

Chart: “Flags in Argentina”

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Flags in Argentina could also be called *Flags of Argentina* and both titles could be used very nicely since the flags in Argentina were also flags of Argentina. All belong to the Argentine-Hispanic-American patrimony.

This type of work will never be finished since many other flags could have been included, and many other presently illustrated flags will experience changes. Furthermore, after the completion of this work, I am sure that many other new provincial flags are bound to be introduced.

Any reader will agree that historical studies of any kind are not necessarily a look at the past but the means to take advantage of past experiences to improve the future. The spirit of this work is to rescue the past using flags as the medium, and by that, enabling new generations to understand this from a different and visual perspective.

Michael Faul, suggested that the work be divided in three parts: Hispanic period, Independence and revolutionary period, and provincial and cities flags as the third period.

I will comment on the second period because during a long interval, the idea of an Argentine nation was very much in doubt. Furthermore, for those that clearly had a vision of an Argentine nation, the form this nation will take as a legally constituted state, was very much under discussion. For that reason, you will find some flags described as the flag of the United Provinces of the River Plate, or the flag of the United Provinces of South America, and sometimes the word “of” is substituted by the word “in” South America. The flag adopted in 1816 was at that time a transitional flag. It was known as “*the lesser flag*,” which serve as the “*greater flag*” until legal constituted authorities decide on a permanent one. You will read words which are evidence of the process of the formation of a modern state. Words like: “*The Head of the Government*,” which was not the president. “*The Assembly*,” and “*The Congress*,” which were two separate bodies and sometimes competed with the authority of the Head of the Government. “*The authorities seated in Buenos Aires*,” which is not the same as “*The Government of Buenos Aires*,” or “*The President of the Nation*.” whom not always resided in Buenos Aires.

Belgrano hoisted a flag of national character in 1812. However, still doubtful as to what function that flag played. Was it an “Argentine,” flag? Did the flag represent a constituted form of government, a state, a nation, or just an ideal. (The term Argentina begun legally and officially in 1826.)

Belgrano’s intentions seem to indicate the desire of having a flag of permanent character with an agenda of becoming the flag of a State. On the other hand, the statehood aspired by Belgrano and his flag did not spell out the required control of a populated territory and sovereignty. It seems that this flag of “national” character was supposed to be the flag for The United Provinces of the River Plate, which included present Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay. The Government was appalled by the idea of a “national flag,” but at the same time tolerated the display of the color blue and white not as a national flag of permanent character but as a party/ideological flag of temporary character and function. Furthermore, the Government had neither political or military control over the whole of the territory and population it proclaimed to preside and represent.

The teaching of history in Argentina is vertical and monolithic perhaps as a result of being a young nation with a past of civil war and unrest. Argentine children are taught one official history, of one father of the country, and one creator of the flag. Therefore, for Argentines, the idea of many flags as part of their patrimony is new, somehow foreign, and resisted by some. Works of this kind are trying to achieve in the conscience of the people the idea of belonging to a greater culture whose understanding is of the utmost importance for the future of any nation. Knowledge of this heritage will produce cultural dialogue enabling the explanation of misunderstandings which kept people apart from each other.

Two types of sources have been used to complete this work; Direct Source- a) visiting museums and collections where the actual flags can be seen, as well as contemporary drawings or paintings. b) Using coins, medals, and uniforms. The second source of information are documents which we could sub-divide in official documents and publications, and work published by private individuals. The bibliography consulted is of public domain; however, the author has researched public and private archives from vexillologists of Argentina, Spain, France and the United States. Much of the information provided in this work are from previous essays by this author given in International Congresses of vexillology, or in vexillological publications. Some of these works are: “*Provincial Arms of Argentina*,” “*Federal Flags*,” “*The Flag of the Argentine Confederation*,” “*The Flag of the Andes*.” The corresponding bibliography is noted on each of these works.

