called Dirty War conducted by the military climaxed in 1976–1977 as clandestine security forces detained people in thousands, routinely torturing and executing many of them in secret prisons.[55] Ignoring human rights issues, the two British governments of the late 1970s, Labour and Conservative, treated the dictatorship no differently from its predecessors, elected or not. In Buenos Aires, British company executives endorsed the regime. Following the company's heavy losses under Isabel Perón, leading personnel at Lever considered the Videla government "about the best we are likely to have…There is nothing about the early events [after the coup] which looks objectionable or disagreeable to us…The senior members of the Ministry of the Economy

[55] The mass of published writing on this episode starts with Argentina. Comisión Nacional sobre la Desparición de Personas. *Nunca Más. The Report of the Argentine National Commission on the Disappeared; with an introduction by Ronald Dworkin*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1986. Recent contributions include Emilio A. Crenzel. *Memories of the Argentina Disappearances: The Political History of Nunca Más*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

are highly regarded…This is the first opportunity we have had in three years to restore the economic viability of our business."[56]

The British chamber of commerce basked in its association with José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz, who as minister of the economy for five years from 1976 directed the military government's policies.[57] The minister's British connections began with his great-grandfather, an importer of Shorthorn cattle. His family had close ties with the Sociedad Rural Argentina, the most Anglophile wing of the Argentine elite, tied to Britain for more than a century as pedigree cattle importers and prime beef exporters. As guest of honour at the fiftieth anniversary banquet of the British chamber of commerce in 1963, Martínez de Hoz addressed its members on behalf of the Sociedad Rural. There, he delivered a formulaic encomium to British settlers employed by the Sociedad Rural over many decades. It declared the British "find life congenial in Argentina. Here they can live their own life without sacrificing any of their national predilections." It praised "their love of nature, of animals, of the open-air life, which all tend to ensure that here they will find scope for their preferences and pursuits."[58]

In 1976, Martínez de Hoz imposed a stabilisation plan notable for its extraordinary coerciveness, since dissenters invited sequestration and summary execution. As wages sank lower than in decades, manufacturing output contracted at unprecedented speed, driving thousands into an impoverished informal economy. Efforts to attract foreign investment under Martínez de Hoz contained distant echoes of the policies of Miguel Juárez Celman ninety years earlier. Like Wenceslao Pacheco in the late 1880s, the minister pursued foreign funds by artificial methods to inflate rates of return. An overvalued peso launched a flood of imported consumer goods—a bubble sustainable only by continuing additional foreign investment. In another policy reminiscent of his distant predecessors, Martínez de Hoz encouraged the formation of unsound, speculative provincial banks known as *financieras*.[59] Tempted by such inducements, British investors made modest contributions to the inflow of foreign funds. Following the same pattern as its predecessors, although slower and

[56] UNI/RM/OC/2/2/4/103 (Martin).

[57] British Chamber of Commerce in the Argentine Republic. *Sixty-Fourth Annual Report* (30 June, 1977).

[58] Quoted in *Review of the River Plate* 31 Aug. 1963.

[59] For discussions of the programme, see Rock, *Argentina*, 366–373; Wynia, *Argentina*, 230. Smith, *Authoritarianism*, 234–239, identifies five short-term phases during Martínez de Hoz's tenure principally involving an inconclusive battle against inflation.

feebler, such investment arrived close to the peak of an economic cycle. In this climate, the chamber of commerce pronounced 1980 a busy year. "British businessmen are increasingly aware of the opportunities offered in Argentina and we have received a steady flow of visits from trade groups, missions and individual businessmen. Prospects are excellent and the feeling of goodwill between our two countries is very gratifying."[60]

* * *

Thirty years before the Martínez de Hoz ministry, the post-war Perón regime disrupted the British community in Argentina but failed to destroy it. In 1951, some 48,000 persons, 18,000 of whom were British-born and 30,000 of British descent, were deemed eligible for British passports.[61] Despite ongoing emigration, larger numbers of British subjects continued to live in Argentina than almost any other non-British Commonwealth country.[62] Anglos displaced from the old British firms, and many younger people educated in state and private universities, migrated into manufacturing and services as owners, managers or clerks. Preserving its middle class status, the group became well represented in professions like accounting, law and medicine.[63] Some Anglos found employment in both British and US multinationals. Until the 1970s, they entered British firms with few qualifications. "The minimum requirements were a good command of both languages and a modicum of intelligence," recalled Arthur Edbrooke, the chairman of Duperial in the 1960s.[64] Of seventeen senior executives in Lever Hermanos in 1960, eight were Anglos including Henry Colville-Jones, its popular chairman, who joined the company in the early 1930s.[65] With a total workforce of only 11,000 in the multinationals as a whole, one tenth of that of the old railway companies, links between the subsidiaries and the community remained far weaker than formerly. With Anglo-Argentine trade too in almost constant descent, bonds between the community and Britain itself grew increasingly attenuated.[66]

[60] British Chamber of Commerce. *Sixty-Seventh Annual Report*, 1980.

[61] Report in *Standard* 4 Dec. 1951. A consular report in 1953 showed 15,000 persons registered at the British Embassy and 24,000 who were unregistered, to make a total of 40,439. See Chancery, Buenos Aires to Consular Department 25 Jan. 1953 FO 425/7.

[62] Chancery to Consular Department 25 Jan. 1953. FO 495/7.

[63] *Triennial Report for 1979* FCO 47/1207.

[64] Edbrooke in *Bulletin of British Community Council* Vol. 9, No. 7, 1964.

[65] UNI/RM/OC/2/2/4/36 (Hartoz and Laycock).

[66] Figures on the workforce of multinationals quoted in *El Cronista Comercial* 22 Aug. 1988.

The Anglos clustered in affluent northern suburbs of Buenos Aires led by Olivos, a district known for a time as the Barrio Inglés. Farther along the suburban railway, Martínez attracted another Anglo population; smaller concentrations lived beyond Martínez in La Lucila and San Isidro.[67] Anglophones in the southern suburbs centring on Lomas de Zamora grew poorer and diminished in number. In the federal capital by the early 1950s, wealthy Belgrano remained the single neighbourhood with a sizeable English speaking population. The inner core of the community remained as resistant as ever to integration, as its upper crust competed for honours from the British Crown. By 1958, around one hundred men and one woman, namely Winifred Brightman, founder and long-time principal of Northlands School, had received the OBE (Order of the British Empire).[68] By the late 1960s, many community members revealed signs of advancing age. The well-heeled commonly retired to the Sierras de Córdoba, a long-popular destination once serviced by the Central Argentine Railway. Poor Anglos struggled on in Buenos Aires living on incomes corroded by inflation. Numbering them at 8000 in 1970, Ambassador Michael Hadow recommended granting them British social benefits, although his plea passed unheeded. In other respects, Hadow discerned major changes in the community. He considered its members "increasingly assimilated to the Argentine way of life, especially the younger ones," as shown by increasing exogamy.[69] Anglos were abandoning their "former [identity as a] self-sufficient inward-looking clique, which largely avoided contact with the Argentines."[70]

The community schools survived by enrolling upper-middle-class Spanish-speaking children. A few benefited from the new source of demand for English speakers created by the rise of the multinationals. Northlands alone now enrolled one thousand girls, while in 1970, (before the major Argentine currency devaluations of the early 1970s), Hadow reported fees at St. George's College exceeded those of top British public schools.[71] Schools mutated into local institutions professing distant British connections. With its "ethical and moral foundations anchored in its Presbyterian heritage," St Andrew's Scots School provided one example.

[67] The Anglican community at Martínez is described in the magazine *Angle* June 1965.
[68] *Standard* 12 June, 1958, recording the numbers of OBEs.
[69] A discussion of marriage practices appeared in *Standard* 22 Mar. 1956.
[70] Hadow to Douglas-Home. *Triennial Report* 28 Sept. 1970. FCO 47/418.
[71] "Triennial Report." Hadow to Douglas-Home 20 Sept. 1970. FCO 47/418.

"Manners Makyth Man," proclaimed the motto of Barker College in Lomas de Zamora quoting William of Wykeham. During later years, this school also pledged a parallel commitment, in modern US style, to "La Enseñanza para la Diversidad," (Education for Diversity). Surviving British remnants in the schools still bore marks of the influence of Thomas Arnold, the celebrated headmaster of Rugby School. Schools continued to promote English sports in Arnoldian fashion, combining athleticism with ethical awareness.

Changes in other community bodies paralleled those in the schools. As it succumbed to another siege of Spanish speakers, the Hurlingham Club, the former conclave of the British elite, clung on to remnants of its origins like its oak-panelled Edwardian décor. In 1971, the *Buenos Aires Herald* published cartoons under the caption "Argentinization comes to Hurlingham." Sketches caricatured English gentlemen acknowledging the demise of the British Empire in Argentina [*sic*] while welcoming Argentine newcomers with cash to keep the club afloat.[72] The British Hospital opened its doors to all comers, while preserving subsidies for British and Anglo patients.[73] The *Review of the River Plate*, an English-only publication for more than eighty years, began translating editorials into Spanish. In this period of rapid cultural flux in the community, Argentina became a destination for leading literary figures led by Graham Greene in 1970 and V.S. Naipaul in 1972, who both arrived under the sponsorship of Victoria Ocampo, the distinguished novelist and editorialist.[74] Greene's *The Honorary Consul* drew inspiration from contemporary affairs in Argentina, while Naipaul produced a short story, *The Return of Eva Peron*, an unflattering view of the late first lady. He found the resurgence of Peronism in the early 1970s puzzling. "Argentina was a very difficult place to write about. It was so hard to understand." He made coruscating remarks about Anglo-Argentines (despite living with one), ridiculing their fanciful nostalgia about "home." He considered it "useless to pretend that a man separated from a country by two or three generations can really return [to it]." Other remarks exemplified Naipaul's postcolonial style. He criticised the "antics" of Anglos, calling them "provincials who struggle to attach themselves by mimicry or self-deceit to the metropolis."[75] During this

[72] *Buenos Aires Herald* 11 Apr. 1971.
[73] *Buenos Aires Herald* 23 Oct. 1972.
[74] *Buenos Aires Herald* 5 Apr. 1970, 24 Apr. 1972.
[75] *Buenos Aires Herald* 28 Apr. and 25 Aug. 1972.

period, celebrated Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges, well-known for his Anglophile outlook, travelled to Europe following published translations of his short stories. In London, he addressed audiences of up to a thousand people in Central Hall, Westminster.[76]

Although pummelled heavily during the economic and political vicissitudes of the 1970s, most British and Anglo residents sidestepped most if not all their worst ill-effects. In 1972–1975, guerrilla associations led by the Montoneros and the Trotskyite People's Revolutionary Army or ERP (Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo) kidnapped, ransomed and occasionally murdered executives of multinational corporations, several with British backgrounds. The abduction of Stanley Sylvester, honorary consul in Rosario and an executive of Swift, the US meat packing company, in 1971 became the inspiration for Graham Greene's novel. In late 1972, the kidnappers of Ronald C. Grove, a former director of Anglo Frigorífico, extorted $1 million before releasing him.[77] Charles Lockwood, a prominent company director, was captured twice, first in 1973 when he too won release on payment of $1 million. Lockwood befriended his captors calling them "idealists who were concerned about the miserable life of the poor." He reported they had planned to demand $7½ million under the false impression he owned various companies. "They found my name on the boards of several foreign firms and believed I owned the companies, which is just not so." After his release, Lockwood remained in Argentina, a decision leading to his second abduction.[78] This time police killed his captors, enabling Lockwood and his family to flee the country.[79] Numerous British executives sought the protection of safe houses. "We shall have to be careful not to arouse trouble for ourselves," declared a Lever official. "Those who have done so (like Shell Oil and Anglo-Frigorífico, for example) have suffered very seriously indeed." Kidnap threats "must be extraordinarily unpleasant for our staff…Argentina is a bumpy place to do business, but we have done well there in the past and should do so again."[80]

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[76] *Buenos Aires Herald* 1 June, 1971.

[77] *Buenos Aires Herald* 11, 21 Dec. 1972.

[78] His first abduction is noted *Buenos Aires Herald* 7 June, 1973; for his release, see 8 and 10 Aug.

[79] *New York Times* 1 Sept. 1975.

[80] UNI/RM/OC/2/2/4/96 (Graham).

In 1981, the Argentine economy and political system unravelled once more. Martínez de Hoz set up a giant Ponzi scheme in which financial infusions from abroad paid the interest on past borrowings. As he left office in March, the fragile structure disintegrated leaving a ballooning balance of payments deficit, multiple devaluations, a procession of failed economy ministers and massive capital flight. Between 1979 and 1981, foreign debt near-doubled from $19 billion to $35 billion and increased by an additional two thirds in subsequent years. The renewed disintegration of the economy eliminated foreign investment, including the trickle of funds from Britain. It also stirred popular protest and attempts by the long supressed political parties to unite in demands for elections. In December 1981, a coup within the military overthrew the eight-month old junta under Gen. Roberto E. Viola. Still grappling with the legacies of Martínez de Hoz, another junta under Gen. Leopoldo F. Galtieri prolonged current austerity policies. Its leaders also grew apprehensive about a possible political backlash, a reprise of events under Onganía in 1969–1970 when tightening controls provoked popular rebellions and guerrilla actions. The disunited, embattled military feared it might not be able to contain another new wave of dissent. Attempts to build alliances with civilian party leaders failed. What else remained?

Occupying the Falkland Islands, and drawing on the credit it bestowed as a means for self-consolidation, offered the junta a way to resolve the dilemma. For almost twenty years by this point, the islands had remained a sporadic source of tension. As Argentina pressed its claims for sovereignty, at times Britain pondered withdrawal in line with ongoing programmes to reduce military and naval expenditure. The Wilson governments of 1964–1970 indicated preparedness to concede sovereignty over the islands if Parliament approved and "the wishes of the islanders were respected."[81] In 1971, an agreement between the two countries led to closer links between the Falklands and the mainland. As recalled by then Prime Minister Edward Heath, "relations between the two delegations were extremely warm and very profitable." They resulted in construction of a new airstrip by the Argentine Air Force and arrangements for the hospital treatment and education of islanders on the mainland. "It was agreed in the beginning there would be no discussion of sovereignty," according to Heath. Yet his government too accepted the system later called leaseback—indefinite

[81] Falkland Islands Review Committee. *Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors* [*The Franks Report*]. CAB 292/1 (1982).

British administration of the islands combined with an acknowledgement of Argentine sovereignty—if Parliament and the islanders agreed.[82]

Opposition from the islanders and Parliament, together with the ongoing instability in Argentina, stymied further progress.[83] In early 1976, tension over the islands prompted the withdrawal of the British ambassador from Buenos Aires. Warning of retaliation if Argentina attempted a takeover, British governments also allowed the islands' defences to continue to weaken. From late 1981, Admiral Jorge Anaya, a member of the Galtieri junta, began preparations to seize the islands. Galtieri consented, informing his foreign minister that "something more than diplomacy" lay in the offing to settle the Falklands question permanently.[84] In late March 1982, the junta landed marines on South Georgia Island, the largest of the Falkland Islands dependencies, and on 2 April deployed a larger force to seize the islands' capital at Port Stanley and other points on the archipelago.[85] Britain took retaliatory action. As a naval task force sailed to the South Atlantic, intensive international diplomacy failed to forestall a counterattack. Following a month of fierce combat by land, air and sea, the conflict terminated with the loss of one thousand lives on both sides. As defending Argentine conscript forces surrendered to seasoned British regulars, Argentine rule over the Falkland Islands ended after only seventy-four days.

During the build-up to the conflict, both sides made serious miscalculations. Argentina's included over-confidence based on false expectations of support from the United States. Britain's lay in fostering an impression of a willingness to withdraw from the islands by reducing its defensive forces. The British showed no cognisance of the way the Argentine military juntas recurrently employed force as a bonding tool, as epitomised by the Dirty War. Questionably, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher proclaimed the rights of the islanders to self-determination. "We've no doubt about our sovereignty over the Falklands. The people there are of British stock.

[82] Falkland Islands Review. Testimony of E. Heath. CAB 242/51. Reproduced in Falklands Islands Review Committee, *Franks Report*.

[83] Falklands Islands Review Committee, *Franks Report*, 29; also Informe Rattenbach. *El drama de Malvinas*, Buenos Aires: Espartaco, 1988, 27–32 summarising the diplomatic exchanges of 1979–1980 led on the British side by Nicholas Ridley.

[84] Informe Rattenbach, *Malvinas*, 37.

[85] On the preliminaries to the Argentine invasion, see Lawrence Freedman and Virginia Gamba-Stonehouse. *Signals of War. The Falklands Conflict of 1982.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991, 3–83. A study focussing on the timing of the invasion appears in John Arguilla and Maria Moyano Rasmussen. "The Origins of the South Atlantic War of 1982." *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 33, 4, 2001, 739–775.

People who are born British are born free and they have a right to decide who will govern them. And they've chosen to be loyal to Britain and we must stand up for those who stand up for freedom."[86] Classical British theorists of sovereignty would not have shared her view. Long ago, Thomas Hobbes defined sovereignty as the "ultimate and absolute authority to declare the law." In this case, with two parties contesting it, sovereignty could not exist by the Hobbesian definition; in the absence of sovereignty, the British government lacked any entitlement to bestow self-determination on the islanders.[87]

In Argentina, the defeat prompted jolting disillusionment. Afterwards, military officers faced charges of mistreating conscripts and mismanaging supplies.[88] The war's single positive result lay in toppling the Galtieri junta and hastening the demise of the entire military regime. The *Informe Rattenbach*, a report commissioned after the war by the Argentine military, targeted the ineptitude of the high command. "The strategic obsession with surprise led to a choice to act [on April 2, 1982] at the worst possible moment," without knowledge of the likely reaction of the United States.[89] Rattenbach's group accused the junta of sacrificing Argentine lives in a reckless gamble to resolve domestic economic and political problems. Galtieri and his associates "confused a circumstantial objective of internal politics, that of revitalising the Process of National Reorganisation, with a legitimate historical vindication" of Argentina's rights of sovereignty over the islands.[90]

* * *

In 1982, Britain regained possession of the Falklands archipelago at great expense and substantial loss of life; if after the war, Argentina renounced the use of force it maintained its claim to sovereignty, leaving the issue still in abeyance.[91] Past discussion of the Falklands question in the *Buenos*

[86] Quoted in *Buenos Aires Herald* 6 Nov. 1982.

[87] Self-determination and sovereignty are discussed in neutral style in Lowell S. Gustafson. *The Sovereignty Dispute over the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

[88] On the treatment of conscripts, see Daniel Kon. *Los chicos de la guerra. Hablan los soldados que estuvieron en Malvinas.* 9th Edition. Buenos Aires: Galerna, 1983.

[89] Informe Rattenbach, *Malvinas*, 41.

[90] Quoted in Gustafson, *Sovereignty*, 145.

[91] An enquiry commissioned in Argentina four years after the war concluded the British government currently expended £500 million annually on the islands' defence. Máximo Bonich, Oscar Camilion et alia. (Consejo de Estudios del Atlántico Sur). "Argentina-United

Aires Herald suggested that many Anglos supported Argentina's claims. In 1970, a journalist recorded that observing "the British flag flying over Port Stanley is a continual irritant for Argentines, and, indeed, for many Anglo-Argentines. Good relations will always be in jeopardy as long as the grievance exists."[92] In later years, Anglos and some British residents grew irritated with the islanders for obstructing solutions to the controversy. Archibald Norman, the British-born editor of the *Review of the River Plate*, called them backward Colonials, who preferred to live "with virtually no secondary schools or hospitals, and a second class citizenship that carries no right to permanent residence in Great Britain."[93] During the Argentine occupation, Bishop Richard Cutts, an Anglo heading an episcopal commission formed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, led a delegation to the islands to urge the population to accept Argentine rule. William Murchison, owner of a leading shipping company in Buenos Aires and chairman of the community council at the time, issued statements reminiscent of the appeals of British merchants to Lord Aberdeen in 1845 during the Anglo-French intervention. Urging Thatcher to solve the dispute without the use of force, he emphasised that "Argentina had always shown every consideration towards the British community, allowing it to run its own schools, churches, hospitals, old people's homes and other institutions…[Community] members have integrated themselves into all aspects of Argentine life, playing a prominent role especially in business and agricultural circles."[94]

The war provoked painful divided loyalties within the Anglo population. Young men conscripted into the Argentine forces were among the worst affected. "I was fighting against British people, who for me were as good as family," reported one man, nineteen years old at the time. An interviewer described him as a third generation Anglo who spoke with "an almost perfect, old time BBC English accent."[95] Some older Anglos reacted to the war with traumatic shock. One man who professed pride in his "pure Anglo-Saxon ancestry," believed his sense of connection with the British Empire had endowed him with a sense of "chivalry, fair play

Kingdom. An Analysis of Relations." Translated by S.M. Williams and R.H. Gooding. Buenos Aires, July 1986. Mimeo. (Copy in Chamber of Commerce.)

[92] *Buenos Aires Herald* 20 Nov. 1970.

[93] *Review of the River Plate* 10 June 1982.

[94] Murchison to Thatcher. Facsimile in *Buenos Aires Herald* 8 Apr. 1982.

[95] Sophie Ares. "Divided loyalties. A Young Soldier's Return to the Falklands 20 Years on." *The Scotsman* 30 Aug. 2002.

and honesty." He changed his opinion in face of British tactics during the war, notably the heavy losses in the sinking of the Argentine light cruiser *General Belgrano* outside the officially declared war zone. "From yesterday I am 100 percent Argentine," he announced.[96] Exposing division in the community, British loyalists labelled those who took Argentina's side as hypocrites. They were "people whose whole way of life has always been unequivocally British, who have customarily referred to Britain as "home," denigrating and abusing everything Argentine…[W]hen such people react to the current crisis by proclaiming their unadulterated argentinidad… they need not be surprised if their neighbours reply by raising an eyelid."[97]

Few British residents or locally born Anglos heeded Margaret Thatcher's advice to flee. Their decision to remain became another similarity with the long-ago events of the Anglo-French intervention. They refused exile on the grounds "my home, my entire income, nearly everything I possess and most of my friends are in this country."[98] Decisions to remain sparked acute insecurity, fear of charges of espionage or becoming a target for reprisals. Such fears proved groundless as members of the government headed by Galtieri himself issued reassuring statements. Correspondents with the *Buenos Aires Herald* attested to a strong sense of goodwill towards the British community during the war among Argentines, whose absence of malice contrasted with the attitude of the British tabloid press. The *Daily Express*, an adversary of the Anglo-Argentine connection since the era of the Roca-Runciman treaty, called members of the British community traitors and "fat cats…a snob upper class minority that have grown rich on the exploitation of the 'natives'."[99]

Both sides froze each other's assets. Argentina banned British tourists and embargoed property of more than one hundred British companies valued at $500 million.[100] The British measures intensified a credit squeeze throughout Latin America, accentuating an already bleak situation in a period of international recession and escalating foreign debt. Argentine

[96] *Buenos Aires Herald* 29 Apr. 1982.

[97] *Buenos Herald* 2 July, 1982.

[98] *Buenos Aires Herald* 16 April 1982.

[99] *Buenos Aires Herald* 12 and 25 May 1982, quoting the *Daily Express*; Florencia Cortés Conde. *The Anglo-Argentine Bilingual Experience*. Ph.D. diss.: University of Texas at Austin, 1993, 34. See also Florencia Cortés Conde. *Los angloargentinos en Buenos Aires: lengua, identidad y nación antes y después de Malvinas*. Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2007.

[100] The measures are listed in *La Nación* 12 June 1982; also *Ámbito Financiero* 26 July 1982.

bans on the sale of British property persisted until 1986 and of company shares until mid-1989.[101] For several years, trade between the two countries ceased. Old British companies, first BOLSA and later Duperial closed their doors, although Lever, Pilkington and Glaxo survived.[102] In 1989, the election of Carlos Menem as president of Argentina marked improving relations. Another phase of modest investment by British companies during the 1990s ended in 2001 with another collapse. By that time, Argentina no longer ranked among Britain's top fifty external markets.[103] Later years brought little change. In 2004, the chamber of commerce listed a surviving handful of centenarian companies of British origin, mainly in trade and shipping. In 2014, the chamber's centenary volume listed businesses it had once represented and promoted. By that time, the former British schools, now scarcely recognisable as such, occupied pride of place.[104]

Discussion of the mass evacuation of the British population during the 1982 war revived long-pondered issues of quantifying community membership and defining its boundaries. In Archibald Norman's view, "the Community, as an economic entity, ceased to exist with the expropriation or purchase of railway, gas and other companies…Since it is a cultural and intellectual community, however, it continues to survive."[105] Further enquiry revealed 17,000 people were still registered at the British Embassy, although not all had rights to British passports and not everyone entitled to a passport was registered at the embassy. As an amorphous "cultural force," Norman guessed the community might total 100,000—a figure invoked by Murchison in one of his missives to Thatcher. Attempts to define the community by linguistic criteria produced no greater clarity. Anglos commonly spoke English at home and Spanish at work, although language usage within families also varied, with some members preferring Spanish and others English. Norman concluded by defining the British community as separated from the host society "in a way that other foreign groups are not." He explained its isolation from the way the traditionally higher standard of living of British residents imposed barriers to outside contact.

[101] *La Nación* 6 Oct. 1987. "Situación jurídica de los bienes de propriedad británica en la Argentina."

[102] *The Independent* 17 Nov. 1993.

[103] *First Magazine* 1998; *Cámara de Comercio Argentino-Británico* Feb. 2000.

[104] See Cámara de Comercio, *Influencia Británica*.

[105] *Review of the River Plate* 12 May 1982.

Soon after the Falklands war, long acknowledged areas of separation weakened. Demonstrating that "you can't be loyal to the two countries at the same time," the war forced people to decide "whether you are Argentine or British," and provided signs that many opted to be Argentines.[106] Younger members in particular emphasised that "far from being a closed-in clan of British expatriates, [we] are a motley crowd eager to receive all comers."[107] Another respondent welcomed the end of an Anglo way of life rooted "in an uneasy, self-imposed condition as foreigners in their own country…The caste system, the club system all conspired against those people who were increasingly uneasy at their own self-isolation and lack of fulfilment."[108]

In research in 1990, Florencia Cortés Conde surveyed almost 200 community members. By that time, relatively few Anglos had more than one great grandparent born in Britain. Among respondents born after 1972, only 7 per cent had British-born mothers and 5 per cent British-born fathers. Assessing the group's numbers at around 15,000, Cortés Conde described its members as a "small community of mostly educated middle class people or skilled workers, submerged in a Spanish-speaking world." In 1990, members still bore the scars of the Falkland conflict. A respondent reported the war had "split me down the middle; it is only now eight years later that the pain subsides."[109] By then too, the "language islands," as the author called them, of which Olivos became a last survivor, no longer existed.[110] Spanish had become the preferred language of almost three quarters of Anglo households in southern districts of Buenos Aires and of half in the north, a difference reflecting social divisions in the community beginning during the railway era. The questionnaire provided intriguing illustrations of bilingualism and cultural mixing. A middle aged woman reported "When I return to the UK, I rediscover lots of beautiful words I had forgotten or been too lazy to use." When asked, "What does Spanish mean to you personally?", another middle aged woman responded, "Everything, a lifetime, my life." "And English?" "My life as well. Everything."[111]

[106] *Buenos Aires Herald* 24 Sept. 1982.

[107] "Suburban Players" quoted in *Buenos Aires Herald* 28 Nov. 1982.

[108] *Buenos Aires Herald* 13 May 1982.

[109] From handwritten responses to the survey questionnaire by Florencia Cortés Conde, 1990. Biblioteca Max Buch, Universidad de San Andrés, Buenos Aires.

[110] Cortés Conde, *Bilingual Experience*, 88.

[111] Cortés Conde, *Questionnaire*.

Explaining why some families had forfeited their British connections, a respondent cited the "decline of British economic interests, the gradual dwindling of the community in size and clout. The less independent economic strength it has, the more it will integrate." Some expressed unconcern. A respondent training for a position in a state hospital had no regrets about the decline of English usage, which he described as an "instrument of separation." An older respondent expressed regret and a sense of loss. "There is a great deal of marrying outside the community. Inflation has hit us hard and we are not as prosperous as before. Many can no longer afford to send children to bilingual schools. Although we love and respect our British ancestry, we love this country and our fellow Argentinians, with all their faults and virtues."[112]

[112] Cortés Conde, *Questionnaire*.

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