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The Debate in the Newspapers of the Young Enlightened of San Juan. An Ideological Struggle Through the Pen (1825–1861)

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ABSTRACT

The written press in the Argentine province of San Juan is celebrating its bicentennial this year, having first appeared in 1825 when the printing press was introduced during the liberal government of Salvador María del Carril. This research project aims to investigate the influence of liberal ideology on the enlightened young members of the local elite. The study will cover the period from 1825 to the reissue of the newspaper *El Zonda* in 1861, just a few months before Domingo Faustino Sarmiento assumed the governorship. The ideological debate in the press is important for identifying the different factions within the provincial elite, as the aforementioned liberal sector was opposed by a more conservative faction that emphasized colonial traditions and the Roman Catholic religion. Likewise, the liberal and conservative sectors represented the Unitario and Federal parties respectively. During the first half of the 19th century, these parties engaged in a fierce struggle for political power throughout the Argentine Confederation. Liberal ideas were noticeably influenced by their counterparts in the United States and Europe. This ideology sought to modernize society and put an end to conservative ideas representing Spanish heritage, caudillos and backwardness. Therefore, this paper proposes to take a look at the print media in San Juan during the first half of the 19th century.

Keywords: Newspapers; Journalistic Debates; Liberal Ideas; Conservative Ideas; Argentina

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1. Introduction

The topic analyzed in this paper is related to the axes of cultural integration and conflict from the perspective of the written debates of the enlightened elite. Newspapers not only constituted a means of information for citizens, but were also a space for debate between those who proposed profound changes in society following liberal ideas and those who, on the contrary, were opposed to such ideas, promoting the continuity of the social order established in the Spanish colonial era where the social order and the association in power between the rulers and the Church prevailed.

The emergence of newspapers in the province of San Juan can be considered early, as it occurred in the first half of the 19th century, as a means of expressing a debate of ideas among sectors of the literate elite. On the one hand, there was a group of intellectuals with liberal ideology, close to the ideas of the Enlightenment and Romanticism; on the other, a sector that, based on federalism, defended the ideas of political and social conservatism, close to those of the colonial period.

Damián Hudson (1898) narrates the events that took place in the province and the Cuyo region from the beginning of the 19th century, being a direct witness to the events he describes. The author, originally from Mendoza but with long-standing roots in San Juan, was a protagonist in several uprisings during the federal era. Horacio Videla (1972, 1976) recounts a meticulous study of the province in his research. With access to abundant local written and oral sources, the author narrates the four centuries of San Juan's history and reconstructs the hidden power structures behind families, politicians, and conflicts, offering a detailed description of how the civil war affected the Argentine Confederation and the characteristics of the factions involved in the conflict.

Due to the significant number of newspapers that appeared in the province during the period under review — a topic addressed in this paper — the valuable contributions of San Juan historians Ana María García, Susana B. Malberti and María Julia Gnecco (2015) will be considered. The authors analyze the profiles of different local newspapers from 1825, when the printing press was introduced to the province, until 1852. The authors examine articles

from various publications from this period. In their analysis of the newspapers of the time, they note a clear liberal influence in the enlightened sectors under both liberal and federal governments.

Finally, in the research closest to this work, Mark Szuchman (2019) discusses the history of the written press as a space for struggle, citing the case of newspapers in the city of Buenos Aires. He describes how different political discursive strategies evolved to reach a wider audience, while at the same time changing the meaning of key concepts for a democratic society, such as being, freedom, nation, government, and sovereignty. The ultimate goal of these concepts was the national organization of the new Argentine state.

2. Materials and Methods

This work will be guided by a methodology based on a survey of the various publications that appeared in the province during the aforementioned period. Information from the print press will be compared and the political context in which the newspapers emerged will be analyzed. Additionally, bibliographies related to the topic will be consulted, ranging from general to highly specific sources.

The qualitative methodological approaches that will guide the research are based on documentary analysis. The research will examine the historical context and various events of a period marked by the ideological struggle between Federalists and Unitarians in an area that now corresponds to Argentina. Therefore, it is important to investigate the key works addressing this issue in nineteenth-century San Juan. At the same time, secondary sources from various National Archives collections will be examined in depth. The aforementioned documentation will be analyzed to complement the various historiographical works used in this study.

Based on the above, the following newspapers were analyzed: *Registro Oficial de la Provincia de San Juan*, *el Defensor de la Carta de Mayo*, *El Amigo del Orden*, *El Solitario*, *El Boletín que contiene las Disposiciones y Comunicaciones del Gobierno General de la República de las Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata*, *El Repetidor*, *El Ingenio Sanjuanino*, *El Republicano*, *El Constitucional*, *El Honor Cuyano*, *La Fragua Republicana*, *El Abogado*

Federal, *El Zonda* and *El Republicano Federal*. (Official Register of the Province of San Juan, Defender of the May Charter, Friend of Order, The Solitary, The Bulletin containing the Provisions and Communications of the General Government of the Republic of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata, The Repeater, The Ingenuous San Juan, The Republican, The Constitutionalist, The Honor Cuyano, The Republican Forge, The Federal Lawyer, The Zonda, and The Federal Republican).

Likewise, the book mentioned in the Introduction has been of great importance to understand the background: *Historia de la Prensa Escrita en San Juan. Sus orígenes (1825–1852)*, written by Ana María García, Susana B. Malberti and María Julia Gnecco, 2015. Newspapers with different political stances were analyzed. In most cases, articles featuring the inhabitants of San Juan were chosen, but those with political references that had an impact on local society were also included.

3. Results

The entire process that led to the early appearance of newspapers in the province of San Juan during the 19th century will be analyzed below, emphasizing the different groups of the local elite who had access to the only printing press, which was also property of the province. The sections that analyze the result of the work are the following: Historiographical background on the press in present-day Argentina, the printing press and the first publications during the governments of Del Carril, Navarro and Sánchez, the consolidation of liberal ideology in the press, the controversy in the press over banknotes, journalism under federal influence after Quiroga's arrival, varied political stances in the press during the 1830s, the Zonda, a transgressive newspaper in San Juan, and other publications under the Benavides government, which will constitute the elements of observation.

3.1. Historiographical Background on the Press in Present-Day Argentina

Among the most notable contributions to historiography is the paradox of the new Ibero-American states, where democratic elections and institutions were proclaimed, but in reality, they were a fiction perpetrated by

local elites to continue exercising public power. It was in this context that the first media outlets emerged that reflected public opinion regarding the state^[1]. Simultaneously, reading and cultural centers appeared, as well as social gatherings that reflected the interests of a group of young, enlightened thinkers^[2].

These new public spaces were distinguished from the “public sphere” by the fact that the former were more concrete. There, these groups linked by kinship, friendship, and neighborhood expressed themselves in various ways, including the publication of their ideas through the press. As a paradoxical precedent, Annick Lemperiere (1998) notes that, in Spain during its decline as an imperial state, newspapers represented customs of the *Ancien Regime* in order to maintain order and good customs among the population and not as a means where ideas could be confronted^[3].

The emergence of print media also meant a new social division between the literate elite and the mostly illiterate people, which implied the challenge of publications and formal education directly or indirectly confronting the traditions and customs of the popular sectors^[1]. In the case of Ernesto Picco (2018), the emergence of the Argentine written press was based on three premises: namely, there was no national journalism but a provincial one, development was always linked to politics, and the press went from being consumed only by the most cultured factions to a mass media outlet^[4].

On many occasions, the written press was a relevant element in the power structure, as it was there to describe the events and conflicts that occurred. The press was largely considered an educational tool for citizens and a disseminator of republican ideas, while also promoting public education in order to achieve the new standards of civilization desired by nineteenth-century liberalism^[5].

Although Guerra objected to the dichotomy between Spanish traditionalism and American liberalism, he reaffirmed the ideas of tradition and modernity, which in Argentina represented federalism and unitarianism, respectively. The national independence processes later slowly transformed into democratic, modern societies, but at the same time, they reflected the flaws of the Spanish liberal revolutionary process^[6].

As a precedent in Argentina, a very strong ideological

dispute arose in Buenos Aires between 1810, the year of the May Revolution, and 1820, the year when large-scale civil wars began. During this period, journalism was not seen as a stable profession, given the scarcity of newspaper subscribers. Therefore, it was believed that those who wrote articles in newspapers did so with the aim of presenting their ideas to the nascent 19th-century society. Disputes with the power were limited, as all newspapers received some assistance from the government. This assistance came from the statements issued by the various government agencies ^[7].

In the case of San Juan, the advent of the printing press became the main means of disseminating the ideas of the local government, given that it occurred during the liberal government of Salvador María del Carril, just one month before the enactment of the *Carta de Mayo*. Although this document was not a constitution, it contained a series of reforms that involved important aspects of life in the province. It was precisely here that freedom of worship appeared, which significantly increased its confrontation with the local Church and the most conservative sectors of San Juan ^[8].

3.2. The Printing Press and the First Publications During Del Carril's Government

Due to what was mentioned in the previous paragraph, the first publications that appeared in the province can be described as political and barricade press. These publications also had a doctrinal, cultural, scientific, and literary character, where spaces for debate between the philosophical and the religious were highlighted ^[9].

In 1825, within the political context of the liberal provincial government of Salvador María del Carril, the first provincial publications appeared. One of the main issues highlighted by the newspapers of this period was the positions taken regarding the War with Brazil, supported by the position of President Bernardino Rivadavia in Buenos Aires ^[10]. It was then that the State Printing Office appeared on the provincial scene, becoming the main means of disseminating the ideas of the dominant group in San Juan through the emergence of the written press. In the newspapers, members of the local aristocracy promoted Enlightenment ideas, both under the liberal and federal governments, becoming a single elite of liberal thought ^[11].

El Registro Oficial de la Provincia de San Juan was apparently the first provincial publication. The newspaper fulfilled Governor Del Carril's objectives regarding the dissemination of government acts, following an initiative carried out by Rivadavia in Buenos Aires, suppressing the edicts and circulars characteristic of colonial society. The newspaper reported on public affairs, such as the Popular Assembly that created the Provincial Chamber of Representatives, the laws for the direct election of the governor and representatives, and the election of deputies to the National Congress ^[12].

Then appeared *El Defensor de la Carta de Mayo*, a newspaper promoted by Governor Del Carril. Through a series of suggestive questions, the newspaper proposed the ideas of pacification and freedom, referring to the desires of the people at that time, such as popular liberty and public suffrage, while also supporting the cordial agreement between the Buenos Aires government and Great Britain ^[12]. It should be noted that *El Defensor de la Carta de Mayo* appeared the day after a group of more than 60 residents had asked the governor not to legislate on the sensitive issue of religion ^[13]. Likewise, in his only two publications, Del Carril defended himself against the attack promoted by the Cordoba priest Ignacio Castro Barros in the pamphlet *Impugnación a la tolerancia de culto* (Imputation to the Tolerance of Worship). Del Carril emphasized reason as opposed to religious fanaticism. However, the governor's attempts to convince public opinion were in vain, as the revolution took place on July 26, 1825, which ended with his deposition ^[13]. *El Defensor de la Carta de Mayo* only appeared in 1825, while *El Registro Oficial de la Provincia de San Juan* appeared between that year and 1826.

Del Carril anticipated the national law of 1826, promoting freedom of worship in the province, which would be reflected in the Fundamental Law of the Province of San Juan, called the *Carta de Mayo* (May Charter), sanctioned by the Legislature in July 1825. The *Carta de Mayo* revealed the most progressive principles influenced by the American liberal ideology regarding law, philosophy and politics. Among other articles, the following stand out: individual freedom and freedom of thought, the inviolability of correspondence, the equality of men before the law, the support of the Catholic religion by the State and the free right to petition the Legislature ^[14].

3.3. Navarro and Sánchez, the Consolidation of the Liberal Ideology in the Press

Del Carril was replaced as governor of San Juan by José de Navarro, who was elected by the legislature as his successor with extraordinary powers. Del Carril had requested help from Facundo Quiroga of La Rioja during and after the revolution, but he was never assisted ^[12]. Navarro attempted to continue the religious policy of the *Carta de Mayo*, while proclaiming his allegiance to Rivadavia's national government, which earned him many internal problems. Another relevant act of his government was the creation of the Topographic and Geographic Office, headed by French citizen Victor Barreau.

Likewise, the newspaper *Registro Oficial de la Provincia de San Juan* highlighted at this time the government's provisions related to the secularization of the religious orders in 1823, and the creation of the aforementioned Provincial Office of Topography and Geography (Later, the publication would refer to several regulations regarding local life, in relation to the prohibition of galloping, the dumping of sewage on public roads, and the repair of sidewalks by residents ^[15]).

During his government, the newspaper *El Amigo del Orden* (1825–1826) appeared, which describes Governor Navarro's punishment of the revolutionaries. The newspaper had a liberal and enlightened political style of the rationalist liberalism type; it contained a pedagogical purpose that stimulated enlightened men while defending Unitarianism. It can be defined as an independent and non-official publication ^[12].

The publication opposed Navarro's legitimacy, since he had not been elected, emphasizing that sovereignty should reside with the people and not be recruited in the streets and taverns by the agents of power, highlighting the vital importance of elections. It considered Facundo Quiroga to be a man of integrity, a landowner, and a patriot, while also highlighting the support Quiroga had given to Del Carril. This statement contradicts Hudson's statement above regarding the relationship between Del Carril and Quiroga. The publication was discontinued due to problems with the State Printing Office. According to some authors, it was edited by Rudecindo Rojo and Francisco N. Laprida ^[12].

The newspaper's very name (the friend of the order)

alluded to its editors' loyalty to the liberal cause, emphasizing the full validity of Law and Order as examples of an organized society, encouraging civic virtues in citizens, defending Liberty and the cause of Reason. The publication also promoted the exchange of opinions among readers, providing a space for them to express their opinions on various topics of interest; readers did not identify themselves, but used pseudonyms ^[16].

Later, the Chilean citizen José Sánchez, who had already been governor in 1821, continued to support from San Juan the unitary cause of Rivadavia who, in turn, was recognized as president of the United Provinces by the Chamber of Representatives in July 1826. Sánchez had the collaboration of his minister-secretary, Amitisarobe, an envoy of Rivadavia of Buenos Aires ^[17].

El Boletín que contiene las Disposiciones y Comunicaciones del Gobierno General de la República de las Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata was an official publication that reproduced the various laws and communications that were sent from the national government to the provinces.

In the only copy of this newspaper, which has been found without the corresponding date of edition, according to the authors García and Gnecco, it would be from 1826. In the newspaper, the publication of the requirements for candidates for national deputies and the need to carry out a census of children in San Juan distinguishing sex and age for the application of the smallpox vaccine ^[15].

3.4. The Controversy in the Press About Banknotes

In November 1826, during Sánchez's term of office, the opening of the branch of the *Banco Nacional* in the province took place, which was in charge of Rudecindo Rojo, and its accountant was the French citizen, Charles Tascheret. The bank branch only lasted until the fall of the governor. At this time, the newspaper *El Repetidor* was born (1826–1827). Although the names of its editors do not appear, they were Laprida and Barreau ^[16].

In its pages, several articles against Quiroga were published, while it repeated excerpts from other newspapers, hence its name, its motto was "*La virtud sola hace a los republicanos*" (Virtue alone makes republicans), in Spanish and French. Its editorial was liberal; it criticized in its

pages to the caudillos such as Juan Bautista Bustos and Manuel Dorrego. This newspaper had a heated debate with another contemporary publication: *El Ingenio Sanjuanino* (1826).

El Repetidor, in its first issue, highlighted the appearance of the *Banco Nacional* in the province and at the same time pointed out the appearance of bank bills presenting them as an alternative means of payment that replaced the limited cash of that time. The newspaper pointed out that dishonest merchants used to appropriate the scarce circulating metal while prices were increased when customers paid with bills; at the same time the newspaper asserted that the Church had doubled the value of masses and religious acts as a consequence of this new situation ^[12].

The appearance of banknotes also affected the poor sectors of society, since in many cases the paper money received as payment by some workers was quoted at half its value. The newspaper described the dramatic scenes that were witnessed in the food supply stores, due to the fact that with the increase of basic necessities such as sugar at excessive prices, the poorest sectors were affected. At the same time, the newspaper blamed the merchants for their distrust ^[18].

In another of its editions, *El Repetidor* highlighted agriculture as the activity that promoted the wealth of a State, citing the United States and the figure of George Washington, relating liberalism with the promotion of such activity; in this way, it was proposed that the same actions be carried out in the province to promote its growth, since the territory had a fertility and productivity even greater than those of North America. It also highlighted the *Law of Emphyteusis* promoted by Rivadavia, so that the settlers could obtain a fair reward for the lands they worked ^[12].

El Ingenio Sanjuanino was an informal publication that appeared simultaneously with *El Repetidor* and, from its pages, made strong criticisms of the latter. As with many publications of the time, the name of its editor does not appear. From his writings it can be deduced that he was an educated person, respectful of law and order, from the same enlightened sector, although from his columns, *El Repetidor* accused him of being a priest involved in the deposition of Del Carril. He opposed the republican government while promoting agriculture, mining and social spaces such as the theater ^[16].

El Ingenio Sanjuanino replied to *El Repetidor*, criticizing the appearance of banknotes, pointing out that the neighbors of the city totally rejected this means of payment and preferred to continue carrying out cash transactions. At the same time, he denounced a citizen named Manuel Olivera, who accepted the banknotes because he was a dependent of the Buenos Aires' government. In turn, *El Repetidor* responded and attacked *El Ingenio Sanjuanino*, through loose sheets, as if it were a supplement dedicated to that purpose, refuting both its content and its journalistic style ^[12].

In another of its editions, *El Ingenio Sanjuanino* accused *El Repetidor* of not being coherent with its liberal political principles, accusing it of being a despot; at the same time, it asked other people to take care of the publication since, in its opinion, it was very far from the ideas of the order. This ratifies the hypothesis pointed out above where an internal discussion between the enlightened sectors is described ^[12].

3.5. Journalism Under Federal Influence After the Entry of Quiroga

When Quiroga entered San Juan, Valentín Ruiz, originally from the province of Salta, assumed the governorship on a transitory basis from January 5 to 17, 1827, in order to avoid the acephaly, and he would be governor again in 1832. Facundo called an Assembly of neighbors, in which Manuel Quiroga Carril was appointed governor, who, in February, was confirmed in his position ^[19].

As for the written press, during his administration, *El Amigo del Orden* (second series) appeared; in its first issue, the newspaper describes the reasons for the interruption of the first series, detailing that they were due to the political upheavals that occurred in the province, although its editors are not mentioned, the publication is attributed to Rojo and Barreau. The presence of the latter is corroborated by the publication of issues related to the provincial geographic and topographic office ^[15].

The newspaper rescued the prudent and pacifist position of Quiroga Carril's government, while calling for calm, stressing that its objective was to work for the good of the Nation. In spite of this, it manifested itself in favor of a unitary position, marking a continuity with respect to the first edition, once again defending the enlightened and

liberal positions. It also narrated the war conflict of the United Provinces with Brazil, where it remarked that there was a San Juan contingent on the battlefield ^[15].

The newspaper also mentioned the presentation of theatrical plays and the creation of civic militias in San Juan. On the other hand, it described an important demographic growth, stating that at that time there were 30,000 inhabitants in the province. At the same time, it criticized the state of deterioration of public education, caused by the economic problems of the treasury. Another section worth mentioning is an article called "Wallachia and Moldavia", where it described the prevailing situation in these states occupied by the Greeks, the article alluded to the exploitation of the poor by the rich and moral laxity, using it as a counterexample of the editorial line of the newspaper ^[15].

During Quiroga Carril's administration, the province suffered economic difficulties, so he resigned three times from his position, until it was finally accepted in October 1828, being succeeded by Timoteo Maradona, who took over as governor in November of the same year ^[16]. Maradona was invited to participate with the government of Mendoza in an expedition against the Indians of La Pampa, but this could not take place because in December 1828, the unitary revolution against Dorrego broke out. The shooting of Dorrego was the cause that prompted the provinces to declare war on Buenos Aires; the three Cuyo provinces did so instantly, invoking the treaty of Huanacache, under the federal ideology ^[10].

By 1829, the newspaper *El Solitario* (second edition) appeared as a consequence of the crisis of governability in the province, being born during the governorship of Maradona. Regarding its editorial, in its first issue, there is a note addressed to the governor in which he proclaims that he will praise and censure the measures that are conducive and contrary to the general good, respectively.

On the other hand, *El Solitario* expressed its support for the cause of Independence while criticizing Spanish absolutism and, continuing with that line, supported the ideals of the French Revolution, highlighting the principle of Sovereignty of the People, limiting arbitrary power. Here we can observe the Enlightenment thinking, where the newspaper reflected the need to consolidate a type of education in which reason is emphasized, linking it directly to the advancement of the people, while it related backward-

ness to ignorance, attributing violent situations to the lack of public instruction ^[12].

Likewise, the newspaper highlighted the great coverage of national politics, describing the situation of Bolivia under Simón Bolívar and the supposed relationship of Manuel Dorrego with him. Regarding the Constitution of 1826, *El Solitario* pointed out the lack of general consent in the province for a federal system highlighting that the *Honorable Junta de Representantes Provincial* ordered its deputies to vote for a Representative Republican Government avoiding the use of the word "federation", besides calling for the "National Union" from its columns ^[12].

In another edition it openly criticized the federal faction of the province which it considered only reactionary for economic reasons. At the same time, the newspaper underlined the scarce support that the Federal Party had contrary to the Unitary Party in the province, since the latter "is supported by the national will and forms itself the true public opinion" ^[12].

3.6. Varied Political Stances in the Press in the 1830s

By May 1829, José María Echegaray Toranzo assumed the governorship and appointed Francisco Ignacio Bustos as his minister, nephew of the governor of Córdoba, who was then deposed by General Paz. Bustos in his federal condition, looked for an early alliance with the other caudillos: Quiroga, Aldao, López and Rosas while the military division was in charge of the former governor Quiroga Carril. However, when arriving at Las Quijadas, in June, the troops revolted taking Quiroga Carril prisoner and returned to San Juan ^[10].

As a consequence of this uprising and the return of the troops to the province, Echegaray and Bustos abandoned the government and later fled to Mendoza. The government of Mendoza, following the stipulations of the Treaty of Huanacache, came to the aid of the deposed government, so the brothers José and Francisco Aldao left on June 14 in order to reinstate the government of San Juan. The first armed encounter took place in Niquivil, a place located between Jáchal and San Juan obtaining the Mendoza army a quick victory and replacing Echegaray in office ^[10,20].

In these times, *El Republicano* (1829) was born, which

was a critical newspaper in a difficult time characterized by instability and political virulence in San Juan. As its name indicates, the newspaper was committed to the national republican organization. Several articles appear signed by “the editors of El Republicano”, since they preferred not to expose their names in those troubled times.

The space dedicated to opinion articles was much larger than that destined to news, which shows the position taken by the publication, so its purpose was not commercial but the dissemination of ideas and positions. In one of its editions, it expressed its feeling that it had not yet been possible to establish the Republic, the hope of true patriots, while lamenting that social guarantees had not yet been consolidated in the towns ^[15].

At the same time, *El Republicano* alluded to the economic problems, stating that although it was necessary to apply a certain protectionist policy to the provinces, customs duties should be collected by a National Power that had not yet been constituted. Thus, the position of Buenos Aires was defended, since this city, being geographically benefited by its port, was not obliged to abandon free trade to the benefit of the rest of the provinces, which it considered unfair for the former; besides, the newspaper had a pro-Buenos Aires position which it would later show by defending the Capitalization Law of 1825 and the national government of 1826 ^[15].

In the same edition, the publication harshly criticized the political situation in Mendoza, where the Legislative power had delegated its functions to the Executive by suspending the sessions, but also censured the local government for mismanaging the treasury, criticizing the disorder in the public administration, where it stated that there was an excessive number of inefficient public employees, while describing a calamitous situation in terms of public education ^[15].

From the editions of *El Republicano*, the federal system was highlighted for its implementation as a form of government in the United States, highlighting the advancement and progress that this country was experiencing; however, it clarified that to implement this type of system it was essential that the people could be previously enlightened, so at this point a dichotomy between Federalism and Unitarianism can be appreciated, it is not known if for a matter of pragmatism or for another unknown cause ^[21].

La Fragua Republicana, also born in 1829, was, on the other hand, a newspaper with a net pro-government and federalist cut, with its editor Francisco Ignacio Bustos, mentor of Echegaray Toranzo’s government. It stood out in its pages the diffusion of news and political facts of San Juan, the neighboring provinces and Chile at the same time that it harshly criticized the *unitarios*, whom it called *magpies*.

In one of its editions, the newspaper gave a wide coverage of the uprising of Las Quijadas, criticizing the rebels who claimed to be enlightened, but fought with subversive violence instead of through the press or legality. At the same time, he highlighted the weariness of the people in the face of these uprisings. In another of its issues, it describes the uprising of Los Barriales, in Mendoza, where Governor Corvalán had been deposed, but was later restored by the forces of Facundo Quiroga ^[12].

Later in time, in 1835, during the government of Yanzón, the newspaper *El Constitucional* appeared, of which the name of its editors is unknown. It declared itself a friend of the government, but with a critical and measured attitude, while vindicating Quiroga and the governor. In its pages, it declared itself to be a lover of order and opposed to revolution, even though it did not agree with the government; for this reason, it criticized the Mendoza unitary Lorenzo Barcala who had tried to overthrow Rosas; it highlighted the use of the red ribbon (Federal symbolism) as a positive one ^[12].

The newspaper also promoted the sanction of the national and provincial constitutions, while praising liberal ideas. In its editions it described a climate of violence and citizen insecurity, for which the government had had to create a military commission. On some occasions, the publication reproduced articles from the newspaper *El Córdoba*. This newspaper sought to vindicate the province of Córdoba, after the assassination of Quiroga.

Regarding the economic aspect, given the aforementioned trade difficulties, Yanzón’s government sought to carry out a protectionist type policy with the northern provinces, although paradoxically alluding to the liberal ideology of Adam Smith and his principle of “the best tax is that which best combines a large income in the treasury with the least possible disbursement by the taxpayers and that which leaves the least temptation to fraud and the

most unharmed the right of citizenship”^[21]. It should also be noted that commerce and industry, the latter mostly viticulture grew until 1836 relatively due to a lack of organic economic policy^[22].

In January 1836, Yanzón attempted an invasion of La Rioja, presumably in search of the treasures left by Facundo in his native province. The result of the incursion was so disastrous that Yanzón decided to flee to Chile, while the invaded ones decided to collect a war indemnity for the aggression received, for which they organized the invasion of San Juan by a group of 700 men commanded by the federal leader Tomás Brizuela. During the occupation of San Juan, the La Rioja soldiers committed all kinds of outrages and abuses, in addition to collecting a large war indemnity^[22].

By this time a new newspaper appeared, *El Abogado Federal* (1836), which also does not contain the data of its authors. It quoted the Constitution of Pennsylvania, in reference to what it called excessive profit in the salary of public employees, which shows that its editors were aware of the liberalism of the United States, at the same time that they called for republican austerity. The publication also had an enlightened background as it promoted articles related to the arts and sciences^[12].

The newspaper declared itself to be the forced heir of *El Constitucional*, since its editors had fled to Chile, linking them to the Yanzón government; the publication harshly questioned this group which it described as unitary and anarchist, while it affirmed that *El Abogado Federal* represented the true feeling of Federalism, which can be defined as totally official. It could be conjectured that *El Abogado Federal* and *El Constitucional* had the same typesetters, although the content of both newspapers is totally opposite^[21].

3.7. El Zonda, a Transgressor Newspaper in San Juan

Undoubtedly, *El Zonda* (1839) was the most important newspaper during the analyzed period. The members of the *Sociedad Dramática Filarmónica*, among whom, besides Sarmiento, Antonino Aberastain and Guillermo Rawson stood out. According to its editors, the newspaper focused on social and cultural matters, although it sought to amalgamate political, literary, and economic aspects. Although

the newspaper was required to have an apolitical tone, this was not respected by the editors; according to them, the objective of the newspaper was to seek to unite the mentioned aspects by promoting a critical attitude of the public in cafés, salons and gatherings.

In his most famous works written in exile, Sarmiento had highlighted the importance of publishing newspapers, which was a distinctive feature of the modern and free peoples of the world, which he considered essential for the society he longed for^[23]. Likewise, Sarmiento complained about the censorship received by those who held differing views from Rosas and could not express their ideas through the press in the territory of the Argentine Confederation^[24].

Sarmiento, who wrote the editorial, highlighted the cooperation of the government and emphasized the importance of female education while praising the figure of Fray Justo Santa María de Oro. In other editorials, it considered publications as the civilization of man, from its pages, it praised the American way of life. It rejected games and vices, because they awakened all kinds of passions, contrasting two lifestyles, proposing that the whole population should join the ideas of progress^[12].

El Zonda was a totally transgressive newspaper, in a quiet society, it criticized the community, -reflecting the inferiority complexes that plagued the people of San Juan, according to its point of view-, a consequence of the Spanish colonial mentality while it praised the urban style of Buenos Aires and followed the prevailing ideas of the United States and Europe. Therefore, the result of the effect of its editions must have been the rejection by most of the population, which felt attacked by the criticism of local daily life^[12].

As an example of the above, *El Zonda* analyzed the lines of behavior of the San Juan society, calling them “old antipathetic party” and “modern sympathetic party”, where the former followed the Spanish model, which was not used to public contact between both sexes, while the latter, following the guidelines of the English, North Americans and French, held that all men should support women. Likewise, letters from readers of both sexes are highlighted and several women also appear as subscribers to the publication^[12].

Owner of a style unknown until then, the newspaper

became the so-called writers' journalism. In one of its publications, the newspaper made a table called "Statistics of the Zonda", where a classification was made of how many citizens were or were not ^[12].

The message of the newspaper was crossed by orality in the collective reading. This was mainly due to the fact that the newspaper was read in caf  s and/or gatherings, which led to repeated complaints by Sarmiento who urged his readers to buy the newspaper on pain of denouncing them, since many of them did not buy it, but read it in a caf   or borrowed it from neighbors. For this reason, *El Zonda* published a virulent editorial that in its flyer demanded: "Either DON'T READ EL ZONDA OR BUY IT" ^[12]. This situation led to the closure of the newspaper because the publication did not reach 50 subscribers ^[25].

By that time, Sarmiento held the position of administrator of the Official Printing Office in a pacified political environment as a consequence of the return of the exiles from Chile through a negotiation between Fray Justo Santa Mar  a de Oro and the governor Nazario Benavides. This negotiation was carried out without the intermediation of Rosas and made possible the return of many exiles, among them Sarmiento and Aberastain. However, in 1839, the national circumstances provoked a general hardening against the Unitarians. The reelections of Benavides in 1838 and 1840 showed how little influence the newspaper had on public opinion.

3.8. Other Publications Under the Benavides Administration

By this time a publication of federal tendency appeared, called *El Republicano Federal*, which constantly attacked the *unitarios* and Del Carril. The name of its editors does not appear. The newspaper quoted other newspapers, various letters and chronicles of travelers. Also, in political terms, it attacked the emigrants and Yanz  n, while defending Benavides and Rosas, mentioning unitary conspiracies in Chile. This newspaper made no reference to culture and education ^[15].

El Honor Cuyano was a publication that, like *El Republicano Federal*, openly defended the Federation and attacked the Unitarians. The name of its editor does not appear, but it would have been the public official Salvador Quiroga ^[25]. Letters from readers, who used pseudonyms,

were published, while national and foreign newspapers were transcribed. The newspaper maintained a debate with the Chilean publications *El Progreso* and *El Mercurio*, in which Sarmiento worked ^[15].

In its pages social, economic and cultural information was offered. It considered the letter sent by Sarmiento to Benavides in March 1845 from Chile as an insult to the figure of the governor; since in the letter Sarmiento proposed Benavides to join his cause. In addition, the newspaper highlighted Rosas' policy in 1845, in the face of the Anglo-French blockade ^[15].

In another of its editions, the newspaper described an economic conflict with Chile that confronted Rosas with Cuyo, regarding the management of foreign relations. Likewise, the newspaper highlighted the mining discoveries in the province and supported female education pointing out that public education should be controlled by the State in order to ensure the moral norms of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church in childhood. It highlighted the figure of Benavides describing him as "the meek caudillo", exemplifying the good treatment he had had towards Sarmiento and Chacho Pe  aloza ^[15].

As the final piece of information, it must be pointed out that, in 1861, the newspaper *El Zonda* was reedited, under the direction of Pedro Echag  e, who would be an outstanding official of Sarmiento while this one occupied the governorship of San Juan between 1862 and 1864 ^[26]. In this new edition Sarmiento also participated writing different articles. Sarmiento considered that newspapers were an essential element for the progress of the people. In *El Zonda*, the political and socio-cultural objectives that Sarmiento desired for San Juan were clearly shown. This reversed the trend he mentioned, whereby newspapers did not last long in San Juan ^[24].

4. Discussion

The confrontation between the political sectors representing liberals and conservatives began in the Modern Age and reached its peak with the Independence of the United States and the French Revolution. These new political ideas spread throughout Europe and America between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Argentina was no exception to this trend since the

May Revolution of 1810 and the subsequent Declaration of Independence in 1816, when two groups with conflicting political interests emerged. This situation led to a civil war that lasted for about 50 years, with some intervals, between the *Unitarios* (liberals) and the *Federales* (conservatives). The Unitarians accused the *Federales* of representing reactionary ideas imposed by Spain's colonial past, while the *Federales* accused the *Unitarios* of being a party that opposed the Catholic religion and the established order.

From the results obtained, some analyses and interpretations can be made that engage with the context and historiographical works that address related topics. A deeper focus will be given on the ideas expressed in newspapers by two groups of the local elite during the first half of the 19th century. Beginning with provincial autonomy in 1820, a group of influential residents emerged who would henceforth be present in all the events of San Juan's life, serving as the main endorsement required by the newly formed governments. These residents represented the true power behind the ruler and always appeared with their support, whether federal or unitary parties. It was they who reflected their thinking through the press.

The differing opinions of both groups belonging to the local elite, as reflected in the written press, reached another arena where cultural hegemony was contested. Some of these comments were made subtly, with sectors close to the *Unitario* Party criticizing the customs of a peaceful local society, while others directly alluded to the clashes between the two political camps on the battlefield. Although, in principle, the new liberal ideas were unable to achieve their political objectives, they were the starting point for presenting themselves as the image of civilization and progress, which from the 1860s onwards would prevail in San Juan and throughout the Argentine Republic.

5. Conclusions

The emergence of the written press in San Juan in the first half of the nineteenth century reflected the debate among members of the local elite. This debate was a clear confrontation between enlightened sectors, which made up the ranks of both parties: Federal and Unitary. The authors of the articles, in most cases, are located as officials

of the different governments, the local Church or sectors influenced by the Romanticism of the time, as in the case of Sarmiento and a group of intellectuals who founded the newspaper *El Zonda*.

Their ideas were clearly influenced by events in Europe and the United States, societies they often took as a reference for the San Juan they longed to see in the not-so-distant future. The liberal newspapers criticized the colonial past, which they saw as a legacy of the Ancient Regime and backwardness, and which they also directly linked to the caudillismo and the Rosas government. On the other hand, in the federal newspapers, although they vindicated Rosas and the federalists, they did not oppose the new ideas, for example, in the case of education. There were also publications that seemed to be a hybrid of both tendencies.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that all the newspapers were printed in the Official State Printing Office, which meant that their editors had to be cautious in the publication of certain articles. In any case, the impact of these publications in San Juan between 1825 and 1852 was limited, since the literacy rate was low at that time and newspapers had not reached their peak. To all this must be added the fact that the population of the province was quiet and rather conservative, somewhat reluctant to the liberal ideas that appeared in the written press.

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Conflicts of Interest

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