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Contested discourses in  
the Foundation of 'Modern  
Argentina'.  
The Political Debates of the  
1880s in the Party Press.

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2006  
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# Contested discourses in the Foundation of 'Modern Argentina'. The Political Debates of the 1880s in the Party Press.

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In the historiography of Argentina, the 1880s has been defined as a decade of ideological consensus, a consensus reached after years of discord.<sup>1</sup> The arrival of Julio A. Roca (1880-1886) to power in October 1880 has been seen to mark the coming of a new climate of ideas, a comparatively bleak period in political and institutional contentions, deprived of the powerful intellectual figures that had fuelled the heated debates during the previous four decades, and still behind the contentions emerging after 1890, resulting from the organization of opposition parties and labor organizations as well as from dissent and conflictive views mounting amongst members of the political elite.<sup>2</sup> The ideological portrait of the 1880s has been painted, therefore, as a decade of high degree of consensus in comparison to earlier and later times.

It is remarkable that this has been so given that the decade opened and closed with revolution. The revolution of June 1880, the largest and bloodiest confrontation in the last quarter of the century, has been seen as the end of an era of political confrontation and the beginning of a new period marked by the consolidation of one-party rule. The revolution of July 1890, on the other hand, has been portrayed as a landmark for the emergence of opposition parties in the 1890s, helped by the discontent resulting from economic crisis. Thus, the years in between these upheavals have been interpreted as unusual times in Argentina's turbulent history, a period of remarkable ideological homogeneity during which Juan B. Alberdi's constitutional project was finally consolidated through the works of a political elite that centralized the power of the national government, enforced its authority throughout the country and fostered foreign capital investment and European immigration. The year 1880 seemed to have marked the moment in which the project of 'Modern Argentina' uncontestedly began to unfold.<sup>3</sup>

There are at least two main reasons why these received views have persisted. The first is that Argentina had certainly achieved a degree of consensus at the time. None of the political parties contested the principles of the National Constitution or attempted to change its premises (not even the pre-

cept that the President could not be re-elected on consecutive terms) and all parties agreed on the economic model and the need to attract European immigrants to this land. The second reason lies behind the political circumstances of the decade, particularly, the dispersion of the old opposition parties and the ascendance of the Partido Autonomista Nacional (PAN). After its electoral and military defeat in April and June 1880, Bartolomé Mitre's party (the *Partido Liberal or Nacionalista*) opted to refrain from participating in elections and disbanded its loose party structure as a policy of protest against the government. Mitre and his followers entrenched themselves behind *La Nación*, jointly with *La Prensa*, the largest and most respectful daily in the country.<sup>4</sup> From its pages they launched their campaign against the PAN. The other opposition group, the *porteño* Autonomists, decided to join the PAN in August 1880, only to split again in 1883. Once back in the opposition camp, they also refrained to contest elections turning *El Nacional*, the second most important political daily after *La Nación*, into one of the most deadly opponents to the government. The Catholic groups organized themselves in an opposition party, the Catholic Union, after the passing of a series of lay laws in 1884, but they also stayed away from the polling stations.<sup>5</sup>

These opposition parties organized a coalition (*Partidos Unidos*) for the presidential election of 1886, which was disbanded after its defeat. They would meet again in 1889 to organize the revolution against President Miguel Juárez Celman (1886-1890) that broke out the following year. The PAN, therefore, ruled for a decade practically without competition at the elections while the opposition centered their struggle in the pages of their dailies. Until now, this latter policy has been overlooked. Indeed, the demobilized political world of the 1880s has led to the interpretation of these years either as a period of acceptance (active or passive) by all groups of the main trends of the new ideological climate of the 1880s, or as years in which the ideological homogeneity was such that it could not be undermined by the isolated voices of powerless discordant groups.

It is argued in these pages that the ideological contentions that took place during the foundational decade of 'Modern Argentina' have remained unnoticed and that the perceived views on the ideological homogeneity reached during these years need to be reassessed. The main purpose of this paper is, therefore, to reconstruct the political and constitutional debates of the 1880s, particularly those between the party in government, the PAN, and the main

opposition parties, the Nationalist and the Autonomist. I focus on the arena where this debate took place: the party press. The voice of political parties and factions, created and financed by them, the party press represented a kind of journalism that did not survive into the twentieth century when it was gradually replaced by self-financing enterprises that claimed to conform to "modern" standards of "objectivity," to be committed to being an "independent" source of information (rather than opinion).<sup>6</sup> The nineteenth century party press of Argentina, like that of most other countries, however, had none of the characteristics of their successors. Financed by a political party or faction, their directors and staff worked for the party and, rather than providing the latest news, their role was to present the party's opinions. They were the principal tools by which a political organization spread its ideas, combated its adversaries, defended itself from the attacks of its opponents, and created their own identities.

These organs of partisan opinion were an essential part of the political world given that the effort to impose a particular representation of society and government, in competition with rival representations, is one of the fundamental forms of political struggle.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, these papers were the principal instruments of the legitimating process undertaken by all parties.<sup>8</sup> Presidents Julio A. Roca and Miguel Juárez Celman respectively employed *La Tribuna Nacional* (LTN) and *Sud-América* to launch a discourse, to propose and defend a set of ideas with which they attempted to generate the legitimacy of their rule. As we shall see, during this process, both presidents appealed to the idea of progress but employed the word with different meanings, ends and results. The disbandment of their party structures and the policy of abstention from the polls adopted by the two main opposition groups enhanced the function of their respective newspapers, *La Nación* and *El Nacional*, in creating the identity of these parties and in legitimating their opposition role. These party papers, therefore, provide a rich source with which to examine these processes.

The second purpose of this paper is to situate these debates and processes within the broader ideological landscape of late nineteenth century Argentina and examine their performative function within the political world of the 1880s. As we shall see, these debates occurred within a shared climate of ideas, which, nonetheless, did not dilute existing tensions common to a liberal creed permeated by different languages. Liberalism, in Argentina and elsewhere, has proved to be "capacious," and its inherently expanding character generated or allowed for ideological conflict.<sup>9</sup> Ideology is defined here as a

loose association of ideas destined to gain support, to construct shared beliefs, to generate enthusiasms and to inspire action. Ideologies define roles, rank values, and create identities for organizations grouped around them.<sup>10</sup> Thus, we look at ideas in their most descended form, in their interplay within the partisan world of the 1880s.

The first section analyzes the political discourse of the two administrations of the 1880s through the content of their party papers, LTN and *Sud-América*. While their discourses signaled the new climate of ideas, as we shall see, they were far from identical; indeed, significant tensions can be traced between them by paying particular attention to the manner whereby the same words were reformulated to convey different meanings. The second section reconstructs the discourses of the opposition launched by *La Nación* and *El Nacional*. While these discourses shared common ground, they also differed in the themes towards which they centered their attacks, as well as in the different content they invested to similar topics. After all, these two parties, now in opposition, had been competitors in previous decades and these prior trajectories marked departures in their opposition discourse in the 1880s as well as their employment of different strategies and different languages. The final section offers a series of reflexions on the implications of these debates in the context of the 1880s as well as on the wider ideological spectrum of the end of the century in Argentina.

### The PAN's Political Discourse

President Julio A. Roca launched his own newspaper, *La Tribuna Nacional* (LTN) a few days before entering office in October 1880. It had a press run of 5,000 copies and was financially backed by subscriptions from the national and provincial governments, as well as by credits from the National Bank and the usual system of subscribers among friends and sympathizers.<sup>11</sup> By launching his own newspaper, Roca showed that he had quickly learned from the mistakes of his predecessor, Nicolás Avellaneda (1874-1880), who also had been a president from the interior with little support in Buenos Aires. A newspaper was an essential tool in the political world of the time and, given the circumstances that surrounded Roca's election, *LTN* became one of the most important instruments of his presidency. His administration was inaugurated on 12 October, just four months after the Province of Buenos Aires had launched the most violent rev-



olution of the last quarter of the century in an attempt to prevent him from taking office. Roca now had to rule from a city he did not know well, where he had no friends and few acquaintances, with the local support of new political allies whom he did not entirely trust, and from a building in close proximity to the site where 20.000 men had entered into battle a few months earlier. More significantly, he had to rule from a city where public opinion could not be ignored, and where the political parties either bitterly opposed him or only reluctantly accepted him.<sup>12</sup> After the fall of Rosas, the press in Buenos Aires became one of the main protagonists of an effervescent republican life.<sup>13</sup> Almost one hundred periodicals and newspapers were published in Buenos Aires in 1872, a number which continued to rise dramatically in the following years. Among these publications, the political press played a crucial role. It consisted of a half a dozen dailies whose content and format was a hybrid between a pamphlet and a modern newspaper.<sup>14</sup> Published, staffed, and financed by the political parties and factions, the political press served as their respective mouthpieces. Through these dailies each political group expressed its opinion, attacked its opponents and attempted to influence the public debate. In the printing capital of the Republic, the opposition to Roca ran two of the most prestigious and successful papers of the time: *La Nación* and *El Nacional*.<sup>15</sup>

*LTV* became one of the most important political instruments of Roca's presidency. Through the newspaper the new President created his identity, promoted the government's goals, explained the values he supported, and attempted to shield himself from the attacks of his rivals. *LTV* was the medium he used to legitimate himself, that is, it was the site of those activities which all governments and political parties engage in to justify their actions, that define how they present themselves to the public, and make claims to authority.<sup>16</sup> *LTV* purported that it was not the official government newspaper, that its aim was not to inform on policies, decrees, or laws; and when Roca or his ministers published in it they did not sign their columns. *LTV* claimed time and again that it was the voice of the PAN, not the government, and that its intention was to enter the battleground of public debate on the same level as the other members of the party press. Naturally, the distinction between a party paper and the official paper of the government was not clear-cut; in the public imagination *LTV* was known as the newspaper of the President.

Through *LTV* Roca designed an image of change for his administration and of rupture with the past; both were instrumental as the campaign portrayed 1880 as the beginning of a new era, signaled by the arrival of progress.

As elsewhere, the idea of progress erupted with force in Argentina at the end of the century.<sup>17</sup> However, while progress was a prominent term in the ideological spectrum of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, its meaning and popularity varied broadly from country to country, as well as among contesting voices within each country. In Argentina, different sectors of the elite used progress with different connotations, whether they be in the “scientific professions” or politicians. And though it was once thought that the term’s constant appearance in the public language of the time was a sign of the triumph of positivism over liberalism, we now know that far from being hegemonic, positivism in Argentina manifested itself in weak, fragmented, and vague terms, both among the scientific professions and even more so, I argue, among the political groups.<sup>18</sup> Traces of the language of – to use the more precise term-- “scientific politics” can easily be detected, particularly in the second half of the 1880s, but this language was sporadic and unintentional; that is, it was employed without any explicit awareness of its theoretical implications nor with any reference to the theoretical works that had stronger impact in other Latin American countries, particularly Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela.<sup>19</sup>

Time and again, when *LTV* appealed to the language of progress, it stressed that the meaning of progress should not be reduced to material development, the construction of roads and bridges, the arrival of immigrants and credit, or the extension of the railway. When the government spoke of progress it meant the moral development of the people. Progress affected individuals and society in ways that went well beyond material gains: it fostered a work ethic in the individual, respect for the law and love of peace, and thus strengthened society’s conservative feelings for leading an orderly life.<sup>20</sup> Progress also had positive political consequences that were reflected in the institutions individuals build for themselves: modern societies develop the wisdom to implement good laws, and so they distinguish themselves from backward countries through their aptitude for reflection and through the accountability of governments to citizens.<sup>21</sup>

The newspaper departed from a, by then, well-established view of human nature, that men are internally torn between passions and interests. The effects of progress – on the individual, on society, on institution building – arose from the restraining effect that the conservative interests fostered by economic development exercised over men’s passions.<sup>22</sup> *LTV* insisted that these passions represented men’s dark destructive tendencies -- negative impulses which expressed themselves through politics and were channeled through the political

parties. Politics was responsible for destruction, hatred and war. *LTV* argued that the current government was successful because it acknowledged that the destructive passions of politics could only be tamed by developing society's conservative interests. It was material progress that brought about moral progress, not the other way around; it was through economic development that civilizations were built.<sup>23</sup>

According to *LTV*, in Argentina this far reaching impact of economic progress began to be felt, precisely, since 1880. Previously, politics had been characterized by intolerance, violence and disorder and every attempt to build good and stable institutions had perished in the flames ignited by political passions, and encouraged by the political parties.<sup>24</sup> However, only two years after Roca had assumed the presidency, *LTV* confidently announced that an inalterable peace prevailed throughout the country; governors, senators and deputies were regularly elected in all provinces without the violence and coercion that had marred elections in recent years. The old politics of intolerance and hatred had given way to mutual acceptance and understanding. The people were now adverse to party strife: "each day that goes by, the intransigence disappears, tensions are dissolved and resistance is eliminated."<sup>25</sup> By fostering commerce and industry, the government had eradicated the foundations for anarchy. As the newspaper heralded, "the time of politics as drama is over. There are no more idle multitudes plotting revolts."<sup>26</sup>

In the government's public discourse, progress not only brought peace and civilization but fostered civil and political liberties as well. Modern economists taught, *LTN* argued, that freedom and the rule of law were the result of economic progress. It was not the case that economic development could take place only when the law and civil and political liberties were respected; in fact, it was love of work and caring for one's enterprise that led people to appreciate the advantages of order, good government, and personal freedom: "it is not hard to see that greater guarantees and liberty exist among the people where habits of work are more developed and where the fruits of industry are more abundant, and that these values are more precarious [...] where the revitalizing currents of progress have not yet penetrated."<sup>27</sup> Thus, in the discourse of the PAN, the word progress had a wide meaning and the effects of progress were far-reaching. According to *LTV*, progress contributed to the development of good work habits in the individual, fostered love of order, helped to establish good governments with just laws, and brought about peace and liberty.

Naturally, in the discourse of *LTV*, Roca was hailed as the single man responsible for the arrival of progress. Roca had “given national activity a new and fertile direction in the glorious and pacific feats of work and progress, converting the energies that used to be wasted on bloody destructive struggles into an element of life and reproduction.”<sup>28</sup> *LTV* insisted that these achievements were all the more impressive if the current situation was viewed in contrast with the situation of Argentina from Independence to the present, and proceeded to proclaim its own vision of Argentina’s history. This view began by bemoaning an appalling colonial legacy that “left us with neither political education, orderly habits, regular institutions of government, a proper legislative system, love for work, commerce, nor industry;”<sup>29</sup> and proceeded on to an endless list of attempts at state-building, each of which had been extinguished by the flames provoked by political passions, “a history of infighting, misfortunes, and martyrs.”<sup>30</sup> According to the newspaper, the errors of the post revolutionary period had been caused by political passions which had led the country from the horrors of anarchy to the clutches of tyranny, and once the most basic problems appeared to have been resolved with the adoption of the 1853 Constitution, years of potential progress were wasted as bloody revolutions erupted, inaugurating a period of misfortunes that reached its peak in the confrontation of 1880. Fortunately, the last of Argentina’s great problems had found a permanent solution and the generous sentiment of nationalism triumphed over the mean sentiment of localism. In the pages of *LTV*, this happy ending to the tortured tale of Argentine history was, naturally, attributed to General Roca. Thanks to Roca and his party the country had left behind the “age of inexperience” and successfully reached “the age of reflection and calm [...] which eliminates chimerical abstractions, which runs from dangerous illusions and seeks practical solutions.”<sup>31</sup> The country had entered a stage similar to that of great nations that had triumphed in making the great leap from the Middle Ages into Modern times.

*LTV*’s version of Argentine history was marked by a series of peculiar characteristics. It was not a story of state building, in which a group of men against adversity fought to construct a nation, as in the narrative of the Founding Fathers in the United States. In Roca’s interpretation the central character in the country’s history was progress, and the story was told in terms of the struggle of progress to open a path against the obstacles set by political passions. Another significant aspect of *LTV*’s vision of Argentina’s past was the variety of functions that this narrative was intended to fulfill. The most obvious function

was to highlight daily the Roca administration's achievements, offering a detailed list of the fruits of progress that the country had purportedly enjoyed since the first day of his presidency. The need to build on a discourse of greatness, honor, and triumph for Roca and to contrast it with a dark past demonstrates, above all, the urgency with which the newspaper sought to construct a reputation for the new government. This reputation was to be built on an abrupt division between the past and the present. In the *LTV*'s version, Roca's administration did not intend to build on the work of its predecessors, it was not going to improve upon an enterprise that was already in course before he came to power. The newspaper did not present the PAN to the public as a party with a prestigious lineage and roots in previous presidencies. On the contrary, it was recreated as a completely new and modern organization, founded at the outset of 1880 and with no contact with the past. *LTV* reconstructed the past, which was portrayed as at once near and distant—chronologically near but distanced by the breach between backwardness and progress.

While, progress was a significant feature in *LTV*'s public discourse, the process of legitimization of Roca's presidency was not limited to saluting the arrival of progress and its wide-ranging effects. Side by side with a discourse on progress, *LTV* deployed a strategy of reputation building based on the President's strict compliance with the constitution in his exercise of power.<sup>32</sup> This strategy was developed in response to opposition attacks. As we shall later see, *La Nación* rejected the PAN's ideas on progress and questioned the president's legitimacy, while *El Nacional* charged that the Roca administration had violated the spirit of the national constitution. The constitutional discourse unfolded by *LTV* to counteract these attacks was centered on three key features of the institutional system which were the target of the opposition attack: 1) the principle of representation; 2) the role of political parties, and 3) the federal system of government.<sup>33</sup>

1) As we shall see, one of *La Nación*'s main attacks upon the Roca administration was that, from the moment of his election, Roca had violated the principle of representation. For the newspaper, Roca's candidacy had been imposed by a League of Governors over the will of the people, and since entering office, the President had used fraud to continue to manipulate the electoral system. *LTV* defended Roca by sidestepping the circumstances surrounding the 1880 presidential election, and so avoided reopening wounds Roca preferred to heal. As for the accusations of electoral fraud, instead of denying the

existence of fraud, *LTV* opted for insisting that electoral vices had been a permanent aspect of the electoral process. The paper asked, "Or are we to be told that there used to be an old and sound, established education in politics, a tradition of clean suffrage that was lost with the country's moral and political development?"<sup>34</sup> If *La Nación* chose to question the government on the grounds of electoral fraud, *LTV* stated, it was only to justify Mitre's decision to abstain from the polls which had been adopted solely to mask the disarray within his own party ranks. Fraud had been a permanent feature of the electoral process, in Argentina and elsewhere, and to back these words the paper reprinted complaints raised following prior elections in the country, as well as extracts from similar objections against corrupt electoral procedures published in the United States, England, and Spain.<sup>35</sup>

While the opposition blamed Roca for the unsavory aspects of the elections, *LTV* placed the blame on the people's lack of education and on the political parties themselves. *LTV* estimated that of an electorate of 400,000 citizens, 300,000 did not know how to read or write, a situation which the parties exploited to gather votes in a system of universal male suffrage. After long and repetitive editorials on the subject, *LTV* concluded that the solution to this problem did not lie in changing the electoral laws, or in restricting the vote, but in a long and gradual process of education. Therefore, the paper claimed, Roca's administration was doing more to improve the situation than previous governments; by opening the gates to progress it enabled the gradual improvement in the welfare of the people.<sup>36</sup>

Elections in Argentina, while necessary, by their very nature were not yet sufficient for investing legitimacy upon those candidate that emerged victorious; they were still far from structuring a consensual transfer of power from subjects to rulers.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, *LTV*'s strategy was to try to legitimate Roca's presidency by appealing to the constitutionality of his exercise of power rather than the electoral origins of his rule. "The Constitution of the Republic," the paper constantly stressed, "guarantees freedom of thought, freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom of speech, freedom of industry, freedom of government, etc. Is any one of these liberties suspended or surprised in the Republic?"<sup>38</sup> Time and again, *LTV* appealed to the 'inverted principle of representation' by which the sovereignty of the people is guaranteed through the exercise of government rather than by the source of its power. The paper explained this concept to its opponents in the following way:

Legislation, government initiatives, the congressional debate, and the relentless and lively action of the Executive are not elements produced by tyrannies, imported to the country like manufactured goods, or the product of imaginary visions, but the expression of the public sovereignty in whose name we rule. *This is the representative system from the point of view of universal doctrine and from the point of view of our organization.*<sup>39</sup>

2) The role that politics and political parties were to play in the new, Modern Argentina was another recurring theme in the pages of *LTV*. Both citizens and the opposition parties had to be taught, it was argued, that old political practices were incompatible with the new era. Given that the country had set out on the road to progress in 1880, the function of politics was to make the path smoother by pre-empting potential conflicts between factions. Those who conceived of politics as a dispute between the "truth and error, between good and bad," had been confused by "one of the most absurd sophisms invented by political passion."<sup>40</sup> The opposition was mistaken in thinking that public agitation was synonymous with political freedom, *LTV* argued. On the contrary, public agitation "suspends the course of the economic and moral interests of the country, ends stability and safety and suspends all legal safeguards."<sup>41</sup> *LTV* insisted that it was necessary "to humanize the political struggle and the impatience of the political parties, and to spread more rational and practical concepts."<sup>42</sup> Since politics was a matter of resolving practical questions, political parties were to have a more limited role. They were defined, by the PAN as "associations of an incidental kind", necessary only for helping a candidate attain office. Once this end was achieved, the political party should be dissolved until the next election "in order to return peace to society (...) which cannot withstand the unnecessary strain for very long."<sup>43</sup>

It should be noted, however, that while *LTV* stated that politics and political parties should play a more modest role in the new era, it also sustained that political parties had a central role to play in the republican form of government.<sup>44</sup> Political parties, "far from being an evil or a symptom of weakness, are a prime condition of freedom [...] the same way that uniformity and public indifference are signs of oppression."<sup>45</sup> The models for what political parties should look like were to be found abroad, in England and the United States, where, it was claimed, they force governments to be accountable and contributed to the

political debates of their times. *LTV* pleaded to the Argentine political parties to transform themselves from being vehicles for personal passions and tools of destruction to being prime elements in a republican government, thereby rationally contributing to institution building in the country.<sup>46</sup>

3) The federal system was another topic that *LTV*, mainly in response to its opponents, examined in detail.<sup>47</sup> As we shall see, *El Nacional* denounced that provinces had increasingly lost their autonomy under a system of one-party rule and as a result of the process of centralization of power that Roca had pursued since taking office. Against this charge, *LTV* insisted that Roca showed the utmost respect for the principle of *self-government* (sic) in the provinces. To prove this, it pointed to the relatively small number of federal interventions that had taken place under his administration.<sup>48</sup> However, *LTV* also hurried to explain that this did not mean that the President restrained himself from exercising influence in the internal affairs of the provinces, only that he chose to do this by other means he considered more legitimate. He provided personal advice to his friends in the provinces and, in cases of serious conflict (such as a revolt in one of the provinces), the President's policy was to seek a solution outside the institutional arena. For example, in 1882, when a revolt broke out to overthrow the Governor of the Province of Corrientes, Roca went personally to the Province and succeeded in mediating an agreement between the opposing groups. When the opposition newspapers in Buenos Aires rushed to denounce Roca's interference in provincial affairs in violation of their autonomy, *LTV* praised the actions of a President who "with his sole presence had succeeded in putting out the fire."<sup>49</sup> And when a few months later Roca's intrusion swayed a heated election for the governorship of Entre Ríos in favor of his candidate, *LTV* defended the President's policy as employing peaceful means to achieve peaceful ends in marked contrast with his three predecessors.

Thus, Roca defended his interference in the provinces by raising the exercise of personal influence to constitutional doctrine. This doctrine defended personal and informal intrusion as an improvement over prior practices in which the army, revolts, and federal interventions were the tools by which presidents had imposed their allies in the provincial governments. A personal suggestion or timely advice from the President was claimed to be superior as means and ends and, furthermore, fit perfectly with the Constitution as they showed greater respect for the federal form of government.



The practical implications of the PAN's ideology were significant: it established a hierarchy and web of values on which the government based its policies and it provided the administrations of the 1880s and the PAN with a well-defined identity. Roca's legitimacy was jointly based on the idea of progress and the constitutional exercise of his rule. In January 1887, less than three months after Juárez had taken office, *LTV* proudly published the final balance of Roca's administration. In its view, the country had already successfully completed its first phase of evolution: "Its society tends to acquire the forms of a defined organism: its government is democratic; power is divided; its diverse parts had their functions allocated and an institutional spirit dominates over all the parts. What is left to be done?," *LTV* asked. The answer was, "to continue on this path.... in one word, to do more of the same."<sup>50</sup> Naturally, the review was aimed not only at Roca's performance but also at marking the path that Juárez, the new President, should follow. As we shall now see, however, Juárez had different plans.

To date, the ideologies of the two presidents of the 1880s have been portrayed as identical, without distinctions to speak of between them. Random quotes from their public speeches and their respective newspapers have been employed, indistinguishably, as representative of the climate of ideas during the period. Comparative studies have stressed the remarkable homogeneity of the ideology of the party in government in Argentina in contrast to contemporary Mexico, Brazil and Chile.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, while the rivalry between Roca and Juárez has received attention, this contest has been reduced to a power struggle for the country's leadership with no reference to ideological differences.<sup>52</sup>

*Sud-América* was Juárez Celman's official paper from his campaign for the presidency in 1885 through his resignation from office in August 1890.<sup>53</sup> More than any other party paper, *Sud-América* actively created the product it spoke for: every word emitted by the President, every action and every policy was reproduced, explained, displayed, justified and re-elaborated with insistence daily in the paper.<sup>54</sup> The style of the paper was in direct line with its conception of the press and public opinion. Unlike *La Nación*, which portrayed itself as the sole representative of the public opinion, *Sud-América* saw its role as the maker of opinion, not its representative. That was, according to the paper, "the true role of the papers: they discuss, they shed light on issues, they

examine these issues according to their own points of view and to their passions, to form opinion, not to represent it."<sup>55</sup> To form opinion in favor of the President was, therefore, the papers explicit role. In doing so, the editorial content *Sud-América* was much less thoughtful than other papers editorials and its tone was even more combative. *Sud-América* showed no mercy for its opponents, it did not hesitate to antagonize rivals, to deepen schisms, and to create an abyss, and the paper was not interested in healing wounds. The costs of this policy were soon seen. As we shall see, *Sud-América* created for the President the title of "*jefe único del partido único*," and the political isolation that this creation entailed was one of the main artifices behind the circumstances that forced Juárez to leave office in August 1890, less than for years after stepping into power.

One crucial aspect of *juarismo* was the manner in which it pushed certain concepts of the previous administration to their limits. Notions of peace, order and progress, the role of the political parties, and the country's past were reformulated in *Sud-América* to adapt to Juárez's style. Initially, during the first months of his administration, for example, *Sud-América* celebrated the arrival of progress with a similar tone as LTN had.<sup>56</sup> Gradually, however, the repetition of familiar formulas gave way to more extreme expressions. In 1887, *Sud-América* declared that "apart from the United States, there is no other example of a people [...] who have reached the greatness of the Argentine nation," and "faced with the resounding spectacle of the present era," the paper incited its readers to "stand up and sing out to this our homeland, our blessed homeland."<sup>57</sup> In another of its typical expressions, the celebration went as follows:

The railways are spreading through the territory, powerful industries are starting up, numerous credit establishments are opening, the value of land increases a hundred fold, Argentine funds take the markets by storm, the public debt diminishes, official income increases in surprising amounts, commerce is increasingly successful, immigrants arrive and settle, throughout the whole country there is a feeling of well-being provided by work and trust which the government of order, administration and liberty inspires. *We are the greatest and happiest nation of South America.*<sup>58</sup>

The countless articles on progress published by *Sud-América* are not only remarkable for their exaggerated, enthusiastic, arrogant tone, but also for their diffusion of a lineal view of history. While *LTN* underlined the fragility of the

present times, constantly reminding its readers that any turmoil could send the country back to the darkness of previous years, *Sud-América* insisted that such days were definitively over and that even its opponents, "will have to agree that the Nation is fast fulfilling its great destiny."<sup>59</sup> *LTV* had made its reconstruction of Argentina's history one of the favorite topics in its pages; *Sud-América*, however, seldom harked back further than Mitre's administration (1862-1868).<sup>60</sup> Its brief, sporadic references to Argentine history were aimed at pointing out the place this young President was filling in the Republic: he represented "a new bloodline, a new sap, a new life";<sup>61</sup> he was Argentina's moment of splendor. The myth of a country "condemned to progress," which would remain in the public imagination for decades to come, had in *Sud-América* one of its main makers.

Nonetheless, it was in their conceptions of politics, the exercise of power, the role of political parties and the federal system that we discover the main ideological contrasts between the two administrations of the 1880s. These contrasts not only concerned how the same topic were addressed in the two publications, but also how themes prominent in one paper were notably absent in the other. One example is the principle of representation. The opposition parties launched the same attacks on Juárez that they had directed against Roca. Juárez was Roca's brother-in-law, elected thanks to his support, making him an easy target for charges of nepotism. But while *LTV* dedicated long pages to legitimating Roca by stressing that the people's sovereignty was guaranteed by the constitutionality of Roca's rule, *Sud-América* completely ignored the topic of representative government. The paper made no reference to the manner in which Juárez had been elected to office and ignored the attacks of the opposition on the violation of the people's sovereignty.

On the themes that *Sud-América* chose to expand, the contrasts with *LTV* are notable. For example, *Sud-América* stressed the role that politics and political parties were to have in the new era. The paper departed from the doctrines advanced by *LTV* which attributed a more limited role to parties and publicly called for opposition parties to transform themselves from being channels of destructive passions into essential components of the republican form of government.<sup>62</sup> In his first speech to inaugurate the sessions of Congress -- this address being the single most important presidential speech each year-- Juárez stated that "true and healthy politics consists, simply, in administration" and refrained from further reference to the political and institutional life of the country, traditionally the centerpiece of presidential addresses to Congress.<sup>63</sup> On the same occasion the following year, he went even further by celebrat-

ing the end of politics in the country while recommending that the congressmen should not “busy themselves with the discussions of political bills that the country is not demanding.”<sup>64</sup> *Sud-América* echoed and developed this presidential doctrine, sustaining that “public indifference is the best testimony to the progress public opinion has made.”<sup>65</sup> In reply to the opposition’s charges against the lack of political life, the paper insisted that this was a positive sign that Argentina “had left the wrong path and had turned to productive work in search of the satisfaction of its needs through reproductive labor.”<sup>66</sup> In a similar vein, *Sud-América* proudly announced:

Above many other nations of the globe, the Argentine Republic has the immense privilege of not having political parties to divide its citizens by questions of radical principle. [...] Here there are no Conservatives and Liberals, there are no *Whigs* and *Tories*, there are no Republicans and Democrats.<sup>67</sup>

It should be noticed that *Sud-América’s* celebration of the end of politics was not the festive expression of a general consensus finally reached between old enemies. It was a celebration based on the victory of some who had vanquished others; it was a celebration based on antagonism not conciliation. Indeed, one of the many paradoxes of the period was that neither Juárez nor his paper intended to construct a system of supreme power by winning over new allies and bringing on board the reluctant or the independent. Rather, *Sud-América* pursued a politics of exclusion and extreme hostility: old divisions were exacerbated and new ones were crudely and unnecessarily created during the four years of his government. On his path to the presidency, the sharpest arrows had been directed against Juárez’s main rival, Dardo Rocha, until the paper declared him “A Finished Issue”, as the relevant headline labeled it.<sup>68</sup> Once in power, *Sud-América* did not hesitate to reopen the wounds that had been inflicted during Roca’s presidency upon the relationship between the State and the Catholic Church. The discussion in Congress during the second half of 1888 on the law of civil marriage gave rise to new debates about the institutional powers of the Church. *Sud-América* showed no trepidation in publishing during the second half of 1888 declarations such as, “the clergy is generally ignorant and of less than mediocre intelligence”,<sup>69</sup> while simultaneously referring to colleagues in the Catholic press as “those wimps at La Unión.”<sup>70</sup>

Nor did *Sud-América* make any attempt to heal the old division between Buenos Aires and the Interior, which had reemerged during the 1886 presi-

dential campaign due to the geographic distribution of competing political groups. Initially, the main contenders for the presidency came from the PAN: Dardo Rocha (Governor and later Senator of the Province of Buenos Aires), Bernardo de Irigoyen (Roca's Minister of Foreign Affairs and of the Interior), and Juárez himself (Governor and later Senator of the Province of Córdoba). In mid 1885, once it became obvious that Roca supported Juárez as candidate of the PAN, Rocha and Irigoyen joined forces with Mitre's Nationalist Party and with the recently formed Catholic Union. Once again, the country's regional competition took place in the contest for the Presidency. Juárez portrayed himself as the candidate from the provinces, while the opposition, grouped together under *Partidos Unidos*, had its main stronghold in the city and Province of Buenos Aires. *Sud-América* portrayed the porteño opposition as the remnants of an era that refused to die and its defenders as "feeble explosions of old localism, rickety crowds fed by senile sap." "The gross, intolerant and harmful metropolitanism," the paper continued, "cannot resign itself to sit back and watch in silence the political and administrative work of the party," despising a President who had not been raised on Calle Florida or in the *Club del Progreso*, the social symbols of *porteño* society.<sup>71</sup> Bartolomé Mitre was another regular victim of the paper's attacks, targeted as the main example of the "old localism."<sup>72</sup> Yesterday's defeated "old men" were contrasted with today's triumphant youth – as the paper observed, "on old tombs, how many new inscriptions."<sup>73</sup> In contrast, Juárez's party was said to be made up of "the most educated youth in the Republic and of liberal progressive men who do not use their age and experience as the only legitimate qualification for serving the country. Young men in line with advanced ideas and modern spirits."<sup>74</sup>

An opposition defeated and in disarray was an easy target for *Sud-América*. To these fragments, the paper recommended "sit back and watch in silence" the workings of the new President.<sup>75</sup> The obstacle to construct Juárez's supreme power, however, arose not from a weak opposition but from Julio Roca's strong leadership over the PAN. Roca had supported Juárez candidacy to the presidency thinking that he could easily return to office in 1892. In the meantime, he made sure that all provinces responded to him, that he remained the president of the PAN and that LTN was his own mouthpiece, not the PAN's. However, a few months after entering office, divisions soon arose inside the party between roquistas and juaristas, those loyal to Roca and those who saw the opportunity to reshape party politics around the new President. Soon, governors began to switch loyalties. Juárez, for his part, announced that he would remain aloof

from party politics and that he would not intervene in the political affairs of the provinces. Many interpreted this as a sign of freedom to handle local affairs as they thought fit and proceeded even to attack Roca's allies. *Sud-América* was crucial in the antagonism that emerged between *roquistas* and *juaristas*. It was in its pages that the idea to debunk Roca from the presidency of the PAN and to name Juárez "*jefe único del partido único*" materialized.

The process was tactfully initiated in October 1887 on the occasion of the celebration of Juárez's first year in power. Then, *Sud-América* stated that, despite similarities, Juárez Celman's administration was not an "exact continuation of the ideas, men, and administrative criteria of General Roca's government."<sup>76</sup> Two months later, *Sud-América* fully launched the doctrine that the presidential candidate of a party was that party's leader who, upon becoming President, continued to be the leader of his party.<sup>77</sup> The topic of party leadership came up again in October 1887 when Roca, after more than a year abroad, returned to Argentina. *Sud-América's* editorials became more aggressive, stating that: "The Autonomist Party which recognized General Roca as its leader no longer exists. It was replaced by the Partido Nacional – a name first used by Dr. Juárez Celman when he accepted to be presidential candidate, and therefore it is perfectly understandable that the party should recognize him as its leader."<sup>78</sup> The article ended by assuring "*that even General Roca recognized that Juárez is the leader of the National Party.*" The repetition of these concepts was accompanied by countless proclamations by all of the governors of adherence to the one and only leader published in the paper.<sup>79</sup>

The "*unicato*," the term used in the public debate between 1888 and 1890 to refer to the concept of "*jefe único del partido único*," was, in fact, a conception of the exercise of government and politics which had been practiced since the very start of Juárez Celman's administration.<sup>80</sup> The construction of the absolute power of a leader over his party and of the President over his country was in this case done by antagonizing and excluding opponents who resisted him and by demanding the public adherence of those who embraced him. *Sud-América's* celebration of the absence of political parties in Argentina was, in reality, the festive announcement of the existence of a single-party, that of Juárez.

The building of a system of absolute power had significant implications for the federal system, an institutional framework designed, precisely, to create and to divide the power of the national government and to protect the autonomy of the provinces. Juárez, however, had his own reading of federal-

ism. One notorious feature in the pages of *Sud-América* is the regular, central and long editorials that described in detail the political and economic situation of the provinces. In contrast to other papers, including even LTN, *Sud-América* dedicated long articles to an exaggerated inventory of the growth and transformations that it claimed had taken place in regions far away from its porteño readers. Naturally, praise was lavished upon friendly provinces whereas governors who hesitated to publicly express their loyalty to the President were attacked from the pages of *Sud-América*.<sup>81</sup> But *Sud-América* demanded payback for generosity to friendly regions, and the newspaper regularly reproduced endless telegrams of support sent by the provinces to the President and reported in minute detail on an endless series of banquets allegedly held in all corners of the Republic in honor of Juárez. Hand in hand with these symbolic expressions of allegiance, *Sud-América* also unfurled Juárez's definition of federalism:

The Argentine Constitution has very clearly defined the relationships between the Governors and the President of the Republic, establishing that the former are *the natural agents of the federal government*, creating a national power, until recently unknown, that at present is recognized and proclaimed from one extreme of the nation to the other. The provinces recognize, in turn the benefits which are owed to this power and the extent of its contribution to this rapid rise to national greatness, ensuring order and peace, which has permitted the development of industry and prosperity and an increase in public wealth.<sup>82</sup>

*Sud-América*, in this way, redefined the federal system of the 1853 Constitution, replacing the original idea of division and mutual control of power with the principle of submission of provincial governments to the President. According to the paper, this fortunate transformation had been made possible because all of the governors belonged to the *Partido Nacional*, guaranteeing order in the exercise of government and the tranquil renewal of provincial authorities.<sup>83</sup> The wealth and growth attained were offered as proof of the benefits of transforming a federal regime into a *de facto* unitary form of government.<sup>84</sup>

While Roca had attempted to reach consensus and to attract old opponents to his side, Juárez's idea of the "*jefe único del partido único*" was unilaterally imposed by contrasting antagonistic formulas: progressive liberalism

versus spiritual obscurantism; the Nation versus Buenos Aires; the Partido Nacional versus a nonexistent opposition; young versus old; Juárez's men against Roca's; Juárez against the rest. The creation of *juarism* was based on the construction of these antagonisms as well as the constant adulation of the country's sole leader. At the beginning of each year, the newspaper dedicated several pages to the transcription of telegrams congratulating the President on the occasion, and this was repeated on each of the President's birthdays and on every anniversary of his government's inauguration. Every 12 October, the beginning of a new year of his administration, was celebrated in *Sud-América* with long "reports" listing the President's achievements; elaboration on these reports filled the pages of the paper for the rest of the month. The paper wasted no opportunity to also detail the President's private activities, emphasizing how in Juárez's presidency, "the most agreeable hours of social life are spent," describing in detail the music listened to and the entertainment offered by a host who outshone himself with his "affability of character and the elevation of his spirit."<sup>85</sup> Even when he had been in office for years, *Sud-América* continued to highlight the intelligence and qualities of the young Dr. President. The constant adulation of the *jefe único del partido único* was an essential aspect of *juarismo*, of the legitimating process of a President whose candidacy and post was relentlessly questioned by his opponents.

### The Voices of the Opposition

The strongest opposition to the PAN came from two traditional parties of Buenos Aires, Bartolomé Mitre's old Partido Liberal, by then known as *Nacionalista*, and the *porteño* Autonomists.<sup>86</sup> In protest against the government, they decided to abstain from electoral competition, concentrating their opposition in the columns of their newspapers, *La Nación* and *El Nacional*.

By the time Roca came to power, *La Nación* was ten years old, was owned by Bartolomé Mitre and, as a business enterprise it was a success.<sup>87</sup> Each of these facts were in themselves exceptional characteristics at a time when newspapers had very short life spans, were owned by a series of shareholders and, as business adventures, mostly ended in failure. Furthermore, *La Nación* was unique among peers because it successfully combined two features: it was a forerunner in the transition to becoming a modern newspaper and it was also a party paper.<sup>88</sup> By 1887 it printed 18,000 copies per day and it ran neck and



neck with *La Prensa* as the most widely read and respected newspaper in Argentina. Its format, finances, and part of its content were typical of a modern paper: its pages had an up-to-date design, it was financed through advertising and its content was primarily dedicated to news information, both national and international. Nonetheless, publicly identified with Mitre, the editorial line was Mitre's party line; one of the paper's prime roles was to wave the party flag exposing its general principles and its position on everyday events. *La Nación* was "Don Bartolo's newspaper," as his adversaries liked to call it, and the contents of its political editorials were the expressions of the Nationalist Party.

*La Nación* was the most important opposition paper in the 1880s. Its role went far beyond the obvious data on press runs and its reputation. As it liked to remind its readers, *La Nación* not only represented the political group with the longest history in the short life of the Republic but also the only group that had remained firmly in opposition throughout the entire decade, unlike the comings and goings of other factions and their publications. The presidential elections of April 1880 and the revolution that followed two months later had left the Nationalist Party on the losing side, yet the party suffered more from the defeat than did the paper. From that moment on, to demonstrate its rejection of what it considered to be an illegitimate government, the Nationalist Party adopted on principle abstention from elections, sustaining this stance throughout the whole decade.<sup>89</sup> In this context, given the party's policy of electoral abstention, *La Nación* became the sole and exclusive instrument of opposition, and the party gave the paper the responsibility of "keeping alive that sacred fire"<sup>90</sup> of maintaining republican fortitude against an official discourse that praised demobilization.<sup>91</sup>

One of the main features of *La Nación's* content was its defense of the right of revolution, openly calling the people throughout the decade to raise arms against an illegitimate government. The Nationalist Party had possessed a revolutionary tradition that went back to the revolution of 1874, it had been the protagonist in the revolution of 1880 against "Roca's imposition," and would later lead the coalition that organized the July Revolution of 1890 to put an end to Juárez's presidency.<sup>92</sup> *La Nación* defended the right to revolt in conservative terms: either in government or in opposition, the Nationalist Party "has always been doctrinaire, constitutional and conservative, like its patriotic proposals."<sup>93</sup> There was a fight against "the real rebels who rose up against legality and the law, who pretend to push justice aside and to impose their own whim arbitrari-

ly."<sup>94</sup> While *LTN* pursued a campaign which stressed peace and order, accusing *La Nación* and its circle of a discourse that put the very existence of the Republic at risk, *La Nación* accused the government of provoking a civil war, "as it is not possible for a free country to have candidates who do not enjoy the people's support, forcibly imposed upon them."<sup>95</sup>

In an editorial entitled "The Cause of the Evil", published in July 1880, *La Nación* outlined the source of the Republic's malaise: "while the people do not choose their authorities, while the authorities interfere in the election process, it is mere illusion to believe that peace has been achieved."<sup>96</sup> It was the violation of the principle of representative government that made the administrations of the 1880s unconstitutional; the cause of the evil was not the essentially bellicose nature of the country's politics, as preached by *LTN*, but the absence of free suffrage.<sup>97</sup> This same absence in the past had justified the revolutions of 1874 and 1880, and the same argument would be raised again when defending the right to revolt in July 1890. For *La Nación*, what divided the political parties in Argentina was not fundamental differences in the principles of organization of the Republic, but the electoral question.<sup>98</sup> On the one hand there was the Liberal or Nationalist Party, upholding the banner of free suffrage since 1874, on the other the PAN, which had the power in its hands to put an end to the violation of suffrage, but refused to do so.

Jointly with the outcry over the absence of free suffrage, *La Nación* also denounced the disappearance of political life that resulted from the PAN's "electoral machine's" monopoly of power. With their calls to demobilization, with their praise of the absence of party strife, the government "wants to reach uniformity through exclusion, that is by a depressing unanimity."<sup>99</sup> *La Nación* raised a republican plea to shake up "all those content to live without a voice, without a vote, with no power over their daily actions, those sort of deaf-mutes or idiots of politics who betray their civic duties."<sup>100</sup>

For the paper, Roca and Juárez based their governments on the wrong premises by equating progress with material development. The greatest conquests were institutional in character; compared to them material progress was hardly relevant: "order, progress, work, security, and justice can only be solidly established in a country ruled by institutions based on reason and justice and under the influence of a government limited by law."<sup>101</sup> However, *La Nación* accused Roca's administration of having made no reference on any occasion to concepts like justice and freedom. Indeed, his government's slogan of "Peace

and Administration," contained no mention of justice and liberty, concepts fundamental to its achievement.<sup>102</sup> *La Nación* proposed an alternative reading of progress. Progress would be achieved not by the absence of party strife and by leaving the people to pursue material gains, but precisely through the participation and clashes of the different political forces, "improving in this way the ideas, the means, the institutions and the general condition of the country."<sup>103</sup> These were the teachings of Edmund Burke, Thomas Macaulay, and Alexis de Tocqueville and other equally relevant sources, the paper claimed, and these teachings could be found in Argentina's own history of political and institutional struggles.<sup>104</sup>

Progress is achieved through liberty, the empire of justice and the law, and through the influence and the exercise of democratic institutions given that these considerably improve the conditions of individuals and society to better fulfill their aims.<sup>105</sup>

*La Nación* also hurried to counter attack *LTVs* vision of the country's past as a struggle for progress against the destructive tendencies of the political passions until Roca came to power.<sup>106</sup> Instead, hers was a story of the long struggle to build republican institutions that would best guarantee the people's freedom. In its longer version, this history covered the 1820's, Rivadavia, the 1826 Constitution, "tyranny", Caseros and Pavón. The shorter version started off with national organization, placing particular emphasis on the revolutions of September 1874, "in the name of suppressed institutions,"<sup>107</sup> and of June 1880 against the League of Governors, ending with the subsequent suppression of public liberties and political life.<sup>108</sup> The leading role was, naturally, reserved for the Nationalist Party. While through *LTV* the PAN presented itself as a new party, with no contact with the past, the Nationalist Party portrayed itself as an organization with long and deep roots in the country's history that could be traced to Bernardino Rivadavia's Unitary Party and whose heroic struggle were portrayed in the following terms:<sup>109</sup>

The Liberal Party first fought against tyranny, spilling its own blood from Buenos Aires to Jujuy; and heroically struggled for nine years locked up inside the walls of Montevideo; it fought in Caseros and, on the 11 of September, it returned liberty to Buenos Aires and her sisters, triumphing later in Pavón, and introducing for the first time the united Republic, with her fourteen provinces, under the empire of a single law.

La *Nación's* fight to impose its own view of Argentine history was not insignificant in the ideological battles of the 1880s. The PAN's version was that of the struggle for progress, dating its arrival precisely to the year 1880 and identifying Roca as the single person responsible for its achievement. *La Nación's* history of Argentina was constructed on an institutional axis, as the fight for free institutions against tyranny, a struggle in which the Liberal or Nationalist Party was the sole champion. This story was also used to contrast the current civic indifference with a not so distant past full of lively debate where virtuous people exercised their public liberties. If the PAN's version of history achieved hegemony, 1880 would remain as the starting point of Modern Argentina, the beginning of a new history in which the Nationalist Party had no place. *La Nación* fought to sustain a longer, republican history of the country which provided the Nationalist Party with a leading role and where the story of recent republican glory gave meaning to the policy of electoral abstention that the party had adopted in 1880 in protest against the new regime.

The complaints about the current situation grew louder during Juárez Celman's administration as the doctrines and realities of Roca's government were said to become even cruder. Writing in 1887, *La Nación* concluded that the great mistake of Roca's administration had been that "the government believed that it could not adequately bring peace to the people and administrate its interests without depriving it of its constitutional rights."<sup>11</sup> But, according to the paper, with the arrival of Juárez it was necessary to add to the long list of evils "the enormous fortunes raised in the government's short years, openly displayed with the tranquility which comes from guaranteed impunity."<sup>12</sup> According to *La Nación*, Juárez had deeply wounded public morale "by the ostentatious display of enormous fortunes made by certain men in office."<sup>13</sup> *La Nación* stressed with insistence the contrast between the civic virtue and austerity of the years of national organization and the corruption and immorality of modern times. The newspaper looked nostalgically back at a tradition that seemed to be lost. Yesterday was an era, the newspaper insisted, when

One went to government, not to get rich nor satisfy bestial appetites, but to embody the government with professed ideas and make real the aspirations of the citizens. Governors and ministers left their posts in the same conditions that they had started. Electoral clubs did not assault banks [...] Lawyers abandoned their studios and doctors left their

patients to sit in the Chamber without emolument.<sup>114</sup>

The paper indignantly denounced how the greatest fortunes in Buenos Aires, amassed over decades of considerable effort, were surpassed in a couple of years by public officers who shamelessly displayed their new riches. For the paper, this was both a symptom of and testimony to political corruption in public administration and private morals.<sup>115</sup>

*La Nación* was not alone in campaigning against the institutional and political changes that the country was experiencing in the 1880s. *El Nacional* voiced the concerns of the *porteño* Autonomists, the heirs of Adolfo Alsina's party.<sup>116</sup> They had opposed the election of Roca in April 1880 but, after the revolution in June, decided to support the new administration and formally joined the PAN.<sup>117</sup> *El Nacional* was an ally of the President until 1882 and, as such, joined its voice to LTN's campaign for peace and order, defining their perception on the country's politics in the following way:

Peace and liberty are the aspiration of all. But some believe that the former is the fruit of the latter, and with that conviction they do not hesitate to disturb order as soon as they see themselves hurt by some misuse of power, while others consider that turbulence leads to anarchy, and anarchy to despotism, and refuse to follow that path because they believe that it would lead to the sacrifice of peace.<sup>118</sup>

*El Nacional* publicly sided with those who upheld order, sustaining that "the present time in our conception of the Argentine Republic should be an era for political calmness and great administrative activity, and this is the way, we believe, that real statesmen understand it."<sup>119</sup> However, even in these years of support for the PAN and its campaign for peace, *El Nacional's* discourse varied in significant aspects from official rhetoric. One difference was the idea that order should be based on the principle of representation. *El Nacional* sustained that, as the cases of England, the United States, Belgium and Switzerland showed, "the only people who enjoy the benefits of peace and freedom are those who have sincerely practiced representative government, improving public customs in good times and testing them in the bad times."<sup>120</sup> A second difference resided in *El Nacional's* defense of party strife as a necessary condition for the existence of freedom. On these grounds, even though they were rival organizations, it publicly encouraged the Nationalist Party to abandon electoral abstention in the name of the health of representative govern-

ment.<sup>121</sup>

Thus, between mid 1880 and 1882, *El Nacional* endorsed the official rhetoric of peace, distancing itself considerably from the defense of revolution sustained by *La Nación*, but also sustaining, as did *La Nación*, that a representative government and party strife were the basis of lasting peace within liberty, in marked contrast with the discourse of the government. However, by mid 1882 the content of the paper substantially changed as the result of political realignments. By then, the contest inside the PAN for the presidential election of 1886 had unofficially begun. Dardo Rocha, Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires (1880-1884), had made clear his intentions of becoming the next presidency, an aspiration that was also shared by Juárez and Irigoyen. And while by then it was not clear which candidate would favor the President, it has become publicly obvious that he would not support Rocha. Soon Dardo Rocha became Roca's main rival as he had the power of the Province of Buenos Aires and its Bank to build his own power base. *El Nacional* supported Dardo Rocha, joining forces with *La Nación* in a public battle against the government.<sup>122</sup>

Some of the themes on which *El Nacional* centered its attacks were similar to those raised by *La Nación*, except that, on no occasion, did the paper advocate the right to revolution. One of the recurring topics was the violation of the principle of representation through electoral fraud. As we mentioned, the paper defended the principle of representation as an essential ingredient of peace, even when it had supported the government and also made the violation of representative government one of the centerpieces of its campaign against the PAN. *El Nacional's* campaign for clean elections reached its peak during the 1886 presidential campaign when Judge Miguel Tedín was a protagonist in the Federal Capital, annulling a series of electoral registries which were believed to have been fixed.<sup>123</sup> In this context, the paper constantly denounced the struggle of the opinion of the majority (whose representation it naturally claimed) against official imposition.<sup>124</sup> During Juárez's presidency, the paper underlined the defects of a system where, for example, public jobs (such as the railways and the municipalities) were exchanged for votes.<sup>125</sup> It lamented election days as "shameful episodes" where all kinds of misdemeanors took place.<sup>126</sup> However, unlike *La Nación*, it never sustained that the Republic's many vices merited a revolution to depose the current administration.

*El Nacional* also exposed other forms of corruption. The distribution of jobs in the public sector, including at universities and schools; the sale of state land to speculators instead of to settlers; the consummation of "shameful little business deals" with bribes on both sides; the arbitrary award of pensions by

a Congress monopolized by one party, were all cited in the newspaper's constant railing against the system forged in the 1880s.<sup>127</sup> The attacks were not only against "the system" but were also personal. The newspaper, for example, accused Atavila Roca, the President's brother, of growing wealthy from doing business with the national government. When the accused took the newspaper to court for defamation it charged that Roca threatened the right of freedom of the press.<sup>128</sup>

Another recurrent target, also predominant in *La Nación*, was *juarismo* both as a system and a style of government -- a system invented by Roca and perpetuated by Juárez with his own personal seal. *El Nacional* denounced a government that hid behind the idea of order and that portrayed any legitimate opposition act as dangerous to the Republic, solely with the intention of drowning public freedoms.<sup>129</sup> According to *El Nacional*, Juárez's had added his own imprint to this system, a style of public and private life manifested in a luxurious ostentation of wealth and power which offended any trace of austere republicanism. The paper launched its attack on one of the main features of Juárez's administration: the rapid economic growth that the country had experienced since 1887 and that would result in the economic crisis of 1890. *El Nacional*, recurrently warned against "moneyism(sic)", the uncontrolled desire for monetary gain that had invaded the social strata of the country and created a climate of "public and private luxury,"<sup>130</sup> of "flashy ostentation,"<sup>131</sup> indulged in by "many individuals who have themselves dragged around in luxurious coaches,"<sup>132</sup> men who had become rich overnight thanks to their participation in the government.<sup>133</sup> For *El Nacional*, this was not a necessary consequence of progress, but the result of the government's doctrine that had reduced its agenda to material prosperity and had reduced citizens to mere producers of wealth. As a result, "the masses have abdicated their rights and aspirations [...] demanding in exchange order and development of their material interests."<sup>134</sup> But, "if materialism prevails," *El Nacional* sustained, "public and private morals will disappear"<sup>135</sup> and the government would triumph in "converting the masses into flocks of sheep, developing their sensual tastes in exchange for the abdication of their rights."<sup>136</sup> The newspaper largely lamented the impact that the rapid increase in wealth of the men in power had "not only on institutions which are long dead, but on the dignity of the Argentine citizen."<sup>137</sup>

One of *El Nacional's* main campaigns was directed at the impact that the administrations of the 1880s had upon the federal system, a topic barely mentioned by *La Nación*. This was a theme with different strands. When in

mid 1882, *El Nacional* switched from supporting to opposing the government, it launched a campaign repenting the federalization of Buenos Aires, resuscitating arguments that a minority led by Leandro Alem had loudly expressed in September 1880 in the Legislature of the Province of Buenos Aires during the debates on the federalization of the city.<sup>138</sup> In a harsh tone, *El Nacional*, for example, declared that “by kidnapping the great capital, and beheading without healing the Great Province, all the other [provinces] will be enslaved by their own weakness, lacking the support of Buenos Aires, the old political and liberal center of this part of America.”<sup>139</sup> The article blamed *juarismo* for the “triumphal return of barbarism,”<sup>140</sup> while recriminatory editorials condemned the centralization of power in the hands of the President that had followed the federalization of the city of Buenos Aires.<sup>141</sup> During the 1886 presidential campaign, *El Nacional* ignited old tensions between Buenos Aires and the provinces, presenting Juárez as the enemy of the city-port.<sup>142</sup> While the Republic was historically in debt to Buenos Aires, Juárez, the paper argued, liked to slander “the people of May – for whom he has that inexplicable hatred of a parishioner who cannot bear to see how the big city casts a shadow over his village –oh! God preserve us from his triumph!”<sup>143</sup> The newspaper also pointed out that, although the main culprit, Juárez was not the only one to antagonize Buenos Aires. The “sonata of order”, the official discourse throughout the decade, was described by *El Nacional* as “the shield behind which the government attacks Buenos Aires, blaming the city for anything that does not turn out according to its plans.”<sup>144</sup>

A second strand of *El Nacional's* campaign on federalism was aimed at what was then called “the situation of the provinces.” Endless editorials were dedicated to denouncing those “barbarians who despotically ruled the provinces of the Interior.”<sup>145</sup> The system set up by the PAN, it was argued, ignored the constitutional premises of the federal government, substituting for them a system that reduced the governors to being mere “electoral agents” of the President.<sup>146</sup> Roca was singled out as the man responsible for disciplining the provincial governors, while Juárez’s imposition was said to be nothing more than exacerbation of a system that had already nullified the federal principle.

*El Nacional's* opposition discourse was original not only in its institutional aspects, particularly its emphasis on the topic of federalism, but also in the style of its campaign. Concomitant with contemporary journalistic conventions, articles published in *El Nacional* were anonymous, often signed by pseudonyms. In 1887, however, in the thick of the campaign against Juárez, *El*



*Nacional* launched "a true novelty in American journalism."<sup>147</sup> Beginning February 1, 1887, a group of public figures -- introduced as "political personalities, men of letters"<sup>148</sup>-- wrote regularly and exclusively for the newspaper, signing their own articles. Among them were: Vicente Fidel López, Aristóbulo del Valle, Juan María Gutiérrez, Delfín Gallo, Manuel Gorostiaga, Manuel Bilbao and Mariano Varela. The interesting feature of this "journalistic novelty" was that these men published pieces beyond daily events. Long and thoughtful reflections, these signed contributions were polished versions of the author's perspective on the changes that had occurred over the last decade. Manuel Gorostiaga, for example, was mainly concerned with a topic he was very familiar with: politics in the provinces. He had been National Deputy for Santiago del Estero during Roca's administration, had made an alliance with the President to control politics in his province, but soon fell out with Roca.<sup>149</sup> One after another, Gorostiaga's articles exposed the current system of power in the provinces, a system where the President held the reins, imposing severe punishments on those governors who refused to give in.<sup>150</sup> For his part, Manuel Bilbao - the Chilean born journalist, historian and, above all, polemicist - wrote on a wide range of topics, from the situation of local government, the almost military discipline with which members of the National Congress responded to the President, and the dangers of an official doctrine based on materialism.<sup>151</sup>

Delfín Gallo, by then National Deputy for the Province of Tucumán and an experienced journalist on constitutional issues, claimed to offer in his articles in *El Nacional* a balanced analysis of the nature of the PAN.<sup>152</sup> For him, the party had played a valid role during Roca's government (in which Gallo had served in the Ministry of Interior), "cementing the organization of the country on a long-lasting basis" and putting an end to the old hegemony of Buenos Aires over the provinces.<sup>153</sup> However, for Gallo, once this mission had been accomplished, the party should have given way to a system of organic parties "with ideas, with objectives, with support from public opinion"; such a system of parties for him was, "the only way to rescue us from the dangers which darken the future."<sup>154</sup> Juan María Gutiérrez, offered well-grounded reports on every area of public administration, drawing a negative balance in each.<sup>155</sup> Like Gallo, he also claimed that the solution to Argentina's evils lay in the organization of strong, permanent, political parties that would compete against the PAN.<sup>156</sup>

## Conclusions

The debates reconstructed and analyzed in these pages disclose the ideological confrontations of a decade whose exceptionality was thought to have resided in the absence of debates. As we have mentioned, the 1880s have been portrayed as unusual times in the tumultuous history of the Republic, times

marked by a high degree of consensus among the political elite regarding Argentina's destiny. To historicize these debates, however, allow us to assess their nature and to evaluate their relevance. More significantly, it permits us to reformulate our perceptions of the place of the 1880s in the ideological landscape of nineteenth century Argentina.

One of the aspects that these pages confirm is that the political parties and factions of the 1880s were not divided by alternative projects regarding immigration, education, or public policy. The debates were over the country's institutions, on how to best interpret the workings of the Republican, liberal, and federal character of the National Constitution of 1853.<sup>157</sup> While the Constitution itself was not in dispute, its interpretation generated ideological tensions over well defined issues whose relevance was not due to their novelty - indeed, the content of these debates were not new in Argentina or elsewhere - but to the way in which the political parties of the 1880s sculpted their identities around them. The reconstruction of these debates also allows us to re-evaluate the new climate of ideas of the 1880s. The new aspect of this climate was the idea of progress. However, it was a new aspect whose nature and impact needs to be carefully assessed, not only because the meaning of progress within the government's discourse changed significantly over the years, but also because, rather than sweeping away other trends of thought, this innovation was furiously contested by the opposition groups.

Progress was a central theme in Roca's discourse as it was portrayed to be the root from which a constellation of benefits would flow. Progress would result in peace and tranquility, individual and social development, freedom and the gradual perfection of political institutions. Progress would also replace the old warlike nature of party politics with a more rational participation in the construction of the Republic. As we have seen, jointly with a campaign to teach the advantages of progress, *LTV* also launched a legitimizing discourse on the constitutionality of Roca's administration which, in turn, was argued to guarantee popular sovereignty. While for Roca progress was the main means to achieve a series of benefits, for Juárez, progress was an end in itself, a supreme value that demanded and justified the eradication of politics, the end of party strife, and a system of undisputed subordination to the President. And while Roca legitimized his rule in terms of respect for the limits set by the Constitution, Juárez built a system of absolute power of the President over his party and over the country. The revolution of July 1890 is evidence of the errors of Juárez in basing

the legitimacy of his government on the growth of the economy as the former collapsed with the first negative signs in the latter. The discourses of Roca and Juárez were not systems of mutually complimentary ideas, nor should *juarismo* be reduced to an extreme form of defending the same values. The revolution is also evidence of the lack of acceptance of Juárez' set of ideas not only among the opposition parties but also inside the PAN itself, as *LTV* eventually publicly turned against the *jefe único del partido único*.<sup>158</sup>

Whether as a means or an end, as part of a broader constitutional discourse or as the centerpiece upon which to justify absolute power, progress in the 1880s represented a new climate of ideas that the Party in government thought to impose. For the Nationalist Party, however, the ideology of the party in government was based on the wrong premises: the country demanded the consolidation of the republican institutions; therefore, respect for the principle of representation should be the supreme value defended. Instead, the Nationalist Party sustained the principle of a healthy republican life, which required the active involvement of the citizenry in public strife, not gagging politics in the name of progress. The current situation justified, in *La Nación's* view, a revolution to bring down the government. While *El Nacional* shared with *LTV* the idea that these were not times for revolution, it concurred with the Nationalist Party in the belief that the principle of representation should be the basis of all order and that liberty could only be achieved and sustained through party competition not its absence.

There were, however, significant distinctions between the rhetoric's of *La Nación* and *El Nacional*, besides the justification of revolution. These were, after all, the papers of two parties that had been historical rivals. When *La Nación* negatively compared the present with the recent past full of healthy political strife, and when it offered its own version of the country's long history to counterbalance the version printed by *LTV*, it was recalling a political tradition rooted in the Province of Buenos Aires, but barely existent elsewhere in the country. The tradition of lively political struggles, of public manifestations, of a mobilized citizenry that *La Nación* vindicated belonged, almost exclusively, to Buenos Aires's Province. Likewise, when it denounced the imposition of presidents rejected by public opinion, it was denouncing, in fact, the imposition of an alliance of governors that had electorally and militarily defeated the Province of Buenos Aires. Contemporary readers probably were aware of this, but *La Nación* made sure this reading was only implicit, thereby avoiding a discourse of open confrontation between Buenos Aires and the provinces. Even though

in the paper's version of Argentine history it was clear that the Province of Buenos Aires and its leaders had been the protagonists in the struggle for free institutions, *La Nación* avoided creating an antagonistic discourse between the Province of Buenos Aires and Interior or between the Province of Buenos Aires and the national government. *El Nacional* chose another strategy. Championing the autonomist tradition it spoke for, the paper reopened the wounds between Buenos Aires and the Interior by launching a campaign publicly repudiating the federalization of the city of Buenos Aires, resorting to an old discourse of the Province as the only one capable of fighting against the tyranny of a central government, and contrasting the "liberal center of this part of America" against the 'barbarians' who despotically ruled the provinces.

The discourses of *La Nación* and *El Nacional* were far from new; on the contrary, both enjoyed a long tradition in Buenos Aires. Rooted in the city's history, in the 1880s political circumstance placed these discourses as the language of opposition against a realignment of political forces that pushed them to the margins of national politics. A republican discourse of clean elections and sound institutions had always been the hallmarks of *La Nación*, in the same way that the defense of the autonomy of the Province of Buenos Aires had been the emblem of *El Nacional*. In the 1880s, they raised their banners to confront an ideology that in their view, made a mockery of the principle of representation and inflicted a deadly wound on the country's federal system. Far from disappearing under the new climate of ideas or having implicitly accepted their premises, both papers defended their old values and fought against the new ones. *La Nación* and *El Nacional* became the language of opposition against which the PAN had to struggle to impose its own premises, a language that, far from disappearing in the 1880s, raged battle with force, continuing its struggle into the 1890s and beyond, as reformulated in the hands of different political actors and different historical settings.<sup>159</sup> Under this new light, the 1880s do not appear as an unusual decade of homogeneity organized around a new set of principles widely accepted by all involved, but as years in which the ideological clashes between the participants were interlocked with those of preceding and subsequent years.

The debate reconstructed here also provides insights into the nature of liberalism and the role that ideas play in concrete historical junctures. The content of the public debate of the 1880s offers testimony to the way that liberalism, in Argentina and elsewhere, can be permeated by different traditions of

political thought. Traces of liberalism, republicanism, conservatism and positivism can easily be discovered in the political debates of the 1880s. But even if we could agree on where to place the contours of each of these traditions, a classificatory exercise to trace genealogies, to allocate them to actors and denote their tensions would constitute, as it has been elsewhere, an unfertile exercise.<sup>160</sup> All parties involved in the 1880s spoke a variety of languages without awareness of their theoretical implications and without adopting a particular label for their discourse. Rather, liberalism proved here, once more, to be expansive and flexible, characteristics that at the same time allow and generate tensions and clashes not easily resolved at theoretical level. In concrete historical settings, these tensions proved to be significant enough to be appropriated by political actors who defined their identity upon them and used them to legitimize their actions.

## NOTES

1 \* Sections and previous versions of this paper were presented at the Symposium 'Construcciones Impresas. Diarios, periódicos y revistas en la formación de los estados nacionales en América Latina y Estados Unidos (1820-1920)' held at the Universidad de San Andrés, Buenos Aires, on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 2002; at the Jornadas on the July Revolution of 1890 at the Universidad T. Di Tella on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> August 2003; and the Latin American Center of the University of Maryland on December 2003. I would like to thank the comments received on these occasions as well as those made by Ezequiel Gallo, Paula Bruno and Stephanie Bowers, on a preliminary draft. I would also like to thank the financial support of the Leverhulme Trust, 'Fundación Antorchas' and the Hewlett Foundation towards the research project of which this paper is part. This paper was written while I was Visiting Associate Professor at the Center for Latin American Studies, University of Maryland between August and December 2003.

As it was put by Tulio Halperín Donghi in one of the most insightful studies of the period. See his "Una nación para el desierto argentino", in Proyecto y construcción de una nación, Caracas, Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1980.

2 Tulio Halperín Donghi, "Un nuevo clima de ideas" in G. Ferrai and E. Gallo, La Argentina del ochenta al centenario, Buenos Aires, 1980. For the increasing contentions emerging after 1890 see N. Botana and E. Gallo, De la república

posible a la república verdadera (1880-1910), Buenos Aires, 1997; E. Zimmermann, Los liberales reformistas. La cuestión social en la Argentina, 1890-1916, Buenos Aires, Ed. Sudamericana/Universidad de San Andrés, 1995; P. Alonso, Between Revolution and Ballot Box. The Origins of the Argentine Radical Party in the 1890s, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2000; O. Terán, Positivismo y Nación en la Argentina, Buenos Aires, Punto Sur, 1987. These works have successfully revised the old canon on the ideological homogeneity of the 1880-1916 period.

3 For this canon see José Luis Romero, Las ideas políticas en Argentina, Buenos Aires, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1959. For the political mobilization in preceding years see H. Sabato La política en las calles. Entre el voto y la movilización. Buenos Aires, 1826-1880, Buenos Aires, Ed. Sudamericana, 1998; and for the 1890s see Alonso, Between Revolution and the Ballot Box.

4 La Prensa is not included in this study as it was not a party paper. It was the most modern newspaper of its time, run as a business and, while it offered its opinions on politics, it was not the mouthpiece of a party or faction. For a portrait of La Prensa see P. Alonso, 'En la primavera de la historia'. El discurso político del roquismo de la década del ochenta a través de su prensa', Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana "Dr. Emilio Ravignani, Tercera serie, núm. 15, 1er semestre de 1997, pp. 37-51.

5 The Catholic Party press has been excluded from this study because, although the religious conflict was significant, it never became the main dividing line between the government and the main opposition parties; indeed the Catholic party remained a very small organization whose members did not hesitate to join anti-Catholic parties to oppose the government, as it was the case of the Partidos Unidos in 1886.

6 A more complete description of these newspapers can be found in Alonso, "' En la primavera de la historia'".

7 R. Chartier, Cultural History, Between Practices and Representations, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1994, p. 5.

8 By legitimating process I mean the activities in which all parties engaged to justify their actions. See R. Barker, Legitimizing Identities. The Self-Presentations of Rulers and Subjects, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2001.

9 For a characterization of liberalism as "capacious" see Alan Gibson, "Ancients, Moderns and Americans: The Republicanism-Liberalism Debate Revisited", History of Political Thought, vol. XXI N.2, Summer 2000., pp. 261-307.

10 See J. Appelby, Without Resolution: The Jeffersonian Tensions in American Nationalism, Essay presented at Oxford University in April 1991, p. 4. These concepts have been explored in greater depth in Alonso, "En la primavera de la historia", pp. 36-37.

11 For the finances of LTN see Agustín de Vedia to Roca, 1 April 1888, Archivo General de la Nación, (AGN) Archivo Julio A. Roca, leg. 57 .

12 I define public opinion in this context as the "opinion of public men," a concept which I have elaborated in Alonso, "En la primavera de la historia."

13 For the press between 1852 and 1860 see Alberto R. Lettieri, La República de la opinion. Política y opinion publica en Buenos Aires entre 1852 y 1862, Buenos Aires, ed. Biblos 1998. For the press in the 60's and 70's see H. Sabato, La política en las calles. Entre el voto y la movilización. Buenos Aires, 1862-1880, Buenos Aires, Ed. Sudamericana, 1998, pp. 62-74. This does not mean that the press was not important in previous times. Even under Rosas the press was so significant that the Governor invested considerable effort in curbing opponents and launching his own discourse. See Jorge Myers, El discurso republicano en el régimen rosista, Buenos Aires, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1995.

14 Duncan aca tambien For a further characterization of the political press see Alonso, "En la primavera de la historia", pp. 37-50.

15 Sabato, La política en las calles; Alberto Lettieri, La República de la Opinión. Política y opinión pública en Buenos Aires entre 1852 y 1862, Buenos Aires, Biblos, 1999.

16 See R. Barker, Legitimizing Identities. The Self-Presentations of Rulers and Subjects, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2001.

17 See H. Biagini, La generación del ochenta. Cultura y politica, Buenos Aires, 1995, Chap. 1, "El progreso y sus avatares," pp.9-28.

18 For the traditional interpretation of positivism as the hegemonic ideology of these years see D. Foster, The Argentine Generation of 1880. Ideology and Cultural Text, Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1990, and Terán, Positivismo y nación en la Argentina. For positivism in the scientific community see Marcelo Montserrat, "La mentalidad evolucionista: una ideología del progreso," in Ferrari and Gallo (comp.), La Argentina del ochenta al centenario, 785-818; O. Terán, Vida intelectual en el Buenos Airesde fin de siglo (1880-1910). Derivas de la "cultura científica, Buenos Aires, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000. In this later work Terán convincingly establishes on the mitigated impact of positivism within the scientific profession.

19 For the concept of "scientific politics" see C. Hale, The Transforma-

tion of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1989. Studies on the impact of Positivism in Latin America are numerous; one of the finest is Arturo Ardao, "Asimilación y transformación del positivismo en Latinoamérica," in his Estudios Latinoamericanos de historia de las ideas, Monte Aguila Editores, Montevideo, 1978, pp. 99-110. For individual countries see also on Brazil: José Murilo de Carvalho, La formación de las almas. El imaginario de la república en el Brasil, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 1997; and Robert G. Nachaman, "Positivism, Modernization, and the Middle Class in Brazil," The Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol. 57, N. 1, Feb. 1977, pp. 1-23; on Venezuela, see: Nikita Harwich Vallenilla, "Venezuelan Positivism and Modernity," The Hispanic American Historical Review, Vol 70.N.2 (May, 1999), 327-344.

20 "Anacronismos," LTN, 21 July 1892.

21 LTN, 12 Feb. 1887.

22 On the different meanings and roles attributed to the passions and the interests over the centuries see A. O. Hirschman, The Passions and the Interests. Political Arguments for Capitalism before Its Triumph, Princeton, New Jersey, 1977. On the development of these ideas in the United States see J. Appelby, Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992.

23 "El mensaje y la política," LTN, 11 June 1888.

24 For the PAN's construction of its own version of the country's political history and its implications see Alonso, "En la primavera de la historia."

25 "Progresos que no se mencionan," LTN, 1 January 1881.

26 Ibid

27 Ibid

28 "Los partidos," LTN, 16 December 1887.

29 "1888-1889," LTN, 1 January 1889.

30 "La lucha legal," LTN, 8 January 1886

31 Ibid.

32 LTN's discourse on the limits of power of the President confirms the view that many political elites in Latin America based their governments on a constitutionalist discourse. On this issue, see Gabriel Negretto and José Antonio Aguilar Rivera, "Rethinking the Legacy of the Liberal State in Latin America: The cases of Argentina (1853-1916) and Mexico (1857-1910), Journal of Latin American Studies, Vol. 32, Part 2, May 2000, 361-398.

33 These issues have been analysed more extensively in P. Alonso, "La Tribuna Nacional y Sud-América: tensiones ideológicas en la construcción



de la "Argentina moderna" en la década de 1880," in P. Alonso (comp.), Construcciones impresas. Panfletos, diarios y revistas en la formación de los estados nacionales en América Latina, 1820-1920, Buenos Aires, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004.

34 "La ley electoral," LTN, 9 August 1883.

35 "Conquistas morales," LTN, 10 December 1885; "Las elecciones," LTN, 8-9 February 1888; "Prácticas electorales," LTN, 9 May 1886.

36 "La democracia práctica," LTN, 1 de octubre de 1885.

37 See Natalio Botana, El orden conservador. La política argentina entre 1880-1916, Buenos Aires, Ed. Sudamericana, 1997; and his "Comentarios finales," in Antonio Annino, (coord.), Historia de las elecciones en Iberoamérica, siglo XIX, Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1995.

38 "Las libertades públicas," LTN, 6 February 1886.

39 "El sistema representativo," LTN 15-16 October 1883. The italics are mine.

40 Ibid.

41 "Política," LTN, 11 November 1885.

42 "El medio y la aspiración," LTN, 19 February 1887.

43 Ibid.

44 Tulio Halperín Donghi, "Un término de comparación: Liberalismo y nacionalismo en el Río de la Plata," in Roderic A. Acamp, Charles A. Hale, Josefina Zoraida Vázquez, Los intelectuales en el poder en México, El Colegio de Mexico, 1991, pág. 115.

45 "Los partidos," LTN, 28 April 1886. See also, "Una anécdota," LTN 23 December 1885.

46 Ibid. See also "Oposición negativa," LTN, 5 of May 1887: "Oposición," LTN, 3 June 1888.

47 Federalism is a topic in need of further research in Argentina. For a starting point for the period analysed here see Natalio Botana, "El federalismo liberal en Argentina: 1852-1930," in Marcelo Carmagnani (coord.), Federalismos latinoamericanos: Mexico/Brasil/Argentina, Mexico, El Colegio de Mexico/Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993.

48 Federal intervention refers to the national government's constitutional right to intervene in the political affairs of a provincial government by law or decree in vaguely specified situations.

49 "De regreso," LTN, 19 April 1882.

50 "La república Argentina. Su estado actual," LTN, 26 January 1887.

51 Charles Hale, "Political and Social Ideas in Latin America, 1870-1930,"

in L. Bethell (ed.), The Cambridge History of Latin America, (Cambridge University Press 1986), Vol. V, p. 392.

52 On the rivalry between Roca and Juárez see Duncan Gustavo Ferrari, Apogeo y crisis del liberalismo, 1886-1890, Ediciones La Bastilla, Buenos Aires, 1978; Timothy Duncan, "Government by Audacity. Politics and the Argentine Economy, 1885-1892," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Melbourne, 1981.

53 The paper had been founded in 1884 but once it became Juárez tool for the presidential campaign some members of the editorial board resigned and the paper remained in the hands of Roque Sáenz Peña, Lucio V. López and Carlos Pellegrini. See P. Groussac, Los que pasaban, Buenos Aires, 1972, pp. 215-219

54 For a characterization of Sud-América see Tim Duncan, "La Prensa Política: "Sud-América," 1884-1892, in Ferrari and Gallo (comp.), La Argentina del ochenta al centenario, pp. 761-784. For the features of juarismo, see Duncan, "Government by Audacity."

55 "La prensa. A propósito del mensaje," Sud-América, 11 May 1888.

56 See, for example, "La Nación y la provincia," Sud-América, 7 March 1887; "Roca y Juárez," Sud-América, 19 October 1886.

57 "El país," Sud-América, 23 August 1887.

58 "En progreso," Sud-América, 13 September 1887. My italics.

59 "El país," Sud-América, 23 August 1887.

60 "El primer año," Sud-América, 12 October 1887

61 "Los hombres de ayer y los hombres de hoy," Sud-América, 7 May 1888.

62 "La oposición y las palabras del Doctor Juárez," Sud-América, 28 September 1886

63 H. Mabragaña, Los mensajes. Historia del desenvolvimiento de la nación argentina redactada cronológicamente por sus gobernantes , 1810-1910, Buenos Aires, Talleres Gráficos dela Compañía Gral. De Fósforos, 1910, Vol. IV- 1881-1890, p. 259.

64 Ibid.

65 "El mensaje. Política," Sud-América, 10 May 1888

66 Ibid.

67 "Ya llegó el General," Sud-América, 5 November 1888. These same words are quoted in part in Duncan, "La prensa política," p. 772. Similar concepts can also be found in "Jefaturas de partido," Sud-América, 5 December 1888.

68 Sud -América, 6 December 1886

- 69 "El obispo Toro," Sud-América, 1 September 1888.
- 70 See, for example, Sud-América, 3 September 1888.
- 71 "En progreso," Sud-América, 13 September 1887. Italics are mine.
- 72 "Notas risueñas," Sud-América, 18 January 1888
- 73 "Viva Mitre!...Vivaaa!!!," Sud-América, 21 January 1889. See also, "Los hombres de ayer y los hombres de hoy," Sud-América, 7th March 1888 y "Los jóvenes y los viejos," Sud-América, 8 February 1888.
- 74 "Rol de la juventud," Sud-América, 7 March 1889.
- 75 See Duncan, "Government by Audacity."
- 76 "El primer año de la presidencia del Dr. Juárez," Sud-América, 13 October 1887.
- 77 "Jefaturas de partido," Sud-América, 10 December 1887
- 78 "Ya llegó el General," Sud-América, 5 November 1888.
- 79 "Jefaturas de partido," Sud-América, 5 December 1888. Italics in the original. See also, "El partido nacional y el progreso," Sud-América, 11 March 1889
- 80 Duncan, "La prensa política," pp. 772-775
- 81 Facing attacks in the paper were: the Governor of Tucumán, ousted by revolutions sponsored by the national government in 1887; the Governor of Cordoba removed through impeachment in 1888 to leave the seat vacant for the President's brother, Marcos Juárez; and the Governor of Mendoza in 1889 unseated by a revolt. See Duncan, "Government by Audacity."
- 82 "La política nacional," Sud-América, 13 May 1889. My italics.
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 Duncan, "La prensa política," pp. 772-775
- 85 "En la casa del presidente," Sud-América, 9 August 1888.
- 86 For Mitre and his party trajectory see David Rock, State building and political movements in Argentina, 1860-1916 Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- 87 Launched in January 1870 with an initial press run of 1,000 to replace La Nación Argentina, was originally owned by a group of investors but in 1879 Mitre bought all the shares becoming the sole owner. See, R. Sidicaro, La política mirada desde arriba: las ideas del diario La Nación, 1909- 1989, Buenos Aires, 1993, pp. 13-19, and Julio Ramos, Desencuentros de la modernidad en América Latina, pp. 95-100.
- 88 For an analysis of the distinction between party press and modern press and a more detailed characterization of La Nación is explored in greater depth in Alonso, "En la primavera de la historia".

89 The exceptions were one isolated appearance at the ballot boxes in the Province of Buenos Aires in 1883, and as members of the Partidos Unidos coalition in the 1886 presidential election. For the reasons behind the Party's policy of electoral abstention see "La causa del mal," La Nación, 30 July 1880; "La abstención," La Nación, 4 November 1880; "Abstención activa. Actitud del Partido Liberal," La Nación, 4 October 1883

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 For the making of this tradition see Hilda Sabato, "El ciudadano en armas: violencia política en Buenos Aires (1852-1890)," Entrepasados, N. 23, 2003: 149-169.

93 "Partidos y programas," La Nación, 27 April 1884.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 La Nación, 30 July 1880.

97 Ibid.

98 "Criterio de los partidos," La Nación, 6 October 1880

99 Ibid.

100 "Signos de decadencia," La Nación, 28 May 1882.

101 "Doctrinas y declaraciones," La Nación, 6 June 1882.

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103 "Estática política," La Nación, 5 January 1881

104 "Partidos y facciones," La Nación, 10 June 1884.

105 "Mensaje presidencial," La Nación, 4 May 1883.

106 It is beyond the limits of this work to analyze in detail the parallels which can be established between the version of national history described in the columns of La Nación and Bartolomé Mitre's own historical work. For the latter, see N. Botana, La libertad política y su historia, Buenos Aires, 1991, Chapters II, III y especially VIII; Tulio Halperín Donghi, "Mitre y la formulación de una historia nacional para la Argentina," Anuario IHES, núm. 11, 1996, pp. 57-70; Elías José Palti, "La Historia de Belgrano de Mitre y la problemática concepción de un pasado nacional," Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana "Dr. Emilio Ravignani", Tera series, núm.21, 1st semestre 2000, pgs. 75-98.

107 "Opinión, partidos, partidarios," La Nación, 11 November 1883.

108 See "Guerras electorales," La Nación, 21 August 1883; "Opinión, partidos y partidarios," La Nación, 11 November 1883.

109 "Partidos y programas," La Nación, 27 May 1884. For the Liberal's Party search of its roots see also Halperín Donghi, "Una nación," p. LI.

- 110 "El partido liberal," La Nación, 13 October 1880.
- 111 "Libertades prometidas," La Nación, 25 May 1887.
- 112 "Notas de la semana," La Nación, 30 January 1887.
- 113 "El aislamiento," La Nación, 5 February 1887
- 114 Ibid.
- 115 Ibid. See also, "Notas de la semana," La Nación, 30 January 1887; "El aislamiento," La Nación, 5 February 1887; "Auri Saera Fames," La Nación, 13 March 1887.
- 116 The paper was mainly run by Aristóbulo del Valle, Domingo F. Sarmiento and Vicente Fidel Lopez.
- 117 For the reorganization of the PAN to include the Autonomistas, see El Nacional, 3 August 1880.
- 118 "La oposición en los comicios," El Nacional, 7 July 1881.
- 119 "El duelo," El Nacional, 26 January 1882. The Autonomist banner in the 1860s and 1870s can be seen in R. Cortés Conde and E. Gallo, Argentina: La república conservadora, Buenos Aires, Ed. Paidós, 1972.
- 120 "El duelo," El Nacional, 26 January 1882.
- 121 "La oposición en los comicios," El Nacional, 7 July 1881.
- 122 El Nacional, 1 June 1882.
- 123 For the 1886 presidential campaign, see Carlos R. Melo, "La campaña presidencial de 1885-1886," Separata de la Revista de la Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Año XXXIII, N. 2, 1946; Susana I. Rato de Sambucetti, "El Presidente Roca y los Candidatos a su Sucesión Presidencial," Academia Nacional de la Historia, Cuarto Congreso Nacional y Regional de Historia Argentina, 1977, pp. 221-242.
- 124 See, for example, El Nacional, 25 March 1885 and 29 April 1886.
- 125 El Nacional, 24 July 1883.
- 126 See El Nacional, 6 January 1888; 6 February 1887; and 19 January 1885.
- 127 See El Nacional, 24 July 1883; 29 January 1883; 24 July 1885; 22 November 1887.
- 128 El Nacional, 12 December 1885.
- 129 "Orden Nacional," El Nacional, 14 May 1885; "La sonata del orden," El Nacional, 2 May 1885; "Juarismo," El Nacional, 29 May 1885.
- 130 "El dinerismo," El Nacional, 10 October 1883; "Cuestiones trascendentales," El Nacional, 4 May 1884.
- 131 "Los Relumbrones de Roca," El Nacional, 7 July 1886.
- 132 "Las revelaciones sobre la política electoral," El Nacional, 29 April

1886.

133 "El 14 de Julio," El Nacional, 15 July 1889.

134 "Vértigos de la prosperidad," El Nacional, 27 June 1887.

135 "Comienzo del año," El Nacional, 21 January 1888

136 Ibid.

137 "Política juarista," El Nacional, 16 April 1888.

138 For the debate and Alem's position, see Ezequiel Gallo, "Liberalismo, centralismo y federalismo. Alberdi y Alem en el 80," Investigaciones y Ensayos, Academia Nacional de la Historia, 45, Buenos Aires, January-December 1995; and Alonso, Between Revolution and the Ballot Box.

139 El Nacional, 27 May 1883

140 Ibid.

141 El Nacional, 12 May 1884.

142 "La escuela de la injuria. ¿Quién es Juárez?," El Nacional, 29 May 1885; "Juarismo," El Nacional, 28 April 1885.

143 Ibid.

144 "La sonata del orden," El Nacional, 2 May 1885.

145 "Civilización y barbarie," El Nacional, 5 January 1886.

146 "¡¡ AL FIN!! Una palabra decente," El Nacional, 15 December 1888.

147 El Nacional, 1 February 1887.

148 Ibid.

149 See P. Alonso, "La política y sus laberintos. El Partido Autonomista Nacional entre 1880 y 1886," in Hilda Sabato y Alberto Lettieri (coord.), La vida política. Armas, votos y voces en la Argentina del siglo XIX, Buenos Aires, FCE, 2003, pp. 11-15.

150 See, for example, "Pueblos y gobiernos," El Nacional, 4 February 1887; "Política," El Nacional, 2 August 1887; "La cuestión de Salta," El Nacional, 14 October 1887; "La tarea del presente," El Nacional, 31 October 1887.

151 "Puntos de partida," El Nacional, 3 February 1887; "La bancarrota de una nación," El Nacional, 23 March 1887; "Vértigos de la prosperidad," El Nacional, 27 June 1887.

152 Delfín Gallo was the brother of Santiago Gallo, the Governor of Tucumán during the presidential election of 1886 who, although on good terms with Roca, had given the votes of his province to Bernardo de Irigoyen. The local juaristas were his greatest opponents and they pressured him to resign from his post before Juárez step into office.

153 "Los partidos políticos," El Nacional, 14 March 1887.

154 Ibid.

155 "Balance político," El Nacional, 11 February 1887.

156 Ibid.

157 Halperín Donghi, "Una nación", pp. LXXVII- XCVII.

158 On this point see Alonso "La Tribuna Nacional and Sud-América".

159 The Radical Party combined in the 1890s the languages of the opposition of the Nationalist and the Autonomist parties. By then, however, the Nationalist Party (called the National Civic Union), had abandoned the revolutionary banner. On the discourse of the Radical Party, see Alonso, Between Revolution and the Ballot-Box.

160 On previous occasions I have referred to the advantages and limitations of the liberalism-republicanism debate for Latin America. See P. Alonso Entre la revolución y las urnas. Los orígenes de la Unión Cívica Radical y la política argentina en los años noventa, Buenos Aires, Ed. Sudamericana/Universidad de San Andrés, 2000, pp.145-165, and Alonso "La Tribuna Nacional y Sud-América". See also Elías Palti, "Las polémicas en el liberalismo argentino. Sobre virtud, republicanism and lenguaje"; and Luis Negretto, "Repensando el republicanism liberal en América Latina. Alberdi y la Constitución Argentina de 1853", both in El republicanism en Hispanoamérica. Ensayos de historia intelectual y política, coord. José Antonio Aguilar and Rafael Rojas (Fondo de Cultura Económica/Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económica, 2002). On the eclectic nature of liberalism, see Ezequiel Gallo, "Las ideas liberales en la Argentina", en El pensamiento político argentino contemporáneo, ed. Aníbal Iturrieta, Síntesis, 1994, 51-163. Natalio Botana, La tradición republicana. Alberdi, Sarmiento y las ideas políticas de su tiempo (Buenos Aires: Ed. Sudamericana, 1984); and his La libertad política y su historia (Buenos Aires: Ed. Sudamericana, 1991).

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