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The Intellectual Opposition to Juan Manuel de Rosas



ROBERT CRAWFORD COTNER *

THE rule of Juan Manuel de Rosas, Argentine dictator and "restorer of laws" from 1829 to 1852, was established in the midst of political and economic instability which, according to some Argentine writers,¹ reached a condition bordering on anarchy. The fundamental cause for this situation, which prevailed in the provinces along the Río de la Plata until 1835, was inexperience in self-government. Other factors were the lack of a community of interests among various political divisions, such as Corrientes, Uruguay, Salta, Entre Ríos, and Buenos Aires; the dearth of adequate school systems; slow means of communication; and a misunderstanding in the hinterland of the great forces making for national unity which were becoming a part of the thinking of the *porteños*. This misunderstanding explains in part the struggles between "Unitarians" and "Federalists" after the year 1820.²

Martín Lazcano, in summing up the period before 1829, says that while the bitterness between Unitarians and Federalists was acute, life was respected.³ While the individual freedoms of ordinary citizens were not secure, it was the kill-

* The author is an instructor at the University of Texas.

¹ Ricardo Levene, *A History of Argentina* (Durham, 1937), chaps. xxxvi, xlv; Martín V. Lazcano, *Las Sociedades secretas, políticas y masónicas en Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires, 1927), II, 221.

² Ernesto Quesada, *La Época de Rosas* (Buenos Aires, 1898), 47. For information on the *Caudillo* read Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Civilización y Barbarie, Vida de Quiroga, Aldoa, y el Chacho* (Buenos Aires, 1889); John Anthony King, *Twenty-four Years in the Argentine Republic* (New York, 1846); and Esteban Echeverría, "La Cautiva," *Obras Completas* (Buenos Aires, 1873), I, 35 ff.

³ Lazcano, *op. cit.*, II, 220.

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ing of Governor Manuel Dorrego by the Unitarian General Juan Lavalle,⁴ in December, 1828, which, according to Lazcano, ushered in a period of basest anarchy. He concluded that this execution opened the way for “the sacrificing of lives on the altars of a mistaken exigency of tranquility and national well-being.” During this period of turmoil Juan Manuel de Rosas emerged as the strongest Federalist leader.⁵

Rosas was thirty-six years old in 1829, and like his father a successful rancher and Indian-fighter on the Salado River. He had prospered and expanded his holdings largely through the effective control he maintained over his men. They kept order along Rosas' section of the Río Salado because they trusted him. He kept his bargains, and he could excel them in many tasks. This hold on his men was so strong that they sometimes threatened death to anyone who spoke ill of him. Rosas maintained order on the *estancia* while he sought it after the Federalist plan for his province.⁶ This purpose is attested by the assistance he rendered to Governor Martín Rodríguez and, later, by his successful efforts to overthrow General Lavalle in 1829. Rosas, as the outstanding Federalist, merited the honor of being elected by the Legislature to the position of Governor and Captain-General of the Province of Buenos Aires in December, 1829.⁷

The Federalists were now in the majority, but the bitterness between the rivals had become so great that various *caudillos* considered it their duty to “exterminate” the Uni-

⁴ Ricardo Levene, *Lecciones de Historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1920), II, 295.

⁵ Lazcano, *op. cit.*, 221.

⁶ Carlos Ibarguren, *Juan Manuel de Rosas* (Buenos Aires, 1930), chaps. i and iv, and Darwin's description of Rosas printed in N. A. N. Clevon, ed., *Readings in Hispanic American History* (Boston, 1927), 479-83. By the Treaty of Barracas between Lavalle and Rosas, the former agreed to retire to Uruguay and Juan José Viamonte was to become provisional governor of the province of Buenos Aires.

⁷ Levene, *op. cit.*, II, 323.

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tarians.⁸ According to Levene,⁹ Rosas was convinced that it would require a dictator to achieve law and order at home and to obtain the respect of foreign powers for Argentina. Rosas was making progress toward a stronger union under *El Pacto Federal* (January 4, 1831)¹⁰ when the Unitarian general, José María Paz, started a rebellion. Following the defeat and imprisonment of Paz,¹¹ the country remained peaceful until after Rosas went out of office in 1832. For three years he cannily refused offers of re-election. He fought Indians, trained an "army" for any emergency,¹² and confided in his ally, General Juan Facundo Quiroga. In the fall of 1834, he wrote:

The people continue in a state of agitation, stirred up by the Unitarians, by the Freemasons' lodges, by aspirants to public office, by secret agents of other nations, and by the great Freemason societies which have all Europe in commotion. Who can hope for tranquillity and peace to celebrate the federal pacts? Political agitation has kept the people destitute. Who can pay the cost of convening a federal congress without funds, much less the expenses of the general government? Where are the funds with which to pay the foreign debts?¹³

The great *caudillos*, Rosas and Estanislao López in the littoral and Quiroga in the provinces, were keeping order.¹⁴ When this unusual trinity, "*los tres compañeros*," was broken by the slaying of Quiroga at Barranca-Yaco, February 16, 1835,¹⁵ fear and hatred dictated various answers to the question, "By whose order did José Santos Pérez kill Quiroga?" King¹⁶ sums up the Unitarian attitude in this manner:

⁸ Quesada, *op. cit.*, 50-53.

⁹ Levene, *op. cit.*, II, 325.

¹⁰ Dardo Covalán Mendilaharsu, "El Pacto Federal," *De la Epoca de Rosas* (Buenos Aires, 1913), 1.

¹¹ Levene, *op. cit.*, 306.

¹² Mention of an army was made by General Tomás de Iriarte. See reference in R. J. Cárcano, *Juan Facundo Quiroga* (Buenos Aires, 1931), 16.

¹³ Adolfo Saldías, ed., *Papeles de Rosas . . .* (La Plata, 1904), I, 124.

¹⁴ Cárcano, *op. cit.*, 12.

¹⁵ Adolfo Saldías, *Historia de la Confederación Argentina, Rosas y su Epoca* (Buenos Aires, 1892), II, 234.

¹⁶ King, *op. cit.*, 227-29. Cf. David Peña, *Juan Facundo Quiroga* (Buenos Aires, 1909), 440-44.

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Quiroga spoke and Rosas listened. The one [Quiroga] . . . recommended a constitution and laws; the other acquiesced, the better to conceal his true designs, while at the same time, the subtlety of the devil was wreathing itself about his heart. . . . The body [Quiroga's] was entombed, a splendid monument erected, and thus the *farce* was ended.

On the other hand, *La Gaceta Mercantil*, official organ of the Federalist government, issued this awful threat: "Eternal vengeance, vengeance without mercy! War to the death to the infamous unitarians" for killing Quiroga.¹⁷ Before condemning Rosas, one should not overlook that General Paz, for several years a prisoner of Rosas and one who had no cause to remove the blame from Rosas if it were his due, wrote in his *Memoirs* that López and the Reinafé brothers were to blame for the crime.¹⁸ Due to the inability of all parties to get correct news and the general accumulation of distrust between Unitarians and Federalists, bitter hatreds flared again. The resignation of the respected Dr. Manuel Vicente Maza from the governorship and the installation of Rosas in the governor's office on March 7, 1835,¹⁹ with "supreme public power" (*la suma del poder público*) confirmed for the opposition the worst suspicions of individual Unitarians.²⁰ They considered the plebiscite of March 26-28 a farce. However, the verdict of the vote, 9,320 to 4,²¹ regardless of its imperfections and the general tenor of the population, encouraged an arch-enemy of Rosas, Domingo F. Sarmiento, to record: "Never had government been more popular, nor more desired than that of Don Juan Manuel de Rosas."²² Even modern dictators might envy this overwhelming demonstration of popularity.

¹⁷ Cárcano, *op. cit.*, 361.

¹⁸ José María Paz, *Memorias Póstumas* (La Plata, 1892), II, 349 ff.

¹⁹ This was less than a month after Quiroga's death. It appears that no practical action had been taken during this interval to punish the murderers.

²⁰ Ibarguren, *op. cit.*, 312-13.

²¹ Esteban Echeverría, *Obras Completas* (Buenos Aires, 1873), IV, 386.

²² Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Obras* (Buenos Aires, 1900), XXXVIII, 376. Compare with Hitler's record vote of March 29, 1935.

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Governor Rosas was at the helm of the ship of state with absolute power to chart the destiny and steer the course of many groups and individuals. Ramos Mejía charged, along with other writers,²³ that Rosas was a crazy man. To date the charge has not been proved.²⁴ Unitarians have charged that he developed a “planned tyranny.” On the other hand, the members of the influential Federalist society, *La Sociedad Popular Restauradora*, expected him to act rapidly and decisively in restoring order.²⁵ He did not hesitate to issue decrees to carry his policies into effect. He instituted a scheme to distinguish his followers by red waistcoats and ribbons and by red markings on their houses to contrast with the blue of the Unitarian partisans. The success of his plan may be measured by a statement to the effect that at his inauguration the only light blue discernable was “in the eyes of women and in the sky.”²⁶ On this occasion, April 13, 1835, Rosas summarized the national situation as he saw it and charted the direction for his future—and the nation’s. In part, he said:

No one can overlook the fact that a large faction of unprincipled men, boasting about their lack of faith and placing themselves in open war with religion, honesty and faith, have brought about disorder and immorality, have broken the laws, caused crimes to increase, encouraged trickery and deceit. Remedial actions should not be delayed by technical procedures, and their application ought to be immediate and expeditious. Divine Providence has put us in this position to test our virtue and constancy. We should pursue until death the unfaithful,

²³ José María Ramos Mejía, *Rosas y su Tiempo* (Buenos Aires, 1907), II, 381 ff; Mariano A. Pelliza, *Historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1910), II, 210; José de Armas, “Rosas and Doctor Francia,” *Inter-America*, III (October, 1919), 21.

²⁴ José María Zuviría, *Estudios sobre la historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1881), 78-79; Ernesto Quesada, *La Época de Rosas* (Buenos Aires, 1898); Castro Esteves, *Inquisiciones acerca de Rosas y su Época* (Buenos Aires, 1927), 45-58.

²⁵ Quesada, *op. cit.*, 155. On the land policy see A. F. Zimmerman, “The Land Policy of Argentina, with Particular Reference to the Conquest of the Southern Pampas” in *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XXV (February, 1945), 12 ff.

²⁶ Ibarguren, *op. cit.*, 316.

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the sacrilegious, the thieving, the murdering, and above all the faithless and the traitors who have the effrontery to ridicule our sacred faith. Of this race of monsters none should be left among us, and they should be punished so vigorously as to deter others through terror and fright. The All Powerful will direct our action.²⁷

The Unitarians doubted if the government in its bold attempts to eliminate the impurities in the nation's blood stream would be content to purge with political vaccines and tonics. Branded as the carriers of contagion, they planned to withhold coöperation. Such was the tense political atmosphere in which a group of young men, called the *Joven Argentina* society, found themselves in the spring of 1835.

Buenos Aires had seen a number of political and literary clubs spring to life since independence. For example, the work of Vicente Fidel López and his friends, who started an *Asociación de estudios históricos y sociales* at the home of Miguel Cané in 1832, introduced a new type of intellectual activity. They began an active study of the "new French romantic school." From studies such as these developed "a new disquietude," a creative interest in social concepts which enabled youthful Esteban Echeverría to plant his ideas in fertile soil and to bear fruit. These students found a friend in the book-seller, Marcos Sastre. Later he organized them into a literary club called *El Salón Literario* which met at his shop. At its inception, probably in 1834,²⁸ Juan Bautista Alberdi, Vicente F. López, Miguel Cané, Carlos Tejedor, Félix Frías, Jacinto Rodríguez Peña, Juan María Gutiérrez and others were present. Governor Maza was not unfriendly to the organization, but members of *La Sociedad Popular Restauradora* aroused suspicions which caused Rosas to regard the literary club as a *Logia Unitaria* (Unitarian Freemason Society) and part of a general crusade against the

²⁷ Iburguren, *op. cit.*, 317.

²⁸ Ricardo Rojas, *Historia de la Literatura Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1920), 178-92.

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Roman Catholic Church. In this atmosphere of uncertainty, the members began to meet irregularly and secretly at various places.²⁹ Vicente López, who was a member of the Tribunal of Justice, was warned by his colleague, Dr. Maza, that Rosas thought the *Salón* "was not his place."³⁰ The situation grew worse when these students of ideas advocated free press, free speech, and public education. The Jesuits and the members of the *Mazorca*, Rosas's organization of terrorists, looked upon such teachings as ruinous to Church and State. These new ideas might be worse than the teachings of the Unitarians.³¹

Much of the responsibility for the new doctrines and the discussions at the *Salón* belongs to Esteban Echeverría. Like Rosas, Echeverría was a *porteño*, but he received the finishing touches of his education from the school of European literary romanticism rather than from practical experience at an *estancia* or *saladero*. Yet, he understood the pampas, their life and power, and he longed to see all units of Argentine society fused into a sympathetic "Association." José Domingo Echeverría, Esteban's father, was a Spaniard, while his mother was the *porteña*, María Espinosa. Born September 2, 1805, Esteban attended parochial primary school and later entered the College of Moral Sciences. As a student of Mariano Guerra and Juan Manuel Fernández de Agüero, he gave evidence of talent, a good mind and interest in study. He had embarked, however, on a reckless personal life. Gutiérrez, his personal friend and biographer, attributes a noticeable nervousness to the biological changes of youth; but Ricardo Rojas says that it was due to "loves, idle pursuits, passions of the blood," and that these caused a weak heart which brought about his early death in 1851. He continued his

²⁹ Lazcano, *op. cit.*, 219-20.

³⁰ Rojas, *op. cit.*, 192.

³¹ José Ingenieros, "La filosofía social de Echeverría y la leyenda de la Asociación de Mayo," *Revista de Filosofía*, VII (March, 1918), 235-36.

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bad habits while working as a clerk in the Customhouse, but he seems to have realized the evils of his surroundings and decided on Europe as a place to study and to prepare himself to do something with his life.³²

The years 1825-1830 were spent, for the most part, at Paris, supplemented by a trip to London in 1829. He read widely and soon passed from the classical Spanish writers to the romantic French and Byronic school. He was familiar with the works of Saint-Simon, Sainte-Beuve, Chateaubriand, Guizot, Schiller, and Goethe.³³ After this experience abroad, Echeverría returned home in 1830 at the age of twenty-five. He began to advocate a strong national idealism which was not out of harmony with universal brotherhood. To him the future would give an opportunity for perfecting the utopian society, based on laws guaranteeing equality, liberty, and fraternity. The laws were to be peculiar to the various customs and needs of his people, who, he hoped, could be brought together in a vital "association" made possible through education. The examples of Byron and Mazzini were as great lights from the East which guided him in the preparation of his people for a "glorious progress."³⁴ He worked at

³² Rojas, *op. cit.*, 134-39.

³³ Levene, *op. cit.*, 376. See Alberto Palcos, *Echeverría y la democracia Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1941), 57-69, 143-45.

³⁴ Rojas, *op. cit.*, 143. Following the death of Saint-Simon, Echeverría could have attended lectures by Saint-Amand Bazard at Paris in 1828, the bulk of which may be read in *Exposition de la doctrine de St. Simon* (2 vols. Paris, 1828-30). Saint-Simon, like many eighteenth century philosophers, taught the idea of "*la perfection de l'ordre social*" or the doctrine of progress. He believed the world had seen too much of destruction and was ready for a great reconstruction. This idea apparently was of interest to the young Argentine political scientists who were saddened by their own long period of civil feuds. The influence which the doctrines of Saint-Simon had on Echeverría is nebulous. Saint-Simon did not reveal that fear of private property, mechanization, or the industrial leader so frequently expressed in later socialistic writings. He also professed belief in the importance of moral and Christian teachings and the need for a world guided by the principle of universal brotherhood. Certainly the "symbolic words," the creed of the *Asociacion de Mayo*, do not stress socialist economic doctrines. It is emphasized that *Socialista* did not mean "Socialist" in the current sense. If there had been such a word in 1838, these young Argentinians would probably have been called

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literary endeavors and the next seven years saw the publication to his *Profecía del Plata*, *Elvira* and *Los Consuelos* and, in 1837, *Rimas*, which included the famous epic of the pampas, *La Cautiva*. Now he was ranked as a national poet. He was invited to *El Salón Literario*, and there he found a group of young men receptive to his theories and eager to become crusaders for a new Argentina.

Echeverría saw two irreconcilable factions. The Federalists were victorious, most numerous, and, he said, "the genuine expression of semi-barbarian instincts." The Unitarians were a conquered minority, "with good tendencies, but without basic premises of social criteria." Something new and unifying was necessary to bring all groups together. Echeverría suggested to Alberdi and Gutiérrez the *pensamiento de asociación* or doctrine of association, stressed by Mazzini and Saint-Simon. They were friendly toward the idea.³⁵ Echeverría soon decided to gather his friends into a secret organization and educational agency modeled after Mazzini's "Young Italy."³⁶ Therefore, in May, 1837, he set out to establish *Joven Argentina* or *Joven Generación Argentina*, as it was called at its inception.³⁷ At the first meeting of some thirty to thirty-five young men, Echeverría read the fundamental "symbolic words"³⁸ which became the creed of the *Asociación de*

political scientists with a "sociological" approach. They understood that Argentina was not trained by Spain for self-government; therefore progress would be slow and relative. See Raúl A. Orgaz, *Echeverría y el Saint-Simonismo* (Cordova, 1934), 35-51.

³⁵ Esteban Echeverría, "Ojeada retrospectiva sobre el movimiento intelectual en el Plata desde al año 37," *Obras Completas*, IV, 5-8.

³⁶ Gaetano Salvemini, *Mazzini* (Firenze, 1925), 177 ff.

³⁷ Lazcano, *op. cit.*, 223.

³⁸ The "symbolic words" were: (1) Association; (2) Progress; (3) Fraternity; (4) Equality; (5) Liberty; (6) God, center and circle of our religious faith; Christianity, his law; (7) Honor and sacrifice, motive power and control of our social conduct; (8) Adoption of all legitimate glories as collected from the May Revolution, scorn of all usurped and illegitimate renown; (9) Continuation of the progressive traditions of the Revolution of May; (10) Independence of the retrograde traditions which subordinate us to the ancient regime; (11) Emancipation of the American spirit; (12) Organization of the

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Mayo, as the *Joven Argentina* was called after its dispersion and the departure of many of its members to Montevideo in 1838.

The aspirations and romantic character of the *Asociación* are expressed in Alberdi's speech of June 23, 1837. As he traced the rise and fall of empires moving westward, he cited as the causes "the eternal progressive impulse of man" and "the unfolding of the human spirit." He said that each people must have a constitution peculiar to its own needs and that the cause for the sterility of Argentina's constitutional experiments could be found in the failure to appreciate these fundamentals. In France, he said, thinking came before action but in Argentina there were results without principles. Therefore, he urged that what the fathers should have done, youth must do. He exhorted the young men to give an intelligent foundation to government and to continue the "principles of May" rather than merely copy foreign civilizations or constitutions. Later in the same speech he said:

The heroes of 1810 began without deliberation. . . . We are not the first to recognize this fact; and we will not do more than follow the example already given in politics, by that unusual man (*hombre extraordinario*) [Rosas] who presides over our public destinies. He gives a complete national direction in politics and the duty of this group is to give a perfectly harmonious direction to other elements of society. . . . This calls for a study of the philosophical elements of human civilization and of the forms which these elements ought to receive under the particular influences of our age and native environment.³⁹

Thus spoke the future author of *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina*. He radiated the spirit of the new generation, confused and tired of the Federalist-Unitarian struggle. His words imply that

country on the democratic basis; (13) Brotherhood of principles; (14) Fusion of all the progressive doctrines into a single program; (15) Denial of sympathies which may entangle us with the two great factions which have contended for power during the revolution. Echeverría, *op. cit.*, IV, 119-204.

³⁹ Juan Bautista Alberdi, *Obras Completas* (Buenos Aires, 1886), I, 257-67.

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the *Asociación* was not necessarily hostile to Rosas; he did not advocate revolutionary methods; but Rosas could hardly be expected to see an ally in any group which called for changes in his program of stability, order, and the *status quo*, especially when it was just then receiving severe jolts from plotting Unitarians in Montevideo.

On July 8, 1837, a meeting of the club was held, and a definite formula of procedure, resembling that of "Young Italy," was adopted. The next day being Independence Day, a great celebration was held, and at that gathering the members dedicated themselves to spread the principles of the Revolution of May. Echeverría did not consider the country ready for a material revolution. He believed that only a moral revolution would be useful—one which denoted progress in the regeneration of his country. "We believe," he said, "that before appealing to arms to secure this end, it is necessary to diffuse by way of propaganda, slow but incessant, the ideas of brotherhood. . . ." He advocated that a first step should be to convince all factions to come together into a national party. Then, all interests were to be considered in the vast and fraternal unity of the new organization.⁴⁰ The *Asociación* appointed Alberdi, Gutiérrez and Echeverría as a committee to explain and clarify the "symbolic words." This work, known as the *Dogma Socialista*, was soon finished and was adopted by the members during the summer. It was to serve as a basis for the thinking of many similar societies both in and out of Argentina during the next decade.

With the establishment of more definite aims the *Asociación* entered a new stage of development—the period of political activity. The *Dogma Socialista*, as yet kept secret, was clearly anti-Rosas, but Echeverría continued to advocate reform through education. Some members were not content

⁴⁰ Echeverría, *op. cit.*, IV, 9-10.

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with this relatively slow process, and by November Alberdi began to infuse a more definite political character into the group. This development was not entirely satisfactory to Echeverría, for he preferred evolution to revolution. Nevertheless Alberdi began to publish *La Moda*, a musical and literary magazine in which he inserted political articles. This publication was soon proscribed, in April, 1838. Echeverría recorded that Rosas became suspicious and that meetings of the club were held irregularly. Rosas had other reasons for being suspicious of the vigorous society, for, in the same month, Miguel Cané and Andrés Lamas started *El Iniciador* in Montevideo and received articles of social, philosophical, and literary nature from Alberdi, Frías, Tejedor, and Gutiérrez. Naturally, these articles appeared under fictitious names,⁴¹ but they were strikingly similar to the earlier articles in *La Moda*.

Rosas believed that the French blockade of Buenos Aires, after March 28, 1838, was encouraged by the Unitarians of Montevideo and Buenos Aires. Therefore, a more careful search for his enemies began, and as Echeverría says, life became "intolerable" for the members of the *Asociación*. The motto "Death to the savage Unitarians" and the branding of some political victims caused Alberdi and others to embark before the end of the year for Montevideo. They hastened to publish the *Dogma Socialista* in *El Iniciador*.⁴²

The *Joven Generación Argentina* had been disrupted by November, 1838, but its work went on by various means. Echeverría chose to remain a while longer in Buenos Aires, believing that emigration was not the way to aid his country. He now hoped for an internal, radical and rejuvenating revolution. The members in Montevideo, on the other hand,

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 40-41, Cf. Faustino J. Legón, *Doctrina política de la Asociación de mayo* (Buenos Aires, 1939), 240 ff.

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drew together in the *Asociación de Mayo*. This organization became a "central committee," and served as one of the main centers of action against Rosas.⁴³ Jacinto Rodríguez Peña, Rafael Corbalán, Carlos Tejedor, Santiago Albarracín and Enrique de la Fuente formed an "auxiliary committee" in Buenos Aires known as *Club de los Cinco*. They coöperated with Commander Pedro Castelli and Colonel Maza in the abortive "Revolution of 1839." These two chapters of the *Asociación* also coöperated to encourage the expedition of General Lavalle in 1840.⁴⁴ The idea of *asociación* spread. In San Juan an organization was started by D. F. Sarmiento, Benjamín Villafañe, Rodríguez, Aberaistain, Cortines and others. In 1840 Vincente F. López formed an *asociación* in Córdoba and published *El Estandarte Nacional*. Organizations developed in Salta and Jujuy, while Benjamín Villafañe, from San Juan, went to Tucumán to organize Marco de Avellaneda, Brígido Silva, and their friends. José Cubas, Eufasio Quiroga, Berón de Astrada, and others organized in Catamarca. From these was born the *Coalición del Norte* which worked to eliminate the *Rosistas* governors.⁴⁵ The elements of dissatisfaction had been scattered, not to die but to multiply.

As soon as the *Asociación de Mayo* distrusted Rosas and he considered them to be an Unitarian Free-mason society, conflict began. Paul Groussac, writing of this "innocent free-masonry," says, "it is not the critic who moves mountains but faith."⁴⁶ To these young men Mazzini exemplified the qualities of faith and organizing genius in the struggle for Italian unification. His example was a constant encouragement. Possibly the chief contribution of Echeverría and his friends

⁴³ Lazcano, *op. cit.*, II, 234.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 231-34.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 227-28.

⁴⁶ Paul Groussac, "Esteban Echeverría" *La Biblioteca*, IV (May, 1897), 254.

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to the cause of constitutional government in Argentina was keeping alive the ideal of a more perfect unity. This faith as expressed in the "Symbolic Words" and their separate subsequent writings did much to make possible the Constitution of 1853. During the decade prior to the overthrow of Rosas, with its blockades, foreign interventions, confiscations, wars and intrigues, Echeverría, Alberdi, Gutiérrez, Sarmiento, Lamas, and others made various charges against Rosas. In order to know whether the critics had anything better to offer, it is necessary to consider whether or not any of the charges made by these men had a foundation in the theories expressed in the *Dogma Socialista* and if anything was done in the Constitution of 1853 to prevent the recurrence of such "evils."

The charge is often repeated that Rosas' actions, based on the law of 1835 granting "supreme power," were unconstitutional. Leaving aside the technical steps by which this power was gained and whether the Legislature granted the powers of its own will and free accord, the very first article of the *Dogma Socialista* branded any action under such a grant as invalid. This position was taken on the ground that any constitution, no matter how formed, should not grant such powers. The fundamental idea was that there must be an association of equals and that to give anyone supreme power over an individual or a group completely violated the principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity. The *Dogma* was most emphatic: "No majority, or party or assembly, has the right to establish a law which attacks the natural laws and fundamental principles of society, and which places at the mercy of the caprice of one man the security, the liberty and life of all."⁴⁷

In discussing the question of independence from traditions, Echeverría stated that Spanish society was based on

⁴⁷ Echeverría, "Dogma Socialista," *Obras Completas*, IV, 122.

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inequality of classes. He emphasized that before this condition could be changed, radical reforms must take place in laws and education. He also implied that Rosas was not likely to be sympathetic to this program.⁴⁸ In other words, there must be checks on any government; a man's person and property must, as a fundamental concept, be secure or he may become a slave to another or to the state. The *Dogma* went so far as to say that the very institution of government "is of no utility, moral value or necessity" unless it secures to each citizen his "imprescriptible rights and principally his liberty."⁴⁹

The probability that civil wars and foreign blockades might delay or embarrass the creation of an adequate Association was not discussed. The statement in the *Dogma* that the best form of government for Argentina would be one which bore a close relationship to her customs and social conditions left the way open for a federal structure. It is generally agreed that Rosas never called a constitutional convention which might have attempted to unite the various factions, and this stands as a valid charge against him.⁵⁰ That the French blockade left little time to consider reforms was a plausible defense. Nevertheless, the inaction from 1835 to 1838, when Rosas had supreme power, justified, at least to some extent, the misgivings of the members of the *Asociación*. Later events, such as the confiscations of Unitarian property and the open threats of death to all who did not subscribe to the Rosas doctrines, encouraged acceptance of the new theories.

Alberdi, in his *Bases y puntos de partida para la organización política de la República Argentina*, stressed certain phases of the *Dogma Socialista*. He urged a federal republic which would "adopt and sustain the Catholic culture" with

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 160-63.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁵⁰ Levene, *op. cit.*, 386 ff.

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toleration of other faiths. After the general clauses, "public rights" were considered, and liberty to work, to speak, and to print were guaranteed; no law was to recognize differences of class or person, thus attacking the badge system of Rosas; property was declared inviolate; and security was to be maintained by trial in regular courts based on laws passed before the charge. Article 79 guarded against a continued dictatorship by declaring that there should be no re-elections except after a six year interval. The president and his ministers were to be responsible for their acts. Article 86 named specifically such acts as hindering the progress [one of the symbolic words] of the country" and "embarrassing the freedom of trade."⁵¹

When the Constitution of 1853 was prepared, Alberdi's plan was followed closely. It is true that the restriction of the office of president to Roman Catholics represented a departure. Also the guarantees of "equality," "liberty," or "security" for the citizen do not stand out in the form of the Constitution, but the essential guarantees were clearly stated in Articles 14 to 23. For example, Article 19 declared: "No inhabitant of the Confederation will be obligated to do anything which is not ordered by law, nor forbidden to do what it does not prohibit."⁵² As a final protection to equality and freedom of all individuals, the Constitution read:

Congress does not have power to grant to the National Executive, or the provincial Legislatures to the Governors of the Provinces, *facultades extraordinarias*, or *la suma del poder público*, [granted to Rosas]. . . . Acts of this nature shall be absolutely void, and will subject those who formulate them, as well as those who consent thereto or sign them, to the liability and penalty of infamous traitors to their country.⁵³

⁵¹ Alberdi, *op. cit.*, IV, 550-80. For a work minimizing the influence of Alberdi in shaping the Constitution, see Ernesto Quesada, *La Figura histórica de Alberdi* (Buenos Aires, 1919), 37.

⁵² All references to this document are taken from *Congreso General Constituyente de la Confederación Argentina, sesión de 1852-54* (Buenos Aires, 1871), Part II, 37 ff.

⁵³ Article 29. Cf. F. L. Joannini, *The Argentine Civil Code* (Boston, 1917), xxxviii.

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Rosas, it will be recalled, got into trouble with France in 1838. This was due in a large measure to minor quarrels over the rights of French nationals in matters of trade and army service.⁵⁴ Evidence shows that Rosas was stubborn, but that he acted within the accustomed law of nations in the matter of dealing with Vice-Consul Aimé Roger. On the other side, Roger was haughty, and the French were not averse to following up quarrels with new Latin-American states with force.⁵⁵ Members of the *Asociación*, without all the facts, charged Rosas with plunging the nation into foreign wars. Nevertheless, these young men were far ahead of many contemporaries in their attitude toward world brotherhood and freedom of commerce.⁵⁶ Thus Rosas' decree of January 8, 1845, closing the rivers to Paraguay and Corrientes and thereby precipitating the combined Anglo-French blockade,⁵⁷ convinced the young patriots that their ideas of "Progress" and "Fraternity" were practical signposts on the path to peace. Even in the face of foreign attack, they reasoned that the level of American intelligence must be raised to that of Europe. To that end they would encourage the immigration of foreigners. Echeverría and Alberdi urged freedom for the individual and equal treatment to natives of all nations.⁵⁸ Florencio Varela, writing in the *Comercio del Plata*, and Sarmiento in the press of Chile insisted constantly on free navigation of rivers and nationalization of customhouses.⁵⁹ Alberdi wrote at length

⁵⁴ John F. Cady, *Foreign Intervention in the Rio de la Plata 1838-50* (Philadelphia, 1929), 35-55.

⁵⁵ The "Pastry War" with Mexico is another case in point.

⁵⁶ "Fraternity is mutual love, or that generous disposition which inclines man to do for others that which he wishes to be done for him." Echeverría, *op. cit.*, IV, 129, quoting *Young Europe*.

⁵⁷ Pelham Horton Box, *The Origins of the Paraguayan War*, University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences (Urbana, 1930), XV, 20.

⁵⁸ "By the law of God and of humanity all men are free." Echeverría, *op. cit.*, IV, 134, quoting Saint-Simon.

⁵⁹ M. de Vedia y Mitre, "La formación constitucional de las provincias y su régimen fiscal (1810-1853)," *Revista de la Facultad de Derecho y Ciencias Sociales*, III (April-June, 1924), 360.

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on the advantages of freedom of all arteries of internal trade for the nation and advocated free trade on the international rivers.⁶⁰ After the defeat of Rosas in the battle of Monte Caseros, the framers of the Constitution wrote into that document that

all foreigners possess all the civil rights of citizens while in Argentina; . . . they are not obligated to become citizens nor to pay forced, extraordinary contributions. Nationalization may be obtained by two years of continuous residence in the Confederation; but this may be shortened through service to the Republic.⁶¹

While all citizens had to arm to defend the Republic, "citizens by naturalization are free to lend or not this service for a term of ten years from the day he received his citizenship paper."⁶² Also,

the Federal Government shall encourage European immigration; and it shall not restrict, limit, nor burden with tax anyone entering Argentine territory who comes to cultivate the land, to better industry and to introduce and teach the sciences and the arts.⁶³

Furthermore, as in the United States, it was provided that the internal rivers were to be free, under Federal jurisdiction, to all members of the Confederation.⁶⁴ Congress was given the power to make treaties and regulations with foreign nations

⁶⁰ Article 34 of *Bases y puntos*. In this connection compare a study made by Cesar Díaz Cisneros, *Alberdi ante la Filosofía y el Derecho de Gentes* (La Plata, 1930), 32.

⁶¹ Article 20.

⁶² Article 21.

⁶³ Article 25. Present day Argentine writers who question this policy have criticised Alberdi. The importance of foreign teachers as viewed by Echeverría and Andrés Bello, at one time Minister of Public Instruction, is brought out in the study José Ingenieros, "La filosofía social de Echeverría y la leyenda de la Asociación de Mayo," *Revista de Filosofía*, VII (March, 1918), 262 ff. On March 31, 1948, Dr. Aníbal Sánchez Reulet, formerly a professor at the University of Tucumán, spoke on the background of the Argentine crisis of 1930 on the Lecture Series sponsored by the Institute of Latin-American Studies of the University of Texas. He placed emphasis on the effects of the rapid immigration from the less well educated peoples of southern Europe and how Argentina had failed to assimilate them adequately to ranch, farm, and factory as well as to the practices of constitutional democracy before 1930. He pointed out that Buenos Aires, like New York City, is not typical of the rest of the country.

⁶⁴ Article 26.

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necessary to regulate maritime and land commerce.⁶⁵ On this provision ultimately were based the agreements with Paraguay, Uruguay, and Brazil, which allowed use of the international rivers long before such an arrangement was worked out on the Danube in Europe.

Disputes dealing with religious subjects are often quite bitter, and such was the case in Buenos Aires. Rosas thought of the *Asociación de Mayo* as another "Unitarian Freemason society," which to him was synonymous with "Masonic opposition."⁶⁶ More than once he spoke and wrote as a Charles V, defender of the true Faith. The *Dogma Socialista* taught separation of church and state and freedom of conscience and worship; it recognized Christianity as the best religion because it spread brotherhood and respect for the Creator; and it held that the priests should teach tolerance and not persecution, as "force makes hypocrites."⁶⁷ Rosas was charged with sacrilege because he forced the priesthood to wear special badges and garments and because some rather fanatical clerical followers, the *Apostólicos*, caused his picture to be placed in the churches where some priests deemed it worthy of the bended knee. The Jesuits opposed such actions and were expelled in 1847. While Juan Manuel was anxious for the approval of the Pope, his attitude toward the Jesuits and non-juring clergy brought about his excommunication before a satisfactory solution was arranged.⁶⁸ The religious conflict was settled by the Constitution providing for the retention of the Roman Catholic Church as the state church. Among its numerous functions, one, as in the days of Charlemagne, would be to convert and help civilize the barbarians on the

⁶⁵ Article 64, section 12.

⁶⁶ Lazcano, *op. cit.*, 234-35.

⁶⁷ Echeverría, *op. cit.*, 140-41. The *Apostólicos* vigorously campaigned for the Rosas regime. John F. Bannon, S. J., and Peter M. Dunne, S. J., *Latin America* (Milwaukee, 1947), 514.

⁶⁸ Charles S. Stewart, *Brazil and La Plata* (New York, 1856), 196. Cf. Bannon and Dunne, *Latin America*, 512, 516.

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frontiers. Toleration was granted to other religious groups.⁶⁹

Echeverría and his friends realized the backwardness of the people in the matter of political experience. The stages of civilization of the various parts of Argentina, especially in matters of political development, were too uneven for stability. Two ways apparently were open to fill in the abyss which lay between the palace and the ranch or between *porteños* y *gauchos*. As a recent writer has phrased the idea: "Revolutions would fill it with rubbish and blood if it were not levelled by the school."⁷⁰ Education was considered to be a surer way. Echeverría taught that an unqualified doctrine of the omnipotence of the masses was dangerous, because, as he put it, when these dominant masses were ignorant and untrained, the result could only be despotism.⁷¹ To combat this situation the *Asociación* was to encourage education of all as a means of developing the germ of democracy latent in Argentine society.⁷²

During the long period of armed opposition to Rosas after 1838, including the period of the French blockade, which materially affected revenues, educational programs suffered. It is to the credit of the men trained in the *Asociación*, such as Gutiérrez, Alberdi, and Sarmiento, and the framers of the new constitution that careful attention was given to the question of public instruction.⁷³ When peace was restored

⁶⁹ Article 64, section 15; Article 14 and Article 19.

⁷⁰ Quoted from Ingenieros by Adolfo Posada, *La República Argentina* (Madrid, 1912), 173.

⁷¹ Echeverría, *op. cit.*, 157.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 176 and Echeverría, "Manuel de Enseñanza Moral," *Obras Completas*, IV, 327-411. See also D. F. Sarmiento, *Política de Rosas* (Buenos Aires, 1930), 119 and Emilio Ravignani, "Un proyecto para organizar la instrucción pública, durante el primer gobierno de Rosas," *Boletín del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas* (August, 1922), I, 33 ff. It appears that several professors were removed from the University because they were suspected of Unitarian sympathies. José Mármol, the poet, probably in love with Rosas' daughter, Manuelita, was arrested while a student and held for some time without definite charges. He became an ardent member of the *Asociación* and vented his hatred of Rosas in various writings. The best known was *Amalia*.

⁷³ Article 64, section 16 of the Constitution of 1853.

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and increased revenues were assured, more schools were opened than ever before.⁷⁴ Later, on account of the persistent efforts of President Sarmiento and Nicolás Avellaneda, Minister of Culture and Public Instruction and son of the famous Marco de Avellaneda, excellent normal schools were established in Argentina.⁷⁵

Some of the more apparent contradictions of the *Dogma Socialista* deserve brief comment. While stressing equality and fraternity, that document states that "sovereignty resides only in the collective reason of the people." This collective reason is to be found in the conclusions of representatives of classes of people, "which are equal," rather than representatives chosen by universal suffrage. To Echeverría, Alberdi and Gutiérrez universal suffrage was as absurd in 1837 as was the formula of the radical French democrats—"all for the People and by the People." They chose to say: "All for the People and by the reason or will of the People."⁷⁶ These men of the *Asociación* wanted "a policy, a religion, a philosophy, a science, an art, an industry which works simultaneously for the same moral solution" and which "establishes harmony of hearts and intelligences, or an intimate union of all members of the Argentine family." A single party, based on restricted suffrage, as the central unit and directive force seems to have been the chief innovation proposed to take the place of the single man rule of Rosas.⁷⁷ Political democrats would probably agree that Argentina did not need a new party based on the ideals of the *Dogma Socialista* and to which all belonged, but she needed two or more parties free to criticize the government, to devise new legislation to meet changing conditions, and to lead or cooperate in govern-

⁷⁴ Posada, *op. cit.*, 186-87.

⁷⁵ Levene, *op. cit.*, 470.

⁷⁶ Echeverría, *op. cit.*, IV, 192-93.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 193.

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mental activities according to the freely expressed will of the electorate. Any single party probably would have continued a dictatorship.

A survey of the period from 1838 to 1853 discloses that there were several forces, including Rosas and the *Asociación de Mayo*, in personal and political opposition, and yet that they were preparing the way for a united and more peaceful Argentina. Rosas, like Napoleon, forced a centrally directed nation which superseded the anarchy of petty local leaders, and a strong national union did result. The *Asociación* through its related branches in various parts of the country helped to break down extreme local pride and narrow provincialism so that the words *República Argentina* came to mean more than *porteño* and *Cordobés*. As Avelina M. Ibáñez has pointed out, Unitarians, Federalists and the Romanticists of the *Asociación* worked for an ideal government for Argentina but differed primarily as to the means by which it should be accomplished.⁷⁸

Echeverría and his friends of the *Asociación de Mayo* served Argentina well when they popularized the practical phases of both Unitarian and Federalist doctrines. They pointed out the futility of the extremes: localism with its disregard for national well-being and extreme centralism with no regard for the individual. They stressed that, while the good of all the people of Argentina came first, the individual person had certain inalienable rights. The Constitution of 1853, which shows clearly the influence of Alberdi, is a worthy expression of the teachings of the *Asociación de Mayo* and the practical experience with Rosas' centralized control of the government.

⁷⁸ Avelina M. Ibáñez, "Echeverría en relación con las tendencias unitarias y federales," *Boletín del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas*, XV (July-September, 1932), 75-76. Dr. Aníbal Sánchez Reulet expects to publish a biography of Echeverría in the near future. He is currently studying and lecturing in the United States as a Guggenheim Foundation Fellow.