

IDEAS, IMMIGRANTS ET ALIA IN
NINETEENTH- AND TWENTIETH-
CENTURY ARGENTINA

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- THE INVENTION OF ARGENTINA.* By Nicolas Shumway. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992. Pp. 325. \$34.95.)
- THE POLITICS OF RIVER TRADE: TRADITION AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE UPPER PLATA, 1780–1870.* By Thomas Whigham. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. Pp. 274. \$50.00.)
- ORDER, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY IN BUENOS AIRES, 1810–1860.* By Mark D. Szuchman. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1987. Pp. 297. \$39.50.)
- EL DISCURSO CRIOLLISTA EN LA FORMACION DE LA ARGENTINA MODERNA.* By Adolfo Prieto. (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1988. Pp. 241.)
- LA EVOLUCION DE LAS IDEAS DE DOMINGO F. SARMIENTO.* By Daniel E. Zalazar. (Somerville, N.J.: SLUSA, 1987. Pp. 170. \$8.50 paper.)
- ARGENTINA AND THE JEWS: A HISTORY OF JEWISH IMMIGRATION.* By Haim Avni. Translated from the Hebrew by Gila Brand. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991. Pp. 267. \$32.95.)
- THE WELSH IN PATAGONIA: THE STATE AND THE ETHNIC COMMUNITY.* By Glyn Williams. (Cardiff, Wales: University of Wales Press, 1991. Pp. 285. \$60.00.)
- ONE FAMILY, TWO WORLDS: AN ITALIAN FAMILY'S CORRESPONDENCE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC, 1901–1922.* Edited by Samuel L. Baily and Franco Ramella. Translated by John Lenaghan. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1988. Pp. 251. \$35.00 cloth, \$15.00 paper.)
- EL FEDERALISMO BLOQUISTA: BRAVO O EL PRAGMATISMO POLITICO.* By Adalberto Zelmar Barbosa. (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 1988. Pp. 292.)

All nine of these books on Argentina address important and unexplained issues, and several of them may be justly described as seminal in their fields of inquiry. The three books by Nicolás Shumway, Adolfo Prieto, and Daniel Zalazar are devoted to political ideas in the nineteenth century. Three others by Haim Avni, Glyn Williams, and Samuel Baily and Franco Ramella examine the Jewish, Welsh, and Italian immigrant communities of Argentina. The last three, the works by Mark Szuchman,

Thomas Whigham, and Adalberto Zelmar Barbosa, are local studies focusing respectively on the city of Buenos Aires, the Upper Plata region, and the Andean province of San Juan. Of the nine, only Whigham stresses economic issues, a fact that illustrates a strong recent trend away from economic history toward politics, ideology, and community studies. Similarly reflecting the recent broadening of the geographical range and subject matter of Argentine history, only two of these books focus on the city of Buenos Aires: Szuchman studies the linkages between family and politics, and Prieto the development of popular nativist (or "Criollista") attitudes during the era of European immigration before 1914. Last of all, most of these books deal with nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century themes, with only Avni on Jewish migrants, Williams on the Welsh, and Zelmar Barbosa on the Bloquista movement in San Juan advancing much beyond 1920.

Nicolas Shumway's *The Invention of Argentina* stands out as one of the most accomplished and challenging historical monographs on Argentina in recent years by virtue of its conceptual approach, argument, technique, and literary skill. Shumway's principal argument asserts that the ideological and political conflicts among members of the Argentine intelligentsia in the nineteenth century established conceptual parameters and political practices that have greatly influenced Argentine politics in the twentieth century. He examines "Argentina's sense of self as it emerged in the last century" and the country's "guiding fictions." Scattered throughout the volume are illustrations of nineteenth-century values, attitudes, points of view, prejudices, and myths that yielded twentieth-century reincarnations. Among these continuities are the authoritarian and oligarchic strands of Argentine liberalism that became ubiquitously visible in the cult of the "enlightened minority." The caudillos' nineteenth-century quest to gain "a mystical ability to perceive the inchoate will of the people" manifested numerous twentieth-century parallels, not least in the career of Juan Perón. The continuities are also exemplified by justification of the military coup in the name of "armed civilization" (invoked so prominently by the military juntas of 1976–1983), which had other antecedents in the writings and the actions of leading nineteenth-century figures like Bartolomé Mitre and Domingo Sarmiento.

Shumway goes beyond pointing out such continuities to peel away the layers of fiction and misrepresentation surrounding Argentina's early-nineteenth-century history, which were created by the liberal school of historians led by Mitre. For example, Shumway acknowledges the orthodox liberal view of Mariano Moreno, a central figure in the 1810 revolution, as a product of the Enlightenment. But Shumway also paints an unorthodox portrait of Moreno as "a frighteningly authoritarian figure reminiscent of Machiavelli, the Grand Inquisitor, and the French Jacobins." In *The Invention of Argentina*, Mitre himself no longer appears as

the disinterested architect of liberal “progress” but as a ruthless intriguer who resorted to bribery and even terrorism and aspired to personal tyranny. Shumway also illuminates Domingo Sarmiento’s susceptibility to the racist outlook of contemporary European writers like Joseph Gobineau. Sarmiento’s ego was such, Shumway contends, that it could turn him into a murderer.

These iconoclastic interpretations emerge mostly from a close reading of the less-known correspondence of the nineteenth-century liberal heroes, material that subsequent liberal historians have often chosen to ignore, forget, or attempt to suppress. Shumway betrays strong sympathies with the Argentine federalists and shows the strength of federalist ideas in the twentieth century, despite their terminal political defeat between 1860 and 1880. He examines the careers of a variety of federalist political leaders: José Artigas, leader of the independence movement in the Banda Oriental centered in Montevideo; the federalist writers led by José Hernández, author of *El gaucho Martín Fierro*, whose changing views and eventual reconciliation to the liberal order epitomized the great political transition in Argentina between 1875 and 1885; and several forgotten nineteenth-century federalists such as Bartolomé Hidalgo and Oleagario Andrade.

This tendency to extol the federalists and denigrate the liberals might be thought a weakness of *The Invention of Argentina* because it entraps Shumway in the historiographical cliché of liberal history versus “historical revisionism.” Were he to allow himself to become too closely identified with the latter, Shumway would be joining a cast of dubious characters. He evades the snare, however, by endorsing most strongly those nineteenth-century intellectuals who favored a pragmatic synthesis of the liberal aspiration for change with the federalist stress on preserving tradition. Shumway’s favorite personality is Juan Bautista Alberdi, who joined the liberals in upholding nondemocratic government, railroads, and immigrants in order to accelerate change while supporting institutions that provided niches for the backward and isolated provincial communities and for remnants of the old social order like the gauchos.

In *The Politics of River Trade: Tradition and Development in the Upper Plata, 1780–1870*, Thomas Whigham focuses on the ancestral domain of the Guaraní north of Buenos Aires along the Paraná and Uruguay rivers as far as Asunción and in the Argentine province of Corrientes, southeastern Paraguay, and the southern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. He examines the development of the staple products of these areas and of Paraguay (led by yerba mate and tobacco) and details the organization of the river trade between Asunción and Buenos Aires. As an economic history detailing agrarian production and internal trade, the book is a sound, painstaking, and original piece of research.

The most intriguing parts of *The Politics of River Trade* lie in the

challenges it offers to a particular interpretation of Paraguayan history between independence in 1810 and the outbreak of the War of the Triple Alliance between 1865 and 1870. In bald outline, this interpretation stresses the progressiveness of the Paraguayan state before the war. With its weak landed class and insignificant church, its precocious railroads and incipient industrial economy, its disdain for foreign trade and drive toward economic self-sufficiency, Paraguay has been characterized as following a course toward a burst of nondependent development. The war, however, cut short and destroyed these trends, dooming Paraguay to become an anarchic backwater, the prey of Brazilian and Argentine liberals and their imperialist backers in Europe. According to this view, all progress and potential for Paraguayan development was lost.

This interpretation of Paraguay has recently garnered adherents among left-leaning historians, although it originated among the nationalist or "revisionist" writers of the kind that in Argentina created the cult of Juan Manuel de Rosas. Whigham's contribution to the debate is to underscore the retrograde (as opposed to the progressive) features of the Paraguayan dictatorships. Rather than being precursors of twentieth-century economic and political nationalism, the Paraguayan regimes were the relics of Bourbon mercantilism. José Gaspar de Francia's policies sought not to eliminate foreign trade in a search for self-sufficiency but "to subject diminishing trade to controls that would exact maximum revenues" (p. 27). Subsequently, Whigham observes that "Francia ruled his country along patrimonial lines, like a skillful Bourbon administrator" (p. 199). Similarly, the aim of the regime of Carlos Antonio López was not to stifle trade but to encourage it to grow to the maximum extent compatible with the government's capacity to tax it. Having abandoned protection long before and welcomed foreign merchants to Asunción, Paraguay by the death of López in 1862 had ceased to bear any resemblance to a "closed economy." Whigham discards the views of those influenced by the revisionist historians that the War of the Triple Alliance originated in structural conflicts between proto-nationalist Paraguay and its liberal, anti-nationalist neighbors. Instead Whigham blames the war mainly on the clash of personalities resulting from the megalomania of Francisco Solano López and Mitre's ruthless determination to consolidate the rule of Buenos Aires over the rest of Argentina and to annex Paraguayan territory.

Whigham is correct in emphasizing the regressive features of the prewar Paraguayan state and in challenging any idea that Francia and López embodied some kind of South American modernizing autocracy. But Whigham stresses personality too much because some important structural differences existed between Paraguay and its liberal enemies. Paraguay was unique in Latin America during this period for the size and power of its state and the weakness of its civil society and institutions outside the state. One illustration of these conditions appeared at the

outbreak of the war, when Solano López mustered an army of between twenty and thirty thousand men. As a proportion of each country's population, the Paraguayan army was about six times larger than the Argentine army and more than ten times bigger than Brazil's (the absolute numerical supremacy of the allied armies reflected their much larger populations). Similarly, while Mitre in Argentina had to use the press-gang to recruit his paltry, ill-equipped force of some ten thousand and Brazil drafted thousands of unwilling slaves for combat, the Paraguayans (including some women recruited by Solano López) fought with indomitable enthusiasm almost to the last soldier. All students of Latin American history will remember that by the end of the war, Paraguayan women were said to outnumber the men by as much as fourteen to one. Thus there were striking differences between Paraguay and its neighbors that converted the country into a Latin American version of oriental despotism. But Paraguay was neither progressive nor a precursor of twentieth-century leftist nationalism.

Whigham's concerns are economics and politics. By contrast, Mark Szuchman's *Order, Family, and Community in Buenos Aires, 1810–1860* is principally a work of social and institutional history. Some of Szuchman's preliminary statements have a disconcerting ring of triteness: citizens and the state after independence in Argentina shared the commitment to reconstruct "law and order"; the basic linkage between the citizens and the state lay in "familial strategies of survival and the personalist nature of political power." Statements that caudillismo possessed elements of consent or that Rosas gained legitimacy because he kept order are unobjectionable but unenlightening. Moreover, in some parts of this book, an elliptical style impairs its momentum and direction.

Even so, the core of *Order, Family, and Community*, which is devoted to the institutions and practice of law and to the development of primary education before 1860, conveys close concentration, analytical skill, and a sensitivity to nuance and detail. Szuchman is among the first to examine the system of the *jueces de paz* in Buenos Aires and the barriers to developing a jury system in Argentina. *Jueces de paz*, as appointees of the central government who possessed executive as well as judicial functions, were another legacy of the Bourbon period who bore virtually no resemblance to the justices of the peace in England except in name. On the absence of the jury system in Argentina, Szuchman argues that the barriers lay in class divisions and the lack of any sector akin to the yeomanry or middle class (another example of an issue pointed to but not analyzed fully). Szuchman cites the new emphasis on individual self-development as the purpose of education that followed the independence movement, Argentina's experience with the Lancaster model of teaching, and the way that education came to be viewed toward the second half of the nineteenth-century as vital to the country's material progress.

Another work focusing on Buenos Aires is Adolfo Prieto's *El discurso criollista en la formación de la Argentina moderna*, which explores the growth of popular culture in Buenos Aires during the late nineteenth century. This study draws on an unusual collection of popular Argentine prose and verse literature published around the turn of the century, which belonged to a German-born professor employed at the University of La Plata. As Prieto shows, many of the educational reformers led by Sarmiento were convinced that if the masses became literate, they would develop upper-class tastes for high culture. Instead, the spread of literacy produced a boom in popular novels and newspapers, while the growth of education reinforced the people's separation from the elites rather than bringing them closer.

The new reading public of Buenos Aires became particularly fond of a type of Argentine western starring the fictional gaucho hero Juan Moreira, the Billy the Kid of the pampas, whose cult contributed to the proliferation of the so-called *centros criollos*. On Saturday nights, members of the centers (native Argentines as well as foreign immigrants) dressed up as gauchos, joined in campfire singalongs, and tucked into *asado de tira* (barbecued beef). As Prieto emphasizes, the positive aspect of Criollismo was that it assisted in creating a shared sense of culture and nationality.

Prieto also provides some interesting illustrations and vignettes on the expansion of this popular culture. By the early 1870s, Buenos Aires boasted a larger quantity of newspapers and weeklies per capita than most European and North American cities, in addition to the enormous market for the Criollista novels. Some of the most popular Criollista novels were printed in Milan because the irrational Argentine tariff made it much cheaper to import printed paper than blank paper. But the books often came back reading like pidgin Italian. The growth of mass education also afforded new opportunities for graft. Ministers of education, for example, would select textbooks for the schools that had been written by their own relatives. Prieto's *El discurso criollista* is lively entertainment as well as a perceptive study of the mechanisms of cultural assimilation.

Carefully and coolly argued, Daniel Zalazar's *La evolución de las ideas de Domingo F. Sarmiento* represents another blistering critique of Sarmiento, a longer and more focused version of some of the judgments made by Shumway. Zalazar shows how Sarmiento moved from an analysis of Argentina based on geographical determinism, which appeared in *Facundo* in the 1840s, to a form of racial determinism in his unfinished work, *Conflictos y armonías de las razas en América*, written mostly in the 1880s. In his earlier work, Sarmiento explained "barbarism" as the result of the physical environment of the pampas, which he argued had produced a society of nomads like the Bedouins of North Africa. But in *Conflictos y armonías*, he located the origins of the same conditions in racial mixing. In Sarmiento's view, *mestizaje* had led to a society that had

achieved only the most superficial advances toward civilization. The Spanish colonizers, he asserted, made a fundamental error in attempting to incorporate the indigenous peoples into their American empire: they should have driven them away or killed them off as the British did. In his view, only those American countries having a large majority of whites would be capable of achieving a dynamic "Christian and European civilization." Thus Sarmiento concluded that mixed-race societies were barely able to develop beyond the rudimentary and "barbarous" societies based on the wheel and the horse that had evolved in antiquity.

Sarmiento had planned *Conflictos y armonías* as a Latin American version of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, but because of its insulting and intellectually shallow content, the Argentine work is rarely read, seldom quoted, and often deliberately forgotten. An embittered and rambling piece of bigotry based on then-fashionable positivist and evolutionist texts, *Conflictos y armonías* became a measure of Sarmiento's extreme disillusionment as his political influence ebbed during the last years of his life. It is also a sad reflection of the perennial, although always selective, susceptibility of many Latin American intellectuals to the cultural and intellectual fads of Western Europe.

Haim Avni's *Argentina and the Jews: A History of Jewish Immigration* has the unusual merit of drawing on the foreign ministry archives of four Western European nations as well as on some original Jewish sources held in Israel and elsewhere. Unfortunately, this ecumenical use of sources adds little to the book, for if the author may be well versed in the modern history of the Jewish people, his knowledge of Argentina is at best rudimentary. The book shows that the settlement of Jews in Argentina broadly followed the larger trends of immigration to that country, peaking first in the 1880s and then in the decade prior to the outbreak of World War I. Avni estimates the size of the Jewish community in Argentina by 1914 to have been one hundred thousand, more than the number of Jews in Palestine (his figure seems very high to me). He also provides an illuminating account of the activities of Baron Maurice de Hirsch, the pioneer and guiding light of Jewish settlement in Argentina, and of the Jewish Colonization Association, which by the end of the nineteenth century owned a quarter of a million hectares of agricultural land in the pampas. Subsequent themes include the efforts of successive governments of Argentina between 1935 and 1945 to minimize the immigration of Jewish refugees. In 1941, for example, a scandalous and repugnant proposal was made in Buenos Aires to admit Jewish children, but only if they were sterilized. Argentina thus contributed indirectly to the Holocaust, although it might be acknowledged that Argentina's lack of receptiveness to Jewish refugees at this point was not much greater than that of countries like the United States and Britain.

Argentina and the Jews is calmly argued and well researched, but it

lacks a critical thrust and is more a chronicle than a work of interpretive history. Avni shies away from controversial issues like the Jewish-controlled white-slave traffic in Buenos Aires and the growth of Argentine anti-Semitism. He acknowledges Argentina's almost unique position as a Catholic country that received large numbers of Jewish immigrants but fails to examine the issue. For example, he has little to say about the Argentine Catholic Church and the implications of the greater frequency of Jewish-gentile intermarriage in Argentina than elsewhere.

Glyn Williams's *The Welsh in Patagonia: The State and the Ethnic Community* has the even more striking distinction of using multiple sources in Welsh. The Welsh colony in Chubut, founded in 1865, marked an effort to preserve Welsh identity when the Welsh people, particularly in the southern part of the principality, were facing the destruction of their rural communities due to the encroachments of the British industrial economy. The Welsh were often unwilling to follow the other nationalities of the British Celtic fringe to North America and to attempt to keep their culture intact once there because they were too small in number and faced even stronger pressures from the surrounding Anglophone populations. But empty Patagonia, with its low hills and damp Welsh-like valleys and pastures, seemed an ideal venue for those ready to flee the homeland in search of cultural and ethnic survival.

For many years, the Chubut community received strong support from both the Argentine and British governments, although the Welsh themselves mistrusted both sides and sometimes fomented jingoism in Argentina by offering themselves to Britain for annexation. These wilderness settlers used their fervent Methodism as well as their unfathomable language to safeguard their isolation and promote their communal solidarity. By Argentine standards, the Welsh were strikingly successful in establishing peaceful relations with the indigenous tribes of Patagonia: the bloody frontier battles waged to the north were conspicuously lacking in Chubut. As Williams tells the story, the Welsh community was intensely democratic, giving women the same political rights as men. Yet the autocratic power wielded by the chapel and the preachers suggests that "participatory theocracy" may be a more accurate label. For decades Methodism and the Welsh language erected even higher barriers against the outside world than the vast wilderness that lay beyond the small confines of the community. The economy of the colony was based on wool, wheat, and later alfalfa. Thanks to natural growth and occasional immigration, the community slowly expanded for the first fifty years.

After World War I, however, the colony began to decline. Some members, facing land hunger in Chubut, moved out of Argentina and back to Wales or abandoned their Welshness by migrating to North America, Australia, or South Africa. Intermarriage with the growing local population of Catholics became more common, and the Spanish language

gradually intruded on the Welsh. Such creeping absorption and dilution mirrored the onset of the broad economic and political changes occurring in Argentina between 1920 and 1950: agriculture declined, urban manufacturing grew, and population moved out of the rural communities and into the towns. In the 1940s, the emergence of a national social-security and welfare system under Perón undermined and quickly destroyed the local welfare networks created by the colonists.

Searching for the details of this process, Williams points to the collapse of the Welsh Cooperative Society during the 1920s, which forced the settlers into the clutches of commercial middlemen in Buenos Aires. By the early 1930s, wool prices had dropped to barely one-sixth of the level of the boom years of World War I. Marriages with non-Welsh persons, which represented only 7.5 per cent of the total before 1920, climbed to 50 per cent in the 1950s. By 1970, when Williams began his research in Chubut, the Welsh language itself was declining rapidly. With the example of the Patagonian Welsh before them, the English-speaking shepherds of the Falkland Islands grew increasingly resistant to incorporation by Argentina. As an anthropologist, Williams intersperses his historical narrative with more theoretical observations based on the literature on ethnicity and minority cultures. But this part of *The Welsh in Patagonia* does not blend well with the historical text, and it is difficult to view the fate of the Welsh community as much more than a cameo of the broader forces and changes that undermined rural and ethnic communities throughout Argentina.

The last of the books devoted to immigrants, *One Family, Two Worlds* by Samuel Baily and Franco Ramella, is an edited translation of the letters between the two Sola brothers, who moved to Argentina in 1901 and 1912, and their parents in the Italian town of Biella (northeast of Milan). The editors' introduction points to the preponderance of northern Italians over southern Italians among emigrants to Argentina. Baily and Ramella emphasize the strong community base of Italian emigration, detailing the way emigrants often followed one another across the Atlantic from the same villages or towns and preserved these relationships and links in Argentina. The editors also demonstrate the close economic ties binding the emigrants to the families they left behind. In the case of the Sola family, the sons sent their parents regular remittances, but the sons could also tap Italian capital at times by borrowing on the security of family land.

One Family, Two Worlds serves as a light aperitif for the extensive study Baily is completing on Italian emigration to Argentina. The letters themselves raise one or two chuckles and occasionally hint at broader issues. For example, when the elder son arrived in Buenos Aires in 1901, he found so many Italians that he thought Argentina was an Italian-speaking country. For a time, too, he believed that President Julio Roca

was an Italian. But in general, the fortunes of the Sola brothers were fairly unremarkable and, like those of the Welsh community in Patagonia, mirrored conditions in the country at large. Thus in 1904, “everywhere there is construction and modernizing” and therefore opportunity, but by 1914, following a real estate collapse and a financial crisis, “25 per cent of the houses in certain districts are vacant.” More intriguing and difficult to understand is the reluctance of the two brothers, who were clearly devoted to their parents, to return to Italy even for a brief spell, despite constant entreaties. The letters intimate that a sense of rank and prestige was at play: having done relatively well in Argentina, the brothers seemed reluctant to confront their humble origins back home. Even so, the fact that the two quickly returned to Italy after the deaths of their parents in the early 1920s to claim their inheritances suggests they had not fared as well in Argentina as they liked to pretend, or perhaps it simply underscores the primacy of money in their scheme of things. This kind of issue, which illustrates the great complexity of immigration, will no doubt be examined in Baily’s forthcoming study.

The last of the books under review here is Adalberto Zelmar Barbosa’s *El federalismo bloquista: Bravo o el pragmatismo político*. The study addresses a puzzling topic in an attractive and original way, although as a whole it fails to sustain its early promise. *Bloquismo*, a term deriving from the “bloc” of dissident Radicals who opposed the national Radical party under Hipólito Yrigoyen, emerged in San Juan during the early 1920s. Bloquismo is more than a historical curiosity, however, because it exists today as the oldest exclusively provincial political movement in Argentina and one still capable of contesting and winning elections in the 1980s. Moreover, throughout its seventy-year history, Bloquismo has had only two leaders. The first was the colorful, demagogic, and sometimes violent Federico Cantoni, one of Argentina’s earliest “Italian” political leaders; the second was Leopoldo Bravo, long rumored to be Cantoni’s illegitimate son.

Bravo had an unusual early career as a diplomat when he accompanied Cantoni to Moscow in 1947. Cantoni was serving as Perón’s ambassador in the Soviet Union, and Bravo succeeded Cantoni after his death. In 1953 Bravo had a remarkable experience as the last Westerner known to have met with Stalin, only days before the dictator’s mysterious death. Later Bravo spent several years in other Eastern European capitals as a diplomat before finally returning to a political career in his native province of San Juan.

One of the intriguing patterns that emerges from *El federalismo bloquista* is that both leaders of the Bloquista movement pursued left-wing policies in San Juan but were frequently allied with right-wing generals in Buenos Aires. In 1930, for example, Cantoni became a supporter of Generals José Félix Uriburu and Agustín Justo, and in 1945 Cantoni endorsed

Perón. Similarly during the late 1970s, Bravo endorsed the Jorge Videla regime while ignoring its infamous record on human rights and then became a favorite of General Leopoldo Galtieri, who led Argentina into the war with Britain over the Falkland Islands. In 1982 Galtieri attempted to make use of Bravo's diplomatic experience in making overtures to the Soviet Union for support. Yet when Bravo served as governor of his province in the mid-1960s, he (like Cantoni forty years before) played the part of the left-wing populist.

The key to this paradox lies to some extent in the conflicts between Cantoni and Yrigoyen in the 1920s, which produced ongoing hostilities between the Bloquistas and the Radicals. Yet the populists in San Juan found little in common with those in Buenos Aires because the provincial populists received so little from the dominant group in the capital. The dictators, by contrast, had a much smaller constituency in Buenos Aires and could therefore afford to be more generous with the provinces.

Unfortunately, this approach of exploring the external alliances pursued by the Bloquistas and comparing the rewards they received from them eludes Zelmar Barbosa. He provides an interesting account of San Juan politics until around 1935, dwelling on the growth of Cantoni's radical programs and his attempts to democratize the province through measures like land reform and the enfranchisement of women. Zelmar Barbosa captures the exceptional instability of the province of San Juan, whose history is replete with assassinations and ephemeral administrations rapidly overturned by Buenos Aires through "federal interventions." But Zelmar Barbosa slides over the 1930s and, aside from describing Cantoni's and Bravo's tenures as ambassadors in Moscow, resumes his story only in the 1960s. As governor of San Juan between 1963 and 1966, Bravo resurrected some of Cantoni's progressive program in popular housing and support for peasant producers. But from here on, it becomes difficult to follow Zelmar Barbosa's argument, as Bravo switched back and forth from supporting left-wing populism to endorsing the right-wing military. The results in *El federalismo bloquista* are some unsightly gaps and unexplained transitions. Zelmar Barbosa finally gives up the task of explaining Bloquismo and contents himself with extolling the caudillo, whose mystique and appeal are said to lie beyond the scope of analysis and understanding. Thus a book that begins with the drama of the meeting between Bravo and Stalin ends on an incoherent note of hagiography.

Among the nine books reviewed, Shumway's *The Invention of Argentina* is the most ambitious and successful. This work is likely to spark renewed interest in nineteenth-century intellectual history, a field that has appeared arid and unattractive. Shumway provides a foundation on which to search for broad parallels between the era of the formation of the liberal state between 1850 and 1880 and the creation of the neoliberal

state taking place at present under President Carlos Menem. Szuchman's *Order, Family, and Community in Buenos Aires* has some defects, but the issues it raises concerning the law and the local administration of justice are worthy of closer study. These subjects are particularly pertinent during the late nineteenth century (the period immediately following that analyzed by Szuchman) because at this point the most striking differences appeared between Argentina and analogous frontier societies like Canada and Australia. As Szuchman implies, Argentina entered the late-nineteenth-century era of rapid development and modernization with institutional encumbrances that were to centralize political power and strangle the roots of local democracy.

Whigham's *The Politics of River Trade* is the strongest of the regional studies reviewed here, the kind of research that will eventually endow work on Argentina with the subtlety and sophistication that have been achieved in the field of Mexican history. Whigham has taken a mostly correct stance on prewar Paraguay, although he failed to draw out the full implications of his conclusions. Zelmar Barbosa's *El federalismo bloquista* provides a good account of the Cantoni era in San Juan but loses the threads of its argument in discussing the career of Bravo.

Of the three books on immigrants, Williams's *The Welsh in Patagonia* emerges as the most original, even though it focuses too much on the Welsh community in isolation and too little on its interactions with the rest of the Argentine population. By examining these interactions, Williams would have found more scope for exercising his skills as an anthropologist. Avni's *Argentina and the Jews* and Baily and Ramella's *One Family, Two Worlds* are better viewed as starting points than as conclusive studies. The two books by Argentine scholars, Prieto's *El discurso criollista* and Zalazar's *La evolución de las ideas de Sarmiento* are of very high quality although they address fairly limited subjects. All nine books contain valuable data, analytical paths, and sound judgments, and when taken together, they illustrate the continuing vitality and growing diversity of historical studies on Argentina.