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***Argentina's Partisan Past:
Nationalism, Peronism and Historiography, 1955-76***

Thomas Michael Goebel

A thesis submitted to the University of London in candidacy for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy from the Department of History, University College London



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Abstract of thesis

This PhD thesis is an inquiry into history as politics in Argentina from the overthrow of Perón to the military coup of 1976. Its main aim is to explain why and how a particular strand of nationalist historical writing (historical revisionism) conquered the public sphere in this period, so that by the 1970s its principal tenets had become almost common sense in the Argentines' understanding of their national past. For this purpose, the thesis contextualises the revisionist discourse in relation to, firstly, the intellectual field and, secondly, political developments, arguing that only a combination of cultural and political history allows us to account for the success of revisionism in influencing the collective historical consciousness. The principal primary sources on which the thesis relies are the publications of revisionists (both books and periodicals), militant periodicals, daily newspapers and institutional sources, in particular related to public education.

Special emphasis is given to the conditions that underpinned the production and the public success of revisionist symbolic goods. In six chapters the thesis analyses the historical development of the relationship between the liberal and the nationalist view of history (1); the connection between contemporary debates about Peronism and the revisionist version of the past (2); the influence of Marxism (3); the cultural and political networks of revisionism (4); the Peronist appropriation of revisionist imagery (5); and the relationship between nationalist intellectuals and the state (6). From these points, the thesis derives broader conclusions about the relationship between politics, national identity and historical narratives by singling out the factors that contributed to such a strong politicisation of historiography under nationalist signs. Particularly stressed is the mutually reinforcing interplay between a profound crisis of political legitimacy, a fragile intellectual field and an uneven institutionalisation of historiography.

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This thesis would have been impossible without the support of many Argentine historians, who are familiar with its topic from their own professional and personal experience. During my two research trips to Argentina, several historians have helped me to conceptualise the main problems related to my topic. I would like to express my special gratitude to Luis Alberto Romero, Alejandro Cattaruzza and Alejandro Eujanian, who were all extraordinarily generous with their limited time, offering to discuss my ideas, concerns and uncertainties on repeated occasions, sometimes for several hours, as well as inviting me to seminars at the Universities of Buenos Aires and Rosario. Much of my initial orientation I owe to them. I would also like to thank Gerardo Aboy, Carlos Altamirano, Roberto Baschetti, Hilda Sabato, Ernesto Salas, Ricardo Sidicaro, Oscar Terán and Juan Carlos Torre for their readiness to discuss my project during its early stages, providing me with valuable contacts and suggestions for further research. I am furthermore indebted to four interviewees, Fermín Chávez,

Alejandro Olmos (son), Arturo Peña Lillo and Jorge Oscar Sulé, for sharing their personal memories and opinions with me and clarifying many details that would have been difficult to verify in the labyrinthine world of Argentine archives. Being either related to or themselves the protagonists of this study, I was most impressed with their openness towards an unknown foreigner; an openness they never made dependent on whether I shared their views. I can only hope that such an association does not displease any of these interlocutors and that, at least partially, they recognise either their recommendations or their personal memories in this work. Whilst many of the ideas and interpretations expressed in this thesis are thus borrowings, all its possible errors or misjudgements are entirely my own.

Parts of this thesis have been presented as papers at conferences or published as articles in journals. Both gave me the opportunity to receive helpful suggestions that hopefully sharpened some arguments. In this context, I would like to acknowledge the comments by Eduardo Hourcade and, again, Alejandro Eujanian as well as of the anonymous reviewers of the journals *prohistoria*, *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe* and *Histoire(s) de l'Amérique latine*. Friends and colleagues in Argentina, Britain and Germany have supported me during writing this thesis, fuelling my interest and discussing ideas, some also reading and commenting parts of this thesis. Among them, I am most indebted to my friend Christian Hochmuth, with whom I have long shared a passion for the theory and practice of history and whose reading and commenting of an entire draft shortly before submission went well beyond what might be expected from a treaty of friendship. I would also like to thank Camila Arza, Mauricio Chama, Joanna Crow, Benno Gammerl, Caterina Pizzigoni, Kate Quinn and David Wood for reading drafts of parts of this thesis and for their helpful suggestions. What most helped me to continue my work during moments of doubt and insecurity was my parents' encouragement and wholehearted support, which I greatly appreciate. To them I dedicate this thesis.

Finally, the issue of translations must be addressed, which turned out to be an arduous matter. The main problem were translations of the primary sources from Spanish to English, neither of which is my native tongue. My thanks go once more to Nicola Miller, who was meticulous in helping me to convey in English the nuances of the Spanish originals and to Claudia Murray, who helped me disentangle the sometimes Byzantine ways of the Argentine idiom. The other problem were secondary texts, in particular theoretical works. In the course of much travelling throughout my

thesis, I ended up reading Spanish translations of originally English, German, French, Portuguese and Italian texts. Since it made no sense in an English thesis to quote from translations into Spanish, I finally decided to go back to the originals, translate them myself and, wherever I was aware of the existence of a published English translation, compare it with my own. Despite the help, unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine and so are possible errors in them.

Introduction

The background

This thesis explores a particular construction of Argentine national identity between 1955 and 1976. It focuses on the strongly nationalist and anti-liberal current of historical writing known as historical revisionism and seeks to explain why this current acquired such importance in collective understandings of the past during the period considered. Although in the strictest sense this thesis is therefore a history of historiography, the nature of its object of analysis compels a broader contextualisation. Revisionism was not so much an inquiry into history designed to expand knowledge, but rather a consciously partisan account of Argentina's past developed to serve political purposes of the present. Casting historical figures as symbols for contemporary struggles, the revisionist current created an idealised imagery of the nation and its leaders. A crucial ingredient of twentieth-century nationalist thought in Argentina its motifs were appropriated as a political weapon, after 1955, especially by Peronist groups. Through its convergence with Peronism, revisionism gained wide currency during the 1960s and began to strongly shape the ways in which Argentines understood their past. Exploring the production, dissemination and political usage of historical revisionism, this thesis ultimately seeks to contribute to our understanding of the history of Argentine nationalism and debates about national identity.

In order to understand the main ideas of revisionism, it is first necessary to delineate the dilemmas to which it proposed an answer. Broadly speaking, these dilemmas evolved around the questions of national identity. One might expect the problem of collective identity to be particularly acute in an immigrant society like Argentina. A common joke holds that, whilst Mexicans descended from the Aztecs and

Peruvians from the Incas, Argentines descended from boats. There have indeed been few places in world history so deluged by mass immigration as Argentina between 1860 and 1930. Situated at the margins of the Spanish Empire, the territory of the Viceroyalty of the River Plate had been scarcely populated and, compared to the splendour of Mexico City or Lima, its capital Buenos Aires had been a lacklustre outpost of minor importance before the May Revolution of 1810 and the declaration of independence in 1816. Unsurprisingly, for the remainder of the nineteenth century and especially after 1852, the question of how to forge “a nation for the Argentine desert”, as the title of an essay by the historian Tulio Halperín Donghi suggests, dominated political debates.¹

Historians agree on the broad outlines under which this preoccupation developed.² From a bird’s-eye perspective, the century after independence can be summarised as the rise of the model of liberal development, which came under attack from the 1920s onwards. At first, as in many other Spanish American countries, Argentina’s independence solved fewer problems than its liberator José de San Martín might have hoped. The four decades after 1810 were characterised by internal warfare and the politics of that era dominated by patriarchal *caudillos*, military strongmen who ruled through clientelistic methods and often assembled a large popular following.³ Only after the most significant of them, Juan Manuel de Rosas (governor of Argentina’s mightiest province, Buenos Aires, from 1829-32 and 1835-52),⁴ had been defeated in the battle of Caseros, did the questions of how to organise a nation-state and how to endow it with a cohesive national identity pose themselves in all seriousness. From the 1850s the task of nation-building fell to a new generation of leaders, known as the Generation of 1837, many of whom had been exiled during

¹ Tulio Halperín Donghi, *Una nación para el desierto argentino* (Buenos Aires: Editores de América Latina, 2004).

² The standard textbooks are now the series by Sudamericana, which is more general, and Ariel, which focuses on political and intellectual history and includes documents: Noemí Goldman (ed.), *Revolución, República, Confederación (1806-1852)* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1998); Marta Bonaudo (ed.), *Liberalismo, estado y orden burgués (1852-1880)* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1999); Mirta Lobato (ed.), *El progreso, la modernización y sus límites (1880-1916)* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2000); José Carlos Chiaramonte (ed.), *Ciudades, provincias, estados: orígenes de la nación argentina (1800-1846)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1997); Tulio Halperín Donghi (ed.), *Proyecto y construcción de una nación (1846-1880)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1995); and Natalio Botana and Ezequiel Gallo (eds.), *De la República posible a la República verdadera (1880-1910)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1997).

³ A useful correction to many stereotypes about *caudillismo* is Noemí Goldman and Ricardo Salvatore (eds.), *Caudillismos rioplatenses: nuevas miradas a un viejo problema* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba and Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UBA, 1998).

⁴ The classic work about Rosas in English is: John Lynch, *Argentine dictator: Juan Manuel de Rosas 1829-1852* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981).

Rosas' regime. Writer-statesmen such as Bartolomé Mitre or Domingo Faustino Sarmiento argued that Rosas was the epitome of barbarian backwardness and that *caudillismo* had to be eradicated from Argentine politics to make place for an enlightened project of progress and civilisation inspired by the advances of the European nations and the United States.

The ideas of the Generation of 1837 are generally associated with the term liberalism, since its thinkers drew upon cosmopolitan and liberal ideas from Europe. But these ideas soon appeared to be strangely “misplaced” in Latin America, as the Brazilian writer Machado de Assis noted for his country in 1879.⁵ Thinkers like Sarmiento faced the problem that, in contrast to the Old World, there was no strong society from which a state could be built. The Argentine translation of liberalism was thus tainted with an original sin: the political order was not conceived as an arena for the free expression of a society composed of free citizens, but rather as a tool for the creation of a society from above. In the elitist eyes of liberal statesmen, the *caudillos'* mass following bespoke the untrustworthiness of an amorphous populace that was scattered over the boundless hinterlands. According to Sarmiento's famous dictum of 1845 —extolled or reviled depending on viewpoint—, the population needed guidance with regard to the quintessential dilemma between “civilisation and barbarism”.⁶ Besides European immigration, education was deemed promising to indicate the right path. Given the social thinness that underpinned this project of nation-building, the state remained pivotal as an instrument to implement the ideal of a liberal Argentine nation.

Although there were always dissident voices, the consensus around this state-focused interpretation of liberalism was sustained relatively well for several decades. From the viewpoint of a still narrow elite, there seemed to be few convincing alternatives to the dominant ideas and, in any event, the benefits they promised to yield, not least the material ones, were satisfying enough to forestall sweeping questioning. Prospects looked good indeed for some decades. Landowners, who at the beginning of the twentieth century formed a dynamic agro-capitalist class,⁷ accumulated legendary wealth and the Parisian expression *riche comme un argentin* emboldened Buenos Aires' aspiration to become the Southern hemisphere's replica of the

⁵ Roberto Schwarz, *Misplaced ideas: essays on Brazilian culture* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 31.

⁶ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, *Facundo: civilización y barbarie* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1990).

⁷ See Roy Hora, *The landowners of the Argentine Pampas: a social and political history, 1860-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), esp. pp. 1-130.

capital of the nineteenth century. One hundred years after the May Revolution, to many observers, Argentina looked like a tremendous success story, a land of promise that had secured its place among the world's great, rich and powerful. Some harboured subdued doubts already and, especially in the two decades after the Centenary, the effects of mass immigration and the middle class's quest for participation in the political process began to appear threatening to some members of the elite. Yet only during the World Depression did the hitherto almost unshakable confidence in Argentina's perpetual progress crumble for good. After 1930, most Argentines became convinced that the nineteenth-century ideal of setting up an overseas mimesis of Europe would never materialise, and ever since then the Argentine nation-state has been primarily understood as a spectacular failure. As the liberal consensus broke apart, explanations began to diverge widely as to what had gone wrong.

The predominance of the prism of failure beclouded the recognition of some rather impressive achievements: the modernising state accomplished significant industrialisation and expanded the system of welfare provisions. Per capita GDP and living standards rose.⁸ The heretofore heterogeneous immigrant masses coalesced into an Argentine people to the extent that from the 1930s onwards the issue of immigration no longer dominated public debate. By the 1960s, the grandsons of poor and illiterate Calabrian peasants were being awarded doctorates from the University of Buenos Aires. However, the abyss between the myth of Argentina's continuous progress and the country's perceived reality continued to widen, as circumstances fuelled the fear that the golden age had vanished for good with increasingly persuasive evidence. Since the World Depression economic problems were matched by the elusiveness of a viable political order. In the face of the oligarchy's declining power and the rise of the middle and later the popular classes, Argentina's fragmented elites displayed an utter incapacity to shape a legitimate framework for the political expression of group interests. In the absence of a strong tradition of conservatism, the populist experiment led by Juan Domingo Perón (1946-55) for a while managed to convince parts of the elite that a state-led co-option of the working class was the most

⁸ See Carlos Díaz Alejandro, *Essays on the economic history of the Argentine Republic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 443-448 on indices of industrial output between 1935 and 1966, which doubled or tripled in almost all areas, and p. 496 on expenditure on the welfare system between 1950-63, which tripled in this period. See Rosemary Thorp, *Progress, Poverty, and Exclusion: An Economic History of Latin America in the 20th Century* (Washington: Inter-American Development Bank, 1998), p. 353 on GDP in US\$ per capita at 1970 prices (which more than doubled between 1930 and 1970) and p. 360 on the Historical Living Standard Index, based on the Human Development Indicator (1930s: 79; 1970s: 125).

promising guarantor of social order.⁹ But the Peronist evocation of a harmonious national community turned out to be deceptive in the light of exhausted monetary reserves from the 1950s onwards. Perón's regime temporarily managed to suppress oppositional tendencies by further increasing the state's encroachment upon society, but he thereby entered into conflict with entrenched corporate interests, in particular the Catholic Church. This provided the final trigger for the military coup that ousted Peronism from state power in 1955. Yet the subsequent attempts to exclude Peronism from political participation proved even less capable of producing a feasible solution to the predicaments of the political system. When Perón returned to power in 1973, it was in a climate of acute polarisation and spiralling political violence, which in 1976 culminated in yet another military coup. The leaders of the ensuing dictatorship set themselves the goal of once and forever eradicating what they called "subversion", torturing and killing thousands of Argentines in a "Dirty War". Against the background of an economic crisis, the military then launched a disastrous conventional war against Britain to recuperate the Falkland Islands in 1982. This war was quickly lost, bringing further discredit to the military as an institution, but ultimately helping the restoration of democracy in the following year. In short, the five decades before 1983 were marked by a protracted crisis of liberal democracy, accompanied by a desperate search for explanations of the country's lamentable condition. Countless efforts, in diverse literary and academic genres, have been devoted to pinpointing historical moments, figures and structures that could be held responsible for Argentina's problems. As Jeremy Adelman has noted, "there are few countries where the ghosts of the past haunt the present so relentlessly."¹⁰

Under such circumstances, it was no surprise that history came to be seen as central to an understanding of Argentina's dilemmas of nation-building. Closely linked to political developments, historical revisionism, which emerged in the 1930s, became well-nigh hegemonic in the 1960s and then declined after the restoration of democracy, claimed to have the answer regarding the question of what had caused Argentina's malaise: the liberalism of the Generation of 1837. Notwithstanding the current's heterogeneity, the main arguments of revisionism can be summarised as follows: a conspiracy between British imperialism and the local oligarchy had subjugated

⁹ A good introduction to the basic features of the Peronist regime is Juan Carlos Torre (ed.), *Los años peronistas (1943-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2002)

¹⁰ Jeremy Adelman, review of Nicolas Shumway's *The invention of Argentina*, in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2 (1992), p. 471.

Argentina's national consciousness. Liberalism was a foreign ideology, which had been imported by perfidious intellectuals such as Sarmiento and Mitre in order to facilitate the degradation of Argentina. The traitors employed a falsified history—interchangeably referred to as “liberal” or “official” history—as their most efficient ideological weapon, which served to prolong Argentina's ignominious debasement. What was most disgraceful, according to the revisionists, was that the nation honoured in a pantheon of heroes those responsible for its opprobrium. Figures like Sarmiento or Mitre thus urgently needed to be replaced by those who embodied authentic national values, who had heroically resisted against foreign penetration, namely the *caudillos*. As for the analogous struggles of the present, the new pantheon would inspire the people to free Argentina from the chains of foreign powers. In short, revisionists belligerently set out to revise the ideas associated with the nineteenth-century project of liberal nation-building.

Revisionism and nationalism

The central question of this thesis is why and how historical revisionism gained so much currency in the two decades after the overthrow of Perón in 1955. This question determines my approach and, to varying degrees, differentiates it from the previous secondary literature. Today, the prospects for such a historicisation of revisionism are more favourable than when it was first attempted twenty years ago. In the aftermath of the dreadful outcome of the disputes of the 1960s and 70s, many of the surviving left-wing intellectuals began to reconsider the premises upon which their earlier beliefs had been based. As a key component of the political discourse of that era, historical revisionism came under scrutiny, too. There were important antecedents, of course, especially two essays by Halperín Donghi, the first published in 1970, the second fourteen years later, which are still the best on the topic.¹¹ There was furthermore a short monograph on “nationalism and historiography in Latin America” by the Uruguayan historian Carlos Rama, published in 1981, which mostly dealt with Argentine revisionism, denouncing it as a source for all kinds of fascist ideology in the River Plate.¹² Yet especially after 1990 revisionism became an object of historical inquiry rather than political passions. The most important outcome was a monograph by Diana

¹¹ Tulio Halperín Donghi, *El revisionismo histórico argentino* (Buenos Aires and Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1971) and Tulio Halperín Donghi, “El revisionismo histórico como visión decadentista de la historia nacional”, *Alternativas* (June 1984), pp. 72-93.

¹² Carlos M. Rama, *Nacionalismo e historiografía en América Latina* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1981).

Quattrocchi-Woisson,¹³ but there now also exists a large number of articles and book sections on revisionism.¹⁴ The fact that interest in the topic has not diminished since then is shown by the re-publishing in 2005 of Halperín's two articles.¹⁵

My thesis will not contradict any of the major claims of these studies, such as the non-academic character, the nationalistic fervour and the chiefly political aims of revisionism, all points about which revisionists themselves were remarkably candid. I also agree with the common argument that during the two decades after the overthrow of Perón revisionism became “a sort of common sense among vast sectors [of the population,] not only intellectuals”, or, even more generally, that “Argentine culture was characterised, from around 1930 until our days [1986], by the presence of history as politics and politics as history, thanks to the strength of historical revisionism.”¹⁶ However, so far, perhaps because the literature on revisionism has largely been written by Argentine historians, to whom the relevance of the subject matter is immediately evident from their own biographical experience, the main interest has been to explain how the revisionist current came into being in the first place and, to a lesser extent,

¹³ Diana Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme de déracinés: l'Argentine, pays malade de sa mémoire* (Paris and Toulouse: CNRS, 1992).

¹⁴ In chronological order of appearance, the most important are: Alejandro Cattaruzza, “Algunas reflexiones sobre el revisionismo histórico”, in: Fernando J. Devoto (ed.), *La historiografía argentina en el siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1993), vol. 1, pp. 113-139; Maristella Svampa, *El dilema argentino: civilización o barbarie: de Sarmiento al revisionismo peronista* (Buenos Aires: El Cielo por Asalto, 1994), pp. 171-189 and pp. 269-281; Michael Riekenberg, “Zum politischen Gebrauch der Geschichte in Argentinien und Guatemala (1810-1955)”, in: Michael Riekenberg (ed.), *Politik und Geschichte in Argentinien und Guatemala (19./20. Jahrhundert)* (Frankfurt am Main: Diesterweg, 1994), pp. 11-154, esp. pp. 118-130; José Carlos Chiaramonte, “En torno a los orígenes del revisionismo histórico”, in: Ana Frega and Ariadna Islas (eds.), *Nuevas miradas en torno al artiguismo* (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, 2001), pp. 29-61; Daniel Campione, *Argentina: la escritura de su historia* (Buenos Aires: Centro Cultural de la Cooperación, 2002), where references to revisionism are scattered throughout, but see esp. pp. 84-90; Alejandro Cattaruzza, “El revisionismo: itinerarios de cuatro décadas”, in: Alejandro Cattaruzza and Alejandro Eujanian, *Políticas de la historia: Argentina 1860-1960* (Buenos Aires: Alianza, 2003), pp. 143-182; the corresponding articles in Fernando J. Devoto and Nora Pagano (eds.), *La historiografía académica y la historiografía militante en Argentina y Uruguay* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2004); and the special section of *prohistoria*, vol. 8 (2004) (pp. 167-265). There is furthermore a vast number of articles on more specific questions of revisionism as well as several biographies of revisionists. For reasons of space, they cannot be referenced here, but will be throughout the individual chapters where appropriate. There are also the many works by Norberto Galasso about revisionism. Although invaluable as a source of information, they are not really *studies of* revisionism, but rather *part of* the left-leaning revisionist literature itself, reproducing the discourse that is analysed here. Although ideologically from a different perspective, namely the extreme Right, the same goes for Antonio Caponnetto, *Los críticos del revisionismo histórico*, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: Instituto Bibliográfico “Antonio Zinny”, 1998).

¹⁵ Tulio Halperín Donghi, *El revisionismo histórico como visión decadentista de la historia nacional* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2005).

¹⁶ First quotation from Oscar Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas: la formación de la nueva izquierda intelectual en la Argentina 1956-1966*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires: El Cielo por Asalto, 1993), p. 57. Second quotation from Silvia Sigal and Eliseo Verón, *Perón o muerte: los fundamentos discursivos del fenómeno peronista*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 2003), p. 196.

how its ideas subsequently developed. Scholarly attention has thus by and large centred on the period before 1955. The question of why and how, by 1970, “the task of historical revision could [...] be deemed to be complete” and why “the intellectual movement that had promoted it, achieved [...] an unexpected triumph”, as Halperín Donghi remarked then, has received less attention.¹⁷ The main question of this thesis thus has not as yet been explored in detail.

This question, in turn, interests me mostly inasmuch as it can contribute to our understanding of nationalism in twentieth-century Argentina. To what extent does a study of revisionism allow for broader conclusions about nationalism? As a starting point, this problem might be addressed by conceptually narrowing down the term nationalism. From a broad perspective, two strands of theories of nationalism can be divided. On the one hand, perennialist theorists such as Anthony Smith have argued that usually “a state’s ethnic core shapes the character and boundaries of the nation.”¹⁸ On the other hand, according to modernists such as Ernest Gellner or Eric Hobsbawm, nationalism was the outcome of practices of state-building and “it is nationalism which engenders nations and not the other way round.”¹⁹ Hobsbawm and Ranger’s paradigm of nationalism as the “invention of tradition” encapsulates this view that national identities were the outgrowth of a creative process of modernisation rather than the extension of pre-modern perennial bonds. Although Latin America has often fallen off the map of these theories of nationalism, the modernist perspective has predominated when the region’s nationalisms have been considered. In the case of Argentina, for the reasons outlined above, it is easy to see why this approach seems preferable. Perennialism might be applied to Mexico or Peru, but what came closest to the imagery of an ethnic archetype in Argentina —the figure of the *gaucho*— was usually portrayed in cultural and social rather than ethnic terms. Even if Argentina possessed an ethnic core, it is more promising to analyse nationalist discourse from the mid-nineteenth century onwards in the light of an “invented tradition”, not only because the state assumed such a central role in the creation and dissemination of a cohesive collective identity, but also for a second reason. According to Hobsbawm, an

¹⁷ Halperín Donghi, *El revisionismo*, p. 43.

¹⁸ Anthony Smith, *National identity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 39.

¹⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 55.

‘invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices [...] which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past.²⁰

As the case of historical revisionism shows, such references to a “suitable historic past” indeed became crucial in Argentine nationalism.

However, accepting that Argentine nationalism was based on continually reformulated “invented traditions” does not resolve all analytical problems related to it. A first distinction concerns the difference between the nineteenth-century cosmopolitan project of nation-building and the later development of anti-liberal evocations of the nation as the fundamental category of understanding and forging social and political reality. Both befit the modernist definition of nationalism as a set of ideas that sought to advance ideas about national identity to construe and/or convoke a political community. In accordance with the modernist model, the difference between the nation-building designs of statesmen like Sarmiento and his later detractors could thus be read as the superseding of one form of nationalism by another. Hobsbawm himself has analysed Latin American nationalism along the lines of such phases.²¹ Although analytically valid, in a thesis on the twentieth century, this makes the definition of nationalism too broad to be useful. Contemporary denomination in Argentina after 1930 separated “liberalism”, of which Sarmiento was a paradigmatic emblem, from “nationalism”, understood as a set of ideas that stressed the nation as the main organising principle of politics, denounced cosmopolitanism and universalism and was opposed to liberalism, typically branding it as anti-national. Likewise, in her study on constructions of national identity in the late nineteenth century, Lilia Ana Bertoni has distinguished between the inclusive ideals of cosmopolitan patriotism, on the one hand, and nationalism, on the other, which stressed the homogeneity and authenticity of an indivisible national community.²² It is this second form of nationalism on which this thesis focuses. The term nationalism henceforth does not refer to the liberal model of nation-building, but instead denotes only the anti-liberal form of nationalism that was dominant from at least the 1930s onwards.

²⁰ Eric J. Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing traditions”, in: Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 1.

²¹ Eric J. Hobsbawm, “Nationalism and nationality in Latin America”, in: Bouda Etamad, Jean Batou, and Thomas David (eds.), *Pour une histoire économique et sociale internationale: Mélanges offerts à Paul Bairoch* (Geneva: Editions Passé Présent, 1995), pp. 313-323.

²² Lilia Ana Bertoni, *Patriotas, cosmopolitas y nacionalistas: la construcción de la nacionalidad argentina a fines del siglo XIX* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001).

However, usage of the term should not be narrowed too much either. Most studies on twentieth-century Argentine nationalism have concentrated on the authoritarian and largely anti-democratic strands of thought that gained momentum in the 1930s.²³ These were expounded by groupings of right-wing thinkers and activists who launched periodicals, founded debating clubs and set up street-fighting gangs and sometimes large political associations, thus forming a political current, which in contemporary political debates almost monopolised the Spanish term *nacionalismo* for itself. Although this near-monopolisation might be interpreted as a sign of this current's temporary hegemony, it should not mislead the analyst into assuming that this was the only form of nationalism after 1930. Other nationalist groups, such as FORJA, a breakaway faction from the Radical Party in the mid-thirties, differentiated themselves from the most authoritarian strands by stressing the popular ingredients of the national community. Even if the reactionary and authoritarian ideas of the interwar period were the most typical form of nationalism in the 1930s, for the period after 1955, it is highly problematic to equate these ideas with nationalism *tout court*. In the 1960s, in the context of politico-ideological mobility and the imprints of international developments such as the Algerian war of independence or the Cuban Revolution, the reactionary interwar forms were largely eclipsed by an eclectic blend of anti-imperialist *tercermundismo*, populism and Marxism. Throughout the thesis, I will therefore differentiate between the term *nacionalismo*, by which I mean the right-wing strand of thought that emerged in the interwar period, possessed a degree of self-consciousness as a political current and was often associated with the Catholic Right and an authoritarian emphasis upon hierarchy, order and discipline, and the broader term "nationalism", which also includes the more left-leaning and populist currents that gained weight after 1955.²⁴ Nationalism will be understood as the common denominator of these sets of ideas, which converged in their anti-imperialism, anti-liberalism and their stress on the authenticity of the national community in opposition to supposedly damaging foreign

²³ Marysa Navarro Gerassi, *Los nacionalistas* (Buenos Aires: Jorge Alvarez, 1968); Enrique Zuleta Álvarez, *El nacionalismo argentino*, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: La Bastilla, 1975); Cristián Buchrucker, *Nacionalismo y peronismo: la Argentina en la crisis ideológica mundial (1927-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1987), pp. 116-257; David Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina: the Nationalist movement-its history and its impact* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Alberto Spektorowski, *The origins of Argentina's revolution of the right* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 2003).

²⁴ This device has been proposed in previous English-language literature: Sandra McGee Deutsch and Ronald Dolkart (eds.), *The Argentine right: its history and intellectual origins, 1910 to the present* (Wilmington: SR Books, 1993) and Sandra McGee Deutsch, *Las Derechas: the extreme right in Argentina, Brazil, and Chile, 1890-1939* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

influences. Based on this definition, nationalism is understood as a particular discourse, which is not necessarily expressed through a single movement with the exclusive aim to promote this discourse, although there can be nationalist movements that adopt elements from it. In this case, Peronism was a nationalist movement of this kind.

If twentieth-century Argentine nationalism is understood in this way, then historical revisionism can be seen as the nationalist “invention of tradition” *par excellence*. Yet although all revisionists can be regarded as nationalists according to the definition above, the question remains to what extent the inverse is true as well. The scholarly literature on twentieth-century Argentine nationalism has unanimously cast revisionism as a distinctive and crucial part of its subject matter, although often without analysing it in much depth.²⁵ This is not to say that everybody with a nationalist mindset was also a revisionist. For example, many politicians who are often qualified as nationalist cannot be called revisionists, simply because they never wrote anything about history. Some of the protagonists of the studies of Argentine nationalism, such as a number of priests, military advisers or journalists, should not *primarily* be treated as revisionists either. Nevertheless, most writers whose political orientation was nationalist *did* engage in the production and/or dissemination of revisionism, be it through history books, more general essays or journalistic articles. For the period after 1930, at least one half of the thinkers considered in the aforementioned scholarly studies can also be classified as revisionists, even if writing history was rarely their exclusive occupation. The link between nationalist thought and history was even stronger in the 1960s. In this decade, the terms “revisionist” and “nationalist intellectual” can almost be used synonymously. As Ana María Barletta and María Dolores Béjar have remarked,

²⁵ For example, Spektorowski, *The origins*, pp. 93-109 uses revisionism as evidence for his argument that there was a synthesis between right- and left-wing nationalism. Deutsch, *Las Derechas*, pp. 327-328 sees revisionism as a crucial component that set the Argentine Right apart from its Brazilian and Chilean counterparts and as proof for her point that right-wing nationalism was more influential in Argentina than in the other two countries. Navarro Gerassi, *Los nacionalistas*, pp. 131-145 identifies the exaltation of Rosas as the main criterion that distinguished Argentine nationalism from similar currents of thought elsewhere. Other studies, such as Samuel Baily, *Labor, nationalism, and politics in Argentina* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1967), which is fundamentally concerned with the working class rather than intellectual debates, and Pablo José Hernández, *Peronismo y pensamiento nacional, 1955-1973* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 1997), largely a piece of anecdotal journalism, have also repeatedly touched upon revisionism.

in the corrosive criticism of the paradigm of the liberal nation and in the consequent re-invention of the Argentine past in order to legitimise the desired nation, we recognise two elements that are shared by all nationalists.²⁶

In the light of these considerations, it seems justified to derive some broader conclusions about nationalism from analysing its “invention of tradition”, namely revisionism.

In a next step, revisionism and nationalist discourse in general might then be connected to broader political problems. The rise of revisionism, as an instance of a highly partisan and anti-liberal nationalism, coincided with Argentina’s main period of political instability between 1930 and 1983. It is tempting to argue that nationalist mythologies such as revisionism *contributed* to these difficulties of agreeing on a legitimate political order. Is it not telling enough that the leaders of military coups (there were six between 1930 and 1976) frequently drew on combative and divisive nationalist ideas? On the other side of the political violence of the 1970s, did the name of the guerrilla group Montoneros not show that they were inspired by historical revisionism? Looking across the Andes, was Chile’s greater political stability not also matched by a nationalist account of the past, *decadentismo*, that was less partisan and polemical than its Argentine counterpart? Undoubtedly, Argentina’s protracted crisis of liberal democracy between 1930 and 1983 was underpinned by a political culture marked by divisions between brothers in arms and irreconcilable “enemies” who had to be eliminated, whether symbolically or physically, of which nationalism (and its main version of the past, revisionism) were important elements. The very terms democracy and (especially) liberalism were widely discredited throughout this period. In the 1960s, labelling oneself as a liberal was almost tantamount to political suicide.

However, with regard to nationalist discourse in that period, much depends on the conceptual lens through which we examine the relationship between ideas and practical politics. The scholarship on nationalist ideology —in particular by non-Argentine authors— has often suffered from a rather unidirectional schematism, according to which the subject of analysis (nationalist ideas or, more generally, identity constructions) is envisaged only as a potential driving force of Argentina’s political instability or calamitous human rights record, rather than also asking *how* these ideas came to be politically applied. Often, the publications of nationalist thinkers were scanned in search of the “ideological origins” of military coups. For example, Alberto

²⁶ Ana María Barletta and María Dolores Béjar, “Nacionalismo, nacionalismos, nacionalistas: ...¿un debate historiográfico?”, *Anuario del Instituto de Estudios Histórico-Sociales*, vol. 3 (1988), p. 382.

Spektorowski has argued that the “nationalist ideology that had an important influence on Argentinian politics achieved consummation with the successful revolution of 1943, which ushered in Peronism.”²⁷ In a book published in 2003, he identified this as the ideology of “reactionary modernism”.²⁸ David Rock started from the premise that Argentine political culture was inherently authoritarian and then found plenty of examples that suggest that the ideology of the “Nationalist movement” was the main responsible for this authoritarianism.²⁹ Nicolas Shumway went back much further. For him, the “guiding fictions” inherent in the later writings of the early nineteenth-century thinker Mariano Moreno (according to Shumway, “a frighteningly authoritarian figure, reminiscent of Machiavelli, the Grand Inquisitor, and the French Jacobins”) already forecast the populism of both Hipólito Yrigoyen and Juan Perón as well as the fact that “Fascists and third-world communists would become the new paternalists.”³⁰ With the help of Rock’s and Shumway’s studies, Diane Taylor found that “many of the myths and evils we associate with the Dirty War can already be identified in the nineteenth century”, such as “Catholic values exemplified in the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the Counter-Reformation; [...] the distrust of foreigners; [...] the tendency to resort to violence”.³¹

I do not share the confidence of these authors that harmful ideas translated into political practices so effortlessly. Before speculating about the extent to which they became practical guidelines for guerrillas, political leaders or military men, to the detriment of Argentina’s stability, we should look at the means of production and transmission of these ideas. My question, therefore, is not whether nationalist intellectuals or revisionists should in the last instance be held responsible for military coups, but what the structural stimuli were for their discourse to spread and to acquire meaning. The danger of an excessive structuralism increased every time I revisited the books and articles of revisionists. Although most of them might have wanted to become advisers to the Prince, their essayism more often seemed to express their relatively weak integration into political parties or movements. Their own political ini-

²⁷ Alberto Spektorowski, “The ideological origins of right and left nationalism in Argentina, 1930-43”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 29 (1994), pp. 155-184, p. 155.

²⁸ Spektorowski, *The origins*.

²⁹ Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*.

³⁰ Nicolas Shumway, *The invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 28 (Machiavelli etc.), p. 40 (Yrigoyen) and p. 46 (the remaining three). He does not further specify in what sense Moreno resembled Machiavelli, the Grand Inquisitor and the Jacobins, nor whom he means by “Fascists and third-world communists”.

³¹ Diane Taylor, *Disappearing acts: spectacles of gender and nationalism in Argentina’s “Dirty War”* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 37.

tiatives were usually failures and they were thus in search of more promising political allies, whom they often believed to find in the orbit of Peronism. This made them vulnerable to political developments (often actually ephemeral conjunctures) upon which they had little influence. This impression of revisionists at first seemed paradoxical in the light of the wide dissemination of their ideas in the 1960s and 1970s. Yet this seeming paradox is the main argument of this thesis: the revisionist account of Argentina's past spread so widely precisely *because* its producers failed to retain a hegemonic grip on their own discourse.

Intellectuals and politics

For the same reason, I am sceptical that the main explanatory factors for the spread of nationalist discourse —here revisionism— can be found through a textual analysis of nationalist writings alone. Elaborate linguistic approaches to intellectual history like Dominick LaCapra's might be able to interpret the meaning of texts without analysing the context,³² but this should not lead us to infer that the social acceptance of an invented tradition stems exclusively from the creative potential of its producers. With regard to the topic of this thesis, an excessive focus on revisionist writings entails the danger of examining revisionism as a current of historiography, which the historian who analyses these writings is tempted to judge according to her or his own understanding of Argentine history. But in order to understand the success of revisionism the extent to which an account of, say, the unfolding of the battle of Caseros was true to events or not is largely irrelevant. The problem of historical truth, as raised by post-modernist theorists in recent years, has little illuminative potential here. Keith Jenkins' question of whether historiography is "value-free or always 'positioned for someone' [...], innocent or ideological, unbiased or biased, fact or fancy"³³ would allow for only two answers with respect to this case: either, one can simply reaffirm the revisionists' claim to have found historical truth. Or else, the historiography in question can be taken to confirm the suspicion that historical writing is essentially fictitious. Revisionism would be an inexpensive victim for this, because its political agenda was so blatant. Instead, I would much prefer to circumvent such dichotomous questions by insisting that, to be believable, revisionist interpretations had to fulfil a required minimum of plausibility. For example, it needed to be generally accepted that Britain

³² Dominick LaCapra, *Rethinking intellectual history: texts, contexts, language* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

³³ Keith Jenkins, *Re-thinking history* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 67.

had indeed had far-reaching commercial interests in Argentina, that “liberals” such as Mitre or Sarmiento had encouraged or led cruel wars against the *montonera* insurgencies of the interior, and that Argentina’s export-led integration into the world market had indeed had its pitfalls in the form of a disadvantageous dependency on international price fluctuations. But none of this helps our understanding of revisionism a great deal. As Oscar Terán has remarked,

the power of revisionism in these years [1955-66] does not reside in any novel contributions, given that it has reached an extreme degree of codification of its own discourse that only allows for a quantitative expansion [...] of the supposed evidence that it had upheld for decades.³⁴

As I will try to show with the example of historical revisionism, the efficacy of nationalist ideas cannot easily be found by only scanning nationalist writings.

Two theorists, Raymond Williams and Pierre Bourdieu, have helped me conceptually to unravel my reservations about an approach to nationalism that focuses on texts alone. Both allow us to discard the notion of individually endowed creativity as the source of literary production, instead insisting on the concrete social and material circumstances that set the parameters for this production. Bourdieu’s critique of an approach that casts content as the predominant determinant of discursive dynamics is particularly appropriate for a study that, rather than paraphrasing nationalist mythologies, seeks to explain their effectiveness. For this purpose, nationalist ideas can be conceptualised as symbolic goods, the production and circulation of which is subject to a certain logic. According to Bourdieu, the rules that guide this production become comprehensible when contextualised within interconnected fields, which can be understood as a “structured space of positions, within which the same positions or their interactions are determined by the distribution of different types of resources or ‘capital’”.³⁵ Depending on the type of capital that different actors seek, one can distinguish between different fields, within which the agents are defined by “*properties of position* [that are] irreducible to intrinsic properties”.³⁶

Of special importance here are the intellectual and the political fields, both structured by particular types of capital.³⁷ In this model, the intellectual field is distinct from politics and defined as

³⁴ Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*, p. 57.

³⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, *Questions de sociologie* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980), p. 113.

³⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, “Champ intellectuel et projet créateur”, *Les Temps Modernes*, no. 246 (1966), pp. 865-906, p. 865.

³⁷ *Ibid.* on the intellectual field and Pierre Bourdieu, *Langage et pouvoir symbolique* (Paris: Fayard, 2003), pp. 213-258 on the political field.

a properly intellectual order, dominated through a particular kind of legitimacy, [which] was defined by its opposition to economic power, political power and religious power, that is to all instances that could try to legislate in the domain of culture in the name of power or of an authority that was not properly intellectual.³⁸

The question is not whether this theoretical blueprint can be applied without qualification to this case study. Since the degree of autonomy of a given field from another is the result of a historical process, the model should be seen as an analytical ideal-type rather than as an observable norm. Bourdieu himself has warned that “however great the autonomy of the intellectual field is, it is determined, in structure and function, by the place it occupies within the field of power.”³⁹ For this very reason, however, the analytical category of the intellectual field is useful for an exploration of the interrelationship between intellectuals (and their ideas) and political power. Such an approach is perhaps especially apposite for Latin American countries, where both intellectuals and the state have usually been interpreted as extraordinarily influential in shaping collective identities.⁴⁰

The question of why and in what ways revisionism was disseminated between 1955 and 1976 will thus be embedded in an analysis of the interplay between intellectuals and politics in that period. The classification of nationalist thinkers as intellectuals must be considered first, because it is less immediately obvious than their connection to politics. Given the difficulty to resolve the question of what constitutes an intellectual, many studies of intellectuals demarcate their subject by stating that there are as many definitions of the term as there are intellectuals and that, as long as their agents see themselves as such, there is no need to engage in theoretical discussions. This is impossible here, because my protagonists—whether we call them revisionists or more generically nationalist thinkers—denied being intellectuals. They also have partially fallen off the map of studies about Argentine intellectuals in the 1960s, such as the one by Silvia Sigal, who distinguishes between “progressive intellectuals”, who are the focus of her book, and “nationalist ideologues”, whose writings and careers she does not analyse.⁴¹ The term intellectual was anathema to Argentine

³⁸ Bourdieu, “Champ intellectuel”, p. 866.

³⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, “Champ de pouvoir, champ intellectuel et habitus de classe”, *Scolies*, no. 1 (1971), pp. 7-26, p. 14.

⁴⁰ For a general overview of this problem, see Nicola Miller, *In the shadow of the state: intellectuals and the quest for national identity in twentieth-century Spanish America* (London and New York: Verso, 1999).

⁴¹ Silvia Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder en Argentina: la década del sesenta* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2002), p. 63.

nationalists for varying reasons, ranging from the extreme rightists, for whom it rang bells of liberalism, democracy, Marxism and, to more than one, Judaism, whilst the more left-leaning argued that, under the semi-colonial conditions in Argentina, intellectuals were an instrumental part of the oppressive apparatus of imperialism. But we should not be misled by this denial. Following Norberto Bobbio, a preoccupation with refusing the label can be revealing in itself, since s/he “who speaks of intellectuals, in doing so develops a task that habitually corresponds to intellectuals” and the person “turns into an intellectual, even though s/he starts writing about intellectuals to say all possible ills about them”.⁴² Repeated and passionate refusal of the category does not necessarily prove that the author is no intellectual; instead, one might be dealing with an extreme case of the model of the militant intellectual.

Unless we accept the categories used in their self-portrayals, I cannot think of any convincing reason *not* to see revisionists as intellectuals, however the term is conceived. If, in a Gramscian vein, intellectuals are understood through their relationship with political power and their function in society, the case is fairly clear-cut and the very notion of the “ideologue” becomes only a variant of the intellectual. If one commits what Gramsci called the “widespread error [...] of [looking] for this criterion of distinction in the intrinsic nature of intellectual activity”, revisionists still appear as intellectuals, because they wrote essays, books and articles.⁴³ A definition based on Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge or a Weberian model that characterises intellectuals through their privileged access to knowledge and their critical distance from political projects are admittedly more difficult here.⁴⁴ But still, by construing accounts of what constituted national authenticity, Argentina’s nationalist thinkers bore, formulated and communicated ideas about social reality. Moreover, they also sought to authorise their accounts by proving that they possessed cultural capital (knowledge, educational competences or familiarity with literary texts) and the kind of symbolic capital that, according to Bourdieu, is peculiar to the intellectual field (for example honours endowed by prestigious cultural institutions).⁴⁵ In short, a case study about

⁴² Norberto Bobbio, *Il dubbio e la scelta: intellettuali e potere nella società contemporanea* (Rome: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1993), p. 10 and p. 113.

⁴³ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 8.

⁴⁴ Karl Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*, 7th ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1985) and Max Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf / Politik als Beruf* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1992).

⁴⁵ On cultural capital, see Pierre Bourdieu, “Les trois états du capital culturel”, *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, no. 30 (1979), pp. 3-6. On symbolic capital, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a theory of practice*, translated by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 171-183.

revisionists inevitably raises questions about intellectual debates. Most studies on Argentine intellectuals in the 1960s, including Sigal's, have effectively ended up treating at least the most prominent populist essayists—who were also revisionists—as intellectuals.⁴⁶

There are now several such studies, but Sigal's and Terán's, both originally published in 1991, still stand out.⁴⁷ Both trace the development of ideas against the background of cultural modernisation and the political predicaments of the period from 1955 to 1966. Both are concerned with analysing the political radicalisation of intellectuals and thereby the origins of the self-declared “Peronisation” of the young middle class after the coup of 1966. For this, Sigal and Terán draw attention to the political homelessness of intellectuals in that period, which among large sectors of the Left, then hegemonic in intellectual debates, finally resulted in their decision to declare themselves supporters of the prohibited Peronist movement. However, the ways in which the two studies reconstruct their topic differ. Whereas Terán treats what he calls the “formation of the Argentine intellectual New Left” in the vein of a history of ideas, drawing out ideological hegemonies and cross-fertilisations, Sigal is more interested in a sociological reconstruction of networks, institutions and the structural relation of intellectuals with political power. Although Terán's book allows us to situate certain notions in a broader context of currents of thought in the 1960s, Sigal's approach is thus closer to what I am proposing. Yet again, my object of study constitutes only a part of these broader intellectual debates, and a rather peculiar one, whose dynamic is closely interwoven with Sigal's and Terán's concerns, but responds to non-intellectual stimuli even more strongly than their topics do. The focus has to shift according to the sample of people we look at. For example, the centrality that Sigal concedes to developments in universities makes less sense for this study, given that revisionism largely developed outside academia. Similarly, the ending of Sigal's and Terán's studies, the coup of 1966, when the new military rulers put an end to university autonomy, might have constituted a clear-cut break for “progressive intellectuals”, who were now forced

⁴⁶ Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, esp. pp. 172-187 and Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*, where references are scattered throughout the study.

⁴⁷ Sigal, *Intelectuales y política* and Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*. Other examples are: Héctor Ricardo Leis, *Intelectuales y política, 1966-1973* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1991); Federico Neiburg, *Os intelectuais e a invenção do peronismo: estudos de antropologia social e cultural* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1997); Horacio González, *Restos pampeanos: ciencia, ensayo y política en la cultura argentina en el siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Colihue, 1999); and Claudio Suasnábar, *Universidad y intelectuales: educación y política en la Argentina (1955-1976)* (Buenos Aires: FLACSO/Manantial, 2004), which focuses on debates about education policies.

into exile or into substituting private institutions, but it was less of an inflexion for those sectors that were not part of the university in the first place.

Intellectual debates in the 1960s, as both Terán and Sigal have stressed, acquired their meaning in relation to politics. That this also goes for nationalist thinkers barely demands detailed clarification, since, in the context of a modern nation-state, their normative statements referred to the properties of the political community. This opens a new line of inquiry that analyses the relationship of the producers of nationalist ideas with the state, as Nicola Miller has done for several Spanish American countries.⁴⁸ Here, the two most important characteristics of the political situation in Argentina between 1955 and 1973 were the proscription of Peronism and the crisis of legitimacy linked to this. Although the decade before the coup of 1966, in which the composition of power brokers can be described as a stalemate, differed from the ensuing authoritarian military regime that sought to resolve this stalemate unilaterally, these two basic facts remained. Since Peronism, despite being banned from electoral participation, retained political clout (before 1966 mostly through the union movement and from 1969 also through political violence), other political actors were obliged to adopt a stance in relation to the exiled leader. Similarly, intellectual debates in the entire period from 1955 to 1973 revolved around the question of how to interpret and position oneself in relation to Peronism; a problem that arguably extended into the three years of Peronist government from 1973 to 1976, which dramatically displayed the disintegration of national-populist politics.⁴⁹

These debates did not develop independently from the political situation. Especially in the case of populist revisionists, their contribution to interpretations of Peronism should not be seen as only an intellectual debate or an “invention of Peronism” that was disconnected from the reality of the movement, as Federico Neiburg’s study suggests,⁵⁰ because many of them became so involved in Peronist militancy themselves. The expression “the fact of Peronism”, coined by the Catholic *nacionalista* Mario Amadeo,⁵¹ captures very well the two faces of the problem that

⁴⁸ Miller, *In the shadow*.

⁴⁹ I am, of course, not the first to note the importance of understandings of Peronism in the development of intellectual debates in the 1960s. Carlos Altamirano, *Peronismo y cultura de izquierda* (Buenos Aires: Temas Grupo Editorial, 2001), for example, has stressed the importance of Peronism for left-wing intellectuals, whose traditional political organisations now found themselves deprived of their ideal-typical clientele.

⁵⁰ Neiburg, *Os intelectuais*.

⁵¹ Mario Amadeo, *Ayer, hoy, mañana* (Buenos Aires: Gure, 1956), p. 91. The expression is taken up by Altamirano, *Peronismo y cultura de izquierda*, p. 49.

post-1955 interpretations of Peronism had to tackle: Peronism was now a phenomenon of the past that required analysis, but, at the same time, it was also a contemporary presence because of the continuing adherence to the deposed leader of large parts of the population. Neiburg's approach becomes problematic, where the intellectuals in question began to declare themselves as Peronists. Whilst the Peronisation of middle-class intellectuals and students occurred on a large scale only after 1966, this problem affected the most prominent revisionist essayists from at least 1955 onwards, as they became embroiled in the intricacies of Peronist politics. This engendered a discursive dynamic, as described by Silvia Sigal and Eliseo Verón,⁵² in which various trends that were notoriously inchoate competed for credibility as the most authentic Peronists. Revisionist constructions of historical lineages became instrumental in this competition. As I will argue, many of the reasons for the spread of revisionism have to be sought in these internal dynamics of the Peronist movement.

Although, therefore, I will by default contribute to interpretations of Peronism, this is not the main aim of this study. In part, I refrain from trying to deliver a new interpretation of Peronism because so many compelling arguments have been made about it already. Today, the scholarship about Peronism in the period from 1955 to 1976 alone is extensive and diverse, in particular regarding, firstly, the Peronist trade unions and its relation with the working class and, secondly, examinations of the Peronist youth groups and the emergent guerrillas.⁵³ However, the richness of this literature is neither a good nor the only reason for my reluctance to contribute to this field. The better justification is my scepticism regarding the extent to which the ideas of intellectuals modified Perón's or his movement's political practices. As I will try to show, Peronism drew on revisionist motifs after 1955 and revisionism and both Peronist doctrine and imagery resembled each other in several respects, but historically this affinity was elective. The Peronist appropriation of revisionism occurred as a function of conjunctural political necessities rather than due to a permanent and necessary ideological convergence. This view fits well into what has become an almost

⁵² Sigal and Verón, *Perón o muerte*.

⁵³ If one has to restrict the bibliography to a few illustrative examples, they might include, for the first: Daniel James, *Resistance and integration: Peronism and the Argentine working class, 1946-1976* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and Juan Carlos Torre, *El gigante invertebrado: los sindicatos en el gobierno, Argentina 1973-1976* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2004); and for the second: Richard Gillespie, *Soldiers of Perón: Argentina's Montoneros* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) and Lucas Lanusse, *Montoneros: el mito de sus 12 fundadores* (Buenos Aires: Vergara, 2005). Somewhere in between the two trends is Samuel Amaral and Mariano Ben Plotkin (eds.), *Perón: del exilio al poder*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: EDUNTREF, 2004).

consensual interpretation in recent years, namely that Peronism should be primarily understood as a form or a style of applied politics rather than as the expression of a stable ideological programme upon which the elaborations of intellectuals could have left decisive imprints.⁵⁴

Scope and structure of the thesis

In sum, this thesis draws on the insights of several areas of Argentine historiography that have developed over the last twenty years: works on revisionism itself, the historiography about Argentine nationalism, studies of intellectual debates in the 1960s and, ultimately, parts of the literature about Peronism. My main aim is not to revise the major lines of existing interpretations. Rather, by adopting a different angle on the topic, I aim at a new collage of existing knowledge, relating several areas that hitherto have been studied largely in isolation from each other. The thesis is not mainly a history of historiography, but a study of the conditions for what could be called the “plausibilisation” of a particular “invention of tradition”. In order to render these conditions comprehensible, it draws on insights from theories of cultural production and seeks to contextualise historical revisionism in the tension between the intellectual and the political field.

For this purpose, the thesis relies mostly on published primary sources. This concerns firstly the monographs of revisionists. Since there are more than one hundred of them, I have concentrated on the most prominent authors and books, but I will also draw on less known examples, wherever these help the clarification of particular points. Secondly, the thesis is based on a broad review of periodical publications, available at the Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut in Berlin and several archives in Buenos Aires. In particular the opening and continuous expansion of the well-organised Centro de Documentación e Investigación de la Cultura de Izquierdas en la Argentina (CeDInCI) in Buenos Aires has facilitated access to relevant publications that were not easily available before. These were complemented by the rarely consulted Colección Becerra at the National Library in Buenos Aires, which contain a broad variety of political weeklies, although the series are hardly ever complete. The kind of periodicals consulted include academic and especially historical journals, both by revisionists and other historians, but in particular a large number of cultural and political reviews,

⁵⁴ See Juan Carlos Torre’s remarks in the compilation of interviews Roy Hora and Javier Trimboli (eds.), *Pensar la Argentina: los historiadores hablan de historia y política* (Buenos Aires: El Cielo por Asalto, 1994), pp. 217-218.

magazines and weekly papers. The main focus is on periodicals that were close to Peronism and/or known for their nationalism, but other political organs, belonging for example to Socialist or Radical tendencies, were used, too. I have tried to include a great breadth of such publications, because only this allows to determine with greater precision a pattern of the areas of public debate where revisionism gained currency. From these periodicals also stems much of the biographical information on the less well-known revisionists. Furthermore, I have consulted mainstream newspapers and magazines such as *La Nación* or *Primera Plana* as well as provincial dailies in order to complement information on specific issues. Lastly, some unpublished sources were included, such as outlines of courses at the University of Buenos Aires, parliamentary debates, police records—which became available through the opening of the Archivo de la Comisión Provincial por la Memoria in La Plata—as well as trade union documents from the archive of the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT) in Buenos Aires.

The structure of the thesis is a blending of a chronological with a thematic order. By and large it is conceived as a tale of how a version of Argentina's history was projected into political disputes. The structure thus follows the logic of *politicisation*, that is from the intellectual towards the political field. The first chapter takes revisionism first of all as what it is in the strictest sense: a historiographical current. Here, I will outline the development of Argentine historiography since Mitre and delineate the origins of historical revisionism as well as some of its major historiographical characteristics. This allows the reader to locate revisionism within the historical process of the differentiation of the intellectual field, broaching some themes that are more fully elaborated later on. Chapter two delineates the major concerns of intellectual debates in the period that was opened by the military coup of 1955, connecting these debates to the social background of internal migration and to the cultural modernisation that was characteristic of the period. These debates will be analysed from the perspective of how they related to, firstly, constructions of national identity and, secondly, the predominant political question of the time, namely how intellectuals positioned themselves with regard to Peronism. These two chapters together are meant to draw out the conditions and the ideological linkages that form the background to the flourishing of historical revisionism.

Chapter three links the intellectual debates of the period to the modifications of the revisionist version of the past that also began around 1955. It will explore some of

the differences and similarities of the discourse of a neo-revisionist generation of populist and left-leaning essayists who widely sold their books in the 1960s with the original *rosista* nucleus described in the first chapter. I will argue that a lack of ideological specificity allowed revisionism a high degree of flexibility so that it could be adopted for various purposes and that its unity consisted largely in identifying a common enemy in what was seen as the intellectual establishment. In the following chapter, I will then look at the formation of networks between the intellectual and political fields. This implies identifying the kind of vehicles that underpinned the dissemination of historical revisionism: periodicals, publishers and the militant activities of nationalist intellectuals through which their ideas became applicable for political disputes. This will set the stage for the last section of this thesis, which focuses on revisionism in the political sphere, in particular in relation to the state.

Chapter five analyses the Peronist appropriation of historical revisionism in the immediate aftermath of the coup of 1955. I will argue that this appropriation was not a necessary outcome of an ideological affinity between revisionism and Peronism, but owed much to the political circumstances of the moment. The leaders of the so-called Liberating Revolution, who had ousted Perón, sought to legitimise themselves with a dogmatic version of “official history”. In their intention to discredit the overthrown Peronist government, they compared him to Rosas. In turn, the semi-legal Peronist press accepted the validity of this historical comparison, inverted the originally derogatory value judgment attached to it and finally arrived at praising Rosas as a forerunner of Perón’s deeds. The sixth and last chapter examines the trajectories of nationalist intellectuals in public office and the kind of historical genealogies employed by the governments of Arturo Frondizi (1958-62), the military regime of 1966 to 1973 and the subsequent Peronist administration that ended with the coup of 1976. Here, I will argue that revisionism was not adopted as a new “official history” until 1973 and that when it was (under Peronism) it began to decline. Taken together, the last two chapters thus try to show how the appropriation of nationalist narratives for political reasons not only was the reason for the flourishing of revisionism in the collective imaginary, but also contained already the origin of its decline. Finally, I will try to offer a more general framework that points out some of the conditions that contributed to the politicisation of history and then go on to draw broader conclusions about the connection between nationalist ideas and politics in Argentina.

Chapter one

Argentina's two pantheons: From mitrismo to revisionism

Introduction

It seems paradoxical that historical revisionism, a current that claimed to pinpoint an unequivocal essence of national identity from the study of history, imparted the idea that the country was in fact divided into two perfectly opposed poles. This is all the more surprising in an immigrant society like Argentina. In contrast to, say, Peru where there was at least some plausibility in positing a division between an indigenous highland and a mestizo and white coast, in Argentina the social bases of these two poles were difficult to identify. Yet the notion of two Argentinas was perhaps the most momentous imprint that historical revisionism left behind. Although there were few common ideological denominators among revisionists, they all maintained that Argentina could be neatly divided into manifestations of the true Argentine spirit, on the one hand, and a malicious ensemble of anti-national forces, on the other. In contrast to other forms of bi-culturalism, this division was not ethnically defined, but according to a more general cultural and political framework. In the revisionist view, Argentina's spiritual essence could historically be found in the nineteenth-century *caudillos*, whilst the epitome of the anti-national sectors was a liberal urban elite that was more interested in its links to Europe than in the "real" nation. That the issue of mass immigration ceased to instil heated debates from around 1930 onwards, therefore presented no problems for the continuation of the notion of two Argentinas, which underpinned political culture for several decades.

Argentina also had two different historical pantheons, which claimed to represent different traditions. As Silvia Sigal has remarked,

if Mexicans or Peruvians could draw upon autochthonous cultural referents, the invention of a mythic past in a frontier society had to start from scratch, or almost so. And, lacking an original past, the Argentine historians created two.¹

These are normally identified as “liberal”, “official” or *mitrista* history and the revisionist or nationalist version. Put schematically, they maintained the following: according to the liberal standpoint, Argentine history had begun properly with the May Revolution of 1810, when an enlightened elite realised that independence from Europe’s supposedly most backward country was the only way to progress. Bernardino Rivadavia’s liberalism and secularism embodied this spirit well, but his modernising designs were interrupted by the barbaric forces of the *caudillos* who embodied the darkest sides of bloodthirsty regression. Fortunately, however, the powers of civilisation managed to overthrow the “tyranny” of Rosas and set Argentina on the path of progress again by introducing European-inspired liberal institutions. For revisionists, in contrast, this liberal history served only to prolong Argentina’s subordination to foreign ideas and cultures. In their accounts, Spain’s hierarchic Catholicism was preferable to Britain’s corrupting materialism and liberalism, which had simply replaced the former colonial power. The *caudillos* were the true incorporation of everything Argentine and they had therefore heroically fought against foreign intrusions. Lamentably, Mitre and the liberals had prevailed so that in the present it was essential to fight for the re-establishment of the authentically national forces.

Still today, the image of two Argentinas is upheld in some examples of the scholarly literature on Argentina. Nicolas Shumway, for example, has argued that the political divisions of twentieth-century Argentina could be explained by and essentially were a prolongation of the two competing traditions that had emerged already in the immediate aftermath of independence.² Although Shumway phrases his account in constructivist terminology, he thus casts twentieth-century nationalism as a continuation rather than an invention of tradition. In contrast to such a view, this chapter seeks to anchor the construction of Argentina’s two pantheons in the context of its historical conditions. The types of conditions that receive particular attention are, firstly, the institutional and professional bases upon which Argentine historians constructed their accounts of the past and how politics and history related to each other in the process of

¹ Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 13.

² Shumway, *The invention*.

their emergence. I will argue that this relation followed no regular pattern and that, although the link between politics and history underwent significant modifications, it was never altogether broken. Secondly, and closely related to the first point, the kind of authority from which writers of history derived their authority to participate in historiographical debates will be analysed. Crucial for an understanding of the social role of the historian is Bourdieu's category of the "intellectual field", as outlined in the introduction. Particular emphasis will thus be given to the transition from the nineteenth-century figure of the *pensador*, who as a member of a small elite combined intellectual and political activities to the more restricted notion of the intellectual as a category that was distinct from the politician and the corresponding, albeit belated and incomplete, rise of the professional historian.

In order to delineate continuities and ruptures as well as to situate developments in their specific historical circumstances the topic will be approached chronologically, contextualising revisionism within the broader field of historical debates in Argentina from a long-term perspective. This will allow us to arrive at a clearer understanding of the specificities of revisionism and to define some traits that characterised it over time and beyond its ideological heterogeneities. In other words, I will set out a map of revisionism and introduce some of its principal writers, which will be a necessary basis for the understanding of subsequent chapters. To some extent, this also means that this chapter draws on a large body of secondary literature without contributing many novel points about details. The overall conclusion nevertheless differs significantly from the views that Argentina's two pantheons were the derivatives of nineteenth-century phenomena and that they were opposed to each other in every respect.

1. Mitrismo, Argentina's "official history" and incipient institutionalisation

No other figure is so closely associated with the emergence of historiography in Argentina as the statesman-writer Bartolomé Mitre (1821-1906). In order to understand his historical writing it is necessary to briefly recall the political background against which it developed.³ The battle of Caseros, in which Juan Manuel de Rosas had been defeated in 1852, marked the beginning of the decline of *caudillismo* as the

³ Here and in the following paragraphs, it will be impossible to review the entire literature on Mitre, Sarmiento and the generation of 1837, which, after all, is in itself part of the subject of this study. It should be added, however, that my account has been especially informed by Halperín Donghi, *Una nación*.

dominant form of politics and the onset of a period usually referred to as “national organisation”. Ideologically, this process was led by Rosas’ opponents of the Generation of 1837, such as Mitre and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento (1811-88), who had spent much of the period from 1838 to 1852 in exile in neighbouring countries, from where they had campaigned against Rosas’ “tyranny”. During Mitre’s presidency (1862-68), attempts were made to modernise the country through the introduction of liberal institutions, the encouragement of immigration from Europe and the attraction of foreign —particularly British— capital. Mitre also endeavoured to eradicate the remains of *caudillismo* in the impoverished provinces of the interior, launching two bloody campaigns in the northwest (first, against the rebellion of Ángel Vicente “El Chacho” Peñaloza in La Rioja and, second, against the *montonera* of Felipe Varela) as well as embarking on an unpopular war against neighbouring Paraguay, which had disastrous effects on that country. Although many of these processes intensified and matured only after 1880, the period of national organisation thus laid the foundations for Argentina’s export-led integration into the world market under the ideological premises of liberalism and *porteño* centralism, of which Mitre was an outstanding proponent.

In his *Galería de celebridades argentinas* —published in 1857 together with other authors— Mitre sketched the biographies of the statesmen and soldiers who had been involved in the fight for independence from Spain (especially José de San Martín, Mariano Moreno and Manuel Belgrano) and those whom he saw as the enlightened leaders (such as Rivadavia) who subsequently sought to set Argentina on the path of catching up with the European beacons of progress.⁴ The general thrust of his interpretation was not too dissimilar from Sarmiento’s, whose book *Facundo*, published first in 1845, depicted the struggle between the “barbarism” of the *caudillos* and the progressive forces of “civilisation”.⁵ In both cases, the interpretation of Argentina’s dilemma was less dichotomous and simplistic than later summaries of their work suggested. Especially Sarmiento’s account revealed a degree of admiration for the archaic vigour of its main character Facundo, so that the reader could be forgiven for concluding that the *caudillo*, despite his abominable rawness, at least embodied something authentically Argentine that needed to be understood and accom-

⁴ Bartolomé Mitre, *Galería de celebridades argentinas: biografías de los personajes más notables del Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Ledoux y Vignal, 1857).

⁵ Sarmiento, *Facundo*. See generally on Sarmiento Tulio Halperin Donghi (ed.), *Sarmiento: author of a nation* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1994).

modated in one way or another. Mitre also left some room for such ambiguities, as he conceded the positive influences of some *caudillos*, such as Martín Miguel de Güemes or Manuel Dorrego. Nevertheless, their overall attitude towards *caudillismo* was disparaging. Mitre defined the majority of them as

the representatives of the domineering tendencies of barbarism [...]. The lives of [Artigas, López, Quiroga, Ramírez, Aldao, Ibarra] can serve as a lesson for those to come for their crimes and for their unprecedented cruelties. Here we have another series of historical portraits, terrible and grim portraits that evoke horror, but which serve to enhance the beautiful countenances of those who have become famous for their service, virtue or intellectual works.⁶

Although not explicitly mentioning his name, it went without saying that Rosas was among those symbols of barbarism who did not deserve a place in his *Galería*. Excluding him and most other *caudillos* Mitre sought to lay the foundations for a pantheon of national heroes who could serve as models that later generations should emulate. Written in accessible style, Mitre thus combined an intellectual predilection of his —the writing of history— with his preoccupation to outline the principles that should guide the young nation's future progress. He also took care that his version of national history lived on in an institutionalised form by founding the Junta de Historia y Numismática in 1893/95, later reorganised as Academia Nacional de la Historia. This institution was accompanied by other important steps towards disseminating his views, such as the foundation of the newspaper *La Nación* in 1870. In the late nineteenth century, Mitre's view of history, often called *mitrismo*, achieved almost canonical status in schoolbooks and came to exert great influence on how later generations of Argentines pictured their country's past.

In the absence of both professional historians and professional politicians, Mitre and Sarmiento were typical examples of nineteenth-century *pensadores*, men of letters whose public career combined the generation of political and social knowledge with policy-making. The notion of history as a pedagogical prop for the advance of a national identity was easily consensual among this elite. It is illustrative in this respect that this premise was not at stake in the most celebrated historiographical debate of the time, that between Mitre and Vicente Fidel López. Whilst López advocated the use of oral sources and a more imaginative style to endear a broader public to historical writing, Mitre insisted on meticulousness as the historian's principal virtue and on the necessity to rely on written and consequently verifiable documents. Yet both converged not only in their liberal abhorrence of *caudillismo*, but also in their cultivation

⁶ Mitre, *Galería*, p. iii.

of historiography as an important ingredient of patriotic education from the viewpoint of a rather narrow elite.⁷ Mitre thus did not see his advocacy of scientific methods for the reconstruction of historical truth as potentially conflicting with the political purpose of history, but rather as complementary with or even conducive to such a mission.

Fairly soon, however, Mitre's view on the past as predominantly a guideline for the future would come under pressure under the imprints of positivism and the transformation of learned culture. As Ángel Rama has noted for Latin America as a whole, the kind of marriage between culture and politics within a restricted urban elite that was embodied in the figure of the *pensador* became strained under the modernising marks of increasing literacy and social mobility from around 1870 onwards.⁸ This also brought about changes in the social position of the writer of history, who no longer necessarily combined intellectual prestige with a dominant role in politics and society.⁹ As the new historians no longer needed to be directly concerned with the legitimation of their own presidencies, their inspections of the past took fresh directions. Between 1881 and 1887, Adolfo Saldías (1850-1914), a liberal lawyer and disciple of Mitre's, published a three-volume study on Rosas in which he tried to evaluate the past divisions between Federalists and Unitarians from a dispassionate point of view. In the book, Saldías stressed Rosas' popularity and pondered about the possibility of repatriating the *caudillo*'s remains from Southampton.¹⁰ Eleven years later, Ernesto Quesada (1858-1934), a lawyer and sociologist, published a work called *La época de Rosas*. His marriage to the granddaughter of the *rosista* general Ángel Pacheco had allowed Quesada privileged access to the archives, from which the main protagonist of his book emerged in an openly positive light.¹¹ Although Quesada was closely linked to

⁷ Bartolomé Mitre, *Comprobaciones históricas*, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: Juan Roldán, 1916). On López's skills as a historian see Tulio Halperín Donghi, *Ensayos de historiografía* (Buenos Aires: El Cielo por Asalto, 1996), pp. 35-44. For a concise summary of the polemic in English see Joseph R. Barager, "The historiography of the Río de la Plata area since 1830", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 39, no. 4 (1959), pp. 588-642, pp. 596-597. My argument here is, of course, far from novel. It has been made already by Alberto Pla, *Ideología y método en la historiografía argentina* (Buenos Aires: Nueva Visión, 1972), p. 29.

⁸ Ángel Rama, *The lettered city*, translated by John Charles Chasteen (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 50-73.

⁹ For a characterisation of this "old" type of historian, see E. Bradford Burns, "Ideology in nineteenth-century Latin American historiography", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 58, no. 3 (1978), pp. 409-431.

¹⁰ Adolfo Saldías, *Historia de la confederación argentina: Rosas y su época*, 2nd ed., 5 vols. (Buenos Aires, 1892). The first edition of three volumes had been published in Paris, but to my knowledge is unavailable in Britain.

¹¹ Ernesto Quesada, *La época de Rosas* (Buenos Aires: Arnoldo Moen, 1898).

the conservative establishment during the second presidency of Julio A. Roca (1898-1904), in contrast to Mitre, he was not an influential policy-maker.¹² In the case of Saldías, Mitre himself seemed to acknowledge that there was some kind of division between the historian and the politician that his disciple personified: stressing his own fight against Rosas' "tyranny", he wrote, the book had to be rejected from a political point of view, whilst its strengths as a piece of history had to be praised.¹³ In a sense, therefore, the iron grip that, according to later detractors, Mitre had exerted on historiographical orthodoxy did not last for long, as the reconsideration of past episodes from an angle that did not *a priori* exclude Rosas' contribution to the formation of the Argentine nation-state loomed already among his own liberal followers.

Although there was thus some room for debate in the historiographical interpretation of Rosas, the link between history and the project to forge a national identity remained. In the long run, Saldías' preference for "impartiality" over political applicability did little to modify the entrenched belief that history should be a sub-discipline of nation-building. The link between the rise of positivist empiricism and the institutional consolidation of history as a provider of narratives that bolstered the myths of nation-building had parallels elsewhere in the Americas, including in the United States.¹⁴ However, in contrast to the US, the concrete effects of positivist dogmas on the work of Spanish American historians were limited. South of the Río Grande, the conditions for historiography with their acute lack of well-organised archives meant that, in daily practice, empiricist statements were little more than the payment of lip service to overseas methodological fashions. Whereas US historians came to see themselves as a group of professionals who adhered to certain regular standards and German *Geisteswissenschaften* had well before developed a full-blown ethos of professionalism, this was not the case in Latin America.¹⁵ Well into the middle of the twentieth century, in many countries there were no structures to convoke

¹² See on him Eduardo Zimmermann, "Ernesto Quesada, *La época de Rosas*, y el reformismo institucional del cambio de siglo", in: Devoto (ed.), *La historiografía*, vol. 1, pp. 23-44.

¹³ Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme*, pp. 21-22.

¹⁴ According to Peter Novick, *That noble dream: the "objectivity question" and the American historical profession* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 61-108, US historians used the claim to empirical objectivity not to challenge dominant versions of their nation's past, but to minimise dissent within their profession, whilst they continued to sustain "the story of 'freedom realized and stabilized through the achievement of national solidarity'" (p. 72. The quote within the quote is by John Higham).

¹⁵ Whilst by 1890, social sciences had hardly taken root as an academic discipline in Latin America, the "traditional values" of German university professors in the humanities and social sciences already "were evidently under attack" (Fritz K. Ringer, *The decline of the German mandarins: the German academic community, 1890-1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 82).

a scholarly community of historians. Still today, one struggles to find Latin American equivalents of the kind of associations such as the British Royal Historical Society that have shaped the historical profession elsewhere. As for training, as late as the 1970s a large number of Latin American historians received their original degree in law rather than history; only from that decade onwards have universities begun to urge the completion of doctoral theses in history on a broader scale. Comparative studies of historiography furthermore note the scarcity of historical reviews in twentieth-century Latin America, which in Europe provided a corporate platform for the expression of group demands and peer legitimation.¹⁶

Among the bigger countries of the region, Argentina lagged behind markedly in this respect. The contrast with Chile was striking. West of the Andes, the foundation of the University of Chile in 1842 had led to embryonic attempts to establish history as an academic discipline, which was paralleled by the earlier decline of the figure of the erudite and comprehensive *pensador*. Although in Chile, too, this institutionalisation was dominated by the nation-state's demand for historiography as a legitimising device, the role of historians as suppliers —publicly commemorated in monuments— came to be seen as less dispensable than in Argentina, where the state mounted fewer efforts to create a community of historians.¹⁷ As for historiography in the universities, the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), complementing the traditional disciplines of medicine and law, was founded only in 1896, that is 75 years after the university had first opened. Only from 1906 onwards, did the faculty begin to confer degrees in history and it took another fifteen years before the UBA's institute for historical research (Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas) was founded.¹⁸ At the University of La Plata (UNLP), the Faculty of Humanities and Educational Sciences became an autonomous unit in 1921 and its centre for histo-

¹⁶ Miller, *In the shadow*, pp. 210-212 and Lutz Raphael, *Geschichtswissenschaft im Zeitalter der Extreme: Theorien, Methoden, Tendenzen von 1900 bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 2003), p. 37.

¹⁷ The comparison between Argentina and Chile in this respect is often drawn, e.g. by Jorge Myers, "Pasados en pugna: la difícil renovación del campo histórico argentino entre 1930 y 1955", in: Federico Neiburg and Mariano Plotkin (eds.), *Intelectuales y expertos: la constitución del conocimiento social en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires and Mexico City: Paidós, 2004), pp. 67-106, p. 67. More extensively on the Chilean case, see Allen Woll, *A functional past: the uses of history in nineteenth-century Chile* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana University Press, 1982).

¹⁸ Pablo Buchbinder, *Historia de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1997), esp. pp. 73-79 on the history section in the faculty after 1906 and pp. 139-144 on the institute and his "La Facultad de Filosofía y Letras y la enseñanza universitaria de la historia", in: Julio Stortini, Nora Pagano and Pablo Buchbinder, *Estudios de historiografía argentina*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 1997), pp. 33-52.

rical studies was not inaugurated until 1932.¹⁹ Corresponding developments beyond the realm of universities were slow, too. For example, although the Junta de Historia y Numismática (renamed as Academia Nacional de la Historia in 1938) began to publish a bulletin from 1924 onwards, this publication was neither regular nor did it represent a professional community of Argentine historians.

Furthermore, the process of consolidation was rather intermittent, at least in part due to political interferences in the domain of culture. The period from 1930 to 1945, which has been described as a “Golden Era in Argentine historiography”,²⁰ saw significant advances, but these subsequently faltered, only to pick up momentum again after 1955. The first attempt at a comprehensive multi-volume history of Argentina, which was begun by the Junta/Academia in 1936, therefore had to remain a standard reference work for students of history for decades to come.²¹ Additionally, the institution was temporarily closed down from 1953 until the overthrow of Perón two years later. Its journal of historical research, called *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, was launched only in 1966. In sum, the professionalisation and institutional consolidation of Argentine historiography came about through an unsteady and patchy process that stretched over the first four decades of the twentieth century and experienced repeated diversions, if not outright interruptions.

2. Professionalisation, the Nueva Escuela and the politics of the Centenary Generation

The changes in the social role of the historian that accompanied these developments were also a by-product of transformations in Argentine society and politics. The key period to consider in order to account for the differentiation between intellectual labour and political activities is the decade that began with the centenary celebrations of the May Revolution. The Sáenz Peña Law of 1912 not only established universal and compulsory suffrage for all male citizens over the age of eighteen, but also triggered the rise of middle-class participation and, ultimately, mass politics. The gradual

¹⁹ On history at the UNLP see generally Adrián G. Zarrilli, Talía V. Gutiérrez and Osvaldo Graciano, *Los estudios históricos en la Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 1905-1990* (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia / Fundación Banco Municipal de La Plata, 1998).

²⁰ Barager, “The historiography”, p. 606.

²¹ Ricardo Levene, *Historia de la nación argentina, desde las orígenes hasta la organización definitiva en 1862*, 10 vols. (Buenos Aires: Junta de Historia y Numismática / Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1936-50).

opening of the political field, which previously had been dominated by a narrow elite, also contributed to the appearance of career politicians, in contrast to the nineteenth-century writer-statesmen-soldiers such as Mitre. Although the decline of the *pensador* had already begun under the post-1880 modernisation, his replacement with professional politicians became definite during the presidency of Hipólito Yrigoyen of the Radical Party (1916-22 and 1928-30). Conversely, the Córdoba University Reform of 1918 sought to assert the freedom of teaching and the right of the tripartite government (consisting of academic staff, students and alumni) to decide appointments to crucial positions instead of such appointments being decreed by the presidency of the nation.²² There followed a number of confrontations, which demonstrated the emergence of an intellectual field in Bourdieu's sense.²³ To be sure, this differentiation never matured in Argentina to the extent that it did in many European countries, as culture and the arts continued to be sponsored by oligarchic capital well into the 1930s and political power overtly interfered in the intellectual field at least until the 1970s. But what matters for the moment is that intellectual authority, political influence and economic capital were no longer necessarily united in the same hands.

Historians began to specialise. This change was associated with the Nueva Escuela Histórica, or New School, which from 1916 onwards asserted its hegemony in Argentine historical research by strengthening its institutional bedrock, notably in the Junta de Historia y Numismática and the historical sections at the UBA and the UNLP (whilst the University of Córdoba, despite the Reform of 1918, remained more marginal).²⁴ The historians of the Nueva Escuela —among the most important were Emilio Ravignani (1886-1954), Ricardo Levene (1885-1959), Diego Luis Molinari (1889-1966) and Rómulo Carbia (1885-1944)— belonged to a generation that was no longer tied to the passionate divisions of the nineteenth century and, as their surnames indicated, several of them were of immigrant origin. They legitimised their historiographical production through the establishment of disciplinary yardsticks rather than through politics and social prestige. Under the influence of the methodological handbooks en vogue in Europe, in particular those by Ernst Bernheim and Charles Seignobos, they strove for an empiricism that relied especially on legal documents and

²² See generally Juan Carlos Portantiero, *Estudiantes y política en América Latina 1918-1938* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1978).

²³ Bourdieu, "Champ intellectuel". See also introduction.

²⁴ For a concise overview of the historiographical developments from 1880 to the Nueva Escuela see Halperin Donghi, *Ensayos*, pp. 45-55 and on the Nueva Escuela the introductory remarks in Devoto (ed.), *La historiografía*, vol. 1, pp. 10-12.

implemented unified standards that set history as a discipline apart from other, especially literary, inquiries into social reality.

Under the pre-eminence of the Nueva Escuela the ties between history and politics were modified once more. It is true that the members of the Nueva Escuela were not *exclusively* historians, since they aspired to and fulfilled political functions, the most prominent of them as Radicals. Ravignani was a national deputy of the UCR for several periods between 1936 and 1950. The more populist-inclined Molinari befriended Yrigoyen, became the president's private secretary, undersecretary of foreign relations and, from 1928, senator for the Federal Capital. In 1946 he became a supporter of Peronism, was appointed as Perón's personal delegate on a diplomatic mission and elected to the national senate.²⁵ In comparison to their forerunners in historiography, however, the men of the Nueva Escuela distinguished themselves chiefly as historians rather than policy-makers. Since they derived their authority to engage in the writing of history from an ethos of professionalism, their writings were not obviously designed to further the authors' own political stances, as had been the case earlier.

Nevertheless, these modifications did not lead to the complete autonomy of historiography from politics. For the continuation of this link, the political activities of the Nueva Escuela were less significant than their understanding of the purpose of history. Levene was an outspoken advocate of the idea that historiography should be part and parcel of the task to produce narratives about national identity that generated a sense of a common ancestral past, which in turn should serve as the basis for the projection of the nation's future. When he was named president of the National Commission of Museums, Monuments and Historical Sites in 1936, he declared that its aim was to "conserve, defend and promote the historical and artistic heritage of the nation, because monuments and museums enrich the tradition of a people and define its personality."²⁶ In the two decades after 1920 and especially during the presidency of Agustín P. Justo (1932-38), of whom he was a personal friend, Levene accumulated positions and launched initiatives, through which he could promote such an official

²⁵ On Ravignani see Pablo Buchbinder, "Emilio Ravignani: la historia, la nación y las provincias", in: Devoto (ed.), *La historiografía*, vol. 1, pp. 79-112. On Molinari see Miguel Unamuno, "Prólogo", in: *Diego Luis Molinari: parlamentario e historiador* (Buenos Aires: Círculo de Legisladores de la Nación Argentina) and the compilation of letters between Diego Luis Molinari and Juan Domingo Perón, *Perón... "antes que llegue el lechero" (Correspondencia)* (Buenos Aires, 1965).

²⁶ *Obras de Ricardo Levene* (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1964), vol. 1, p. 87, quoted in Quattrocchi-Woison, *Un nationalisme*, pp. 152-153. Generally on Levene, see *ibid.*, pp. 169-174.

patriotic enterprise: dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the UNLP, director of its centre for historical studies, founder and director of the Instituto de Historia in UBA's Law Faculty, chairman of the commission for the celebration of Sarmiento in 1938 and initiator for the establishment of numerous provincial archives.

Yet most important was Levene's influence as president of the Junta de Historia y Numismática, restructured as the Academia Nacional de la Historia by presidential decree in 1938. No other institution became so closely associated with "official history" and the dissemination of *mitrismo* as the Academia. This was only in part a result of the fact that Mitre had founded it in 1893. The decade of the 1930s was more important for this perception. Under Levene's second directorship from 1934 to 1953, the institution's ties with political power intensified, whilst it also experienced the height of its influence on Argentina's collective historical imaginary. Various provincial branches of the Academia, usually named Juntas, were founded during the thirties, through which the influence of the central board in Buenos Aires was extended.²⁷ Particularly in these branches, but also in the federal centre, the impression of an impenetrable league of dignitaries —based on status rather than professional merit— was reinforced through the strategy to elect members from a cross-section of the elite in order to assure the support of influential groups and lend additional legitimacy to the Academia's project. The outcome was an extremely conservative body, consisting only of men before 1980. In contrast to the institutes of historical research in Argentine universities, one would frequently find men of the armed forces or the church, who hardly ever devoted themselves to historical research.²⁸ In this environment, empiricism became an additional legitimising element for the forging of a patriotic liturgy rather than the basis for critical historiographical practice that challenged traditional views. In the long run, this combination also justified doubts over the question of whether someone was included in (or excluded from) this officially consecrated club on the basis of professional criteria or rather because of political considerations.

The combination of empiricist fetishism and patriotic fervour characterised the activities and public stance of the Academia for a long time. Even in 1961, in response to criticisms against historical figures on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the

²⁷ San Juan 1932, Mendoza 1934, Santa Fe 1935, Catamarca 1936, Salta 1937, Santiago del Estero 1940 and La Rioja 1940. A second wave of such foundations followed in the late sixties.

²⁸ See the enumeration of the dominant figures of the provincial branches in Armando Raúl Bazán, "La investigación histórica en la Argentina (1940-1973)", *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, no. 16 (1974), pp. 211-227.

May Revolution, the governing board unanimously drafted a declaration which repeated that the main function of the Academia was to

promote historical studies, concerning itself fundamentally with their scientific seriousness and with their patriotic content. In this sense, the Academia must continue to lament the appearance of some works of polemic character [...], which are not founded on meticulous research [...] and for their content might gravely disturb public sentiment, provoking scorn for the representative personalities of the past and scepticism regarding their great deeds.²⁹

Although the declaration left the reader uncertain of whether the stumbling block that caused offence in the Academia was methodological shortcomings or dissenting views, he or she had good reason to suspect that the real problem lay in the purity of a national pantheon rather than in scholarly criteria. The history of the Academia clearly pointed in that direction. After all, its director Levene had proposed to construct a national pantheon—here an actual building—because

for many years the country has longed to see united in a great national Pantheon, in accordance with historical consecration, the mortal remains and the evocative symbols of the great constructors of nationality.³⁰

The project itself petered out in the intricacies of bureaucracy,³¹ but Levene's statement captures the Academia's outlook on history as an element of nation-building quite well.

The opinion of the Academia was habitually sought in the state's initiatives to define national symbols, which gained momentum in the late 1930s and early 1940s, in a process that paralleled the institutionalisation of historiography. For example, in 1941 the Ministry of Justice and Public Instruction created a commission that consisted of Academia-members in order to once and for all define the "authentic" versions of the national flag and anthem.³² Still in the 1960s, the Academia legislated routinely on matters such as changes in street names, procedures in public historical ceremonies and the building of monuments.³³ As a public institution, the Academia's function was to construct and then police the nation's historical imaginary.

²⁹ Reproduced in *La Nación*, 31 May 1961 and *Revista del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas Juan Manuel de Rosas*, no. 23 (1961), p. 449 (hereafter abbreviated as *Revista del Instituto Rosas*). Subsequently, the tone of the declaration was tempered in the *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia*, no. 32 (1961), p. 37.

³⁰ *Boletín de la Junta de Historia y Numismática Americana*, no. 9 (1936), pp. 401-402.

³¹ Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme*, p. 153.

³² Alejandro Cattaruzza, "Descifrando pasados: debates y representaciones de la historia nacional", in: Alejandro Cattaruzza (ed.), *Crisis económica, avance del estado e incertidumbre política (1930-1943)* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2001), p. 432.

³³ The principal source for this are the summaries of the Academia's activities in its *Boletín*, nos. 27 (1956) – 46 (1973).

The question of whether it did so exclusively or predominantly from a liberal and *mitrista* standpoint, is a matter of definitions. Still in the 1960s, there were many signs that distinguished the Academia as a bastion and propagator of Mitre's views on history. First, it incessantly organised ceremonies in homage to Mitre, who after all was its founder.³⁴ Second, as we have seen, the fundamental preoccupation of the institution to establish a pantheon of heroes abided by Mitre's idea of history as a pedagogical device. Third, the figures that populated this pantheon and the fixation on the political biographies of great men of the nineteenth century—in particular in relation to the May Revolution—also followed in the footsteps of the father of Argentine historiography. Even the Academia's research journal, *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, complied with these topical guidelines in the first ten years of its publication from 1966: political biographies and diplomatic and legal history accounted for at least two thirds of all articles. In terms of periodisation, the May Revolution, independence and the period of national organisation were strongly overrepresented, which again suggests a preoccupation with events and figures meant to serve as edifying examples for the readership. Although the period of Rosas' rule—which was still called “dictatorship” in an index published in 1976—was not altogether absent, it did receive much less attention. The same went for the federal *caudillos*. Finally, out of 282 articles, only one was devoted to the philosophy of history.³⁵ Typical titles of articles in *Investigaciones y Ensayos* were “Did Belgrano, Güemes, San Martín and Pueyrredón swear independence?”, “Belgrano's flag and its historical places” or “San Martín's candidature as head of state in 1818”.³⁶ With regard to its perception of the public role of history, the Academia doubtless continued to be a bulwark of *mitrismo*.

However, the fact that this kind of “official history” is also often called “liberal history” should not lead us to infer that it was a club for the promotion of liberalism in the sense the term is usually understood, at least in Europe. Of course, one could already argue over the extent to which Mitre himself was a liberal.³⁷ Yet to characterise the Nueva Escuela and Argentina's “official history” from the 1930s onwards as

³⁴ For the period after 1955, see e.g. *Boletín de la Academia*, no. 27 (1956), p. 20 and p. 36, no. 28 (1957), p. 33, no. 30 (1959), p. 52. This practice continued at the very least into the 1970s (see *ibid.*, no. 46, p. 213).

³⁵ See Néstor E. Poitevin, “Índice general de las colaboraciones de *Investigaciones y Ensayos* (1966-1976)”, *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, vol. 20 (1976), pp. 475-510.

³⁶ Emilio A. Breda, “Belgrano, Güemes, San Martín y Pueyrredón, ¿juraron la independencia?”, *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, no. 5 (1968), pp. 263-288; Ramón de Castro Esteves, “La bandera de Belgrano y sus lugares históricos”, no. 9 (1970), pp. 273-288; and Joaquín Pérez, “La candidatura de San Martín a la jefatura del Estado en 1818”, no. 8 (1970), pp. 209-215.

³⁷ See introduction.

liberal is even more problematic. Not only were the most distinguished historians of this time often associated with Radicalism, but the Academia's doors were also open to anti-liberals and authoritarian *nacionalistas*. For example, in 1921 the Junta/Academia appointed another historian of the Nueva Escuela as a member for life: Enrique Ruiz Guiñazú, who as foreign minister of Ramón S. Castillo's conservative government (1942-43) campaigned for Argentina's neutrality in World War II. In the following year, it appointed Carlos Ibarguren (1877-1956), a writer, lawyer and professor of history at the UBA from an oligarchic family of the province of Salta and ideologically a conservative and elitist *nacionalista*, who complained that populist Yrigoyenism had led to the "flattening of hierarchy".³⁸ After the restorative military coup of 1930 (some leaders of which did not conceal their sympathy with Italian totalitarianism), the provisional president José Félix Uriburu (1930-32), with whom Ibarguren had family ties, named him intervening governor of the province of Córdoba, where he supervised a corporatist experiment. From 1932 to 1936, he was a member of the fascist-inspired Acción Nacionalista Argentina, the nucleus of the Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista (ALN).³⁹ In 1930, after eight years of university lectures on the topic, he published a widely sold biography of Rosas, which hailed the *caudillo* as the "restorer of laws", whose aim had been to "control political and social anarchy, restore order and defend religion", so that "Rosas, in our past, represents the most efficient and powerful embodiment of the realistic and conservative spirit".⁴⁰ The book is generally considered to be the starting point of nationalist historical revisionism,⁴¹ but it had been written by someone who was far from marginalised by "official" history.

This does not mean that by the 1930s the historiographical establishment of the Academia and its director Levene had become reactionary revisionists and *hispanistas*, as the account of Carlos Rama would have it.⁴² It is nevertheless true that the Nueva Escuela and the mainstream of Argentine historical thought from the Centenary onwards did not religiously perpetuate a supposedly monolithic *mitrismo* insofar as

³⁸ Carlos Ibarguren (father), *La historia que he vivido* (Buenos Aires: Peuser, 1955), p. 428. In the run-up to the elections of 1916, Ibarguren drafted the programme of Lisandro de la Torre's Partido Demócrata Progresista. Six years later, he became himself the presidential candidate of the conservative coalition, but lost the elections to the Radical Marcelo T. Alvear (president 1922-28).

³⁹ Cristián Buchrucker, "La visión de la historia contemporánea en cuatro nacionalistas de los años treinta", *Criterio*, nos. 1829-30 (1980), pp. 60-76, p. 60.

⁴⁰ Carlos Ibarguren (father), *Juan Manuel de Rosas: su vida, su tiempo, su drama*, 5th ed. (Buenos Aires: Roldán, 1933), p. 318 and p. 43.

⁴¹ See e.g. Deutsch, *Las Derechas*, p. 223.

⁴² Rama, *Nacionalismo e historiografía*; such characterisations of Levene can be found on p. 35, p. 43 and p. 140.

their ideological orientations and their interpretations of the past were concerned. Molinari even became a self-confessed *rosista* in the 1940s and in 1954 participated in a revisionist campaign for the repatriation of Rosas' remains.⁴³ Ravignani, in turn, although he later disagreed with the belligerent style of revisionism, advocated a rehabilitation of the federalist tradition and had a very positive view of José Gervasio Artigas.⁴⁴ Rómulo Carbia's history of historiography was also far from adhering to a schematic *mitrismo*.⁴⁵ Throughout the 1920s, there was a myriad of attempts by historical writers to reassess the legacy of Rosas and of the federal *caudillos*, sometimes already accompanied by the complaint that previous historiography had suffered from "falsifications".⁴⁶ Beneath these changes, there were a number of underlying continuities —especially in methodology and theory—, but by 1930 historians no longer unanimously condemned federalism, *caudillismo* or Rosas. Similarly to Saldías decades earlier, the new interpretations did not necessarily imply an outright condemnation of everything liberal, but in their evaluation of historical episodes and figures they constituted noteworthy attempts to rehabilitate the legacy of the *caudillos*.

These were only the historiographical repercussions of a much more general reformulation of national identity that had been brought about by a generation of intellectuals who matured around the Centenary —to whom the Nueva Escuela belonged not only biographically, but also ideologically. The Centenary generation is usually associated with the novelist and biographer Manuel Gálvez (1882-1962) and the literary historian Ricardo Rojas (1882-1957), sometimes also with the poet Leopoldo Lugones (1874-1938). It is very difficult to distil a coherent ideological reasoning from the writing of these authors, not least because of their political mobility, which, to put it schematically, followed a movement from Left to Right: Gálvez initially considered himself a socialist, but ended up as a Catholic and *hispanista* supporter of populism, whilst Lugones' career brought him from anarchism to a declaration of belief in fascism. Rojas, whose political stance was the most difficult to pin down, was

⁴³ This was called Organización Popular por la Repatriación de los restos del General Rosas, presided by José María Rosa (see *Boletín del Instituto Juan Manuel de Rosas de Investigaciones Históricas*, no. 19-20, May-July 1954, p. 3 (hereafter *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*)). See also chapter six on his later activities.

⁴⁴ See Buchbinder, "Emilio Ravignani".

⁴⁵ Rómulo Carbia, *Historia crítica de la historiografía argentina (desde sus orígenes en el siglo XVI)* (La Plata: Universidad de La Plata, 1939).

⁴⁶ José Carlos Chiaramonte, "En torno a los orígenes del revisionismo histórico", in: Frega and Islas (eds.), *Nuevas miradas*, pp. 29-61.

to some extent influenced by Marxism in an early phase and, in comparison to Gálvez and Lugones, was more sympathetic to liberal democracy. Yet they also had traits in common. Socially, all came from declining provincial families, which had been affected by the break-up of a narrow elite, and at a relatively young age moved to the capital where they initiated an intellectual career. Their literary production should therefore be seen once more against the background of the growing complexity of Argentine society and the development of an intellectual field, in which the writer became a distinct social category. As is evident from the writings of Gálvez, who was among the first to be able to make a living from them, the hitherto dominant gentleman-writer was replaced by the professional author, who derived authority from the “constitution of *ideologies of the artist*”.⁴⁷ In close relation to this emerged what José Luis Romero has called the “spirit of the Centenary”, which set out in search of authenticity amid the immigrant society of Buenos Aires at the beginning of the century.⁴⁸ The overall contribution of this “spirit”, under the influence of *arielismo*, to understandings of *argentinidad* (a term attributed to Rojas), is perhaps best conceptualised as a transition from liberal cosmopolitanism to “cultural nationalism”.⁴⁹ In this vein, a socially more complex elite revalorised two elements of Argentine national identity: the Spanish legacy and the figure of the *gaucho*, in particular José Hernández’ figure *Martín Fierro*, who was promoted through Lugones’ *El payador* and Rojas’ history of Argentine literature, but in the process arguably lost his character as a heretic symbol against dominant culture.⁵⁰

The impact of the Centenary Generation on historiography, then, was marked by a departure from the premises of classical liberalism. Although both Rojas and Lugones were also members of the Junta de Historia y Numismática (admitted in 1916 and 1936 respectively), they were not biased against *caudillismo* per se. Even Rojas as the most liberal of the three, who in 1932 unfavourably contrasted Rosas with San Martín, had not been deprecating of *caudillos* in his book *La argentinidad*, published

⁴⁷ “La Argentina del Centenario: campo intelectual, vida literaria y temas ideológicos”, in: Carlos Altamirano and Beatriz Sarlo, *Ensayos argentinos: de Sarmiento a la vanguardia*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1997), pp. 161-199, p. 167. On the change from the gentleman-writer to the professional see David Viñas, *De Sarmiento a Cortázar: literatura argentina y realidad política* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XX, 1971), pp. 32-137.

⁴⁸ José Luis Romero, *A history of Argentine political thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963), chapter two.

⁴⁹ The expression comes from Eduardo José Cárdenas and Carlos Manuel Payá, *El primer nacionalismo argentino en Manuel Gálvez y Ricardo Rojas* (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1978).

⁵⁰ See “Héroes patricios y gauchos rebeldes: pasados en pugna”, in: Cattaruzza and Eujanian, *Políticas de la historia*, pp. 217-262.

sixteen years earlier.⁵¹ Lugones never organically participated in the revisionist enterprise, but prominent revisionists of both Right and Left later mentioned his name as an inspiration.⁵² Gálvez, on the other hand, became one of the main figures of revisionism. Never admitted to the Academia, he co-founded the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas Juan Manuel de Rosas in 1938. More novelistic in style than Ibarguen, he also wrote a biography of Rosas, which not only strengthened his credentials as one of the more populist revisionists, but also lent authority to a historiographical current that suffered from a lack of literary talent. According to Gálvez, 120,000 copies were sold.⁵³ In his person, the “spirit of the Centenary” directly culminated in revisionism.

To summarise, when the period of export-led growth drew to a definite close with the coup of 1930 and an authoritarian, anti-democratic and anti-liberal strand of nationalism gained ground among Argentina's intellectuals, nineteenth-century liberalism had already experienced substantial fissures, which to some extent also affected historiography. As José Carlos Chiaramonte has shown, it was in fact difficult by 1930 to find an area of the nation's historical imaginary that had remained unspoiled by attempts at revision.⁵⁴ On the other hand, many of the changes in the views on Argentina's national identity that had developed since Mitre were the results of a reworking of liberal motifs rather than a radical rupture or reversal of them. Saldías had been a disciple of Mitre, who also exerted considerable influence on Rojas. And did not the scepticism vis-à-vis mass immigration of the Centenary Generation, as Fernando Devoto stresses, already have an antecedent in the later writings of Sarmiento himself?⁵⁵ Furthermore, despite the transformations of the social position of the writer and the historian and the increasing empiricism as a by-product of positivism, the dominant historiography from the Centenary onwards drew again closer to Mitre's idea of history as a pedagogic foundation for the future. *Mutatis mutandis*, many features of a liberalism that never had been quite so liberal after all underpinned

⁵¹ Ricardo Rojas, *El santo de la espada: vida de San Martín* (Buenos Aires, 1933) and Ricardo Rojas, *La argentinidad: ensayo histórico sobre nuestra conciencia nacional en la gesta de la emancipación, 1810-1816* (Buenos Aires: Juan Roldán, 1916).

⁵² See Julio Irazusta, *Las dificultades de la historia científica y el Rosas del Dr. E. H. Celesia* (Buenos Aires: Alpe, 1955), p. 144 and the interview with Juan José Hernández Arregui in *Compañero*, no. 12, 27 August 1963.

⁵³ Manuel Gálvez, *Vida de Juan Manuel de Rosas*, 5th ed. (Buenos Aires: Tor, 1953). The figure is mentioned by Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme*, p. 200.

⁵⁴ Chiaramonte, “En torno a los orígenes”, in: Frega and Islas (eds.), *Nuevas miradas*, pp. 29-61.

⁵⁵ Fernando J. Devoto, *Nacionalismo, fascismo y tradicionalismo en la Argentina moderna: una historia* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2002), esp. pp. 14-34. The reference is mainly to Sarmiento's *Conflicto y armonía de razas*.

the early manifestations of a cultural nationalism. Only in the 1930s was liberalism dealt a more serious blow. This came not as a careful revision, but rather as a systematic inversion of everything that —often in caricatural simplification— was regarded as liberal. With regard to its understanding of the goals of historiography, however, this now vehemently anti-liberal nationalism showed some remarkable similarities with the dominant historians of the previous era.

3. Towards a map of revisionism, 1930-55 and beyond

A. The political vocation of revisionism

The *nacionalistas* of the 1930s gained public standing in the context of a crisis of political legitimacy. They fiercely rejected liberalism, which they identified as the ideological basis upon which Argentina had become integrated into the world market since the 1850s. From the late 1920s, liberalism was increasingly under attack as the alleged fountainhead from which Argentina's present malaise sprang. An increasing number of intellectuals, politicians *manqués* and members of the armed forces believed that decrepit and corrupting liberal democracy should be superseded by an authoritarian and hierarchical state that ensured public order and discipline. The cultural rationale of their political arguments relied on an organic notion of Argentina's Hispanic and Catholic roots, which they opposed to a heartless materialism and the disintegrative effects of liberalism. The *nacionalistas* mostly came from middle and upper class backgrounds and in their early phase they spurned the inclusion of the masses in politics and society. This anti-popular bias, however, melted down among many *nacionalistas* during the 1930s, reinforced by two interlocking developments. Domestically, although their initial target had been the populism of Yrigoyen's second presidency (1928-30), the ousting of Radicalism in 1930 and the failure of the ensuing governments to implement the system *nacionalistas* had envisaged (and to forge a legitimate order in general) began to shed a different light on the deposed leader. Internationally, Yrigoyen had at least rhetorically been committed to defending Argentina's sovereignty against foreign interference. The new decade, in contrast, saw a government that reacted to the plummeting of Argentine export prices on the world market by strengthening the country's traditional ties with Britain in a way that many regarded as humiliating. Beyond its ideological eclecticism and fragmentation, Argentine nationalism as a whole thus acquired more populist and anti-imperialist traits,

which were most clearly expressed in the Fuerza de Orientación Radical de la Joven Argentina (FORJA), a group that broke away from the mainstream Radical Party in 1935 and evoked the populist legacy of Yrigoyen.⁵⁶

The political concerns of *nacionalistas* can be illustrated with the example of the brothers Rodolfo and Julio Irazusta (1897-1968 and 1899-1982 respectively), the second of whom became an important revisionist historian.⁵⁷ They came from a cattle-growing family that owned medium-sized land in the province of Entre Ríos, which had suffered the fluctuations of beef prices on the world market, especially in the wake of the Great Depression. After Julio's return to Argentina from his studies at Oxford and the Sorbonne, in 1927 they founded the weekly (and later daily) newspaper *La Nueva República* (LNR), which became known as the most vociferous organ of anti-liberal and anti-democratic opposition to Yrigoyen.⁵⁸ Particularly Rodolfo was influenced by the ideas of the anti-Dreyfusard and architect of the *Action Française* Charles Maurras (1868-1952), although he discounted Maurras' monarchism (which made no sense in Argentina), ignored his anti-clericalism (which did not sit comfortably with a group of intellectuals who often came from backgrounds linked to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church) and adopted his anti-Semitism rather half-heartedly. The most consistent features of the LNR's sermon were the assertion of an organic national community with a strong and hierarchically organised state as a bulwark against the corrupting and supposedly foreign ideologies of democracy, liberalism and Marxism. This was accompanied by a bias against cosmopolitan intellectuals, whom the writers of LNR held responsible for the decline of Argentina's true grandeur and by an exaltation of direct political action, revolutionary violence and military splendour. When Uriburu, who had publicly expressed that he found

⁵⁶ A comprehensive and critical monograph on FORJA remains to be written. The best-known accounts are Miguel Ángel Scenna, *FORJA: una aventura argentina (de Yrigoyen a Perón)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial de Belgrano, 1983) and Arturo Jauretche, *F.O.R.J.A. y la década infame*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires: Coyoacán, 1962), which both cast FORJA as an antecedent for contemporary political engagement. See also chapter four.

⁵⁷ The literature on both, but especially on Julio, is vast. The biographically most relevant are Noriko Mutsuki, *Julio Irazusta: treinta años de nacionalismo argentino* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2004) and his own memoirs Julio Irazusta, *Memorias: historia de un historiador a la fuerza* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Culturales Argentinas, 1975).

⁵⁸ On LNR see especially Olga Echeverría, "Una gran manifestación de la intelligentsia: la reacción de *La Nueva República*", in Susana Bianchi and María Estela Spinelli (eds.), *Actores, ideas y proyectos políticos en la Argentina contemporánea* (Tandil: Instituto de Estudios Histórico-Sociales, 1997), pp. 125-156 and Olga Echeverría, "De la apelación antidemocrática al colonialismo como argumento impugnador de la *oligarquía*: los hermanos Irazusta en la génesis del revisionismo histórico argentino", *prohistoria*, no. 8 (2004), pp. 173-191. A sample of articles was re-edited later: Julio Irazusta (ed.), *El pensamiento político nacionalista: antología*, 3 vols. (Buenos Aires: Obligado, 1975).



inspiration in reading LNR, overthrew Yrigoyen in the coup of 1930, the journalists of LNR believed that the time had come for their rise into policy-making positions. It was perhaps in the concept of *politique d'abord* where LNR was most Maurassian.

Beyond their defiant calls for political activism, it is difficult to pin down an ideological coherence among the propagators of *nacionalismo*. Although anti-liberalism and some sort of authoritarianism were common denominators, on many other questions opinions diverged. The glorification of Argentina's Hispanic heritage was another frequent theme, for example in the writings of Gálvez, but others (say, Lugones) had little patience with this. The groups around the courses on Catholic culture organised by Tomás Casares and the Catholic review *Criterio* also had considerable weight, but some of the more modernist nationalists saw little point in the revival of Thomism. Because of their tendency to align according to matters of day-to-day politics, there was often sharp disagreement even among those who subsequently united to exalt Rosas, as testified by the polemic between Gálvez and Julio Irazusta regarding the best stance to adopt towards Yrigoyen.⁵⁹

The examples of two more revisionist historians, Juan Pablo Oliver and José María Rosa (who became the most prolific of all revisionists), can serve to clarify the background of *nacionalistas*.⁶⁰ Both came from the upper classes and socialised in exclusive circles.⁶¹ In both cases, one grandfather had been minister of a national government. Rosa's father was also a national minister, whilst Oliver's father had been a conservative national deputy as well as minister in the province of Buenos Aires. For both it seemed only natural to envisage a career in politics. After having finished his studies in law at the UBA, Rosa (1906-91) was helped by his father's political contacts and began to serve as a functionary of the Urriburu administration in Santa Fe in 1930. Oliver, in turn, enlisted in a movement called Unión Revolucionaria Juventud Argentina, took part on Urriburu's side in the violent street confrontations of September

⁵⁹ In 1928, Gálvez supported Yrigoyen, Irazusta was opposed to him. Devoto, *Nacionalismo, fascismo y tradicionalismo*, pp. 190-191.

⁶⁰ On Oliver see the interview with him by Luis Alberto Romero, 23 June 1973, Archivo de Historia Oral, Instituto Torcuato di Tella. In stark contrast to Julio Irazusta, Rosa's biography before 1945 is little studied, but Darío Macor and Eduardo Iglesias, *El peronismo antes del peronismo: memoria e historia en los orígenes del peronismo santafesino* (Santa Fe: Universidad Nacional del Litoral, 1997), pp. 37-38 contains some valuable information. More exhaustive, but also more problematic because mostly an autobiographical account by Rosa himself, is: Pablo José Hernández, *Conversaciones con José María Rosa* (Buenos Aires: Colihue, 1978).

⁶¹ This was true for the large majority of the founders of the Instituto Rosas. For example, in his memoirs, Benito Llambí, *Medio siglo de política y diplomacia* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1997), p. 180 remembered that he had regularly met with Gálvez at the Jockey Club, the prime symbol of *porteño* exclusivism.

1930 and shortly thereafter enrolled with the paramilitary Legión Cívica Argentina, which became something like Uriburu's semi-official combat patrol.⁶² Both also had a good relationship with the reactionary military regime in power from 1943, when Rosa was named director of the educational council of Santa Fe. Moreover, both affiliated themselves to the Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista (ALN), which united the *nacionalista* sectors with populist inclinations. Only in the 1960s did their political orientations diverge significantly, when Oliver rejected the Marxist influences in revisionism, whilst Rosa publicised his approval of the Cuban Revolution.⁶³

Those who —like the Irazusta brothers, Rosa or Oliver— became revisionist historians in the 1930s had not received a professional education in history, even though the UBA had been awarding degrees in the subject since the first decade of the century. The majority of them were lawyers by profession and politicians by vocation, whilst initially showing little interest in history. Historiographical debates did not always escape their attention, but they laid no claim to authority in the interpretation of the national past. Ernesto Palacio (1900-1979) —besides the Irazustas the most important driving force behind LNR and later one of the most prominent revisionist historians— wrote in 1928:

La Nueva República has promised in its programme a revision of historical values, which its editors carry out insofar as historical moments add topicality to the political or social problems that are raised. [...] It is only natural, given the limited nature of our task, that we should limit ourselves, most of the time, to raising the issue in a rational way, leaving the work of proving or refuting our assertions to the historians [...].⁶⁴

Palacio saw no need for disputes over a ground that he felt belonged in the safe hands of professionals. In the late twenties, LNR did not exalt Rosas.⁶⁵ Nor was Rosas a frequent motif among *nacionalistas* in general. In a later interview, Oliver stated that, by 1930, “there was no *rosismo* yet.”⁶⁶ In other words, the beginnings of revisionism cannot be understood as a politicised historiography, but rather as politics that turned into historiography. One therefore has to seek the incentives for revisionism beyond

⁶² See Marcus Klein, “The Legión Cívica Argentina and the radicalisation of Argentine nacionalismo during the Década Infame”, *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2002), pp. 5-30.

⁶³ See the interview with Rosa after his return from Cuba in *18 de Marzo*, no. 8, 5 February 1962.

⁶⁴ *La Nueva República*, no. 31, 8 September 1928; quoted by Zuleta Álvarez, *El nacionalismo*, vol. 1, p. 127.

⁶⁵ For LNR, see Irazusta (ed.), *Pensamiento nacionalista*.

⁶⁶ Interview with Oliver by Romero, Instituto Di Tella, p. 15. The preference of Uriburu's followers in historical matters was instead Lavalle, an enemy of Rosas (see Cattaruzza, “Descifrando pasados”, in: Cattaruzza (ed.), *Crisis económica*, p. 436).

the confines of the historiographical debates that had developed over the decades before 1930.

The typical revisionist was an intellectual who had *failed* as a politician. His (never her) increased interest in history was directly proportional to his failure in and consequent disappointment with applied politics. The emergence of revisionism can be dated remarkably precisely and linked to concrete political developments. In 1934, the first orchestrated *nacionalista* campaign for the repatriation of Rosas' remains took place and the Irazusta brothers published their book *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico*, a milestone in the formulation of revisionism.⁶⁷ What had happened? Firstly, the *nacionalistas* who until recently had hoped for politically decisive roles in the Uriburu administration were either disappointed with the course of this military government or removed from office when the Revolution of 1930 took a more liberal-conservative turn after Uriburu was replaced by Agustín P. Justo (1932-38). LNR abandoned Uriburu in October 1931 and the frustration with Uriburu was retrospectively expressed by *nacionalistas* such as Oliver: "yes, there was disillusion among the *nacionalista* groups, because Uriburu simply handed government back to the previous system."⁶⁸ Secondly, of cardinal importance was the widespread outrage at some scandalous details that leaked from the negotiations of the Roca-Runciman Treaty in 1933, which allowed Argentina to retain access to the British market in exchange for guarantees to purchase British goods.⁶⁹ As a reaction to these developments the main target of *nacionalista* attacks was no longer the undisciplined masses, Marxism or Yrigoyen's populism, but instead the liberal oligarchy that, in their view, sought to continue Argentina's demeaning submission to British commercial interests.

The Irazustas' *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico* (1934) expressed this view very clearly. The book is divided into three parts: the first narrated the behaviour

⁶⁷ "La junta americana de homenaje y repatriación de los restos del Brigadier General Don Juan Manuel de Rosas al Pueblo Argentino en ocasión del aniversario del combate de 'La Vuelta de Obligado'", press statement, leaflet, Buenos Aires, 20 November 1934. The book reference is: Rodolfo Irazusta and Julio Irazusta, *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico: los eslabones de una cadena, 1806-1933*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Independencia, 1982). See Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nacionalismo*, pp. 122-129 on the repercussions of this book and pp. 130-137 on the repatriation campaign.

⁶⁸ Interview with Oliver by Romero, Instituto Di Tella, p. 16. Similar points can be found throughout the literature; see e.g. the interview with Carlos Ibarguren (son) by Luis Alberto Romero, 15 July 1971, Archivo de Historia Oral, Instituto Torcuato di Tella, p. 26. The rupture of LNR is reprinted in Irazusta (ed.), *Pensamiento nacionalista*, pp. 183-189.

⁶⁹ For a brief discussion of the impact of the Roca-Runciman Pact on Argentine historiography in English, see Peter Alhadeff, "Dependency, historiography and objections to the Roca Pact", in: Christopher Abel and Colin M. Lewis (eds.), *Latin America, Economic Imperialism and the State: The Political Economy of the External Connection from Independence to the Present* (London and Dover, NH: The Athlone Press, 1985), pp. 367-379.

of the Argentine mission to London during the negotiations of the Roca-Runciman Pact, which Julio bemoaned as egregiously submissive. The second part, also written by Julio, outlined and denounced the individual points of the Treaty. Only Rodolfo's part, the last and shortest, ventured into the "history of the Argentine oligarchy", which was the group held responsible for Argentina's current ills. Ever since the first national president, Bernardino Rivadavia, who had initiated the chain of Argentina's submission to the British commercialist yoke due to his admiration for European liberalism,⁷⁰ the oligarchy had distinguished itself as the anti-national parasite par excellence, argued Rodolfo. Only the interlude of Rosas' regime had been capable of resisting the transformation of the country into the South American equivalent of Asian or African colonies, but unfortunately the "anti-national fervour of the *émigrés*",⁷¹ who fought against Rosas from Montevideo, finally assured that the putrefying foreign penetration returned after 1852. This short historiographical exercise, however, was mostly an attempt to extend the basis for what had already been argued in the previous chapters. Julio later remarked about the book that "what we studied and what we saw, the past and the present, reciprocally illuminated each other", but the starting point was the authors' moral indignation over the Roca-Runciman Pact.⁷²

As many authoritarian nationalist intellectuals now aimed their invectives against the oligarchy rather than working-class agitation, they drew closer to the emerging populist nationalism of FORJA. The contacts of the Irazustas and other right-wing *nacionalistas* were particularly cordial with Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz (1898-1959), who, although never organically affiliated to FORJA, became known as its most prominent writer.⁷³ Julio Irazusta later pointed out in his memoirs that it was

in the year in which we published *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico* that there was a sort of blossoming of a new consciousness about the national reality, what Scalabrini Ortiz calls [...] a 'movement of nationalist realism'.⁷⁴

Through his book *Política británica en el Río de la Plata* (1939), in which he rabidly denounced British commercial and political conspiracies as the source of Argentina's

⁷⁰ Irazusta brothers, *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico*, p. 182.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁷² Julio Irazusta, *Ensayos históricos* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1968), p. 12.

⁷³ For a short summary of his biography in English see Mark Falcoff, "Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz: the making of an Argentine nationalist", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, vol. 52, no. 1 (1972), pp. 74-101.

⁷⁴ Irazusta, *Memorias*, p. 221. Likewise, Carlos Ibarguren (son) acknowledged his friendship with Scalabrini (interview by Romero, Instituto di Tella, p. 27).

problems, Scalabrini also became a promoter of historical revisionism.⁷⁵ Him excepted, however, most of the writers close to FORJA at that stage were even less interested in history than the *nacionalistas*. Although Quattrocchi has argued that FORJA had a strong influence on the development of revisionism in the 1930s and in the early years of the Instituto Rosas, the evidence to support such a case is scarce.⁷⁶ Atilio García Mellid, who seems to have been the next among them to turn to historiography, published his first history book only in 1946.⁷⁷ Arturo Jauretche, in the 1960s the most prolific and successful of all populist essayists, admitted that he was a latecomer to revisionism and that FORJA was not very interested in history during its ten years of existence.⁷⁸ In any event, even if their participation in revisionism had been organic from early on, there is no reason to assume that their preoccupations were more historiographical. If the close link between history and politics had undergone significant modifications in the previous decades, revisionists reinforced it from the 1930s onwards.

⁷⁵ Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz, *Política británica en el Río de la Plata*, 4th ed. (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1965).

⁷⁶ Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme*, pp. 224-228. Her case is based on the argument that there was a strong Yrigoyenist current of revisionism from as early as 1916 onwards, in support of which she mentions a number of Radicals who were also revisionists (notably Dardo Corvalán Mendilaharsu, Joaquín Díaz de Vivar and Ricardo Caballero). It should be added, however, that they were hardly the most prominent revisionist writers, that (with the exception of Corvalán) they were not affiliated to the Instituto Rosas and that their links to FORJA were at best tenuous. Quattrocchi also mentions Carlos Steffens Soler, a member of the Directive Council of the Instituto Rosas, as “a distinguished figure of the Yrigoyenist group FORJA” (p. 243n.; the formulation in the French original of her book is more cautious (“on nous dit que...”) than in the Spanish translation, where it is directly affirmed that he was “una figura distinguida”). This is the only reference to Steffens Soler as a FORJA-member I have come across, however. To the best of my knowledge, all other erstwhile *forjistas* who later affiliated themselves to the Institute (Roque Raúl Aragón, René Saúl Orsi, Roberto Tamagno, García Mellid and Jauretche) did so only after 1945, and mostly after 1958. The other person who is often mentioned to substantiate Quattrocchi’s claim that there was a triangular relationship between Radicalism, Peronism and revisionism is John William Cooke. But his links to Yrigoyenism and FORJA, which are sometimes recorded in the secondary literature, were at best opaque and Norberto Galasso, *Cooke: de Perón al Che, una biografía política* (Buenos Aires: Homo Sapiens, 1997), p. 12 has convincingly argued that Cooke’s interpretation of Argentine history was far from revisionist at the very least until 1943. All this supports the argument of Alejandro Cattaruzza, *Historia y política en los años treinta: comentarios en torno al caso radical* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 1991) that the convergence between revisionism and Radicalism was more partial.

⁷⁷ Atilio García Mellid, *Caudillos y montoneras en la historia argentina* (Buenos Aires: Recuperación Nacional, 1946).

⁷⁸ Arturo Jauretche, *Política nacional y revisionismo histórico* (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1959), p. 3 and Jauretche, *F.O.R.J.A. y la década infame*, pp. 39-42.

B. The institutionalisation of revisionism and its models

Even though —throughout the history of this current— the majority of revisionist intellectuals were lawyers and failed politicians, their historical writing made it necessary for them to position themselves in the field of historians. It is noticeable that the first attempts to endow revisionism in general and *rosismo* in particular with an institutional framework paralleled the foundation of historical commissions, the building of monuments and the institutional advances of “official” history under the auspices of the state. Just as 1934 was a key date for the political incentives behind revisionism, it was perhaps no coincidence that the year 1938 saw not only the transformation of Mitre’s Junta into the Academia Nacional de la Historia, but also the foundation —independently from each other— of two revisionist institutes, whose intention was to counter the Academia’s prerogative in creating a national pantheon. On 15 June, a group of right-wing upper-class *nacionalistas*, including Rosa, founded the Instituto de Estudios Federalistas in Santa Fe, in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the province’s main *caudillo*, Estanislao López.⁷⁹ Much more important in the long run, however, was the foundation of the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas Juan Manuel de Rosas in the Federal Capital in the same year, in which —besides the mentors of LNR— Gálvez, the sons of the elder Carlos Ibarguren and Ramón Doll, a former socialist and then self-confessed fascist, assumed leading roles.⁸⁰

Throughout the following four and a half decades the attitude of revisionists and especially the Instituto Rosas toward the Academia was characterised by belligerent assaults against its supposed liberalism and its monopoly on defining an official pantheon. Nearly every single issue of the institute’s review —published irregularly from 1939 onwards with a circulation of approximately 1,500 copies— and its even more polemical bulletin, which occasionally replaced the review, provide ample evidence of this tendency. The revisionist self-portrayal as marginalised and subversive *franc-tireurs* against a vicious enemy upon whom officialdom had bestowed superior weapons on the battlefield of history helped to create some kind of *esprit de corps* among them and led to the rise of the idea that there were now two ideas of Argentina’s past, perfectly opposed to each other in every respect.

⁷⁹ Information on this initiative is difficult to find and references are widely scattered. See e.g. Miguel Ángel Scenna, *Los que escribieron nuestra historia* (Buenos Aires: La Bastilla, 1976), p. 252 and Macor and Iglesias, *El peronismo antes del peronismo*, pp. 38, 179 and 193.

⁸⁰ On Doll see Norberto Galasso, *Ramón Doll: socialismo o fascismo* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1989).

However, it is perhaps more interesting and revealing to draw attention to the underlying similarities —and sometimes even personal connections— between the Instituto Rosas and the Academia. The main difference, of course, was that the Academia was publicly financed, whilst, before its nationalisation by presidential decree in 1997, the sources of funding of the Instituto Rosas were private (and usually rather opaque) or at best semi-public, as was the case from the 1950s onwards when trade unions donated money. Although neither of the two institutions had many full-time staff, in the case of the Academia an increasing number of the contributors to its publications gained money from their historical writing and/or employment in universities, whilst before 1997 all members of the Instituto Rosas were *ad honorem* hobbyists who usually spent little time at the institute. In its make-up, however, the Instituto Rosas tried to mirror the Academia. Among its foundational members, the majority of lawyers and journalists was complemented by clergy (for example, the Jesuit Leonardo Castellani) and military men (its first two presidents were an army general and a navy captain). Such backgrounds among the members of the Instituto would remain common over time, later complemented by a small contingent of medical doctors. Furthermore, the members of the institute were almost exclusively male throughout its entire existence, very few were under 30 years old at any given time and, at least until 1955, many members had Spanish surnames and/or two surnames, which were overrepresented in comparison to Jewish and Italian names.⁸¹ Although less remarkable, the institutional structure of the two bodies was comparable, too: at the top stood a president, followed by vice-presidents, a secretary, a treasurer and, finally, the

⁸¹ The information on the members of the Instituto Rosas stems from a wide range of published sources, especially its *Revista* and *Boletín*, whereas the information on the Academia comes largely from the *Boletín de la Academia Nacional de la Historia*. Whilst on this basis it is relatively easy to reconstruct the structure and functioning of the Academia, this is not the case with the *rosistas* (which implicitly shows that their institutionalisation was less successful). At the Instituto Rosas I was repeatedly told that the minutes of meetings, lists of members and subscribers to the publications, financial records and other similar unpublished documents were lost during the military dictatorship after 1976. At least, the periodicals occasionally included lists of the members, e.g. in 1938, in 1951, in 1968 and in 1971. From these I gathered the names of 171 members altogether. Although it is difficult to obtain precise biographical information on all of them, from a large number of references in contemporary periodical publications and in the secondary literature an approximate picture can be constructed of their occupational and social backgrounds, age and gender. This picture remained similar over time, although the mixture was slightly more diverse in the 1960s in terms of class, age and professional and political backgrounds, if not regarding gender. Two of the 171 were women, both of whom largely unknown and insignificant for the history of revisionism. 112 surnames were Spanish and only 25 Italian; 8 German, 6 English, 4 French and the remaining 16 were other, mixed or could not be categorised with certainty, but none was recognisably Jewish. Although this does not necessarily mean that there was never anyone with a Jewish background among them, Jews were certainly underrepresented (in contrast to, say, academic social sciences), which was hardly surprising in the light of the anti-Semitism of many members of the Instituto Rosas.

members (*vocales* at the Instituto Rosas and *académicos de número* at the Academia). Although less successfully than the Academia, the institute also sought to anchor institutional procedures in codified statutes and rules. Parallels were still evident much later, when the *rosistas* sought to counter the expansion of the Academia through branches in the interior (Juntas) by launching similar initiatives in 1959 and 1969.

These unstable provincial pockets of revisionism —often named after *caudillos*, too, such as the Instituto Alejandro Heredia in Tucumán or the Instituto Juan Facundo Quiroga in Mendoza (both founded in 1959)— were an instructive microcosm of how attempts at institutionalisation interplayed with politics.⁸² Labelled as a “patriotic campaign to disseminate the historical truth of the River Plate”,⁸³ the foundations followed a certain pattern. The by then president of the institute, Rosa, who was usually accompanied by another person from Buenos Aires, travelled to the provincial capital, invariably on a day near to the two principal national holidays, 25 May (May Revolution of 1810) and 9 July (Declaration of Independence of 1816). He was scheduled to give talks with titles such as “The two Argentinas” or “The Conspiracy of Silence”, in which he typically declared that the

Argentine history that is taught in schools, the history that you have learned, is not Argentine history [...]. Against foreign-inspired liberalism, the people rose up and for that they had their *caudillos*, faithful expressions of the national sentiment and soul, a soul whose existence the liberals deny [...]. This is how Quiroga [...], Artigas, López and Rosas arose. However, the history which we are taught tends to create among the people a feeling of repulsion towards these authentic defenders of nationality. Rosas is the expression of the Federal par excellence and federal means the affirmation of the Argentine, whilst Unitarianism is the faithful expression of colonialism. Rosas was always fought against with foreign help and he was made to fall from power because of foreign action and because of betrayal.⁸⁴

In most cases the premises for the talk were provided by trade unions, occasionally by a parish church, and on rare occasions the talk was delivered in public libraries, depending on the stance of the local authorities. The following day began with a visit to the local newspaper which dutifully published an interview with Rosa. The actual foundation of the new branch of the Instituto Rosas consisted in signing the statutes,

⁸² Information on the following stems largely from reports in the respective provincial daily newspapers of the day of the foundation or re-foundation of these institutes (e.g. *Los Principios* (Córdoba), 7 July 1959; *Los Andes* (Mendoza), 8 and 9 July 1959 and 8 July 1960; *Gaceta de Tucumán*, 26 May 1969) and from the review of the Instituto Rosas (esp. no. 21 (1960), pp. 44-62) and the second series of the bulletin (esp. no. 6, September 1969, pp. 16-17). In the case of Tucumán also from the periodical of the institute itself (*Revisión Histórica*, nos. 1-3 (May 1960, May 1961 and July 1968)).

⁸³ *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, no. 22 (July-December 1960), p. 387.

⁸⁴ *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, no. 21 (1960), p. 45 (“Las dos Argentinas”), p. 52 (“La conspiración de silencio”) and pp. 47-48.

hoisting the Argentine flag and holding a mass in church. Although it was often stressed that the new institute “had no connotation of any political type whatsoever”,⁸⁵ the authorities often thought differently and interfered in the events, apparently fearing that they might turn into a political demonstration. A look at the list of members in these branches shows that official suspicions were not entirely unjustified inasmuch as, besides the usual dignitaries from the provincial elite, Peronist politicians and unions at this stage sponsored and attended the activities of these institutes.⁸⁶

Although explicitly directed against the Academia, the purpose and character of revisionist institutionalisation thus not only paralleled the developments of “official” history, but also imitated them. There was even a degree of personal contact and overlap between the Academia and *rosismo*. Again, the branches in the interior, where the field of historians was more fragile (and possibilities for recruitment consequently more limited) than in the capital, reveal this.⁸⁷ Yet even in the more polarised context of Buenos Aires, there were examples of historians who, at one point or another had been a member of both institutions. For example, the Jesuit priest and colonial historian Guillermo Furlong was a member of the Academia as well as the Instituto Rosas at different times and, in 1970, Julio Irazusta was appointed as *académico de número*. The revisionist movement, which had now created its own institutional framework to disseminate its ideas, thus protracted and reinvigorated rather than invented the link between the aim to construct a national identity and the claim to be professional historians.

C. The activities and historiography of revisionism

The preferred kind of activities and the form of historical writing of revisionists were not very different either from those whom they identified as their liberal or *mitrista* enemies. The main activity of revisionists consisted in the glorification and vilification of the great men and battles of the nineteenth century. One of the statutes of the Instituto Rosas left no doubt that the institute’s chief aim was “to initiate a process of

⁸⁵ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 6, September 1969, p. 16.

⁸⁶ The list is potentially long, but as examples of Peronist (or neo-Peronist) politicians, one could mention Enrique Corvalán Nanclares in Mendoza or Juan Carlos Cornejo Linares in Jujuy.

⁸⁷ Even the boundaries with the universities were blurred. In the case of Tucumán, it was perfectly compatible for Manuel García Soriano to be a member of the Instituto Alejandro Heredia and a lecturer at the Universidad Nacional de Tucumán. Even the dean of this university’s Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (Enrique Wurschmit) was associated with the revisionist institute. Another typical example of a historian from the provinces who stood between the Academia and revisionism was Armando Raúl Bazán (La Rioja).

revalorisation of the personage [i.e. Rosas]”.⁸⁸ Similarly to the Academia, the chief vehicles for the consecration of historical figures were the holding of a public homage, commemorative events, the elevation of statues or the mounting of memorial plaques in public places. The most regular event was the annual pilgrimage to San Pedro in the province of Buenos Aires on 20 November to commemorate the naval battle that Rosas' troops had fought against the Anglo-French intervention of 1845. Another preoccupation was the foundation of commissions to campaign for the repatriation of Rosas' remains from England and the abrogation of Law 139 of 1857 which had declared Rosas a traitor to the fatherland. Behind these initiatives stood the idea of a pedagogical mission with the ultimate aim that the state adopt the revisionist pantheon and interpretation. The periodicals of revisionist institutions were thus filled with reprints of letters that were sent to governors, ministers and other functionaries of the state, asking them to participate in a commemoration, to rename a street or to drop a proposal by the Academia.

In the 1960s, these activities acquired a folkloric character. The trips to San Pedro culminated with *asados*, accompanied by folkloric music and dance (*peñas*). The more popularly oriented periodicals of the Instituto Rosas, *Revisión* (1959-66) and the bulletin of the institute (1946-54 and 1968-71), frequently displayed visual symbols associated with *caudillos* and *gauchos*, such as the so-called “Tacuara” lance or the Federal Star. They also featured poems. Without irony, the writer Ignacio B. Anzoátegui, a *nacionalista* of the far Right and a Peronist supporter, wrote a “eulogy to the hero”, accompanied by a picture of Rosas:

He was born to a great father by an illustrious mother. He was a child of the soil, white on both sides of the family and Creole from head to foot without any mixture of democratic mulattoes or English economists, as the pimps of free trade were called back then.⁸⁹

The rest of the issue featured reports of the activities of the Instituto, letters of the readers, reviews and some other articles which the front page announced with titles such as “The power of truth: historical revisionism” or “Urquiza, the mercenary: chronicle of a betrayal”.⁹⁰ Usually, anyone with the most basic knowledge of Argentine history could predict the content of such texts without actually reading them. In short, the campaigning issues of revisionism reached an extreme degree of codification and repetitiveness.

⁸⁸ *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, no. 1 (1939), p. 156.

⁸⁹ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 3, October-November 1968, p. 22.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* Urquiza had overthrown Rosas in 1852 in the battle of Caseros.

The fixation on the question of who to revere as the foundational fathers of the nation was reflected in the thematic predilections of the historiography produced by the Instituto Rosas. Of the 105 articles published between 1939 and 1961 in the *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, which had a stronger claim to academic authority than the other periodicals, ninety referred to the time span from the wars of independence to the beginning of Roca's first presidency, not a single one focused on colonial history, and the rest were either general overviews or could be subsumed in the category "revisio- nism against its enemies". Political and military history was highly over-represented (seventy articles), whilst social questions were virtually absent (two articles). Furthermore, there was a strong bias towards the biographies of great nineteenth-century men (sixty articles). The inclination towards political history and biographies was similar to the Academia's preferences, although they were even more pronounced in the case of the *rosistas*.

Another affinity with "official" history was that revisionists saw the relationship between their rather unornamented empiricism and the political usages to which it was put as peculiarly unproblematic. On the rare occasions when revisionists ventured into the terrain of methodology or the philosophy of history, still in the 1960s, questions were resolved by referring to Ranke.⁹¹ Asked in an interview in 1968 which Argentine and international historians he considered as his models, Rosa mentioned a number of revisionists and, "on a universal scale, Rómulo Carbia taught me to critically recon- struct historical facts with the objective method of Ranke."⁹² Yet Ranke's name was only a label for the revisionists' claim that they had historical truth on their side. A typical editorial of the review of the Instituto Rosas maintained that "the inheritors of the initiators of the historical lie, the disseminators of falsified history are now left more lonely than ever" because "the truth has triumphed."⁹³ The revisionists' una- dorned claim to truth coexisted happily with their candid demand that history should serve as a political weapon, since empiricism would be unfailingly conducive to the fulfilment of their political goals.⁹⁴ As a result, revisionists never produced a single

⁹¹ E.g. Rodolfo Ortega Peña and Eduardo Luis Duhalde, *Las guerras civiles argentinas y la historiografía* (Buenos Aires: Sudestada, 1967), p. 14 or Elías Giménez Vega, *Revisión al revisionismo: contribución a la polémica de Rosa con Soares de Souza* (Buenos Aires: published by the author, 1969), p. 30.

⁹² José María Rosa, *Historia del revisionismo y otros ensayos* (Buenos Aires: Merlin, 1968), pp. 8-9.

⁹³ *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, no. 17 (1958), p. 3.

⁹⁴ Examples of this are innumerable. Two especially straight-forward texts are Ricardo Font Ezcurra, "La historia instrumento político", *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, no. 4 (1939), pp. 117-130 and Jauretche, *Política nacional*.

methodological or theoretical debate worth mentioning. Their methodological texts amounted to an exercise in circular peer consecration, in which revisionists mutually complimented each other's writings. An article called "Outline of methodology" in the bulletin of the Instituto Rosas in the late 1960s, for example, was mainly a recommendation to read Rosa, Gálvez and Scalabrini Ortiz. Reading these authors would teach the historian the method of unmasking the "deformation of the understanding of reality [...which] is the cemetery of coherent political action."⁹⁵ Similarly, book reviews in revisionist periodicals sermonised about the works of their own group, accompanied by predictable use of adjectives ("notable", "valiant" etc.). The key question with which revisionist reviewers approached their task was usually how the author had evaluated the great men of the nineteenth century.

In many respects, revisionist activities and historiography were thus the mirror image of the kind of history that they polemically cast as their enemy. What was new about revisionism was not so much a positive evaluation of Rosas, *caudillismo* or Federalism. As we have seen, different viewpoints had already emerged in the aftermath of Mitre's biographical works. The notion that history should serve as a tool for politics or for the construction of a national identity fomented by the state was not exclusive to revisionism either. What was new was the systematic and Manichean nature of the revisionist enterprise to forge an alternative pantheon in function of a fervent anti-liberal nationalism. For this task it was necessary to essentialise the traits of a supposedly monolithic enemy and gloss over the intellectual and historiographical developments that had occurred since Mitre. The definition of the relationship between revisionism and earlier historiography was therefore ambivalent, especially in relation to the Nueva Escuela and the Academia, but also regarding earlier writers such as Saldías. Since in the revisionists' view historiography always translated political standpoints, they had difficulties in understanding how a liberal and a disciple of Mitre could have had a balanced view of Rosas.⁹⁶ The revisionist understanding both of nineteenth-century politics and of the contemporary field of historiography were profoundly dualist and inversely analogous: "official" history had not changed since

⁹⁵ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, no. 3, October-November 1968, pp. 19-21.

⁹⁶ A solution to this dilemma was eventually found in the argument that the case of Saldías was "curious" and that he quickly fell prey to "that subtle form of ideological terrorism which is the 'conspiracy of silence'" (Norberto D'Atri, "El revisionismo histórico: su historiografía", in: Arturo Jauretche, *Política nacional y revisionismo histórico*, 6th ed. (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1982), p. 115 and p. 116. As Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nacionalisme*, pp. 22-25 has shown, Saldías' career in fact suffered no setbacks whatsoever from the publication of his book on Rosas.

Mitre, whilst they themselves were the direct successors of the struggle of Rosas and other *caudillos*. As this position precluded the possibility of change, their historiography remained ahistorical.

D. The revisionists eclipsed by Peronism

Whilst institutionalisation and the codification of revisionist activities and historiography to some extent allowed for the emergence of a distinctive group identity around the organisational nucleus of the Instituto Rosas, the boundaries of revisionism in general were blurred. From its very foundational moment onwards, the Instituto Rosas remained a fragile club that failed to monopolise the discourse of its members. All of them, throughout their career, published many more articles in *nacionalista* weekly newspapers and cultural reviews than they did in the Instituto's bulletin or review. In the early forties, for example, *nacionalista* publications such as *Nuevo Orden*, *El Pampero* or *El Restaurador* (all on the extreme Right of the political spectrum) or Scalabrini's more populist *Reconquista*, none of which was predominantly historiographical, became much more important for the dissemination of revisionism than the narrowly circumscribed institutional *rosismo*. Furthermore, given the political affiliations of the revisionists, it was not surprising that *nacionalista* groups such as the ALN (besides Oliver and Rosa, Carlos Ibarguren (son) also belonged to this organisation) also began to fulfil a crucial role as vehicles for revisionist and *rosista* imagery, for example through street demonstrations. This permeability towards politics only increased over time. Especially after 1955, the growing success of revisionism also meant that its institutional nucleus found it harder to retain control over the broad diversity of voices that in one way or another expressed revisionism (see chapter four).

In contrast to the interest in and the links with applied politics, the revisionist impact on academic historiography remained limited. This was less the outcome of systematic marginalisation than of the revisionists' lack of interest in the historical research undertaken in public universities, which contrasted with their fixation on the Academia Nacional de la Historia. Whilst the latter was easily identified as the state's organ for the forging of a civic historical imaginary, this point was more difficult to make for universities. Although in the eyes of revisionists they did form part of the abominable apparatus through which the oligarchy imbued the people with a "falsified history", at least before 1955 they tended not to be the main target of polemics. Therefore, it is not surprising that initially we find few revisionists among university

professors. That this partly changed in the years between 1943 and 1946 was not because revisionists were actively seeking employment in universities, but rather because of political developments to which they were vulnerable.

The strong politicisation of revisionism meant that, from 1943 onwards, the relationship between nationalist intellectuals and Peronism became a crucial touchstone for the future career of revisionist authors as well as for the development of their version of history as a whole. Initially, the odds for *nacionalistas* to assume the kind of influential political roles they had longed for since Uriburu looked promising.⁹⁷ Cordial ties with some of the military officers who had seized power in the coup of 1943 at first yielded public posts for members of the Instituto Rosas, particularly when the regime needed staff for its federal interventions in the provinces. Federico Ibarguren and Ramón Doll became governmental functionaries in the province of Tucumán and Palacio a minister in San Juan. José Alfredo Villegas Oromí was appointed economy minister in Mendoza and Héctor Llambías, another member of the institute, undersecretary of education at the federal level. Most important, however, was the province of Santa Fe, where the intervening governor Arturo Saavedra was a close ally of the *nacionalistas*, who consequently allocated a number of posts to them, as the aforementioned example of Rosa as director of the provincial Council of Education (with Font Ezcurra as his secretary) shows.⁹⁸ The more populist-inclined nationalists, in turn, placed their hopes in the rising figure of Perón himself. FORJA was dissolved in December 1945 in support of Peronism and some of its members were granted jobs by the new administration after 1946. Jauretche, for example, was named director of the bank of the province of Buenos Aires.

Views about history were hardly of any importance in determining the relationship between Peronism and nationalism. Perón's moves therefore affected the *rosistas* as much as they did other nationalistic thinkers. Although Perón's rhetoric adopted many elements of the various trends of nationalism that had emerged since the 1930s, in particular its populist variants, his dealings with their erstwhile formulators turned out to be less congenial than they had hoped.⁹⁹ Whilst prestigious and politically influential posts were to be filled with former Radicals, Socialists and Conservatives

⁹⁷ For a concise introduction in English to the relations between the *nacionalista* Right, the military regime of 1943 and Peronism see Richard J. Walter, "The Right and the Peronists, 1943-1955", in: Deutsch and Dolkart (eds.), *The Argentine right*, pp. 99-118.

⁹⁸ On the negotiations leading to this situation in Santa Fe and the role of another member of the Instituto, Carlos Steffens Soler, in them, see Hernández, *Conversaciones con Rosa*, p. 108.

⁹⁹ The standard account on this issue remains Buchrucker, *Nacionalismo y peronismo*.

who had participated in the formation of the Peronist coalition in late 1945, the *nacionalistas* were treated like a potential nuisance. Apparently, the Peronist deputy and *rosista* Joaquín Díaz de Vivar suggested to Perón to appoint a number of his *nacionalista* friends —many of them revisionist writers— to ambassadorships, but the project faltered in Juan Atilio Bramuglia's ministry of foreign affairs.¹⁰⁰ Instead, after massive resignations of anti-Peronist academic staff in public universities, in history, sociology and neighbouring disciplines some revisionists and/or *nacionalistas* were drafted in to fill the void.¹⁰¹ Their entry into the university thus was the outcome of a short-lived political circumstances rather than of a design to develop a scholarly profile as historians.

At best the relationship between revisionism and Peronism can be characterised as a “marriage of reason”, as Quattrocchi has suggested.¹⁰² If we follow this interpretation, it needs to be added, however, that the conjugal rights were unequally distributed, which led either to tensions or to outright separation. Even with the *forjistas*, whose arguments were more easily compatible with Perón's, relations were uneasy. The stance of the more right-wing revisionists vis-à-vis the new regime after 1946 vacillated between two options. Either they tried to carve out a niche between culture and politics, thereby allowing themselves to be co-opted by a government on whose policy they knew they had little influence, or they assumed an oppositional posture. The pitfalls of both choices can be illustrated by the experiences of the founders of LNR, Ernesto Palacio and Julio Irazusta. The former was elected deputy on a Peronist ticket in 1946 and became president of the National Commission of Culture. In this position, he struggled to make his voice heard in politics and already in the following year he resigned. After his failure as a politician, he dedicated himself more fully to the writing of history again and in 1954 published a comprehensive history of Argentina since the conquest.¹⁰³ Irazusta, in turn, saw few opportunities to influence political decisions under Peronism and remained in silent opposition, until in 1956 he publicly denounced the “indescribable and incredible regime of Perón” for its supposedly feigned economic nationalism, behind which, according to Irazusta, the leader had

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Joaquín Díaz de Vivar by Romero, Archivo de Historia Oral, Instituto Torcuato di Tella, June-August 1972, p. 14.

¹⁰¹ For example John William Cooke, Gabriel Antonio Puentes, José María Rosa and Héctor Sáenz y Quesada at the UBA and Juan José Hernández Arregui, Federico Ibarguren, Roberto Marfany and Carlos Steffens Soler at the UNLP.

¹⁰² Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme*, pp. 257-352.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 288-297. The corresponding reference for the book is Ernesto Palacio, *Historia argentina* (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1954).

demagogically concealed his real designs to continue the country's sell-out to British imperialism.¹⁰⁴ Given his second disenchantment with the pragmatism of day-to-day politics, perhaps it was no surprise that from the late fifties Irazusta was known as one of the most committed historians among revisionists, who stood apart for his refusal to take part in overtly political undertakings.

Political developments also had an impact on the fate of the Instituto Rosas, from which Irazusta resigned in late 1949 and the more populist Rosa was elected president in 1951. Although revisionists felt compelled to position themselves in relation to politics, they eschewed the Instituto Rosas as a tribune for that purpose. Throughout the Peronist decade, the institute's publications avoided not only confrontation with Perón but also too overt political positioning in general. It seems that one of the main aims was to prevent a degree of politicisation that —given the divergent political views of its members— could have threatened group solidarity and instead to maintain the character of the institute as a refuge from active politics. For this reason, it is misleading to speak of a “complete Peronisation” of the institute, as Quattrocchi has done,¹⁰⁵ even after the Peronist deputy John William Cooke had become vice-president of the institute. An editorial of the bulletin in 1954 pointed out that the Instituto Rosas had no links to any particular political tendency because

if revisionism and the Institute devoted themselves to intervening in today's politics, no matter in which tendency, they would jeopardise the historical cause of revisionism in unjustified adventures, preventing the addressee of Historical Truth —the Argentine People— from adopting this cause [...].¹⁰⁶

Although the anti-Peronist opposition continued to draw derogatory analogies between Perón and Rosas' “tyranny” and held that the cordial affinities between Peronism and right-wing *nacionalismo* were only hidden behind a deceptive façade, revisionists saw too organic a link with Perón as dangerous, since many among their ranks were sceptical about the real intentions of his regime. Even Rosa, who later personified the link between revisionism and Peronism, did not identify with the populist movement at this stage.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, the institutional nucleus in which he had made his first steps as a

¹⁰⁴ Julio Irazusta, *Perón y la crisis argentina* (Buenos Aires: Unión Republicana, 1956), p. 9. There are many more examples of more explicit *nacionalista* opposition to Perón, too. For example, Roberto de Laferrère participated in the military uprising against Perón in 1951.

¹⁰⁵ Quattrocchi-Woissou, *Un nacionalismo*, p. 324. For a convincing critique of Quattrocchi's arguments see Julio Stortini, “Historia y política: producción y propaganda revisionista durante el primer peronismo”, *prohistoria*, no. 8 (2004), pp. 229-249.

¹⁰⁶ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, nos. 19-20, May-July 1954, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Rosas in *Envido*, no. 2, November 1970, p. 44.

historiographical militant, the Instituto de Estudios Federalistas in Santa Fe, kept its distance from officialdom during this period.¹⁰⁸

Conversely, the Peronist regime saw no reason to adopt or promote the revisionist version of history. To be sure, there were attempts to insert Peronism into a broader revisionist genealogy from within the Peronist camp. As a Peronist deputy, Cooke set the tone for the kind of analogies that were later often drawn, when he wrote in an article in the daily *La Época* in the late forties:

There can't be total Argentine independence without an intellectual liberation that completes political and economic liberation. What has been taught as "history" so far is a malicious distortion of the real facts [...]. We are not mere destroyers of statues — we want heroes too, but authentic ones [...]. The *descamisado* [i.e. follower of Perón] recognises in the *montonero*, in the *gaucho*, in the rabble, his brothers in suffering and in struggle. [...] As men of the New Argentina we are a historical continuity of the men who authentically created the nation.¹⁰⁹

However, before he became Perón's official delegate in Argentina in 1956, Cooke was a secondary figure in Peronism. Although already at this stage there might have been some financial support from Peronist unions, there is no evidence of direct public sponsorship of revisionist activities.

Nor did the Peronist regime draw on the revisionist account of history. Regarding official propaganda and education (increasingly pervasive after 1950) there were no traces of revisionist imagery. San Martín was systematically glorified and likened to Perón, but the uncontroversial liberator was not specific to any particular pantheon of heroes (and San Martín was probably chosen for exactly this reason). It has been suggested that Peronism endeavoured to strike a balance "between Rosas and Sarmiento".¹¹⁰ However, when the controversial period from 1829 to 1880 was touched upon in schoolbooks or propaganda, Peronist preference lay with the "liberal" pantheon. The most famous example was the naming of the railways after nationalisation in 1948 as San Martín, Belgrano, Urquiza, Sarmiento, Mitre and Roca. In a celebration for the anniversary of the railway nationalisation two years later, the National Commission of Museums, Monuments and Historical Sites, depicted Sarmiento as an intellectual

¹⁰⁸ Macor and Iglesias, *El peronismo antes del peronismo*, p. 179.

¹⁰⁹ Reproduced in *Crisis*, no. 23, March 1975.

¹¹⁰ Colin M. Winston, "Between Rosas and Sarmiento: notes on nationalism in Peronist thought", *The Americas*, vol. 39, no. 1 (1983), pp. 305-332. Two good examples of sparing out the middle sixty years of the nineteenth century in official liturgy would be the primary schoolbook Fernando J. Veronelli, *Abanderados: libro de lectura inicial* (Buenos Aires: Kapelusz, 1955) or the Peronist propaganda book *Síntesis Histórica de la República Argentina*, (Buenos Aires: no publisher given, no year given (probably 1950-55)).

precursor of Perón's deed.¹¹¹ Only after the overthrow of Perón would the Peronist movement appropriate revisionism (see chapter five).

However, the very fact that Perón's stance in historiographical issues would become an important question for revisionists reveals the extent to which their historical writing was oriented towards the political field and especially towards being accepted and adopted by the state as the replacement for the liberal pantheon. Even if the Instituto Rosas was an institutional core that resisted transformation into the mouthpiece of a clearly identifiable political tendency, most of its members continued to see themselves as politicians or as intellectuals with a right to intervene in politics rather than defining themselves as historians.¹¹² This was even clearer for the populist and nationalist intellectuals, such as the erstwhile members of FORJA, who at this point were only tangentially linked to formalised revisionist activities and initiatives. History thus remained a surrogate activity for periods in which political fortunes turned out to be less favourable than they had hoped. This political orientation of revisionism, as we will see in the following chapters, was the principal constant of the current.

Conclusion

Revisionists differed less than they imagined from those whom they declared to be their arch-enemies. Both revisionism and the "official" history of the Academia were mostly concerned with a moral-political assessment of nineteenth-century great men and their aptitude for being adored as the epitomes of Argentina's national identity. As Nicola Miller has put it, there was an overall "tendency to appraise historical figures rather as one might weigh up a potential in-law to see if they merited being accepted as 'one of the family' or not."¹¹³ This led to a preoccupation with civic ceremonies, statues and symbols rather than historical research. This is not to say that we are dealing with the narcissism of small differences. In terms of their preferential choice of historical models liberal and revisionist historians were diametrically opposed and the institutions on which their version was based as well as their proponents were

¹¹¹ Juan Francisco Castro, *Sarmiento y los ferrocarriles argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Educación de la Nación. Comisión Nacional de Museos y Monumentos Históricos. Museo Histórico Sarmiento, 1950).

¹¹² Again, the interviews with Díaz de Vivar, Carlos Ibarguren (son) and Oliver of the oral history archive of the Instituto di Tella are good examples of this. Even clearer is the case of the memoirs by Llambí, *Medio siglo*.

¹¹³ Miller, *In the shadow*, p. 214.

accurately distinguishable: on the one hand, the Academia and its commemorations of figures such as Mitre, Rivadavia or Sarmiento; on the other hand, the Instituto Rosas and its glorification of the *caudillos*. But in many respects, the two were a mirror image of each other rather than representing fundamentally different understandings of history and its public usages. Revisionism was not a “paradigm change”, not even in the sense of a “change of world views”. According to Thomas Kuhn’s definition, “led by a new paradigm, scientists adopt new instruments and look in new places.”¹¹⁴ But this did not happen with historical revisionism. First, they intervened in historiographical debates from a political point of view. Second, their nationalism might have been more radical and more decisively anti-liberal than that of their predecessors, but many of the liberal premises had been gradually eroding since the Centenary. In the person of Gálvez, revisionism developed directly from the “cultural nationalism” of the Centenary generation. Third, and most importantly, the historiographical rehabilitation of Rosas or federalism as such were hardly novel by 1930. All that was new about the revisionist enterprise was the systematic nature of their inversion of everything they associated with liberalism.

In the eyes of revisionists, ever since Mitre politics and history in Argentina had continuously been nothing but two sides of the same coin. Their inability to distinguish the intellectual or the historian from the politician applied both to their analysis of their enemies as well as to their own aim of influencing in intellectual and political debates. Hegemony in historiographical debates —supported by a rather crude empiricism— would, according to them, necessarily bolster the fulfilment of their political ambitions and vice versa. Given that politicisation or, more generally, the cultivation of history for the construction of a national identity were such rampant phenomena in Argentine historiography, it is tempting to look for explanations in a deficient institutionalisation.¹¹⁵ The institutional bases for historical research were precarious all over Latin America and especially in Argentina, in notable contrast to Chile, for example. Halperín Donghi’s argument that Chile’s counterpart to Argentine revisionism, *decadentismo*, was characterised by less explicit links and references to contemporary

¹¹⁴ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The structure of scientific revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 111.

¹¹⁵ The argument is made especially by Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme*, p. 9.

politics thus at first sight seems to confirm that institutionalisation and politicisation stood in an inversely proportional relation to each other.¹¹⁶

It is more complicated than that, however. Firstly, the institutionalisation of history in Argentina was never mainly due to the efforts of an independent professional group. Already the *mitrista* initiative of the Junta de Historia y Numismática was designed to support the state's attempt to foster a civic historical imaginary rather than to create a historical profession that worked independently from the guidelines set by policy-makers. Secondly, and more remarkably, revisionism historically emerged at a time when the figure of the *pensador* was no longer dominant in public debates and when political power had already become differentiated from intellectual influence. This was not a mere historical coincidence. The existence of an intellectual field with its own rules to some extent even explains the dynamic of the trajectories and activities of revisionists: lawyers by profession and politicians by vocation, they moved into the *alternative* realm of historiography after they had failed to secure a comfortable niche for themselves in politics. But the moment when *nacionalista* intellectuals discovered their interest in history coincided with increasing institutionalisation and professionalisation under the auspices of the Nueva Escuela, inaugurating the "Golden era in Argentine historiography". As Bourdieu notes, "the existence of a specialised field of production is the condition for the appearance of a struggle between orthodoxy and heterodoxy".¹¹⁷ Revisionism was not the symptom of the complete lack of institutions that typically organise and structure the intellectual life of a society. As Ernest Gellner has argued, "a crucial aspect of nationalism [...] is that intellectuals have ceased to be a substitutable commodity."¹¹⁸ The evidence presented in this chapter indeed suggests an interpretation of revisionism as a phenomenon that paralleled a sudden drive at institutionalisation within the overall context of an uneven and patchy modernisation and consolidation of the intellectual field, which did not become fully autonomous from politics. Although the latter remained the prime motivation for revisionist writers, the characteristics and dynamics of their enterprise must therefore be explained through the *interplay* between the political and the intellectual field.

¹¹⁶ Halperin Donghi, *Ensayos*, pp. 107-109. On *decadentismo* see Sofía Correa Sutil, "El pensamiento en Chile en el siglo xx bajo la sombra de Portales", in: Oscar Terán (ed.), *Ideas en el siglo: intelectuales y cultura en el siglo XX latinoamericano* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2004), pp. 211-305.

¹¹⁷ Bourdieu, *Langage et pouvoir symbolique*, p. 208.

¹¹⁸ Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1964), p. 159.

In many respects revisionism resembled what Raymond Williams has called a “cultural formation”. Although there was an identifiable institution, the Instituto Rosas, the much broader overall range of the activities of revisionists meant that the “establishment of a selective tradition” was

also a question of *formations*; those effective movements and tendencies, in intellectual and artistic life, which have significant and sometimes decisive influence on the active development of a culture, and which have a variable and often oblique relation to formal institutions.¹¹⁹

In the long run, the formula of success of revisionism resided not so much in its institutionalisation, although this provided an identifiable nucleus and pole of orientation over an extended period of time. Much more important was the permeability and relative informality of hardly institutionalised networks, which allowed for adaptation and flexibility in the face of political developments and broader intellectual climate changes. Since it was not the sign of a traditional society with a reduced urban intellectual and political elite, revisionism furthermore meets Williams’ requirement of formations as being “characteristic of developed and complex societies”. The opposition between Argentina’s two pantheons —liberal and nationalist— should not be understood as the continuation of nineteenth-century divisions between a liberal and cosmopolitan elite and an autochthonous *caudillismo*, but rather as a retrospective selection of traditions, the practices of which developed parallel to an uneven modernisation of intellectual life. The second coming of revisionism after 1955, although within a different ideological climate, once again coincided with an upsurge of cultural modernisation.

¹¹⁹ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 117.

Chapter two

Intellectual debates and Peronism in the context of cultural modernisation

We have to defend a university that is autonomous but also socially responsible.

It should not be under the orders of a ruler —nor of a party or political ideology— but must be ready to serve society, the people who maintain it.

Risieri Frondizi, 1956

The university has to be a decisive and fundamental part of the design and the orientation of the national government and, therefore, of all Argentines.

Rodolfo Puiggrós, 1973*

Introduction

Although revisionism was strictly speaking a historiographical current, the attraction of the writings of its proponents for the general public did not reside in their clarification of historical problems, but in their connection to contemporary questions. Revisionism became even less historiographical in the 1960s. Essays by populist-revisionist authors such as Arturo Jauretche or Juan José Hernández Arregui, which only marginally dealt with history, sold well not because of their historiographical insights, but because they addressed questions whose relevance was readily evident to a broader public. The aim of this chapter is to situate the discourse of the most prominent nationalist and populist intellectuals of the late 1950s and 1960s within broader public debates about national and political identities during that period and to analyse how revisionism related to these debates.

After 1955, socio-cultural conditions for a rise in concern with issues of national identity were favourable in Argentina. Theorists of nationalism, most famously perhaps Ernest Gellner, have often pointed to the connection between nationalist identity constructions and modernisation. In Argentina after 1955, two aspects of modernisation converged: first, cultural modernisation, manifest in phenomena such as the extension of education systems, the widening of sectors that consume cultural goods or the differentiation of the cultural field into specialised sub-units with their own mechanisms for the accumulation of cultural capital. Second, urbanisation and its social effects. Following Gellner, the connections of these two processes with nationalism are readily evident: the link with education, because, as he has stressed, “the minimal requirement for full citizenship, for effective moral membership of a modern community, is literacy” and the connection with migration to cities, because the strains of anomie as an effect of massive urbanisation create ideal conditions for identity politics.¹ The relationship between modernity and nationalism remains ambivalent in this model, since there is an

inverse relationship between the ideology and the reality of nationalism. The self-image of nationalism involves the stress of folk, folklore, popular culture, etc. In fact, nationalism becomes important precisely when these things become artificial.²

One combination that facilitates the flourishing of nationalism, then, might be the conjunction of modern means (mass media, a broadening cultural market, etc.) and the desire to construe a perennial identity in the absence of customary social bonds that would make any such attempt seem superfluous.³

In this chapter, I will argue that the wider appeal of revisionism after 1955 indeed developed alongside, firstly, a rapid modernisation of cultural life and, secondly, debates about urbanisation. There was not necessarily a direct or causal connection between these processes. It would be misleading to see Argentine nationalist intellectuals as promoters of the most important developments in cultural and intellectual life. The role of both reactionary *nacionalistas* and populist writers in processes such as the transformation of the book market or the renovation of the higher education

* Risieri Frondizi, “La universidad y sus misiones” (October-November 1956), reproduced in Beatriz Sarlo (ed.), *La batalla de las ideas (1943-1973)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 2001), p. 318 and Rodolfo Puiggrós, *La universidad del pueblo* (Buenos Aires: Crisis, 1974), p. 29.

¹ Gellner, *Thought and Change*, pp. 147-178. The quote is from p. 159.

² *Ibid.*, p. 162.

³ This argument about modernisation and an increase in anomie as factors favourable for the spread of nationalism has been made very often. See e.g. Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds.), *The invention*, “Introduction”, pp. 4-5.

system was negligible. Among those who after 1955 contributed to Buenos Aires living up to its self-image as a cosmopolitan city at the forefront of the latest international trends in culture, arts or science, we will search in vain for any of the nationalist intellectuals that have been mentioned in the previous chapter. With the partial exception of Gálvez, Argentina's nationalist intellectuals lacked international reputations. As I will argue, virtually all of them found themselves in a subordinate position in relation to dominant trends in academia and other areas of intellectual activities.

Nor did nationalists alone "invent" the issue of urbanisation, to be then exploited for their political goals. Internal migration was one of the main concerns of intellectual debates after 1955. If, up to the 1920s, the strongest migratory impact had come from overseas, the following decades had seen urbanisation with migrants from the pampas and the littoral provinces. The effects of this internal migration were still evident in Buenos Aires in the 1960s, now accompanied by a further influx of migrants from the North-western and Northern provinces.⁴ The proportion of the population residing in cities rose from 52.2 percent in 1950 to approximately 70 percent in 1975 and the population of Greater Buenos Aires grew from approximately 5.2m in 1950 to seven million in 1960 and over nine million in 1970, when it was still the largest metropolis in Latin America.⁵ Throughout the period from 1930 to 1970, Buenos Aires' society was in a state of fluidity, accommodating a stream of migrants whose values and habits often differed markedly from those of long-term *porteño* residents. As José Luis Romero remarked in 1976, "no such [...] crisis had arisen in Latin America since the irruption of Creole society." But, "as this was repeated, a discussion that harked back to old arguments was resumed", in the form of "a superficial analogy between the Creole groups [...], some constituted in *montoneras*, and the new urban masses."⁶ As I will try to show, revisionism gained currency as an attempt to redefine national identity in view of contemporary debates about internal migration. Migrant workers of the decades after 1930 were often understood as the latter-day descendants of the rural

⁴ See generally Javier Auyero and Rodrigo Hobert, "'¿Y esto es Buenos Aires?' Los contrastes del proceso de urbanización", in: Daniel James (ed.), *Violencia, proscripción y autoritarismo (1955-1976)* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2003), pp. 213-244.

⁵ Kenneth Ruddle and Mukhtar Hamour (eds.), *Statistical Abstracts of Latin America: 1969* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1970), p. 76 for the last figure, C. Paul Roberts and Takako Kohda (eds.), *Statistical Abstracts of Latin America: 1966* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1967), p. 61 for the figures of Greater Buenos Aires in 1950 and 1960 and James W. Wilkie and Stephen Haber (eds.), *Statistical Abstracts of Latin America: 1980*, vol. 21 (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1981), p. 87 for the estimation of urbanisation.

⁶ José Luis Romero, *Latinoamérica: las ciudades y las ideas* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2004), p. 378.

culture of *caudillismo* that revisionists exalted as the authentic embodiment of Argentine national identity.

The debate about internal migration became tied to a political question: how to interpret Peronism. Was populism not the political expression par excellence of these internal migrants, who soon came to be called *cabecitas negras* (little black heads)? The search for cultural and political identities appeared to be only two sides of the same coin. Federico Neiburg has persuasively argued that, under these circumstances, “‘explaining Peronism’ was synonymous with ‘explaining Argentina’”.⁷ After Perón’s downfall there was indeed a widely shared perception that Peronism had brought to the surface certain problematic and hitherto neglected aspects of Argentina’s social reality and, by implication, that the unravelling of the enigma of Peronism held the key for understanding Argentina. Not surprisingly, literary, essayistic and scientific attempts to come to terms with Peronism achieved broad dissemination in this period. Due to the ongoing political weight of Peronism, this was not only an academic discussion. The task of explaining Peronism seemed politically all the more urgent, the clearer it became that successive political endeavours to integrate Perón’s illegalised and alienated followers into the political system (especially President Arturo Frondizi’s project) did not show satisfactory results. Furthermore, as the successive debacles of attempts to divert the working class’ allegiance away from the deposed leader became undeniable, the participants in debates about Peronism were impelled to position themselves in relation to the outlawed mass movement in one way or another. In this way, questions of cultural identity which had become more pressing due to the effects of internal migration were increasingly politicised.

This chapter will contextualise nationalist and populist writers within these debates. The main argument is that the particular kind of cultural modernisation that took place in Argentina after 1955 led to a situation in which the irregular distribution of cultural capital among intellectuals became politicised. As a result, populist intellectuals (most of whom can also be classified as revisionists) formed a distinct group in the most important debates of the late 1950s and 1960s, inasmuch as they felt marginalised from the most prestigious institutions of intellectual life. Whilst the themes addressed in revisionist writings closely resembled the general intellectual concerns of the period —especially regarding internal migration and Peronism— the

⁷ Neiburg, *Os intelectuais*, p. 14. See also Federico Neiburg, “Ciencias sociales y mitologías nacionales: la constitución de la sociología en la Argentina y la invención del peronismo”, *Desarrollo Económico*, vol. 34, no. 136 (1995), pp. 533-556.

position from which revisionists made their arguments set them apart from other intellectuals. As a first step, the main traits of cultural modernisation in general and the restructuring of universities in particular will be sketched. Against this background, I will then cast the various interpretations of the link between internal migration and Peronism, beginning with sociology as the main example of an academic understanding of Peronism.⁸ This will then be linked to non-academic writings that were concerned with similar questions, using the essays of nationalists and populists as primary sources. Finally, I will return to the question of how the fragmentation intellectual field contributed to the specificities of nationalist discourse.

1. Universities and modernisation after 1955

To become effective on a massive scale, printed political ideas—including nationalist ones— first require a market. With literacy rates surpassing most Southern European countries, conditions had always been favourable for this in Argentina. Literacy rose from 86 percent in 1947 to 91 percent in 1960, but the explosion of the number of students in higher education was the most important factor in cultural developments. It more or less doubled in every decade after 1950: there were approximately 82,000 students in 1950; 181,000 in 1960; 322,000 in 1971; and 620,000 in 1977, by when almost half were women. The growth of numbers in Argentina was slightly below the average of the Americas so that, by the mid-seventies, Argentina came only fifth in the Americas in absolute figures, but since Argentina neither had the continually high birth rates of other Latin American countries nor the post-war baby boom of North America, the relative impact of this explosion was nonetheless accentuated. In the late sixties, Argentina had far more students per one million inhabitants than any other Latin American country, more than France and twice as many as the United Kingdom. By 1975, more than a quarter of all Argentines between 20 and 24 years of age were enrolled in higher education institutions. The humanities grew disproportionately: between 1962 and 1968 alone the number of students in humanities tripled and in 1966, a third of all students who graduated did so in humanities.⁹ Yet, paralleling

⁸ On sociology in the 1960s see Lucas Rubinich, “La modernización cultural y la irrupción de la sociología”, in: James (ed.), *Violencia, proscripción y autoritarismo*, pp. 247-279 and Francisco Delich, *Crítica y autocrítica de la razón extraviada: veinticinco años de sociología* (Caracas: El Cid, 1977).

⁹ In comparison, in the USA, the number of *history* graduates between the early fifties and the early sixties doubled (John Higham, *History: professional scholarship in America*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 236). All the figures given here should be treated with care, because

developments in most other Spanish American countries, there were also other, new disciplines, especially sociology and psychology, both of which were inaugurated between 1955 and 1958 in several Argentine universities.

Two remarks are apposite in relation to this rise in student numbers. Firstly, it was accompanied by broader cultural modernisation. One of the more immediate connections concerned publishing. Between its foundation in 1958 and the military coup of 1966, when the government seized control of it, UBA's university press (Eudeba) published 802 titles and sold roughly twelve million copies.¹⁰ Eudeba thus became the single most important factor in a veritable revolution of the book market.¹¹ The main novelty were cheap editions sold through newsstands on *porteño* streets, a sales strategy pioneered by Eudeba and imitated by the main publisher of revisionist literature, Arturo Peña Lillo, which massified reading habits. Another novelty were bestseller lists, from 1962 onwards published on a weekly basis in the news magazine *Primera Plana*. Produced by a staff of professional journalists and modelled upon the American magazine *Time*, *Primera Plana* became a symbol of Argentina having joined the age of modern mass media with its colourful full-page advertisements for cars, office furniture or *haute couture*.¹² Changes in the culture of journalism and publishing were complemented by much broader developments, statistically reflected in such diverse phenomena as the growth of cinema audiences (average yearly per capita visits grew from 6.3 in 1953 to 15.5 in 1967), the spread of psychoanalysis or the rise of divorce rates.¹³ Secondly, these were social transformations that, once accelerated or (depending on your viewpoint) released by the downfall of Perón, largely

of national differences in education systems (one reason why figures in the USA were much higher) and in survey methods, but what matters is the general trend. Figures on Argentina and many of the international comparisons differed only minimally, wherever I looked them up. They are taken from Kenneth Ruddle and K. Barrows (eds.), *Statistical Abstracts of Latin America: 1972* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center, 1973) pp. 198 and 208-209, Wilkie and Haber (eds.), *Statistical Abstracts 1980*, pp. 133 and 139, Charles Lewis Taylor and Michael Craig Hudson, *World handbook of political and social indicators* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 229-231, Jorge B. Rivera, *El escritor y la industria cultural* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1985), p. 634 and Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 78.

¹⁰ Sarlo (ed.), *La batalla*, p. 69. The corresponding figures for 1959 to 1962 are 200 new titles and approximately three million copies (Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 77).

¹¹ The annual output of titles grew in the two decades after 1955 (from approximately 3,500 titles in 1955 to 6,700 in 1976) and so did the number of copies produced for each title. See Raúl H. Bottaro, *La edición de libros en Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Troquel, 1964), pp. 30-32 and Wilkie and Haber (eds.), *Statistical Abstracts 1980*, p. 170.

¹² On *Primera Plana* see Maite Alvarado and Renata Rocco-Cuzzi, "'Primera Plana': el nuevo discurso periodístico de la década del 60", *Punto de Vista*, no. 22 (1984), pp. 27-30.

¹³ See generally Peter Waldmann, "Anomia social y violencia", in: Alain Rouquié (ed.), *Argentina, hoy* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1982), pp. 206-248. The cinema figure is from Wilkie and Haber (eds.), *Statistical Abstracts 1980*, p. 174. The comparable cinema figure for West European countries today is usually below 3.

escaped the control of governments. From a broad perspective, it seems that governmental policies regarding higher education reacted to *faits accomplis* rather than following a clear programme. Often, decisions seemed odd in view of the ideological orientation of the decision-maker: a Catholic *nacionalista* as education minister (Atilio Dell’Oro Maini) assisted the initial drive towards the renovation of public universities after 1955. Frondizi’s developmentalist administration (1958-62) allowed for the foundation of Catholic universities and the culturally reactionary rulers of the so-called Argentine Revolution (1966-73) further expanded public higher education, thereby revealing the suicidal tendencies of their regime.

Yet the Argentine version of the worldwide cultural revolution was also linked to the domestic political context. Despite the Córdoba Reform movement of 1918, Argentine universities continued to depend upon state power for most of the twentieth century. The main instrument to bring universities under political control was the president’s constitutional faculty to “intervene” them and appoint trustee rectors (*interventores*). Such interventions occurred repeatedly, in particular after military coups, but also at the beginning of both presidencies of Perón (1946 and 1973). Not surprisingly, descriptions of the institutional trajectory of universities conventionally follow the periodisation that is marked by different governments and one refers to the “Peronist University” or the later “Reformist University”. The interventionist tendencies of the state were strong under Perón, whose programmes for higher education vacillated between indifference, efforts to curb a bastion of anti-Peronist opposition and an ingrained disdain for the Reformist demands of 1918. The climate in public universities under Perón has thus usually been described as somewhere between stifling and obscurantist.¹⁴ The coup of 1955, in turn, opened a phase of renovation and improvement of scholarly standards, which was cut off by the intervention of 1966, leading to massive resignations of academic staff. Finally, after the Peronist return to power in 1973, public universities were briefly dominated by the radicalised youth sectors of Peronism, especially the Montoneros, who then became the victims of purges by the most right-wing groups within Peronism, from whom the military dictatorship took over in 1976.

Among those who were to gain academic weight after the coup of 1955, the overthrow of Perón’s regime induced optimistic forecasts for academia, as expressed

¹⁴ See Carlos Mangone and Jorge A. Warley, *Universidad y peronismo (1946-1955)* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1984) and Silvia Sigal, “Intelectuales y peronismo”, in: Torre (ed.), *Los años peronistas (1943-1955)*, pp. 481-522.

in a special issue of the cultural journal *Sur* under the programmatic title *Por la reconstrucción nacional*.¹⁵ Liberal intellectuals who had felt alienated by the stifling intellectual climate during the Peronist era now came to the fore and tried to assert hegemony under the new conditions. Similarly, the student union of the capital's university, the Federación Universitaria de Buenos Aires (FUBA), bolstered by its traditions of anti-Peronism and support for the University Reform, seized the moment of 1955 in order to occupy university buildings and to lay claim to the students' right of participation in decision-making. In a programmatic document entitled "*We are the University*", the students vowed to fulfil the programme of the University Reform.¹⁶ The education minister Dell'Oro Maini indeed allowed the (re-)implementation of the Reform's primary aspiration, the tripartite government —consisting of teachers, students and alumni— as the central governing body of universities. FUBA also succeeded in imposing its preferred candidate as rector of the UBA, José Luis Romero, a medievalist with political inclinations towards socialism and a supporter of the University Reform. Romero's successors, including Risieri Frondizi, the later president's brother, continued to lead the UBA in a Reformist spirit. Throughout the period ranging from 1955 to 1966, by implementing an academic system of scientific standards that worked without overt political meddling, Argentine universities had a relatively high degree of autonomy from governments.

This is not to say that the Reformist University was apolitical. Conflicts arose when governmental policies were perceived to run contrary to the goals of the Reform of 1918, which became evident in 1958, when Frondizi's administration tried to introduce private universities. Already under the Liberating Revolution, education minister Dell'Oro Maini had championed private initiative in higher education, which was mainly seen as a concession to the Catholic Church's longstanding claim to run its own universities.¹⁷ Romero had already resigned in opposition to these plans. The conflict simmered for three years until in September 1958, against the opposition of virtually all bodies of student opinion as well as of his brother Risieri, President Arturo Frondizi exerted sufficient pressure for Congress to promulgate law 14,557, allowing

¹⁵ Tulio Halperín Donghi, "La historiografía argentina en la hora de la libertad", in *Sur*, no. 237 (November-December 1955), reproduced in Sarlo (ed.), *La batalla*, pp. 402-407.

¹⁶ Reproduced in Alberto Ciria and Horacio Sanguinetti (eds.), *La Reforma Universitaria* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1983), vol. 1, p. 157.

¹⁷ Article 28 of decree-law 6403 from December 1955 envisaged the creation of private universities. Between then and 1958, this article led to embittered political confrontations and caused the fall of Dell'Oro Maini as well as the resignation of Romero.

the creation of private universities. In practice, the measure did favour mostly Catholic institutions, which were now officially recognised as universities —such as the Universidad del Salvador or the Universidad Católica Argentina (UCA), to mention only the two best-known examples from the Federal Capital—, it also enabled non-religious foundations, notably of the Instituto Torcuato di Tella. Although the Instituto di Tella became an important repository for artistic and scientific innovation, especially after the coup of 1966,¹⁸ private universities generally played a secondary role in Argentina's intellectual life before the 1980s, especially in comparison to other Latin American countries, such as Chile or Colombia.

Despite the dispute between the UBA and successive governments, populist sectors of public opinion identified the Reformist University with anti-Peronism. This was facilitated by the fact that the restoration of university autonomy after 1955 was the outcome of the measures of a military regime keen to eradicate Peronism from Argentine politics rather than the result of the achievements of staff and students. In 1955, many of the lecturers who had held posts during the Peronist University had to leave their offices, whilst those who had been dismissed or who had resigned after the military coup of 1943 were reinstated. Although this reinstatement was only symbolic because, afterwards, everybody had to apply anew in open competitions, in many cases the reinstated teachers won these competitions.¹⁹ It was difficult to determine whether they did so because of academic or political criteria, since scholarly excellence, cultural capital and anti-Peronist credentials so often coincided. Academic standards did improve after 1955, but the procedure through which this was enforced gave reason to suspect that the new dominant groups in public universities had arrived in their positions because they were anti-Peronists. The authorities perceived no tension between de-Peronisation and the implementation of academic standards. Since the practice of appointing staff during the Peronist decade was seen (in many cases not without reason) as politically motivated, the ensuing academic de-Peronisation was portrayed as a necessary measure to restore the universities' autonomy from politics. The government's higher education policy thus became a lesson in the pitfalls of

¹⁸ See John King, *El Di Tella y el desarrollo cultural argentino en la década del sesenta* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de Arte Gaglianone, 1985) on artists and Mariano Ben Plotkin and Federico Neiburg, "Elites intelectuales y ciencias sociales en la Argentina de los años 60: el Instituto Torcuato Di Tella y la Nueva Economía", *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2003), pp. 119-149 on economists.

¹⁹ See Mónica Esti Rein, *Politics and education in Argentina 1946-1962*, translated by Martha Grezenback (Armonk and London: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), pp. 165-167.

authoritarian liberalism, creating resentment among those who were barred from the Reformist University. The argument that universities were an ideological tool of anti-Peronism began to sound more plausible.

Many of the intellectuals who were expelled because they were deemed to be close to Peronism can also be identified as revisionists, both *nacionalistas* and populists.²⁰ Since the leaders of the Liberating Revolution identified *nacionalismo* with Peronism, Rosas with Perón (see chapter five), the experience of the purges of 1955 bound together many of those who wrote revisionist history. It was as if the winners and the losers of 1955 could be divided into cosmopolitan liberals and socialists, on the one hand, and nationalists, Peronists and revisionists, on the other (with a heterogeneous group including communists in neither of these two camps). For example, by the end of 1955, two of the later best-known revisionist writers, Rosa and the Marxist-Peronist Juan José Hernández Arregui, had to give up their academic jobs, which meant that they now found themselves in an economically more precarious situation.²¹ In general, especially those former lecturers who could rely neither on a wealthy family nor on a regular job had to find other sources of income. Many of the expelled began to seek alternative channels for articulating their ideas, usually in journalism. For example, Rosa first secured a post at the Instituto de Estudios Políticos in Madrid, a formerly Francoist think tank, and, after his return to Argentina in 1958, began to write for weekly papers and magazines, whilst reorganising the Instituto Rosas. Later, he wrote the script for Miguel Antín's feature film *Juan Manuel de Rosas* of 1971, which popularised central themes of revisionism.²² Others continued a more limited degree of teaching in surrogate areas, for example in secondary schools or in adult education linked to Peronist trade unions. After 1958 some revisionists were employed by Catholic universities. The historian Julio A. Torres or the neo-Peronist politician

²⁰ The information on the professional careers of revisionists stems from a large number of primary and secondary sources and the generalisations, therefore, cannot be referenced in detail. As for primary sources, periodicals in which they published or back covers of their books often contained valuable information. Furthermore I consulted the *Programas de Estudio* of UBA's Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and the university's *Resoluciones del Consejo Superior*. For facilitating my access to the latter, I would like to thank Eugenio Gallinar. Useful secondary works on history as a discipline at the UBA and the UNLP are: Buchbinder, *Historia de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras*, esp. pp. 155-217 and Zarrilli, Gutiérrez and Graciano, *Los estudios históricos*, esp. pp. 141-190.

²¹ Rosa had taught at the UBA, Hernández Arregui at the UNLP.

²² See *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 10, August 1971, p. 40 on the film. Rosa seems to have evaded references to his stay in Spain from the 1960s onwards, but the *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, no. 17 (1958), pp. 108-109 recorded his "most brilliant intellectual activity" in Madrid. I would like to thank José Álvarez Junco for clarifying that the Instituto de Estudios Políticos was no longer a bastion of Francoism by the mid-fifties.

and sociologist Rodolfo Tecera del Franco became professors at the Universidad del Salvador, whilst Villegas Oromí, a founding member of the Instituto Rosas, was granted a minor administrative post at the Cultural Institute of the UCA. Although nationalist intellectuals were not categorically banned from public universities,²³ most of them had to retreat into other areas. The emergence of these divisions in the intellectual field were likely to become politicised, since the excluded identified the Reformist University with anti-Peronism.

2. Internal migrants and interpretations of Peronism

Alongside these fragmentations developed intellectual debates about the nature of Peronism. Among academics, sociologists took the lead. Created as an independent discipline at UBA's Faculty of Philosophy and Letters in 1957, Gino Germani became the primary figure in the discipline. Born in Rome in 1911, Germani had arrived in Argentina in 1934, where he had gained academic experience with quantitative sociological studies. During the Peronist decade he had remained outside academia and frequented anti-Peronist circles.²⁴ Conceptually indebted to structuralism, functionalism and modernisation theory, observing North American trends in the discipline, Germani became known for postulating what he called "scientific sociology".²⁵ According to him, disinterested scientific knowledge had previously been thwarted by the state's indifference towards statistics and Argentine intellectuals' predilection for interpretative essayism, which in his eyes amounted to a combination of an unscientific literary pastime and an ideologically charged enterprise. Rejecting this tradition of *ensayismo* and social philosophy, which he discarded as "speculative", he invoked the "necessity of organising the knowledge of social reality in a systematic way and in a scientific spirit."²⁶ This spirit, in practice conducive to the accumulation of large amounts of data, would allow for scientific distance from the object of study. The renovation and relative autonomy of universities after 1955 seemed to be favourable to the implementation of these designs.

²³ For example, García Mellid and Hernández Arregui gave talks at UBA's Law Faculty in the late fifties: *Mayoría*, no. 34, 25 November 1957 on García Mellid and Norberto Galasso, *Juan José Hernández Arregui: del peronismo al socialismo* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del Pensamiento Nacional, 1986), p. 90 on Hernández Arregui.

²⁴ Neiburg, *Os intelectuais*, pp. 157-166.

²⁵ A brief look at the footnotes of Germani's works suffices to see the influence of North American scholars, especially Talcott Parsons.

²⁶ Quoted in Neiburg, *Os intelectuais*, p. 182.

Due to its immediate political relevance, scientific distance was seen as critical to the sociological interpretation of Peronism, which now became a point of focus in the discipline as well as a sub-area for achieving academic distinction. Although only a part of Germani's best-known work, published in 1962, was explicitly devoted to Peronism, it was this part that attracted most attention. In this study, Germani cast Argentina's socio-political developments in the twentieth century as a transition from a "traditional society" to a "mass society", in the course of which rural workers migrated to the large cities in search of employment in expanding industries.²⁷ Industrialisation, he argued, had not been accompanied by the creation of political mechanisms or interest groups that would have represented the demands of these migrant workers and would have allowed their democratic participation.²⁸ This explained the emergence of Peronism, described as a local variation of totalitarianism, which "uses an *ersatz* of [=substitute for] participation, creates among the masses the illusion that now they are the decisive element, the active subject, in guiding public affairs."²⁹ The groups that irrationally fell victim to this illusion, in Germani's view, were the politically inexperienced migrants from the interior who had moved to Greater Buenos Aires throughout the decade that preceded Perón's ascent to power. According to his interpretation,

[t]hese great masses, which had been rapidly transplanted to the cities [...], gained political significance without at the same time finding the necessary institutional channels to integrate themselves into the normal functioning of democracy. [Combined with other factors, this] left these masses "in [a condition of] availability", made them an element ready to be taken advantage of by any venture that would offer them some sort of participation.³⁰

Germani's famous dualism distinguished these migrant workers from an established working class in the cities, consisting largely of descendants of immigrants, who by the mid-1940s had acquired a high degree of unionisation, often under socialist or communist auspices. Contrary to these skilled industrial workers, the most striking characteristic of the migrants was their "spontaneous or improvised participation, without training or discipline."³¹ Having previously tarried beyond the reach of modernisation processes, they came to embody the socio-cultural essence of Peronism. This became known as the orthodox interpretation of Peronism among scholars.

²⁷ Gino Germani, *Política y sociedad en una época de transición: de la sociedad tradicional a la sociedad de masas* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1962).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-162.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 230-231.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

Germani's interpretation was dealt a serious blow with the publication of Juan Carlos Portantiero and Miguel Murmis' study on the origins of Peronism in 1971, which, from a Marxist perspective, refuted the notion of a dualist working class and interpreted Perón's regime mainly as the outcome of a cycle of capital accumulation without redistribution.³² Whilst Germani's thesis never recovered from this critique and became discredited among academics,³³ the thrust of his interpretation, namely that Peronism symbolised the emergence of social sectors from the country's interior, characterised by their "non-modern" cultural attributes, was a widespread assumption in intellectual debates of the 1960s, far beyond the confines of sociologists. In this "invention of Peronism", as Neiburg has called these debates,³⁴ the fusion of a cultural identity (the internal migrant) with a political one (Peronism) became a main feature. The undisciplined migrant workers who allegedly incorporated the essence of Peronism came to be seen as the latter-day descendants of the nineteenth-century *gaucho* hordes that followed a *caudillo*. In this point, most interpretations of Peronism of the period from 1955 to 1966, although expressed from different political and institutional standpoints and couched in very different literary genres, showed remarkable similarities.

In the above-mentioned issue of *Sur* from late 1955, deriving his authority from his status as an internationally acclaimed writer —i.e. from a source which differed markedly from Germani's scientism—, Jorge Luis Borges, who was named director of the Biblioteca Nacional by the regime of the Liberating Revolution in 1955, drew out some of the tropes that were often employed in depictions of Peronism. His article, entitled *L'illusion comique*, was an allegory of the events of 17 October 1945, a crucial day in the Peronist liturgy, when a mass demonstration on Buenos Aires' central Plaza de Mayo had successfully demanded Perón's release from prison.³⁵ Two major themes stood out in Borges' article. Firstly, in his account, the demonstrators appeared as "vulgar" hordes that rampaged the symbolic city centre. The word that Borges used for the "accumulating" enforcement squads [*amontonando*] bore the connotation of the

³² Miguel Murmis and Juan Carlos Portantiero, *Estudios sobre los orígenes del peronismo*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 1972), esp. p. 118 for a critique of Germani.

³³ See Mariano Plotkin, "The changing perceptions of Peronism: a review essay", in: James P. Brennan (ed.), *Peronism and Argentina* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Books, 1998), pp. 29-54 and Tulio Halperín Donghi, "Algunas observaciones sobre Germani, el surgimiento del peronismo y los migrantes internos", *Desarrollo Económico*, vol. 15, no. 56 (1975), pp. 765-781.

³⁴ Neiburg, *Os intelectuais*.

³⁵ Jorge Luis Borges, 'L'illusion comique', in *Sur*, no. 237, November-December 1955, pp. 9-10, reprinted in Sarlo (ed.), *La batalla*, p. 122.

nineteenth-century *gaucho* bands from the interior, the *montoneras*, encapsulating the impossibility of their assimilation to civilised urban life and their unyielding hostility towards the cosmopolitan port city. Secondly, Borges depicted this invasion as a sort of nightmarish theatrical production whose actors irrationally performed on the basis of a peculiar blend of coercion and willingness. He thereby revisited the carnivalesque motif that was already present in his literary account of 17 October, *La fiesta del monstruo*. Both qualifiers for Peronism —the vulgar hordes from the interior and their irrationality— can be seen as associated to the idea of a persistent barbarism that had not yet been eradicated by the advance of civilisation. Despite the differences of genre between Borges and Germani, in the writings of both, Perón’s supporters were thus characterised by their irrationality and their origin from the interior provinces.

The association between Peronism and the traditional culture of the interior was also made by pro-Peronist authors. In contrast to Borges’ abhorrence at Peronism and Germani’s scientific sobriety, their writings glorified the supposedly authentic traits of Argentine nationality that were embodied in Peronism and the migrants. Marxist-nationalist essayists such as Jorge Abelardo Ramos or Hernández Arregui or populists like Jauretche not only differed from scientific sociologists in that they were outside academe, but also in that they stressed that their writings should be put to concrete political uses. Yet the general assumptions beneath their interpretation of Peronism resembled Germani’s. As scholars who refuted Germani’s thesis have remarked, central traits of this thesis were shared by populist writers who depicted the Peronist movement as the latest instance of a division that supposedly pervaded Argentine history.³⁶ Germani’s orthodox interpretation converged most clearly with populist depictions of Peronism in the leitmotiv of the internal migrant, who came to be called *cabecita negra* in Peronist vocabulary.³⁷ Whilst the term originally bore pejorative racial connotations, it became a positive signifier of Peronist identity, often connected to the imagery of the *gaucho*.³⁸ An oft-cited text by Scalabrini Ortiz, first published in 1949, was typical of how populist intellectuals portrayed what they saw as the cultural essence of Peronism. Describing the scenes on the Plaza de Mayo on 17 October 1945, he wrote:

³⁶ Murmis and Portantiero, *Estudios*, pp. 62-64. Walter Little, “The popular origins of Peronism”, in: David Rock (ed.), *Argentina in the twentieth century* (London: Duckworth, 1975), p. 163 and p. 166.

³⁷ For an early example after 1955, see Antonio Castro, “La lección nacional de los cabecitas negras”, *Columnas del Nacionalismo Marxista de Liberación Nacional*, no. 3, 1 September 1957, p. 3.

³⁸ To name only two examples of a potentially endless list, both taken from the Peronist press in the 1960s: *Relevo*, no. 1, 17 October 1962, p. 5 and *Dinamis*, no. 137, November 1967, pp. 42-55.

In front of my eyes I saw swarthy features, burly arms and strapping torsos marching [...]. It was the strangest crowd the imagination can conceive of. The traces of their origin could be detected on their faces. [...] It was the subsoil of the roused fatherland. It was the basic foundations of the nation that were revealed just as the past ages of the soil are revealed in the upheaval of an earthquake. It was the substratum of our idiosyncrasy and of our collective possibilities that were right there in their primordiality.³⁹

In Scalabrini's view, their provenance from the "subsoil", which can also be read as an allegory for the interior, implied their "primordiality" and a state of mind that was not yet corrupted by the processes of modernisation. Unlike the Europeanised sectors of the working class, they had resisted the temptation of "foreign" ideas such as Marxism.

Germani's notion of working-class dualism was also shared by pro-Peronist essayists. In particular left-wing authors who tried to disentangle themselves from the supposedly European ideals of Argentina's traditional Left stressed the split between skilled industrial workers (identified with the Socialist and Communist Parties) and the new migrant proletariat that allegedly formed the bedrock of Peronism. For example, Alberto Belloni, a leader of the union of state employees (ATE) who came from a socialist background but began to sympathise with Peronism after 1955, explained that, in the 1930s, in Greater Buenos Aires there had emerged a new proletariat of "native ancestry", made up of internal migrants.⁴⁰ In another book, Belloni made explicit his notion that there had emerged two different wings of the working class: unionised workers, who were descendants of European immigrants, whereas the

other wing of the country's working class movement consists of the stream of native youth, offspring of the creoles and *gauchos* of the *montoneras*, who descend on the port-city. [...] They have a virgin mentality without much experience or consciousness of their situation as a class in modern society.

In Belloni's view, their "virgin mentality" not only made them susceptible to Peronism, but also meant that they were the "real face of our people". The fact that "[t]he strength of these men came from the very entrails of the earth and the Argentine people [...] makes them capable of marking out a new national course."⁴¹

Whereas Germani dissected the socio-cultural stratification of the working class in order to explain why large parts of it had fallen victim to what he saw as totalitarian demagoguery, populist intellectuals hailed the new workers as an authentic national-

³⁹ *CGT de los Argentinos*, no. 25, 17 October 1968, p. 6. Also reproduced in *Compañero*, no. 17, 16 October 1963, p. 3. Originally published in *El Laborista*, 16 October 1949.

⁴⁰ Alberto Belloni, *Del anarquismo al peronismo: historia del movimiento obrero argentino* (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1960), p. 59.

⁴¹ Alberto Belloni, *Peronismo y socialismo nacional* (Buenos Aires: Coyoacán, 1962), p. 13.

revolutionary movement and depicted them as the latest instance of a longer historical genealogy, moulded in a revisionist understanding of history. For example, the Trotskyist nationalist Ramos posited the socio-political origins of Peronism under the heading “The *cabecitas* come to Buenos Aires”:

In only few years we saw a new Argentina appearing before our eyes [...]. The *cabecitas negras*, as the wrathful and blind oligarchy later called them, descended from the Mediterranean provinces. [...] Descendants of the eponymous *montonero*, they turned into industrial workers and became the backbone of our young proletariat. They arrived without unionist or political traditions, elevated in the ladder of civilisation through passing from the countryside to the city, enshrouded in an elemental nationalism, vernacular, naïve and profound [...]. In the social subsoil seethed the necessity of a new economic policy.

Whilst this process first led to the aberration of the 1943 coup, the native or new working class, on 17 October 1945, paved the way for a movement that “manifested the national will to be.”⁴² Similarly, the Marxist-Peronist Eduardo Astesano wrote that the

participation of the people in political action [...] had already been manifest in the *montoneras* and in *rosismo* and, in a distant future, would come back [...] on a certain 17 October.

The continuity with the past, in Astesano’s view, was encapsulated in a “*gaucho* working class” which he opposed to the skilled immigrant workers of Buenos Aires.⁴³ Hence, while populist intellectuals, in contrast to Germani, claimed to be the spokespersons of the marginalised new proletariat and of Peronism, the underlying diagnosis of a division between the interior and the established urban working class was easily compatible with the orthodox sociological thesis. In this sense, the interpretation of Peronism offered by populist and neo-revisionist writers like Ramos or Astesano mirrored understandings that were widespread at the time.

3. Scientific sociology and Peronised intellectuals

However, populist essayists stressed their opposition to academic views, identifying them with liberalism and anti-Peronism. There are many examples that bespeak the populist resentment against academics. The following passage from a book by the left-

⁴² *Lucha Obrera*, no. 5, 22 December 1955. The longer quotation is from Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *De octubre a setiembre: ensayos políticos de Víctor Almagro* (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1959), pp. 342-343.

⁴³ Eduardo B. Astesano, *Martín Fierro y la justicia social: primer manifiesto revolucionario del movimiento obrero argentino* (Buenos Aires: Relevo, 1963), p. 113.

wing nationalist writer Rodolfo Puiggrós —which might as well have been written by Ramos or Astesano— can illustrate this:

Even today, it is taught from the highest ranks of the university professoriate that our country is afflicted by a recurring disease and that we cannot consider ourselves “civilised” until we have eradicated it for ever. It [the disease] is *caudillismo* in its four incarnations: *montoneras*, Creole politics, Yrigoyenist rabble [*chusma*] and *descamisados* or *cabecitas negras* of Peronism. The politicians and sociologists who are dazzled by the declining Europeanist civilisation see in these ups and downs the expression [...] of the same substantial barbarism, which has not been stamped out.⁴⁴

In this view, academic positions corresponded with political viewpoints. The academic claim of scientific distance to the object of analysis, according to this account, could not conceal that “politicians and sociologists” were together in their Europeanist arrogance towards the supposedly authentic expressions of Argentine nationality.

In a similar vein, Ramos constructed two opposed historical genealogies, in which academics like Germani represented the most recent exponent of the supposedly anti-popular and anti-national intellectual establishment. In Ramos’ view, this establishment consisted in an alliance between the traditional Left, embodied in the founder of the Socialist Party Juan B. Justo, the liberal oligarchy, for which he singled out Mitre, and imperialism. According to Ramos, the old Left’s succumbing to liberalism under Argentina’s “semi-colonial” conditions had meant that

[o]ne of the weaknesses of our national and popular revolution [...] is that there has to date been no scientific and Marxist critique of our historical past, which is indispensable for fully understanding the national and social struggles in Argentina and the function of the popular masses in these struggles.⁴⁵

In the book in which Ramos set out to accomplish this task, *Revolución y contrarrevolución en la Argentina*, the first part of which was published in 1956 to an enormous success that led to several enlargements and re-publications, he cast Germani as an intellectual successor of Justo’s reputed anti-popular socialism. Justo’s

“scientific theory of history” was as little scientific as it was Marxist. [...] Yet curiously, his ideas of how to evaluate the historical process would become precursors of the modern “sociology” carved out according to the North American model and propagated by abstract statisticians [*estadígrafos*] of the likes of Gino Germani or by *cipayo* “Marxists” of the lower ranks, who, impotent to understand Argentine reality, kneel before Pythagorean divinity.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Rodolfo Puiggrós, *El peronismo: sus causas*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Carlos Pérez, 1971), p. 18.

⁴⁵ *Lucha Obrera*, no. 8, 25 January 1956.

⁴⁶ Jorge Abelardo Ramos, *Revolución y contrarrevolución en la Argentina*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1965), vol. 2, p. 80. The term *cipayo* is untranslatable. It is probably an etymologic derivate of the word “sepoy”. According to Ramos himself, who frequently used the term, it originally referred to

Although Ramos claimed that his argument was based on a political criterion, it is revealing that the target of his attack were intellectuals-politicians (especially Mitre and Justo, about whom he developed a veritable obsession) or intellectuals (Germani) rather than politicians. The symbolically violent rhetoric of this passage and the fact that Ramos' own understanding of Peronism had shown similarities to Germani's suggest that the rationale behind this attack was not so much differences in interpretation of Argentina's reality, but rather a resentment against what Ramos and other populist intellectuals perceived as a mandarinic intelligentsia.

Attacks against the Reformist University were the specialty of nationalist and populist *intellectuals* who were excluded from public universities and not of the Peronist rank and file. In the Peronist press directed towards a working class readership, academic debates usually passed unnoticed. Yet on the rare occasions when such periodicals engaged with intellectual discussions about the nature of Peronism, Germani appeared in a favourable light. For example, *Dinamis*, the monthly magazine of the union of the light and power workers, introduced a section in 1966 to review books, which the union had acquired for its library. The first review was devoted to Germani's *Política y sociedad*, which was praised for having achieved an objective and scientific evaluation of the significance of Peronism.⁴⁷ Opposition to the Reformist University, therefore, was not primarily a question of Peronists versus anti-Peronists, even though writers such as Puiggrós or Ramos portrayed their polemics as part of this political dichotomy.

Nor was an anti-academic bias confined to the populist Left. Intellectuals of the extreme Right also took issue with public universities. Although, in contrast to Ramos or Puiggrós, the Right pictured academia as a hotbed of communism and moral atrophy, arguments resembled each other in that academics were seen as the promoters of an "anti-national" ideology. A typical example of this view was a front-page article in the reactionary pro-Peronist weekly *Retorno*, entitled "The university against the entire country". The piece was targeted against Ismael Viñas,⁴⁸ Romero, Germani and

natives fighting in the British army in India and was subsequently applied to Cubans fighting for the Spanish in the late nineteenth century. FORJA had introduced it into Argentine political vocabulary (*ibid.*, p. 478). The word was frequently used in the jargon of the national-popular camp. It could mean traitor of the fatherland, someone with affinities to European culture, mercenary of an imperialist power, cosmopolitanist.

⁴⁷ *Dinamis*, no. 112, 4 April 1966.

⁴⁸ Together with his brother David, Ismael Viñas was the main figure behind the cultural journal *Contorno*. In 1956, he was Romero's secretary at the UBA. Later, he was close to Frondizi's wing of the Radical Party and joined the Partido Socialista Argentino de Vanguardia in 1963.

Eudeba, who were lumped together under the claim that they were the fifth column of international communism. To this information, the author added several anecdotes of students who had allegedly been kidnapped and tortured by communists. The article concluded that the institutional safe-haven for these events, the “liberal and democratic” university, had to be eradicated because it “does not serve the nation”. As a consequence, the conditions of the Peronist University had to be reinstated.⁴⁹ Unsurprisingly, one of the main contributors to *Retorno* was the *nacionalista* sociologist Alberto Baldrich, who, after having served as a minister for the military governments of 1943-46 had found a comfortable niche in the Peronist cultural apparatus as a professor at the UBA until 1955, when he had to leave (see also chapter four on him).

Populist intellectuals, virtually all of whom were excluded from the Reformist University, constructed an opposition between the people, whom they claimed to express, and the “intelligentsia”. A good example of this dichotomy were the writings of the essayist Arturo Jauretche. In his widely read book *El medio pelo en la sociedad argentina* of 1966, he referred to the author Beatriz Guido, who was known for her cosmopolitan lifestyle, as “a sub-product of literacy campaigns” and added: “[t]he reader must understand that the space that I am going to devote to her is only justified by the interest of a dissector in front of the anatomic specimen.”⁵⁰ Jauretche opposed his style to a scientific tone and grounded his authority to intervene in intellectual debates on an appeal to the practical experience of the common people, whom he claimed to express through an ostensibly unpretentious and non-academic prose. He wrote that

[t]he Nation is a life, that is to say a continuity, an elemental notion, which nevertheless generally escapes the country’s academic thought, perhaps to the same extent to which [this thought] is disconnected from it [the nation]. There are truths, such as this one, which escape the “intelligentsia” but which are easily accessible to our common countrymen, for the simple reason that they think with common sense and for themselves instead of applying borrowed information and opinions.⁵¹

As the subheading of *El medio pelo* announced, in opposition to the social sciences in public universities, Jauretche advocated a “national sociology”. The book’s blurb enthused that the language of this approach was indebted to everyday forms of expres-

⁴⁹ *Retorno*, no. 60, 1 September 1965.

⁵⁰ Arturo Jauretche, *El medio pelo en la sociedad argentina: apuntes para una sociología nacional*, 9th ed. (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1967), p. 194. The term *medio pelo* (literally middle hair) refers to sectors of the middle class which aspire to acceptance among the upper class.

⁵¹ Jauretche, *Política nacional* (1982), p. 9.

sion among common Argentines.⁵² After an anecdotal example that was meant to prove the general uselessness of statistics—which amounted to the remark that only half of Córdoba’s buildings appeared in official property registers—Jauretche explained that his insights were derived from the experience of everyday life rather than from scholarly training. Invoking José Hernández, the author of the gauchesque epic *Martín Fierro* (first published in 1872), he avowed: “I simply ride along [the discipline of sociology] with ‘halter and lasso’, as Hernández said, a sociologist of ours who was not specialised either.” What a truly “national” sociology needed was the posture of a *gaucho* like Martín Fierro, conducive to the “rectification of the apparently scientific datum by experience [which] requires a degree from the university of life.”⁵³ In this domain, Jauretche portrayed himself as uniquely qualified. As he believed that the option was “[b]etween being an intellectual and being an Argentine”, he affirmed: “I do not accept being defined as an intellectual. [...] I vote for the second. Without reservations.”⁵⁴

Behind the populist claim to speak for the “people” or the “nation” instead of the supposedly anti-national “intelligentsia” often lurked a bitterness for not being recognised as serious intellectuals. Whereas Jauretche attacked the “intelligentsia” with irony and sarcasm, this resentfulness was especially clear in the writings of Hernández Arregui. Against possible methodological reproaches from academics (who were, according to Hernández Arregui, equivalent to the “intelligentsia, [...] the colonised middle classes”) he defended himself for the absence of footnotes in his works:

If I have not done it [include footnotes], this is not because I am unaware of the technique, which is precisely what I have taught to generations of university students, but because—and those gentlemen who confuse reviewing with nit-picking may as well know this—my books do not come from research but from struggle.⁵⁵

The passage not only shows Hernández Arregui’s political commitment, which hardly anyone could have doubted given his Peronist militancy, but also that this commitment implied a positioning against academia. Had it been so clear that Hernández Arregui’s writing was defined *only* in relation to politics, it would have been unnecessary to polemically declare its non-academic character. Populist intellectuals thus defined their position in relation as much to the political as to the intellectual field. A similar

⁵² Jauretche, *El medio pelo*.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 9. and p. 13.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 176.

⁵⁵ Juan José Hernández Arregui, *¿Qué es el ser nacional? La conciencia histórica hispanoamericana* (Buenos Aires: Hachea, 1963), pp. 12-13.

attitude towards academia can be detected in a passage from an article by the president of the Instituto Rosas, José María Rosa, published in the nationalist weekly *Santo y Seña* in 1960. Rosa wrote that

[t]here are many anti-revisionists who read us, but in secret, like boys who eat the neighbour's grapes. I know this from experience. Two years ago, I published a book on the fall of Rosas, which was read a lot because it sold out. The adversaries read me, looking for a chink to stick the knife into and as yet they have not found one: I keep waiting for the reviews in the big dailies. I correct myself: one adversary found a mistake (or at least that's what he thought).

The disagreement was over the question of whether the Brazilian army, after the battle of Caseros, had marched through Buenos Aires on 20 February, as Rosa had written in his book, or one day earlier. Rosa explained that,

since I'm an expert in such matters, I let him come. I opened the game by showing the memoirs of César Díaz, which affirmed that it was on the twentieth. A long-time player of *truco*, I withheld the best card for the final showdown. My opponent, a callow player, threw back at me that one witness alone, however qualified he was, was not worth anything in court against the date of the decree that said clearly "19 February". [...] So I played the ace of spades that I had hidden away: no one less than Sarmiento, the courier of the Allied army, said that the march had been fixed for the nineteenth, but took place on the twentieth. [...] I awarded myself all the points, as befits a complete victory.⁵⁶

Similar to this example, many writings by populist and revisionist authors implicitly indicate a wish for recognition by whom they attacked as their opponents.

Another sign of this desire was that the populist intellectuals felt obliged to demonstrate erudition, literary knowledge and education. Jauretche, for example, sought to derive authority from frequent quotations from European writers —Chesterton, whose writings the 1930s courses of Catholic education had introduced in Argentina, being among his favourites. In 1963, Hernández Arregui, whose style Horacio González has fittingly labelled "doctoral Leninism",⁵⁷ gave an interview to the left-wing Peronist weekly *Compañero*, in which he was asked which writers had influenced him most. This was the question on which Hernández Arregui gave the longest answer, stressing that he had "never been a 'vulgar' Marxist" and that he had read, among many others, Dilthey, Husserl, Feuerbach, Vico, Ernst Troeltsch, Durkheim, Hans Freyer, Ferdinand Tönnies, George Herbert Mead, Wright Mills and Freud.⁵⁸ Hernández Arregui's book *Imperialismo y cultura* was in large parts designed to show its

⁵⁶ *Truco* is an Argentine card game. José María Rosa, "Así fue Caseros", in *Santo y Seña*, no. 12, 2 February 1960.

⁵⁷ González, *Restos pampeanos*, p. 269.

⁵⁸ *Compañero*, no. 12, 27 August 1963, p. 4.

author's familiarity with the great names of world literature, ranging from Rainer Maria Rilke to Jean-Paul Sartre.⁵⁹ Hence, despite their refusal of the category, many populist writers in fact did portray themselves as intellectuals, understanding this term very classically as independence from the constraints of politics and claiming a knowledge-based authority for themselves. Jauretche's stress upon having "always been marginalised" came close to the notion of the bohemian freedom of the intellectual who was only bound to his own conscience. Since, according to him, "there is no freer man in Argentina than me", he had no political obligations vis-à-vis Perón: "I had very good relations with Perón, but we practically broke them off, because at a certain moment I told him what nobody used to tell him and the man had grown unaccustomed to my frankness."⁶⁰ In a similar vein, in a letter to the writer Ernesto Sábato, Hernández Arregui wrote: "I do not have any commitments and I boast of absolute intellectual independence."⁶¹

In sum, the recurring polemics against the Reformist University by populist intellectuals should be seen in the light of their subordinate position in the intellectual field. As Bourdieu has remarked,

[i]f the denunciation of professional routine is to some extent consubstantial with prophetic ambition, [...] it is none the less true that producers cannot fail to pay attention to the judgement of university institutions. [...] There are plenty of attacks upon the university which bear witness to the fact that their authors recognize the legitimacy of its verdicts sufficiently to reproach it for not having recognized them.⁶²

A similar attitude towards universities conditioned Argentine populist discourse in the 1960s. This is not to say that political ideas played no role in this. On the contrary, writers like Ramos, Hernández Arregui or Jauretche identified positions in the intellectual field with political viewpoints. Yet precisely for this reason, it is difficult—and probably futile—to establish whether invectives against the "intelligentsia" were *either* the result of resentment because of these populist intellectuals' perceived marginalisation from official academia *or* the expression of a genuine conviction on behalf of populists that intellectuals represented the anti-national forces and therefore should be attacked on political grounds. In any event, the fragmentation of the

⁵⁹ Juan José Hernández Arregui, *Imperialismo y cultura*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Hachea, 1964).

⁶⁰ Interview with Jauretche by Luis Alberto Romero, 22 April 1971, Archivo de Historia Oral, Instituto Torcuato di Tella, p. 130.

⁶¹ Juan José Hernández Arregui, *Imperialismo y cultura*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1973), p. 341.

⁶² Pierre Bourdieu, *The field of cultural production: essays on art and literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p. 124.

intellectual field became politicised, as the unequal distribution of symbolic capital came to be seen as coinciding with political divisions. According to the accounts of those who were excluded from it, the Reformist University represented an anti-national—and by extension anti-Peronist— establishment that had to be fought. Intellectual prestige was habitually depicted as resting on political grounds so that the boundaries between intellectual and political strategies of legitimation were increasingly blurred.

4. *The rise of Peronism in universities, 1966-73*

Although the legitimacy of academic scholarship had thus been undermined already before 1966, it took the military coup of this year to finish off university autonomy. Whilst the regime of General Juan Carlos Onganía, self-styled as the *Revolución Argentina*, initially wavered in its social and economic policies—before adopting orthodox stabilisation measures that antagonised the working class— its attitude towards cultural policy was resolute from the outset. Denouncing public institutions of higher education as breeding grounds for moral degeneration, hotbeds of subversion and obstacles to the implementation of “Western and Christian” values, the government seized control of the universities in a remarkably violent police operation on 29 July 1966 at UBA’s Faculty of Sciences, which became known as the “Night of the Long Sticks”. This measure ended the autonomy of the universities by eliminating the system of tripartite government and converting the rectors into mere administrators under the government authorities. If the aim of the repressive measures was to depoliticise universities, the overall educational policy of the government backfired. The rapid expansion of student numbers continued after 1966 and the military regime further encouraged this process by decreeing the foundation of twelve new public universities between 1971 and 1973, thereby more than doubling their overall number. As elsewhere in the world, the change in the social composition of university students as a result of the expansion of higher education contributed to the students’ radicalisation in the late 1960s.

After 1966, Argentine universities underwent a “Peronisation”, as many students began to declare their faith in Perón.⁶³ In 1971, Perón, in his routine letters to the Pero-

⁶³ There had already been isolated pockets of Peronist student groups before 1966 and pro-Peronist intellectuals had occasionally spoken in public universities. For example, Hernández Arregui had toured provincial universities in the early sixties (these talks were published as Hernández Arregui, *¿Qué es el*

nist Youth (JP), courted his addressees as “a marvellous generation of young people, which is showing its capacity and *grandeur* every day”.⁶⁴ The leftist wing of Peronist unionism also took an increasing interest in the matters of university students.⁶⁵ The alliance between workers and students reached its climax in the *cordobazo*, as the unrest in the city of Córdoba in May 1969 came to be known, which precipitated the fall of the military dictatorship and ultimately paved the way for Perón’s return to Argentina in 1972/73.⁶⁶ Between the *cordobazo* and Perón’s return, the Peronist guerrilla group Montoneros, closely tied to the JP, gradually gained sway among students, culminating in 1973 in the “*montonera* university”. When Puiggrós was named rector of the UBA and Jauretche director of Eudeba in 1973, this was only the apex of a process of Peronisation that had been under way since the late 1960s. As a contemporary who found herself at the centre of this political mobilisation of middle-class youth noticed in 1971, “paradoxically, Onganía’s government had done more for a real politicisation of the student body than fifty years of [the University] Reform.”⁶⁷

In order to explain the Peronisation of Argentine universities after 1966, broader factors must be taken into account.⁶⁸ In part, this Peronisation was simply the Argentine equivalent of the student radicalisation that occurred elsewhere in the world.⁶⁹ The idea that “the student movement has a debt with the working class”, as a student leader at the University of Córdoba had put it already in 1964,⁷⁰ was not peculiar to Argentina in this period, but since the local working class continued to identify with Peronism, the logical consequence of this impression was that students did so, too. Generational conflicts may also have played a role. Since most students came from non-Peronist milieus, declaring one’s faith in Perón could be a rebellion against the father genera-

ser nacional?). However, such examples were very rare and the coup of 1966 was a watershed in this respect.

⁶⁴ Juan Domingo Perón in his letter of 23 February 1971, in: Roberto Baschetti (ed.), *De la guerrilla peronista al gobierno popular: documentos 1970-1973* (La Plata: La Campana, 1995), p. 139.

⁶⁵ E.g. *CGT de los Argentinos*, no. 12, 18 July 1968, p. 1.

⁶⁶ On the *Cordobazo* see e.g. the testimonies in Juan Carlos Cena (ed.), *El cordobazo: una rebelión popular* (Buenos Aires: La Rosa Blindada, 2000). On the union background: James P. Brennan, *The labor wars in Córdoba, 1955-1976: ideology, work, and labor politics in an Argentine industrial city* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1994) and Mónica Gordillo, *Córdoba en los '60: la experiencia del sindicalismo combativo* (Córdoba: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba, 1996).

⁶⁷ *Envido*, no. 3, April 1971, p. 55.

⁶⁸ A useful introduction to this question is Waldmann, “Anomia social y violencia”, in: Rouquié (ed.), *Argentina, hoy*, pp. 206-248.

⁶⁹ The faculty that had expanded most in previous years, Philosophy and Letters, was also the faculty in which Peronist groups drew most votes in the student elections of November 1973. See *Militancia*, 6 December 1973.

⁷⁰ The student leader introduced a speech by John William Cooke. See John William Cooke, *El retorno de Perón: un análisis revolucionario* (Buenos Aires: Segunda Etapa, 1964), p. I.

tion. The political situation that was established through the coup of 1966 made an impact, too. By closing congress, prohibiting political parties and restricting union activities, Onganía's regime reduced the multiplicity of axes along which political conflict had been negotiated before. In this politically and culturally stifling climate, oppositional sectors identified the Peronist movement, which by then had already proven its survivability under the conditions of illegality, as the most promising vehicle to realise their demands. From exile, Perón helped to further enlarge the groups of his adherents by nurturing the (notoriously incompatible) ambitions of his self-declared followers to become the dominant part of his movement.⁷¹ Overall, this reinforced the impression that the central axis around which Argentine politics revolved was the division between Peronists and anti-Peronists.

To a lesser extent than students, university staff also became more pro-Peronist after 1966. This was not immediately clear after the coup, nor was it the outcome of governmental plans for higher education. Instead, this development is best understood as a long-term effect of the mass exodus of staff after the "Night of the Long Sticks". In protest against this measure and in the unavailing hope of regaining their lost autonomy through protest, about 8,600 university teachers resigned in the Federal Capital alone within a few days.⁷² As a result, less experienced staff had to be drafted in from other areas, such as private institutions or secondary schools. In accordance with Onganía's sympathies with the Catholic Right and the orientation of his secretaries of state for culture and education (Carlos María Gelly y Obes, José Mariano Astigueta and Dardo Pérez Guilhou), the new appointees were often recruited from Catholic universities. The new directors of UBA's Department of Sociology, for example, Justino O'Farrell and Gonzalo Cárdenas, had previously taught at the UCA. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, however, many of these younger Catholics drew closer to the Left and to Peronism, paralleling developments among students and the birth of left-wing Peronist guerrilla groups. As early as 1967, the bibliography of a course taught by Cárdenas read like a who is who of populist and neo-revisionist authors, with Scalabrini Ortiz, Hernández Arregui and Puiggrós among the favou-

⁷¹ For a discussion of Perón's tactic in relation to union leaders between 1955 and 1973, see James W. McGuire, *Peronism without Perón: unions, parties, and democracy in Argentina* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 80-163. For the ways in which Peronist discourse exacerbated this problem, contributing to the political violence after 1973, see Sigal and Verón, *Perón o muerte*.

⁷² Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 46.

rites.⁷³ Under the auspices of O'Farrell and Cárdenas emerged the so-called *cátedras nacionales*, university chairs that were explicitly devoted to foster political goals close to Peronism. The politicisation of the discipline was reflected, too, in the fact that *tercermundista* periodicals such as *Antropología del Tercer Mundo*, *Cristianismo y Revolución*, both committed to continent-wide trends among the Catholic Left, or *Envido* became important sources of reference across the social sciences. Unsurprisingly, these developments met the approval of left-wing Peronists like Hernández Arregui, who celebrated that the students finally adopted a “national consciousness”, adding that, after an education in an anti-Peronist environment, they had now transformed Perón into the great “patriot of today”.⁷⁴

In the form of the *cátedras nacionales*, national-populist essayism, even though its best-known proponents did not take part in their organisation, thus won out over Germani's scientific sociology. The “Declaration of Peronist university teachers in the discipline of sociology” stated:

we reject any attempt to revive the modernising sociology that worked as an anti-popular ideology in the period that followed the overthrow of the last government of the people in Argentina, the government of General Juan Domingo Perón. We believe that sociologists tied to the institutions [...] function in the service of imperialist domination in our country.⁷⁵

By the same token, in an article published in *Cristianismo y Revolución*, Cárdenas pledged to create a “national sociology” —as Jauretche had done before— and condemned the supposed enclosure of Germani's circle in a detached ivory tower.⁷⁶ The author of another article in the same journal similarly reasoned “that ‘scientificism’ and ‘rationality’ can also be a weapon of the regime”.⁷⁷ In stark opposition to Germani, the academics of the recently founded *cátedras nacionales* often promulgated a return to *ensayismo* as a means to accomplish the social and political tasks that, in their view, scientific sociology had neglected, circumvented or deliberately inhibited. Even though the most prominent populist intellectuals remained outside the principal cultural institutions of the state before 1973, these developments enlarged the market for their writings. When the magazine *Panorama* surveyed sociology students from UBA in

⁷³ “Programas de estudio”, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Buenos Aires, segundo cuatrimestre 1967, no. 81. The bibliography also included right-wing *nacionalistas* like Ernesto Palacio and Walter Beveraggi Allende.

⁷⁴ Juan José Hernández Arregui, *Peronismo y socialismo* (Buenos Aires: Hachea, 1972), p. 147.

⁷⁵ Reproduced in Horacio González (ed.), *Historia crítica de la sociología argentina: los raros, los clásicos, los científicos, los discrepantes* (Buenos Aires: Colihue, 2000), p. 83.

⁷⁶ Gonzalo Cárdenas, “Historia de nuestra dependencia”, *Cristianismo y Revolución*, no. 5, November 1967, pp. 4-6.

⁷⁷ *Cristianismo y Revolución*, no. 30, September 1971, p. 3.

1971, asking them to name the sociologists they had read, the most frequent answers were Marx, Lenin, Perón, Ramos, Jauretche and Ernesto “Che” Guevara.⁷⁸ The viewpoints of the populist opposition to the Reformist University thus gained ground in public universities after the coup of 1966.

Sociological interpretations of Peronism, in this context, resembled the views that had previously been expressed by the populist Left. In both content and tone, a contribution to a book on Peronism edited by Cárdenas mirrored the view of authors like Ramos:

in Peronism, the man who had hitherto been banished found his expression, the man from the interior whom the refined classes called *cabecita negra* and who had come to Buenos Aires, in response to the new impulse of industrialisation.

This man’s roots could be traced back to the very origins of the nation, since there had been two genealogical lines of historical continuity which “were born with the emergence of nationality [...]. On one side was the ideal of the [...] refined classes, especially of Buenos Aires, on the other side the ideal of the man from the interior and the *gaucho*.”⁷⁹ As many university students declared themselves Peronists in the late 1960s, they constructed their newly acquired political identity on the basis of similar interpretations. Put schematically, they saw their parents as examples of the urban, liberal and anti-Peronist middle classes, to which they opposed the allegedly autochthonous traditions of national identity, of which they depicted Peronism and themselves as heirs. This political alignment of university students further expanded the market for populist and neo-revisionist essays, which endowed these students with a political identity. It might further be argued that, since their declaration of faith in Perón usually did not stem from working-class socialisation, but instead was an elective affinity, they were in particular need of such justifying identity constructions.

Among these groups, revisionist books found a fruitful market.⁸⁰ This is not to say that *nacionalista* ideas of the 1930s became the main inspiration for the political attitudes of university students in the late 1960s. If they read revisionist authors, Hernández Arregui, Ramos and Jauretche, maybe also José María Rosa, were more

⁷⁸ Rubinich, “Modernización y sociología”, in: James (ed.), *Violencia, proscripción y autoritarismo*, p. 272.

⁷⁹ Pedro Geltman, “Mitos, símbolos y héroes en el peronismo”, in: Gonzalo Cárdenas (ed.), *El peronismo* (Buenos Aires: Cepe, 1973), pp. 109-137, here p. 123 and pp. 111-112.

⁸⁰ This assertion is unfortunately difficult to quantify, since there were no available statistics as to the readership of particular books. However, various kinds of documents of Peronist student sectors from the time suggest as much. See also chapter four and the remarks on university curricula in chapter six. According to a statistic published in *La Opinión*, 25 September 1973, the high sales figures of Evita’s *La Razón de mi vida* were largely due to the book’s middle-class and student readership.

popular choices than the reactionary and at this time less known members of the Instituto Rosas such as Doll or Palacio. Furthermore, interpretations of Argentina's contemporary and past reality by populist intellectuals frequently mingled with international inspiration, ranging from the Cuban Revolution and the Algerian war of independence to *tercermundismo* and liberation theology. Writers like Puiggrós thus shared the upper ranks of non-fiction bestseller lists in the 1960s with authors like Frantz Fanon and Herbert Marcuse.⁸¹ Yet it is nevertheless true that within this eclectic blend of orientations, revisionism became an important tool to construe an interpretation that explained contemporary predicaments and justified political actions and choices, since revisionism allowed to embed these questions of the present within an alleged historical continuity. As indicated by the cognomen of the most important Peronist guerrilla group, the Montoneros, young self-declared Peronists sought to enthrone themselves as the culmination of a historical lineage which arose from the figures exalted in historical revisionism. Paralleling the passage from scientific sociology to "national sociology", revisionism superseded the current of social history that had been practiced by Romero and others and, among large sectors of the reading public, imposed itself as the predominant version of Argentina's history.⁸² The main vehicle in this transition were not the history books written by members of the Instituto Rosas, but populist essays, which moulded the contemporary question that mattered most —namely how to understand Peronism— within a broader understanding of Argentine national identity and history, based on revisionist premises.

Conclusion

The revival of the notions of historical revisionism after 1955 was not so much due to developments among historians, but instead linked to the questions of how to understand Peronism and how to relate this movement to issues of national identity. Given the political survival of Peronism after the Liberating Revolution of 1955 and the ongoing social effects of internal migration, these questions became urgent matters

⁸¹ *Primera Plana*, no. 232, 12 June 1967 (Puiggrós); no. 78, 5 May 1964 (Fanon); and no. 304, 22 October 1968 (Marcuse). Besides the seeming inchoateness of this repertoire, I was always baffled by the enormous repercussions of Algeria's war of independence, almost across the entire political spectrum, including the apotheosis of the FLN by the extreme Peronist Right. The commitment to the cause of Algerian independence of Fanon and Sartre, both widely read in Argentina at the time, could provide some clues for an explanation.

⁸² On this development see Luis Alberto Romero, "La historiografía: de la historia social al revisionismo", *Todo es Historia*, no. 280 (1990), pp. 48-55.

in contemporary debates. The predominant framework within which intellectual debates discussed these topics in the 1960s resembled Germani's orthodox interpretation of the origins of Peronism. The populist movement, according to this view, had come into being because of the emergence of an unskilled migrant proletariat without experience of political organisation, as opposed to the established urban working class. Migrants therefore easily fell victim to Perón's populist demagogy. Peronism represented a particular part of national identity, namely the culture of the interior, identified as a "pre-modern" or authentic lifestyle, uncorrupted by clear political ideologies such as Marxism or liberalism. Whilst in the eyes of some this was a sign of uncivilised backwardness, others exalted the alleged features of authenticity and a national spirit in this picture. Yet the overall framework within which these different evaluations were expressed was relatively stable throughout the 1960s. This general understanding was then moulded into more far-reaching historical analogies, in which Peronism was depicted as a recurrence of nineteenth-century *caudillismo* and its supporters as the descendants of the *montoneras*.

These debates need to be cast against the background of cultural and intellectual developments that affected the ways in which they acquired relevance and meaning. Broadly speaking, the cultural modernisation during the two decades after 1955 provided an expanding market for the circulation of such debates. The explosion of student numbers created a growing potential readership for social science and history books as well as essayistic accounts of Argentina's social and political reality past and present, from which revisionist products benefited. Furthermore, similarly to the second half of the 1930s, the second coming of revisionism in the late fifties coincided with a wave of modernisation in cultural institutions. As we have seen in the previous chapter, in the late thirties this could be seen in the consolidation of historiography as an academic discipline, whereas here it has been connected to a more general development in higher education. Massification of education might be seen as encouraging the spread of ideas relating to national identity per se and, according to some modernist theorems, was even a necessary pre-condition for the emergence of nationalism. Insofar, from the perspective of theories of nationalism, the observation that the expansion of the book market enhanced the dissemination of the ideas of nationalist intellectuals in Argentina after 1955 is hardly surprising. However, this cultural modernisation also had some more specific traits that should be taken into account in order to explain which position nationalist and populist intellectuals occupied in it. The

field of production of intellectual debates after 1955 was fragmented because of an unequal distribution of the possibilities to access symbolic and cultural capital. Virtually all of the well-known propagators of the neo-revisionism of the 1960s were populist essayists outside public universities. As the academic sociologist Francisco Delich pointed out in retrospective in 1977, the gap between the progressive members of the Reformist University and nationalist essayists was so wide that there was hardly any communication between them.⁸³ This created what Liah Greenfeld has identified as a frequent condition in the emergence and spread of nationalist ideas, namely a “*ressentiment-prone*” situation.⁸⁴ As we have seen, nationalist and populist intellectuals attacked what they saw as an impenetrable intellectual establishment, from which they were excluded. A sense of marginalisation was what bound not only the *nacionalista* revisionists of the 1930s, but also their populist successors together. Lacking the kind of prestige that university positions conferred, they resorted to legitimising their viewpoints by claiming that they expressed the “people” or the “nation” and, ultimately, by declaring themselves to be the intellectual basis of the Peronist movement.

The dividing lines of the intellectual field thus became politicised. The problem was not the anti-Peronist bias of the writings of Germani or Romero that their opponents alleged. As we have seen, a magazine like *Dinamis* could detect no such bias in the orthodox sociological interpretation of Peronism, which even coincided in large parts with the version of populists like Ramos. Nor was a categorical “absence of autonomy” of public universities the *raison d’être* of scientific sociology, as Neiburg has suggested.⁸⁵ The problem was that, because the Reformist University had come into being under the auspices of a regime that was dedicated to eradicating Peronism from Argentina’s political and cultural life, it became more plausible to portray academics as anti-Peronist ideologues or as members of a liberal and cosmopolitan intelligentsia that was opposed to the “authentic” demands of the “people”. This undermined an academic basis of legitimacy from the very outset, further exacerbated through the military coup of 1966, which finished off what was left of university autonomy and, for various reasons, opened a phase during which Peronist tendencies

⁸³ Delich, *Crítica y autocrítica*, p. 28.

⁸⁴ Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: five roads to modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 16. My usage of her concept is rather free because she uses the term with reference to international relations and not an internal domestic problem, as I do here.

⁸⁵ Neiburg, “Ciencias sociales”, p. 552.

gained weight among intellectuals and students. The two epigraphs of this chapter show this development towards political justifications of intellectual activity. Whilst Risieri Frondizi in 1956 demanded a university independent from governmental interference, the UBA-rector at Rodolfo Puiggrós, who became rector of the UBA in 1973, claimed that his task was to ensure that the universities were at the service of the national (by then Peronist) government, which in his rhetoric automatically implied that they served the “people”. The following chapter will further elaborate on the question of how revisionism can be seen as an expression of the complaints of nationalist and populist intellectuals against the establishment, which they opposed to the “people”.

Chapter three

The heterogeneity of revisionism: between authoritarianism and Marxism

Introduction

The well-known neo-revisionists of the 1960s, such as Puiggrós, Hernández Arregui or Jauretche, differed from the *nacionalistas* who dominated the Instituto Rosas not only in that they produced essays that interpreted contemporary national reality rather than history books, but also in their ideological orientation. This difference matched broader shifts in the climate of ideas. As described by Oscar Terán, the new hegemonic current in intellectual debates in the 1960s was the “New Left”.¹ Doctrinally eclectic and sometimes heterodox, but commonly marked by its dissidence from the official Communist and Socialist Parties, the New Left began to favourably reconsider the importance of the national question as well as Peronism and some of its intellectuals began to embrace increasingly nationalist views. Hence, although the forms of nationalism expounded by right-wing Catholics and other authoritarian thinkers did not disappear after the Peronist decade, to put it schematically, the intellectual mainstream of nationalist ideas was populist, interspersed with Marxist elements.² Whilst *nacionalismo* reflected the authoritarian ideas of the interwar period, the populist currents of the sixties blended anti-imperialism, nationalism, Marxism and a stress on Spanish American solidarity. Whereas in the 1930s *nacionalistas* had often taken inspiration from the Southern European Right, the international horizon of the 1960s was shaped

¹ Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*.

² The terms Left and Right are understood relationally rather than attributively here, since it is debatable whether, say, Jauretche should be described as “left-wing”.

by the Cuban Revolution and national liberation movements in other countries of the Third World. In a clarifying simplification, one might say that Frantz Fanon replaced Charles Maurras on the reading list of nationalist Argentine intellectuals. In this, Argentina's left-wing nationalism of the 1960s had a lot in common with what Jorge Castañeda has described as a general Latin American trend in that era: the idea that "the 'real' country [...] is perceived to be the nation of the marginalized poor, illiterate, ethnically distinct. The elite is exterior to the nation".³ However, in contrast to many other Latin American nationalisms where the authoritarian currents of the interwar period had left more marginal imprints, Argentina's left-wing nationalists of the 1960s—including Marxists—, in search of vernacular antecedents of their anti-imperialism and anti-liberalism, appropriated *nacionalista* motifs. The main theme that they adopted, as I will try to show in this chapter, was historical revisionism, the development of which, as a result, reflected the broader changes of Argentine nationalism.

These transformations raise the question to what extent it is possible to pin down a coherent nationalist ideology. This question is especially complicated from the perspective of the ideological mobility of the 1960s, but there has even been scholarly disagreement with the regard to the two or three decades before 1955. Cristián Buchrucker, for example, has argued that it is necessary to distinguish between a right-wing strand, which he calls "restorative", and the populist ideas of FORJA that were more influential in Peronism.⁴ Other authors, in turn, have maintained that nationalism might have developed sub-groups, but that these overall resembled each other ideologically (especially in their anti-liberalism); they should therefore be grouped together.⁵ Following this line of interpretation, David Rock has also argued that the authoritarian ideas of what he has called "the Nationalist movement" remained relatively similar between around 1910 and 1990.⁶ This second group of scholars, who have emphasised common traits over differences in Argentine nationalism, have often pointed to historical revisionism as one such common denominator.⁷ The argument is true insofar as virtually all nationalist intellectuals indeed adhered to an understanding of the past that can be classified as revisionist. However, this observation does not resolve the

³ Jorge Castañeda, *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left after the Cold War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 273.

⁴ Buchrucker, *Nacionalismo y peronismo*.

⁵ Most explicit in this interpretation is Spektorowski, *The origins*.

⁶ Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*.

⁷ E.g. Navarro Gerassi, *Los nacionalistas*, pp. 131-145, Deutsch, *Las Derechas*, pp. 223-224 and Spektorowski, *The origins*, pp. 99-105.

question of how similar their political ideas were. As the scholarship on nationalist historiography has shown, it is by no means clear that revisionism expressed specific ideas and goals on which all its proponents agreed. Quattrocchi-Woisson, for example, has stressed that there were two currents of historical revisionism from early on, one populist, the other aristocratic-authoritarian.⁸ Again, the question is even more problematic for the 1960s. As Fernando Devoto has convincingly argued in view of the writings of left-wing nationalists like Puiggrós, it is difficult to find any meaningful ideological unity among all revisionists for the period after 1955.⁹

In this chapter, I will analyse the neo-revisionist discourse of the 1960s, which in terms of its weight in public debates was in the main Marxist-nationalist or populist, and compare it to the notions that had been dominant three decades earlier. I will argue that both versions resembled each other in that they were anti-liberal and nationalist, although saying so is almost a tautology. More important, therefore, is another similarity, namely the perception of the common enemy of “official history”. At first sight, this observation may seem superfluous, too, since the very definition of revisionism implies that it was opposed to “official history”. However, as I will argue, the fact that revisionism was central for Argentine nationalism at large should not go without saying because it allows for broader conclusions about nationalism. From this perspective, the common ground of nationalism was not so much a clearly defined political idea or objective, but instead can be first and foremost understood as a discourse against what was portrayed as an “official” liberal establishment. In order to show this, particular attention will be given to the so-called *izquierda nacional*, which is usually associated with Ramos and Puiggrós and, to a lesser extent, Hernández Arregui, but populists like Jauretche or Rosa will also be part of the analysis. In contrast to the previous chapter, here I will concentrate on their biographical backgrounds, their intellectual trajectories and the historiographical dimension of their writings.

1. Trajectories of the izquierda nacional and the national-populist camp

From a biographical perspective, it is very difficult to identify a common trajectory of the neo-revisionist intellectuals who became widely known in the aftermath of the Liberating Revolution. However, a good starting point to reconstruct their backgrounds

⁸ Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nacionalisme*.

⁹ Fernando Devoto, “Reflexiones en torno de la izquierda nacional y la historiografía argentina”, in: Devoto and Pagano (eds.), *Historiografías académica y militante*, pp. 107-131.

might be the intellectuals of the *izquierda nacional*, who came from the Marxist Left and, throughout the fifties, drew closer to populist and nationalist viewpoints. The main reason for their reconsideration of the national question was that Peronism had deprived the traditional Left, that is the Socialist and Communist Parties, of their ideal-typical clientele, namely the working class. The decade after the Second World War thus brought about a reorientation of parts of the Left, in which Marxist notions were blended with an emphasis of the nation as the crucial category of analysis. In contrast to some other Latin American countries, on the shores of the River Plate this merging could not rely on many intellectually solid precedents. Argentina had never had an equivalent of José Carlos Mariátegui and if any Argentine Marxist had come close to the Peruvian's talent, it might have been Aníbal Ponce, whose thought has been described as a "Marxism without nation".¹⁰ The leader of the Argentine Communist Party, Vittorio Codovilla, had a reputation of being obsequious to Muscovite directives. During the election campaign of 1945, he struck an alliance with the bourgeois parties of the Unión Democrática and notoriously called for the defeat of "Nazi-Peronism" at the ballot box in order to "open an era of liberty and progress",¹¹ thereby echoing the Soviet strategy of building popular fronts even two years after the Comintern had officially been dissolved. Although throughout the following decade, the party vacillated in its strategy towards the Peronist regime, it never managed to rid itself of its reputation of anti-Peronism and bourgeois sympathies. In comparison, parts of the Brazilian CP placed much stronger emphasis on national unity and, despite the violent confrontations of 1937, sided with Getúlio Vargas in 1945.¹²

Revisionism played into this problem, because the anti-Peronism of the Communist and Socialist Parties was bolstered by interpretations of Argentine history that could be regarded as liberal. This might sound surprising in the case of the Communist Party (which in other respects, of course, can hardly be called liberal), but the writings of the party's official historian, Leonardo Paso, were supportive of the liberal rather than of the revisionist pantheon.¹³ Likewise, the work of other commu-

¹⁰ Oscar Terán, "Aníbal Ponce o el marxismo sin nación", in: Oscar Terán, *En busca de la ideología argentina* (Buenos Aires: Catálogos, 1986), pp. 131-178.

¹¹ Vittorio Codovilla, *Batir al nazi-peronismo para abrir una era de libertad y progreso* (Buenos Aires: Anteo, 1946).

¹² Michael Löwy (ed.), *Marxism in Latin America from 1909 to the present: an anthology*, translated by Michael Pearlman (New Jersey and London: Humanities Press, 1992), p. xxxv.

¹³ See Leonardo Paso, *Los caudillos y la organización nacional* (Buenos Aires: Sílabo, 1965) and his "Rivadavia y la línea de Mayo", in the CP's *Cuadernos de Cultura*, nos. 27 and 29, March and September 1957.

nists, such as Héctor Agosti or Rodolfo Ghioldi, read a bourgeois-democratic tradition into the May Revolution, embodied in Mariano Moreno —after whom the communist institute of history was named— and later manifest in Echeverría and Sarmiento, whom communists contrasted with *caudillismo*.¹⁴ The opposition against Peronism was even more clearly anchored in liberal traditions in the case of the Socialist Party.¹⁵ During the electoral campaign of 1945, Socialists had coupled their understanding of Peronism as fascism with evocations of Argentina's liberal pantheon. In a statement dating from December 1945, José Luis Romero (the later rector of the UBA who was close to Socialism) drew a clear-cut boundary between some classical figures with liberal connotations and Peronism:

A phantom haunts the free country in which Echeverría and Alberdi, Rivadavia and Sarmiento were born: the ominous phantom that rises from the scarcely closed graves of Mussolini and Hitler.¹⁶

In a similar fashion, the leader of the Socialist Party, Américo Ghioldi, pointed out in 1956 that Peronism was a “historical denigration”, since Perón had slandered the “builders of nationality”, whilst glorifying “the tyranny of Rosas.”¹⁷ Ghioldi did not specify whom he meant by “builders of nationality”, but this was hardly necessary, since it was sufficiently known that the figures mentioned by Romero were those habitually evoked by Socialists. In 1956, the party congress even adopted a declaration against historical revisionism.¹⁸ In short, anti-Peronism and liberal historical evocations seemed to converge among the Left.

In opposition to this, Marxists like Ramos and Puiggrós reasoned that the traditional Left's liberal blueprints forbade it to understand the reasons behind the working class' mass defection to Peronism. In their view, this desertion was not due to the fact that Perón had better material rewards to offer than Communists and Socia-

¹⁴ Héctor P. Agosti, *Nación y cultura*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1982). See also the contributions by Agosti and Portantiero on the 150th anniversary of the May Revolution in *Cuadernos de Cultura*, no. 47, May/June 1960, pp. 1-8 and 21-32 and the remarks on the commemoration of Echeverría in 1951, in which liberals and communists participated in close cooperation, in José Aricó, *La cola del diablo: itinerario de Gramsci en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Puntosur, 1988), pp. 174-181

¹⁵ Marcela García Sebastiani, “El Partido Socialista en la Argentina peronista: oposición y crisis de representación política (1946-1951)”, *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2002), pp. 31-64.

¹⁶ Quoted in Silvia Sigal, “Intelectuales y peronismo”, in: Juan Carlos Torre (ed.), *Los años peronistas (1943-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2002), pp. 481-522, p. 502. For the reading of Peronism as fascism, see Romero, *A history*, p. 238.

¹⁷ Américo Ghioldi, *De la tiranía a la democracia social* (Buenos Aires: Gure, 1956), pp. 91-96.

¹⁸ Daniel Omar De Lucia, “Liberalismo e izquierda: una relación poco estudiada”, Paper presented at the Primeras Jornadas de Historia de las Izquierdas, Buenos Aires, 8-9 December 2000 (Centro de Documentación e Investigación de la Cultura de Izquierdas en la Argentina), p. 3.

lists, but to cultural factors. Based on the argument that the classical parties of the Left were incapable of understanding the authentically Argentine spirit of the working class, the Marxist dissidents thus began to positively re-evaluate Peronism, concentrating on nationalist categories without abandoning their Marxist concepts. Throughout the decade of Perón's government, this development led to the emergence of two main breakaway groups among the Left.¹⁹ The first, led by Puiggrós (1906-80), emerged from the communist cell of the railway workers of the southern section of the Federal Capital. It broke with the Communist Party in 1948/49 and shortly afterwards formed the Movimiento Obrero Comunista (MOC). As Puiggrós laid out in *Clase Obrera*, the organ of the group, "the Codovilla tendency, of which we were a part, stands in open contradiction to the historical development which leads the Argentine people towards their liberation." In contrast, the MOC portrayed itself as "a child of 17 October 1945",²⁰ which implied the appropriation of populist themes, such as the glorification of a national community and the charismatic bond between leader and masses. In the eyes of the MOC-ideologues, these traits had to be incorporated as part of a movement towards an emancipatory revolution, the vehicle for which would be a united anti-imperialist front. According to this interpretation, the nation was the key category to understand the historical development of those countries that were deemed semi-colonial, a classification of Argentina which could rely on the authority of Lenin's *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*.²¹ Although the group's erstwhile leader, Puiggrós, spent much time in Mexico during the 1960s, his writings as well as those of other MOC-members left a strong imprint on left-wing nationalist debates in Argentina after 1955.

The second main grouping from which Marxist populists emerged was the Partido Socialista de la Revolución Nacional (PSRN). Most of its members had belonged to the Socialist Party before they broke away from it in 1953, but among its ranks were also intellectuals who had come from other sectors of the Left. The Trotskyist group around Ramos (1921-94), who had been editor of the newspaper *Octubre*, gained particular influence in the PSRN. Similarly to the MOC, the PSRN

¹⁹ Altamirano, *Peronismo y cultura de izquierda*, pp. 13-25 gives a general overview of these divisions before 1955.

²⁰ *Clase Obrera*, no. 50, April 1950, pp. 3 and 4.

²¹ Vladimir I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*, first published in 1917, available from <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch06.htm>. On the MOC during the Peronist regime see Samuel Amaral, "Peronismo y marxismo en los años fríos: Rodolfo Puiggrós y el Movimiento Obrero Comunista, 1947-1955", *Investigaciones y Ensayos*, vol. 50 (2000), pp. 167-190.

drew closer to Peronism, evoking the events of 17 October 1945 as proof of the working class' support for Perón.²² In December 1955, Esteban Rey thus maintained in the PSRN-organ *Lucha Obrera* that the last “ten years of tough national struggle waged by the working class and popular movement, which originates on 17 October 1945”, could be the prologue of a united anti-imperialist front.²³ The history of both these groups, which formed the core of what is usually called the *izquierda nacional*, thus suggests a path from a Marxist background towards nationalist positions. As the Catholic *nacionalista* Fermín Chávez remarked in 1957 in a journal with the telling title *Columnas del Nacionalismo Marxista de Liberación Nacional*, Marxists had opened themselves up to “national reality”.²⁴ Marxist populists shared this understanding of their own development. For example, Eduardo Astesano, another prominent member of the MOC and the director of the *Columnas*, retrospectively summed up his biography as a move from Marxism to nationalism in a bibliographical essay about his own works, published in 1970. There, he qualified the book with which he had initiated his writing in 1941, an interpretation of the May Revolution, as a “class-based analysis”. In 1949, he had finished what he now considered as a “first approach to economic nationalism” and, through his “enlistment in historical revisionism” (performed in his book of 1963, *Rosas y el nacionalismo popular*), he finally arrived at the “synthesis of the national vision of the process” that he attributed to his book of 1967, *La lucha de clases en la historia argentina*.²⁵

However, although the history of the *izquierda nacional* suggests a linear movement from the Left towards nationalism at the origins of the neo-revisionism of the 1960s, the biographies of the writers who are usually associated with this current, followed no homogenous pattern. It is worth remembering in this context that José María Rosa, whose writings became widely known in the 1960s when he had declared himself a supporter of the Cuban Revolution, originally came from the extreme Right. Although, in his function as president of the Instituto Rosas, Rosa tried to bind together all those who can be called revisionists and who published in the 1960s, the differences of their backgrounds are striking. First, the *nacionalistas* described in

²² See on the PSRN see Norberto Galasso, *La Izquierda Nacional y el FIP* (Buenos Aires: CEAL, 1983), pp. 79-89. Other Trotskyist groupings, such as Nahuel Moreno's Partido Obrero Revolucionario (POC), which joined the PSRN in 1954, adopted a positive reading of Peronism only after 1955.

²³ *Lucha Obrera*, no. 5 (22 December 1955).

²⁴ *Columnas del Nacionalismo Marxista de Liberación Nacional*, no. 1, 14 July 1957, p. 3.

²⁵ Eduardo B. Astesano, *Nacionalismo histórico o materialismo histórico* (Buenos Aires: Pleamar, 1972), pp. 207-208.

chapter one were still present, most of them without substantially modifying their reactionary ideas. As many either came from Catholic spheres of sociability or had taken part in the legions, political associations and street-fighting factions of the extreme Right in the 1930s, they were fervently anti-Marxist and most remained so. To be sure, over time the boundaries became blurred. The contacts between Ramos and the *nacionalista* Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, for example, were well-known.²⁶ It would be an exaggeration, however, to see this as a rule. Neither Ramos nor Puiggrós socialised in *nacionalista* circles such as the Instituto Rosas, nor did they publish in the periodicals that expressed this tendency. Yet even among the ideologically more compatible populist essayists—a group that besides Ramos and Puiggrós for example includes Jauretche or Hernández Arregui—there was no common biographical pattern. Some of them had had connections to Radicalism, whilst others had begun their careers at the extreme Right of the ideological spectrum, later drawing closer to the populist Left. Several examples can illustrate this.

Jauretche (1901-74) was born in Lincoln, province of Buenos Aires, into a middle class family.²⁷ His father was a functionary of the Conservative Party and although the family did not own land, they had close ties with the local landowners. After he had moved to the capital at the age of 19, he enrolled in the elite state school Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires and, in 1925, entered the Law Faculty of UBA. In the same year, partly inspired by the Mexican Revolution, he participated in demonstrations of the anti-imperialist Unión Latinoamericana and in the uprising of Paso de los Libres in 1933 against the Justo government, as a result of which he spent four months in prison. Two years later, he became one of the founders of the breakaway-group from the Radical Party in 1935, the Fuerza de Orientación Radical de la Joven Argentina (FORJA), which claimed the populist heritage of Hipólito Yrigoyen and was influenced by Víctor Raúl Haya de la Torre's APRA. Jauretche's political activities brought him into contact with Perón at a time when the latter was still secretary of

²⁶ See e.g. Arturo Peña Lillo, *Memorias de papel: los hombres y las ideas de una época* (Buenos Aires: Galerna, 1988), p. 88 or the interview with the Peronist politician Oscar Albrieu by Luis Alberto Romero, 12 June 1972, Archivo de Historia Oral, Instituto Torcuato di Tella, p. 3. Frondizi's adviser Rogelio Frigerio claimed that Hernández Arregui, too, was a friend of Sánchez Sorondo (*Compañero*, no. 12, 27 August 1963). Son of Matías, an anti-Semitic former minister, the journalist Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo was born in 1912, wrote for the youth section of LNR and *nacionalista* periodicals such as *Nueva Política*, *Baluarto* or *Dinámica Social* before he became editor-in-chief of *Azul y Blanco*. He studied in a Jesuit secondary school and had Castellani as his history teacher, before studying law at the UBA.

²⁷ On Jauretche's biography see esp. Norberto Galasso, *Arturo Jauretche: biografía de un argentino* (Buenos Aires: Homo Sapiens, 1997).

welfare and labour. Understanding FORJA as a part of Radicalism that supported Perón's policy, Jauretche was among those who worked for the, ultimately failed, agreement between Amadeo Sabattini's Radicalism in Córdoba and Perón in 1944. In December 1945, FORJA declared its dissolution in favour of Peronism. Under the Peronist governor of Buenos Aires, Domingo Mercante, Jauretche became director of the provincial bank in October 1946, but had to leave this post after the conflict between Mercante and Perón in 1950.

Hernández Arregui's public career had some similarities to Jauretche's, but his social background differed.²⁸ He was born into a lower middle-class family in 1912 in Pergamino, in the province of Buenos Aires. After his father had left the family, his mother brought him up in the Federal Capital, where he studied at UBA's Law Faculty. In 1933 the early death of his mother and economic insecurity as a result of this obliged him to interrupt his studies and move to the province of Córdoba, where he lived with his uncle. This uncle's contacts with the provincial government of Sabattini allowed him to work in public libraries and as director of an institute for the formation of secondary school teachers for a few years, until he re-entered university at the age of 26. Instead of law, he now studied philosophy at the University of Córdoba, where he came into contact with the Italian Marxist Rodolfo Mondolfo, who supervised his doctoral thesis on "The sociological bases of Greek culture". This contact, later stressed by Hernández Arregui as a decisive intellectual influence, probably led him to adopt Marxism, of a particularly Hegelian and idealist kind.²⁹ Hernández Arregui engaged in Radical student groups whilst studying in Buenos Aires and, like Jauretche, became an adherent of Yrigoyen. When in Córdoba, he supported Sabattini and by 1944 he had become secretary of the provincial committee of the UCR. He met Jauretche in the course of the Perón-Sabattini negotiations, but only fully identified with Peronism from 1947 onwards. Contrary to much of the *izquierda nacional*, which followed the slogan of "critical support" for Perón, Hernández Arregui henceforth defined himself as a Marxist Peronist and underscored that his statements had to be understood as declarations from within the movement. Throughout the Peronist decade he was lecturer for the introduction course in history

²⁸ On Hernández Arregui see Galasso, *Hernández Arregui*.

²⁹ See the interview in *Compañero*, no. 12, 27 August 1963, p. 4. The Hegelian influences might have come from Mondolfo, who was primarily known for an anti-materialist reading of the Hegelian Marxist Antonio Labriola.

and regular professor for historiography at the University of La Plata and, until 1955, directed a little-known radio programme called *Vida Artística*.³⁰

Another important left-wing and populist revisionist was John William Cooke (1919-1968), born into a wealthy family in La Plata.³¹ His father had been a Radical congressman, ambassador to Brazil and, a supporter of the Allies in World War II, was named minister of foreign affairs in August 1945. Cooke junior was elected national deputy on a Peronist ticket in 1946 and thereafter became known as a nationalist, first by opposing the ratification of the Act of Chapultepec by the Argentine Senate and later by criticising Perón's contracts with the US company Standard Oil.³² Throughout the Peronist decade he was also a lecturer in political economy at UBA's Law Faculty and in 1954 was appointed vice-president of the Instituto Rosas. Although Cooke's political sympathies resembled many of the ideas of the other thinkers mentioned, he was exceptional in this context in that he was more important as a political organiser than as an intellectual, at least before he moved to Cuba in 1960 (see also chapter five). It is revealing in this respect that, in comparison to Hernández Arregui and Jauretche, Cooke was less anti-intellectual, instead defending the role of the "revolutionary intellectual".³³ At least in this respect, Cooke could be classified as a Cuban Marxist rather than an Argentine nationalist.

In short, the biographies of Argentina's most important nationalist intellectuals of the 1960s followed no identifiable pattern. Ideologically, they came from very different and often hardly compatible traditions. Socially, their backgrounds were more diverse than those of the largely upper-class *nacionalistas* of the 1930s. In contrast to other intellectuals of the 1960s, such as the writers of the cultural journal *Contorno*, who, as Carlos Altamirano has shown, can be called a "generation",³⁴ the neo-revisionists did not belong to a particular age group either. Although many of them were born

³⁰ On his pre-1955 posts at the University of La Plata see Zarrilli, Gutiérrez and Graciano, *Los estudios históricos*, p. 110.

³¹ On him see Ernesto Goldar, *John William Cooke y el peronismo revolucionario* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor América Latina, 1985), Galasso, *Cooke* and Miguel Mazzeo (ed.), *Cooke, de vuelta: el gran descartado de la historia argentina* (Buenos Aires: La Rosa Blindada, 1999).

³² The ratification of the Act of Chapultepec was an important point of disagreement between Perón and *nacionalista* groups such as the ALN. See its organ *Alianza*, extra, August 1946.

³³ Quoted in Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*, p. 142.

³⁴ Altamirano, *Peronismo y cultura de izquierda*, pp. 56-61. On *Contorno* see William H. Kutra, *Contorno: literary engagement in post-Peronist Argentina* (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1988) and Marcela Croce, "Contexto, compromiso, contestación. *Contorno*: situación en el mundo intelectual", in: Noemí Girbal-Blacha and Diana Quattrocchi-Woisson (eds.), *Cuando opinar es actuar: Revistas argentinas del siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1999), pp. 443-476.

between 1910 and 1930, Jauretche and Puiggrós were older, whilst two other Marxist revisionists, the lawyers Rodolfo Ortega Peña and Eduardo Luis Duhalde, whose history books were also widely read in the latter half of the sixties, were much younger.³⁵ In geographical terms, they came from different parts of the country, and from both rural and urban backgrounds. Although their activities in the sixties were usually based in the Federal Capital, there was no over-representation of people who had been born there. Ultimately, the fact that many had received an education in law is less a sign of the homogeneity of their backgrounds than evidence that this career remained common among Argentine intellectuals in general at that time.

Although their backgrounds cannot serve as a trait of unity, one common feature was that most became well known shortly after 1955, when their first widely sold books were published. The political events of these years were the stimulus to bring them together under the signs of anti-liberalism, nationalism and support for Peronism. This meant not only that Puiggrós and Ramos now wrote for periodicals that were more closely tied to Peronism.³⁶ In 1957, Chávez clarified his consent to contribute articles to Astesano's Marxist journal in the following words:

Five or six years ago, [...] it would have been easy to deny them [the Marxists] any kind of collaboration without explaining to these comrades that our nationalist position forbade us any dialogue [...]. Today, in turn, this dialogue has become possible, more than anything due to the events which have occurred in Argentina in the last two years.

With this, Chávez hinted at the growing opposition to Aramburu's regime after November 1955, in the course of which many intellectuals began to see Peronism in a more positive light. This regime antagonised revisionists not only by sacking some of them from their university posts, but also through more overt repression. For example, in late 1955, Rosa was imprisoned with Cooke, who had sought refuge in his house, as

³⁵ They are always mentioned together, since all their publications were written jointly. Both had studied at UBA's Law Faculty and came from Greater Buenos Aires. Ortega Peña (1935-74) was the grandson of the novelist David Peña, who is often seen as a proto-revisionist, and the son of wealthy parents. He briefly flirted with Frondizi's Radicalism as a student, but in 1957 affiliated himself with the CP. Duhalde (born in 1939), who must not be confused with the Argentine president from 2000 to 2003 (also called Eduardo Duhalde), had enjoyed a Catholic education and his first political socialisation was linked to the Catholic Action. As a student he entered a movement that supported the University Reform and identified himself as a Marxist. In the wake of Frondizi's loss of intellectual support, they conjoined with the contributors of *El Popular* and began to frequent Peronist circles, especially under the influence of Hernández Arregui. There is now a useful short summary of their lives and writings: Ariel Eidelman, *Militancia e historia en el peronismo revolucionario de los años 60: Ortega Peña y Duhalde* (Buenos Aires: Centro Cultural de la Cooperación, 2004). See also Duhalde's autobiographical article: Eduardo Luis Duhalde, "Peronismo y revolución: el debate ideológico en los 60: una experiencia", *Confines*, no. 6 (1999), pp. 53-65.

³⁶ Puiggrós in Benítez' *Rebeldía*, Ramos in *El Líder* (see Roberto Baschetti (ed.), *Documentos de la resistencia peronista, 1955-1970* (La Plata: La Campana, 1997), p. 24).

a result of which Rosa, as he stated in an interview of 1978, “became incorporated into Peronism”.³⁷ However, their common alienation from the government was hardly in itself capable of generating a shared political ideology. The next question to consider, therefore, is whether or to what extent they held similar ideas.

2. The instability of the revisionist pantheon

Generally speaking, the unifying element of these ideas was that they were first and foremost characterised by three “antis”: anti-liberalism, anti-imperialism and anti-intellectualism. Populist revisionists equated the people, the masses and the nation, demanding Argentina’s sovereignty against foreign intrusion and the unity of the nation against disruptive individualism and politicking. However, although it was to a degree distinctive of revisionist writings that these three “antis” always appeared together and that they were formulated in vitriolic language, none of these elements per se was specific to revisionists. As Terán has shown, liberalism fell into disrepute in nearly all areas of intellectual debates in the period, anti-intellectualism was very common, too, and, as he has put it, “anti-imperialist discourse was hardly visible because, like God, it was everywhere”.³⁸ Slogans such as *patria o colonia* were not the prerogative of those who are commonly labelled “nationalists”, but permeated all areas of political life. The repudiation of imperialism and liberalism was shared by most diverse tendencies, ranging from the Radical Party, Peronist unions, the military to Communists. The specificities of Marxist or populist neo-revisionism thus have to be sought elsewhere, too.

What united the neo-revisionists’ interpretation of the past with their forerunners from the 1930s? It immediately becomes difficult to identify common grounds within revisionist historiography, if the question is what historical figures were glorified, how and for what reasons. Broadly speaking, the historiographical differences between the writers of the *izquierda nacional* (Ramos and Puiggrós, but also Hernández Arregui) and the *nacionalistas* (for example Palacio or the Irazustas) were as follows: in terms of genres, the *nacionalista* historians had formed an institutional nucleus in the form of the Instituto Rosas, where they wrote more specialised history books and articles,

³⁷ Hernández, *Conversaciones con Rosa*, p. 130 (“quedé incorporado al peronismo”). This series of interviews remains the best source for biographical information on Rosa. For his Santa Fe activities see Macor and Iglesias, *El peronismo antes del peronismo*, esp. pp. 37-38.

³⁸ Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*, pp. 55-72 on anti-liberalism, pp. 137-147 on anti-intellectualism. The quotation about anti-imperialism is from p. 111.

whereas the authors of the *izquierda nacional* usually produced essays that sweepingly dealt with both history and contemporary politics. As for historical symbols for the contemporary political struggle, the *izquierda nacional* preferred the federal *caudillos* to Rosas, because these could be more easily depicted as the embodiments of a popular national identity based in the interior provinces, in contrast to the former governor of Buenos Aires, who seemed suspicious as an icon of centralism and the landowning oligarchy.

Yet even this scheme is problematic, since the writers who did not clearly fit into either the *izquierda nacional* or the conservative *rosista* category (for example, Jauretche or Ortega Peña and Duhalde) outnumbered those who did. The main feature of both the historical interpretations and the ideological viewpoints among revisionists was their bewildering polyphony, as debates around the figure of Rosas can illustrate. The problem with which the neo-revisionists of the *izquierda nacional* and populists like Jauretche had to come to grips was that, although Rosas may have been a popular patriot and even, if one liked, a champion of national capitalism who had protected the manufacturing industries of the interior, he was also the owner of vast estates who acted in the name of the cattle-breeders of Buenos Aires. Within revisionism, discussions about this often started from the question of whether it was more important to apply class or nation as the more fundamental criterion in historical analysis. An article by Jauretche, which was published in a book that had the clear-cut title *For Rosas or Against Rosas*, focused on this issue. According to the author, those writers of the *izquierda nacional* who had argued that Rosas was in the main a member of the landowning elite, opposing him to the federal *caudillos*, were guilty of “crude materialism”. Jauretche saw in this non-*rosista* version of revisionism an instance of “Mitro-Marxism”, that is an interpretation of Argentine history by Marxists who had not sufficiently freed themselves from the liberal *mitrista* views that were seen as typical of the traditional Left. Against this, he affirmed that, rather than class as a category, the nation “was always the axis and remains so.”³⁹

But other neo-revisionists were less sure how to interpret Rosas. The symbol of the former Buenos Aires governor divided the populist neo-revisionists, since the *nacionalista* Right had established a clear-cut case in this question. With their authoritarianism, Catholicism and nostalgia for a lost golden age, *rosistas* had glorified

³⁹ Arturo Jauretche, “Don Juan Manuel y el revisionismo tímido”, in: Federico Barbará and others, *Con Rosas o contra Rosas: 32 escritores e historiadores emiten su opinión sobre D. Juan Manuel de Rosas* (Buenos Aires: Freeland, 1968), p. 20, p. 18 and p. 21.

their hero as the “restorer of law” rather than as a popular *caudillo*. The Marxists Puiggrós and Ramos did not see Rosas as a model to emulate in contemporary politics and preferred to focus on other figures. Hernández Arregui, too, tried to circumscribe a profile beyond “the *nacionalista* tendency grouped around the figure of Juan Manuel de Rosas and the liberal one around Mayo and Caseros”, since “during Rosas’ government the *porteño* monopoly maintained all its vigour” and “Rosas’ arguments were the same as those put forward by Rivadavia”.⁴⁰ Other intellectuals of the *izquierda nacional*, however, saw Rosas in a more favourable light. Whilst Hernández Arregui had rejected an invitation to speak at the Instituto Rosas in 1954, Astesano gave a talk there in 1959.⁴¹ At this time, he had already abandoned the position he had defended in 1951, namely that Rosas had not been interested in true economic independence, and arrived at an interpretation of him as a champion of a popular bourgeois revolution. Even though Astesano, too, detected the most strenuous anti-imperialism in the interior provinces, he nonetheless curtailed the distance that separated Rosas from the federal *caudillos* of the hinterland by asserting that both forms of federalism “were an expression of the reaction against a dependent, colonising and foreign capitalist development.” Astesano thus paved the way for his interpretation of Rosas as a popular leader and the founder of Argentine independent capitalism.⁴² Another positive interpretation of Rosas from a Marxist perspective came from Ortega Peña and Duhalde. Although they were methodologically less scrupulous in their employment of Marxist analytical categories than Astesano and criticised the Marxism of the *izquierda nacional*, they also stressed the common grounds between Rosas and the federal *caudillos*, arguing that there was a “continuity between the policies of Rosas and the *montonera* [...] on the level of the historical needs of nationality”.⁴³

Conversely, right-wing revisionists distrusted the Marxist novices. Quite how far apart the world of authoritarian *nacionalistas* was from that of the Marxist populists

⁴⁰ Hernández Arregui, *Imperialismo y cultura*, p. 15 and p. 20.

⁴¹ On Hernández Arregui’s rejection, see Galasso, *Hernández Arregui*, pp. 66-67, on Astesano’s talk *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, no. 19 (1959), p. 108.

⁴² *Columnas del Nacionalismo Marxista de Liberación Nacional*, no. 3, 1 September 1957, p. 1 and p. 3. He fully elaborated his reading of Rosas in Eduardo B. Astesano, *Rosas: bases del nacionalismo popular* (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1960).

⁴³ Rodolfo Ortega Peña and Eduardo Luis Duhalde, *Felipe Varela contra el Imperio británico. Las masas de la Unión Americana enfrentan a las potencias europeas* (Buenos Aires: Sudestada, 1966), p. 166. For their criticism of the *izquierda nacional* see *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, no. 5 (second period), May 1969, p. 24. The difference between writers like Astesano and Puiggrós, on the one hand, and Ortega Peña and Duhalde, on the other, might also be interpreted as one of quality. As long-standing CP intellectuals Astesano and Puiggrós had a more solid acquaintance with both Marxism and Argentine history than Ortega Peña and Duhalde.

was testified by a review in the bulletin of the Instituto Rosas of a book by Ramos, written by the Jesuit Leonardo Castellani, an admirer not only of Rosas, but also of José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Whilst Castellani found fault with Ramos' alleged ignorance of the Gospel, he displayed his own unfamiliarity with Marxism, as he unselfconsciously rechristened Ramos' Leninist-inspired *Ejército y semi-colonia* with the more unobtrusive title *Ejército y política*.⁴⁴ Within the Instituto Rosas—essentially still a nucleus of right-wing *nacionalistas*—further disputes erupted when Ortega Peña and Duhalde decided in 1966 that their goals were best served by turning into Marxist revisionist historians and joining the institute. Soon, they found themselves embroiled in a polemic over the War of the Triple Alliance against Paraguay with the *nacionalista* Oliver, who, after the publication of a history book by the Marxist León Pomer sensed “a communist tactic of infiltration in the national currents”.⁴⁵ It transpired in the course of the polemic that Oliver was no longer sure that Mitre deserved the negative judgments by revisionists, since, as Oliver reasoned, he had patriotically led Argentina into a war against foreign aggression. Ortega Peña and Duhalde, in turn, avowed that Oliver's account had “its root in the liberal-*mitrista* education” and that “there cannot be any confusion in the camp of the nationals: with the liberals, there is no possibility of understanding whatsoever”.⁴⁶ The exchange threatened to escalate when Oliver denounced the institute's president, Rosa, as “a distinguished publicist of fantasy-history and patrician *porteño* ancestry [...] who sometimes coincides with reality”, so that the editorial board decided it was better to declare the debate as finished.⁴⁷ But what it showed was that there were few figures and events exempt from controversy, even within revisionism. Still, Rivadavia was a foreign-inspired liberal ideologue and so was Sarmiento. Although San Martín was an undisputed hero and so were *caudillos* like Güemes and Dorrego, liberals laid claim to these three figures, too. And if revisionists no longer agreed over Rosas and Mitre, what was one to make of figures that never clearly belonged to either liberalism or revisionism, such as Mariano Moreno and, especially, Alberdi? The revisionist pantheon became increasingly unstable.

However, the importance of history as a central axis in these disputes should not be overestimated, as the contributions of Rosa, ecumenical in matters of ideology, can

⁴⁴ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 5, May 1969, p. 21.

⁴⁵ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 4, April 1969, p. 24 and p. 27.

⁴⁶ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 5, May 1969, p. 23.

⁴⁷ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 6, September 1969, p. 32.

illustrate. Given his position as president of the Instituto Rosas, if anyone had a vested interest in the glorification of Rosas it was him. Unsurprisingly, in a letter written in 1958, Rosa criticised Puiggrós for not having sufficiently revised the interpretation of Rosas that Puiggrós had given in his 1944-book *Rosas el pequeño*. Trying to persuade Puiggrós that “Rosas was a socialist *avant la lettre*” (an affirmation based on a document in which Rosas had expressed his sympathy for the European revolutions of 1848), Rosa wrote that “the problem of Rosas is crucial to our history and it has not been ‘overcome by time’, as you say.”⁴⁸ On another occasion, however, Rosa argued that “the essential problem is not the figure of Rosas but the different criterion that we apply to judge him.”⁴⁹ In any event, what really mattered, according to Rosa, was that, “when communism and nationalism coincide [...], the world-wide national liberation of the peoples and the social emancipation of the proletariat [...] is inevitable.”⁵⁰ Notwithstanding his self-professed Marxist nationalism, however, he had no difficulties in positing class and nation as analytical categories in dichotomy. In an interview in 1968, he explained that

history sometimes shows us the internal confrontation of a national mentality and a class mentality [...]. The bourgeoisie has a *class* mentality, but I cannot find this in the so-called working class. Look what happens in our country: those above have ‘class consciousness’, those below national consciousness.

Although there was little in this statement that would have made it incompatible with the Marxist analyses of other authors, the observation, in Rosa’s eyes, showed “the great mistake of Marxism”.⁵¹

In short, the political ideas of nationalist intellectuals were not uniform. Unless categories as broad as anti-imperialism or anti-liberalism are applied, it is difficult to distil common denominators. Exercises aimed at disentangling different strands of Argentine nationalism became a favourite activity of the *izquierda nacional* itself. For example, large parts of Hernández Arregui’s bestseller *La formación de la conciencia nacional* were devoted to separating reactionary from progressive nationalism, as were

⁴⁸ José María Rosa to Rodolfo Puiggrós, Madrid, 14 March 1958 (I would like to thank Omar Acha for having made accessible this letter to me). The corresponding reference to the book on Rosas is Rodolfo Puiggrós, *Rosas, el pequeño*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Perennis, 1953).

⁴⁹ *Mundo Nacionalista*, no. 3, 5 September 1969, quoted in Jauretche, *Política nacional* (1982), pp. 10-11. In italics in original.

⁵⁰ Letter Rosa to Puiggrós, 14 March 1958.

⁵¹ Rosa, *Historia del revisionismo*, pp. 10-11. The expression “internal confrontation” supposedly referred to a confrontation within one country.

passages of Puiggrós' work.⁵² Ramos described the *nacionalista* Alberto Baldrich as “a contumacious fascist (later Peronist-fascist)”.⁵³ But does that mean that it is mistaken to group all these nationalists together? After all, the *izquierda nacional* was conscious of its appropriation of historical revisionism from the *nacionalismo* of the 1930s. According to Hernández Arregui,

the merit of Argentine *nacionalismo*, and its real contribution to the formation of national consciousness, was its historiographical work.⁵⁴

Although revisionists did not share a biographical pattern, fought between themselves over ideological differences and could not agree on what figures precisely should populate the pantheon of national heroes, their trait of unity consisted in that they identified a common enemy. As the label revisionism indicated, this common enemy was what they perceived as the deformation of the nation by “official” liberalism.

3. The centre of the revisionist argument

Regardless of what historical symbols revisionists picked, for varying forms of anti-liberalism and anti-imperialism, they all praised the personalistic political principle of *caudillismo*. The charismatic bond between the leader and the people, in their view, was the typically Argentine way of doing politics, whereas they equated liberalism with corrupting politicking. The typical *caudillo* in their account did not represent group interests, but simply the nation. The search for valuable *caudillos* was therefore tantamount to the claim to rescue from oblivion a real or authentic Argentina, which had allegedly remained invisible under the surface of liberal disintegration. In an essay published in 1959, in which he linked the necessity of historical revision to the exigencies of Peronism, Jauretche called for a search for the “authentic nation”.⁵⁵ This plea, of course, was so generic that all revisionists could agree upon it, ranging from the *izquierda nacional* to the Catholic Right. But while, as we have seen, the question which figures or events embodied this “authentic nation” and for what reasons remained uncertain, it was easier to agree on the “enemies” of authenticity: distortion and falsification. From this stemmed three basic characteristics of all revisionist

⁵² Juan José Hernández Arregui, *La formación de la conciencia nacional (1930-1960)*, 3rd ed. (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1973) and Rodolfo Puiggrós, *El proletariado en la revolución nacional*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Sudestada, 1968), pp. 47-66.

⁵³ Ramos, *Revolución y contrarrevolución*, vol. 2, p. 557.

⁵⁴ Hernández Arregui, *La formación (1973)*, p. 264.

⁵⁵ Jauretche, *Política nacional*, p. 51.

narratives. Firstly, they relied on a Manichean set of binary oppositions, such as authenticity versus falsification, people versus anti-nation, masses versus oligarchy, sovereignty versus imperialist yoke, *caudillos* versus effeminate liberal ideologues, interior versus port city and real nation versus intelligentsia. Secondly, one particular point in this model was often explained by referring to another. Thirdly, these dichotomies usually took on the form of a conspiracy theory, according to which hidden forces (such as the falsifications of intellectuals or secret manoeuvres in the City of London) powerfully pulled the strings beyond the visible façade.

The concept of distortion in particular made revisionism compatible with a rudimentary Marxism, because it fitted well into a crude form of the Marxist understanding of ideology that Raymond Williams has defined as the idea of “a system of illusory beliefs”.⁵⁶ The notion of a history distorted by liberalism was common to both the *nacionalistas* and the Marxist and populist neo-revisionists. If one had asked right-wing revisionists whether there was one sentence by Marx with which they agreed, they might well have picked the phrase that “the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas”. This is not to say that they were influenced by Marx. Nor that the *izquierda nacional* took great care in analysing this notion. Also, *nacionalistas* and Marxists meant slightly different things when they employed concepts like ideology or falsification. When Ernesto Palacio entitled his 1939 book *La historia falsificada* he quite literally had in mind historians who deliberately distorted the evidence, which was a problem that he thought easily redeemable through his own archival research.⁵⁷ In turn, what Jauretche later labelled “pedagogic colonisation” referred to a problem that allegedly affected all levels of society and was therefore more difficult to rectify: through education and cultural influences imperialist powers had colonised the minds of Argentines, so that a concerted effort was needed to achieve cultural liberation.⁵⁸ According to Jauretche, “pedagogic colonisation” had to be understood as part of a “cultural superstructure”, a concept that he had learned from

⁵⁶ Williams, *Marxism and literature*, p. 55. As elsewhere, this concept of ideology coexisted relatively peacefully with other uses. Halperín Donghi, *Ensayos*, p. 111 has observed that many revisionists of the thirties saw democracy as an ideology or a false consciousness. It must be added that this was different in the writings of the *izquierda nacional*. Puiggrós’ criticism of “constitutional fetishism”, for example (Rodolfo Puiggrós, *Las izquierdas y el problema nacional*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Cepe, 1973), p. 15), should not be interpreted as antidemocratic.

⁵⁷ Ernesto Palacio, *La historia falsificada* (Buenos Aires: Difusión, 1939).

⁵⁸ Arturo Jauretche, *Los profetas del odio y la yapa: la colonización pedagógica*, 6th ed. (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1973).

Ramos.⁵⁹ Hence, although Jauretche's view was not exactly the same as Palacio's, his account nevertheless echoed the merging of the revisionist denunciations of a falsified history with Marxist vocabulary, which, even though he was unfamiliar with Marxist theory, began to populate his writings at precisely this point.⁶⁰

In this mixture, Marxian subtleties, such as the differences between ideology, false consciousness and alienation, mattered little, as different terms were used interchangeably. In *Imperialismo y cultura*, a good example of this blend, Hernández Arregui avowed that "the point of departure is the consideration of cultural activity as ideology". From there,

the aim is to prove how this generation [from the 1930 military coup onwards] was the instrument of imperialism, which used it to reinforce a false consciousness of the nation's own essence and to disarm the defensive spiritual forces that struggle for national liberation [...].⁶¹

Ideology always had to be understood in the context of Argentina's semi-colonial condition and the role of imperialism. The same author thus affirmed that

the imperialist offensive goes hand in hand with ideological invasion. The entire public opinion of the country is infected to the core by this publicity that dissolves the national consciousness of a people. Institutions do not escape this propaganda. I am referring here to imperialist infiltration of the trade unions, the armed forces and the universities.⁶²

The alleged liberal falsification of history was deemed part of this "imperialist penetration". Although, Maristella Svampa is thus right to argue that "revisionism methodologically reinforces the Marxist reading",⁶³ this does not mean that revisionism necessarily engendered a rigorous Marxist methodology. Without much acknowledgement or discussion of problems of method, approaches ranged from Rosa's Rankean optimism (for him, the accumulation of documents sufficed to demonstrate what the great men of the nineteenth century *had actually been like*) to the rigid Marxism of Puiggrós, who of all revisionists came closest to economic determinism.

What really unified the revisionist argument thus continued to be its denunciation of the ideological penetration of imperialism and the distortion of history. That this was the point of connection could not only be seen in that non-Marxists like Jauretche

⁵⁹ Jauretche, "Don Juan Manuel", in: Barbará and others, *Con Rosas*, p. 17.

⁶⁰ On an international level, the best-known example of a stress on cultural liberation in Third World struggles of decolonisation, of course, became Frantz Fanon, *The wretched of the earth*, translated by Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1963), esp. pp. 206-248. Fanon hardly influenced Jauretche (in any case, Jauretche's *Los profetas del odio* was first published in 1957, that is six years before Fanon was first translated into Spanish), but *The wretched of the earth* was widely read among the Peronist Left during the second half of the sixties.

⁶¹ Hernández Arregui, *Imperialismo y cultura*, p. 15.

⁶² Hernández Arregui, *Peronismo y socialismo*, p. 66.

⁶³ Svampa, *El dilema*, p. 277.

made use of Marxist concepts at this point, but also, conversely, in that Marxists borrowed from *nacionalismo*, especially its *hispanismo*, in order to explain the historical origins of this distortion. Although immigration was no longer a crucial issue of public debate by the 1950s, Ramos revived the matter to explain the weakness of authentic traditions in Argentina. In his eyes, the absence of grandparents among immigrants

makes it completely impossible for the generations after 1880 to perceive the fundamental outlines of the Argentine historical process, given that the offspring of these successive streams of immigrants, who lacked an oral tradition, could understand history only through the textbooks of the schools that are dominated by the oligarchy. These superstructural elements have huge importance in twentieth-century Argentine politics and in the historical imposture that still rules.⁶⁴

Whilst Ramos' works did not usually expound a strong anti-immigration bias, Hernández Arregui's nationalism stressed Argentina's Hispanic roots more openly. In his view, one fundamental problem of the Argentine crisis lay in the economic and political replacement of Spain by Britain as the principal point of reference for the ruling class. After assuring the reader of the far-reaching Hispanic influences in Shakespeare—designed implicitly to prove the cultural superiority of Spain—, Hernández Arregui observed that the masses “remained Hispanic, affiliated to the past.”⁶⁵

Hernández Arregui's notion of *hispanidad* as being constitutive of Argentine national identity was not the same as the nostalgic longing for a pre-capitalist Catholic and hierarchical age that had been the repertoire of some reactionary thinkers of *nacionalismo* and revisionists of the thirties, such as Ibarguren, Gálvez or Palacio.⁶⁶ Rather, it was meant to exalt a Hispanic American identity in opposition to what he perceived as a threatening *American way of life*. Nevertheless, behind Hernández Arregui's nationalism lurked a form of cultural conservatism, which suspected modernisation of inducing moral degeneration and was not very different from some variants of *nacionalismo*. Moralism and an aversion towards the latest cultural trends from overseas were also widespread among the Peronist Youth (JP). For example, the JP-organ *Trinchera* defined “the Peronist lifestyle” in opposition to consuming alcohol and visiting brothels. The scenes in Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas' 1968-film *La hora de los hornos* in the arts branch of the Instituto Di Tella—at the time the

⁶⁴ Ramos, *Revolución y contrarrevolución*, vol. 2, p. 166.

⁶⁵ Hernández Arregui, *¿Qué es el ser nacional?*, p. 29.

⁶⁶ In fact, the *hispanismo* of 1930s *nacionalismo* was explicitly criticised by the *izquierda nacional*. See for example Rodolfo Puiggrós, *Pueblo y oligarquía* (Buenos Aires: Jorge Alvarez, 1969), p. 17.

cutting edge of artistic innovation and known as the *manzana loca* (the crazy block)—pictured its students as the quintessence of frivolity, promiscuity, drunkenness, moral corruption and indifference towards the misery of the mass of the people.⁶⁷ For Hernández Arregui, the Instituto di Tella was “modern art without national roots”.⁶⁸ In this view, cultural modernisation was despicable because its flippancy was a symptom of imperialism having succeeded in diverting attention away from the cause of national liberation.

Overall, according to neo-revisionists, the circular link between imperialism, oligarchy and liberal ideologues remained more important than the lack of Spanish roots or Catholic morals in order to explain the distortion of Argentine reality and history. Puiggrós (who can be seen as the neo-revisionist farthest away from the ideas of *nacionalismo*) wrote that

[t]he ideological infection introduced through imperialist propaganda provokes, in the colonial mentality of the liberal intellectuals and politicians, [...] a deformed vision of social reality [...].

Since, according to this view, the oligarchy controlled the means of communication, it was only logical that “the conquest of power cannot be learned in books.”⁶⁹ In Rosa’s view, “the intellectuals —as happens in colonial or semi-colonial countries— unshakeably continued to favour foreign ways.”⁷⁰ Hernández Arregui depicted his bestseller *Imperialismo y cultura* as the first application of the concept of alienation to Argentine culture,⁷¹ at the roots of which supposedly lay the imperialist project of economic domination. In this sense, imperialism was a crucial explanatory element and the accounts of the *izquierda nacional* were based on an economic determinism. However, arguments about the material basis of the anti-national character of oligarchic literature in *Imperialismo y cultura* hardly went beyond mere affirmation. “An equivocal literature of introspection *corresponds* to the economy of monoculture”, Hernández Arregui wrote.⁷² But rather than collating economic statistics, the book discussed literary products and the author aimed at proving the cultural liberalism and cosmopolitanism of the oligarchy. The material bases of imperialism formed only the invariable background and the oligarchy was defined through its cultural rather than its

⁶⁷ *Trinchera*, no. 3 (October 1960). In contrast, *Dinamis*, the magazine of the union of light and power workers, found nothing indecent about imitating the style of *Primera Plana* and giving broad coverage to the latest records from the First World or to beauty contests.

⁶⁸ Hernández Arregui, *Peronismo y socialismo*, p. 51.

⁶⁹ Puiggrós, *Pueblo y oligarquía*, p. 13. Puiggrós, *Las izquierdas*, p. 187.

⁷⁰ Rosa, *Historia del revisionismo*, p. 67.

⁷¹ Hernández Arregui, *¿Qué es el ser nacional?*, p. 12.

⁷² Hernández Arregui, *Imperialismo y cultura*, p. 127. Italics added.

economic properties; it was a parasitic rather than an exploitative class. In this argument the neo-revisionists had much in common with the traditional historiographical strand of the 1930s, too. As Halperín Donghi has remarked, in the Irazustas' *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico* the anti-nation, the oligarchy, had already been defined culturally and not according to economic criteria.⁷³

Even though all revisionists identified falsification and distortion as the enemy, at first glance the national-populist Left differed from the more elitist *nacionalistas* in that they claimed to rescue the marginalised masses from historical oblivion. Hernández Arregui wrote that “we must oppose the official history of the oligarchy with a revolutionary revision that exposes the class content of this canonised fable of our past.”⁷⁴ However, although in comparison to the *rosismo* of the 1930s class as a category played a more central role in the populist narratives, in their writings as well, it acquired its meaning only in connection with the category of the nation. Even the authors of the *izquierda nacional* depicted the nineteenth-century masses —not yet the proletariat of the following century— as a *naturally* national class. For Hernández Arregui, “the nationalism of the masses stems from the actual, not theoretical, fact of colonisation. Not from books, but from the destructive eradication that comes upon us from outside.” The nationalism of the masses appeared as something that had existed *a priori*. Hernández Arregui's definition of the masses was simply that “they do not think of the *there* of the world. They think of the *here*. Of the fatherland.” It thus turned out that “the masses are always national, although they do not know the definition of *nation*” and that “the proletariat [here, the contemporary] is, by definition, a national and revolutionary class.”⁷⁵ Borrowing Alain Touraine's words, in this discourse, “class and nation thus appeared as nothing but the two faces of the same protagonist of the struggles for national liberation.”⁷⁶ For revisionists, the nationalism of the masses thus needed no further discussion because they saw it as a naturally given essence.

⁷³ On the absence of materialist yardsticks for the characterisation of the oligarchy in the most successful book of the Irazusta brothers, *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico*, see Tulio Halperín Donghi, “Argentines ponder the burden of the past”, in: Jeremy Adelman (ed.), *Colonial legacies: the problem of persistence in Latin American history* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), p. 165.

⁷⁴ Juan José Hernández Arregui, *Nacionalismo y liberación* (Buenos Aires: Hachea, 1969), p. 19.

⁷⁵ Hernández Arregui, *Peronismo y socialismo*, p. 16, p. 70 and p. 67.

⁷⁶ Alain Touraine, *La parole et le sang: politique et société en Amérique latine* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1988), p. 141. Typical of this was the argument of Astesano who, in a first step, established that the *gaucho* was the prototype of Argentineness and, in a second step, depicted the revolutionary capacities of the “*gaucho* working class”.

Although Marxist revisionists stressed the importance of the popular masses in history, the scope they conceded to subaltern sectors in their books was much narrower than they promised in their introductions. The title of Ramos' best-known book, *Revolution and Counterrevolution*, epitomised its dichotomous pamphletic content much more accurately than the subtitle of the original 1956 edition —dropped for the 1965 edition— which had raised the misleading expectation that the reader held in his hands a study about *The Masses in Our History*. It would have been equally possible to take one of Puiggrós' titles, such as *People and Oligarchy* or *The Left and the National Problem*, since Ramos' most recurring invectives were directed against those whom he saw as the archetypes of the oligarchy, Mitre, and of the anti-national liberal Left, Juan B. Justo.⁷⁷ Despite habitually proposing to retrieve those who had supposedly been buried by “official history”, the products of other authors, such as Hernández Arregui's history of ideas or Rosa's books of political and diplomatic history, were even more inclined to become a history of great men, which rarely included the popular classes. Although generic references to the “excluded”, the “marginalised” and in particular the “silenced” were frequent, a search for the term “inequality” in the essays and history books of national-populist authors would be undertaken in vain. The argument that the essays of the *izquierda nacional* revealed class problems is misleading. Marxist revisionists, let alone other revisionists, never tackled issues such as housing conditions, health care or popular culture. Like their *rosista* predecessors, they did not write social history.

The impediment to social history was not insufficient archival resources, but their own reasoning. Class and nation were condensed into a single organic object that was the agent of national liberation. The fact that this entity was not only based on *national* values, but also on the cultural properties of the *proletariat*, would —at least if it became conscious of its own destiny— ensure the ultimately socialist outcome of national liberation. In principle, this body could be a class as well as a historical figure. It was only a short step, then, from the idea that “every historical individuality personifies social powers” to the discovery of figures that embodied the values of both nation and popular class.⁷⁸ Marxist revisionists saw these values above all in the federal *caudillos* who had resisted Mitre's *porteño* centralism, such as Ángel Vicente “El

⁷⁷ The respective Spanish titles were: *Revolución y contrarrevolución en la Argentina: las masas en nuestra historia* (Ramos, 1956), *Pueblo y oligarquía* (Puiggrós, 1969), *Las izquierdas y el problema nacional* (Puiggrós, 1967).

⁷⁸ Hernández Arregui, *Imperialismo y cultura*, p. 21.

Chacho” Peñaloza, Felipe Varela or Ricardo López Jordán, i.e. in the interior or at least in the littoral provinces. Frequently exalted were also some earlier *caudillos* who had fought against the preponderance of Buenos Aires, such as José Gervasio Artigas or Facundo Quiroga. Past and present struggles were represented as analogous. Hernández Arregui asked

From where did the focal points of national emancipation emerge in the last years? From the provinces, Córdoba, Tucumán, Rosario [sic], Corrientes, San Juan, Catamarca [...]. The country, crushed during the nineteenth century with the extermination of the last *montoneras* of Felipe Varela, is in the interior.⁷⁹

According to Ortega Peña and Duhalde, “Mitre [...] is the symbol of the directing cattle-breeding class which organised the country according to the dictates of English financial capital”, whereas “Felipe Varela [...] is the organisation of the people, of the provincial working classes.”⁸⁰ For them, Varela thus did not only do what the nation or the people wanted, but he *was* the organisation of the people, at the same time synonymous with the “provincial working classes”. The identity between *caudillo* and people had already been established through a homology in the title/subtitle of the book: *Felipe Varela Against the British Empire. The Masses of the Unión Americana Confront the European Powers*. Yet that the masses and the *caudillo* could be melded in the same semantic position was only possible through their antagonism to their always implicit opposite: *the British Empire* or *the European Powers*.

Neo-revisionist texts commonly established a system of points of reference that mutually explained each other: the historical distortions of liberalism led to imperialist penetration. This penetration was manifest in economic and cultural practices, which led to the exclusion of those who resisted these distortions. In this way, the imperialist penetration again caused a false historical consciousness. It was possible to insert more elements into such chains, but in any case the fact that they explained themselves *eo ipso* forever relegated to a subordinate level questions about determinants or about the relationship between base and superstructure. Ramos in particular cast a wide net in his writings, where every knot was untied through a reference to its neighbours, which was then pressed into an overall dichotomous scheme. At the beginning of the second volume of *Revolución y contrarrevolución*, he declared that the social, cultural and political changes of the twentieth century “only find themselves confronted with one

⁷⁹ Hernández Arregui, *Peronismo y socialismo*, p. 70.

⁸⁰ Ortega Peña and Duhalde, *Felipe Varela*, pp. 165-166.

invariable factor: the cattle-breeding and commercial oligarchy.” On the last pages of the same volume, the reader was told:

However surprising it might seem, and in spite of the transformative power of history, there is one thing that a century and a half of vicissitudes has not changed in our country: the all-embracing power of the cattle-breeding oligarchy, built from the balkanisation of Latin America and the eclipse of Artigas. The oligarchic nucleus, a truly parasitic and paralysing core, corrupter of Argentine economics, politics and culture, bases itself on the same interests, the same psychology and the same myths with which it confronted the *caudillos*, sustained the exclusivism of one port against the Nation, elevated Rivadavia, admitted Rosas, acclaimed Mitre, exterminated Paraguay, opposed Roca, overthrew Yrigoyen and exiled Perón.⁸¹

According to Ramos, throughout the twentieth century, the struggles of liberation had received their justification through their negative opposite, the oligarchy, against which the rest had to be measured.

Such chains or dualities, in which the arguments confirmed each other, were characteristic of a discourse that attempted to be at once hermetic and all-encompassing. It ascribed an immobile significance to every historical protagonist and event within a global model of interpretation, in which every element referred to another. The distribution of roles in this game was ambivalent. Rosas, Varela or Perón could not simply be seen as the representation of a precise social constituency such as the working class. The crucial problems of Argentine history thus assumed an ethical rather than a socio-economic character. The enemy was identified as the enemy of the fatherland rather than the representation of interests of specifiable social groups. This explains why the tone of these writings was always moralist and why “betrayal” was such a recurrent category in this discourse. In this, revisionism resembled populist rhetoric. In the words of Perón, “the people never betray, those who betray are the men who try to deceive the people.”⁸² As for the historical narratives of national-populist writers, “betrayal” became the decisive concept in accounting for historical change. When Rosa was asked in an interview by the popular historical magazine *Todo es Historia* in 1970 whom he saw as “the most dreadful personage in our history”, he replied: “I understand and explain them all. [...] I can’t say that I’m the enemy of any of them.” But he added that “there is one federal personage whom I can’t forgive because he represents the traitor, and that is Urquiza.”⁸³ Revisionists never explained the battle of Caseros or any other historical event through changes in the socio-

⁸¹ Ramos, *Revolución y contrarrevolución*, vol. 2, p. 7 and p. 698.

⁸² Quoted in *Crónica*, 18 October 1964.

⁸³ *Todo es Historia*, no. 33, January 1970, p. 61.

economic structure or changing interests, but through the moral ineptitude of eminent men. Just as Urquiza was a traitor in Rosa's eyes, for García Mellid, the political activities of the Unitarians were simply a series of "betrayals" of the country as a whole.⁸⁴ In spite of Ortega Peña and Duhalde's claim that "every historical individuality personifies social powers",⁸⁵ revisionists thus did not usually interpret historical figures according to the group interests for which they stood, but instead assorted them into a group of anti-national traitors and one of true nationalists.

Summarising, the seeming strength and self-sufficiency of revisionism derived from a circular arguments, in which each point explained and legitimised another. This can be seen as an attempt to make a discourse invulnerable against the potential disturbances that stemmed from its own instability. Correspondingly, past and present mutually illuminated and legitimised each other. According to Jauretche, a national policy was conducive to the revision of history just as historical revisionism would entail a national policy. Curiously grounding his argument on Marc Bloch's demand for an *histoire à rebours*, making it sound like a call for an unrestrained use of anachronisms, he contended that the oligarchic "politics of history" required an oppositional politics of history. And the political needs of the present not only determined historiography, but also vice versa.⁸⁶ After he had told readers that Anchorenas and Gainzas had been the only families mentioned in José Hernández' gaucho epic *Martín Fierro*, Ramos wrote that "presently, and by the clear intention of history, they have joined together in the family owning the newspaper 'La Prensa', the gloomiest anti-national bastion in Argentina." If the contemporary events posthumously revealed Hernández' "mysterious sensibility", there was also "an intention of history", which, by the time he had written *Martín Fierro*, had already determined future historical events.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Atilio García Mellid, *Proceso al liberalismo argentino*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Theoría, 1964), pp. 317-350. The list of usages of betrayal as the explanatory factor in revisionist literature is potentially endless.

⁸⁵ See footnote 79.

⁸⁶ Jauretche, *Política nacional*, pp. 23-25. Whilst the *Annales* School in general was an inspiration for the kind of social history that emerged in Argentine universities after 1955, Bloch had been translated into Spanish and was read by Argentine historians before 1955 (I would like to thank Luis Alberto Romero for this clarification).

⁸⁷ Ramos, *Revolución y contrarrevolución*, vol. 1, p. 189.

Conclusion

Fernando Devoto is right to argue that it is difficult to identify common denominators among revisionists in the 1960s.⁸⁸ Although the history of the *izquierda nacional* suggests a movement from Marxism towards nationalism, the overall composition of Argentine nationalism in the 1960s was an eclectic mixture from different backgrounds. It is impossible to neatly divide nationalism into a right-wing *nacionalismo* and a left-wing and populist current. Most nationalist intellectuals did not fit into either of the two categories: into which group would the widely read Jauretche fall, or his former FORJA-fellow García Mellid? Ortega Peña and Duhalde, members of the Instituto Rosas, who denied belonging to the *izquierda nacional*, or a Catholic populist like Fermín Chávez, let alone the prolific Rosa, are no easier to classify. If one strand was singled out on the basis of the twofold self-definition of Marxism and populism it would have to include at least Puiggrós, Ramos, Astesano, Cooke, Hernández Arregui, Rosa, Ortega Peña and Duhalde. But as we have seen, their ideological backgrounds had little in common: some had a trajectory in the traditional Left, others in Radicalism, and Rosa had originally been a sympathiser of fascism. Unsurprisingly, the political ideas of nationalist intellectuals revealed no common pattern either. There were certain themes they had in common, such as anti-imperialism, perhaps always the most promising candidate to bind together Marxism and nationalism. But there was little agreement over what exactly this anti-imperialism meant and, furthermore, the label is too generic to pin down an unmistakable nationalist ideology. Conversely, assuming that all nationalists shared a revisionist understanding of Argentina's history, if we try to find historical figures or a set of figures they exalted or reviled, the possible choices quickly turn out to be too specific. In the 1960s, not even the classics were spared from arguments. Many revisionists still admired Rosas, but others did not. Puiggrós, although he did not repeat the criticism of the former governor of Buenos Aires that he had written in 1944, was especially known for his dislike of Rosas. Mitre, formerly the target par excellence of revisionist attacks, recovered stature as a great patriot in some accounts. Oliver saw "communist infiltrations" in the *nacionalista* ranks and Ramos identified a "contumacious fascist" in his environment. Jauretche tried to steer a middle course, but also felt that the "Mitro-Marxists" of the *izquierda nacional* were a danger to revisionist orthodoxy.

⁸⁸ Devoto, "Reflexiones", in Devoto and Pagano (eds.), *Historiografías académica y militante*, pp. 107-131.

But is it therefore mistaken to speak of revisionism in the singular? It seems to me that the attraction of revisionism lay precisely in its lack of specific ideological demands. That nationalist intellectuals of all persuasions turned to history might have served two goals at the same time: first, it was a means of legitimising themselves in the present; second, it can be seen as a way of dissolving political questions of the present in an overarching historical narrative that made precise definitions in contemporary politics less necessary. Instead of being geared towards the realisation of concrete political aims, revisionism derived its coherence from combining three enemies: liberalism, imperialism and intellectuals. The very term revisionism already suggests that it was directed *against* a perceived orthodoxy. The fixation on the idea that there had been a distortion provided a degree of cohesiveness that otherwise would have been absent. On the positive side of its dichotomous reading of reality stood the *caudillos*. The chosen figures and the reasons for which they were picked could differ, but the form of politics that revisionists praised was always the personalistic principle of *caudillismo* and the charismatic bond between a symbolic leader and nation. This leader had to be above the atomised group interests that were typical of liberal politicking. Therefore, it was problematic when a certain figure, for example Rosas, could be seen as the expression of the interests of a specific group (in this case, of the cattle-breeding oligarchy). He was then no longer the embodiment of the nation as such. In the accounts of national-populists, the masses, who had the same interests and fulfilled the same historical function as *caudillos*, were naturally national. They had no particular demands, needs or concerns, just those of the people. A closer look at phenomena such as social stratification or inequality would have endangered the coherence of this discourse. Such questions were thus hardly raised in revisionist writings and they had to be sacrificed to the overarching principle that coalesced class and nation into a single organic agent that would bring about national liberation. Within this overall model, the question of what exactly it meant that the people or the leader represented the authentic nation were resolved in a circular argument, such as: the *caudillo* was the real nation because he incorporated the people who were opposed to the oligarchy; the oligarchy was anti-national, because it was aligned with imperialism, which tried to depose the *caudillo*. If in reality it had been a federalist (Urquiza) who deposed Rosas, this could only be because of betrayal and lack of loyalty to the nation.

In this, revisionism was very close to the features of Peronist discourse that have been described by Sigal and Verón: “Peronism is not a political position among other

possible ones, it is by definition a trans-political entity: to be Peronist simply means to be a true Argentine.” Just like the ideal revisionist *caudillo*, “Perón does not represent an ideology, nor does he pursue a political *interest*.” For that reason, “like the Fatherland, Perón determines who is loyal and who is a traitor.”⁸⁹ Revisionist discourse also resembled Touraine’s description of Latin American populism in general.

Populist discourse does not seek to be representative and the political boss does not direct himself to a precise category or class. The leader is identified with an ensemble, the people, the nation, the fatherland [...]. The enemy is defined as the anti-nation, the anti-people [...]. This absence of a social reference can be explained because the populist leader believes that it is consciousness that determines social transformations [...] He turns political problems into ethical choices.⁹⁰

In short, revisionists did not express precise tenets or demands. This turned it into a polysemic discursive blueprint which could be applied for different reasons and with different aims. In this lay part of its attraction. As Bourdieu has remarked, “the great prophesies are polysemic [...] Therefore, thinkers with great elasticity are like a gift from God [...] for an annexationist interpretation and for strategic usages.”⁹¹ This opens another line of inquiry, namely how revisionism was made applicable for “strategic usages”.

⁸⁹ Sigal and Verón, *Perón o muerte*, p. 128. and p. 129.

⁹⁰ Touraine, *La parole et le sang*, p. 205.

⁹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, “Les conditions sociales de la circulation des idées”, *Romanistische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 14, no. 1-2 (1990), pp. 1-10, p. 5.

Chapter four

Networks of dissemination of revisionism: periodicals, publishers and political groups

Introduction

Left-wing Argentine intellectuals became increasingly politicised in the 1960s. As has been argued in chapter two, this politicisation was in part linked to the fragmentation of the intellectual field. It also mirrored international developments, however. Since French debates enjoyed great prestige in Argentina, Sartre's demand that the intellectual put his activity to political uses was perhaps especially influential.¹ The interest in post-revolutionary developments in Cuban culture further reinforced the ideal of the militant intellectual.² Although in an urbanised society like Argentina it was less obvious than in Cuba how the step from advocating armed insurgencies to actually taking part in them should be made, many Argentine intellectuals nevertheless convinced themselves that revolution was the order of the day in their country too. To be sure, when middle-class students began to arm themselves in the late 1960s, it turned out that not every intellectual who had freely used the term revolution was prepared to follow them. Yet at the very least the 1960s were a period in which the majority of Argentine intellectuals believed, as Beatriz Sarlo has put it, that "the distinctively intellectual dimension of [their] activity could gain a purpose through the distinctively

¹ As Tony Judt, *Past imperfect: French intellectuals 1944-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 205-245 has shown, the French intellectual community of the post-war period was also characterised by a combination of self-abnegation and suspicion of anything associated with liberalism.

² See Claudia Gilman, *Entre la pluma y el fusil: debates y dilemas del escritor revolucionario en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2003), pp. 189-231.

political dimension.”³ The disappointment with Frondizi’s developmentalist administration in late 1958, in which many intellectuals had hoped to be granted a crucial role, further exacerbated their despair of ever finding a political home. Especially after 1966, many began to associate themselves with the Peronist movement.

Revisionists, perhaps even more so than other intellectuals, were also politicised and drew closer to the Peronist movement, as scholars who have studied this topic have often emphasised.⁴ Revisionists furthermore coupled this call for political engagement with a bias against intellectuals. Sigal has even argued that “the revisionists [...] brought to Argentine political culture [the] dimension [of] anti-intellectualism.”⁵ As we have seen, nationalist intellectuals accused the “intelligentsia” of being responsible for the nation’s ills and they had argued since the 1930s that historiography should be understood primarily as a political weapon. Back in 1934, the Irazusta brothers’ fundamental concern already lay in the political rather than the historiographical domain. This could be deduced most easily from the structure of their foundational revisionist book, *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico*, where the short excursion into history was little more than an appendix to the authors’ more immediate urge to condemn the Roca-Runciman Treaty of the previous year as the abominable seal of Argentina’s capitulation to British commercial interests. After the downfall of Perón, revisionists further accentuated their instrumentalist notion of history. In 1959, Jauretche criticised his forerunners of the 1930s for not sufficiently asserting the ultimately political goals of their writing:

The task which the revisionist school fulfilled [...] ran the risk, even if they had the truth on their side, of remaining a simple revalorisation of history as anecdote [...]. In this way, historical revision would have been an act of justice but not the contribution necessary to placing history at the service of national politics.⁶

In 1973, an article in the periodical *Militancia*, which supported the Montoneros and was directed by Ortega Peña and Duhalde, maintained that revisionism helped the people “not to think abstractly, but to find themselves as politicised beings.”⁷ If the programme of the 1960s consisted in further politicising revisionism, the ways in which revisionism was disseminated in order to become politically applicable warrant further attention.

³ Beatriz Sarlo, “Intelectuales: ¿escisión o mimesis?”, *Punto de Vista*, no. 25 (1985), pp. 1-6, p. 2.

⁴ See for example Halperín Donghi, *El revisionismo*, Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nacionalismo* or Cattaruzza, “Algunas reflexiones”, in: Devoto (ed.), *La historiografía*, vol. 1, pp. 113-139.

⁵ Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 13.

⁶ Jauretche, *Política nacional* (1982), p. 61.

⁷ *Militancia*, no. 3, 28 June 1973, p. 22.

This chapter examines the ways in which revisionist imagery was disseminated and appropriated for political goals. It thereby relates to a broader theoretical question, namely how nationalist ideas can develop an appeal beyond the original producers of these ideas. As Anthony Smith has argued, modernist approaches towards nationalism that concentrate on the pivotal role of intellectuals in the formulation of “invented traditions” often fail to explain why and how these intellectual “inventions” pervade much larger sectors of the population.⁸ Since this generic problem exceeds the scope of this chapter, the question might be narrowed by asking to what extent revisionists as a group of intellectuals could manipulate the spread of their ideas. The controllability of a discourse might be said to depend on the types of vehicles through which it is conveyed. Widely sold books, for example, tend to promote the fame of an author, not of a group, and they are open for appropriating uses by a broad public. In contrast, as Beatriz Sarlo and Carlos Altamirano have put it,

a periodical tends to organise *its* public, that is the area of readers that recognise it as an instance of authorised intellectual opinion. Therefore, the difference between book and periodical [...] is not merely technical. Every periodical includes a certain class of writings (declarations, manifestoes etc.), around the ideas of which it seeks to create stable links and solidarities [...]. Another trait that can sometimes take the form of the book, but that seems inherent to the form of the periodical is that it habitually translates a group strategy.⁹

It might be added that this is especially true for cultural reviews that appear regularly and are led by the same editors over an extended period of time. Finally, stable cultural institutions with regularly published reviews can provide an even stronger coherence for permanently promoting a group strategy. Although not very stable itself, the Instituto Rosas was the only revisionist institution in this sense.

Although the review and the bulletin of the Instituto Rosas habitually described revisionism as a “movement” and celebrated its “success”, the main argument of this chapter is that, after 1955, the dissemination of revisionism cannot be seen as a concerted strategy of a group of intellectuals with clearly defined boundaries. Instead, revisionist imagery gained currency through informal networks, often linked to the Peronist movement, in which intellectuals and political activists mingled. Although periodicals did play a crucial role in this, the ones that became most important as vehicles of revisionist imagery were usually short-lived enterprises that supported a

⁸ Anthony Smith, *Nationalism and modernism: a critical survey of recent theories of nations and nationalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), esp. p. 116 for a critique of Elie Kedourie for attributing too great a role to intellectuals.

⁹ Carlos Altamirano and Beatriz Sarlo, *Literatura/Sociedad* (Buenos Aires: Hachette, 1983), pp. 96-97.

certain political faction. This meant that the spread of revisionist themes and their appropriation by political groupings became difficult to control for their erstwhile producers. In order to show this, as a first step, I will analyse the traits of, firstly, the print media that carried articles by revisionist authors and, secondly, book publishers. Next, it will be shown how the Instituto Rosas unsuccessfully struggled to regain initiative in this dispersion. Finally, I will examine how factions of the Peronist movement appropriated revisionist motifs for their own purposes. All this contributed to a further subordination of history to political goals.

1. Periodicals and publishers

One might expect that historiographical debates that have an important repercussion in the public sphere are discussed in the mainstream mass print media. The (West) German *Historikerstreit* over the question of the uniqueness of the Holocaust, for instance, was almost exclusively conducted through mass media.¹⁰ Similarly, contributions to Israel's historians' debate of the 1990s were often first published in the literary supplement of *Ha'aretz*.¹¹ In stark contrast, however, a search for the debates surrounding Argentine historical revisionism in the 1960s in dailies such as *La Nación* and *La Prensa* or in the weekly magazine *Primera Plana* would be almost fruitless. Though perhaps obvious to anyone familiar with the topic, this does not go without saying because it is indicative of the fact that revisionism was not perceived as an important public debate in itself; instead it was seen mostly as an appendix of a political orientation, namely Peronism. One of the very few exceptions in which revisionism was mentioned in the mainstream press, an article in *Primera Plana* in 1964, can illustrate this. After lamenting in the headline that "the past still divides the Argentines", the journalist reported that two Peronist unionists had travelled to Southampton to visit Rosas' grave and that the Peronist-dominated municipal council of a town in the province of Chaco planned to rename its main street as "Avenida Rosas", but not a single revisionist writer was mentioned in the entire article.¹² Their absence from the mainstream press nurtured the revisionists' claim that they were silenced by powerful media moguls, linked to imperialism. Their favourite target was

¹⁰ Especially in the two leading daily broadsheets *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the most important weekly newspaper, *Die Zeit*.

¹¹ See Barbara Schäfer (ed.), *Historikerstreit in Israel: Die "neuen" Historiker zwischen Wissenschaft und Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2000).

¹² *Primera Plana*, no. 75, 14 April 1964.

La Nación, which they saw as a bastion of the establishment. In the eyes of Ramos, *La Nación* remained irrevocably associated with the liberal and pro-imperialist falsification of history that had been instigated by the paper's founder Mitre, the "hero of the fatherland-selling oligarchy":

If 'La Nación' has been an important element in the elaboration of the mythology, it is no less true that Mitre and *mitrismo* constitute a bulwark of imperialism in the River Plate; this fact explains the glory that the falsified history has awarded to the political inspirer of the assassination of Chacho [Peñaloza], [...] the last of the great *caudillos* of our *gaucho* army.¹³

According to the *nacionalista* periodical *Retorno*, in turn, the problem was that, instead of reporting on Rosas, "the big press, instrument of the hidden headquarters that pull the strings of contemporary history, always has up its sleeve a scandalous topic to dis-inform public opinion."¹⁴

The idea that the liberal-conservative *La Nación* sidelined nationalist and populist views of Argentina's history on political grounds was not entirely mistaken. The paper often buttressed its editorial demands for democracy, social justice and civil liberties—a rhetoric that was often abandoned when it came to the analysis of practical policies—with references to the figures associated with the liberal and cosmopolitan tradition, such as Rivadavia, Sarmiento and Mitre. The contributors that were chosen to write in its supplement on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the May Revolution underscored this liberal outlook of the paper, as they were likely to sympathise with figures of the liberal pantheon.¹⁵ However, there was no orchestrated "conspiracy of silence". Not all revisionists had always been excluded from what they saw as the liberal establishment. Scalabrini Ortiz and Julio Irazusta had written for *La Nación* in the 1930s. Several *rosistas* had also published in Victoria Ocampo's literary journal *Sur*, which was usually seen as a bastion of the cosmopolitan intelligentsia.¹⁶ Despite the journal's liberal image and cosmopolitan reputation, Ramón Doll had deemed *Sur* an appropriate place to publish his fervent denunciation of "the Europeanised classes with their backs turned against the Nation".¹⁷ Personal contacts between revisionists and those who came to embody the quintessence of the oligarchic and cosmopolitan

¹³ *Lucha Obrera*, no. 8, 25 January 1956.

¹⁴ *Retorno*, no. 39, 7 April 1965.

¹⁵ *La Nación*'s supplement for this anniversary included texts by Bartolomé Mitre, Carlos Alberto Erro, Juan Mantovani and Francisco Romero, among others.

¹⁶ On *Sur*, see John King, *Sur: a study of the Argentine literary journal and its role in the development of a culture: 1931-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹⁷ *Sur*, no. 22, July 1936, p. 96. It is notable that some articles, particularly Doll's review of *La Argentina y el imperialismo británico*, had the advertisement of historical revisionism as its *primary* aim and that apparently this did not meet objections from Ocampo or others.

intelligentsia had not been uncommon. As Irazusta later acknowledged, he had enjoyed privileged access to Ocampo's circle in the mid-1930s.¹⁸ But there were also examples from the two decades after 1955. Vicente Sierra wrote an article for *Clarín* in 1960, José María Rosa for *La Opinión* in 1971 and Juan Pablo Oliver contributed to *La Nación*.¹⁹ Such contributions were exceptional, but they show that revisionists were not systematically and categorically excluded from the mainstream press, as they usually held.

Nor was revisionism prominent in monthly literary and cultural reviews that might be said to have translated the strategy of an intellectual group (with the obvious exception of the publications of the Instituto Rosas). Nationalist intellectuals rarely founded or contributed to the kind of intellectual journals that Terán has used to reconstruct the climate of ideas of the 1960s.²⁰ Most of these expressed political and intellectual concerns with which revisionist ideas did not sit comfortably. For example, by the 1960s, the Catholic journal *Criterio* represented a liberal-conservative strand of Catholicism and thus had ceased to be a potential mouthpiece of *nacionalistas*.²¹ Unsurprisingly, revisionism could hardly be seen either in the cultural review of the Communist Party, *Cuadernos de Cultura*, or in Marxist journals like *Pasado y Presente* or *La Rosa Blindada*, the editors of which had broken away from the Communist Party more recently and less radically than Puiggrós. Whilst *Criterio* had become "too liberal", these reviews were "too communist" to draw on revisionist ideas.²² However, the absence of revisionism from cultural journals cannot be explained on such ideological grounds alone, because revisionist themes did not feature prominently either in intellectual monthly journals that did expound political ideas

¹⁸ Irazusta, *Memorias*, pp. 226-227.

¹⁹ Sierra in *Clarín*, 22 September 1960 and Rosa *La Opinión*, 20 November 1971. I could not find the corresponding references of Oliver's articles, but the information stems from *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 5, May 1969, p. 23.

²⁰ Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*.

²¹ See Marcelo Montserrat, "El orden y la libertad: una historia intelectual de *Criterio*, 1928-1968", in Girbal-Blacha and Quattrocchi-Woisson (eds.), *Cuando opinar es actuar: Revistas argentinas del siglo XX*, pp. 151-192.

²² Since its foundation in 1950, *Cuadernos de Cultura* remained under the auspices of the Communist Party and was directed by Héctor Agosti. The other two were projects by dissidents from the Communist Party in the 1960s, directed by José Aricó (*Pasado y Presente*) and by José Luis Mangieri and Carlos Alberto Brocato (*La Rosa Blindada*). Only in the ideologically most eclectic of the three, *La Rosa Blindada*, in the articles by León Pomer, do we find a sort of "very Marxist" revisionism that came close in some respects to the interpretations of the *izquierda nacional*, and a contribution by Cooke (see the later compilation of articles Néstor Kohan (ed.), *La Rosa Blindada: una pasión de los '60* (Buenos Aires: La Rosa Blindada, 1999), pp. 161-175). On *Pasado y Presente*, see Raúl Burgos, *Los gramscianos argentinos: cultura y política en la experiencia de Pasado y Presente* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2004).

compatible with those of revisionists. This can be illustrated by the examples of two periodicals in which, on merely ideological grounds, one might expect to find revisionist imagery. These occupied diametrically opposed positions on the spectrum of nationalism, but each was quite ideologically homogenous.

The first example is the cultural journal *Dinámica Social*, founded by the Italian fascist Carlo Scorza, which appeared regularly between 1950 and 1965.²³ On a platform of rabid anti-communism, communitarian Catholicism and exaltation of *hispanidad*, it brought together the extreme Right of *nacionalismo*. In a typical article, Bruno Jacovella (Tulio's brother) defined his nationalist position as "a concrete affirmation of unity against the abstract and disintegrating positions of Collectivism and Liberalism", aiming to "fight the predominance of the parts, individual and class".²⁴ That the journal sought to establish an intellectual prestige rather than to intervene directly in contemporary politics was reflected, for example, in the bibliographical section of the *Boletín de Estudios Políticos* of the Universidad Nacional del Cuyo, where *Dinámica Social* was mentioned next to political science journals from Spain.²⁵ Because of its identification with the extreme Right *Dinámica Social* was regarded with suspicion by less sectarian populists and left-wing nationalists. Hernández Arregui, for example, refused to contribute on the grounds that the publication cherished racism, anti-Semitism, nostalgia for an authoritarian hierarchical order and Sorelianism.²⁶ The second example is *Cristianismo y Revolución*, a platform of the Marxist-Catholic dialogue that developed in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, which appeared regularly every month from 1966 to 1971 under the editorship of Juan García Elorrio. Politically the journal expounded a *tercermundista* and often Guevarist orientation, combined with a declaration of faith in Peronism, which later made it the major platform of the "revolutionary tendency", that is above all the Peronist Youth (JP) and the Montoneros. In the first issue, García Elorrio declared:

The Third World is [...] growing in the wake of the revolutionary processes [...] through tough and violent but profoundly human action, in which we Christians join. [...].²⁷

The journal furthermore displayed an interest in the kind of nationalist Marxism that was characteristic of the *cátedras nacionales*.

²³ See on this publication Noemí Girbal-Blacha, "Armonía y contrapunto intelectual: *Dinámica Social* (1950-1965)", in Girbal-Blacha and Quattrocchi-Woisson (eds.), *Cuando opinar es actuar: Revistas argentinas del siglo XX*, pp. 399-442.

²⁴ Bruno Jacovella, "La crisis del nacionalismo", in *Dinámica Social*, no. 87 (1958), pp. 2-3.

²⁵ *Boletín de Estudios Políticos*, no. 5/6 (1956).

²⁶ Galasso, *Hernández Arregui*, p. 66.

²⁷ *Cristianismo y Revolución*, no. 1, September 1966, p. 1.

Although *Cristianismo y Revolución* and *Dinámica Social* thus expressed very different political beliefs, revisionism might have been a common denominator. Firstly, compared to most other periodicals that can be called nationalist, both were quite intellectual in their outlook so that there should have been a concern with historiography here. Secondly, albeit from a different position, their political orientation conformed well with the sectors akin to the exaltation of *caudillismo*. The presumable readership of *Cristianismo y Revolución* —left-wing Peronist middle-class students and the proto-Montoneros— adopted revisionist imagery, whilst several members of the Instituto Rosas contributed to *Dinámica Social*: Castellani, Julio Irazusta, Bruno Jacovella, Palacio, Soler Cañas or Stieben as well as Sierra and Baldrich (who were associated only later with the institute). Yet in both cases, revisionist articles were scarce. In *Cristianismo y Revolución* revisionist references were mainly confined to the published statements of political groups, in particular the Montoneros. The *rosistas* who wrote in *Dinámica Social* usually focused on non-historical matters, as in the aforementioned article by Bruno Jacovella. There was one article about revisionism in 1959, but, oddly, it was written by someone who had few connections to revisionists. It was entitled “Does our history need revisionism?” and the author was not even convinced that the answer to this question was a yes.²⁸

In turn, the periodicals that contributed most to the dissemination of revisionism were weeklies in between immediate political goals and intellectual issues. Three main features of these periodicals should be stressed. Firstly, they typically combined political campaigns in favour of a particular politician or faction with evocations of historical figures. Secondly, they were almost invariably in opposition to whichever government was in power. This opposition was often their very reason for existence: a group of politicians *manqués*, journalists and intellectuals joined to found a publication when their aspirations to take part in political decision-making had experienced a setback. Thirdly, almost all of these periodicals were very short-lived (their average lifespan was less than two years), which could be due to economic problems, but also to the first two characteristics. Although less often than their directors claimed or imagined, periodicals were the victims of censorship because of their opposition to governments. More often, the problems stemmed from their own political ambition. Since the editors-in-chief and the contributors were incapable of fulfilling their politi-

²⁸ Alfredo A. Coronel, “¿Necesita nuestra historia del revisionismo?”, in *Dinámica Social*, no. 102 (1959), p. 30.

cal aspirations themselves, they sought to place their activities at the service of certain politicians, but these allegiances proved fatal for group cohesion, as there emerged disputes over which strategy to adopt, which led to desertions or the abandonment of the entire project. Unsurprisingly, such problems affected in particular ideologically eclectic periodicals.

Especially *nacionalistas*, among whom there was a greater degree of group cohesion than among the populist neo-revisionists of the sixties, had founded many periodicals since the 1930s, many of them weeklies. Midway into an interview with Oliver in 1973, the historian Luis Alberto Romero remarked: “it seems to me that what’s ideal for a *nacionalista* politician is to have a periodical”.²⁹ Cultural journals and especially weekly papers that combined opinion pieces on the latest political events with more general essays were an important bond for *nacionalistas* since the late 1920s. The institution of the periodical was so central that Cristián Buchrucker has dated the origin of what he has called the “restorative” strand of nationalism—which in the main coincides with what is called *nacionalismo* here—to the foundation of *La Nueva República* in 1927.³⁰ The average *nacionalista* was a regular contributor to several publications at the same time, which taken together provided a degree of group cohesion, since the lists of contributors to each of these periodicals often overlapped. These publications were usually semi-professional. In very few cases, their directors might have been able to make a living from them, but normally the economic situation was strained. In most cases, contributors wrote without pay, and hence they needed other sources of income. Although it is difficult to reconstruct the financial situation of most right-wing nationalist intellectuals, it can be suspected that law offices were a common financial source, given that many of them had a degree in law. These offices might also have subsidised *nacionalista* periodicals, since—apart from the most successful, which reached circulation figures of 100,000—very few of them were profitable for themselves. Advertisements did not yield much, since they were few in number and consisted usually of unpaid publicity for small publishing houses, bookshops and debating clubs, where *nacionalistas* (the contributors and editors included) socialised. Such periodicals—as *Baluartes*, *Crisol*, the Catholic *Criterio*, *El Federal*, *Nueva Política*, *Nuevo Orden* and *El Pampero*—mushroomed especially in the years before and during the Second World War; and most members of the Instituto

²⁹ Interview with Juan Pablo Oliver by Luis Alberto Romero, 23 June 1973, Archivo de Historia Oral, Instituto Torcuato di Tella, p. 39.

³⁰ Buchrucker, *Nacionalismo y peronismo*, pp. 116-257 on this “restorative” strand.

Rosas regularly contributed to at least two of them. Although, by contrast to the review of the Instituto Rosas and other specialised revisionist journals, none was mainly devoted to historical issues, they did become important vehicles for the dissemination of *rosismo*.

This kind of publication all but disappeared after the overthrow of Perón. Between 1955 and 1960, the two typical examples of *nacionalista* periodicals, in which several members of the Instituto Rosas published, were the weeklies *Azul y Blanco* and *Mayoría*. Under the editorship of Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo *Azul y Blanco* was founded in May 1956 by a group of *nacionalistas* who were linked to the short-lived administration of General Eduardo Lonardi (September–November 1955) and opposed to the anti-populist military regime of Pedro Eugenio Aramburu, who had ousted Lonardi in the palace coup of November 1955. Despite the paper's attempts to project itself as a voice of the now supposedly orphan working class by devoting one page to union issues and organising “popular soup kitchens”, the bulk of the articles in *Azul y Blanco* showed little interest in the concerns of workers. Its claim to express the demands of “the people” translated into a preoccupation with preventing the (very) hypothetical advance of communism in Argentine unions, whilst most articles were in fact about intellectual, political and cultural rather than bread and butter issues. Although the odd headline praised the “Argentina of labour” for confronting “Marxism, leftism, masonry”, the bulk of articles reported on the alleged sidelining of the patriotic goals of *nacionalista* intellectuals. In this context, the weekly claimed to promote popular culture and began to publish exaltations of revisionist heroes such as Rosas or Facundo.³¹

Mayoría showed more interest in cultural affairs than *Azul y Blanco* and its language was less vitriolic. Articles in *Mayoría* varied from comments on contemporary events and interviews with *nacionalista* writers to book reviews and longer features on gatherings of intellectuals and politicians. In its political orientation, however, *Mayoría* was similar to *Azul y Blanco*. Founded in 1957, its director Tulio Jacovella belonged to the Catholic and Hispanic Right and maintained good connections to the Armed Forces. Also, despite the intellectual concerns of its director, *Mayoría* was a mouthpiece of political goals, as became clear in 1957, when it was placed at the service of a “national front” of neo-Peronists that was proposed by the politician

³¹ *Azul y Blanco*, no. 105, 17 June 1958 (headline about the working class) and no. 106, 24 June 1958 (“silenced intellectuals” and the piece on Facundo).

Alejandro Leloir, to whom *Mayoría* referred to Leloir as “the ultimate hero of the popular resistance” in a headline. Later, it campaigned for the leader of the Asociación Obrera Textil, Andrés Framini, who belonged to the left wing of Peronist unionism, apparently trying to benefit from Framini’s popular support.³² Articles that had the character of a historiographical campaign complemented the reporting of current politics. In a one-page biography that commemorated the death of Dorrego, García Mellid wrote that

[t]he figure of colonel Dorrego has the value of a symbol because his sacrifice repeated itself over and over again throughout our history. Dorrego was the interpreter and leader of an authentic national and popular movement; he devoted himself to serving those social masses that the “select minorities” call plebs, rabble or down-and-out.³³

Such articles were complemented by regular columns about history written by Rosa and a series about the federal *caudillos* by Chávez.

Whilst *Azul y Blanco* and *Mayoría*, despite their attachment to neo-Peronism, remained *nacionalista* in their orientation, other periodicals that became important for the spread of revisionism explicitly declared themselves as Peronist, whether from a left- or right-wing perspective. The best-known example of the first group was the weekly *Compañero*, appearing in 1963-64, which was tied to the left-wing Peronist Youth and became an important platform for revisionism, due to a series by Ortega Peña and Duhalde on the federal *caudillos* and the Baring Brothers.³⁴ On the extreme Peronist Right, in turn, was *Retorno* (1965-66 and 1970), a weekly newspaper directed by Pedro Michelini, an adviser of the CGT in La Plata and Perón’s personal delegate in Argentina from 1965 onwards, which also contained frequent references to the figures of the revisionist pantheon, even though it did not carry a series on history like *Compañero*.³⁵ The most important periodicals that included articles by prominent revisionist authors like Jauretche were even more eclectic in themselves, albeit always

³² Juan Domingo Perón and John William Cooke, *Correspondencia* (Buenos Aires: Gránica, 1973), vol. 1, p. 202 and p. 260 on the support for Framini.

³³ Atilio García Mellid, “Dorrego: un símbolo de nuestra historia”, in *Mayoría*, no. 10, 10 June 1957.

³⁴ *Compañero*, nos. 21-30, 14 November 1963 to 20 January 1964. The series was prompted by a visit to Argentina of a Barings representative.

³⁵ For example, in an article directed against contraception, because this contradicted the “divine command to grow and multiply”, the author bolstered his point with the argument that, if Argentines did not produce sufficient children, “the great fatherland dreamt of, founded and realised by San Martín, Rosas and Perón respectively would remain utopia” (*Retorno*, no. 39, 7 April 1965). An important figure in the paper was the *nacionalista* and revisionist Alberto Baldrich (1898-1982). Born into an upper-class family in the city of Buenos Aires, Baldrich became a publicist and politician after he had finished his law studies at the UBA, from the late 1940s onwards politically close to the most reactionary elements in Peronism, such as those of the journal *Frontera 67* (see no. 1, January 1967, p. 32). To my knowledge, no biography of Baldrich has been written thus far.

within an overall populist framework; for example, *Santo y Seña* and *El Popular*. Their common denominator was that its contributors were disenchanted with Frondizi's government and instead claimed to express the demands of the "people", as the motto of the subtitle of *El Popular* made clear ("Towards the people for truth").³⁶

In sum, among nationalist publications, the typical periodical that was a vehicle for the dissemination of revisionism was a short-lived, ideologically eclectic and very politicised weekly that served a particular political tendency, normally close to Peronism. Neo-revisionists also repeatedly founded their own publications. Hernández Arregui founded a review, *Peronismo y socialismo*, in 1973, once it was clear that Perón was not going to reward his militancy in the movement with a public post.³⁷ Ortega Peña and Duhalde also founded their own periodical, *Militancia*, in the same year. However, the journalistic undertakings led by neo-revisionists usually ended in failure shortly after they had been launched. Astesano's *Columnas del Nacionalismo Marxista*, founded in 1957, lasted for only three issues.³⁸ In 1962, he tried again, this time with a less intellectual format that mostly featured speeches by the unionist Framini, but it seems that there appeared only one issue.³⁹ Jauretche founded a paper in November 1955, *El 45*, through which he sought to acquire influence in Peronism, but the paper was banished by the authorities after only three issues (see chapter five). Ramos' weekly *Política*, in which Jauretche, Astesano, Jorge Enea Spilimbergo, Ortega Peña and Duhalde and the Uruguayan revisionist Alberto Methol Ferré wrote, first appeared in February 1961, but closed down in September of the same year. More often, as regards journalism, the populist neo-revisionists were better known as contributors rather than as editors-in-chief.

However, most important for their fame was their writing of books. Since some of their essayistic books sold very well, the book as medium might indeed be

³⁶ The contributors to *El Popular* were ideologically the most diverse. Besides the usual suspects of revisionism (here e.g. Chávez, Cooke, Hernández Arregui, Puiggrós, and the right-wing *nacionalista* and Peronist Adolfo Silenzi di Stagni), other contributors did not belong to nationalist circles: the sociologist José Nun, the writer Ernesto Sábato, the Marxist essayist Juan José Sebrelí or the former *Contorno*-director Ismael Viñas. *Santo y Seña* was only slightly less eclectic: Cooke, Rosa, Jauretche and Hernández Arregui from the pro-Peronist core of populist revisionism, but also Ernesto Sábato and the *nacionalista* anti-Semite Juan Carlos Goyeneche.

³⁷ See González, *Restos pampeanos*, pp. 238-241.

³⁸ The contributors to the *Columnas* were ideologically very heterogeneous, too: besides Astesano, there wrote, for example, the right-wing *nacionalista* Oliver, the Catholic priest Chávez and the Peronists Arturo Sampay, Antonio Castro and John William Cooke.

³⁹ *Relevo*, no. 1, 17 October 1962.

considered as one of the most influential forms of disseminating revisionism.⁴⁰ The structure of the nationalist book publishing scene in some ways resembled that of the periodicals. Revisionist literature usually did not appear with the biggest publishers, such as Eudeba in the period from 1955 to 1966 or, after that, the commercial publisher Jorge Álvarez. Again, this was not exactly a “conspiracy of silence”, as revisionists would have it. After the Onganía regime had seized control of public universities in 1966 —and by extension of UBA’s press— and especially after Jauretche was named director of Eudeba in 1973, it did publish revisionist authors (see chapter six). Jorge Álvarez, too, published revisionist authors in the late sixties, namely Puiggrós and Ortega Peña and Duhalde.⁴¹ By and large, however, a number of smaller publishers, some directed by revisionists themselves, were more important. Similarly to periodicals, their reputation rested on political orientation. For example, on the inside of the front cover of the books of Ramos’ publishing house Coyoacán, which between 1961 and 1963 edited 18 titles, the rationale of its task was explained with the core of the revisionist argument in the 1960s. It said that Latin America’s

subordination was not only economic: the great international forces elaborated more subtle and effective chains. To perpetuate their economic and political control, historical tradition was deformed [...] and false ideologies were opposed to the formation of a true national Latin American ideology.⁴²

Coyoacán, the statement went on, had come to rectify these matters of consciousness.

The only publishing house that was explicitly and exclusively set up to further historical revisionism, Ortega Peña and Duhalde’s *Sudestada*, had three similarities to the kind of periodicals that typically disseminated revisionism. Firstly, by the standards of book publishing, it was rather short-lived. It was founded in 1966 and published at least 34 titles until 1969, when it was closed down.⁴³ Secondly, its foun-

⁴⁰ The only available sales figures for individual books are relative, through the bestseller lists in *Primera Plana*. The biggest sales success was Jauretche’s *El medio pelo en la sociedad argentina*, which was re-published eight times between November 1966 and July 1967 alone. It was immediately number one on *Primera Plana*’s bestseller list (no. 204, 22 November 1966) and (with short interruptions) stayed among the top five until October 1967 (no. 249, 3 October 1967). The figures in *Primera Plana* were based on a survey of bookshops only in the capital, but this was where the market was concentrated and there is no reason to assume that the relative figures were very different in the provinces.

⁴¹ For example, Rodolfo Ortega Peña and Eduardo Luis Duhalde, *Reportaje a Felipe Varela* (Buenos Aires: Jorge Álvarez, 1969) and Puiggrós, *Pueblo y oligarquía*.

⁴² Here cited from the inside cover of Eduardo B. Astesano, *San Martín y el origen del capitalismo argentino* (Buenos Aires: Coyoacán, 1961).

⁴³ 34 was the number of titles I could locate through an online catalogue search in the Library of Congress, the COPAC and the library of the University of Texas at Austin. Although the number is therefore approximate, I have not come across books by publishers such as *Sudestada* that could not be

dation responded directly to political developments. In the mid-sixties, Ortega Peña and Duhalde were lawyers and ideologues for the metalworkers' leader Augusto Vandor, the most powerful of all Peronist unionists, who tried to outmanoeuvre Perón and constituted a movement that would benefit from the exiled leader's prestige among the working class without letting him participate in decision-making.⁴⁴ Vandor seemed to have lost this struggle, when his preferred candidate in the elections for governor of Mendoza in April 1966 lost against the candidate supported by Perón. This helped to trigger the military coup of June, which Vandor supported, whilst Ortega Peña and Duhalde at this point broke with Vandor and decided to retreat from involvement in political agitation for three years by dedicating themselves fully to writing and publishing revisionist history books. The closure of *Sudestada* in 1969, in turn, coincided with them drawing closer to the revolutionary tendency of Peronism, from which originated the murderers of Vandor in July 1969. Thirdly, by the same token as many nationalist periodicals, the publishing house *Sudestada* merged ideologically very diverse currents, ranging from Marxist neo-revisionism to ultra-reactionary *nacionalismo*. Besides Ortega Peña and Duhalde's own books, it re-published, for example, a work from 1941 by Enrique Osés —by then a self-declared Nazi— that had first appeared in the fascist periodical *El Pampero*.⁴⁵

The repertoire of the most important publisher of revisionist literature, Arturo Peña Lillo, also included right-wing *nacionalistas*, but he mostly specialised in populist essayists.⁴⁶ Peña Lillo had worked as a printer during the Peronist regime, when he was affiliated to the Communist Party. Rather accidentally, he ended up publishing Ernesto Palacio's *Historia argentina* in 1954, through which he became associated with historical revisionism. The golden age of Peña Lillo's publishing coincided closely with the height of revisionism. He published at least 159 titles between 1955

found in either of these three catalogues so that I think it unlikely that the total number was much higher.

⁴⁴ On Vandor, see for example Viviana Gorbato, *Vandor o Perón* (Buenos Aires: Tiempo de Ideas, 1992) and Graciela Ducatzenzeiler, *Syndicats et politique en Argentine, 1955-1973* (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1980).

⁴⁵ Enrique P. Osés, *Medios y fines del nacionalismo* (Buenos Aires: Sudestada, 1968). It is very likely that Ortega Peña and Duhalde got in touch with Osés' work through the Instituto Rosas, because the bulletin of the institute published a short biographical summary of Osés' life and work in 1968 (*Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 1, July 1968, p. 6), the same year in which Ortega Peña and Duhalde became more active in the institute and published Osés' work. My information on Osés is complemented by Daniel Lvovich, *Nacionalismo y antisemitismo en la Argentina* (Barcelona: Javier Vergara, 2003), p. 273.

⁴⁶ My information on this stems in particular from a personal interview with Peña Lillo in Buenos Aires on 9 December 2004, based on my previous reading of his memoirs (Peña Lillo, *Memorias*) and another interview with him in *Página 12*, 29 May 2004.

and 1976, when his business declined.⁴⁷ Historiography in a narrow sense did not constitute the majority of titles, but all Peña Lillo-books were in one way or another about national identity —ranging from essays about folklore and popular culture to the more clearly political writings— and most deserved the label of populist revisionism. Besides Jauretche, who was his most successful author, Peña Lillo published, for example, Puiggrós, Astesano, Ramos, Rey and Spilimbergo of the *izquierda nacional*, the *nacionalistas* Doll and Sánchez Sorondo, the populist revisionists Rosa and Chávez, the right-wing Peronist Raúl Jassen or the former FORJA-members García Mellid and René Saúl Orsi.

In comparison to Ramos' Coyoacán, Peña Lillo was a more commercial publisher. Although the label became known for historical revisionism, its director did not define his enterprise in terms of explicitly political goals. Following Eudeba's strategy of selling low-priced books at street kiosks, the collection *La Siringa*, launched in 1959 with the idea of a new title about history and politics each fortnight, became a major commercial success. It was advertised in the following words:

Something completely new is in your hands, reader. In a cruel era, like the one in which we are living [...], this little object called "book" is an indispensable instrument for the consciousness [...]. The collection *La Siringa* is meant to close the abyss between the book and the reader [...] through publications with a high circulation and with exceptionally cheap prices.⁴⁸

As this passage shows, the rationale behind *La Siringa* was at least in part economic, which, of course, was not incompatible with political goals. According to Peña Lillo, Ramos financially supported the launching of the collection in the late fifties.⁴⁹ Advertisements for the collection were scattered in periodicals like *Santo y Seña*, the potential readership of which coincided with Peña Lillo's (just as the authors were the same in both cases), which had the congenial side-effect that these advertisements were usually unpaid for.

In sum, the dissemination of revisionism through periodicals and book publishers did not follow a controllable group strategy. This is not to say that revisionist imagery could simply be found everywhere in the media. On the contrary, due to its politicisation it hardly permeated the mainstream press, to which revisionism appeared largely irrelevant as an intellectual debate that would have been worthy to report, if not connected to politics. For a similar reason, intellectual journals and reviews, even if

⁴⁷ See footnote 43 for the way of calculation. Here, it was complemented by a list that Arturo Peña Lillo gave me.

⁴⁸ Back cover of Jauretche, *Política nacional*.

⁴⁹ Peña Lillo, *Memorias*, pp. 89-93.

their tendency was ideologically compatible with nationalist ideas, hardly carried articles about the revisionist view of the past. Instead, revisionism was prominent in weeklies that stood in between political and cultural concerns, were ideologically eclectic and vulnerable to political changes due to their close attachment to political factions. Taken together, they formed part of an extended informal network, the boundaries of which, however, were blurred. These features undermined the building of stable group solidarities that would have allowed a greater measure of controlling the spread of revisionism.

2. Institutions and the dissemination in politics

This fragmentation and instability of vehicles of nationalist discourse affected the institution that laid claim to a prerogative over revisionist narratives: the Instituto Rosas. Even though there were initiatives to found other institutions to bring together nationalist intellectuals,⁵⁰ the Instituto Rosas was the only permanent one. Populist and Marxist essayists like Hernández Arregui never launched a single initiative to endow their writing with an institutional framework comparable to the Instituto Rosas. The institute, in turn, essentially remained a nucleus of right-wing and upper-class *nacionalistas* with a traditionalist *esprit de corps*. By the 1960s, in contrast to the more famous populist neo-revisionists, virtually all of its founders were rather obscure in terms of publicity. Carlos Ibarguren (father) no longer engaged in public debates after 1955 and his two sons never matched their father's fame. Julio Irazusta's intellectual and political opinions went largely unnoticed in public debate after 1955.⁵¹ The same was true for Palacio and for Doll, a lonely old man by the sixties whom no one took seriously anymore. The one major exception among the reactionaries of the 1930s was the Instituto's president Rosa, who adapted more flexibly to the changing climate of ideas in the 1960s by declaring himself a Marxist and supporter of the Cuban Revolution.

⁵⁰ For example, there was a revisionist-Peronist debating club called Centro de Estudios de Problemas Argentinos, which was founded by Alberto Baldrich in La Plata in 1961 and brought together *rosistas* (Rosa, García Mellid, Steffens Soler, Doll and Oliver) with the Peronist politicians Antonio Cafiero, Pedro Michelini and Jorge Taiana. This institution seems to have existed only on paper, however, and for a rather short period of time. The only reference to this I have come across was in Michelini's periodical *Huella*, no. 2, 17 September 1963. Throughout my research, I have tried in vain to find out more about this initiative.

⁵¹ Notably, both his memoirs (Irazusta, *Memorias*) and the scholarly biography of his life (Mutsuki, *Julio Irazusta*) end with the year 1955.

The attitude of the members of the institute towards the wide public dissemination of revisionism was ambivalent.⁵² Although this was never made explicit, the institute's decision to re-launch its bulletin in 1968 seemed like an attempt to regain ground over which it had lost control in previous years. The editorial of the first issue triumphantly declared the "victory of historical revision", but also lamented that "we have lost, historiographically speaking, a little dignity and seriousness".⁵³ This formulation could not conceal the tensions that had emerged among the members. One problem was the arrival of newcomers from very diverse backgrounds, like the Marxist lawyers Ortega Peña and Duhalde. By the late sixties, there were also several Peronist politicians affiliated to the institute, who hardly had any interest in historiography, such as Perón's former personal delegate in Argentina, the physician Raúl Matera.⁵⁴ According to Fermín Chávez, even the publication of the institute's bulletin after 1968 was managed by militants of the Peronist Youth.⁵⁵ The institute's president later recalled his difficulties in handling the emerging rows between Peronists and non-Peronists.⁵⁶ After Rosa had left the presidency vacant in 1968, the feuds escalated further. In April 1969, the ultra-rightist Alfredo Ossorio was expelled for "repeated acts of misconduct", soon to be followed by the vice-president Manuel de Anchorena. Both had apparently sought to transform the institution into a tool of their political ambitions.⁵⁷ From 1971 onwards, the institute saw itself obliged to practically close down, although it continued to formally exist under the presidency of one of its founding members, Alberto Contreras.

There were isolated voices from within revisionism who criticised the current's unruly popularisation. In 1965, the far-right *nacionalista* Pedro de Paoli accused Rosa of Marxist "deviations" from what he saw as the Catholic orthodoxy of revisionism

⁵² On this see also Julio Stortini, "Polémicas y crisis en el revisionismo histórico: el caso del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas 'Juan Manuel de Rosas'", in: Devoto and Pagano (eds.), *Historiografías académica y militante*, pp. 229-249.

⁵³ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 1, July 1968, p. 3.

⁵⁴ See on him Pablo José Hernández, *Conversaciones con Raúl Matera* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 1980)

⁵⁵ Personal interview with the author, Buenos Aires, 11 July 2003.

⁵⁶ Hernández, *Conversaciones con Rosa*, pp. 150-151.

⁵⁷ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 5, May 1969, p. 16 on Ossorio and no. 7, October-November 1967, p. 47 on Anchorena. Precise reasons for their expulsion were not given, but they can be inferred from other sources of information. Ossorio seems to have tried to use the institute as a platform for the violent *nacionalista* youth group Tacuara (on which see below; on the links between Tacuara and Ossorio see Roberto Bardini, *Tacuara: la pólvora y la sangre* (Mexico City: Oceano, 2002), pp. 117-120). Anchorena had apparently tried to use a campaign for the repatriation of Rosas' remains that might have been financed with money from the institute for his political ambitions in Peronism. On the campaign, see *Clarín*, 22 November 1969, and on his career as a politician see the obituary in *La Nación*, 24 May 2005.

that should be derived from telluric forces.⁵⁸ For the lawyer Elías Giménez Vega, in turn, the biggest problem was the politicisation of revisionism and its exploitation by Peronist groups. In 1970, he complained that “in the name of revisionism false parallels are drawn and forced images are sponsored.” In his eyes, the nationwide commemoration of San Martín that the Peronist regime had decreed in 1950 had “turned the industrialisation of commemorations into a national plague”, whilst the analogies between San Martín, Rosas, Yrigoyen and Perón that had become standard repertoire of the Peronist imaginary by 1970 were “demagoguery”. These voices were hardly heard, however. Giménez Vega had to publish his book under an unknown label and, today, it is difficult to find information on him.⁵⁹

Giménez Vega was not obscure because what he said was mistaken. On the contrary, as Ossorio and Anchorena had shown, political ambition frequently threatened to undermine the group cohesion among revisionists. Political ambition was not specific to the *nacionalistas* in the Instituto Rosas, but also pursued by the neo-revisionist and populist intellectuals. Like the *nacionalistas* of the 1930s, their attempts to influence policy-making frequently failed too. Even the famous Jauretche, who was candidate for a seat in senate in 1960 on a platform that stressed his Peronist credentials, received only very few votes.⁶⁰ García Mellid decided to engage in party politics in December 1955, when he co-founded the neo-Peronist Unión Popular with the labour lawyer Juan Atilio Bramuglia, who had been Perón’s Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1946 to 1949; but García Mellid never came to play an important role in this party. The only one who fared better was Ramos with his Frente de Izquierda Popular (FIP), which won 7.5 percent of the vote in the presidential elections of September 1973. However, this success was due to particular circumstances, since the party drew the votes of young left-wing populist followers, who had been alienated from Peronism in the previous month, when Perón had sidelined their preferred candidate, Héctor Cámpora.⁶¹ In the presidential elections of March, which Cámpora had won, the vote for the FIP had been negligible and the forerunner of the party, the Partido Socialista de Izquierda Nacional had languished for several years without ever

⁵⁸ Pedro de Paoli, *El revisionismo histórico y las desviaciones del Dr. José María Rosa* (Buenos Aires: Theoría, 1965).

⁵⁹ Elías Giménez Vega, *Cartas a un joven rosista* (Buenos Aires: Luis Laserre, 1970), p. 11, p. 31 and p. 277. In the previous year, Giménez Vega had already written a critique of revisionism for which he did not find a publisher at all: Giménez Vega, *Revisión al revisionismo*.

⁶⁰ See Arturo Jauretche, “Del programa de Avellaneda al programa de Alsogaray”, in *El Popular*, no. 5, 13 October 1960, pp. 8-9.

⁶¹ See Galasso, *Izquierda Nacional*, pp. 134-163.

making a concrete political impact that would be worth mentioning. In general, nationalist intellectuals more often attached themselves to an already existing faction (rather than creating one themselves) and, sometimes, even their intellectual activities followed the designs of politicians. For example, according to Fermín Chávez, the periodical *El Popular* was founded upon the initiative of the veteran Peronist politician Vicente Saadi from the province of Catamarca.⁶²

After 1955, Peronist politicians and especially the trade unions sponsored revisionism. This is a speculative terrain, because systematic financial records are scarce. But there is much anecdotic evidence to support such a claim, not least for the union leaders, who dispensed much patronage and had many contacts with revisionists.⁶³ Presumably, for example, the articles that Jauretche and Rosa wrote for the (journalistically very professional) magazine of the electrical workers' union, *Dinamis*, paid better than most of their contributions to other periodicals.⁶⁴ According to Gerardo Aboy, the meat workers' union hung up a portrait of Rosas shortly after the anti-Peronist coup of 1955, whilst the founding member of the Instituto Rosas and Peronist diplomat Benito Llambí recalled in his memoirs frequent meetings between him, García Mellid, Tulio Jacovella, Tecera del Franco and the leader of that union, Eleuterio Cardoso, in the same period.⁶⁵ When Rosa toured the provinces in the 1960s, the most frequent venue of his talks were union premises (see chapter one) and the links between Ortega Peña and Duhalde and Vandor or Astesano and Framini were close.

Teaching in political training courses for unionists thus became a potential source of income for revisionists. In 1963, the Secretary General of the CGT, José Alonso, created a Secretariat of Press, Culture, Propaganda and Functions, the declared rationale of which resembled the revisionist idea of being silenced, stressing in particular the need to teach Argentine literature, folklore and history to future union leaders.⁶⁶

⁶² See Chávez' preface to the re-edition of the *Columnas del Nacionalismo Marxista de Liberación Nacional* (Buenos Aires: El Calafate, 2001), p. 4.

⁶³ I have never seen any official records, but in an interview in Buenos Aires on 13 December 2004, Jorge Oscar Sulé, a member of the Instituto Rosas, confirmed to me that the institute was subsidised by the unions. On union finances in general, see James, *Resistance and integration*, pp. 167-174.

⁶⁴ E. g. Arturo Jauretche, "Rosas y los caudillos", *Dinamis*, no. 126, December 1966, pp. 32-33 and José María Rosa, "El día de la soberanía", *ibid.*, pp. 42-47.

⁶⁵ Gerardo Aboy Carlés, "Las dos fronteras de la democracia argentina: la reformulación de las identidades políticas de Alfonsín a Menem", PhD dissertation, Universidad Complutense, Madrid, 1998, p. 155 and Llambí, *Medio siglo*, p. 276.

⁶⁶ CGT, *Memoria y Balance: 1963-64* (Buenos Aires: Confederación General del Trabajo, 1964), pp. 355 and 367.

The content of such courses is evident from the summary of a history class for members of the union of municipal employees in 1974. The students learned that

[t]he resistance to the project of [this] liberal political revolution is summed up in the figures of San Martín and the federal *caudillos*. [...] Rosas' period is the clearest resistance to the liberal political revolution. During his government, an attempt was made to transform the United Provinces of the River Plate [...] into a community with a historic destiny [...]. In this way, the opposition to any form of surrender before foreign [powers] through the defence of our territorial and economic sovereignty synthesised the aspirations of the entire authentic nation and laid on Rosas' shoulders the hatred of those who aimed at a formal country that concealed the birth of a new colony.⁶⁷

Such views in union classes were not surprising, given that intellectuals like Cooke were invited to speak at union conferences.⁶⁸ Still today, Buenos Aires' union libraries often hold copies of Rosa's multi-volume *Historia Argentina* from the late sixties.⁶⁹ In this sense, given the largely Peronist orientation of the unions, revisionists carried their ideas into the Peronist movement. As Terán has remarked, historical revisionism thus indeed began to permeate sectors of society far beyond intellectual circles.⁷⁰ There, however, the usage of revisionist motifs obeyed a specifically political dynamic, on which revisionist intellectuals had a more limited influence.

3. Militancy and history among the Peronist youth groups and the Montoneros

Within the Peronist movement, the trade unions were not the main consumers of nationalist symbolic goods. Far more avid readers of revisionist literature were the middle-class students who began to declare their faith in Perón as the embodiment of what they began to call *socialismo nacional*. In part, this difference might be explained by the fact that the Peronist youth groups were more likely than union leaders to read any kind of literature. After all, it might be expected that a typical heavy-handed union boss entertained fewer intellectual sensibilities than a sociology student or a Catholic seminarist. Although this is probably true, another explanation can also account for why revisionism became more important among the Peronist Youth (JP) than among

⁶⁷ "Cursos de Capacitación Político-Sindical", Unión Obreros Empleados Municipales, en coordinación con la Secretaría Política de la Presidencia de la Nación, leaflet 1974.

⁶⁸ Here, to the culturally especially active union of telephone workers in 1964. In a letter of regret, Cooke stated that he could not attend (John William Cooke, "Documentos, cartas, discursos", *Crisis*, vol. 1, no. 9 (1974), pp. 3-15, p. 11).

⁶⁹ José María Rosa, *Historia Argentina*, 8 vols. (Buenos Aires: Juan C. Granda, 1964-69).

⁷⁰ Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*, p. 57.

unionists.⁷¹ It might be argued that revisionism permeated especially those areas of Peronism that suffered from deficient credentials as a natural part of the movement. In this respect, the unions, which represented a well-defined constituency and were called the “vertebral column” of Peronism, differed from middle-class children of often anti-Peronist parents, who had to prove that they were serious Peronists. In practice, both explanatory factors (intellectual habits and lack of legitimacy) complemented each other, since the revolutionary tendency of Peronism felt that it lacked credentials *because* it was too intellectual in its outlook. But in order to account for the ways in which nationalist imagery was put to political usage it is more promising to focus on the interpretation that revisionism was used by groups in need of legitimacy. The strongest case in point to substantiate this argument is that Perón himself hardly ever drew on revisionist imagery.⁷²

Revisionism featured strongly in Tacuara, a violent youth group of predominantly upper-class secondary students from Buenos Aires. The very name of the group (Tacuara was a lance used by *gaucho montoneras*) drew on revisionist imagery. How important revisionism was in this group can be illustrated by a report of the intelligence unit of the police of Buenos Aires province, which observed the group’s activities in the mid-sixties. The report suggests that the police officer found it difficult to classify the group in ideological terms. S/he noted that Tacuara was “right-wing with a strong tendency to be extreme”, but also added that one of its offsprings had entered into relations with the Communist Party. Thus a further category was introduced, namely the group’s “sense of history”, which was “revisionist”.⁷³ Founded in 1955 by members of the ultra-right Unión Nacionalista de Estudiantes Secundarios (UNES) that harked back to fascist paramilitary groups of the 1930s, Tacuara’s ideas were inspired by the Spanish *falange* and *rosismo*. Each year on 20 November it held

⁷¹ Even the sectors of Peronist unionism that were close to left-wing students and published periodicals with intellectual ambitions were less imbued with revisionist imagery than the JP. A good example of this is the CGT de los Argentinos (CGTA), led by the graphic worker Raimundo Ongaro and with good contacts to left-wing Peronist students. The editor-in-chief of its paper (*CGTA*) was Rodolfo Walsh, a former *nacionalista* who had written for *Mayoría*, and later a Montonero. In the 55 issues during the almost two years of existence of *CGTA* from 1968-70, there were almost no references to revisionism at all. When it came to the commemoration of 20 November, the paper simply reproduced a passage of Saldías’ pre-revisionist book on Rosas (*CGT de los Argentinos*, no. 31, 28 November 1968, p. 5).

⁷² See also chapter five and conclusion.

⁷³ “Informe especial de la Agrupación Tacuara”, Legajo no. 18.744, Mesa Referencia, Archivo de la Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, formerly Dirección de Inteligencia de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, p. 2 and p. 7 on the communist contacts of Baxter’s wing. My information on Tacuara is based on this report and on Bardini, *Tacuara: la pólvora y la sangre* and Daniel Gutman, *Tacuara: historia de la primera guerrilla urbana argentina* (Buenos Aires: Vergara, 2003).

commemorations of the execution of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, combined with celebrations of the anniversary of the battle of Vuelta de Obligado.⁷⁴ The group gained influence in UBA's law student union, although the codified initiation rites ensured that it remained a relatively small and elitist circle at first. Its members stressed violence, courage and direct political action as values, which were cultivated in symbolically charged ceremonies that combined *rosista* imagery with elements taken from fascism and anti-Semitism. Tacuara-members frequently engaged in street fights and violent physical attacks on Jewish schoolchildren. Its principal leader at this time was the young seminarian (and later priest) Alberto Ezcurra Uriburu (1937-93), who prided himself on his family connections with Rosas and with the leader of the authoritarian military coup of 1930. He, too, came from a wealthy background—the family's house in the countryside was used for folkloric gatherings—and his father was a long-standing member of the Instituto Rosas and had been an anti-Semite and supporter of the Axis.⁷⁵

Tacuara's organ was called *La Barbarie*. In an article, it evoked Perón's buzzword of the "organised community" that had to unify the "different groups" and suppress "egoists". In order for the "state to recover its Communitarian function" it called for revolution:

A revolution is when the Community restores the State to its function as synthesiser of "social antagonisms". [...] Through the act of Revolution, society finds itself. In our Fatherland the State responds to anything but its function to serve the Community. It is a historical need that the National Forces take power and return to the service of the Common Good. Nothing and nobody prevents those who have knowledge of this situation from taking up arms to remedy it. Those who shun this struggle can only be called COWARDS or TRAITORS.⁷⁶

Despite the appropriation of some elements of Peronist doctrine, this faction of Tacuara stuck to its anti-Semitic and anti-communist line, bolstered by references to the past. In its commemoration of the battle of Vuelta de Obligado on 20 November 1845—called "Day of national sovereignty" in *nacionalista* terminology—it stated:

Obligado [...] is the symbol that expresses the struggle and up to now bitter defeat of a people that was diverted from its cultural and religious roots [...]; from the Hispanic to the Europeanising *porteño* culture and from there to the amorphous sham that is Buenos Aires today [...]. It is here [in the Avenue Corrientes] where sepyoism and the synagogue really meet [...].

⁷⁴ This was a common practice among the revisionist Right in general. See for example the poems dedicated to Primo de Rivera and Rosa's article on the Vuelta de Obligado in *Azul y Blanco*, no. 179, 17 November 1959.

⁷⁵ See Alberto Ezcurra Medrano's article in *El Restaurador*, no. 5, 3 July 1941.

⁷⁶ The statement was reproduced in *Huella*, no. 5, 8 October 1963.

Don Juan Manuel, illustrious *gaucho* and faithful interpreter of our purest realities, [...] managed to interrupt [this process] for many years, until the servile mentality that is characteristic of our pseudo-intellectuality took over and violated that noble gesture, a feat of soil and sky, with a projection of the future that dominates us and won't die, despite its essential bankruptcy.⁷⁷

This discourse of telluric allegories, Hispanicism and anti-Semitism was tempered in the wake of the entry into Tacuara of some lower middle-class youths. The group disintegrated and some members began to sympathise with the Cuban Revolution and Peronism. Thus was formed in 1962 the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario Tacuara (MNRT), close to parts of the JP, which tried to form an urban guerrilla nucleus inspired by *foquismo*. In the MNRT's melange of ideas that could be traced back to Sorelian syndicalism as well as social Catholicism, some members increasingly looked for inspiration in Marxism-Leninism.

Tacuara's usage of revisionist motifs was most notable in the yearly commemorations of the battle of Vuelta de Obligado. From the early 60s onwards, the papers reported attacks on statues, busts or portraits of Sarmiento on the previous day, and violent demonstrations on 20 November, in most of which Tacuara-members were involved.⁷⁸ In 1963, whilst JP militants burned an American, a British and a Soviet flag in the capital, the city of La Plata witnessed the explosion of firecrackers and violent clashes between the GRN and Tacuara, which threw flyers with the following text:

The Argentine youth is on its feet. Today as yesterday. Raising the same flags, we throw ourselves into the fight for God and the Fatherland. We will clean with blood what can only with blood be cleaned.

Apparently fearing such violent clashes, police had forbidden a speech by Rosa in the offices of the union of gastronomic workers.⁷⁹ In the following year, a bomb exploded in the Sarmiento museum in the Tigre delta, whereas its counterpart in the capital was assaulted by armed robbers who knocked down four employees and two visitors in order to take possession of a flag of the Argentine-Brazilian army that had overthrown Rosas in 1852. On 20 November, five Tacuara members managed to enter the *cabildo* on the Plaza de Mayo, in the centre of Buenos Aires, climb on the balcony and make the fascist salute to baffled spectators. They sprayed the walls of the *cabildo* with the slogan "20 November: Day of National Sovereignty", and next to the pyramid on the

⁷⁷ *La Barbarie*, no. 11, November 1964.

⁷⁸ In 1963, a portrait of Sarmiento in a Buenos Aires sports club was tarred, for example (*Crónica*, 20 November 1963).

⁷⁹ *Crónica*, 21 November 1963.

square placed portraits of Rosas, Perón and Evita.⁸⁰ In August 1963, a JP-commando stole San Martín's sabre from the National Historical Museum so that, as the corresponding communiqué affirmed, it would "shine again in the grand fight for the re-conquest of Argentineness." The authors went on to reiterate the revisionist leitmotiv that San Martín's legacy of his sabre to Rosas proved the high esteem in which the liberator had held Rosas. The thieves then solemnly swore not to give it back unless the government annulled the treaties with foreign oil companies and fulfilled a number of further demands, such as the nationalisation of electrical companies and the releasing of prisoners related to the JP.⁸¹ Two years later, a commando unit of the JP went as far as Paris in an attempt to recover a flag that the French had taken from Argentina in the course of the battle of Vuelta de Obligado and that was displayed at the Hôtel des Invalides.⁸²

What was the role of nationalist intellectuals in these groups? Several revisionist authors were linked to Tacuara and the Peronist Youth in one way or another. For example, after MNRT-members had assailed the hospital of the union of bank employees and robbed the wages in 1963, Ortega Peña and Duhalde took on their legal defence and *Compañero* published public statements by the group.⁸³ The MNRT also released a joint manifesto together with CONDOR, a grouping that had been formed by Hernández Arregui, Ortega Peña and Duhalde and others, which stressed the common belief in Perón among both groups: "This first working together of two organisations that come from different experiences of political action, has a deeper meaning that transcends it. The confluence in practice of a common denominator: PERON."⁸⁴ Unsurprisingly, the foundational declaration of CONDOR had, like Tacuara, stressed the need for historical revisionism as a principal means of imbuing revolutionary consciousness.⁸⁵ Although both Peronist involvement in student politics and talks by revisionists in public universities remained scarce until the late 1960s, young Peronist militants had first come into contact with revisionist intellectuals through education in the early years of the decade. During a speech by Rosa in UBA's Law Faculty that had been organised by the JP in 1960, the audience erupted into

⁸⁰ *Crónica*, 20 and 21 November 1964.

⁸¹ Reproduced in *Compañero*, no. 11, 20 August 1963.

⁸² See Diana Quattrocchi-Woisson, "Entre historia y política: el retorno de un emblema", *Desmemoria*, no. 15 (1997), pp. 51-57.

⁸³ *Compañero*, no. 63, 8 September 1964.

⁸⁴ In Baschetti (ed.), *Documentos de la resistencia*, p. 331.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 394-395.

chanting “San Martín, Rosas, Perón”.⁸⁶ Jauretche was the main speaker at the meeting of the Juventud Universitaria Peronista (JUP) on the occasion of 20 November 1963 in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, also attended by members of the union of petrol workers (SUPE) and the Argentine division of the Arab League, which led to the issue of the Algerian war of independence being at the forefront of the debates.⁸⁷ In the previous years, Hernández Arregui had embarked on a tour through universities of the interior to give talks, out of which his book *¿Qué es el ser nacional?* emerged. In 1964, Cooke explained the failure of Perón’s return to university students in Córdoba. When the Brazilian military regime prevented Perón, on his stopover in Rio de Janeiro, from continuing his flight to Buenos Aires, Cooke established a parallel with Rosas’ downfall over hundred years earlier. In December 1964, he declared, “one more time, just like in 1852, Brazilian despotism solved the problems of Argentine despotism.”⁸⁸ According to Richard Gillespie, Hernández Arregui, too, held discussions with the proto-Montoneros.⁸⁹

It was no surprise, therefore, that themes taken from nationalist ideology —and in particular historical revisionism— strongly permeated these groups, many members of which continued a career of political violence. It is difficult, however, to see a clearly defined ideology as the reason that motivated these careers. The later trajectories of erstwhile Tacuara-members were erratic, ending up in opposed camps during the violent confrontations of the 1970s. Ezcurra Urriburu, for example, stayed faithful to his fascist-inspired ideas and later, just like the bulk of those who had remained within the UNES, supported the “anti-subversive” terrorism of the notorious Argentine Anticommunist Alliance (Triple A) and the ensuing military dictatorship of 1976-83. The same held true for the members of Tacuara who associated with the Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista (GRN) in 1960, guided by the anti-Semitic priest Julio Meinvielle. Two leaders of the MNRT, on the other hand, José Luis Nell and Joe Baxter, both former law students of Irish descent, later embarked on careers that were as tragic as they were bizarre. Nell fought for the Uruguayan guerrilla movement, the Tupamaros, and was imprisoned in Montevideo, but he escaped and became a member of the Montoneros. During the infamous attacks by right-wing Peronists on Montoneros at Ezeiza airport in Buenos Aires when Perón returned from exile on 20 June 1973,

⁸⁶ *Trinchera*, no. 3, October 1960.

⁸⁷ *Crónica*, 20 November 1963.

⁸⁸ Cooke, *El retorno*, p. 2.

⁸⁹ Gillespie, *Soldiers of Perón*, p. 80.

Nell was shot and left paralysed. In 1974, he killed himself on a rail track outside Buenos Aires. Baxter fought for the Viet Cong and travelled to China, before participating in the foundation of Argentina's second large guerrilla, mostly of Trotskyist extraction, the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP). In 1973, he died in a plane crash at Paris' Orly airport, allegedly with several million dollars in his baggage, intended for the then little known Sandinistas. Two other erstwhile Tacuara-militants, Fernando Abal Medina and Gustavo Ramus, co-founded the Montoneros, whereas the later JP-leader Rodolfo Galimberti had also belonged to Tacuara.⁹⁰

Nationalist intellectuals were never the leaders of the Peronist youth groups. Some, like Ramos or Jauretche, even strongly disagreed with the militaristic strategy of the Montoneros. Jauretche said about the so-called revolutionary tendency:

I see them right now, all these students who stylise themselves as Peronists, but this is a Peronism they have invented and which has very little connection to the real country. All these terrorist groups will soon be surprised that the country will not follow them, because they are into stuff that isn't from here.⁹¹

The function that revisionism assumed for these circles was connected to a problem of political legitimacy. This was evident in the ways in which the JP or the Montoneros made use of revisionist imagery. Typically, they depicted themselves as the culmination of a much longer genealogy, in which a historical subject had periodically surfaced but essentially passed through time and space in a relatively unchanged fashion. The JP-organ *Trinchera* stated as early as 1961:

we believe the moment has come to throw ourselves into the struggle, as in other times the *gaucho* masses did behind San Martín and Güemes, Artigas and Rosas, in order to unleash the definitive battle: the great battle for national liberation.

Whilst the fact that it called upon the "young Peronist" to fulfil this task involuntarily hinted at its readers' very recent adherence to Peronism, this tension was immediately eased through its incorporation into a much older tradition.⁹²

The Montoneros' usage of nationalist discourse was very similar. Like Tacuara, their very name, derived from the nineteenth-century *gaucho* militia that fought in the name of the federal *caudillos*, shows how strongly they drew on revisionist discourse.

⁹⁰ Abal Medina, too, came from a wealthy family, connected to *nacionalismo*. His father had written for *El Pampero*, the main journalistic support in Argentina for Nazism, and his brother, Juan Manuel, had worked for *Azul y Blanco*. Despite these links, as Gillespie, *Soldiers of Perón*, pp. 48-52 has argued, Tacuara should not be seen as the nucleus of the Montoneros, who came from many other backgrounds too.

⁹¹ Interview with Jauretche by Luis Alberto Romero, 22 April 1971, Archivo de Historia Oral, Instituto Torcuato di Tella, p. 162.

⁹² *Trinchera*, no. 9, July 1961.

In their first public communiqué, entitled “The Montoneros speak” and published in *Cristianismo y Revolución* in late 1970, their appeal to arms began with a historical reference:

for the same reason we have identified ourselves as Peronists and Montoneros from the moment of our first communiqué we do not believe that the struggles begin with us, but we feel that we are part of the ultimate synthesis of an historical process that originated 160 years ago, and which in its advances and retreats makes a definite leap forward from 17 October 1945 on.

Argentine history was essentially characterised, in their view, by two fronts that had survived unchanged and that were continuously opposed in an irreconcilable dichotomy:

In the course of history, two great political currents developed in the country: on one side, the liberal *Oligarchy*, clearly anti-national and selling out the Fatherland, on the other side, the *People*, identified with the defence of its interests which are the interests of the Nation, against the imperialist attacks in all historical circumstances. This national and popular current expressed itself in 1810 as much as in 1945, in the struggles of San Martín’s army as much as in the *gaucho montoneras* of the past century [...].⁹³

The Montoneros saw themselves on the “people’s” side of this dichotomy, of course, and thereby claimed actively to shape the future course of history.

This type of self-legitimation became all the more crucial the more the outbreak of internal fights between different wings that all declared themselves Peronist required explanations of why a certain tendency considered itself to be more Peronist than another. Again, the Montoneros were illustrative of this discursive strategy. According to Montonero statements, the importance of Perón lay in his being the reincarnation of an eternal struggle. However, since he was only a re-embodiment of older conflicts, the struggle was in principle necessary and possible even without Perón. In this way, as Sigal and Verón have outlined in their study of Peronist discourse, the Montoneros challenged the authority of Perón.⁹⁴ This discursive strategy was a prelude to their claim that Perón did not represent the essence of Peronism anymore, after he had explicitly withdrawn his approval of what he had hitherto called his “special formations” at the May Day rally of 1974, as was expressed in the telling headline of the Montonero periodical *El Peronista* three days after the rally, which implicitly denied that Perón was a Peronist by addressing him as “General” and informing him that “Peronism does not agree”.⁹⁵

⁹³ *Cristianismo y Revolución*, no. 26, November/December 1970, pp. 11-14, here p. 11.

⁹⁴ Sigal and Verón, *Perón o muerte*, pp. 195-202.

⁹⁵ *El Peronista*, no. 3, 4 May 1974: “General: el peronismo no está de acuerdo”.

Revisionist references to the past were employed by both left- and right-wing sectors in the internal Peronist struggles first for hegemony and then for physical domination. When Perón's return to Argentina approached and the revolutionary tendency began to launch its attacks against the "union bureaucracy", which later culminated in the assassinations of union leaders such as Vandor, José Alonso or José Ignacio Rucci, these were bolstered by the insinuation that "Augusto Vandor, like other historical examples of the national struggles, is like Urquiza and Alvear."⁹⁶ Since Urquiza had "betrayed" both Rosas and the people-fatherland, Vandor's inclusion into the anti-*rosista* camp amounted to his elimination from the national and popular line, and by inference from Peronism. From the position of the extreme Peronist Right, *Patria Bárbara*, which labelled itself a "weekly of combative Peronism", charged Puiggrós, as rector of the UBA, with being a communist and "having written two libels that directly attack two figures who are very dear to national sentiment: Juan Manuel de Rosas and Juan Domingo Perón." A headline in the same issue declared that there were "black sheep" in Peronism (in other words people who were not *real* Peronists), who according to the writer could be identified by the fact that "they prohibit mentioning Juan Manuel de Rosas."⁹⁷ As the wave of killings, among them that of Ortega Peña by the vigilante paramilitary Triple A in 1974, drew closer, revisionism was no longer merely politicised, ideologically charged or outweighed by concrete political goals, but it was ultimately transformed into a legitimating tool for quite different purposes.

Conclusion

Although in their writing of history revisionists had followed political goals since the 1930s, the militant nature of revisionism intensified after 1955. One basis of this politicisation had been an anti-intellectual bias, which had long been strong among revisionists, but in the 1960s was reinforced by the New Left's claim that the intellectuals' task was to contribute to national liberation. The changing ideological climate of the 1960s sidelined many of the founders of the Instituto Rosas, who retreated into writing specialised historiography or compiling documents, which was not a route to a successful career in public life. Their political activities were more limited,

⁹⁶ *Lucha Peronista*, no. 5, February 1967.

⁹⁷ *Patria Bárbara*, no. 20, 13 August 1973. The same article stirred up hatred against Hernández Arregui and Ortega Peña (who was assassinated twelve months after the article).

too. Julio Irazusta in 1956 joined the short-lived *nacionalista* party Unión Republicana—which was close to the Lonardi administration that had been displaced from power in November 1955—, but after that he concentrated on improving his prestige as a historian, rewarded in 1971 by his admission to the Academia Nacional de la Historia. As hegemonic ideas in intellectual debates had become unfavourable to elitist anti-populists, the Instituto Rosas was relegated to some sort of folkloric club.

Instead, what the bulletin of the Instituto Rosas ambivalently celebrated as the “victory” of revisionism consisted mostly in the high sales figures of the books of national-populist essayists, who took the lead in further subordinating history to political goals. In the eyes of Ortega Peña and Duhalde, who were perhaps the most politicised of all nationalist intellectuals, history was simultaneously a “feat of clarification” and a sort of “retrospective militancy”, since, as they held, “history is politics.”⁹⁸ Neo-revisionists tended to associate themselves with political factions or tried to become appointed to political offices, like Jauretche in 1960. In the early seventies, Ramos might have been recognised by the general public as a politician as much as he was as a writer. Revisionism thus became linked to politics through networks that consisted of an array of short-lived and precarious periodicals, rather than through the mainstream mass media or cultural journals. A map of publications in the 1960s shows that revisionism was especially prominent in the most politicised, ephemeral and ideologically heterogeneous periodicals. Of course, their political orientation had to conform to that of historical revisionists, that is, it had to be first and foremost nationalist. In most of the no less politicised and short-lived weeklies of the New Left, for example in the organ of the Maoist Partido Comunista Revolucionario de la Argentina (PCRA), *Nueva Hora*, there were few references to *caudillismo*.⁹⁹ In turn, revisionism became associated with Peronism. Left-wing nationalist intellectuals such as Hernández Arregui or Ortega Peña and Duhalde socialised in networks that were closely linked to the emergent radical youth groups that advocated *socialismo nacional* and national liberation in the name of the exiled leader. If not Irazusta, right-wing *nacionalistas*, for example Baldrich, were also linked to neo-Peronist politicians,

⁹⁸ “Rodolfo Ortega Peña y Eduardo Luis Duhalde: por partida doble”, *Todo es Historia*, no. 38, June 1970, p. 38 (italics added in my translation). The other two statements are quoted in Eidelman, *Ortega Peña y Duhalde*, p. 31 and p. 79.

⁹⁹ I consulted a series over several months in mid-1973, during which the paper mainly quarrelled with the Peronist education minister Jorge Taiana.

whereas the Peronist unions were a financial and occupational platform for many populist revisionists, for example Rosa.

This politicisation undermined the possibilities to centrally control the dissemination of revisionist discourse, not only for the members of the Instituto Rosas, but for the producers of revisionist discourse in general. Hence, the spread of revisionist imagery in Peronist politics should not primarily be understood as the success of a concerted effort of nationalist intellectuals to propagate their ideas. It is worth recalling Smith's critique of a "diffusionist" approach towards nationalism that overestimates the capacity of intellectuals to implement a nationalist ideology from above. As Smith has argued, the reasons for the spread of nationalism must be sought among its supposed recipients, too.¹⁰⁰ An analysis of the spread of revisionism reveals that in the event nationalist historical narratives were appropriated mostly by those who lacked credibility as a "natural" part of the (nationalist) Peronist movement. Sectors of the young urban middle class, Perón's newly acquired *compagnons de route*, justified their claim to express the authentic "people" or "nation" by drawing on historical analogies derived from revisionism. The construction of a revisionist ancestry, then, became a preferential strategy in the articulation of what Carlos Altamirano has called "true Peronism", which needed to stress a "truly" Peronist character precisely because it could be (and was) doubted. Having emerged from 1955 onwards, "true Peronists" needed to explain why it was them who embodied the real essence of Peronism (as opposed to their opponents who equally claimed to be Peronists). For this purpose, merely invoking the legacy of Perón was risky because, as long as Perón was alive and recognised as the movement's ultimate arbiter, he could excommunicate his self-declared followers from the movement. This exacerbated the "true" Peronists' need to safeguard their identity constructions against the "risks of factuality", as Altamirano has put it.¹⁰¹ A longer historical genealogy was a promising tool to make the legitimacy of "true Peronism" independent from the contingencies of Perón's volatile blessings. In this way, revisionism was subordinated to the exigencies of Peronist goals. If the ideological heterogeneity of nationalist intellectuals and the dispersion of the vehicles through which they publicised their views had made it already difficult to control the dissemination of revisionism, its appropriation and consequent usage by political groupings was even less manageable for a group of

¹⁰⁰ Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*.

¹⁰¹ Carlos Altamirano, "El peronismo verdadero", *Punto de Vista*, no. 43 (1992), pp. 6-10, here p. 9.

intellectuals. In the following chapter, the Peronist appropriation of revisionism in the context of a crisis of political legitimacy will be explored in more detail.

Chapter five

The Peronist appropriation of revisionism

Introduction

The constellation of power brokers in Argentina between 1955 and 1966 has been described as a “stalemate” or an “impossible game”.¹ Both concepts refer to the incapacity of three main political agents (the military, the Peronist movement—especially its trade union branch—and the Radical Party) to forge a viable political order, since each of these three held a veto power to block the implementation of the designs of the other two actors. In a simplified scheme, the predicament can be summarised as follows: for nearly ten years, the Peronist regime had managed to establish a system in which the state arbitrated over sectoral interests, but (not least due to macro-economic imbalances) the populist state had become untenable by the mid-fifties, which led to the military coup that ousted Perón in September 1955. This “Liberating Revolution” was initially led by General Eduardo Lonardi, who assembled officers and civilians who had taken offence, not so much at the corporatist elements of populism, but at Perón’s anti-clerical campaign of 1954 and at the regime’s contracts with the US petroleum company Standard Oil. Lonardi and his *nacionalista* followers, however, were unseated in a palace coup in November, when Pedro Eugenio Aramburu was sworn in as president, who led the more “liberal” sectors of the Armed Forces. His was a very authoritarian liberalism, since although he declared representative

¹ See Luis Alberto Romero, *Breve historia contemporánea de la Argentina, 1916/1999* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001), pp. 133-168, who speaks of a “stalemate”, and Guillermo O’Donnell, *Modernización y autoritarismo* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1972) for the notion of “impossible game”.

democracy as the ultimate aim, in order to reach this goal, Aramburu said, it was first necessary to eradicate “totalitarian” Peronism from the political scene. The new authorities thus dissolved the Peronist Party, prevented its successors from electoral participation and directed “re-educating” measures at Peronist supporters.² However, this goal soon proved difficult to accomplish, because large parts of the working class continued to adhere to the exiled Perón. Although the Liberating Revolution handed over power to the elected civilian administration of the Radical Arturo Frondizi in 1958, Peronism essentially remained banned until 1973 (albeit to varying degrees), which permitted the Radical Party to win what effectively amounted to minority elections. The organisational forms with which Peronists fought against this situation varied, but the unions (as the “most legal” part of the movement) until 1966 were the most powerful actor, which could topple governments.³ In a situation of quickly changing and unstable alliances, all three power brokers came to regard state power as the most desirable prey in this “impossible game”.

This political background provides compelling explanations of why the link between history and politics was reinforced after 1955. For in the face of a restricted democracy, political actors had to ground their quest for power on sources of legitimation other than democratic elections. Although this problem also affected the Radical Party, it was particularly acute for those actors that did not participate in elections at all, namely the Peronist movement and the military. This chapter will analyse how, in the three years after November 1955, both the leaders of the self-proclaimed Liberating Revolution and the Peronist press drew on historical analogies —“official” history in the case of the Aramburu regime and revisionist in the case of Peronism— to buttress their political goals. As the dichotomy between Peronism and anti-Peronism became the most important dividing line of the political scene, these divisions were moulded into a reading of national history in which the country supposedly had always been divided between these two strands. The idea of two Argentinas thus came to be seen as the origin of the divide between Peronism and anti-Peronism.

That Aramburu’s regime chose to draw on the liberal pantheon, whilst Peronists, in opposition to this, likened themselves to the heroes of revisionist imagery was not

² The best political history of the Liberating Revolution is María Estela Spinelli, *Los vencedores vencidos: el antiperonismo y la “revolución libertadora”* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2005).

³ On the Peronist unions in this period see generally James, *Resistance and integration* and Torre, *El gigante invertido*, pp. 1-23.

an entirely arbitrary choice. Not only was Peronism a nationalist movement and as such in principle compatible with the ideas of revisionists. Also, analogies between Rosas and Perón had belonged to the rhetorical repertoire of anti-Peronists long before 1955. For example, in the run-up to the presidential elections of 1946, followers of the different currents of the anti-Peronist Unión Democrática had branded Perón as a reincarnation of Rosas.⁴ In 1952, a (failed) military uprising against Perón had been planned to coincide with the hundredth anniversary of the battle of Caseros, in which Rosas had been defeated.⁵ Conversely, the revisionist exaltation of *caudillismo* and personalistic leadership as authentically Argentine had affinities with Peronist rhetoric claiming that the leader had a charismatic bond with the people or the nation. Nevertheless, the Peronist regime refrained from converting revisionism into state orthodoxy (see also chapter one). The scholarly literature has overwhelmingly agreed on this point. Alberto Ciria, for example, has observed that official analogies between Perón and historical figures between 1946 and 1955 referred to “characters or episodes from national history, within what could be called liberal or traditional history, never *revisionist* history.”⁶ Virtually all other studies have convincingly supported Ciria’s argument that the first two Peronist governments exalted neither Rosas nor the federal *caudillos* and that, on the contrary, official propaganda enthroned Perón at the end of a lineage that began with the uncontroversial San Martín, but also included several historical figures associated with cosmopolitan liberalism.⁷ The reasons for the Peronist appropriation of revisionism thus have to be sought in post-1955 developments.

⁴ See Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme*, pp. 260-266. This idea persisted throughout Perón’s presidency as Altamirano, *Peronismo y cultura de izquierda*, pp. 27-28 remarks, mentioning the example of the liberal essayist Carlos Alberto Erro.

⁵ Robert A. Potash, *The army and politics in Argentina, 1945-1962: Perón to Frondizi* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), p. 141.

⁶ Alberto Ciria, *Política y cultura popular: la Argentina peronista, 1946-1955* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones de la Flor, 1983), p. 219. Shortly before the publication of Ciria’s book, Winston, “Between Rosas and Sarmiento”, argued more cautiously that Perón tried to maintain a careful equilibrium between Rosas and Sarmiento.

⁷ There are differences of emphasis, however. Authors who have looked at the position of revisionists in public universities found that there were convergences between revisionism and Peronism before 1955: e.g. Halperin Donghi, *El revisionismo*, Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme*, pp. 251-352 and Campione, *Argentina: la escritura de su historia*, pp. 84-90. If the focus is on Peronist propaganda, such links look much more tenuous. On this basis, the following authors have been more sceptical about such links: Mariano Ben Plotkin, *Mañana es San Perón: propaganda, rituales políticos y educación en el régimen peronista (1946-1955)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1994), pp. 194-197; Svampa, *El dilema*, p. 229; Viviana Postay and Natalia Uanini, *Un pasado heroico para la patria peronista: la construcción política de las versiones de la historia, 1946-1955* (Córdoba: Ferreyra, 2001), pp. 37-45. A good synthesis can be found in: Cattaruzza, “El revisionismo”, in: Cattaruzza and Eujanian, *Políticas de la historia*, pp. 161-169.

As has been noted,⁸ the question of why and how this appropriation occurred has not been studied in detail as yet.

As I will argue, the reasons for this appropriation can only be understood in relation to the breakdown of the populist system and the ensuing crisis of political legitimacy. Revisionist intellectuals and ideological questions played a limited role in the beginning of the Peronist instrumentalisation of revisionist motifs. Instead, the usage of revisionist symbols, in particular Rosas, among Peronist groups was largely a reaction against the rhetoric of the leaders of the Liberating Revolution who portrayed their deed as a repetition of the battle of Caseros, in which Rosas had been overthrown. In order to explore the Peronist reaction against this rhetoric, the products of the Peronist press from the years immediately following the overthrow of Perón as well as Perón's own writings will be analysed. The main focus will be on the Peronist press, by which I mean those newspapers that, despite the movement's official proscription, managed to clearly identify themselves as Peronist to the general public. Often directed by men who had previously been largely unknown functionaries of the Peronist government, most of these media were directed at a working class audience and emphasised bread and butter topics. Although they are difficult to find in public archives, they are nevertheless the only way to reconstruct the discursive formation under scrutiny here, since other means of communication that were used by Peronists in these years, such as tapes or pictures, are even less accessible. The advantage of the focus on Peronist publications —instead of other media that were less closely identified with the deposed movement—, lies in the fact that it allows me to consider the lines of transmission *within* Peronism, since the principal aim of this chapter is to trace back the discursive *mechanisms* from which the penetration of revisionism among Peronists stemmed.

As a first step, it is necessary to outline the strategies of the military government that took power in November 1955, especially its pronouncements concerning the national past and their policies towards Peronist means of communication. Secondly, I will delineate the formation of a dispersed field of Peronist publications and the implications this had for the functioning of Peronist discourse. Next, the use of history in this press will be contextualised in relation to other articulations concerning history and its meaning. An analysis of the most influential Peronist periodical of the time,

⁸ E.g. Mariano Ben Plotkin, "The changing perceptions of Peronism: a review essay", in: Brennan (ed.), *Peronism and Argentina*, p. 50 and Raanan Rein, *Peronismo, populismo y política: Argentina 1943-1955*, translated by Eliezer Nowodworski (Buenos Aires: Editorial de Belgrano, 1998), pp. 107-108.

Palabra Argentina, should clarify the degree of contingency that was involved in the process of identity reformulation after 1955. Ultimately, the picture will be broadened towards the more general political reconfigurations that took place between 1955 and the beginning of Frondizi's presidency.

1. The rhetoric of the Liberating Revolution

After November 1955, the policies of the Liberating Revolution were aimed not only at banning Peronism from participation in politics, but also at its symbolic eradication. The most important measure in this respect was the enactment in March 1956 of decree-laws 4161 and 4258 prohibiting the use of all Peronist symbols as well as the use of Perón's name, and banning former Peronist party officials and unionists from holding public office. The new leaders bolstered their aims and policies by pointing to historical precedents and a historical genealogy was identified to legitimise the task of "de-Peronisation". Already in his inaugural speech on 13 November 1955, the new provisional president Aramburu avowed that "a single spirit inspires the movement of the revolution: it is the democratic sentiment of our people that blossomed in 1810 and resurged after Caseros."⁹ According to this genealogy, his government had to be understood as the successor of the *línea Mayo-Caseros*: firstly, the May Revolution in 1810, which had triggered independence from Spain, and secondly, the battle of Caseros, where General Justo José de Urquiza had defeated the government of Rosas on 3 February 1852. Less than three months into his presidency, Aramburu seized the date of 3 February to officially commemorate the battle of Caseros in the Colegio Militar, where he clarified his choice of a historical model:

Caseros is not only the battle that gave the Fatherland back its freedom, but also the vindication of the heroic deed of May that was mocked during the dark night of tyranny.¹⁰

In other words, whilst the May Revolution was seen as an uncontroversial part of the historical roots of national identity, the battle of Caseros was the politically distinctive marker of how this identity should now be interpreted.

The analogy between 1852 and 1955, although gradually transformed into a systematic strategy by Aramburu, was not strictly speaking his invention. The parallels between the two events seemed readily evident to most contemporaries, not least

⁹ Pedro Eugenio Aramburu and Isaac F. Rojas, *La Revolución Libertadora en 12 meses de gobierno* (Buenos Aires: no publisher given, 1956), p. 8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

because Perón's opponents had often likened the populist leader to Rosas. Then, the course of events in late 1955 suggested further similarities. First, Lonardi's conciliatory strategy towards Peronism resembled Urquiza's position 153 years before: just as Lonardi was a Catholic *nacionalista* with corporatist (and therefore potentially pro-Peronist) affinities, Urquiza had been a Federalist, who had not always been unsympathetic towards *rosismo*. There was general agreement on the validity of the historical analogy. When assuming office in September 1955, Lonardi likened himself to Urquiza by declaring that there should be "neither victors, nor vanquished", a phrase attributed to Urquiza. After Lonardi's removal by the most anti-Peronist groups in the Armed Forces, the comparison seemed to fit even better. Just as Lonardi in 1955, Urquiza had been deposed and replaced by groups that aimed at a radicalisation of the break with the "deposed tyrant", as Perón, too, was officially called after 1955.¹¹ Those who had removed Urquiza from power tried to establish a liberal-enlightened nation-state, embodied in the constitution of 1853. Likewise, the "liberal" leaders of the Liberating Revolution around Aramburu sought to replace the Peronist constitutional reform with this original of 1853. From 1956 onwards, groups close to the deposed Lonardi thus continued to compare him to Urquiza, arguing that both had attempted to reconcile a divided nation against the "ideologues [who] follow a politics of hatred."¹² That the unfortunate Lonardi had a "taste of Urquiza", as Rodolfo Ortega Peña recalled nine years later, could simply not be missed.¹³ The analogy furthermore suited the liberal sectors to articulate their denunciations of Lonardi's conciliatory position towards Peronism, which could plausibly be attributed to his team's *nacionalista* connections. Aramburu not only suspected Lonardi of hidden sympathies with Peronism, but there were also signs that his administration included admirers of Rosas. The stumbling block that triggered the palace coup of November was Lonardi's attempt to appoint the *nacionalista* Luis María de Pablo Pardo, who had been a founding member of the Instituto Rosas, as Minister of the Interior.¹⁴ In short, the analogy between 1852 and 1955 was a perfect fit in almost every respect.

Aramburu and his vice-president Isaac Rojas transformed this circumstantial evidence into a systematic rhetorical strategy to portray their deed as an analogous

¹¹ Since it was forbidden to mention Perón's name, he was usually referred to as "deposed tyrant" or "fugitive dictator" in the media and in government speeches.

¹² *Azul y Blanco*, no. 29, 2 January 1957.

¹³ Rodolfo Ortega Peña, prologue to: Hernández Arregui, *Imperialismo y cultura*, p. 7.

¹⁴ Potash, *Army and politics, 1945-1962*, p. 221.

repetition of Caseros. Aramburu declared that “after Caseros, the country stood firm and did not look back to the sombre past; nobody longed for the time of the tyranny,” and as a logical consequence, “the men of the Liberating Revolution, under analogous circumstances, will not do so either.”¹⁵ Not surprisingly, the efforts of the government to replace the “false constitution” —that is the one reformed under Perón in 1949— with the original version from 1853 were also buttressed by favourable allusions to the battle of Caseros.¹⁶ And if the coup against the Peronist regime was the contemporary equivalent of Caseros, it followed that Perón was the reincarnation of Rosas. Vice-president Isaac Rojas declared that the enactment of decree-law 479 of 7 October 1955, which had created a national commission in order to investigate the purported excesses of repression under the Peronist regime, was responding to the “outcry of the Fatherland and the voices of history”. The results of the investigations were published in a book, whose title (*Libro negro de la segunda tiranía*; “Black book of the second tyranny”) implied that Peronism had to be seen as a repetition of Rosas’ “first” tyranny.¹⁷ The government thus not only couched its political objectives within a particular reading of Argentina’s national history, but bound up their anti-Peronist policy with an anti-*rosista* politics of history.

These were not occasional references. Most public speeches delivered by the president and the vice-president contained eulogistic evocations of the battle of Caseros or other events and figures that had long been reviled by revisionists. In a well-advertised journey to San Juan, for example, Aramburu ended his speech with favourable remarks about Sarmiento.¹⁸ From May 1957, the government could even count on a periodical called *Proclama en la línea de Mayo y de Caseros*, which was almost entirely devoted to the construction of this historical lineage.¹⁹ Historical propaganda also permeated the syllabi for the training courses of future unionists in the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT), of which the government had seized control.²⁰ Clearly, the historical precedents of 1810 and 1852 were intended to occupy

¹⁵ Aramburu and Rojas, *La Revolución Libertadora*, p. 51.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 171 for the Rojas statement. Lonardi’s decree-law 479 established the commission, headed by the vice-president, but not yet the title that was given to the book. This was decided by decree-law 14,988 of 16 August 1956, i.e. under Aramburu’s government (see *Libro negro de la segunda tiranía*, (Buenos Aires: no publisher given, 1958), p. 18 and 25).

¹⁸ See the numerous examples in Aramburu and Rojas, *La Revolución Libertadora*, pp. 35-38 (Sarmiento) and p. 87.

¹⁹ *Proclama en la línea de Mayo y Caseros*, no. 2, 22 May 1957.

²⁰ Confederación General del Trabajo, Intervención Departamento de Cultura, “Reglamentación y Programa para la Escuela de la CGT” (Buenos Aires, 1957).

a visible position, which was also perceived by Peronists. In an editorial commenting upon Aramburu's inaugural speech, *Palabra Argentina* noted that "the men of the provisional government have referred to the ideals of May and Caseros *with strange insistence*."²¹ This recognition implied that some Peronists who had previously shown little interest in harnessing historical references were dragged into such discussions.

2. The Peronist resistance, political realignments and historical references

This official rhetoric went along with repression against Peronism, which aimed at closing the channels through which Peronism had expressed itself. Already during Lonardi's *interregnum* the national daily newspaper *La Prensa*, after having been under the control of the CGT, was handed back to the Gainza Paz family, which was known as anti-Peronist, and the government cut the links between Peronism and the other major national dailies. Yet the dismantling of the Peronist media intensified under the presidency of Aramburu, whose government seized control of the most important remaining Peronist periodical, *El Líder*, and shut down others, such as *De Frente*, which had been directed by Cooke, now the main organiser of the Peronist resistance.²² This policy had two main effects. Firstly, it succeeded in scattering the Peronist discourse, which had been tightly centralised under Perón's regime. The illegalisation and dispersion made the Peronist field more heterogeneous. The constant preoccupation about the editorial line of Peronist publications in the correspondence between Cooke and Perón of these years shows that the Peronist leaders found it impossible to ensure that their movement spoke with one voice.²³ Secondly, it created space for the appearance of new Peronist or pro-Peronist media, which were produced clandestinely or under semi-legal conditions. In the immediate aftermath of the coup, a wave of new weekly publications mushroomed, which situated themselves in or near

²¹ *Palabra Argentina*, no. 2, 1 December 1955. Italics added.

²² For the intervention in *El Líder* see Arturo Jauretche, "Los cien días de 'El Líder'", in *Dinamis* no. 46, May 1973, quoted in Baschetti (ed.), *Documentos de la resistencia*, p. 23. On government policy concerning the oppositional press, see Julio César Melón Pirro, "La prensa de oposición en la Argentina post-peronista", *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2002), pp. 115-138.

²³ Perón and Cooke, *Correspondencia*. This was a more general problem of the Peronist resistance. Most accounts of the Peronist resistance are based on the correspondence between Cooke and Perón and on (sometimes oral) accounts by former militants, again with a strong bias towards Greater Buenos Aires and Rosario. See Juan Manuel Vigo, *La vida por Perón: Crónicas de la resistencia* (Buenos Aires: A. Peña Lillo, 1973); Carina Capobianco and Eduardo Matuc, "'No teníamos otra voz': una aproximación a la militancia peronista de base en Rosario: la resistencia peronista 1955-1958", *Cuadernos del Ciesal Rosario*, vol. 3, no. 4 (1998), pp. 89-109; and Liliana Garulli, Antonio Cafiero and others (eds.), *Nomeolvidos: memoria de la resistencia peronista, 1955-1972* (Buenos Aires: Biblos, 2000).

the Peronist sphere, for example: *La Argentina (Justa, Libre y Soberana)*, directed by Nora Lagos in Rosario; *Debate*, produced by a Peronist committee in Resistencia, province of Chaco; and, in the Federal Capital, Hernán Benítez' *Rebeldía, Doctrina (es verdad y nuestra guía)*, directed by José Rubén García Maín, *El 45*, whose editor-in-chief was Jauretche, *El Descamisado*, led by Manfredo Sawady, and *Palabra Argentina*, directed by Alejandro Olmos.

What did they have in common? In comparison to the periodicals examined in the previous chapter, their average life span was even shorter (many launched only one or two issues), their outlook was less intellectual and, with very few exceptions, they were not directed by known politicians or intellectuals. Similarly to the generational renovation of the post-1955 Peronist union leadership,²⁴ few of the directors of these new Peronist publications had gained political experience or held important posts prior to 1955. In terms of content, articles were not usually signed by the author and, in many cases, they were presumably written by the editor-in-chief. Coverage of union issues and day-to-day politics was the main focus of reporting and all were visibly directed at a Peronist readership, identifying themselves as Peronist by mentioning the three principles of *justicialismo* (political sovereignty, economic independence and social justice) in their headings, thereby circumventing the censorship that affected explicitly and unmistakably Peronist symbols or terms.²⁵ Sometimes, letters by the exiled Perón occupied their front pages and they published his latest writings in extracts,²⁶ which then usually entailed their closure. In terms of circulation, they ranged from small neighbourhood broadsheets, which were passed from one person to another with average circulation figures below 5,000,²⁷ to important weeklies like *Rebeldía* and *Palabra Argentina* which sold well above 50,000 copies.²⁸ As most of them cannot be found in public archives, it is impossible to assess their geographical

²⁴ James, *Resistance and integration*, pp. 43-100.

²⁵ Carlos Altamirano, *Bajo el signo de las masas (1943-1973)* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 2001), p. 22 holds that at least two of these principles (social justice and political sovereignty) had been standard symbols of *nacionalismo* by the early 1940s. However, we can safely assume that the general public identified them as Peronist by 1955.

²⁶ *El Guerrillero*, for example, started publishing Perón's book *Los vendepatria* from no. 17, 6 March 1958, onwards. It was one of the papers that responded most directly to the "official" line of Cooke and Perón. This changed amidst the confusion about Perón's orders with regard to the presidential elections of 1958, when *El Guerrillero* distanced itself from Cooke and claimed that Perón's order had been abstention instead of voting for Frondizi (*El Guerrillero*, no. 15, 13 February 1958).

²⁷ Miguel Ángel Moyano Laissué (ed.), *El periodismo de la resistencia peronista 1955-1972: años de luchas y de victorias* (Buenos Aires: Asociación de la Resistencia Peronista, 2000), pp. 15 and 55 mentions such figures for two cases, *Renovación* and *El Doctrinario*.

²⁸ See below for a discussion of circulation figures.

distribution, but it seems that they circulated mainly in Greater Buenos Aires and Rosario. In sum, besides illegal radio stations and tapes that reproduced Perón's voice, these publications constituted the chief means of Peronist communication. Even though there was a sense of solidarity between them due to their shared condition of semi-legality, they often competed for the same public and each editor largely worked in isolation, which created room for (often divergent) individual ambitions.

Regarding the use of history, this dispersion of the Peronist resistance predisposed its publications to react vis-à-vis the highly visible imagery from above instead of independently developing a new historical imagery from below. Not surprisingly therefore, most of the new Peronist media made no effort to reformulate historical narratives. With rare exceptions, they did not articulate revisionist ideas without prior reference to the *línea Mayo-Caseros* or other historical themes raised by the government, such as the evocation of Mitre or Sarmiento. Notwithstanding Aramburu's reiteration of the issue, the Peronist press did not respond immediately. Whereas Aramburu's genealogic construction was extensively covered in the mainstream national press such as *La Prensa* and *La Nación*, initially it was most conspicuous by its absence from Peronist papers.²⁹ When, after a while, some publications slowly began see contemporary events in historical perspective, references to history were subordinated to the more pressing issues of day-to-day politics. In December 1955, *El Proletario*, the successor of *El Descamisado* —which had been closed down because of its too evocative name— commented on the government's attempts at abrogating the constitution of 1949. Given that the government was trying to legitimise these attempts by hailing the original constitution of 1853, it was hardly surprising that the paper picked up the same point: "The political function of this Constitution [1853] was to enforce the pillaging of the oligarchy and the meddling of the voracious English, and later Yankee, imperialism." In the same article, it accepted the claim of the government that there existed a historical parallel between 1852/53 and 1955, since both could be seen as an attempt of the oligarchy to regain power.³⁰ A reactive and defensive pattern was also manifest in publications that were not directly linked with

²⁹ *La Nación* and *La Prensa*, 14 November 1955. It is impossible to obtain complete collections of the Peronist press of the time. Some examples where the historical debate was absent although one would expect some hints, include: *El Descamisado*, no. 1, 30 November 1955; *Doctrina (es verdad y nuestra guía)*, no. 1, 15 December 1955; *La Argentina (Justa, Libre y Soberana)*, no. 1, 28 December 1955; and Jauretche's *El 45*, no. 2, 30 November 1955.

³⁰ *El Proletario*, no. 2, 21 December 1955. On 17 October 1945, a crowd had gathered on the Plaza de Mayo in the centre of Buenos Aires to (successfully) demand Perón's release from prison. In the following years, the date became part of the standard propaganda repertoire of the Peronist regime.

Peronism, but had been increasingly alienated by the Aramburu administration and began to see Peronism in a more positive light, for example in *Revolución Nacional*, whose director was Luis Cerrutti Costa, who had been Minister of Labour under Lonardi.³¹

Gradually, a pattern evolved by which many of the new Peronist media acknowledged that Aramburu and Rojas could be seen as the heirs of the *línea Mayo-Caseros*. Initially this recognition could take the form of ridiculing the government's use of history. In January 1957, *Consigna*, a paper which was mostly concerned with bread and butter topics regarding the unions, ran a question and answer game, which can be read only as an ironical comment upon the who is who of the official historical narrative:

Question: can you name a great man of our national history? [...] — Answer: the august and sublime General Mitre. [...] — Q: who was the General Ángel Vicente Peñaloza? — A: a monster born in the jungle of La Rioja. At some point, he was good and fought the tyranny of Rosas. [...] — Q: who ordered the decapitation of the crypto-CGT-man Ángel Vicente Peñaloza? — A: the liberator and war strategist Domingo F. Sarmiento. [...] Q: what is a strike? — A: it is something crypto-deposed, metallurgic and illegal. [...] Q: is there any line running parallel to the one from Mayo to Caseros? — A: yes. The one from Constitución to Retiro. The latter has the advantage that it has some breathing space.³²

Here, the dividing line between liberal icons, such as Mitre and Sarmiento, and revisionist ones, such as Rosas and Peñaloza, is very clear-cut. Of course, the vilification of the latter two is as ironic as the panegyric to Sarmiento and Mitre. The passage also shows to what extent the historiographical question was already interwoven with the question of Peronism. The figure of Peñaloza, for example, appears to be associated with Peronism, since he is a “cripto-cegetista”, that is a crypto-unionist of the CGT. Finally, the government speeches are ridiculed by comparing the *línea Mayo-Caseros* to an underground line in Buenos Aires, emphasising the stubbornness of Aramburu by indicating that his rhetoric left no “breathing space”. However, whilst the article indicates that an affirmative use of figures such as Sarmiento —a common practice of the Peronist regime until 1955— had become highly problematic for Peronists by early 1957, the text aimed at the rejection of the governmental iconogra-

³¹ In this case as well, the rejection of the *línea Mayo-Caseros* was moulded within the contemporary political discussion about the different versions of the constitution (*Revolución Nacional*, no. 2, 30 August 1956). After the ousting of Lonardi, Cerrutti Costa moved to the opposition.

³² *Consigna*, no. 5, 22 January 1957.

phy rather than at finding one of its own. The ironic style still implies a *reaction* against the glorification of May and Caseros.

This is not to say that revisionists played no role whatsoever in the gradual appropriation of revisionist motifs by Peronism. Since the Liberating Revolution alienated both *nacionalista* sectors and Peronists, these drew together in opposition to the regime and, in the course of this process, revisionist imagery gained currency in the Peronist camp. The history of the periodical *Palabra Argentina* can illustrate the interplay between various processes in which intellectuals, journalists and politicians fostered the identification between Peronism and *rosismo*. *Palabra Argentina* was sold for the first time on 14 November 1955 —the day after Aramburu's inauguration— with eight pages in a broadsheet format, which was reduced to four pages from the second issue onwards. Like other Peronist papers of the time, its precarious financial situation, lack of copyright registration and its insecure existence in legal terms combined to generate anxiety about an imminent closure. Despite these adverse factors, the paper managed to maintain a regular weekly production, until the government closed it in December 1956. It reappeared four months later and continued to be published until 1961, albeit more irregularly from 1958 onwards and in a different format in its last two years.³³ As with most Peronist papers, its political orientation was primarily based on the tenets of its editor, Alejandro Olmos.

Olmos, whose grandfather had been governor of the province of Tucumán during the presidency of Manuel Quintana (1904-06), came from an upper-class family, a background that later allowed him to finance the paper.³⁴ After the family had moved from Tucumán to the capital, Olmos became a junior political commentator on radio at the early age of thirteen, but after enrolling in UBA's Law Faculty, he temporarily abandoned his journalistic activities, though not his interest in politics. Over the years, he personally befriended several nationalist intellectuals, such as José Luis Torres, Jauretche, Scalabrini Ortiz, Chávez and Cooke. His political career and his relationship with Peronism was seriously disturbed over his and other nationalists' protestation against the Act of Chapultepec and, during the Peronist regime, he worked as a rather unimportant functionary in the National Customs Authority (Dirección Nacional de

³³ The date of its closure is indicated by Melón Pirro, "La prensa de oposición". Moreover, the paper's director was arrested in January 1957. This and the other information stem from a reading of the paper itself.

³⁴ This information is based on an interview with Alejandro Olmos (son) in Buenos Aires on 1 November 2004.

Aduanas). At the same time, he socialised in *rosista* groups, becoming editor-in-chief of *Juan Manuel* in 1951, an ephemeral *rosista* publication that campaigned for the repatriation of Rosas' remains and was the organ of a club of mostly right-wing middle and upper class *nacionalistas* with Olmos as its secretary general. The group had links with former members of the government of Edelmiro J. Farrell, as well as with the Instituto Rosas, but no noteworthy connections with Peronism. The paper was mostly devoted to the announcement of public gatherings that campaigned in favour of Rosas, often accompanied by folkloric *rosista* iconography.³⁵

Olmos continued to alternate between political and journalistic activities. Four years after the experience with *Juan Manuel*, Olmos wrote an open letter to the Aramburu government, published in the first issue of his *Palabra Argentina*, in which, describing himself as an average "citizen", he underlined his conflictive relationship with the Peronist regime over the previous nine years. In the same issue, however, Olmos explicitly exalted the *justicialista* flags of "a socially just, economically free and politically sovereign Argentina".³⁶ Despite his rapprochement with Peronism and the fact that Cooke, in a letter to Perón, attested that *Palabra Argentina* had a "truly Peronist tone", it was not "in the orthodox line", as Cooke added.³⁷ Olmos can indeed be seen as an early example of "true Peronism", to borrow Carlos Altamirano's formulation once more.³⁸ Trying to exploit Peronist sympathies of potential voters, Olmos founded a neo-Peronist Party, the Partido Blanco, through which, however, he followed a political agenda that could differ from Perón's, as became clear when he tried to disobey Perón's order to support Frondizi in the presidential elections of early 1958, even though Olmos himself had good relations with the Radical presidential candidate.³⁹ Ultimately, Olmos had to bow to Perón's pressure and supported Frondizi, with whom he was soon disappointed, leaving him bereft of political alliances and embarking again on journalistic enterprises. In the sixties, he first tried to open a university funded by the unions and then to re-launch *Palabra Argentina*, but both projects failed due to the lack of support from the unions and neo-Peronist MPs

³⁵ See the lists of speakers at public gatherings and advertisements of meetings in *Juan Manuel*, no. 2, 9 August 1951. The main organiser of the group was David Uriburu, the nephew of José Félix Uriburu who had led the coup of 1930, inspired by corporatism and fascism. Ramón Doll (see chapter one on him), was also involved in the group.

³⁶ *Palabra Argentina*, no. 1, 14 November 1955.

³⁷ Perón and Cooke, *Correspondencia*, vol. 1, pp. 299 (not orthodox) and 193 (Peronist tone).

³⁸ Altamirano, "El peronismo verdadero". See chapter four.

³⁹ On the Partido Blanco see María F. Arias and Raúl García Heras, "Carisma disperso y rebelión: los partidos neoperonistas", in: Amaral and Plotkin (eds.), *Perón del exilio*, pp. 89-121, esp. 94-97.

respectively. In 1970, Olmos launched another periodical, called *Tercer Frente*, which expounded left-wing *tercermundista* views,⁴⁰ and under the government of Isabel Perón, he became a cabinet adviser.

Taking into account Olmos' earlier experience as a *rosista* campaigner together with his post-1955 alignment with Peronism, it is hardly surprising that *Palabra Argentina* merged elements taken from *rosismo* and Peronism, *before* it received news of Aramburu's inaugural speech. However, the paper initially articulated its favourable comparison between Rosas and Perón in a rather indirect fashion:

Confronted with this process that was initiated by hatred [the Liberating Revolution], one could say, paraphrasing a concept by Rosas formulated in his English exile: 'judgement of Perón falls to God and History, because only God and History can judge the deeds of a people.'⁴¹

The analogy between Rosas and Perón was thus rather unobtrusive at first and only in the following issue, after Aramburu's inaugural speech, was it made more explicit. The editorial of *Palabra Argentina* on 1 December picked up Aramburu's statements, stating that

for the first time, a Government of a revolution invokes Urquiza's revolt and the sad military action of Caseros as a "glorious" precedent. A revolution that calls itself "liberating" cannot take pride in the evocation of the biggest tragedy of our history. [...] Caseros did not mean "liberation from the dictatorship", but the decline of a national sense of personality and sovereignty. It was not the triumph of our doctrine, but the violent imposition of a spirit formed amid foreign philosophies and interests.⁴²

Hereafter, the paper often framed the political events of 1955 within the language of revisionism. In comparison to other periodicals close to the Peronist resistance, Olmos' paper contained such references more often.

Palabra Argentina was more influential than most other Peronist papers. In 1957, Cooke informed Perón at length about the importance of Olmos' newspaper, calculating that it had a readership of one million and advising Perón that it was crucial to maintain good relations with its editor.⁴³ In June 1957, the periodical showed its effectiveness in mobilising the Peronist rank and file, when Olmos called for a demonstration to commemorate the first anniversary of the failed pro-Peronist military uprising of June 1956. Cooke wrote to Perón that Olmos had successfully brought

⁴⁰ I could only locate the first issue of this periodical, from 11 December 1970.

⁴¹ *Palabra Argentina*, no. 1, 14 November 1955. Although this appeared on the day after Aramburu's inauguration, the paper's conditions of production obviously did not enable it to cover the new president's speech.

⁴² *Palabra Argentina*, no. 2, 1 December 1955. As we have seen in other cases already, the article was accompanied by an argument in favour of maintaining the Peronist constitution of 1949.

⁴³ Perón and Cooke, *Correspondencia*, vol. 1, pp. 193 and 299.

about 20,000 people to the streets of Buenos Aires, even though the march had been forbidden by the authorities.⁴⁴ Although it is impossible to establish reliable data on the periodical's circulation beyond Cooke's assertions, the estimate of a readership of one million was perhaps not exaggerated. Together with the *nacionalista* weekly *Azul y Blanco* and Jauretche's *El 45* (which appeared for only three issues), both of which claimed a circulation of 100,000 copies, *Palabra Argentina* was certainly among the main opposition weeklies.⁴⁵

Since *nacionalistas* who had been close to Lonardi suffered less under the repression of the Liberating Revolution than Peronists, their journalistic enterprises were in a better position to project themselves as the voice of opposition to Aramburu, whilst simultaneously trying to appeal to a Peronist readership. This was essentially the strategy pursued by *Azul y Blanco*. Although the paper was not strictly speaking Peronist, it did try to capture the Peronist working-class audience, which its editors thought available due to the closure of the media that had previously been targeted at this readership. From late 1956 onwards *Azul y Blanco* devoted one of its four pages to news concerning the unions. Once Lonardi, to whom many members of the editorial board (such as Mario Amadeo, the Minister of Foreign Relations, and Raúl Puigbó, who participated in Lonardi's coup against Perón), had been removed, the contributors of *Azul y Blanco* showed themselves increasingly disenchanted with the new direction of the Liberating Revolution under Aramburu and drew closer to neo-Peronist circles. Together with Peronists, the paper campaigned for the casting of blank ballots in the election for the constituent assembly in 1957 and published letters by Peronist politicians, such as Alejandro Leloir's, by then the president of the highest Peronist organisational body, the Consejo Superior, who declared his "friendship" with Lonardi.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Cooke (*ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 176) indicated other figures, both below as well as above his own estimate of 20,000. In this letter, he did not mention that the demonstration was organised by Olmos. We can assume, however, that Perón had knowledge of this detail, as the demonstration was a well publicised event in the centre of the Federal Capital (see Moyano Laissué (ed.), *El periodismo*, p. 27).

⁴⁵ *El 45*, no. 2, 30 November 1955; *Azul y Blanco*, no. 22, 4 November 1956 for the circulation figures of these two papers. Since I do not know what a usual ratio between the figure of sold copies and readership was, I find it difficult to assess Cooke's estimate. All these figures are very high in comparison to mainstream dailies. For example, it has been estimated that *La Prensa* sold about 350,000 copies in 1956 (Carlos Ulanovsky, *Parén las rotativas: historia de los grandes diarios, revistas y periodistas argentinos* (Buenos Aires: Espasa, 1997), p. 114). Nevertheless, it does not seem to me that the figures regarding weeklies like *Palabra Argentina* or *Azul y Blanco* are grossly inflated. For example, Jauretche, like Cooke without any discernible interest in exaggeration, estimated that *El Líder* sold 200,000 copies (quoted by Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 118).

⁴⁶ Perón and Cooke, *Correspondencia*, vol. 1, p. 216 on *Azul y Blanco* supporting the Peronist "voto en blanco" campaign. *Azul y Blanco*, no. 75, 19 November 1957 for Leloir's letter. Like Cerrutti Costa, Puigbó was a typical example of the passage from Lonardi to Peronism.

Furthermore, there are some indications that the newspaper functioned as a sphere of sociability for future Peronists. For example, Juan Manuel Abal Medina, who was secretary general of the Movimiento Nacional Justicialista in 1972 and had a decisive influence in negotiating Perón's return to Argentina, worked on the editorial board of *Azul y Blanco* during the Liberating Revolution.⁴⁷ *Azul y Blanco* thus exemplified the rapprochement between Peronism and *nacionalista* sectors, which partly played into the Peronist appropriation of revisionism.

3. The circumstances of the Peronist appropriation

However, it would be misleading to interpret the increasing usage of revisionist motifs by Peronists as merely the result of successful attempts of *nacionalista* ideologues to indoctrinate disoriented Peronist followers. Even in *Palabra Argentina* and *Azul y Blanco*, the editors of which had a history of *rosista* sympathies, the usage of historical themes was less clear-cut than one might expect from that background. In *Palabra Argentina*, like in articles in other papers of the Peronist resistance, historical references were usually made in relation to the government's invocation of the *línea Mayo-Caseros* and never took the form of a revisionist campaign. In the case of *Azul y Blanco*, before 1957, it is even difficult to pin down the paper's stance towards debates regarding the past at all. Although there were some people with revisionist credentials who maintained links to the editorial board in its initial composition —for example Puigbó—, it is hard to discern an overall revisionist tendency.⁴⁸ The author of an article from January 1957, for example, interpreted Caseros in a positive light, albeit without siding with Aramburu's speeches. He accepted that there existed a parallel between the events around the battle of Caseros and the contemporary developments, but instead of Rosas or Mitre, he singled out Urquiza as the primary positive figure that incorporated a positive sense of national identity, on the basis that, like his heir Lonardi, he had tried to reconcile the polarised nation.⁴⁹ Throughout 1957, the paper increasingly accommodated revisionist points of view. In 1958, some of the most prominent right-wing revisionists at the national level and long-standing members of

⁴⁷ His middle class family background was shaped by Catholic *nacionalismo*. His father had worked for the *nacionalista* newspaper *El Pampero*. Juan Manuel's brother Fernando was a founding member of the Peronist guerrilla Montoneros.

⁴⁸ On Puigbó's antecedents as a *rosista* see the report on his speech in *Juan Manuel* no. 2, 9 August 1951.

⁴⁹ *Azul y Blanco*, no. 29, 2 January 1957.

the Instituto Rosas contributed historical articles to *Azul y Blanco*. However, since this change in *Azul y Blanco* coincided with the reformulation of the Peronist narrative of national history —rather than preceding or precipitating it— and, moreover, as the Peronist credentials of the paper remained doubtful, it must be interpreted as a symptom or corollary of wider changes, rather than being a decisive *cause* of the advances that revisionism made in the Peronist camp.⁵⁰

How political motivations played into the Peronist appropriation of revisionism can be shown most clearly in the writings that Perón himself published in these years, in which ideological considerations, as usually with him, played a negligible role. Rather than being the final voicing of deeply held convictions about history, his much debated “conversion” to revisionism in 1957 hardly deserves to be called as much. It should be seen against the convergence of three circumstances in this year: firstly, the precarious situation of Peronism, during which his legitimacy as the ultimate arbiter of the movement was insecure (perhaps more so than ever before and after); secondly, as a consequence of the first factor, his need to maintain open lines of communication with potential allies, among them Olmos and *nacionalistas* who admired Rosas; and thirdly, perhaps most importantly, the official usage of historical references to buttress the government’s call for a constituent assembly to abolish the Peronist reform of 1949, instead of which the original of 1853 should be reinstated. According to Mariano Plotkin, Perón, in the 1957 Caracas edition of his book *La fuerza es el derecho de las bestias*, had still drawn an analogy between the repression of the Liberating Revolution and Rosas’ notorious enforcement squad *Mazorca*. In this comparison, Rosas’ governorship was obviously meant to carry pejorative connotations. Perón’s “conversion” then consisted of two parts. Firstly, in the following edition of the same book, the negative reference to the *Mazorca* was dropped, according to Plotkin, who supports this argument with convincing evidence, upon the initiative of José María Rosa, who had been involved in the revision of Perón’s book.⁵¹ Secondly, in his 1957-book *Los*

⁵⁰ Although it might be argued that *Azul y Blanco*’s opening towards Peronism led to it being read by Peronists, it certainly cannot be regarded as a source that gives insights into Peronist attitudes.

⁵¹ Mariano Ben Plotkin, “La ‘ideología’ de Perón: continuidades y rupturas”, in: Amaral and Plotkin (eds.), *Perón del exilio*, pp. 43-66, here pp. 51-52 and 311n. There is indeed no such reference in Juan Domingo Perón, *La fuerza es el derecho de las bestias* (Madrid: no publisher given, 1957). However, Plotkin not only maintains that the pejorative reference to the *Mazorca* was dropped. He also states that it was replaced with a comparison between the terror of the Liberating Revolution and the Soviet secret police. I could not find this reference either in the edition in question and I could not find either of the two references in any of the following editions: Lima: Editora Gráfica Mundo, 1956; Montevideo: Cicerón, 1958; Buenos Aires: Síntesis, 1973. The issue is somewhat confusing, however, because there were at least six editions of the book between 1956 and 1958 alone.

vendepatria, Perón took notice of the fact that “the dictatorship [the Liberating Revolution] has invoked the *línea Mayo-Caseros* which it declares it will follow.” In contrast to the analogy he had drawn between Rosas and Aramburu only a few months earlier, he now accepted that “there can be no doubt that its [i.e. the government’s] confession is real.” Backed by this recognition, Perón concluded that “they [the leaders of the Liberating Revolution], just as Álzaga, Liniers, Alvear, the enemies of Rosas, etc. undoubtedly belong to the same lineage: *that of the betrayal of the Fatherland*.” Perón then criticised the British loan given to Argentina under Rivadavia’s presidency as the foundational moment of Argentina’s economic dependence on Britain, contrasting it with “the government of Brigadier General Don Juan Manuel de Rosas [which] is, beyond doubt, the most evident eloquence of this deaf struggle” against dependence and “betrayal”.⁵²

It would be futile to look for any deeper ideological reasons behind this “conversion”. As has been often noted, Perón personally regarded the historical debates between revisionists and liberals as unnecessary intellectual exercises.⁵³ Although he had studied the history of the independence period, written historical articles about San Martín and read the works of Scalabrini Ortiz, regarding the divide between the liberal and the revisionist pantheons, Perón’s declarations usually left as much room for exegeses as his following statement from an earlier period:

From History, and even from its excesses, we extract precious teachings in the face of which we cannot and must not remain insensible.⁵⁴

Unsurprisingly, what in 1957 looked like a confession of his “real” sympathies in the revisionist-liberal dispute, if analysed in more detail, turns out to be rather half-hearted. Of the book’s 236 pages, Perón devoted two to the question of “the dictatorship and history”. One of these two pages was a long quotation from *Palabra Argentina*.⁵⁵ Given that its editor gained political weight at this moment and that Perón was well informed of this through Cooke, his reproduction of a page from the paper can be seen as a tactical move to improve relations with Olmos.⁵⁶ Although Perón’s denuncia-

⁵² Juan Domingo Perón, *Los vendepatria: las pruebas de una traición* (Buenos Aires: Liberación, 1958), p. 220.

⁵³ See for example the remarks by Rosa in an interview in 1970 (*Envido*, no. 2, November 1970, p. 46).

⁵⁴ Juan Domingo Perón, *La comunidad organizada (con un apéndice de actualización doctrinaria)* (Buenos Aires: Presidencia de la Nación, 1974), p. 51. There is no need to extend the quotation, because it continues with equally nebulous formulations.

⁵⁵ Perón, *Los vendepatria*, pp. 220-221.

⁵⁶ Cooke’s letters that had advised Perón not to alienate Olmos (see footnote 42) dated from the weeks immediately preceding Perón’s finishing touches on the book (see Perón’s letter from 22 November 1957, in: Perón and Cooke, *Correspondencia*, vol. 2, pp. 41-42).

tion of Rivadavia and the British loan was a classical revisionist theme —perhaps appropriated from Scalabrini Ortiz⁵⁷— the remainder of the passage in *Los vendepatria* was not typically revisionist. Perón’s list of “traitors” was particularly curious. Of the three people mentioned, only the Unitarian *porteño* Carlos María de Alvear —surely the Alvear Perón had in mind— fulfilled the standard criteria of being a target for revisionist vilification. However, Alvear was a rather secondary figure in revisionist narratives.⁵⁸ While Perón’s inclusion of Alvear was thus already slightly peculiar, his mentioning of Martín de Álzaga and Santiago Liniers was even stranger. To be sure, both were involved in fighting the British invasion of 1807, an event revered by revisionists almost without exception. But although Álzaga was known for being pro-Spanish, this in itself did not suffice for a revisionist indictment. Neither of the two appeared often in the controversies between liberals and revisionists. Since they had fought each other, it was moreover unusual to mention them together as the symbols of the same tradition. The most plausible explanation for Álzaga’s inclusion in the enumeration of “traitors” is that, because of his pro-Spanish stance, Perón meant to undermine the credibility of the Liberating Revolution as a successor of the May Revolution, without devoting as much attention to the more controversial issues about Rosas and the battle of Caseros.

After this “conversion”, revisionists had to wait more than thirteen years before Perón invoked Rosas again. In mid-1971, the filmmakers Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas conducted a series of interviews with him in Madrid, released in the same year with the title *Actualización política y doctrinaria para la toma del poder*. Getino and Solanas, whose revisionist views were already apparent in their 1968-documentary *La hora de los hornos*, opened the film with a voiceover that said:

The war for Argentina’s definitive independence is a war that has not as yet been concluded. San Martín, Rosas, the *montoneras* are merely moments of victory in this unfinished war for liberation. A war in which the names and the protagonists changed, but the character of which remained the same: people and anti-people, fatherland and anti-fatherland are still irreducible opposites.

With regard to the historical antecedents of his movement, Perón said:

We, a Spanish colony, became an English colony. Therefore, in Argentina there was an Anglo-Saxon and a Hispanic line. The Hispanic line continued in the idea of independence. The other line is colonial. And in our country our line is... [*Perón paused before continuing*], let’s say, the

⁵⁷ See Scalabrini Ortiz, *Política británica*, especially p. 90.

⁵⁸ In revisionist accounts, Alvear was at best a minor villain, mostly because of his opposition to Artigas.

first *junta* which was in favour of independence, Rosas who defended it and Yrigoyen who was another man who also defended it, and Perón. All other Argentine governments belonged to the Anglo-Saxon line [...]. So all this has historical continuity.⁵⁹

Throughout the interview, Perón evidently courted the film's likely audience, the so-called revolutionary tendency, to which the interviewers belonged, as Perón undoubtedly knew well. Strongly imbued with revisionist imagery, by 1971 this audience was instrumental in the "seizure of power", as envisaged by the film title. However, in the disputes between the liberal and the revisionist pantheon, with the exception of these two examples from 1957 and 1971, Perón followed his preferred strategy of interpretable silence.

By the time of the interview, revisionist imagery had long become common currency among Peronist groups, whereas figures of the liberal pantheon were irrevocably associated with the anti-Peronism of the Liberating Revolution. Whilst during the Peronist regime, appraisals of Sarmiento as a precursor of Perón had still been common practice, in 1961, during a Peronist demonstration in Avellaneda, the speaker, the Peronist politician Raúl Bustos Fierro, was booed for mentioning Sarmiento until he conceded that San Martín and Rosas were more praiseworthy historical figures for Peronists.⁶⁰ Although, given the relatively wide circulation of *Los vendepatria* and the importance that his followers attributed to his words, Perón's passage in this book might have impacted on how Peronists in Argentina used history for their goals, this should not be overestimated.⁶¹ The official analogies between Rosas and Perón played a more weighty role in these changes. The ways in which both weekly newspapers of the Peronist resistance and Perón himself evoked history in relation to contemporary politics, the Peronist use of a revisionist ancestry suggest that this was hardly an invention by Peronists themselves. Instead, it was the inverse derivative of the propaganda that had originated from the government. A common pattern in this reformulation of national history worked as follows: because the organs of the Peronist resistance were unable to articulate a cohesive horizontal way of

⁵⁹ The passage is my own transcript of the film, available at the Instituto Nacional Juan Domingo Perón. More recently, the entire text has been made available at: http://www.rodolfowalsh.org/article.php3?id_article=1170 (accessed 24 February 2006).

⁶⁰ Plotkin, "La 'ideología' de Perón", in: Amaral and Plotkin (eds.), *Perón del exilio*, p. 51.

⁶¹ According to a letter by Cooke, the first edition of 20,000 was sold out after few days and a new edition was under way by late September 1958 (Perón and Cooke, *Correspondencia*, vol. 2, p. 104). However, there had been at least one previous edition so that by the end of 1958 there were three or more editions. Compared to other books edited in Argentina at the time, 20,000 alone is already a relatively high figure: Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 75, calculates that the average number of copies of books published in Argentina in 1958 was 5,471.

communication, Peronists received the governmental iconography from above and began to accept that the Liberating Revolution could be seen as a repetition of the battle of Caseros. By inversion of the originally pejorative meaning of this analogy, revisionist icons, especially Rosas, became increasingly used as Peronist signifiers. Borrowing Maristella Svampa's terms, we could thus argue that a pejorative "hetero-referential appropriation" —that is the labelling of Peronism as barbaric with defamatory connotations— was transformed into an affirmative "auto-referential appropriation" by Peronists.⁶² Such a discursive mechanism was not new in Peronism. Central signifiers such as the *descamisado*, the shirtless person, started their public life as anti-Peronist insults, before they were accepted and endowed with a positive self-value.⁶³ The reformulation of the national past in Peronist circles was originally an imposition from above —before being reformulated— rather than an invention from below. In short, it was reactive rather than creative.

After 1958, Peronist uses of history ceased to refer to the rhetoric of the leaders of the Liberating Revolution. An early example of an attempt to fuse the revisionist iconography with the Peronist doctrine was *Rebelión*, a Peronist neighbourhood newsheet from Rosario, which was first published on 18 November 1959 to commemorate the anniversary of the battle of Vuelta de Obligado. Contrary to the vast majority of the Peronist press before Frondizi's presidency, *Rebelión* was exclusively concerned with a merging of revisionism and Peronism, this time without referring to the propaganda of the Liberating Revolution.⁶⁴ As was the case in later publications of the JP, the employment of revisionism amidst Peronist symbols in *Rebelión* was marked. Unsurprisingly, it was the organ of a youth group —with the unusual name Juventud Justicialista— that attempted to raise its credentials as a legitimate part of Peronism. By 1959, however, the developments that underpinned the Peronist appropriation of revisionism had already taken place.

⁶² Svampa, *El dilema*, pp. 247-281. González, *Restos pampeanos*, p. 284 makes a similar point when he refers to the Peronist inclination towards "adopting the words of the adversary and draining them [of their meaning...], making them suitable for signifying *another* thing".

⁶³ The revalorisation of *descamisado* was made explicit in a speech by Perón: "they do not offend us by calling us *descamisados*; let us not forget that the *descamisados* of old France [presumably the *sans-culottes*] were the ones who indicated a new direction to humanity." (Juan Domingo Perón, *Perón expone su doctrina* (Buenos Aires: Centro Universitario Argentino, 1948), p. 61.)

⁶⁴ I could locate the first two issues of this publication (*Rebelión*, nos. 1 and 2, 18 November 1959 and first half of December 1959). I do not know whether there were more issues following.

Conclusion

From the viewpoint of revisionists, who had long campaigned for their ideas to become the popularly accepted interpretation of Argentine history, the Peronist appropriation at first sight might have appeared as a victory. Finally, Rosas —and, in the long run, other heroes of the revisionist narrative, too— seemed to be rehabilitated as symbols of Argentine national identity by an important political movement. After 1955, Peronism became the main vehicle for the mass dissemination of revisionist ideas. This was not surprising given the affinities between revisionist and populist discourse, both of which frequently invoked personalistic leaders as the expression of the supposedly authentic aspirations of the “people” or the “nation”. However, in its beginnings, the reformulation of the historical discourse of Peronism should not be seen as a necessary outcome of ideological similarities. Nor was it the result of efforts of nationalist intellectuals to indoctrinate the Peronist movement with their views. The outlawing and dispersion of Peronism after 1955 would have made such efforts difficult to achieve in practice anyway. Peronists came to see Rosas as a signifier for their movement, not because they were convinced by the writings of revisionists, but because they reacted defensively against the official rhetoric of the Liberating Revolution. The leaders of the provisional government chose to construct a historical line from the May Revolution, via Caseros, to the Liberating Revolution as a prominent and visible element of their official propaganda, in response to which much of the Peronist reinterpretation of history developed. The Peronist press began to invert the pejorative connotations of the official use of history: revisionist heroes, in particular Rosas, were identified as positive symbols.

Similarly, Perón’s own “conversion” to revisionism was not a matter of deeply held convictions. In 1970, Rosa observed about Perón’s attitude towards the disputes between the liberal and the revisionist pantheon:

He often said: “let us leave the dead in peace, we have enough work with the living.” It was useless to tell him that one should not say this, that we are what we are by virtue of the past. [...]

What I noticed about Perón was that he gave little importance to the past.⁶⁵

On the two occasions when Perón did seem to have decided himself in favour of the revisionist account, it can be explained with the concrete political circumstances that formed the background to his use of such a historical genealogy. In 1957, the future of his movement seemed particularly uncertain and he invoked Rosas, similarly to much

⁶⁵ Interview with Rosa in *Envido*, no. 2, November 1970, p. 46.

of the Peronist press in Argentina, as a means to oppose the *línea Mayo-Caseros* that had been constructed by the leaders of the Liberating Revolution. In 1971, when he was asked in an interview about his historical views, his answer conformed to what was known to be the interpretation of his interviewers, who served as mediators between the exiled Perón and the revolutionary tendency, which at that point was instrumental for bringing down the military regime that had been installed in 1966.

Revisionism thus did become a political weapon, but this was not the victory of militant nationalist writers. The role of intellectuals in the early stages of the Peronist appropriation of revisionism was rather limited, as the case of Alejandro Olmos exemplarily demonstrates. Intellectuals were important, of course, as the producers of discourses about national identity, which could then be appropriated. It was no surprise that Olmos' paper drew on revisionist imagery more than other periodicals, given that he had socialised with writers such as Scalabrini Ortiz, Jauretche and Chávez. But he himself was a public functionary, self-made journalist and (unsuccessful) politician and not primarily known as an intellectual. In contrast to the allegedly one million readers of *Palabra Argentina*, the impact of someone like Jauretche on the Peronist movement was very limited at that moment. His paper *El 45* published only three issues, and he was forced into exile in Uruguay. Although Cooke was more important, his weight was not due to his links with nationalist intellectuals (such as those of the Instituto Rosas, of which he had been vice-president), but to the fact that Perón had named him as his personal delegate. An unimportant backbencher during the Peronist regime, he suddenly became a crucial political organiser in 1955, based on an authority that was derived from Perón's blessing rather than from intellectual prestige. Cooke never wrote a book and most of the publications that bore his name were compilations of speeches and articles that appeared from the mid-1960s onwards, by when he had lost his influence on Peronist politics. The identification of the Peronist movement with revisionist figures should not be attributed to Cooke's influence. In the two volumes of correspondence between Cooke and Perón, one struggles to find references to anything related to historical revisionism.⁶⁶

In short, the Peronist appropriation of revisionism obeyed to the predicaments imposed by the political constellation after 1955. As the national-popular consensus of previous years had broken down and the dichotomy between Peronism and anti-Peronism became the main structuring force of Argentine politics, the divide between

⁶⁶ Perón and Cooke, *Correspondencia*.

the liberal and the revisionist account of the past began to texture this dichotomy. Nationalist intellectuals had provided the iconographies, but the Peronist movement appropriated them instrumentally in response to a political crisis of legitimacy. A strongly militant account of the past, directed against “officialdom”, suited a movement that now found itself in opposition. In the following and last chapter, this link between revisionism and political opposition will be further explored.

Chapter six

Revisionism and political power

Introduction

It has often been argued that the absence of a strong civil society in Latin America endowed intellectuals with a disproportionately great importance as the producers of identity narratives that mediated between state and society. As Alain Touraine has maintained, given the weak articulation of social demands through the political system, the “intellectual party” often became the bearer of unifying myths that vindicated the demands of “the people”.¹ This argument leads to another question, namely the relationship of intellectuals with political power. From the observation —similar to Touraine’s— that “intellectuals have always fulfilled a central function [...] in Latin American societies and politics”, Jorge Castañeda has inferred that

where structured, enduring political parties emerged, intellectuals participated in their leadership or drafted their platforms [...]. And when the opportunity to govern presented itself, they embraced it.²

The most promising country case study to substantiate this argument is probably Brazil, where, according to Sergio Miceli, intellectuals were granted privileged access to the corridors of power and public office.³ It has been argued, however, that this does not hold true for most Spanish American countries.⁴ If Castañeda’s point is stretched, it might still be applied to Mexico to some extent, but it certainly does not fit the experience of Argentine intellectuals. As Juan Carlos Torre has remarked, Argentina’s

¹ Touraine, *La parole et le sang*, pp. 137-150.

² Castañeda, *Utopia Unarmed*, p. 177 (first quotation) and p. 178 (second quotation).

³ Sergio Miceli, *Intelectuais à brasileira* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2001).

⁴ Miller, *In the shadow*.

lower degree of socio-economic polarisation and the political power of the unions as the expression of working-class demands meant that Argentine intellectuals were less important as mediators between state and society than their Brazilian counterparts.⁵ Silvia Sigal has shown that Argentine intellectuals were indeed weakly integrated into the state and political organisations, at least in the 1960s.⁶

This chapter contributes to this discussion by specifically looking at the relationship of historical revisionists to political power. It is difficult to assign revisionists to either of the two categories identified by Sigal, namely “progressive intellectuals”, whose access to political powers was limited according to her, and “nationalist ideologues”, who did become political advisers in her view.⁷ The question is not whether revisionists were “progressive” or “nationalist” (the second adjective is the one that fits), but rather whether they should be classified as intellectuals or as ideologues. What does this distinction mean? Following Norberto Bobbio, I will understand ideologues as one variant of intellectuals, namely as those “intellectuals to whom the holder of power attributes the role of promoters of consensus.”⁸ This definition allows to treat revisionists as intellectuals in order to then ask whether they can also be seen as ideologues in that they enjoyed privileged access to the “holders of power”.

The question of the extent to which revisionists frequented the corridors of power relates to a broader debate about Argentine nationalism. In particular with regard to *nacionalismo*, it has often been argued that its proponents had cordial contacts with powerful circles, especially in the military.⁹ Even for the period after 1955, there are indeed several cases to support this argument, such as the *nacionalistas* Jordán Bruno Genta, who had links to the air force,¹⁰ or Mario Amadeo, Lonardi’s Minister of Foreign Affairs. Occasionally (although not often) revisionists, too, have been interpreted as organically involved in drafting the designs of power brokers.¹¹ I will argue that this idea is very misleading and that the fact that neither Genta nor Amadeo had much interest in historical revisionism was not a coincidence, but followed a pattern. As a general rule, those *nacionalistas* who took on positions as political advisers were not

⁵ Interview with Torre in Hora and Trimboli (eds.), *Pensar la Argentina*, pp. 214-215.

⁶ Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁸ Bobbio, *Il dubbio e la scelta*, p. 118.

⁹ E.g. Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

¹¹ Especially by Rama, *Nacionalismo e historiografía*.

revisionists. There is an element of tautology in this argument, since, given the anti-establishment characteristics of revisionism, it might be said that Genta's or Amadeo's lack of interest in revisionism was a result of their relative success as political advisers. However, the centrality of revisionism in nationalist discourse and the fact that its proponents were by and large excluded would then nevertheless tell a different story about the ways in which nationalist imagery became effective: rather than through the influential posts of nationalist intellectuals, it would seem that their discursive production was tied to their exclusion from political power.

My principal concern, then, is to examine whether there was a pattern to how the production of nationalist ideas related to political power and the state. The relationship between revisionists and the state, of course, changed over time and depended on the government in power. Given the way Argentine politics functioned during much of the twentieth century (as indeed in many other countries of the developing world with strongly presidential systems), the incoming of a new head of state entailed a high turnover of personnel in most public institutions. In the domain of culture, this was exacerbated by the fact that the president holds extraordinary powers to intervene in public cultural institutions, notably in universities, and to appoint key functionaries there. These considerations prompt me to consider the relationship between revisionists and three specific governments in this chapter: Frondizi's developmentalist administration from 1958 to 1962; the military regime known as the Argentine Revolution that began with the coup led by Juan Carlos Onganía in 1966; and the Peronist government from May 1973 onwards. These three governments, the second two of which intervened in public universities, allow us to adopt a comparative perspective that is broadly representative of the relationship in question and to delineate common traits as well as differences. The choice of these three examples seems justified, because the Liberating Revolution has already been dealt with in some detail in the previous chapter, whereas the Radical government of Arturo Illia from 1963 to 1966 offers few variables that could add much to the overall analysis. The general relationship between revisionism and Radicalism will be covered in the section on Frondizi, whose administration furthermore marks a more interesting turning point concerning the attitudes and positioning of intellectuals in relation to politics.¹²

¹² I have referred to the importance of "Frondizi's betrayal" on several occasions already and the topic has received much attention in the secondary literature, notably by Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*, pp. 117-137.

From the analysis of these three governments, two main arguments will be advanced. Firstly, several of the central political ideas of nationalist intellectuals were compatible with the rhetoric of these three administrations. Revisionists were thus not excluded from official positions for ideological reasons by “anti-national” governments, as they themselves would have it. Secondly, however, it was true that their involvement in policy-making was limited. Whilst the administrations of Frondizi and Onganía yielded few important positions for them, the Peronist government after 1973 co-opted them into rather insignificant posts, which entailed a decline in their intellectual activities. Through this examination, this chapter further underscores that revisionism was intrinsically linked to the perceived political marginalisation of its writers.

1. Revisionism, Radicalism and developmentalism

Since revisionist imagery had become a Peronist signifier during the Liberating Revolution, it was no surprise that neither Frondizi nor Onganía wholeheartedly adopted revisionism as a new official history. Whilst in their politics of history they both sought to create a unified national identity, revisionism remained a partisan and largely oppositional version of the past that was promoted by sectors that opposed their governments, even though the ideological outlook of their administrations and the political background of their coalitions did not contradict the ideas of revisionists in principle.

Two years after Aramburu and Rojas had launched their attempts to eradicate Peronism from Argentine society and politics, it was already evident that their strategies were doomed to fail, as large parts of the population continued to adhere to Peronism, whilst the Liberating Revolution did not provide the material rewards that could have helped to uproot this political identity. In July 1957, the results of the elections for a constitutional assembly to annul the Peronist reform of 1949 proved the lack of support for both Aramburu and the Radical Party, which had split into the factions of Arturo Frondizi’s “intransigent” wing (UCRI) and Ricardo Balbín’s Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo (UCRP) in January that year. The approximately 2.1m blank ballots (24 percent of the electorate) were mostly associated with Peronism, which thereby constituted the strongest single political force.¹³ For Frondizi, presidential

¹³ For the evaluation of these events by the Peronist leadership, see Perón and Cooke, *Correspondencia*, vol. 1, pp. 250-260.

candidate in the February 1958 elections, it was thus clear that victory was impossible without securing at least a part of this chunk of the electorate, whose preferred choice was banned. In late 1957, Frondizi's emissaries left for Caracas to strike a deal with Perón: the latter agreed to order his followers in Argentina to vote for the UCRI-candidate, whilst Frondizi, if elected, promised to take steps towards the re-legalisation of Peronism. On 23 February, Frondizi received roughly 4.5m votes and, on May Day, assumed office amidst the widespread optimism surrounding a government that proclaimed national unity.

Frondizi indeed attracted support from a broad range of sectors that had been antagonised by the Liberating Revolution, which the candidate had vociferously opposed. Frondizi's heterogeneous coalition consisted of Catholic *nacionalistas* like Amadeo, who had been ousted by the palace coup of November 1955; Peronist leaders angered by the dismantling of their movement and the anti-popular economic policies of Aramburu; the Communist Party; and left-wing intellectuals, such as those of *Contorno*, who were also alienated by the Liberating Revolution, whilst being attracted to the incoming president's reputation as an intellectual figure.¹⁴ Ideologically, Frondizi's track record and his stated aims dovetailed with many populist and nationalist tenets. He had laid them down in a book published in 1954, which, if not for its unwieldy subtitle and unembellished soberness, might well have been admitted to the canon of revisionist works.¹⁵ Written at the height of the opposition to Perón's invitation to the US company Standard Oil to exploit Argentine reserves, Frondizi argued for the nationalisation of all natural resources as a means of ensuring national sovereignty against what he denounced as omnivorous imperialist appetites. He held that nationalisation would assist the development of an autarkic heavy industry, reducing the external dependency of the export-led model and setting the economy on a path towards the fulfilment of the true national destiny. This programme gained Frondizi applause of populist nationalists and, since Frondizi had combined this with a criticism

¹⁴ This last point is particularly stressed by Carlos Altamirano, *Frondizi o el hombre de ideas como político* (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998).

¹⁵ Arturo Frondizi, *Petróleo y política: contribución al estudio de la historia económica argentina y de las relaciones entre el imperialismo y la vida política nacional*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Raigal, 1956). The title of the introduction to this book ("El antiimperialismo: etapa fundamental del proceso democrático en América Latina"), published separately in the following year, summarised the anti-imperialist core of Frondizi's reasoning.

of Perón's anti-clerical campaign, also of *nacionalistas* and some authoritarian Catholic sectors.¹⁶

The anti-imperialism of Frondizi's UCRI harked back to FORJA, the breakaway group from the Radical Party of the mid-1930s. Although FORJA had been dissolved in 1945 as a response to the advent of Peronism and the majority of its members henceforth supported the new leader, some members were less convinced about these recent affinities and consequently founded the Movimiento de Intransigencia y Renovación (MIR), which became Frondizi's main political platform. The continuity between FORJA and the MIR was personified by Luis Dellepiane and Gabriel del Mazo, both former members of FORJA who contributed to the drafting of political programmes of the MIR in the early years of Perón's government. After the overthrow of Perón, Del Mazo gained a reputation as an ideologue of Yrigoyenist anti-imperialism with the publication of a three-volume history of Radicalism, in which he portrayed Yrigoyen as "the personal condensation of the superior elements of Argentine authenticity".¹⁷ In Frondizi's cabinet, Del Mazo became Minister of Defence.

The two most prolific intellectuals associated with FORJA, Scalabrini Ortiz and Jauretche, also endorsed the UCRI-candidate, albeit independently. Temporarily abandoning his view that under no circumstances an intellectual was capable of being sensitive to the needs of the masses, Jauretche reasoned about Frondizi that

for the first time in Argentine history, an intellectual receives the support of the people, or, in other words, for the first time the people are not against the intellectual. [...] Thus collapses the theorem of the opposition between civilisation and barbarism. Synthesis is possible and realisable [...].¹⁸

After their experience of marginalisation during Perón's second term as president, the two revisionists now believed their aspirations could be fulfilled by Frondizi.¹⁹

Scalabrini and Jauretche voiced their support for Frondizi through the weekly newspaper *Qué (sucedió en siete días)*, the most important campaigning vehicle for Frondizi, which, due to their contributions, also contained revisionist articles. The

¹⁶ Both are evident from the pamphlets that led up to the Liberating Revolution: Félix Lafianra (ed.), *Los panfletos: su aporte a la Revolución Libertadora* (Buenos Aires: Itinerarium, 1955). On the Standard Oil contracts as a principal stumbling block that instigated the *nacionalista* opposition to Perón see pp. 443-462 and on their acclaim for Frondizi see pp. 297-301.

¹⁷ Gabriel Del Mazo, *El radicalismo: ensayo sobre su historia y doctrina* (Buenos Aires: Gure, 1957), vol. 2 (*Caída de la República Representativa, el "contubernio" y la "década infame". 1922-1945*), p. 225.

¹⁸ Quoted in Altamirano, *Frondizi*, p. 77.

¹⁹ That Jauretche and Scalabrini threw their weight behind Frondizi did not pass unnoticed in the Peronist leadership (see Perón and Cooke, *Correspondencia*, vol. 1, p. 217).

paper was founded in 1947 by the entrepreneur Rogelio Frigerio who had previously written for student publications in support of the University Reform of 1918.²⁰ He acquired wide publicity through his first meeting with Frondizi in early 1956, after which he relentlessly championed the cause of the UCRI and ultimately was rewarded with an economic super-ministry in May 1958.²¹ By this time, *Qué...* —known as “the bible of politics”— had achieved wide circulation, especially among intellectuals who sympathised with its anti-imperialist and developmentalist proposals.²² Its main interest was economic, advocating Argentina’s industrialisation to substitute for foreign imports, reflecting the developmentalist ideas in vogue throughout Latin America and their advances in Juscelino Kubitschek’s Brazil. Whilst the paper thus mainly featured articles, illustrated by photographs, drawings, statistics and graphs that explained the advantages of building up heavy industries, these were complemented by cultural and political debates on Argentine national identity. Nationalist intellectuals from both the Right (for example, Puigbó) and the Left (for example, Astesano) contributed to *Qué*.

Similarly to the presidential candidate’s, Frigerio’s own language was also strongly nationalist. In 1959, he contended that “only the weekly *Qué...* arrived at a [...] systematisation of the national and popular thought that was expressed through direct struggle.” According to Frigerio, developmentalism was “about *being a nation*, once and forever”, which had finally become possible, because

the enemy can no longer find natural allies in this land. A good part of the minorities traditionally linked to its [i.e. the enemy’s] interests now have other [interests] which are associated with the process of national liberation.²³

Even four years later, when his tone had become more sober, in a book devoted to strategies for economic growth, Frigerio argued that economic growth was important because it helped that “the national being [...] reaches its fulfilment; sovereignty blends into authentic material, moral and spiritual structures”, in opposition to a “‘borrowed’ culture [that] is imposed upon the vernacular and perverts every attempt at cultural progress.”²⁴ The advertising space that *Qué...* offered for books such as

²⁰ See Fanor Díaz, *Conversaciones con Rogelio Frigerio* (Buenos Aires: Colihue-Hachette, 1977), pp. 19-20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 31-51 on the first meeting with Frondizi and his trip to Caracas.

²² See generally María Estela Spinelli, “La ‘Biblia’ de la política: la revista ‘Qué sucedió en 7 días’ y el frondizismo (1955-1958)”, in: Asociación Argentina de Editores de Revistas (ed.), *Historia de revistas argentinas* (Buenos Aires: Asociación Argentina de Editores de Revistas, 1995).

²³ Rogelio Frigerio, *Las condiciones de la victoria: manual de política argentina* (Buenos Aires: Sociedad Editora Argentina, 1959), p. 7, p. 9 and p. 11.

²⁴ Rogelio Frigerio, *Crecimiento económico y democracia* (Buenos Aires: Losada, 1963), p. 155 and p. 153.

García Mellid's *Proceso al liberalismo argentino* or Hernández Arregui's *Imperialismo y cultura* thus reflected its editor's views. As Celia Szusterman has noted, the ideological mixture upon which Frondizi launched his presidential campaign was bound together by the leitmotiv of anti-imperialism, thus being similar to the ideas of Peronists and nationalists.²⁵

Another unifying theme were Frondizi's evocations of the populist legacy of "old Yrigoyen".²⁶ This struck a chord with nationalists of all kinds, who had admired Yrigoyen since the mid-1930s. Despite having been outspoken supporters of Yrigoyen's overthrow in 1930, the original nucleus of *nacionalistas* around *La Nueva República* had arrived at a positive re-evaluation of Yrigoyenism by the mid-1930s that eased convergences with the populist strands of nationalism.²⁷ Later, Perón was often identified as Yrigoyen's heir. In the 1940s, Gálvez argued that "Perón is a new Yrigoyen" and Scalabrini published a text called *Yrigoyen y Perón: identidad de una línea histórica*.²⁸ Similarly, Cooke also constructed an analogy between the two leaders on the basis that both had been incarnations of popular authenticity. The events of 17 October 1945, according to Cooke, were an echo of Yrigoyen's funeral in 1933, a "popular demonstration [which] only merited the contempt and scorn of the governing oligarchy."²⁹ From the *nacionalista* Right, Bruno Jacovella diagnosed a longer historical analogy, since

the ascent to power of a Rosas, an Yrigoyen and a Perón were characterised by a total uprooting of people from the countryside, whether natives or immigrants, into the big port city and its environs.

In the same article, published in March 1958, Jacovella went on to underline that the intervals between these events were becoming shorter, thereby alluding to the alleged nature of Frondizi's government.³⁰ In short, Frondizi's discourse allowed nationalists

²⁵ Celia Szusterman, *Frondizi and the politics of developmentalism in Argentina, 1955-1962* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), esp. pp. 75-107.

²⁶ Frondizi claimed to accomplish the unfulfilled objectives of Yrigoyen (quoted in *La Prensa*, 17 October 1956).

²⁷ See chapter one.

²⁸ Manuel Gálvez in *El Pueblo*, 13 August 1944, reprinted in Altamirano, *Bajo el signo*, p. 149. Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz, *Yrigoyen y Perón: identidad de una línea histórica*, 2nd ed. (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1972). Correspondingly, evocations of Yrigoyen as a leader and interpreter of the truly popular will had served as one of the few common grounds for the participants in the hasty formation of Perón's alliance in 1945/46. See Altamirano, *Bajo el signo*, p. 32. I would like to thank the author for having drawn my attention to this point in a conversation in Buenos Aires, 17 April 2003.

²⁹ John William Cooke, "Definiciones: peronismo revolucionario", *Cristianismo y Revolución*, no. 2-3, October/November 1966, p. 14.

³⁰ *Dinámica Social*, no. 89, March 1958, p. 3.

of various kind to identify with the incoming president and to hope for governmental or other influential posts.

With regard to episodes of national history, the government's overall rhetoric might well have included revisionist references. By the late 1950s, there had been some common ground established between revisionism, *rosismo* and the populist strands of Radicalism, even though this convergence had never been complete.³¹ According to a later article in *Primera Plana*, during his presidency Frondizi had indeed supported attempts to repatriate Rosas' remains from Southampton and adorned the Salón Blanco of the presidential palace with the *caudillo's* bust.³² However, revisionism did not become the official version of Argentine history under Frondizi, as the writings of Marcos Merchensky, one of the UCRI-ideologues in the run-up to the elections of 1958, demonstrated. In his 1961 book *Las corrientes ideológicas en la historia argentina*, Merchensky sought a synthesis between Rivadavia, Rosas and Sarmiento, figures that were incompatible for revisionists. The author did not disagree with the cause of rescuing Rosas or other *caudillos*, but stressed that his rehabilitation should not lead to the vilification of the liberal statesmen, since "the meaning of history" was that "every era adds elements to the formation of nationality"; an approach Merchensky labelled "integrationism".³³ In the preface to the book, Frigerio underscored Rosas' achievement of national unification, but stressed that he did not belong to "the revisionist school", since that had "deepened [...] the gulf that had been opened up by the preceding historiography and nourished the passions that divide the Argentines. [...] The anti-national interests could not have asked for anything better."³⁴ His version of history to an extent resembled the attempts of the Peronist regime one decade earlier to strike a balance between Argentina's conflicting pantheons.

This scepticism toward revisionism must not be mistaken for a bias against *nacionalismo* or populism in government circles. For example, the populist governor

³¹ Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nacionalismo*, esp. pp. 43-63 goes furthest in this argument by dating the link between revisionism and Yrigoyenism to 1916 (see also chapter one). However, there were always examples of non-*rosista* Yrigoyenism. For example, the monthly UCR-organ of the province of Buenos Aires, *Yrigoyen*, stated on its front page in 1954 (no. 24, September 1954): "Judged in terms of human rights, it is proven that Juan Manuel de Rosas is a tyrant and criminal". There were also erstwhile Yrigoyenists and later Peronists who, in matters of history, were inclined towards the liberal pantheon, such as the politician Raúl Bustos Fierro. On the other hand, it is also true that by 1958 at least one former *forjista*, García Mellid, was a member of the Instituto Rosas.

³² *Primera Plana*, no. 75, 14 April 1964.

³³ Marcos Merchensky, *Las corrientes ideológicas en la historia argentina* (Buenos Aires: Concordia, 1961), p. 285.

³⁴ Rogelio Frigerio, "El estudio de la historia como base de la acción política del pueblo", in: *ibid.*, pp. 5-38, here p. 12.

of the province of Buenos Aires, Oscar Alende, at an homage to Jauretche on the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of FORJA, declared that “the revolution that is unfolding in Argentina [...] will have, once more, a nationalist and popular stamp.”³⁵ After his governorship had ended, he drew close to Peronist and neo-Peronist circles and, in 1969, he took part in a campaign for the repatriation of Rosas’ remains, which was dominated by members of the Instituto Rosas.³⁶ However, during his governorship, when the institute tried to persuade him to attend its annual commemoration of the battle of Vuelta de Obligado in 1958, Alende did not show up and the provincial police prevented the celebration from taking place. To a letter of complaint written by Rosa, according to which Alende had promised to come, the governor replied that other commitments had impeded him to take part in the commemoration. Although Alende expressed his sympathies with the cause of the commemoration, he thus did not sanction the revisionist version of history as official.³⁷

In terms of politically influential positions under Frondizi, a similarly mixed picture emerges. *Nacionalistas* established a foothold, albeit a rather modest one, in Carlos Florit’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which Luis María de Pablo Pardo became an adviser, whilst Mario Amadeo was appointed ambassador to the United Nations. However, this did not translate into institutional advances for nationalist intellectuals who devoted themselves to historical writing. Neither Amadeo nor Pablo Pardo, despite being *nacionalistas*, were revisionist intellectuals. In his writings, Amadeo had never shown any interest in reasoning about the essence of Argentine national identity, let alone engaging in polemics of a historiographical nature. His most widely read book (*Ayer, hoy, mañana*), published in 1956, stood out among nationalist publications as a pragmatic collection of relatively concrete policy proposals concerning the question of de-Peronisation, which its author saw as “the gravest and most urgent problem of the moment”.³⁸ Although Pablo Pardo had been a founding member of the Instituto Rosas, he did not appear in the institute’s list of members after 1955 and he had never published anything worth mentioning.

³⁵ Oscar Alende, “Arturo Jauretche, pasado y futuro”, in: Juan Carlos Neyra and others, *Jauretche: una vida al servicio de la revolución nacional* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor de Buenos Aires, 1965), p. 84.

³⁶ *Primera Plana*, no. 78, 5 May 1964, reported on possible alliances between Oscar Albrieu and Alende. See Julio Stortini, “Polémicas y crisis en el revisionismo histórico: el caso del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas ‘Juan Manuel de Rosas’”, in Devoto and Pagano (eds.), *Historiografías académica y militante*, p. 102 on the repatriation campaign.

³⁷ Letters reprinted in *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, no. 18 (1958), p. 117.

³⁸ Amadeo, *Ayer, hoy, mañana*, p. 89.

In stark contrast, revisionism flourished among those nationalist groups whose demands for participation remained unfulfilled. In opposition to the government, they specialised in cultural debates about the national character. One example was Vicente Tripoli, one of the few former FORJA-militants who never aligned with Frondizi, instead launching the short-lived social sciences journal *Ser Nacional* in 1959.³⁹ Similarly, the *nacionalista* weekly *Azul y Blanco*, from which Amadeo had by then dissociated himself, fiercely opposed Frondizi and in this context counted an increasing number of right-wing revisionists amongst its contributors, such as Castellani, Doll, Rosa or Steffens Soler (all members of the Instituto Rosas). The intensification of its opposition to the government coincided with an upsurge in articles that looked to history for inspiration. At the same time as the *rosista* Oliver criticised Frondizi's petroleum policy, the paper complained about the "silenced intellectuals", most of whom were linked to the Instituto Rosas, and published a piece extolling Facundo's bravery.⁴⁰ Also, the opinions expressed in the paper became more radical. The police impediment of the celebrations on 20 November 1958 and Alende's absence, for example, was attributed to a Masonic conspiracy, said to be typical of a political climate in which "a Jew can lawfully amass all the millions he wants by dealing in petroleum".⁴¹ On the same occasion in the following year, next to a poem in honour of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, Rosa reminded the reader that, during Rosas' times, "the ministers did not use to ask international monetary funds for permission to increase salaries", in obvious allusion to Frondizi's new Minister of Economy and Labour Relations, Álvaro Alsogaray, who was known as an advocate of private enterprise.⁴²

In sum, revisionism continued to be the terrain of frustrated intellectuals in opposition and politicians *manqués* who felt that their ambitions were not sufficiently recognised or heard. Revisionism was a surrogate intellectual activity for those who had not been appointed to official posts or who realised that their influence as ideologues of the government was more limited than they had expected until mid-1958. This exclusion was not due to a discernible bias against nationalist imagery among Frondizi's entourage. The Instituto Rosas had reopened its doors in 1958 and

³⁹ The only issue I could find included articles by José María Rosa and Fermín Chávez, in honour of the recently deceased Scalabrini Ortiz (*Ser Nacional*, no. 1, September 1959). See also chapter four.

⁴⁰ *Azul y Blanco*, no. 104, 10 June 1958 (Oliver) and no. 106, 24 June 1958.

⁴¹ *Azul y Blanco*, no. 128, 25 November 1958.

⁴² *Azul y Blanco*, no. 179, 17 November 1959.

the government did not exclude authoritarian and Catholic *nacionalistas* or populists on ideological grounds. Yet none of this led to an official recognition of the revisionist account of Argentine history. “Official history” proposed instead an inoffensive “integrationism”.

2. Revisionism and the Onganía dictatorship

This constellation was similar during the military regime of Juan Carlos Onganía that came to power through the coup of June 1966, the so-called Argentine Revolution. For the more right-leaning of the circles in which revisionists socialised, the coup of 1966 once more promised to yield benefits from various perspectives. It was clear that, as opposed to Aramburu’s regime, Onganía belonged to the sectors of the Armed Forces with nationalist sympathies; nor was he an advocate of a complete eradication of Peronism, as had become clear in the violent confrontations between military factions in 1962, where he had been active among the *azules*, who favoured a tutelary option regarding the proscribed movement. The new president’s views were informed by many of the key elements of right-wing *nacionalismo* with its frequent references to Catholic and hierarchic traditions. Deploring that “our country has become a scene of anarchy” and that “our international dignity has been gravely compromised by vacillation and indifference”, the first statement of the military *junta* pleaded for Argentines

to unite behind the great principles of our Western and Christian tradition which, not many years ago, made our Fatherland the pride of America and, invoking God’s protection, to begin, all together, the march towards meeting the great Argentine destiny.⁴³

In his inaugural message, Onganía confirmed that his outlook was similar, as he declared that “faith in God, learning from history, commitment to justice, a lively passion for the public good and the greatness of Argentina are the norms that will guide my conduct.”⁴⁴ The president furthermore professed admiration for Francoism and even went so far as to quote almost literally José Antonio Primo de Rivera, which tallied with right-wing *nacionalista* views.⁴⁵

⁴³ “Mensaje de la Junta Revolucionaria dirigido al pueblo argentino”, in *La Nación*, 29 June 1966.

⁴⁴ Juan Carlos Onganía, “Al pueblo argentino”, 30 June 1966, quoted in Gregorio Selser, *El onganiato* (Buenos Aires: Samonta, 1973), vol. 1, p. 313.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Tilman Tönnies Evers, *Militärregierung in Argentinien: Das politische System der “Argentinischen Revolution”* (Hamburg and Frankfurt am Main: Institut für Auswärtige Politik/Alfred Metzner Verlag, 1972), p. 60. Onganía said: “La patria es una empresa en la historia y una empresa en lo universal. La patria es una síntesis trascendente que tiene fines propios que cumplir.” The

This orientation was reflected in the composition of the sectors that exerted an influence in the Argentine Revolution, especially during its first phase. In comparison to Frondizi, the governmental entourage included a larger number of right-wing *nacionalistas*. Among these, particular importance was attached to the members of the Ateneo de la República, an informal think-tank that had been founded by Amadeo and others in 1962 in order to exert political influence based on corporatist, Catholic and authoritarian ideas. Several of its members had known each other since contributing to the Catholic *nacionalista* publication *Sol y Luna* in the late 1930s (Amadeo and Santiago de Estrada), had been involved in the military governments of 1943-46 (Héctor Llabrás) or had been in one way or another linked to the Lonardi administration (Amadeo, Puigbó and Máximo Etchecopar). In 1966, Amadeo was appointed ambassador to Brazil and, later that year, the Ateneo members gained a stronghold in the Ministry of the Interior, led by the Peronist sympathiser Guillermo Borda, whilst they also had a more limited influence in the portfolios of foreign affairs and of culture and education.⁴⁶ Although the government's socio-economic policy, as became clear after initial wavering, was dominated by liberal authoritarian technocrats with whom *nacionalistas* strongly disagreed, government measures in the cultural domain dovetailed with right-wing Catholic ideas. For example, measures were taken to prohibit the showing of films that, in the eyes of censors, "justified" marital unfaithfulness.⁴⁷ Overall, relations between circles linked to *nacionalistas*, including groups like Tacuara, and the government were relatively well developed under Onganía.⁴⁸

As had been the case with Frondizi, Onganía's personal view on history was not in principle disinclined towards revisionist motifs. For example, in September 1969 he chaired a commission for the commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the death of Angel Pacheco, Rosas' brother in arms in the desert campaign of 1833. Through several members, such as Julio Irazusta, the Instituto Rosas also supported the

corresponding passage by Primo de Rivera is: "Una patria es una misión en la historia, una misión en lo universal [...] La patria es una síntesis indivisible con fines propios que cumplir." (*ibid.*)

⁴⁶ See generally on the link between Onganía and the Ateneo: Selser, *El onganiato*, vol. 1, pp. 11-42 and Alain Rouquié, *Pouvoir militaire et société politique en République Argentine* (Paris: Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques and CNRS, 1978), pp. 576 and 686.

⁴⁷ Tönnies Evers, *Militärregierung*, p. 72.

⁴⁸ For the conflicting combination of Catholic, *nacionalista* and corporatist sectors on the one hand and pro-business groups on the other, see Guillermo O'Donnell, *1966-1973: El estado burocrático autoritario: triunfos y derrotas* (Buenos Aires: Editorial de Belgrano, 1982), pp. 95-103. Paul Lewis, "The right and military rule, 1955-1983", in Deutsch and Dolkart (eds.), *The Argentine right*, pp. 147-180 sees this division as having been common to most Argentine military regimes.

event.⁴⁹ According to Halperín Donghi, Onganía was the first president to make positive remarks about Rosas in public.⁵⁰ As had occurred with such official declarations earlier, however, Onganía refrained from praising Rosas alone. His choice of Lavalle as the accompanying hero followed in the footsteps of the historical evocations of the followers of earlier military regimes, especially the nationalist corporatism of José F. Uriburu in 1930.⁵¹ But as an enemy of Rosas, assisted by the French and furthermore responsible for the execution of Manuel Dorrego, Lavalle was unacceptable to revisionists. From a classical revisionist standpoint, Onganía's presumed aim of achieving a synthesis between different traditions of *nacionalismo* was as uncongenial as Merchensky's had been a few years earlier.

Regarding public posts for revisionists and institutional advances of their version of the past, as a general rule, inroads were made in the area of education. In public universities, the background of the mass resignations after the intervention of July 1966, especially at the UBA, created new opportunities, since the empty offices were partially filled by former lecturers who had been sacked in 1955 and by academic staff from Catholic universities. Although Sigal mentions that these changes allowed Rosa and Hernández Arregui to teach at the Universidad del Litoral and the University of La Plata (UNLP) respectively,⁵² most new appointees that were linked to revisionism had a much lower profile. A typical example was Manuel Benito Somoza (1921-72). Although never affiliated to the Instituto Rosas, he did earn credentials as a revisionist throughout his career, beginning with journalistic pieces in the daily newspaper *La Época* during its campaign for the repatriation of Rosas' remains in 1948. In the early fifties he defended his doctoral thesis before Rosa and a number of other historians with *rosista* sympathies; later he published in the journal of the Instituto Rosas and christened his son Juan Manuel.⁵³ During the eleven years after 1955, he worked for a small publishing house and tried to build up a secondary school. After 1966, his career improved remarkably. In April 1967, together with Ortega Peña and Duhalde, Chávez and the editor-in-chief of the popular history magazine *Todo es Historia*, Félix Luna, he participated in the congress on Felipe Varela that was organised by the Junta de

⁴⁹ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 7, October-November 1969, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Halperín Donghi, *El revisionismo*, p. 42.

⁵¹ See Cattaruzza, "Descifrando pasados", in: Cattaruzza (ed.), *Crisis económica*, p. 436.

⁵² Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 39.

⁵³ Manuel B. Somoza, "La política argentina en el ostracismo de San Martín", *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, no. 23 (1961), pp. 310-322. On the campaign of *La Época* see Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nacionalismo*, pp. 327-335.

Estudios Históricos de Catamarca; in 1969 he obtained a temporary lectureship in history at the UBA; and ultimately, in 1970, he was appointed to a permanent post at the Universidad del Salvador.⁵⁴

Somoza's career improvements were linked to a group of historians who founded the Fundación Nuestra Historia in 1968, of which Somoza became president and which had good contacts to government circles. This group had revisionist inclinations and was originally united in the Centro de Estudios de Historia Argentina (CEHA), which had been founded by Diego Luis Molinari in 1963. The centre's leading figure, Jorge María Ramallo, had previously been active as the editor of the review of the Instituto Rosas, to which he tried to give a more scholarly format, but, wearied by the political ambitions in the Instituto Rosas, found that his pedagogical ideas could be more fruitfully implemented through the newly founded centre.⁵⁵ After 1966, many CEHA-members came from a right-wing *nacionalista* background and the centre was transformed into a pedagogical pressure group with close contacts to Onganía's Secretary of Education, José Mariano Astigueta. Under his auspices, the centre organised a nationwide congress in June 1968 to recommend reforms to the history syllabus in secondary schools.⁵⁶ In line with the orientation of both the education secretary and the CEHA-organisers, the congress engaged in activities such as paying tribute to Spain's "Catholic Kings", a ceremony that was accompanied by a speech by the *rosista* Vicente Sierra.⁵⁷ The curriculum proposed by the centre also contained a unit on Rosas' "defence of sovereignty against the French blockade and the Anglo-French intervention", whose overall objective was to endow students with an "understanding of the de facto unity achieved in the Confederation after bloody civil war, and its importance as a base for institutional unity."⁵⁸ In December 1968 the CEHA became a private non-profit foundation, called Fundación Nuestra Historia, which received legal

⁵⁴ See Jorge Bohdziewicz, "Bio-bibliografía de Manuel B. Somoza", *Nuestra Historia*, no. 12, December 1973, pp. 323-330.

⁵⁵ Jorge María Ramallo, *La Revista del Instituto Rosas (1939-1961)* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Nuestra Historia, 1984), p. 11.

⁵⁶ See the centre's journal *Nuestra Historia*, no. 3, September 1968, pp. 186-192.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 189. Even within Onganía's cabinet, Astigueta was known as a particularly fervent Catholic, with little idea of how universities and public education worked. His proposals for introducing religious education into public universities were thus rejected by many who belonged to Onganía's inner circle (see Robert A. Potash, *The army and politics in Argentina, 1962-1973: from Frondizi's fall to the Peronist restoration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 243).

⁵⁸ *Nuestra Historia*, no. 4, January 1969, p. 226.

recognition as soon as March 1969.⁵⁹ Shortly afterwards, under the new Secretary of Education, Dardo Pérez Guilhou, who had previously participated in the organisation of the Mendoza branch of the Instituto Rosas and then been rector of the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo (UNCuyo) in Mendoza, Ramallo was named the secretariat's director for adult education. From this post he launched a programme for schools, initially targeted at union members but later widened to include other groups.

Various other Catholics, authoritarians and champions of a national identity based on the values of *hispanidad* that belonged to this and similar circles saw progress in their careers after 1966. In 1973, for example, two teachers of the UNCuyo and members of the Fundación Nuestra Historia —Pedro Santos Martínez, a *hispanista* and Catholic nationalist who had taught in Spain, and Edberto Oscar Acevedo— were appointed to the Academia Nacional de Historia. Julio Irazusta had reached the same position two years earlier. In 1968, Roberto Marfany, another former lecturer at the UNCuyo and member of the Instituto Rosas became director of the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires, the UBA's prestigious secondary school. The chair of introduction to history at UBA's Faculty of Philosophy and Letters was occupied by Antonio J. Pérez Amuchástegui, another historian with revisionist sympathies who was close to the Fundación Nuestra Historia and later affiliated himself with the Instituto Rosas. When the government opened new public universities around 1968, recruits from similar backgrounds were drafted in. For example, Ernesto Maeder, another historian of the Fundación Nuestra Historia, became rector of the newly founded Universidad Nacional del Noroeste. Other right-wing revisionists who gained posts without being associated to the Fundación were Cardinal Nicolás Fasolino, a reactionary historian from Santa Fe who received a seat in the Academia in 1966. These changes were also reflected in the UBA's university press Eudeba, which after 1966 published an increasing number of *nacionalista* authors such as Carlos Ibarguren (father) and Gustavo Martínez Zuviría, as well as writers linked to the Fundación Nuestra Historia like Santos Martínez or Maeder.⁶⁰ As these examples demonstrate, institutional advances for historians with right-wing and revisionist sympathies were achieved only gradually between 1966 and 1973. When these historians gained official posts under Onganía, this was due not to a decision of the presidential office, but to less tangible changes of climate

⁵⁹ *Nuestra Historia*, no. 5, May 1969, p. 315. In Spanish this status is called "personería jurídica", which allows non-profit organisations to act as a private individual, which entails a number of legal advantages.

⁶⁰ This information stems from an online catalogue search through COPAC.

in the cultural apparatus of the state, which continued under Onganía's successors Roberto M. Levingston and Alejandro Lanusse.

Yet the advances of revisionists into state positions —even if we leave aside the Marxists of the *izquierda nacional* and left-wing Peronists for a moment— were more modest than these examples suggest. Firstly, although the Fundación Nuestra Historia, whose members benefited most from the educational policies of Onganía's regime, was a right-wing *nacionalista* institution, "revisionist" might not be a useful label to classify it. Most members of the foundation were professional historians rather than political writers known for their contributions to the revisionist canon.⁶¹ Even though the predominant ideas in the institution were compatible with this canon, its promotion was not the main goal of the Fundación Nuestra Historia, as the schoolbook by one of its members, the Catholic *hispanista* Santos Fernández Arlaud, illustrated. The text was imbued with right-wing nationalist ideas and its bibliography referenced many *nacionalistas* and revisionists. Whenever it came to anything foreign its author could not resist damning adjectives. For example, he condemned the Roca-Runciman Treaty as "a clear example of the unbridled foreign appetites for exploiting the country's wealth". A few pages further on, students learned that, during World War II, "the United States unashamedly tried to intervene in the internal matters of our country", a move which, however, met the appropriate response in military president Pedro Pablo Ramírez' announcement "that he would not tolerate foreign intrusions and that he was determined to halt the process of disintegration of values that threatened the very life of the fatherland."⁶² Regarding Rosas, however, Fernández Arlaud's assessment sounded more reserved from a revisionist standpoint. He wrote only that "whatever the opinion that Rosas' iron government deserves on an internal level, it is evident that he brilliantly defended our sovereignty against unjust foreign aggression."⁶³ This sentence was the most positive remark about Rosas or any other *caudillo*. The book's sections on the nineteenth century were generally sober and factual. Reviewing another book by Fernández Arlaud in the bulletin of the Instituto Rosas, Alberto Ezcurra Medrano remarked that it "signifies great progress in the teaching of our history", but without "being a *rosista* book or being designed to exalt Rosas, which would take away its

⁶¹ The only exceptions were Vicente Sierra and Julio Irazusta, who by the late sixties had built up a reputation as serious historians and were no longer typically involved in the political campaigns of revisionists.

⁶² Santos Fernández Arlaud, *Historia argentina: tercer año del ciclo básico y del comercial* (Buenos Aires: Stella, 1967), p. 418, p. 421 and p. 420.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

impartiality and consequently its authority".⁶⁴ In short, an overtly bellicose revisionist account was seen as incompatible with the history taught in public schools. Whilst the *Fundación Nuestra Historia* had affinities with revisionism, it was not a platform for the systematic adulation of the heroes of the revisionist pantheon.

Secondly, outside the domains of education and culture there were very few revisionists in Onganía's administration. With only two exceptions (Samuel W. Medrano and Héctor Llambías, who were rather secondary figures) the members of the *Ateneo de la República* had no connections to the *Instituto Rosas* or other groupings dedicated to the writing of revisionist history.⁶⁵ Pablo Pardo finally became a minister (of foreign relations) under Levingston, but by this time his views had so much attenuated that he was not even primarily identified as a *nacionalista* anymore. The erstwhile member of the *Instituto Rosas* had lost touch with revisionism so much that a *rosista* from the early days felt urged to write an indignant letter to the *Instituto Rosas*, in which he wondered whether the minister still remembered his past contributions to the institute's journal.⁶⁶

Conversely, not a single prominent revisionist acquired direct political influence under Onganía and, similarly to the situation under Frondizi, the promotion of revisionist imagery was mainly a phenomenon of the nationalist opposition to the military regime. Despite Onganía's ideological affinities, this opposition also included *nacionalista* sectors, such as the notoriously polemical *Azul y Blanco*, which decried the government's alleged liberalism and began to strike more populist chords. As had occurred nine years before, the paper once more distinguished itself as an organ of revisionism by offering advertising space to Ortega Peña and Duhalde's publishing house *Sudestada*.⁶⁷ Two radical military men who opposed the presidency of Lanusse were also linked to revisionism. Major General Eduardo Uriburu, whom Lanusse removed from his post as Fifth Corps Commander, apparently for political reasons, and Lieutenant Colonel Fernando Baldrich, a Nazi and fascist sympathiser who took part in a failed attempt to topple Lanusse in October 1971, were both members of the *Instituto Rosas* in their leisure time.⁶⁸ Although neither of them contributed to

⁶⁴ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 8, March 1970, p. 28 and p. 29.

⁶⁵ Stortini, "Polémicas y crisis", p. 85 even remarks that the *Instituto Rosas* distrusted the *Ateneo* group.

⁶⁶ *Boletín del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 9, May-September 1970, p. 26.

⁶⁷ Unfortunately, I found it impossible to locate that second series of *Azul y Blanco*. The information is taken from Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, pp. 210-213 and p. 285.

⁶⁸ Potash, *Army and politics, 1962-1973*, p. 265 (on Uriburu) and p. 386 (on Baldrich). They appeared in the list of members published in *Revista del Instituto Rosas*, second series, no. 10, August 1971, p. 2

revisionist literature or played an important role in the institute, their examples suggest that revisionism typically remained a phenomenon of nationalist opposition.

Most left-wing nationalists also opposed his regime, including the most important pro-Peronist intellectuals. This had not been clear from the outset. Although Cooke, by then already a marginal figure within Peronism, condemned the regime from the beginning,⁶⁹ most left-wing Peronist groups initially saw Onganía as a potential improvement in comparison to Illia. Peronist university groups took no offence with the end of the Reformist University and through changes like the *cátedras nacionales* they eventually benefited from the intervention of 1966.⁷⁰ However, these sectors gradually moved to the opposition. Ramos' Partido Socialista de la Izquierda Nacional made up its mind that it was dealing with a "Second Liberating Revolution", once the government's economic policy had taken a pro-business turn with the appointment of Adalbert Krieger Vasena as Minister of the Economy.⁷¹ In the same year, the Revolutionary Peronist Youth (JPR) subscribed to Cooke's assessment of Onganía's regime as a "dictatorship bound to sell out the fatherland".⁷² This opposition became clearer among left-wing Peronists in the wake of the *Cordobazo*, with the emergence of guerrilla groups that fought for Perón's return to Argentina. In 1969, under the auspices of the CGTA, a recently formed "Commission of National Affirmation", which consisted of Jauretche, Hernández Arregui and Rosa, characterised the military regime as the latest promoter of "making national culture foreign" and called workers and students to unite for the "re-conquest of the lost National Sovereignty".⁷³ The most widely known populist neo-revisionists remained oppositional before 1973.

In sum, the rhetoric of both Frondizi and Onganía did not contradict the political ideas of revisionists. Frondizi's anti-imperialism, which harked back to FORJA-notions, and Onganía's sympathies with the Catholic Right were both themes with which revisionists could in principle have identified. However, they did not become these regimes' ideologues. In their politics of history, both presidents sought to achieve a synthesis between the conflicting versions of national identity symbolised by different

(although called "Revista", this was evidently the continuation of the second series of the bulletin that had been republished from 1968 onwards).

⁶⁹ John William Cooke, *El peronismo y el golpe de estado* (Buenos Aires: Acción Revolucionaria Peronista, 1966).

⁷⁰ See e.g. the flyer by the "Peronistas Universitarios", reproduced in: Baschetti (ed.), *Documentos de la resistencia*, p. 452.

⁷¹ *El Partido Socialista de la Izquierda Nacional frente a la segunda Revolución Libertadora*, (Buenos Aires: Partido Socialista de la Izquierda Nacional, 1967).

⁷² *Lucha Peronista*, no. 5, February 1967 ("la dictadura vendepatria").

⁷³ Reproduced in Hernández Arregui, *La formación* (1973), p. 532.

accounts of the past. The partisan nature of revisionism and the fact that it had become so closely associated with Peronism resisted “officialisation” and the promotion of this version of the past in the main continued to be a feature of nationalist opposition. This changed with the Peronist return to power in 1973, when the regime co-opted these hitherto oppositional sectors.

3. The return of Peronism: revisionism’s final victory?

Since the fate of historical revisionism was intimately interwoven with the political developments of 1973-74, it is crucial to understand the framework of events.⁷⁴ In the elections of 11 March 1973, which were reasonably free for the first time since 1952, the Peronist-dominated multi-party coalition Frente Justicialista de Liberación Nacional (FREJULI) won with nearly 50 percent of the 12 million ballots cast. Amid feverish mobilisation the left-leaning Peronist Héctor Cámpora, a veteran of the movement, assumed office on 25 May 1973. The so-called revolutionary tendency of Peronism (JP and the Montoneros) greeted his inauguration with enthusiasm and then sought to steer political developments in a direction that would assure their share of political power by seizing public buildings and trying to prevent opponents within the movement from assuming office.⁷⁵ The underlying strategy of these actions was to create *faits accomplis* before Perón’s imminent return to the presidency, since it was feared that he might arbitrate against the revolutionary tendency, instead resorting to the union leadership as the main support for his government. Precisely this turned out to be the overall direction of events in 1973-74, after Cámpora had been removed from office in July 1973, succeeded first by a brief interim government led by Raúl Lastiri and eventually by the inauguration of Perón and his wife Isabel on 12 October. Political events thereafter were characterised by violent confrontations between groups of the Left and Right, most of which identified themselves as Peronist, disputing who

⁷⁴ My account draws on the following: Maristella Svampa, “El populismo imposible y sus actores, 1973-1976”, in James (ed.), *Violencia, proscripción y autoritarismo*, pp. 381-438; Torre, *El gigante invertebrado*; Ricardo Sidicaro, *Los tres peronismos: estado y poder económico, 1946-55/1973-76/1989-99* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2002), pp. 112-142; and Liliana de Riz, *Retorno y derrumbe: el último gobierno peronista* (Mexico City: Folios, 1981). For an account in English see Guido di Tella, *Argentina under Perón, 1973-76: the nation’s experience with a labour-based government* (London: Macmillan, 1983).

⁷⁵ The most famous example of this strategy was the demonstration staged on 25 May at the prison of Villa Devoto, which culminated in the chaotic release of its political prisoners. Cámpora then retroactively legalised this release.

legitimately qualified as such and who did not.⁷⁶ The growing influence of the Right was reflected in the rise of the Minister of Social Welfare, José López Rega —Lastiri's father-in-law and Perón's personal secretary—, who organised and staffed the vigilante death squad Triple A. Political violence from the extreme Right had reached an early peak on 20 July 1973 at the airport of Ezeiza, where, upon Perón's scheduled return, groups apparently linked to López Rega had opened fire on left-wing Peronists among the crowds.⁷⁷ On the Left, the non-Peronist ERP continued to target businessmen and police officers. Although the Montoneros had officially declared a ceasefire, they were widely assumed to be behind the assassination of the Secretary General of the CGT, José Ignacio Rucci, in September 1973, in what appeared like an attempt to remind Perón of what they were capable if not granted the political weight they demanded.

Given the previous convergence between Peronism and nationalist groupings on both Right and Left, it came as no surprise that nationalists of different orientations colonised the state after 1973. Education initially became the target of the Left, since gaining ground in this area meant only the official sanctioning of informal arrangements that existed since the rise of the *cátedras nacionales* and left-wing Peronist student bodies. The predominance of the revolutionary tendency, especially in the UBA, was not actively sought, but sympathetically accepted by the new education minister Jorge Taiana. A long-standing protégé of Perón and his personal physician, Taiana's record was not unequivocally left-wing and he was disliked by the non-Peronist Left.⁷⁸ Even so, when Argentina's by now 19 public universities were placed under governmental control on 30 May 1973, Taiana did not take steps to prevent the swing towards the Left. In this process, many left-wing populist and neo-revisionist intellectuals began to assume posts in universities.

The most significant appointment was at the UBA, officially renamed the "National and Popular University of Buenos Aires", which despite the recent opening of new universities remained by far the country's most important. Here, Puiggrós was named intervening rector, vowing to achieve the unification of students with the "people", which was all the more urgent, according to him, because "the National

⁷⁶ This is evident from a compilation of street slogans: César Tcach (ed.), *La política en consignas: memoria de los setenta* (Buenos Aires: Homo Sapiens, 2003).

⁷⁷ See Horacio Verbitsky, *Ezeiza* (Buenos Aires: Contrapunto, 1985).

⁷⁸ From 1961 to 1963, for example, he had been affiliated to the Centro de Estudios de Problemas Argentinos, a Peronist social science club where politicians like Antonio Cafiero and Taiana joined with *nacionalista* intellectuals, some from the extreme Right, like the club's president Baldrich. See *Huella*, no. 2, 17 September 1963. See also chapter four.

University has remained removed from the feeling of a people that with its resistance has defended the essences of national culture.”⁷⁹ Puiggrós’ declared aim was to finish off the previously dominant “intellectual colonialism” by affirming Argentina’s “own culture”; a programme that seemed to have the blessing of Perón, who declared that “there will be no technological revolution without a cultural revolution”.⁸⁰ Under Puiggrós’ aegis, the hitherto more informal influence of the Montoneros and the JP coagulated into official positions. So close was their relationship that Puiggrós, long after he had been forced into exile in September 1974, became first secretary of the Montoneros’ branch of professionals, artists and intellectuals.⁸¹ Although the power of the Peronist Left gradually began to diminish after Puiggrós was replaced in October 1973, it was able to cling on to its position under the three succeeding trustee rectors until mid-1974.⁸²

Not all left-wing populist intellectuals who had acquired a reputation as revisionists in previous years, were rewarded. Ramos, for example, assumed no public office, as he preferred to follow his own independent political path through the Frente de Izquierda Popular (FIP), which strongly disagreed with the revolutionary tendency and characterised the internal fighting among Peronists as a dispute between the union bureaucracy and the radicalised petty bourgeoisie.⁸³ Hernández Arregui, despite his long-term militancy within Peronism, was not appointed to a public post either. It seems that he expected to be offered an official position, and there were rumours of an offer to become ambassador to China,⁸⁴ which never materialised, possibly because his resentful personality did not recommend him for public office. Without abandoning Peronism, Hernández Arregui instead launched a periodical, called *Peronismo y socialismo*, which brought together left-wing Peronists close to the revolutionary tendency.⁸⁵ Ramos and Hernández Arregui, however, were rather exceptional in comparison to the overall preferment of left-wing populists in new university appointments. If not with an official post, Hernández Arregui was at least rewarded

⁷⁹ *Militancia*, no. 5, 12 July 1973.

⁸⁰ Puiggrós, *Universidad del pueblo*, p. 12.

⁸¹ See Gillespie, *Soldiers of Perón*, p. 11.

⁸² These successors were Ernesto Villanueva, Vicente Solano Lima and Raúl Lagussi.

⁸³ See Galasso, *Izquierda Nacional*, p. 147.

⁸⁴ Galasso, *Hernández Arregui*, pp. 200-201.

⁸⁵ *Peronismo y socialismo* was renamed as *Peronismo y liberación* in the following year, probably because the original title could be too closely associated with the revolutionary tendency. Its collaborators included the union leader Raimundo Ongaro, the filmmakers Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino and the intervening dean of UBA’s Law Faculty, Mario Kestelboim.

with an honorary title as professor emeritus.⁸⁶ Nearly all other populists who in their past had been involved in revisionist networks were drafted into official positions. At the UBA, Puiggrós' appointment was part of a broader trend that favoured Marxist Peronists, who were close to the Montoneros. For example, Ortega Peña became head of the university's two history departments, one based in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and the other, more traditional, belonging to the Law Faculty. Ortega Peña's friend and colleague Duhalde, in turn, was made director of the UBA's historical research institute, the Instituto de Historia Americana y Argentina. Peronist intellectuals who did not come from Marxist backgrounds also gained posts, not only in education and culture. Fermín Chávez became a teacher at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters at UBA, manager in the public relations department of the state's oil company YPF and director of public relations of the municipality of the Federal Capital, all in 1973. Jauretche and Rosa became director of Eudeba and ambassador to Asunción respectively. Another member of the Instituto Rosas, the *ex-forjista* René Orsi, was named intervening governor of the province of Salta by the government of Isabel shortly before the military coup of March 1976.⁸⁷

Gradually, the Peronist and/or *nacionalista* Right gained ground. An early example was the *rosista* historian Sierra, already 80 years old, who replaced Borges as director of the National Library in 1973 and was named a federal judge.⁸⁸ As early as May 1973, Alberto Baldrich became Minister of Education of the province of Buenos Aires. After the partial reshuffling of the cabinet of July, Benito Llambí, a long-term member of the Instituto Rosas (even though virtually unknown for his writing), was named Interior Minister.⁸⁹ In the domain of culture, the pendulum swung further towards the Right when Isabel took over the presidency after Perón's death on 1 July 1974. In August, the right-wing Catholic Oscar Ivanissevich replaced Taiana as Education Minister and Alberto Ottalagano, who had mixed socially with the *nacionalista* groups from which emerged Argentina's first revisionist institution in the

⁸⁶ *Militancia*, no. 7, 26 July 1973.

⁸⁷ See the obituary in *Hoy*, 20 February 1999.

⁸⁸ For a brief biographical summary see Scenna, *Los que escribieron*, pp. 266-268.

⁸⁹ See his autobiography Llambí, *Medio siglo*. A former major, Llambí had been educated at the Colegio Militar de la Nación and taken part in Uriburu's coup in 1930, but from 1946 onwards distinguished himself as a Peronist. His loyalty was rewarded with ambassadorships to Switzerland and Sweden during Perón's first governments. After 1955, although his *nacionalista* contacts spared Llambí persecution during the Liberating Revolution, he remained outside official positions until mid-1973. When the shift towards the extreme Right escalated after Perón's death under López Rega's growing influence, Llambí resigned from his post in August 1974 and continued his diplomatic career as ambassador to Canada.

province of Santa Fe, the Instituto de Estudios Federalistas, was named rector of the UBA.⁹⁰

Unsurprisingly, revisionism gained ground in public cultural institutions. In part this was simply a side-effect of the turnover in public offices. In 1973 and in the following year, Eudeba re-published the works of Irazusta, Busaniche, Saldías, Ortega Peña and Duhalde and García Mellid. At the UBA, Puiggrós named Rosa, Hernández Arregui, Castellani and Padre Benítez as professors *emeriti* and Scalabrini Ortiz, Cooke and Gálvez as *doctores honoris causae post mortem*.⁹¹ Eudeba announced the award of an annual prize of 20,000 pesos, called Premio Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz, which was for work inquiring into

the forms of economic and cultural dependency, its interrelation and its concrete manifestations in the field of politics [...] [t]he individual behaviour of monopolistic groups, analysing in monographic form the sway of these groups in the area of culture, in the orientation of education and in governmental conduct [...].⁹²

History courses in public institutions assumed an unmistakably revisionist tone from 1973. This development is difficult to ascertain in the case of secondary schools, where the change of government was less directly felt, since the turnover of staff and reform of curricula would have required more laborious and lasting efforts than the replacement of academics in a few key positions. At the UBA, however, the change translated directly into different course outlines. For example, Ortega Peña's module Argentine history II faithfully mirrored the content of the books he had published with Duhalde. It began with the Baring Brothers deal, largely neglected Rosas apart from mentioning his resistance against foreign intrusion and went on to focus on issues such as "British promotion of Bartolomé Mitre's government", the "assassination of Chacho", "historiography and folklore" and "Varela's revolution". Later developments ("the regime", "the Sáenz Peña Law as a tactical response of the oligarchy", Radicalism, "the oligarchic restoration", Peronism, the "counter-revolution") were cast as a continuous oscillation between good and evil, reaching a redemptive climax in the activities of the Peronist guerrillas and their quest for power.⁹³ In the same faculty there were courses on "the thought of John William Cooke", taught by Cooke's widow Alicia Eguren, and

⁹⁰ See the interview with Ottalagano in Macor and Iglesias, *El peronismo antes del peronismo*, pp. 156-175. Much later, Ottalagano also published in Baldrich's *Retorno*.

⁹¹ *Militancia*, no. 7, 26 July 1973.

⁹² *Militancia*, no. 6, 19 July 1973.

⁹³ "Programas de estudio", Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Buenos Aires, segundo cuatrimestre 1973, no. 64.

“Latin American social history” by Puiggrós.⁹⁴ In the second semester of 1973, it had become virtually impossible for students at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters to avoid the bulk of revisionist literature which served as the basis of most courses. Occasionally, Peronist, revisionist and *nacionalista* authors in the bibliography almost completely replaced classic sociological texts.⁹⁵

The political authorities also drew on revisionist symbols. There were several small initiatives. For example, the Peronist bloc of the chamber of representatives of the province La Rioja arranged for the locality General Lavalle to be renamed as Coronel Felipe Varela.⁹⁶ When the army and the JP launched a joint operation to relieve the flood damages in the province of Buenos Aires in early October 1973, it was called “Operation Dorrego”.⁹⁷ Most prominent, however, was the official celebration of 20 November 1973 as “Day of National Sovereignty”. On that day, the press secretariat of the presidency placed full-page advertisements in all major newspapers under the headline “Argentina, sovereign country”.⁹⁸ An official ceremony in San Pedro, where the naval battle had taken place and for that reason a long-standing destination of pilgrimage of the members of the Instituto Rosas, was attended by Interior Minister Llambí.⁹⁹ A ceremony that had formed an integral part in the ritualistic calendar of the Instituto Rosas since its foundation was thus transformed into an affair of the state. Revisionism seemed to finally have become official history. Not only had revisionist intellectuals reached the public positions they felt entitled to occupy. Reciprocally, the government had finally recognised their version of Argentina’s past.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 187 (Eguren) and no. 66 (Puiggrós).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 149 (the teacher was Anibal Yasbeck Jozani). Of the 72 works cited, 46 were Peronist and revisionist authors (including Perón and Evita) and ten more *nacionalista* and anti-imperialist authors (e.g. José Luis Torres or Manuel Ugarte). Of the remaining 18, eight were works by authors I could not identify, but since almost all of them were published by Ramos’ Ediciones Coyoacán, as a subsequent catalogue search revealed, this suggests a very similar ideological outlook. Out of 72, there were thus only ten by authors of another kind. These were Mariano Moreno, Lenin, Sergio Bagú, James Petras and Paul Sweezy.

⁹⁶ *Militancia*, no. 6, 19 July 1973.

⁹⁷ *La Opinión*, 7 October 1973.

⁹⁸ “Argentina, país soberano”, in *Clarín, La Nación, La Prensa*, all 20 November 1973.

⁹⁹ *La Nación*, 21 November 1973.

4. The disintegration of revisionism

And yet, revisionism's supposed hour of glory was not an unambiguous success. Two points need to be raised to qualify this success. Firstly, the importance of the celebrations of the "Day of National Sovereignty" must not be overestimated. It never replaced the national holidays associated with independence, namely 25 May and 9 July, which continued to be the most crucial festivities in the patriotic calendar. Already in its first year, the celebrations of the "Day of National Sovereignty" lacked full official backing. Although the Minister of Education in the province of Córdoba decreed that classes be taught in all secondary schools explaining the patriotic meaning of the naval battle and the UBA-rector Ernesto Villanueva decided the same for his institution, the government insisted that it was a working day.¹⁰⁰ Perón did not himself attend the celebrations in San Pedro, where the battle had taken place, but went on a visit to Uruguay for talks with President Juan María Bordaberry. Furthermore, by adorning the official advertisements in newspapers on that day with a picture of general Lucio N. Mansilla, who had fought the battle in Rosas' name, rather than of Rosas himself, the presidency diluted a potentially controversial issue.¹⁰¹ Although 20 November continued to be commemorated in the two following years, public interest in the occasion dwindled. In 1974, the Instituto Rosas celebrated its customary mass in the metropolitan cathedral, the Partido Justicialista of the province of Buenos Aires organised a gathering, and in Corrientes the Peronist governor placed a bunch of flowers next to a statue of San Martín. But day-to-day politics overshadowed these activities. The speech of the Peronist party chief of Buenos Aires, Rodolfo Decker, recalled the events of November of the previous two years (the celebrations of 1973 and Perón's first return to Argentina in November 1972) rather than the battle of Obligado. The meeting took place in suburban Lanús instead of San Pedro.¹⁰² By 1976, after the military coup, 20 November was no longer officially commemorated.¹⁰³

Secondly, the revisionist victory was not its own victory, but a side-effect of the ascent to power of Peronism. Although many of the appointees —from both Right and Left— who acquired official posts after 1973 had links to nationalist networks that had made revisionism their politics of history in previous years, this was not the reason for

¹⁰⁰ *La Voz del Interior*, 20 November 1973 on schools in Córdoba and *La Opinión*, 21 November 1973 on the other two points.

¹⁰¹ *La Nación*, 20 and 21 November 1973.

¹⁰² *La Nación*, 21 November 1974.

¹⁰³ *Clarín*, 20 and 21 November 1976.

their recruitment. Many of them had never paid much attention to the revisionist enterprise in any event. For example, Ottalagano's links to revisionist intellectuals, including right-wing *nacionalistas*, had been at best tenuous. Likewise, despite his connections to the Instituto Rosas, Llambí was not a man with mainly intellectual interests. In his autobiography, he portrayed himself as a career diplomat and the Instituto Rosas featured only as a social club in the background, a secondary context for the unfolding of his political career.¹⁰⁴ Taiana had formed part of an ephemeral and largely unknown entity called Comité Nacional Pro-Revisionismo Universitario back in 1958;¹⁰⁵ but he had never acquired other credentials as a revisionist. Although authors like Ortega Peña or Puiggrós did have such credentials, their appointments at the UBA should also be seen in the light of their long-term militancy in favour of Peronism rather than as a result of their historical essayism. Their colonisation of official positions was a reward for political activism rather than for cultural contributions and the fact that so many "revisionists" were drafted in after 1973 thus was a sign of the extent to which this version of the past had become a Peronist signifier.

This had become clear once more in the parliamentary sessions in which the designation of 20 November as a national holiday was discussed.¹⁰⁶ The debaters were clearly familiar with the historiography and the public controversies about Rosas. After a Peronist deputy close to the revolutionary tendency in the Buenos Aires Chamber of Representatives had rebuffed a Radical's argument that Rosas also represented the landowning oligarchy, another Radical representative burst out with a statement ("that's what the rector of the University of Buenos Aires says, whom you have appointed"), which referred to Puiggrós' early criticism of Rosas as an oligarchic rancher.¹⁰⁷ Alignment in the discussion was divided along factional lines. Even though

¹⁰⁴ Less than one page of his almost 500-page long autobiography was devoted to this theme (Llambí, *Medio siglo*, p. 44).

¹⁰⁵ *Azul y Blanco*, no. 118, 16 September 1958.

¹⁰⁶ This was based on several legislative projects. The first project, discussed in the Senate and the Chamber of Representatives of the province of Buenos Aires, was the repeal of a law of 1857 which had indicted Rosas for having caused offence to the fatherland ("reo de lesa patria"). The second, discussed in the National Senate in mid-November, was the proposal to create a commission to arrange the repatriation of Rosas' remains from Southampton and designate 20 November a national holiday. The provincial initiative was of concern mainly because Rosas' testament stated that he wanted his remains to returned to Argentina only in the event that his memory had been rehabilitated and the 1857 law annulled.

¹⁰⁷ "Sancción de la Ley N° 8.134, reivindicatoria del ex gobernador de la provincia, brigadier gral. don Juan Manuel de Rosas", sessions of 30 October 1973 (La Plata: Legislatura de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 1974), p. 73 (Senator Zubiri).

one senator claimed that the rehabilitation of Rosas was a heartfelt question of patriotism rather than of party discipline, it was no surprise that he was a FREJULI-member.¹⁰⁸ All the legislative proposals related to the repatriation of Rosas' remains and the designation of 20 November had been drafted by Peronists and, in all three debates, both on provincial and on national level, FREJULI-members argued *en bloc* in favour of Rosas' recognition as a great patriot, occasionally interspersed with exclamations such as "Glory to the heroes of Obligado!"¹⁰⁹

In contrast, the UCR presented alternative propositions which sought to mellow the proposal. Typically for his bloc, a UCR-senator of the province of Buenos Aires, said that "we do not want to replace one supposed sectarianism with another" and, though he was willing to contemplate the repatriation of Rosas' remains, he was sceptical about his exaltation as a national hero and stressed the need to tolerate a number of possible interpretations of Rosas.¹¹⁰ When the celebrations of 20 November then took place, Peronist groups mobilised their members in support and street demonstrations mainly featured Peronist symbols, such as the three *justicialista* slogans political sovereignty, economic independence and social justice. Hinting at the same slogans, the UBA-rector Villanueva interpreted the day as a "homage to those who were the precursors in the struggle for constructing a just, free and sovereign fatherland."¹¹¹ Street demonstrations in the city of Tucumán were dominated by Peronist groups too, one of which was called Unidad Básica Juan Manuel de Rosas.¹¹² Rather than having become the "official history" of the state, revisionist imagery thus continued to be a symbol of the political movement in power, namely Peronism.

Yet not only did revisionism not become fully official. The Peronist period in power after 1973 also inaugurated its decline, since as a signifier of Peronism it had become subordinated to a political dynamic. This problem was evident in that, in terms of its institutional advances, what looked like the final acceptance of revisionists at first glance was in fact a co-option into rather insignificant positions. Just as Perón's lack of enthusiasm for the revisionist cause revealed that he did not see it as a suitable tool to create legitimacy around his presidency, he seems to have been sceptical with

¹⁰⁸ *Diario de Debates, Cámara de Senadores de la Nación*, 14 November 1973, p. 2061 (Senator Américo A. García of San Juan).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 2053. (FREJULI-senator Francisco Cerro of Santiago del Estero).

¹¹⁰ "Sanción de la Ley N° 8.134", p. 41 (UCR-senator Iglesias). Nearly identical points were made by the Radicals in the national senate, especially by Carlos Perette (Illia's vice-president) and Fernando de la Rúa (president 1999-2001).

¹¹¹ *Clarín*, 20 November 1973.

¹¹² *Gaceta de Tucumán*, 21 November 1973.

regard to the question of whether the notoriously polemical intellectuals who had produced this discourse could be converted into “the promoters of consensus”. To be sure, many well-known revisionist intellectuals did receive posts with which they associated a measure of prestige they had previously been denied. But ambassador to Paraguay, director of Eudeba or manager in the public relations department of YPF were by no means politically influential positions.

The co-opted were absorbed in activities other than writing. Since the posts revisionists acquired often entailed a great deal of administrative or teaching responsibilities, there was little room left for publishing. Almost none of the widely known revisionists wrote an important book or article after 1973. It was no coincidence that the two exceptions to this rule —Hernández Arregui, who launched his new periodical in 1973, and Julio Irazusta, who published his memoirs in 1975¹¹³— were precisely those who had not been co-opted. Overall, the number of titles launched by the two main publishers of revisionist literature, the populist-leaning Arturo Peña Lillo and the more *rosista*-oriented *Theoría*, began to drop after a leap in 1974.¹¹⁴ Even these figures are deceptive, because already in 1974—in contrast to the previous year— virtually all titles were re-editions. Moreover, in the case of Peña Lillo the decline was accompanied by a change in the authors published: instead of Astesano or Ramos, he published largely unknown writers after 1974. It thus appears that creative revisionist production ground effectively to a halt in 1973.¹¹⁵ Although this was mostly a practical outcome of their absorption in other, often administrative, activities, it can also be seen as the disappearance of what had been the *raison d'être* of revisionism in the first place. An oppositional version of the past written by excluded intellectuals who attacked everything they regarded as “official”, revisionism no longer made sense once its proponents had themselves become “official”.

Furthermore, the close association with, and subordination to, the needs of the Peronist movement meant that revisionism was eroded in the mounting, and ultimately murderous, tensions within the populist movement. The years 1973-76 showed that there could be no simultaneous “officialisation” of left- and right-wing revisionism.

¹¹³ Irazusta, *Memorias*.

¹¹⁴ This is based on a bibliographical search of the catalogues of British university libraries (COPAC), the Library of Congress and the library of the University of Texas at Austin. The average number of titles that these searches yielded for each year were as follows (including re-editions of books published originally earlier): for Peña Lillo: 1972: 3.7 / 1973: 9.3 / 1974: 14.3 / 1975: 6.3 / 1976: 5.3 / 1977: 2.7 / 1980: 2.7. For *Theoría* 1972: 2 / 1973: 2.3 / 1974: 3.3 / 1975: 2.7 / 1976: 0 / 1977: 1.3 / 1980: 0.3.

¹¹⁵ Peña Lillo confirmed this impression in an interview with me in Buenos Aires on 9 December 2004.

This impossibility was not due to the incompatibility of the different variants of revisionism, of course, but to the ferocious confrontations between the different wings of Peronism that escalated around 1973. Yet if Peronists declared their adherence to a revisionist view of the past, then revisionism was vulnerable to the disputes of Peronism. Political conflicts had already led to the practical closure of the Instituto Rosas in 1971. Two years later, some of the right-wing *nacionalistas* of the Instituto Rosas found themselves embroiled in direct clashes with the revolutionary tendency. For example, when Manuel de Anchorena, vice-president of the institute in 1969, was supposed to become candidate for the governorship of Buenos Aires in early 1973 with the backing of Rucci and the party, the decision was overruled by the Consejo Superior, apparently due to a veto of sectors linked to Montoneros and the JP, which later imposed the left-leaning Oscar Bidegain as governor.¹¹⁶ On 7 July, young leftists tried to prevent another right-wing *rosista*, Ignacio Anzoátegui, from taking up office, after he had been named undersecretary of education.¹¹⁷

Although none of this was a question of historiography, it seriously affected populist and neo-revisionist intellectuals. As the following year and a half witnessed a swing to the Right, the groups and individuals that had exerted the most far-reaching influence upon the dissemination of revisionism in previous years (that is the *izquierda nacional* and left-wing Peronism) were exhausted in a struggle for survival, often quite literally, which frustrated intellectual activities. Already on 20 November 1973, interior minister Llambí in San Pedro and union leader Julio Antún in Córdoba seized the opportunity posed by the official celebrations to stage verbal attacks against Marxism.¹¹⁸ The situation of the Left became most precarious in mid-1974, when Ottalagano, a self-confessed fascist with links to the Triple A, was named rector of the UBA in order to purge the university from the remainders of the left-wing hegemony of 1973. Puigrós had already had to leave his post in October 1973, after which there were rumours that he might be compensated with an ambassadorship to Algeria.¹¹⁹ Since the offer never materialised, he stayed in Argentina until, by mid-1974, the

¹¹⁶ See Potash, *Army and politics, 1962-1973*, p. 483. Like the Montonero journalist Rodolfo Walsh, Bidegain, too, had originally been a member of the right-wing Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista (on which see chapter one). As compensation, Perón appointed Anchorena as ambassador to Britain, a decision taken on the symbolically charged date of 20 November 1973. Anchorena was supposed to negotiate over the Falklands and arrange for the return of Rosas' remains. He was recalled to Buenos Aires in 1975 when diplomatic relations had worsened and lost his post as a result of the 1976 coup. See the obituary in *La Nación*, 24 May 2005.

¹¹⁷ *La Opinión*, 8 July 1973.

¹¹⁸ *La Voz del Interior*, 21 November 1973.

¹¹⁹ *La Opinión*, 1 and 2 November 1973.

situation became life-threatening for him. He first sought refuge in the Mexican embassy and, in late September, fled Argentina.¹²⁰ The danger was very real indeed: on 31 July, Ortega Peña was assassinated by the Triple A. The Montoneros, both receivers and promoters of the revisionist imagery, went underground again. Meanwhile, saddened by the political developments of their country, Hernández Arregui and Jauretche both died a natural death in 1974. The crude fact of physical disappearance thus became another factor in the decline of revisionism.

Apart from a few groups, which despite their earlier record of *nacionalista* fervour and outbreaks of violence looked like moderate peacemakers under such circumstances —such as the nucleus of the Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista around Patricio Kelly¹²¹— what was left of revisionism and *nacionalismo* by late 1974 were either its most obscurantist, Catholic fundamentalist, *hispanista* or quasi-fascist strands or the few groups that had limited themselves to historiography, that is the least influential for the mass spread of revisionist imagery. These two categories were peculiarly blended in the two revisionist-inclined institutions that survived the thunderstorms of 1973-74 intact, the Fundación Nuestra Historia and the Instituto Bibliográfico Antonio Zinny. The second was essentially a subsidiary of the first, as the list of its functionaries at its foundation in 1973 revealed. Although its first president, the Jesuit Guillermo Furlong, was a conservative *hispanista* historian who usually preferred to stay clear of politics, the Instituto Bibliográfico Antonio Zinny also had political affinities with the extreme Right, notably through its secretary Jorge Bohdziewicz.¹²² From 1976 onwards, the public research council CONICET funded the Fundación Nuestra Historia and the Instituto Zinny. The remainder of the *nacionalista* Right, despite occasional disruptions such as the closure of the monthly periodical *Cabildo*, for which Irazusta and Federico Ibarguren wrote,¹²³ continued their publishing activities, notably through the publisher Dictio, which filled the void that had been left by Theoría. Dictio, too, was most successful under the dictatorship from

¹²⁰ See *La causa peronista*, no. 9, 3 September 1974 for the Montonero reaction to the university developments and *Concentración de la Juventud Peronista*, no. 2, October 1974 for the triumphant pose of the extreme Right after Puiggrós' flight.

¹²¹ See *Marchar*, no. 2, October 1974 which evoked Evita and Rosas as the emblems of national unity against the current extremisms that, according to the article, pointed towards Bolshevism and Nazism in Argentina. Although not officially the organ of the ALN at this point, it was clearly linked to its most important leaders. Isabel clamped down on *Marchar* in February 1975. On the Peronisation of the ALN in the early sixties, see "Informe Alianza", Legajo no. 199, Mesa A (Partidos Políticos), Archivo de la Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, formerly Dirección de Inteligencia de la Policía de la Provincia de Buenos Aires.

¹²² *Nuestra Historia*, no. 12, December 1973, pp. 377-378.

¹²³ According to Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*, p. 225.

1976, when its annual output of titles soared. However, especially in the case of the *Fundación Nuestra Historia*, the promotion of revisionism was rather secondary to the overall aims of these groups. Since they furthermore lacked the link to Peronism, their readership was smaller than that of the populist neo-revisionists of the 1960s. After the eradication of the populist Left, they thus were incapable of halting the long decline of historical revisionism.

Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of the relationship between revisionism and political power during the presidencies of Frondizi, Onganía and the Peróns in 1973-76. Firstly, in all three instances, albeit for varying reasons, official rhetoric was compatible with the nationalist ideas to which revisionist writers had subscribed. Leaving aside the more specifically historiographical aspects and the adulation of certain historical figures, Frondizi's anti-imperialist rhetoric echoed notions that had been expounded by FORJA, thus dovetailing well with the views of authors like Jauretche. Onganía's affinities with the Catholic Right fitted into the ideas of *nacionalista* groups. And the convergences between Peronism and revisionism need no repetition here. All three political leaders often appropriated elements from the discourse that had originally been produced by nationalist intellectuals. On grounds of ideological principle, there was thus no incompatibility between these governments and the political ideas of revisionists. The state was not ideologically anti-nationalist, as revisionists habitually claimed, and, buttressing their legitimacy, politicians often adopted nationalist motifs, ranging from the indivisibility and sovereignty of the "nation" and the "people" to the rejection of what was depicted as foreign meddling. There were also *nacionalistas* appointed to official posts, notably under Onganía and Perón, and to a lesser extent under Frondizi. From this perspective, nationalist intellectuals might well have become these governments' ideologues.

However, the nationalist intellectuals' version of the past, revisionism, was unsuited to become official history. This was clearest during the presidencies of Frondizi and Onganía, when official rhetoric with regard to the national pantheon, although not unsympathetic to revisionist heroes, balanced Rosas out against figures like Sarmiento or Lavalle, who in revisionist accounts invariably belonged to the cast of chief villains. Nor did Frondizi or Onganía as "holders of power" choose revisio-

nists as “promoters of consensus”, to borrow Bobbio’s words again. The *nacionalistas* who were drafted in, like Amadeo or Pablo Pardo were political pragmatists by *nacionalista* standards, who had never been very interested in writing, and less in historiography. In contrast, revisionism remained a political tool peculiar to oppositional groups, whether right-wing like *Azul y Blanco* or left-leaning like the intellectuals of the *izquierda nacional*. Their exclusion from and opposition to these governments was undoubtedly also due to the fact that these sectors were linked to Peronism, so that the Peronist return to power bettered their chances to finally be accepted as the drafters of party programmes, prestigious public figures or even policymakers. In 1973, their long-standing identification with Peronism —not their contribution to intellectual debates— was indeed rewarded.

But the attempt to bring “anti-culture to power” in 1973, as Ortega Peña and Duhalde’s newspaper *Militancia* avowed in the headline of its first issue,¹²⁴ was doomed to failure. At best, one could try to co-opt it and this seems to have been the strategy at first. The recognition of Peronist militancy took the form of a distribution of posts, the general pattern of which resembled the appointments made under Frondizi and Onganía. Several people with previous links to nationalist-revisionist networks were endowed with politically more influential posts, namely as ministers or governors (Llambí, Baldrich, Orsi), but they were hardly the representatives of the “anti-culture” to which *Militancia* alluded. It is noteworthy that none of these three had devoted themselves primarily to the revisionist cause. In contrast, those nationalists who were known for their writing, invariably from a revisionist point of view, were co-opted into politically less significant posts: as educational administrators (Puiggrós, Duhalde, Ortega Peña, Jauretche, Sierra), ambassadors (Rosa), second-rank employees in public companies (Chávez). Some did not benefit at all from the Peronist return to power (Hernández Arregui). Nor were their historical narratives made fully official. Whilst many were busy with administrative duties, Perón left for Uruguay on the day that was meant to be revisionism’s hour of triumph and his press secretariat replaced Rosas with the unobtrusive Mansilla. Tailored to suit the needs of the populist movement during previous years, revisionism was subordinated to Peronism, whose tragic disintegration triggered the long drawn-out decline of revisionism. If, in previous years, revisionism had derived its strength from the link with Peronism, the same bond then turned into a vulnerability.

¹²⁴ *Militancia*, no. 1, 14 June 1973.

Returning to Sigal's distinction between "progressive intellectuals" and "nationalist ideologues", revisionists were certainly not progressive, but they were no ideologues either, if that term is taken to mean a role as adviser to the Prince. This finding does not contradict but confirms Sigal's overall argument that Argentine intellectuals were weakly integrated into the state. Especially the populist neo-revisionists, as Sigal herself argues with reference to Raymond Williams' concept, were "fully oppositional" intellectuals.¹²⁵ Saying that the producers of an account of the past as bellicose as revisionism were inappropriate as creators of legitimacy for the state might sound tautological. But the fact that revisionism was such a prominent feature of Argentine nationalism then allows broader conclusions about nationalism. The relationship between revisionists and the Argentine state between 1955 and 1976 supports John Breuilly's general observations on nationalist intellectuals:

Exclusion from expected positions can be seen as a betrayal of principles concerning merit and as a simultaneous expulsion from a firm position in state and society. Nationalism can provide a new identity which contains and fuses images of an ideal state and an ideal society in which these people will have a secure, respected and leading position.

Many revisionist writers conformed well to this characterisation of "the typical nationalist intellectual [who] can be seen as an unsuccessful professional."¹²⁶ For the same reason, even though the revisionist discourse was mainly produced outside the state before 1973, the state nevertheless acquired an outstanding importance for nationalist intellectuals, because it was in relation to the state that they evaluated their own position. This opposition to the government was condensed into the denunciation of a state that had allegedly lost the true path to the fulfilment of the nation's destiny. Once the movement that the complainants had depicted as the means to overcome the national yoke came to power the very complaint had to either disappear or become diluted or modified. If the history of revisionism conforms to Breuilly's model that "cultural identity becomes a way of justifying political opposition to the state, often a state which itself claims to define and express national values",¹²⁷ then the success of Argentine historical revisionism in 1973 was indeed a contradiction in itself.

¹²⁵ Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 179.

¹²⁶ John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the state*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 48-49.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 391.

Conclusion

It is at the vital points of connection, where a version of the past is used to ratify the present and indicate directions for the future, that a selective tradition is both powerful and vulnerable.

Raymond Williams*

The military coup of March 1976 marked a watershed in Argentine history, even though at first it might have looked like a moment of *déjà-vu*. Its leaders' claim that they had to safeguard the honour of the nation by eradicating what they labelled "subversion" was not original and it was not even the first time that a junta had claimed it was necessary to restructure Argentine society. The leaders of the so-called "Argentine Revolution" from 1966 to 1973 had already sought to justify their aims in similar terms. But the scale of brutality of the dictatorship installed in 1976 had no precedents. The killing of Argentine civilians at the hands of their own Armed Forces—euphemistically called "Process of National Reorganisation"—cost the lives of more than 9,000 people, who according to official terminology "disappeared".¹ Paradoxically, the regime's unrivalled authoritarianism marked the revival of liberalism in Argentina, which had languished in ostracism since the 1930s. In this, the "liberalism" of the dictatorship as well as that of the neo-populist administration of Carlos Saúl Menem in the 1990s was reduced to its economic dimension. Both pursued policies of deindustrialisation and tried to crush the channels through which the social demands of the working class could be expressed, which exacerbated the alarming widening of the gap between rich and poor. But a more political version of liberalism also resurfaced from the 1980s, as the catastrophe of the previous decade encouraged Argentina's

* Williams, *Marxism and literature*, p. 116.

¹ See CONADEP, *Nunca más: informe de la Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas*, 13th ed. (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1986). The estimates of human rights organisations range up to the figure of 30,000.

intelligentsia to reconsider the premises upon which they had claimed that their worldview was built in the 1960s. For example, whilst in the sixties or seventies, readers of Gramsci had searched his texts for advice on how to construct the “national-popular”, in the eighties, his writings were read as a recommendation to forge “civil society” as the bedrock of a truly representative democracy.²

A study of nationalist discourse in the period from 1955 to 1976, such as this doctoral thesis, can hardly evade the question of how its subject matter related to the spiral of violence that strangled Argentina in the seventies. As we have seen, motifs taken from revisionism underpinned the justifications of both sides in this violent confrontation. The Montoneros evoked the legacy of the federal *caudillos* and, as their very name indicates, the *montoneras*, whilst their nemesis preferred to draw on imagery from the more reactionary *nacionalista* currents, in particular the figure of Rosas. Therefore, at first glance, the following argument by Benedict Anderson seems to make little sense here. He has alerted us that

[i]n an age when it is so common for progressive, cosmopolitan intellectuals (particularly in Europe?) to insist on the near-pathological character of nationalism, its roots in fear and hatred of the Other [...], it is useful to remind ourselves that nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love.³

That some Montoneros believed that they were sacrificing themselves in the name of the nation might well be true, but seeing their actions (let alone those of the military dictatorship) in light of their supposed love for the nation would mean to take at face value the discourse that I have set myself to analyse. Nationalism seems to have been linked to a much less benign logic here.

On a world map of nationalist accounts of the past Argentine historical revisionism appears to be an oddity. In 1882, Ernest Renan argued that his compatriots should leave behind the divisions of the past and forget the Massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day, because “to forget and [...] to get one’s history wrong, are essential factors in the making of a nation; and thus the advance of historical studies is often a danger to nationality.”⁴ Indeed, as Craig Calhoun has argued, based on the example of the United States, nationalist historical writing often glosses over past fratricides, stressing instead a common ancestral past that unites the citizens of a nation regardless of their political

² See Burgos, *Los gramscianos argentinos*, pp. 125-345.

³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1991), p. 141.

⁴ Ernest Renan, “What is a nation?”, reprinted in: Omar Dahbour and Micheline R. Ishay (eds.), *The Nationalism Reader* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1999), pp. 143-159, here p. 145.

affiliations.⁵ In stark contrast, Argentina's nationalist account of history was strongly partisan. And, after all, a bellicose version of the past that separated heroes from villains, illustrious warriors from pestilent parasites, the true embodiments of national values from traitors of the fatherland, seems to befit a violently divided society. There certainly was some sort of link between revisionism and the political developments that occurred during the apogee of its ability to mould the collective imaginary. After all, revisionism was what Raymond Williams has called

a *selective tradition*: an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present, which is then powerfully operative in the process of social and cultural definition and identification.⁶

Yet although revisionism might have been “powerfully operative”, this argument must not be reduced to a simplistic scheme, in which cynical thinkers for decades planned and then finally executed (or let proxies execute) their violent fantasies. In this conclusion, I would like to plead for care in conceptualising the relationship between nationalist ideas, on the one hand, and political violence or institutional instability, on the other.

Closely related to the question of how ideas translate into political practice is the social role of the intellectuals who propose these ideas. Albert Hirschman has argued that, in order to understand the emergence of bureaucratic authoritarian regimes in the Southern Cone and Brazil in the 1960s and 70s, it is necessary to bear in mind the role of the intelligentsia in generating ideological developments that preceded these regimes. Argentina, Brazil and Chile, he maintains, all had in common an intelligentsia that “produced in the ideological realm an inflation in the generation of ‘fundamental remedies’”, which appear as peculiarly disproportionate to the real dimensions of these countries' crises.⁷ That Argentine nationalist intellectuals proposed “fundamental remedies” against the country's supposed ills can hardly be doubted. Yet the first question we must ask is: how did this become important? The answer I can offer to the question of why one of the major components of Argentine nationalist discourse, revisionism, became part of the collective imagination in the 1960s must be mostly sought in the political usages of this invented tradition. In turn, my answer to the question of

⁵ Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 51-54.

⁶ Williams, *Marxism and literature*, p. 115.

⁷ Albert O. Hirschman, “The turn to authoritarianism in Latin America and the search for its economic determinants”, in: David Collier (ed.), *The new authoritarianism in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), pp. 61-98, p. 83.

why history (especially but not only revisionism) pervaded politics differs little from what Silvia Sigal has argued, rather in passing:

the recuperation of history through politics is a lasting phenomenon that owed as much to the splits within the field of historiography as it did to the fragility of the properly political principles of legitimacy.⁸

However, hers was not a study about nationalism so that, in the following, by drawing on the evidence accumulated in this thesis, I would like to develop some arguments about how the production and spread of nationalist discourse—in particular historical revisionism—in the 1960s might be usefully interpreted.

As the first two chapters have suggested, in the absence of strong institutions able to integrate a cohesive community of professional historians, writers of history books in Argentina were intellectuals rather than experts. Both “official” history, in particular the Academia Nacional de la Historia, and revisionists were fundamentally concerned with a patriotic liturgy that should be implemented by the state in order to forge a national identity based on symbols from the nineteenth century. In their choice of symbols, the two currents were mirror images, but they shared a tendency to assess historical figures in the light of their potential as instruments of nation-building. The decisive division into two opposed poles occurred in the 1930s. This could happen because of the vulnerability of the historiographical field in relation to political and ideological developments that were external to it. Revisionism was not a “paradigm change” that emerged from a scientific community in the sense of Thomas Kuhn, but it was the intellectual epiphenomenon of the crisis of liberalism. It emerged when a number of authoritarian intellectuals—usually lawyers by profession—failed in their ambition to take part in policy-making. Irazusta or Palacio had little interest in history before their break with Uriburu in the early thirties. Insofar as the field of historiography was thus invaded by non-historians, the birth of revisionism at first glance seems like the symptom of a deficient institutionalisation and a lack of independence from politics in the field of historiography.⁹ However, the two main phases in which revisionism flourished (the late 1930s and the late 1950s) coincided with advances in institutionalisation and, in the second phase, also with a drive towards professionalisation in public universities, be it in the form of Germani’s sociology or Romero’s social history. Revisionism was thus not so much the outgrowth of a complete absence of professionalism, institutionalisation and autonomy from politics, but rather a sub-

⁸ Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 12. See also, pp. 173-185.

⁹ This is one of the overall arguments of Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nacionalismo*.

product of an abrupt and uneven push towards achieving these three aims. There might have been little communication between scientific sociology and national-populist approaches, but analytically the two should not be seen in isolation. Revisionists were intellectuals, not least because they defined themselves in opposition to the “intelligentsia”, with which they associated people ranging from Victoria Ocampo to Gino Germani. Their anti-intellectualism not only failed to conceal, but in fact revealed, that they defined themselves in relation to the intellectual field. In contrast, a trade union magazine like *Dinamis* had no objections to Germani.

The spread of revisionism was also linked to modernisation, insofar as the emergence of a mass reading public created a market for its symbolic goods. Arturo Peña Lillo’s book-selling strategy not only paralleled, but also matched Eudeba’s conquest of the market. The cultural modernisation of the post-1955 years was coupled with societal changes in the wake of urbanisation. If anomie helps nationalism to flourish, as Liah Greenfeld has maintained, then conditions in 1950s Buenos Aires provided a promising breeding ground. Not only might the uprooting of socio-cultural standards generate an increasing receptiveness for nationalism among the sectors of the population most affected by these developments, as in Greenfeld’s model.¹⁰ It can also reflect on intellectual debates, which in this case were concerned with establishing the cultural identity of internal migrants, soon called *cabecitas negras*. Narratives about national identity, not only revisionist, drew on the presence of migrants from the extra-Pampean areas in the port city by the late 1950s and depicted them as the latter-day descendants of the nineteenth-century *montoneras*. The question of these migrants’ cultural identity was linked to a political question, namely how to interpret and what to make of the “fact of Peronism”. As Murmis and Portantiero later argued, it was perhaps mistaken to see the *cabecitas negras* as the social base of Peronism, but the idea that they were was widely shared at the time. This debate showed the degree to which questions surrounding cultural identity were tied to political problems.

The intellectual field of the 1950s was fragmented. Its fissures partly explain why revisionism was so belligerent and divisive. The revisionists’ resentment against what they saw as the cultural establishment was very similar to what Bourdieu has called “a populist conservatism on the base of an anti-intellectualism, which endemically haunts

¹⁰ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, p. 15. Anomie is here understood in the Durkheimian sense of an inconsistent or unstable state of common standards and values.

the lower layers of the intelligentsia” and has the “violence of a disappointed love”.¹¹ Quattrocchi-Woisson’s characterisation of revisionism as a “counter-history” captures this feature well.¹² The very term revisionism suggests that it was first and foremost a discourse against a perceived establishment, which according to nationalists of both Right and Left impeded “the people” from learning the truth about their history. The revisionists’ marginalisation from what Jauretche understood as a “cultural superstructure”, by which he mostly meant public cultural institutions, was very real. This is not to say that they were victimised by a “conspiracy of silence” on grounds of their political ideas, as they tirelessly repeated themselves. They did have access to media and funds. As for academe, they were excluded, but this should be seen mainly in light of their lack of interest in serious research at a time when academic criteria became more rigorous. What matters here, however, was that they *were* outside academia. The problem of revisionists was thus not tied to the practices of the discipline of history, which Hayden White identifies as being “constituted by what it *forbids* its practitioners to do.”¹³ On the contrary, Jauretche’s and Hernández Arregui’s insistence that they were free from any kind of obligations was a sign of what Touraine has interpreted as a ubiquitous phenomenon in Latin America, namely “the autonomy of ideological production in relation to economic interests and political forces.”¹⁴

For the same reason, I do not believe that it is possible to distil an ideological essence of a nationalist dogma that leads to the formulation of specific demands. Nor that it would explain very much, if one such dogma was ever found. In this, my thesis differs from previous studies, which have tried to pin down a distinctive set of tenets that characterises an “ideology”, which is then politically implemented.¹⁵ There were, of course, frequent themes. Those groups that I have called *nacionalistas* often emphasised authoritarian values such as order, hierarchy and a strong state, and stressed Hispanic roots, Catholicism and sometimes anti-Judaism as the main ingredients of Argentine identity. The dividing line between them and the more left-leaning populists was the question of democracy, a term which the second group did not use often either, but which at least in principle it accepted as a value. Populists, among them some

¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Les règles de l’art: genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1998), p. 459.

¹² Quattrocchi-Woisson, *Un nationalisme*, pp. 65-95.

¹³ Hayden White, *Tropics of discourse: essays in cultural criticism* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 126.

¹⁴ Touraine, *La parole et le sang*, p. 137. For a similar argument, see Terán, *Nuestros años sesentas*, p. 140.

¹⁵ Especially Spectorowski, *The origins and Rock, Authoritarian Argentina*.

Marxists, thus demanded the political integration of the masses, redistributive economic policies and national liberation from multi-national companies. Both these currents, in turn, converged in other respects, especially in their anti-liberalism and anti-imperialism. Being both “nationalist”, it is needless to say that both cast the “authentic nation” against the corrupting influences of a vaguely defined enemy of the nation (be it communism or the oligarchy). But what really characterised nationalist discourse in Argentina in the 1960s was that it was a heterogeneous set of themes rather than a concrete political programme. Its more left-wing proponents might have claimed to be the voice of the excluded masses, but their writings were strikingly out of touch with social reality. No revisionist historian or essayist ever produced a work of social history worth mentioning and the term “inequality” was virtually absent from their writings. Their discourse was not bound to the specific interests of particular identifiable groups. The main trait that held nationalism together was its sermon against the establishment, which the anti-“official” revisionism articulated well. Revisionism only made sense as a discourse that was defined through an adversary.

The “autonomy of ideological production” from specific social demands should not be mistaken for depoliticisation. On the contrary, the ambitions of nationalist intellectuals to influence policy-making made them seek political alliances, whilst their discourse’s lack of ideological specificity opened up the possibility for appropriation by political actors. Again, Sigal’s argument that the politicisation of the intellectual field was not so much due to the governmental intervention in public universities in 1966, but rather to a choice by intellectuals holds particularly true for the populist neo-revisionists.¹⁶ Since they were not employed in universities, Onganía’s cultural obscurantism concerned them little; some openly welcomed it and to some extent profited from it. Instead, revisionists themselves subordinated historiography to politics, as they explicitly asserted that theirs was a political mission. When Perón was forced into exile in 1955, they believed that large parts of the population were politically orphaned and sensed a chance for the fulfilment of their ambitions. Both *nacionalista* and populist intellectuals, whose relationship with Perón had been characterised by mutual distrust, sought to conquer a new public through their mushrooming periodicals as well as through books. They were not politicians, however, and their ambitions usually failed. Jauretche’s unsuccessful candidacy as national senator in 1960 was symptomatic of this.

¹⁶ Sigal, *Intelectuales y poder*, p. 207.

If they could not become princes themselves, they wanted at least to be their advisers. Many of them —from Hernández Arregui, Ortega Peña and Duhalde to Baldrich— attached themselves to Peronism, which in many respects seemed a natural choice. Partly because, if the *montoneras* resurfaced in the *cabecitas negras* and if these were the Peronists, then Perón appeared to be the natural leader of the nation. And like the antecedents from the nineteenth century, Perón embodied the political style that they saw as typically Argentine, namely *caudillismo*. But besides such considerations, the advantage of Peronism between 1955 and 1973 was that it offered a bewildering array of possible projections that matched the nationalist intellectuals' own diversity. The exiled Perón himself was the first to realise the potential political benefit of the fact that the hopes that were attached to his figure were hardly compatible. He thus alternately nourished each of these hopes sufficiently to ensure that his status as arbiter between the conflicting interests of his movement remained accepted among all of them.¹⁷ Yet although Perón was their preferential choice, in principle, nationalist intellectuals were flexible in their allegiances. For some of them, Frondizi or Onganía were promising candidates, too. But their ambitions were not fulfilled through any of their chosen allegiances. Few nationalist intellectuals were appointed to official posts under Frondizi and Onganía and those who were (moderate populists under Frondizi and Catholic *nacionalistas* under Onganía), were the least known of them.

After 1955, Peronism appropriated revisionism. To be sure, it did not simply usurp control over it. In principle, Peronist and nationalist discourse had always borne similarities. Just as nationalist intellectuals claimed to speak in the name of the nation rather than class-based interests, so did Perón. Both discourses relied on divisions between loyalty and betrayal and both denied that politics might be allowed to be a field in which legitimately differing interests could be played out. Furthermore, they shared an exaltation of personalistic leadership as a central political principle. And analogies between Rosas and Perón were far from new in 1955. Nevertheless, Peronism's newfound affinity for revisionism was elective. The Peronist regime had refrained from exalting Rosas or federal *caudillos* and, on the few occasions when it ventured away from the ubiquitous San Martín, preferred to stay in the familiar tracks of the "liberal" pantheon. Revisionism only became attractive for Peronism when the

¹⁷ The literature on this is broad. See e.g. McGuire, *Peronism without Perón*, esp. pp. 80-150 for the case of the unions.

legitimacy of the national-populist system was broken in 1955. In an attempt to compensate for its lack of democratic credentials, the military regime of Aramburu systematically tried to capitalise on slandering Perón as a barbaric reincarnation of Rosas' "tyranny" with the inverse effect that revisionist imagery gradually began to populate the articles of the dispersed Peronist press. Nationalist *intellectuals* played a secondary role in this appropriation.

That the "nation" and consequently narratives of national identity were prominent sources of legitimacy for Argentine politicians, in turn, was a phenomenon of much longer duration. As Terán has remarked, the onset of the strategy to exploit this source has to be dated back to the second decade of the twentieth century,¹⁸ that is, in connection with the emergence of a more democratic and increasingly massified form of politics. The question of why political leaders are able to capitalise on nationalism leads us astray. Anthony Smith has made a compelling case for not neglecting popular culture to answer this question.¹⁹ For sure, nationalism must be socially grounded. However, political leaders who are not tied to the interests of specific social groups might invoke the "nation" as a legitimising principle more often than the representatives of class-based interests. In this sense, Touraine's argument of the "hyper-autonomy of political actors" in Latin America is again convincing. According to him, a disarticulated society renders political actors, similarly to intellectuals, independent from the social demands of specific groups.²⁰ Following this, frequent invoking of the nation as a source of legitimacy can be interpreted as symptomatic of a weak institutionalisation of interest group politics. Populist leaders, like Yrigoyen or Perón, understood that principle best and they were the most successful in constructing legitimacy through references to the nation, but this strategy pervaded political moments or groups of the most diverse *couleurs*. As we have seen, the Socialist Party, too, identified with a particular historical tradition that supposedly represented the "nation" and sought to portray itself on the basis of this tradition. Perón's nemesis in 1955, Aramburu, equally drew on ideas of what constituted the "nation". The state's demand for identity narratives to construct legitimacy probably lent a surplus of importance to the suppliers, intellectuals. But as long as intellectuals were not admitted to the corridors of power, they lacked the means to control the strategies of political leaders

¹⁸ Oscar Terán, "Acerca de la idea nacional", in: Carlos Altamirano (ed.), *La Argentina en el siglo xx* (Buenos Aires: Ariel/Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1999), p. 285.

¹⁹ Smith, *Nationalism and modernism*.

²⁰ Touraine, *La parole et le sang*, pp. 134-137.

who appropriated their narratives. The ideas of Argentine nationalist intellectuals thus should not simply be seen as a doctrine that their political proxies then implemented. On the contrary, in the long run, the interests of the suppliers were subordinated to the needs of the demanders.

Crises of political legitimacy are likely to increase the demand for identity constructions. Lewis Coser has remarked that historically the importance of intellectuals often grew in such moments of crisis.²¹ But Argentine nationalist intellectuals, to whom concepts like legitimacy or crisis were alien, overlooked the fact that demand regulated the market. When they seemed to be needed in politics, they were deceived by short-term appearances and believed that their ideas could decide the future of the country. They thus began to stroll around the political scene in search of a politician who could help with practical implementation (although tellingly they never said of what). But the politicians they found soon turned out to have their own pragmatic designs for which they did not need quarrelsome advisers. The nationalist intellectuals then felt betrayed and went on to bemoan the politicians' lack of principle and understanding of the nation's real needs. Revisionism expressed precisely this complaint of nationalist intellectuals and it therefore only flourished in opposition to governments. The importance of revisionism in Argentine nationalism thus reveals the abyss between nationalist intellectuals' political ambitions and their real access to the corridors of power.

This was a recurrent pattern throughout the history of revisionism. In the early 1930s, the current first emerged when *nacionalistas* were disappointed because Uriburu had allegedly "betrayed" the "authentic" course of the Revolution of 1930. Later, though under different political circumstances, Jauretche imagined that Perón's sudden lack of interest in him was due to the fact that the leader "was no longer used" to the "frankness" of a man who was only bound to his conscience. In both cases, the politicians' "betrayal" was in fact nothing but the pragmatism of *realpolitik*. For example, Jauretche became a collateral victim of the conflict between Perón and the Buenos Aires governor Mercante, which had little to do with principles and very much with power.²² The "betrayal" was repeated in 1958, after Frondizi's developmentalist project had brought together intellectuals of the most manifold persuasions. Many

²¹ Lewis A. Coser, *Men of ideas: a sociologist's view*, 3rd ed. (New York: Free Press, 1997), pp. 135-144.

²² See Graciela Mateo, "El gobierno de Domingo Mercante: expresión singular del peronismo clásico", *Estudios Interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, vol. 15, no. 2 (2004), pp. 159-192.

revisionists, not least Jauretche, again believed that their time had come, but they were left out once more. When disappointed, they retreated into writing books, essays and articles against “official” history.

To explain the wide dissemination of revisionism in the 1960s, an intra-textual analysis of nationalist writings can be very misleading. The shaping force of this invented tradition did not mostly reside in the enunciation of identifiable principles, but in concrete political *needs* that lay far beyond the reach of the influence of nationalist intellectuals. Peronists did *not* adopt motifs taken from revisionism for reasons of principle or belief, but as a legitimating *strategy*. This becomes clear if we ask ourselves which parts of the movement were imbued with this imagery. Apart from the singular situation of 1955-58, when the future of his movement appeared particularly uncertain, and an interview in 1971, Perón kept silence on historiographical matters. This could not be explained by Perón’s lack of knowledge, since it was known that he had intensely studied the independence period and even written historical articles on San Martín. Nor was he a revisionist at heart, impeded from voicing his real opinion in public by the powerful hidden forces of liberalism. Even pro-Peronist revisionists themselves did not claim as much. Rosa and Halperín Donghi rarely agreed, but they did on the point that Perón showed little interest in the dispute between the liberal and the revisionist pantheons.²³ Perón may also have refrained from revisionist references to the past before 1955 (and, mostly, again after 1957), because he found revisionism unnecessarily controversial.²⁴ Only when it promised to serve concrete political purposes, he referred to revisionist views. In turn, revisionism began to flourish (in particular after 1966) among Perón’s growing number of *compañons de route* from the young middle classes, certainly in part because this was a public with intellectual interests, but also because these sectors lacked natural credibility as a legitimate part of the movement. Furthermore, from the viewpoint of the Montoneros, revisionism could serve as a tool to challenge Perón’s authority. By depicting themselves as the successors of an ancestry much older than Peronism, the figure of Perón himself became less indispensable in their self-justifications.²⁵ The fact

²³ Halperín Donghi, *El revisionismo*, p. 42 and interview with Rosa in *Envido*, no. 2, November 1970, p. 46 (see chapter five).

²⁴ This is the standard interpretation of this matter. See e.g. Ciria, *Política y cultura popular*, p. 283, Winston, “Between Rosas and Sarmiento”, Rein, *Peronismo*, pp. 107-109 and Rein, *Politics and education*, pp. 72-83.

²⁵ See Sigal and Verón, *Perón o muerte*, pp. 195-202 for a similar interpretation of the Montoneros’ use of history.

that the Montoneros utilised revisionist genealogies whilst Perón did not can only be explained by this political dynamic and not by any specific type of programmatic statement in revisionist texts, with which the Montoneros agreed, whereas Perón differed. Hence, the flourishing of revisionism (but also of nationalist discourse in the 1960s in general) expressed the crumbling of the national-populist consensus and the concomitant crisis of political legitimacy after 1955 and not a fixed set of principles that guided the implementation of specific political ideas.

In the course of its increasing usage for political purposes, revisionism began to slip out of the control of its erstwhile producers. Divisions between Peronists and non-Peronists, as Rosa later recalled, tore apart the cohesion of the Instituto Rosas, the only more or less enduring institutional bedrock revisionism (and *nacionalismo*) had ever had. Outside these circles, in turn, by the early 1970s, revisionism pervaded much broader political groups, transcending the growing violent confrontations between the opposed wings of Peronism. The Peronist guerrillas justified their campaign against the “union bureaucracy” with the fact that Vandor resembled Urquiza. Puiggrós probably just escaped assassination at the hands of some vigilante gang of the extreme Right, when he fled to Mexico, after the witch hunt against him had been underpinned by the argument that he had written a book that was critical of Rosas.²⁶ That revisionism was now even more frequently used in these confrontations probably heightened its partisan tone. The link between nationalist discourse and politics can also explain the seeming paradox of a divisive nationalism. Revisionist texts, especially by the more conservative authors, claimed to be inspired by love for the fatherland and directed against liberal politicking and in favour of a homogeneous unified nation, but whence the national-populist consensus was no longer viable, it became a function of the violent confrontations in a disintegrating society.

There were some isolated and hardly heard voices of virtually unknown revisionists who bemoaned the “demagoguery” and the uncontrollable popularisation of their intellectual product, but again the most important among them preferred to hope that Perón would alleviate their suffering by admitting them to the corridors of power upon his return to Argentina. In 1973 their moment of glory seemed to have

²⁶ One might well agree with Richard Gillespie’s argument that the violence of the Montoneros should not be compared to the Triple A or the ensuing dictatorship, but (luckily) this is of little concern for my general question about the link between nationalism and political violence and/or instability. See Gillespie, *Soldiers of Perón*, p. 155. For a refutation of Gillespie’s argument see Celia Szusterman’s review in the *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1 (1984), pp. 157-170.

finally come, as their version of the past was transformed into Argentina's new official history. Revisionists did not realise (or did not publicly admit) that their attempt to bring "anti-culture" to power was a contradiction in itself. In 1973, the fate that Nicola Miller has seen as typical of Spanish American intellectuals caught up with the revisionists: they became "collective accessories rather than advisers to the Prince".²⁷ Had revisionists ever read Braudel, they might have known that, in contrast to the enduring strategy of legitimation that Argentine political leaders made of the term "nation", the ephemeral and diluted officialisation of revisionism in 1973 belonged to the *histoire événementielle*, the "most capricious, the most deceptive" of the durations.²⁸ But whilst Peronism survived the turmoil of the seventies and today —with the presidency of Néstor Kirchner— may be on its way to become a phenomenon of the *longue durée*, historical revisionism lived its short splendour in the shadow of Peronism.

Revisionism languished on for several years more, but it spiralled downwards after the mid-seventies. First, the groups that had used it to legitimise themselves began to attack each other. When the ensuing dictatorship launched its extermination campaign against the Left, many of its disseminators were killed. Some of the surviving Montoneros radicalised further into militarisation. In contrast, some reactionary *nacionalistas* turned into protégés of the dictatorship. But especially after 1983, the importance of revisionism declined to the extent to which democratic principles of legitimacy grew. In his election campaign of 1989 (not coincidentally again from the standpoint of opposition to the Radical government in power), the later Peronist President Carlos Menem used it once more, stylising himself as a reincarnation of Facundo Quiroga. Once elected, he hurried to repatriate Rosas' remains in an official ceremony, only to declare the chapter of revisionism as finally closed. The meaning of Rosas' repatriation was not division and partisanship, he said, but "an authentic pacification of profound national reconciliation" and the farewell to "an old, wasted, anachronistic, absurd country."²⁹ Shortly thereafter, the pictures on the newly introduced peso-notes united figures from each of Argentina's two pantheons: Rosas was good for twenty pesos, whilst Sarmiento was worth fifty. In the second half of the

²⁷ Miller, *In the shadow*, p. 245.

²⁸ Fernand Braudel, "Histoire et sciences sociales: la longue durée", *Annales E.S.C.*, vol. 13 (1958), pp. 725-753, p. 728. If not by revisionists, the works of the *Annales* school were warmly received among Argentina's social historians of the late fifties. See Juan Carlos Korol, "Los Annales en la historiografía argentina de la década del 60", *Punto de Vista*, no. 39 (1990), pp. 38-42.

²⁹ *Clarín*, 1 October 1989.

1990s, the nationalisation of the Instituto Rosas coincided with the disappearance of Menem's *caudillo*-style sideburns.³⁰

What does the apogee and decline of historical revisionism tell us about the relationship between the partisanship of Argentina's nationalist invention of tradition and the country's difficulties in agreeing on a legitimate political order? The answers that this thesis can provide are at best partial. In order to sharpen the argument, however, the points of two previous studies might be recapitulated. Nicolas Shumway has essentially argued that it makes little sense to look at the twentieth century to answer this question, because most divisions that surfaced throughout its course could be found already in the writings of nineteenth-century *pensadores*. The divisiveness inherent in Argentina's "guiding fictions", according to him, was the fountainhead of the violent disputes of the 1970s.³¹ David Rock has scrutinised the texts of the twentieth-century "Nationalist movement" (which was made up mostly by those who in this thesis have been called *nacionalistas*) for an explanation of the frequency of military coups and lack of political consensus.³² Both authors, however, stress ideological continuities as the ultimate driving force behind the political divides of the twentieth century. Much of the evidence of this thesis has suggested that the apogee of a particularly belligerent invention of the past not only coincided, but was also intimately interwoven, with the political violence of the seventies.

This thesis cannot resolve the theoretical question of whether ideas translate into practices or vice versa, but in the light of what has been said about Argentine nationalism, some arguments should warn against the assumption that it has been resolved already. In the thirties and early forties the ideas of reactionary *nacionalistas* did have considerable weight in public political debate and they did possess a degree of self-consciousness as a political current. However, the themes they had put on the agenda —*rosismo* being one of them— developed a dynamic that was modified and appropriated by other actors according to changing political circumstances. As the intellectual climate swung towards the Left after 1955, populist and left-wing forms of nationalism gained importance, adopting and refashioning earlier inventions of tradition in accordance with their own views, which in turn were appropriated by political actors for purposes that were hardly based on stable ideological blocs. Given

³⁰ <http://infoleg.mecon.gov.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/45000-49999/45842/norma.htm> (nationalisation decree of 1997).

³¹ Shumway, *The invention*.

³² Rock, *Authoritarian Argentina*.

the deficient democratic legitimacy of the years between 1930 and 1983, it is not surprising that political actors relied on invented traditions. The choice of these traditions may not be random, but it would be misleading to assume that these traditions themselves pass through time and space unaffected by social and political change, time and again conspiring to defeat democracy. In contrast to this kind of determinism, John Breuilly has warned that the

double-edged role which ideology plays in political movements, both promoting and 'reflecting' those movements, [...] makes it impossible to provide any causal analysis between political ideology and political action.³³

Argentina's belligerent anti-liberal nationalism was certainly consubstantial with political divides and, perhaps, it exacerbated the country's difficulties in agreeing on a legitimate political order, but it should be analysed not only as a promoter, but also as a symptom of these difficulties.

These reservations may apply to any study of twentieth-century nationalism, but the Argentine case presents particular problems to the historian, because the right-wing *nacionalismo* of the 1930s is so easily mistaken for nationalism as a whole. In the long run, it is difficult to identify nationalism as a single political movement in its own right with a powerful ideological agenda that was imposed upon other actors. *Nacionalismo* may be called a movement, whose ideologues and activists helped to shape the climate of ideas that facilitated the coup of 1943, but shortly thereafter Peronism became the nationalist movement, discarding some *nacionalistas* and co-opting others whilst reworking their ideas. Afterwards, the movement that Rock identifies was of only hypothetical existence (mostly in the minds of its potential ideologues) and the men Rock calls the "Nationalists" were in constant search of political alliances. The same held true for left-wing nationalists whose ideas became hegemonic in intellectual debates in the 1960s, in accordance with international ideological developments. The trait of unity between the nationalist discourse of the 1930s and the 1960s was not the ongoing influence of a single movement. Instead, as the prominence of revisionism in both these strands of thought suggests, the main common ground was that their writing was directed against what was projected as the establishment, both the "intelligentsia" and the way in which the state was run by, in their rhetoric, "the sellers of the fatherland". If revisionism was a distinctive marker of a partisan nationalist discourse, then Breuilly's argument about nationalism in general applies well to this case.

³³ Breuilly, *Nationalism and the state*, p. 383.

According to him, nationalism is shaped by its opposition to the modern state and “remains distinctive only for so long as it is unsuccessful”.³⁴ As the years between 1973 and 1976 showed, revisionism, as a feature of an oppositional political culture, could not successfully be accommodated. Having flourished in the context of a deficient democratic legitimacy, its fate was bound to powerful necessities of much longer duration. When these necessities changed, so would revisionism. As suggested in the epigraph by Raymond Williams, through its point of connection with politics, the selective tradition produced by Argentine nationalist intellectuals was not only powerful but also vulnerable.

From this, two generalisations may be hazarded. Firstly, under what conditions is the symbolic good of historical writing likely to become partisan and how does this translate into politically used identity constructions? That historical narratives or a focus on figures and events as symbols acquire great social importance can be expected in an immigrant society that lacks autochthonous roots. But for these to become so divided and politicised, something more is needed. First, if the state creates society rather than society the state, the production of these narratives is less likely to become professionalized by a specialised group independent from the state. In turn, would-be universal intellectuals assume such a function. But more is needed for the past to become partisan. The existence of an intellectual field is necessary for the creation of oppositional identity narratives, which can become particularly combative if, within this field, the distribution of symbolic capital is very irregular and, consequently, the criteria according to which symbolic capital is accumulated are disputed. This might happen in a rapid, but fragile modernisation. Anomie can encourage the re-invigoration and reformulation of existing narratives. Moreover, in the absence of strong bonds with class-based interests, intellectuals will be likely to speak in the name of “the people” or “the nation”. In particular those whose symbolic capital in the intellectual field is limited will be likely to seek alternative routes to access symbolic capital. The political field can seem a promising choice, which might then exacerbate the lack of agreement on which criteria decide upon the distribution of symbolic capital in the intellectual field. The relationship between the intellectual and the political field becomes more intricate, if the state regulates the demand for the intellectuals’ symbolic goods. Again, the “hyper-autonomy” that makes political actors independent from social demands can accentuate this, especially if politics are not only

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

not class-based, but if a widely shared ideal is that the state engineers society. Political actors will then equally be likely to derive legitimacy from unifying principles such as “the nation” or “the people”. In this constellation, a crisis of legitimacy might be more likely to occur, but it also has deeper impacts. Symbolic goods might begin to largely owe their circulation to politics. In this model, narratives of the past initially articulated divisions of the intellectual field (which in itself is not necessarily so problematic), but this division is decisively reinforced as they begin to exist mostly in function of politics.

From this follows the second generalisation, which is about nationalism. Under the conditions mentioned (and under different conditions, all this might well be different), nationalism is most usefully understood, in accordance with Breuille’s definition, as

a form of politics [that] makes sense only in terms of the particular political context and objectives of nationalism. Central to an understanding of that context and those objectives is the modern state. The modern state both shapes nationalist politics and provides that politics with its major objective, namely possession of the state.³⁵

In this view, nationalism acquires its meaning only in relation to politics. If understood as an “invention of tradition” *alone*, it is impossible to explain how it becomes socially and politically effective. Of course, in Hobsbawm and Ranger’s model, nationalism is not simply independent from social reality, but the buzzword of “invention” invites the reader to simplify nationalism as an ideology in the sense of merely “a system of illusory beliefs”.³⁶ Anderson in particular has criticised such an approach to nationalism. He has argued that “nationalism has proved an uncomfortable *anomaly* for Marxist theory”. Since it is so problematic to imply “that ‘true’ communities exist that can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations [...], [c]ommunities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.” But what Anderson calls “‘imagining’ and ‘creation’”³⁷ should not be understood as the brainchild of creative thinkers, conceived from scratch. If nationalism was merely that, an analysis of it, unless nationalist texts are taken at face value, tells us nothing about a society. Even in Latin America, a region that Halperin Donghi has called a “promised land for post-structuralists in search of confirmation for their conviction that

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

³⁶ Williams, *Marxism and literature*, p. 55 has identified this notion as a particularly prominent and reductionist understanding of ideology in Marxism.

³⁷ Anderson, *Imagined communities*, p. 3 and p. 6.

image shapes reality”,³⁸ there are reasons to suspect that the translation of ideas into practices is not a unidirectional process.

³⁸ Tulio Halperín Donghi, “Backward looks and forward glimpses from a quincentennial vantage point”, *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 24, Quincentenary Supplement (1992), pp. 219-234.

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Biblioteca del Congreso, Buenos Aires
Biblioteca del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas Juan Manuel de Rosas, Buenos Aires
Biblioteca Nacional, Buenos Aires
Bodleian Library, Oxford
British Library, London
Centro de Documentación e Investigación de la Cultura de Izquierdas en Argentina, Buenos Aires
Comisión Provincial por la Memoria, La Plata
Iberoamerikanisches Institut, Berlin
Instituto Nacional Juan Domingo Perón, Buenos Aires

II. Primary sources

A. Newspapers and periodicals

Unless otherwise stated, all newspapers and periodicals were published in the Federal Capital.

1. Daily newspapers

Los Andes, 1955-76 — Broadsheet from Mendoza.
Clarín, 1955-76 — National tabloid
Crónica, 1963-66 — Tabloid from Federal Capital, populist.
Gaceta de Tucumán, 1955-76 — Broadsheet from Tucumán.
La Nación, 1955-76 — National broadsheet.
La Opinión, 1971-76 — National broadsheet.
La Prensa, 1955-76 — National broadsheet.
Los Principios, 1959 — Broadsheet from Córdoba.
La Voz del Interior, 1973 — Broadsheet from Córdoba.

2. Weekly, fortnightly and monthly newspapers and magazines

Many of the following publications, especially in the critical period of 1955-58, operated semi-clandestinely and their appearance was thus sporadic. Dates given do not mean regular publication during the entire period, but only that several issued from this period have been consulted. Other periodicals may have appeared for a longer period of time than the years indicated here, but it is usually almost impossible to obtain complete collections.

- 18 de Marzo*, 1963 — Predecessor of *Compañero*.
El 45, 1955 — Weekly of the Peronist resistance.
Alianza, 1946 — Organ of the Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista.
Azul y Blanco, 1956-59 — *Nacionalista* weekly.
La Argentina (Justa, Libre y Soberana), 1955 — Peronist resistance newsheet from Rosario.
La Barbarie, 1964 — Monthly organ of Tacuara.
La Causa Peronista, 1974 — Weekly of the Peronist Youth/Montoneros.
CGT de los Argentinos, 1968-70 — Organ of Ongaro's left-wing CGT.
Clase Obrera, 1950 — Weekly organ of the Movimiento Obrero Comunista.
Compañero, 1963-64 — Left-wing Peronist weekly.
Concentración de la Juventud Peronista, 1974 — Right-wing Peronist monthly.
Consigna, 1957 — Pro-Peronist weekly.
Debate, 1955 — Organ of a committee of the Peronist resistance in Resistencia, Chaco.
Dinamis, 1965-1968 — Publication of the light and power workers union.
Doctrina (es verdad y nuestra guía), 1955 — Peronist resistance weekly.
El Descamisado, 1955 — Neighbourhood newsheet of the Peronist resistance.
El Guerrillero, 1958 — Peronist resistance publication.
Huella, 1963 — Right-wing Peronist weekly from La Plata.
Juan Manuel, 1951 — *Rosista* publication.
Lucha Obrera, 1955-56 — Weekly organ of the Partido Socialista de la Revolución Nacional.
Lucha Peronista, 1967 — Monthly organ of the Juventud Revolucionaria Peronista and the Movimiento Revolucionario Peronista.
Marchar, 1969 and 1974 — Peronist monthly, close to Alianza Libertadora Nacionalista.
Mayoría, 1957-60 — *Nacionalista* weekly.
Militancia, 1973 — Left-wing Peronist weekly.
Nueva Hora, 1973 — Weekly organ of the Maoist Partido Comunista Revolucionario de la Argentina
Palabra Argentina, 1955-61 — Pro-Peronist weekly.
Patria Bárbara, 1973 — Right-wing Peronist magazine.
El Peronista, 1974 — Left-wing Peronist weekly.
El Popular, 1960 and 1964 — Left-wing populist weekly.
Primera Plana, 1962-69 — National weekly news magazine.
Proclama en la línea de Mayo y Caseros, 1957 — Semi-official weekly supporting Aramburu.
El Proletario, 1955 — Follower of *El Descamisado*.
Qué (sucedió en siete días), 1955-58 — Pro-Frondizi weekly.
Rebeldía, 1957 — Peronist resistance weekly.
Rebelión, 1959 — Revisionist and Peronist publication from Rosario.

Relevo, 1962 — Left-wing, pro-Peronist weekly.
El Restaurador, 1941 — Anti-semitic *nacionalista* weekly.
Retorno, 1965-66 and 1970 — Right-wing nationalist and Peronist weekly.
Revolución Nacional, 1956 — Pro-Peronist weekly.
Santo y Seña, 1959-60 — Populist and nationalist weekly.
Tercer Frente, 1970 — Peronist *tercermundista* weekly.
Trinchera, 1960-61 and 1970 — Organ of the Juventud Peronista.
Yrigoyen, 1954 — Radical populist monthly.

3. Academic, historiographical and intellectual journals and bulletins

Boletín de la Junta de Historia y Numismática Argentina/Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1936 and 1955-66.
Boletín de Estudios Políticos, 1950-68 — Right-wing political science journal of the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo.
Boletín del Instituto Juan Manuel de Rosas de Investigaciones Históricas, 1968-71 — Bimonthly bulletin of the Instituto Rosas for campaigning and discussion.
Columnas del Nacionalismo Marxista de Liberación Nacional, 1957 — Cultural magazine, bringing together Marxist and nationalist intellectuals.
Contorno, 1953-59 — Cultural journal of the New Left.
Crisis, 1974-75 — Left-wing cultural journal.
Cristianismo y Revolución, 1966-71 — Monthly journal of Marxist-Catholic dialogue.
Cuadernos de Cultura, 1957-60 — Cultural journal of the Communist Party.
Dinámica Social, 1955-65 — Cultural journal of the extreme *nacionalista* Right.
Envido, 1970-73 — Cultural and social sciences journal linked to *cátedras nacionales*.
Frontera 67, 1967 — Right-wing social sciences journal.
Investigaciones y Ensayos, 1966-76 — Journal of the Academia Nacional de la Historia.
Nuestra Historia, 1968-73 — Right-wing *nacionalista* historical journal.
Revisión Histórica, 1960 and 1968 — Journal of the Tucumán-branch of the Instituto Rosas.
Revista del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas Juan Manuel de Rosas, 1938-63 — Journal of the Instituto Rosas.
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