Portugueses y brasileños hacia el Río de la Plata: Un informe geopolítico, 1816.

By ANÍBAL ABADIE ACARDI and OSCAR ABADIE ACARDI. Recife, Brazil, 1977.


The criollo Miguel de Lastarria was in many ways the consummate Bourbon bureaucrat. Born in Peru, he served as a private secretary and adviser to Viceroy Avilés, and was intimately involved with the problems of the long and disputed southern border between the Spanish and Portuguese dominions. Returning to Spain in 1803, Lastarria became a loyal spokesman for the La Plata area. The author of several treatises on the area, all written to provide historical information and suggestions of future policy to the Spanish crown, Lastarria believed that intelligent reform combined with good public relations would eventually secure this vital part of South America, threatened by English and Portuguese interlopers and local insurgents.

In this valuable volume, Aníbal and Oscar Abadie Aicardi have published the appendix and supporting documents which Lastarria added to his Memoria cronológica sobre la línea divisoria de las Reales Coronas española y lusitana en la América Meridional. Both the appendix, which traces Spanish–Portuguese relations in the Banda Oriental, and the letters, which focus on unsuccessful Spanish attempts to colonize the headwaters of the Ybicuí River under the leadership of Félix de Azara, are important contributions to the historiography of the Río de la Plata area and the diplomatic history of South America. Also included in this volume is the summary from Lastarria’s Optísculo sobre la pacificación de las provincias del Río de la Plata. The excellent introductory essay traces the complex, almost Byzantine political and diplomatic machinations of the Spanish, Portuguese, English, and Americans in the La Plata. The influence of geography, the swings of English foreign policy, the effects of Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic politics, and the growing conflict between Buenos Aires and Artigas are all considered. Although this book would be well served by a good map, both the introductory essay and Lastarria’s work are worthy of scholars’ attention.

Emory University

SUSAN MIGDEN SOCOLOW


The second and more general of these monographs sets out to describe works published in Spain that offered information about the Anglo–American revolution and institutions; French translations of key U.S. revolutionary documents and related tracts; “early works in Spanish written to foment revolution in Spanish America;” and what was published in Spanish during the independence period itself to acquaint Spanish Americans with basic Anglo–American political texts. As the author’s investigation was principally carried out in a limited number of U.S. research libraries, part of his data is based on second-hand references, and some pertinent items (especially newspaper articles) go unmentioned. He also ex-