

*Verdad y mentira de la literatura argentina. Bases históricas de un idioma nacional.* By ARTURO CAMBOURS OCAMPO. Buenos Aires, 1962. Editorial A. Peña Lillo. Colección La Siringa. No. 23. Index. Pp. 93. Paper.

Integran este libro tres capítulos y un apéndice. En el primero, "Los escritores argentinos de 1880," Cambours Ocampo intenta demostrar que "el espíritu de esa generación" no fue positivista ni extranjerizante, sino argentino y con ribetes románticos. En el segundo, "Escritores humorísticos y aprovechados," revive pasadas inquinas contra Juan Carlos Ghiano. En el tercero, "El problema de nuestro lenguaje," repite, con retoques y ampliaciones, lo publicado en dos de sus libros anteriores. El "Apéndice" reproduce textos de Alberdi, Sarmiento, y Juan María Gutiérrez, a fin de apoyar su tesis sobre las "bases históricas de un idioma nacional." Dada la posición ideológica del autor, de nacionalismo político y cultural, su enfoque polémico insiste demasiado en personales consideraciones, con lo cual desvía al lector de la cuestión de fondo, cuyo planteamiento debe ser meditado objetivamente. De aquí que el primer estudio sea el más convincente. Desearíamos que Cambours Ocampo, con serenidad y mayor base documental, lo desarrollara en libro aparte. Podría ser una valiosa aportación.

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*La unidad nacional.* By RICARDO FONT EZCURRA. Buenos Aires, 1961. Ediciones Teoría. Biblioteca de Estudios Históricos. Notes. Appendix. Index. Pp. 219. Paper.

*La unidad nacional* is an interesting and controversial book. While it was published in 1961, its author died in 1955. The work was therefore done during the regime of Juan Perón and follows the then somewhat popular historical argument that Juan Manuel Rosas was a great patriot and his

unitario opponents were traitors, not only to the government of Rosas but to the fatherland, the Argentine Confederation.

Font Ezcurra holds that the nation was in mortal danger of territorial disintegration during the three decades between 1821 and 1851, due to the hostility of foreign powers, France, Great Britain, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Chile, and to the conspiracies of Rosas' enemies in exile, particularly the so-called Argentine Commissions in Montevideo and Santiago de Chile. The emigrés, in their hatred for Rosas, or in their self-seeking, are pictured as willing to betray their country and seek alliance with any of its enemies.

With regard to the Montevidean situation, Font Ezcurra claims that France habitually sought imaginary pretexts to intervene in Africa and America in its grasping search for territory and for money. The French blockade of Buenos Aires in 1838 used the pretext of the cases of Bâcle and Lavié for this purpose. Rosas, on the contrary, conducted his foreign relations with dignity, prudence, and reasonableness. Font Ezcurra claims that the unitarios encouraged France and took advantage of French money and the French fleet to injure their own country. As the villains of acts of extraordinary treason, he names Florencio Varela, Julián Segundo de Agüero, Salvador María del Carril, Gregorio Gómez, Valentín Alsina, and others.

Similarly, Font Ezcurra attacks the Argentine Commission in Chile, naming General Juan Gregorio Las Heras, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Joaquín Godoy and others as participants in a plot to encourage aggression against their country, namely, the Chilean seizure of the Straits of Magellan. Lacking French gold and arms, he accuses them of using the pen instead of the sword to the same end.

Font Ezcurra accuses Florencio Varela and others of encouraging Brazilian manipulations in Uruguay and Paraguay (which he sees as parts of the Argentine Confederation) and in Entre

Ríos, Corrientes, and Misiones. Finally Urquiza is accused of betraying his leader and helping Brazil redress Ituzaingó at Caseros, giving the Brazilian Empire long-sought territorial and political advantages at the expense of Argentina.

The reader who recognizes this as a deeply partisan book will find it interesting reading, carefully and selectively documented to prove a case. An eighty page appendix presents an additional collection of documents useful to any study of this period.

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## BRAZIL

*Formação histórica do Acre.* 3 vols. By LEANDRO TOCANTINS. Rio de Janeiro, 1961. Conquista. Temas Brasileiros Series. No. 5. Illustrations. Pp. 804. Paper. 1800 cruzeiros.

In 1962 Acre became the twenty-second Brazilian state. Sixty years ago Acre was not even a part of Brazil. The road to statehood was short but tortuous. This admirable history of Dr. Tocantins tells the story of how and why Acre became Brazilian. It is a dramatic history which chronicles the last of the *bandeirantes*, those adventurous rubber gatherers who carried Brazilian territorial claims into the hinterlands of the Amazon. As the author stated, "Without rubber, Acre would not be Brazilian."

Did "manifest destiny" à *brasileira* play a role in the absorption of Acre into Brazil? Professor Tocantins wrote, "Acre did not belong to us and we conquered it unconsciously as a part of the fate of our historical destiny and of the physical and social geography of Bolivia." Fate? Historical destiny? The phraseology must sound familiar to American historians. There seem to be in the history of Acre arresting similarities with the history of Texas. History was not repeating itself, but the parallels provide hours of contemplation for students of comparative history.

Professor Tocantins devotes most of his study to the eventful years 1899-1903, when, under the careful handling of Assis Brasil, Eduardo Lisboa, and Rio-Branco, Acre changed hands from Bolivia to Brazil. The skill of those three Brazilian diplomats was extraordinary and remains a highlight in Brazilian diplomatic history. Because of investments of American businessmen in the Bolivian Syndicate, the State Department fixed its attention on the events in the South American heartland. Rio-Branco turned a potential Brazilian-United States discord into a victory for improved relations between the two nations, the beginning of his policy of approximation with the United States.

Professor Tocantins has written very clearly and dominated the innumerable details which fill the three volumes. The Brazilian point of view is well presented but not to the detriment of Bolivian, Peruvian, or American positions, which are treated with a refreshing impartiality. The author consulted a wide variety of Brazilian and foreign printed sources and archives. In short, this study exemplifies in Brazilian historiography the best qualities of careful writing based on thorough research.

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*Santos-Dumont. A Study in Obsession.* By PETER WYKEHAM. London, 1962. Putnam and Company, Ltd. Illustrations. Appendix. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 278.

While most Latin Americans and almost any Brazilian will emphatically declare that Alberto Santos-Dumont rather than the Wright Brothers was first to fly, R.A.F. officer Wykeham's book is the first description of this aeronautical pioneer's work to appear in an English-language book since the 1904 translation of a brief autobiography. The book fails to fill entirely this great gap, but fortunately Brazilian volumes contain factual information that nicely complement its main themes.