

THE IMPRENTA DE LOS NIÑOS EXPÓSITOS IN THE VICEREGAL PERIOD

By ARTHUR F. LIEBSCHER

THE LILLY LIBRARY'S collection of materials from the Imprenta de los Niños Expósitos of Buenos Aires spans the years 1780 to 1824, the entire period of the press's life. The Library purchased its Expósitos material from the private collection of Antonio Santamarina of Buenos Aires through the mediation of Mr. Bernardo Mendel. The Latin American—or Mendel—Collection includes over one thousand Expósitos imprints, of which more than half date from the years 1780 to 1809.

This study surveys the types of material represented by the Mendel Collection Santamarina imprints and attempts to suggest some basic correlations between the imprints and events in the La Plata area. Its scope is confined to the years from the foundation of the press through 1809, a period which roughly encompasses the viceregal stage in La Plata history. During this time Buenos Aires developed significantly, changing from a town of perhaps twenty-six thousand people to a much larger administrative and economic center of forty-five thousand.¹ Increased population brought increased trade, which stimulated the development of a mercantile class. Larger population, more money, and closer commercial ties with Spain prompted a more active cultural and intellectual life. The imprint collection reflects Buenos Aires' development of an independent political, religious, and intellectual vigor. By 1809, Buenos

Aires had ceased being a frontier outpost of the empire; it had begun its own life under its own leadership.

Before this period Buenos Aires was little more than an outpost of the Spanish empire, left out of the tremendous growth undergone by the viceroyalties of Mexico and Peru. Even in the eighteenth century Buenos Aires experienced difficulty establishing itself as a significant part of the imperial economic system.² Spanish trade routes to South America centered on Lima, capital of the Peruvian viceroyalty. Gold and silver from Upper Peru (Bolivia) were sent west to Lima, not east to Buenos Aires, for transport to Spain, while an interior tariff post discouraged the movement of trade from Buenos Aires to Peru.

The fiscal and economic chaos in which Spain found itself in the eighteenth century required numerous changes in the imperial system. The Bourbon kings loosened the mercantilistic trade regulations, although they still did not permit foreign ships to trade with their American possessions. A streamlined system of intendencies replaced the previous haphazard governmental organization, while new governmental units were established, including the viceroyalty of La Plata itself.³

The military needs of the 1770s triggered the creation of the La Plata viceroyalty in 1776.⁴ Colonial competition in the Atlantic had grown strong, and the Spanish sought to establish firm military positions in previously unguarded parts of the empire. In 1776 an expedition was sent to the La Plata estuary to drive the Portuguese from the Banda Oriental. Out of this expedition the infant viceregal government was established; its leader, Pedro Cevallos, became interim viceroy in 1777.

Printing and publishing in the La Plata region antedated the foundation of the *Imprenta de los Niños Expósitos* by seventy-five years. In 1705 the Jesuits published the La Plata region's first book, in Tucumán.⁵ A Jesuit press at the *Colegio de San Carlos* in Córdoba, abandoned with the expulsion of the order from the Spanish empire in 1767, was transported to Buenos Aires and formed the basis for the *Niños Expósitos* press in 1780. The device was the first, and for years the only, full-size printing press in the city.⁶

Viceroy Juan José de Vértiz ordered both the movement of the press to Buenos Aires and its association with an orphanage, the *Casa y Cuna de los Niños Expósitos*. Seeking first to add a means of support for the orphanage, Vértiz also desired to improve the city through the establishment of a printing press. Indeed improvement in social services and municipal functions characterized the rule of Vértiz.⁷ In a vain effort to assure profits, the viceroy granted the press a monopoly on printing spelling texts, song books, and catechisms.⁸

The *Real Imprenta de los Niños Expósitos* was officially established on November 21, 1780, with José Silva y Aguiar appointed "administrator general" for a ten-year term. By his agreement with the viceroy, Silva y Aguiar received one quarter of the press's annual receipts, or one third should profits not reach four hundred pesos. In March 1783, Alfonso Sánchez Sotoca charged Silva y Aguiar with falsification of accounts and illegal salary payments, bringing about the latter's removal from the directorship.⁹ Sánchez Sotoca succeeded to the office, but his administration, like that of Silva y Aguiar, experienced financial difficulties. Paper was expensive and in short supply, and transport

costs added to prices in distant cities, where strong competition from Lima printers was encountered. The authorities did not halt the importation of books and pamphlets printed in Spain despite appeals from the Imprenta's management. Profits accruing to the orphanage were small, totaling just over two hundred pesos in the years 1783-1787.¹⁰

In spite of these financial disappointments, the press gradually developed the possibility of profit providing incentive to lure numerous individuals to bid for its directorship over the years. The Imprenta grew physically, adding in 1807 a press brought from Montevideo by the British during their occupation of the city. The years after 1810 saw additional capital improvements, although lack of type made operations difficult during that period. In 1824, under the reform program of Bernadino Rivadavia, the Imprenta de los Niños Expósitos was closed, reorganized, and then reopened under the name "Imprenta del Estado."

For purposes of analysis the Mendel Santamarina imprints dating from this period can be divided into three segments: 1) political, religious, and economic imprints published prior to 1806; 2) material dealing with the English invasions, 1806-1807; and 3) imprints dating from 1808 and 1809, largely concerned with events surrounding the Napoleonic wars.

THE YEARS 1780-1806

Niños Expósitos imprints dating from these earlier years cover a variety of topics, principally administrative, religious, and intellectual affairs. In all of these areas Buenos Aires showed a significant degree of local leadership and interest. In the 1780s and 1790s, the city moved toward

a social and political maturity that equipped it to strive for regional dominance in the nineteenth century.

Those imprints from the period of Vértiz's rule demonstrate his active leadership for the organization of the primitive viceroyalty. One of the earliest, a broadside dated November 3, 1780, orders that all families living on the frontier be brought to areas under military protection, while a second, dated 1781, pledges the support of the people of Montevideo for Vértiz's efforts to deal with the Indian problem. A printed version of the viceroy's order establishing a board of medical inspectors, the Tribunal de Proto-Medico, demonstrates his efforts to improve the health of the city. Another order appeals for alms to establish a charitable hospital for women.¹¹

In this early period the governing authorities began to use the press to stir community spirit and inspire local loyalty, a practice that reappeared frequently during the Imprenta's history. Publications of this type surfaced as early as 1783, and often combine religious piety with community sentiment; they occur regularly among the imprints dating from the 1790s. A 1790 book, eighty-one pages long including footnotes and a list of printing errors, reproduces the oration delivered by Gregorio Funes upon the death of King Charles III, the reforming Bourbon monarch. Funes praised Charles as much for his religious piety as for his political ability. In 1795 the Imprenta published speeches praising and welcoming the new viceroy, Pedro Melo de Portugal; in 1798 it published the oration delivered at his funeral. All of this literature at once communicated information and stirred public devotion and patriotism.¹²

Religious literature occupied a large portion of the pre-1806 publications and covered a wide spectrum of types

and purposes. The great bulk of religious imprints served the needs of popular piety and religious education, through liturgical material and pastoral letters are also present. Although the amount of religious literature published had declined greatly by 1800, it is evident that the *Imprenta de los Niños Expósitos* was closely linked to the religious life of the Buenos Aires people.

Among the religious imprints catechisms, prayer books, and novenas are the most prominent. Catechism publication constituted one of the primary functions of the press in its early years; the *Imprenta's* record books show 13,500 printed during 1781 alone.¹³ The earliest example in this collection, the forty-eight page *Catechismo de la doctrina cristiana*, apparently originated in Pamplona in the early seventeenth century.¹⁴ A typical prayer book, written by the bishop of Córdoba, José Antonio de San Alberto, includes prayers for each day of the week and closes with a statement of indulgences attached to its use.¹⁵ These catechisms and prayer books were generally put through multiple printings; the San Alberto example was reprinted in 1785, the Pamplona catechism in 1790.

Religious literature decreased greatly after the earliest period, virtually disappearing after 1790. An exception is a small group of prayer books dating from 1805, but at least one of these is a reprint of a much earlier publication.¹⁶ Insofar as this collection represents the total output of the press, it suggests that political and occasionally intellectual matters occupied the *Imprenta's* limited facilities in the period after 1790, precluding publication of pious material.

The press published a significant portion of its religious literature for the use of the various religious organizations or congregations prominent in Spanish Catholicism. One such group, the Real Congregación del Alumbrado y

Vela, appears frequently as a subject of the press's output, beginning in 1791 and continuing at least through 1806. Its constitution, published by the Imprenta in 1799, describes the congregation as a group founded in Madrid in 1789 and established in Buenos Aires ten years later.¹⁷ According to the constitution the organization sought to maintain continuous adoration of the Eucharist in local churches. The relatively high frequency with which its materials appear among the Niños Expósitos publications suggests the popularity of this otherwise obscure congregation.

Pastoral letters from La Plata bishops to their people, particularly from José Antonio de San Alberto of Córdoba, constitute an important part of the religious literature printed by the Niños Expósitos press. An especially prolific author, San Alberto published letters beginning in 1781 and continuing through 1799. Four basic themes emerge from his writings: the role of the bishop, charity, diocesan regulation, and support of civil rulers. San Alberto's publications indicate that the Argentine church possessed vigorous local leadership in its early years.

San Alberto's first two letters, both published in 1781, stress the necessity of a layman's obedience to his bishop, and the duty of the bishop to reside with, teach, and care for his people. Both letters befit an active and concerned bishop facing the difficulties of exercising leadership among new people in a new land. Later letters speak of a school for orphans, emphasizing his duty as bishop to care for the unfortunate; one letter even suspends taxes paid for ecclesiastical documents so lay people could devote more money to alms for homeless children.¹⁸ Whether the people heeded his plea for alms is unknown.

A sternly worded message from San Alberto, at 218 pages one of the longest publications of the Niños Expósitos

press, tried to regularize practices in his diocese regarding parish records and concerning the administration of matrimony, baptism, and penance. The section dealing with confession is particularly interesting because San Alberto espoused what for his day was an enlightened view—that Indians should receive the sacrament even though Europeans doubted their understanding of its meaning.¹⁹

The strong and vocal support given by San Alberto to the civil authorities reflects the close alliance between throne and altar which characterized Spanish territories from the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, and which became particularly pronounced after the coming of the Bourbon monarchs in the eighteenth century. In one imprint San Alberto describes the duty of a citizen to give donations to his king, thereby honoring the king, showing his gratitude, and maintaining the ruler as a major bulwark of the Catholic faith in the wars against Protestant England. In yet another publication, sprinkled liberally with scriptural references, San Alberto praises the sons of Charles III, in the process outlining a portrait of ideal Christian rulers.²⁰

If the Niños Expósitos press showed signs of piety and ecclesiastical regalism, it also manifested stirrings of the European Enlightenment and a gradual maturation of Buenos Aires intellectual life. The Imprenta was undoubtedly a significant instrument for stimulating the new learning in the viceroyalty. Two periodicals published by the press during the viceregal period, the *Telégrafo mercantil, rural, político-económico e historiografo* (1801-1802) and the *Semanario de agricultura, industria y comercio* (1802-1807), display an eighteenth-century desire to collect and disseminate practical knowledge. These journals are not in the Lilly Library collection, although the Library holdings

do contain numerous non-periodical imprints of an intellectual and often "enlightened" nature.

Textbooks are the most basic examples of learned printing contained in the collection. Texts for teaching Spanish and Latin grammar appear occasionally, though they by no means dominate even the earlier years, as do the religious imprints. The only mathematics text encountered while canvassing the collection stresses learning practical mathematics, appropriate for the enlightened thought then appearing in Buenos Aires, and certainly appropriate in the maritime school for which the text was written.²¹

The collection includes a number of Latin-language treatises, all undoubtedly written in that language because of their scholarly character, and all but one dealing with philosophy or theology. That one, a sixteen-page series of conclusions regarding physics and animal sense perception, provides a clear, though unsophisticated, example of emphasis on observable scientific facts.²² The philosophical and theological treatises are formal academic defenses presented in Buenos Aires; each touches upon logic, theology, metaphysics, and occasionally, natural science. Considering the breadth of their topics they are relatively short (the longest being thirty-nine pages), suggesting that they were used as outlines for longer oral or written presentations. One imprint, for example, bears the ponderous title, "Conclusiones publico - historico - dogmatico - scholastico - phisico-teologicae ex praecipuis Sacrae Theologiae tractibus depromptae."²³ Its author treated his ambitious topic in twenty pages.

One peculiar Spanish-language text, published in 1790, indicates an eighteenth-century interest in fresh knowledge and modes of thought. The imprint, *Economía de la vida humana*, purports to be an oriental text, written "by a

Brahman.” Nonetheless, Guillermo Fúrlong Cárdiff, who knows of the imprint, rejects any Buddhist or Lao Tse origins for its texts, which deal with the moral goodness of such traits as reflection, prudence, and modesty. Fúrlong speculated that its origins were English.²⁴

The bulk of the Mendel Santamarina collection exhibits more conventional types of the new learning. An economic tract, associated with Manuel Belgrano, espouses a physiocratic doctrine calling agricultural land the source of all wealth and expounding various theories for the distribution of agricultural wealth. Another imprint, by the mathematician Juan de Alsina, calls for the use of empirical observation and mathematical analysis to determine the general rules of nature. A third is a primitive example of modern historiography, describing events and collecting documents related to the 1801 concordat reestablishing Catholicism in France.²⁵

Two imprints, both published in 1805, demonstrate that Buenos Aires had access to advanced medical techniques, and that the government desired their dissemination for the benefit of the people. One, by Dr. Miguel Gorman of Buenos Aires, gives detailed instructions for the preparation of smallpox vaccine, its administration, and the progress of the resulting pustule, with instructions to apply mercury or silver nitrate ointment to an ulcerated vaccination. Another, written in Madrid, seeks to impart rudimentary knowledge for the performance of a cesarean section in the absence of a surgeon; an accompanying order directs parish priests to familiarize themselves with the techniques for use in an emergency.²⁶

The attempt of the Bourbon monarchs to streamline the administration of their empire, and ultimately to remedy

its serious financial troubles, is reflected in the large number of administrative decrees published by the Imprenta, primarily between 1787 and 1805. With few exceptions, these proclamations have uniform size and design, as if intended to be taken as a series. Other than publicly establishing the voice of royal authority, the exact purpose of the undoubtedly expensive publication of these documents is unclear.

Some of these proclamations deal with efforts to standardize various practices in the empire, as one issued by the viceroy under royal direction regulating fees charged by royal officials in accordance with the *Recopilación de Leyes de las Indias*. Two others, dated 1803, deal with inheritance laws, while a third regulates removal of fugitives from places of sanctuary, such as churches. Five imprints establish rules for military organization, discipline, and maneuvers, reflecting the concern for imperial defense that led up to the establishment of the viceroyalty of La Plata.²⁷

The number of royal decrees dealing with revenue collection clearly reflect the financial difficulties experienced by the Spanish Bourbons. In some instances these decrees merely standardize revenue procedures, as a 1798 decree regulating the arrangement of account books and annual reports, and an 1802 document giving instructions for proper collection of the royal *derechos*. Others are more direct in their efforts to solve the financial problem; a 1797 order places a fifteen-percent levy on all real estate not under royal protection, with the explicit goal of paying expenses in the war with England. Madrid's efforts to establish a healthy financial basis for government met failure in the long run; the Napoleonic wars disrupted the empire, depleted the treasury, and ultimately set the stage for the great independence movement that began in 1810.²⁸

THE BRITISH INVASIONS, 1806-1807

In 1804 Spain was again drawn into the Napoleonic Wars, allied with France against England. It is conceivable that, had England not been an expanding economic power, the La Plata area might have escaped involvement in the European wars. The possibility of opening Spain's La Plata territories to English merchants tempted the British, however, and resistance from the Spanish crown was not anticipated.²⁹ In 1806 British forces under Major General William Carr Beresford and Sir Home Popham moved against Buenos Aires.

The English arrival on May 2, 1806 had been anticipated; Madrid's warnings regarding English intentions prompted the establishment of a *junta de guerra* (council of war) in April 1805 to study the developing situation. Despite these advance measures the viceroy, Sobremonte, fled toward Córdoba, which became the interim capital, and Buenos Aires surrendered to the British without bloodshed.

Pascual Ruíz Huidobro, governor of Montevideo, organized an attack against the English, which was finally launched on August 12, 1806. This force of La Plata residents, commanded by Santiago Liniers, successfully drove the English from Buenos Aires and back to their ships. After the British landed again and seized Montevideo in February 1807, the *cabildo* named Liniers interim viceroy to replace the ineffective Sobremonte. Liniers' second defeat of the British led to a treaty signed in July 1807.

The first indication of invasion identified in the Collection is the large number of announcements to the people, printed at Beresford's order. These imprints, which vary from pamphlet-like flyers to large posters, attest to a British

desire to win popular approval, and seem to support the opinion that the English attempted to rule Buenos Aires justly and well. The Catholic Church was allowed to operate unmolested and its courts were given their traditional power, as were the civil courts of the city. Beresford permitted ships trading on the Río de la Plata to continue freely under a new set of tariffs specified by the British. He ordered that all slaves remain with their masters and made efforts to regularize commercial life within the city.³⁰

After Liniers retook the city in August 1806, the *Imprenta de los Niños Expósitos* became an instrument of defense, used to prepare the inhabitants for further battle with the English. One imprint published in October 1806, warns Montevideo of the possibility of British attack and orders mobilization of the Montevidean populace to resist such a move. Another complains of difficulty in recruiting sailors and orders all seamen in Buenos Aires to report for duty, while a third directs all males over fourteen to report for assignment to public service.³¹

Cut off from Spain by British ships, finances in the viceroyalty undoubtedly became a severe problem, as the presence of imprints pleading for donations indicates. One example reprints a letter from a widow offering two hundred pesos, accompanied by a pointed recommendation from Liniers that the other residents follow her example. After the porteños finally expelled the British, the *cabildo* of Buenos Aires imposed specific donations on all residents to provide for the continued defense of what the *cabildo* called the *patria*, "the region in which Providence has placed us."³²

The aftermath of the invasions produced a number of imprints of historical interest, containing detailed information regarding the military aspects of the struggle. One

volume in the Mendel Santamarina collection brings together three large imprints giving military organization of the Spanish forces, their officers, distinguished soldiers, and services performed by the various companies.³³ One report, attributed to British General Samuel Achmuty, provided a detailed account of troop deployment, casualties, and outstanding officers, all reprinted without Spanish propaganda.³⁴ Finally, an eight-page imprint reproduces a total of eight letters and documents concerning the peace treaty of 1807, indicating a desire on the part of the viceregal administration to establish a public record of the dealings.³⁵

A number of bitterly anti-English tracts followed in the wake of the invasion. Taken as a whole they suggest that the viceregal government felt it necessary to combat English influence lingering from the occupation. The *cabildo*, for example, subsidized the publication of four lengthy essays written in letter style which attempt to demonstrate the perfidious nature of the English by listing their numerous violations against other sovereign states, such as the seizure of Gibraltar. The press published at least two editions of a report on the invasion purportedly written by Popham, to which Liniers appended extensive notes intended to demonstrate that it contained serious falsehoods. Imprints taken from decrees of the *audiencia* continue the prohibition of trade with England, and even outlaw the importation of British newspapers. Finally, several anonymous tracts attack British intentions, honor, and leadership.³⁶

Patriotic literature dominated the year 1807 and demonstrates that the Niños Expósitos press became an agent for expressing the sentiments of community pride that followed the success. Some of this material simply praises the troops and the city, and occasionally ridicules

the English for their embarrassing loss. As would be anticipated, funeral orations for soldiers killed in battle appear in the collection, mixing sentiments of religious faith and patriotic pride.

The religious nature of the funeral orations also characterizes several patriotic imprints which directly link the expulsion of the English with the defense of the Catholic faith. One such publication, a two-part pamphlet attributed to a "priest of the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata," contains a highly emotional essay praising the soldiers for defending both their homeland and their faith against the British. The author ascribes victory to the providence of God, and describes the harm to religion and traditional society that would have resulted from a victory by the Protestant British. Similarly indicative of this link between religion and patria is an 1807 collection of pastoral letters by the archbishop of La Plata, Benito María de Moxo y Francoli, which praise the victories of the viceregal forces.³⁷

The single individual who appears most frequently in these imprints is Santiago Liniers. In many ways Liniers became the focal point of the outpouring of creole pride that marked the year 1807. The spirit generated by Liniers propelled him first to the post of interim viceroy, and made him the object of praise of such luminaries as Moxo and the princess Carlota Joaquina de Bourbon, daughter of the king.³⁸ In 1808, Liniers was appointed viceroy, a post he held for one eventful year until he was replaced by Baltasar de Cisneros.

A significant number of the 1807-1808 imprints in the Mendel Santamarina collection indicate energetic local efforts to care for those who suffered injury during the invasions. The Liniers government was particularly concerned with the fate of widows and orphans, a concern

fired by statements from the loquacious Archbishop Moxo. The government led a well-publicized effort to collect special funds for their support, beginning even before the second invasion in 1807. Widows, orphans, and soldiers received small monthly pensions from the viceroyalty, granted in September 1807. In its efforts to promote contributions the cabildo periodically published the names of all donors and the amounts subscribed by each.³⁹

Governmental concern for widows and orphans extended also to the slave population, whose support in the struggle against the British impressed the viceregal authorities. In acknowledging the services rendered by the slave soldiers, the cabildo granted liberty to all slaves crippled or otherwise useless for service. One imprint indicates that some sort of pension was given to free soldiers too crippled for work; presumably freedmen also became public pensioners. The governing authorities held a much-heralded public lottery to give freedom to seventy slaves or widows and orphans of slaves who had served with the Spanish forces.⁴⁰

The victory over the English, momentous in the history of Buenos Aires, gave extraordinary stimulus to commemorative poetry. Indeed, the bulk of the poetic imprints contained in the Mendel Santamarina collection were conceived with reference to the reconquest of the city, several of the remaining examples having the peninsular struggle against Napoleon as their subject. The poetry from this period originated within the La Plata area, and can be divided into two basic groups, cultured verse and popular verse.⁴¹ Among the cultured poets, José Prego de Oliver appears most frequently in this collection, accounting for four separate imprints.⁴² Also included is Vicente López y Planes' *Triunfo argentino*, a neoclassical portrait of Liniers.⁴³

The popular verse, generally anonymous, displays less cultivated language and treats less eminent subjects, focusing instead on popular speech and the deeds of humble citizens and soldiers.⁴⁴

A TIME OF TURMOIL, 1808-1809

The majority of the imprints dating from 1808 and 1809 concern themselves with the Napoleonic Wars, the invasion of the Iberian peninsula by French forces, and turmoil both within Buenos Aires and between Buenos Aires and Montevideo. The output of the Niños Expósitos press during these years was, with some notable exceptions, anti-Napoleonic and reflected the point of view of Liniers and his followers. As in 1806 and 1807, the Imprenta served as a tool to gain public support for the government.

In March 1807, Charles IV abdicated the Spanish throne in favor of his son, who became Ferdinand VII of Spain. Experiencing a change of heart, Charles shortly thereafter withdrew his abdication and reclaimed the throne for himself. Napoleon Bonaparte intervened openly at this point and sent French troops to bring Charles and Ferdinand over the French border to the city of Bayonne. There, Napoleon forced Ferdinand's abdication and accepted that of Charles, both in favor of Napoleon's brother, Joseph Bonaparte, who was placed on the Spanish throne as Joseph I.⁴⁵ Forces loyal to the Spanish royal family fled southward and established a *junta* in Seville, which claimed power to rule in the name of Ferdinand. Throughout Spain the resistance to French forces and to the usurper Joseph Bonaparte took the form of similar juntas, among which Seville was the preeminent.

These events on the peninsula created a crisis for Santiago Liniers, the viceroy in Buenos Aires. Liniers was

French-born and had ridden to power on the crest of a wave of popularity among the creoles; these facts alone were sufficient to create a distrust for him among those whose fortunes were linked with the overwhelmingly peninsular administrative structure.⁴⁶

When Liniers announced a decision to pledge loyalty to Ferdinand VII, even after receiving news from the French emissary Sassenay of the prince's abdication, the peninsular group used the opportunity to strike against Liniers. The governor of Montevideo, Francisco Javier Elío, charged Liniers with misconduct and led the Montevideans in forming a junta modeled on those in Spain. Even though Liniers was upheld by the audiencia in October 1808, the Buenos Aires cabildo tried to force him to establish a similar junta on January 1, 1809. Only the cries of a favorable crowd saved Liniers from having to comply with their demands.⁴⁷

Clearly, with the absence of a strong government in Spain, orderly government in the La Plata region became increasingly difficult. The Seville junta, to which Liniers' loyalty was pledged, sent a new viceroy in 1809, with instructions to calm the turbulent situation in Buenos Aires.⁴⁸ This viceroy, Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros, experienced only temporary success, and with the fall of the Seville junta he himself was removed from power, and a ruling junta was established in Buenos Aires on May 25, 1810.

Beginning in 1806 and increasingly through 1809, the Niños Expósitos press published a large number of reports on events in Europe surrounding the campaigns of Napoleon. Generally collected from European newspapers, the reports are extremely fragmented, and often printed with little evidence of orderly editing, suggesting that the desire for news Buenos Aires exceeded the supply of information.

A few reports contained in the Lilly Library collection came to Buenos Aires by way of Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo. Reprints from Lima newspapers, which appeared in small numbers following the British invasions of Buenos Aires, are almost entirely missing from the group of imprints reporting events in Europe. The notices from Rio de Janeiro simply report European alliances and military affairs, while one Montevideo imprint gives details on the arrival of the exiled Portuguese royal family in Rio de Janeiro, an event of concern for those who feared Portugal's intentions in the Banda Oriental.⁴⁹

Most news reports came from overseas nations. Reports received from Spain during 1809 originated in Seville and sought to inspire support for the anti-French cause. Several of these imprints report loyalist successes in the north of Spain, particularly near such towns as Manresa and Saragossa.⁵⁰ A significant amount of news was received from European sources other than Spain, most of which originated in London. British reports in the collection concern themselves with details of military progress and with the trade situation in the Atlantic, as was to be expected from a nation deeply involved in a struggle involving economic sanctions.

Reprints of news carrying a pro-French bias are particularly intriguing. These imprints, with some exceptions originating in material received from Madrid during 1807 and 1808, include publications of decrees of Joseph Bonaparte's government, factual information regarding French campaigns, and blatantly pro-French propaganda.⁵¹ It is possible, of course, that the city was so starved for news that the viceregal authorities were willing to publish any material received from Europe. These imprints, however,

all appear before 1809, indicating that the Liniers government lacked a rigid policy excluding French influence during the years 1807 and 1808. The absence of pro-French material during 1809 suggests that some factor, perhaps Napoleon's actions in Spain or the cabildo's distrust of Liniers, brought about the intentional exclusion of French influence from the viceroyalty during that year.

Along with this pro-Napoleon literature, the Santamarina collection contains a number of imprints directed against Napoleon, all dating from the years 1808 and 1809. A portion of this material consists of a miscellany of largely anonymous tracts, ranging from a reasoned appeal to the Spanish to reject a man whose rise to power was marked by great perfidy, to an attack on Napoleon's family origins.⁵² Other imprints indicate that Napoleon brought out a satiric streak in Spanish Americans, as in one humorous essay taken from the *Diario de Santiago*, which ostensibly lauds Napoleon, but becomes so lost in its own verbal entanglements that it ends damning him by faint praise.⁵³ Finally, the collection contains several official proclamations, from Liniers, the cabildo, and ecclesiastical authorities, proclaiming loyalty to the Spanish throne, condemning Napoleon, and predicting his eventual defeat.

Many imprints express loyalty to Ferdinand VII and reject Joseph Bonaparte's rule. These include a soberly-stated inquiry into Joseph's right to the throne, a relation of the events at Bayonne and the disputes that took place within the royal family there, and a description of a Buenos Aires religious procession honoring Ferdinand.⁵⁴ The collection even includes a satirical speech attributed to Joseph Bonaparte admonishing the Spanish for resisting his government; in reality it is no more than a description of his unfriendly welcome to Madrid.⁵⁵ Finally, the collection con-

tains a group of official decrees proclaiming loyalty to Ferdinand and decrying the usurper. The number and vehemence of the 1808 anti-French and pro-Ferdinand imprints substantially offsets the hint of pro-French bias contained in some of the reprinted news reports of 1807-1808.

Several imprints, mostly in the form of official decrees, seek support not only for Ferdinand VII, but also for the junta in Seville, which claimed to govern in his name. The majority of these publications are reprints of proclamations issued by the Seville body itself, or by one of the Spanish regional juntas, either seeking support against Napoleon or simply announcing defiance of the French invaders. Some of these texts originated in America; one, approved by Liniers, solicits money for the support of the loyalist cause in Spain.⁵⁶ Also included in the collection is a reprint of the famous decree of the Seville junta calling a *cortes* (parliament); by inviting delegates from the New World it nullified the imperial system and incorporated the viceroalties into the governing structure of Spain itself.⁵⁷

Compared with the large output dealing with the Napoleonic struggle, a relatively small number of imprints concern themselves with the domestic turbulence that Buenos Aires experienced during this time. Those publications dealing with the trouble between Liniers and Montevideo, and also between Liniers and the Buenos Aires cabildo, treat the subject purely from Liniers' point of view. Without doubt, internal dissension was not regarded as a matter for dispute in publications of the Niños Expósitos press; once again the press served as an instrument helping the viceregal administration carry out its policies and programs.

Included among those documents about the turmoil is a reprint of the audiencia's October 1808 declaration absolving Liniers from wrong-doing and admonishing the

Montevideans to protest the actions of the viceroy within proper channels. In his own declarations, Liniers appears conciliatory toward Montevideo, appealing to the inhabitants to follow viceregal leadership and taking care to refer to Montevideo's "heroic actions" and "reputation and good name." Only one of Liniers' decrees deals with the events of January 1, 1809, but even this declaration is concerned that life in the city proceed as normally as possible. Liniers used the press as an instrument to cool heated tempers and to avoid stimulating further unrest.⁵⁸

The imprints suggest that the Montevidean junta should be understood as a manifestation of separatism within the viceroyalty. The officials in Buenos Aires were primarily concerned that their traditional authority over Montevideo be maintained. It is probable that peninsular-creole tensions were also active, and it is admittedly doubtful that these tensions would be reflected in the official imprints. Still, Montevidean separatism, which flared during the struggle for independence, must be recognized as an important factor in the establishment of a junta independent of the viceroy.

As mirrored in the Mendel Collection, the regime of Baltasar de Cisneros, who replaced Liniers as viceroy in 1809, provides a suitable close to our discussion of the imprints and the period from which they came. The restoration of tranquility in the city of Buenos Aires preoccupied Cisneros; his proclamations call for an end to dissension, praise troops who remained loyal to Liniers, and grant pardons to those involved in the rebellion. He took at least one step toward imitating the political and social development of 1780-1806 by regularizing the duties of the *alcaldes* and establishing a final organization of the city into administrative sections.⁵⁹

The months of Cisneros' administration could not have remained completely tranquil, however; war raged in Europe and South America felt its repercussions. For his part Cisneros had to be attentive to the military needs of the La Plata viceroyalty itself. He undertook a military reorganization to help relieve the fiscal distress of the viceroyalty, while at the same time trying to maintain sufficient strength to resist any French threat.⁶⁰

In these respects we can view Cisneros' administration as a period summing up the previous thirty years. He moved to end the turbulence that had marked the life of Buenos Aires since the British invasions in 1806 and reinstituted peaceful development within the city. Still, 1809 was not 1790; Cisneros could not restore complete peace. His position became increasingly difficult, until the *cabildo abierto* finally dismissed him on May 25, 1810.

CONCLUSION

The imprints permit broad interpretation of Buenos Aires' intellectual, social, and political life during the years 1780-1809, despite their limitations as a tool for historical research. The Niños Expósitos imprints present a picture of a city that vibrated with a life of its own. Buenos Aires, before 1809, matured beyond the status of a colony, that is, of a subject of the mother country, and reached the point of trying to assume control of its own destiny.

The study of these imprints suggests a needed re-interpretation of the viceregal period. Traditional interpretation views the years 1780-1809 solely in light of the events of May 25, 1810. Various historians have focused on the development of cattle-raising or commercial elites during that period, seeking to find the leaders of the sudden break with viceregal government in 1810. Others, in explaining the

May revolution, commented on creole resentment toward restrictions imposed by Spain. The social and political maturation reflected in the Niños Expósitos publications was the true precursor of the 1810 movement.

Considered from a political perspective, the imprint collection demonstrates that strong leadership existed in Buenos Aires, beginning with the creation of the viceroyalty. Admittedly, the vigor of local administration did not preclude due attention to Madrid's directives, especially as Bourbon reformism reached a peak in the 1790s. Nonetheless, local leadership met with significant success in the 1806-1807 crisis. *Porteños*, under Liniers, met the military and political needs of the city, at the same time attending to the welfare of its inhabitants.

In spiritual matters the Niños Expósitos imprints depict the city as orthodox and rigidly royalist, that is, acquiescent in the crown's power of patronage over the Church. At the same time, the region enjoyed strong religious leadership, while auxiliary religious activities, such as spiritual confraternities, flourished. The Church stood as a principal force in the social dynamics of the city. These observations support our vision of Buenos Aires as a socially self-sufficient city, possessing an urban vigor of its own.

Buenos Aires manifested an active interest in the sciences and other intellectual pursuits. The Niños Expósitos imprints demonstrate that Buenos Aires, while not intellectually equal to many other New World cities, absorbed many Enlightenment ideas, especially the desire to disseminate useful knowledge. It is acknowledged that the Imprenta did not act as a medium for unapproved ideas; it was, after all, the press of the government. Official control, however, must not be equated with complete intellectual backwardness.

In the thirty-odd years between 1780 and 1809, Buenos Aires progressed from an obscure village to a bustling commercial and administrative center. Admittedly, the city remained primitive in comparison to Lima, Mexico City, New York, or Boston. Nevertheless, the Niños Expósitos materials indicate that Buenos Aires, in spite of its relative youth, possessed a significant degree of urban maturity. The city had a social, religious, intellectual, and political life of its own, relatively independent of Spain and potentially worthy of a great capital. Only in this understanding can the events of May 1810 begin to clarify themselves.

NOTES

¹ For population figures see Nicolas Besio Moreno, *Buenos Aires: Puerto del Río de la Plata, Capital de la Argentina: Estudio crítico de su población, 1536-1936* (Buenos Aires, 1939), pp. 392-393, 394-396.

² Vicente D. Sierra, *Historia de la Argentina*, III (Buenos Aires, 1959), pp. 423-426.

³ Emilio Ravignani, "El Virreinato del Río de la Plata," in Ricardo Levene, dir. gen., *Historia de la nación argentina*, IV, pt. 1 (Buenos Aires, 1940), pp. 46-59; Sierra, III, pp. 420-423, 463-470.

⁴ Ravignani, pp. 59-60; Sierra, III, pp. 451-452.

⁵ Guillermo Fúrlong Cárdiff, "Orígenes de la imprenta en el Río de la Plata," *Estudios*, XV, núm. 2 (agosto de 1918), pp. 96-114.

⁶ A smaller device may have been present in the city before 1780, as indicated by the existence of several mysterious imprints. See Guillermo Fúrlong Cárdiff, *Historia y bibliografía de las primeras imprentas rioplatenses*, I (Buenos Aires, 1953), pp. 117-125.

⁷ Felix de Ugarteche, *La imprenta argentina: sus orígenes y desarrollo* (Buenos Aires, 1929), p. 69; José Toribio Medina, *Historia y bibliografía de la imprenta en el antiguo Virreinato del Río de la Plata* (Amsterdam, 1965), pp. xiii-xiv.

⁸ Vicente G. Quesada, "Fundación de la Casa de Niños Expósitos," *Revista de Buenos Aires*, I, núm. 3 (julio de 1863), pp. 383-395.

⁹ Carlos Heras, "Introducción: Los primeros trabajos de la Imprenta de Niños Expósitos," in Heras, ed., *Orígenes de la Imprenta de los Niños Expósitos* (La Plata, 1910), pp. vii-xix.

¹⁰ Medina, pp. xxiii-xxx.

¹¹ "Don Juan Josef Vertiz, y Salcedo . . . 3 de Noviembre de 1780," Mendel accession X. 500; "Representación del Cabildo . . . 1781," X. 502; "Ynformando de desarreglo, y abusos con que se exercita la Medicina . . . 16 de Noviembre de 1780," X. 501; "Muy Señor mío . . . 28 de Diciembre de 1782." Mendel accession numbers will be included in all references to imprints.

¹² Gregorio Funes, *Oración funebre . . . Don Carlos III . . .* (1790), X. 567; "Breve oración gratulatoria . . ." (n.d.), "Oración gratulatoria . . ." (n.d.), both X. 601; Benito de la Mata Liniers and Francisco de Garosa, *Oración funebre . . . Pedro Melo de Portugal y Villena* (1798), X. 619.

¹³ Heras, p. xii.

¹⁴ *Catechismo de la doctrina cristiana . . .* (1781), X. 517. Regarding its origin see Fúrlong Cárdiff, *Historia*, I, pp. 483-484.

¹⁵ San Alberto, *Septenario de los dolores de María santísima* (1781), X. 510.

¹⁶ Eugenio de la Santísima Trinidad, *Trisagio seráfico para venerar la muy Augusta y Santa Trinidad* (1781, 1784, 1798, 1805), last printing numbered X. 681.

¹⁷ Constitución de la Real Congregación del Alumbrado y Vela . . . (1799), X. 631.

¹⁸ José de San Alberto, *Carta pastoral* (1781), X. 506; *Carta pastoral segunda* (1781), X. 505; *Carta pastoral . . . con ocasión de haber fundado . . . dos Casas para Niños . . .* (1783), X. 527; *Carta pastoral . . .* (1784), X. 541; *Voces del pastor . . .* (1793), X. 589.

¹⁹ San Alberto, *Prevenciones del pastor en su visita que dirige a todos los curas y tenientes de su diócesis* (1788), X. 562.

²⁰ San Alberto, *Carta pastoral . . . exhortándolos a que contribuyan con algún donativo . . .* (1799), X. 629; *Sermón de gracias . . .* (1784), X. 536.

²¹ Pedro Antonio Cervino, et. al., *Ejercicio de aritmético, geometría elemental* . . . (1802), X. 643.

²² "Excelentísimo Domino Nicolao Francisco Christophoro del Campo . . ." (1784), X. 538.

²³ Emmanuele Bonaventura Villegas, *Conclusiones* . . . (1803), X. 669.

²⁴ José Mendez del Yermo, tr., *Economía de la vida humana* . . . (1790), X. 569; Fúrlong Cárdiff, *Historia*, II, pp. 91-92.

²⁵ Manuel Belgrano, tr., *Principios de la ciencia económico-política* (1796), X. 608; Juan de Alsina, *Análisis al papel periódico entitulado Tratado de filosofía natural y espejo de la naturaleza* (1801), X. 641; *Reestablecimiento de la religión católica en Francia*, 3 pts. (1802-1803), X. 649.

²⁶ Miguel Gorman, *Instrucción para la inoculación vacuna* . . . (1805), X. 676; José Ribes and Manuel Bonafos, *Modo de hacer la operación cesarea después de la muerte de la madre* (1805), X. 677.

²⁷ Marques de Loreta, *Arancel general de los derechos de los oficiales* . . . (1787), X. 588; "El Rey . . . [22 de diciembre de 1800]," X. 663; "El Rey . . . 30 de junio de 1787," X. 560; Marqués de Sobremonte, *Prontuario o extracto del ejercicio* . . . (1802), X. 646; Sobremonte, *Reglamento para las milicias disciplinadas de infantería y caballería* (1802), X. 647; see also X. 635, X. 678, and X. 683.

²⁸ "Yo el Rey . . . Buenos Ayres 22 de Septiembre de 1798 . . .," X. 611; "El Rey . . . Buenos-Ayres 6 de Noviembre de 1802 . . .," X. 651; "El Rey . . . Buenos-Ayres 12 de Mayo de 1797 . . .," X. 626.

²⁹ Juan Beverina, "Invasiones inglesas," in Levene, dir. gen., *Historia de la nación argentina*, pp. 313-314.

³⁰ "Por Guillermo Carr Beresford . . . [28 de junio de 1806]," X. 682; "Por Guillermo Carr Beresford . . . 30 de Junio de 1806," X. 685; "Por Guillermo Carr Beresford . . ." (n.d.), X. 686; "Por Guillermo Carr Beresford . . . 7 de Julio de 1806," X. 686; "El Comandante Británico . . . Agosto 4 de 1806," X. 687; "Condiciones concedidas . . . 2 de Julio de 1806," X. 687.

³¹ "D. Pasquel Ruiz Huidobro . . . Octubre 7 de 1806," X. 704; "Don Santiago Liniers y Bremond . . . 19 de Noviembre de 1806," X. 686; "D. Lucas Muñoz y Cubero . . . 6 de Febrero de 1807," X. 722.

³² "Memorial patriótico . . . [15 de octubre de 1806]," X. 691; "Nota del M.I.C. de Buenos Ayres . . . Abril 25 de 1808," X. 811.

³³ "Legión de Patricios de Buenos Aires . . . Noviembre 2 de 1807," "Legión de Patricios . . . 21 de Junio de 1807," "Estado que manifiesta la distribución y operación de los tres batallones . . . Noviembre 27 de 1807," all, X. 771.

³⁴ *Parte de la conquista de la Plaza de Montevideo* . . . (1807), X. 723.

³⁵ *Para satisfacer la curiosidad pública* . . . (1807), X. 750.

³⁶ Pedro Estala, *Quattro cartas de un español a un anglomano* . . . (1807), X. 717; "El Sr. Brigadier de la Real Armada D. Santiago Liniers . . ." (1807), X. 729 and X. 744; "La Real Audiencia gobernadora . . . 16 de Mayo de 1807," X. 729; "Bando de la Real Audiencia de Buenos-Ayres . . . 12 de Junio de 1807," X. 742; *El publicista de Buenos-Ayres al Señor General Beresford* (1806), X. 687; *El amigo de la Patria* (1806), X. 694.

³⁷ *El vasallo fiel a la religión, al rey, y a la patria* . . . , 2 pts. (1807), X. 739 and X. 740; Benito María de Moxo y Francoli, *Colección de todos los papeles* . . . (1807), X. 774.

³⁸ Moxo y Francoli, *Edictos del Ilustrísimo Señor Don Benito María de Moxo y Francoli* . . . (1807), X. 755.

³⁹ Moxo y Francoli, *Glorioso recuerdo . . . en subsidio de las viudas y huérfanos pobres de los valerosos defensores de la patria* . . . (1808), X. 813; "Aviso al público . . . Septiembre 24 de 1807 . . .," X. 768; "Razon de los donativos . . . 18 de Mayo de 1807," X. 776.

⁴⁰ "Aviso al público . . . Octubre 22 de 1807," X. 763; *Relación circunstanciada de los premios de libertad* . . . (1807), X. 780.

⁴¹ Rafael Alberto Arrieta, dir., *Historia de la literatura argentina*, I (Buenos Aires, 1958), pp. 250-259.

⁴² José Prego de Oliver, "Cantos a las acciones de guerra" (1808), X. 838; "A la gloriosa memoria del teniente de fragata don Agustín Abreu, muerto de resultas de las heridas que recibió en la acción del campo de Maldonado con los ingleses, el día 7 de noviembre de 1806" (1806), X. 696; "Al Sr. D. Santiago Liniers" (1807), X. 759; "Oda" (1806), X. 697.

⁴³ Vicente López y Planes, "Triunfo argentino" (1808), X. 837.

⁴⁴ Arrieta, pp. 253-259.

⁴⁵ Charles E. Chapman, *A History of Spain* (New York, 1965), pp. 407-409.

⁴⁶ Ricardo Levene, *A History of Argentina*, tr. Wm. Spence Robertson (Chapel Hill, 1937), p. 209.

⁴⁷ Levene, *History*, pp. 210-213; José María Rosa, *Historia argentina*, II (Buenos Aires, 1965), pp. 94-110.

⁴⁸ Vicente D. Sierra, *Historia de la Argentina*, IV (Buenos Aires, 1960), pp. 422-424.

⁴⁹ *Noticias habidas por el Correo de Montevideo del miércoles 10 de febrero de 1808* (1808), X. 860.

⁵⁰ For example, see *Extracto del correo político y literario de Sevilla de jueves 29 de junio de 1809* (1809), X. 919, or *Noticias de Zaragoza . . .* (1809), also X. 919.

⁵¹ For example, see *Noticias sacadas de gazetas de Madrid: Gazeta de 11 de Agosto de 1807* (1807), X. 787; *Gazetas extraordinarias de Madrid . . . 9 de Abril de 1808 . . .* (1808), X. 861; *Noticias del ejército francés . . . sacadas de gazetas portuguesas del mes de Febrero de 1807* (1807), X. 785.

⁵² *Cargos que el tribunal de la razon de España hace al imperador de los franceses* (1809), X. 912; *Genealogía de Bruto, Alv. Napoleon Bonaparte . . .* (1809), X. 910.

⁵³ *Carta inserta en el diario de Santiago del Domingo 10 de Julio de 1808: Al grán emperador Napoleon* (1808), X. 852.

⁵⁴ *Contestación a una de las cartas del nuevo Diario de Madrid* (1808), X. 826; *Copia de una carta de Bayona* (1808), X. 828; Moxo y Francoli, *Homilla que pronunció el Ilmo. Señor Doctor D. Benito María de Moxo y de Francoli . . . 12 de Octubre de 1808* (1809), X. 874.

⁵⁵ *Sermón que predicó el Señor Josef Bonaparte . . .* (1809), X. 904.

⁵⁶ "Don Santiago de Liniers . . . Proclama . . . 27 de Agosto de 1808," X. 823.

⁵⁷ "Real decreto de S.M. . . . 25 de Mayo de 1809," X. 930.

⁵⁸ "M.P.S. Los fiscales de S.M. teniendo a la vista lo representado con documentos por el Gobernador y vocales de la Junta establecida en Montevideo . . . 15 de Octubre de 1808," X. 833; "Proclama de . . .

D. Santiago Liniers . . . 26 de Noviembre de 1808," X. 830; "Don Santiago Liniers y Bremond . . . [2 de enero de 1809]," X. 876; "D. Santiago Liniers y Bremond . . . 4 de Enero de 1809," X. 877.

⁵⁹ For example, see "D. Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros y la Torre . . . 22 de Septiembre de 1809," X. 890; *Instrucción para gobierno y desempeño de los alcaldes de barrio en el ejercicio de sus empleos, para que cada uno en su respectivo distrito y todos juntos contribuyan a mantener el orden y seguridad pública* (1809), X. 892; *División de la ciudad de Buenos Aires* (1809), X. 893.

⁶⁰ For example, see "El Excmo. Sr. Virrey . . . 11 de Septiembre de 1809," and "Don Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros y la Torre . . . [23 de enero de 1810]," both X. 890.

ARTHUR F. LIEBSCHER is a graduate student in the Department of History, Indiana University, Bloomington.