

## Origins and Historical Significance of Día de la Raza

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Holidays, even when they have no religious background, often appear to us as authentic expressions of old traditions. Notwithstanding, many of the ‘national’ holidays celebrated today are not older than two hundred years. They reflect the revolutionary nature of politics of the last two centuries, which saw so many new states coming into being. Frequently, these states were post-colonial societies, or what Benedict Anderson termed ‘imagined communities’ (Anderson 1983). Once they had achieved independence, these states needed more than a governing apparatus, a constitution and armed forces. In addition, they required a necessary array of common symbols that would give their distinct populations a sense of shared nationhood. Hence the inevitable ‘national’ holidays celebrated on dates when independence was declared, and others commemorating the launching of decisive rebellions, victories in battles, days when constitutions were approved or when heroic leaders were born and died. *Día de la Raza* is also a comparatively recent holiday, and one obviously related to the post-colonial experience. But in contrast to the typical new-nation holiday, this one was adopted at about the same time by a group of states sharing the same language and cultural heritage (Spain and several Spanish American nations). Moreover, from the very start it was meant on the part of the nations on the western side of the Atlantic to express affection for their former colonial master. On the basis of these broad features alone, it would seem that the new holiday reflected certain contemporary social and cultural trends. Therefore, in tracing its origin one may gain a better understanding of the specific attitudes and values that marked the years when it was established.

*Día de la Raza* or *Fiesta de la Raza* is Spanish America’s celebration of 12 October, the date of the discovery of the Western Hemisphere. It began to take shape in the years during World War I, becoming a fairly established holiday in most countries by the early 1920s. To the sensitive ears and minds of today, rejecting racism, the name of the holiday sounds politically incorrect. In our contemporary world, race is an idea that only groups of the extreme right, standing on the margin of mainstream politics, dare to uphold. It is necessary to stress therefore that in Spanish the word *raza* carries the meaning of an extended community bound by cultural ties in addition to that of a people belonging to the same stock and carrying similar physical traits. It is true that Spanish American intellectuals frequently employed racist theories during the early years of the twentieth century to explain the political instability and the dismal economic performance of their countries (Stabb 1967, 12-33). But they also used the word *raza* in a clearly cultural sense. Phrases such as *el espíritu de la raza*, *el alma de la raza*, or even *la raza española* – all were employed at the time in reference to a contended affinity between Spanish-speaking peoples on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

One authority on the climate of ideas in Spain in the early years of the twentieth century recently wrote that the name of the holiday in Spain was influenced by a

contemporary tendency to cast national problems in racial terms, a by-product of the appeal of the ideas of such European thinkers as Gobineau, Lombroso and Max Nordau. He neglected, however, to notice that the raza in question was not really Spain, but the peoples of Spain and Spanish America combined (Alvarez Junco 1998, 455).

In fact, the notion of affinity was something quite new at the time. The Spanish American republics were rather slow to mollify the tensions with their former master. This was almost inevitable given the long struggle for independence, which had been so destructive and costly in human lives. Spain's own attitude following her eviction from the American mainland contributed to the continuing friction. She was reluctant to recognize the independence and sovereignty of her former colonies (Pereira Castañares 1992; Rama 1982, 9-10). During the 1860s, she engaged them in small wars and debt-collecting operations, as in, for example, her military clashes with Mexico, Peru and Chile, and the intervention in the Dominican Republic. In any case, until 1898, a complete rapprochement with independent Spanish America could not be established as long as Spain continued to rule over Cuba and Puerto Rico, thus maintaining a colonial presence in the Western Hemisphere.

It is true, however, that signs of reconciliation began appearing even before the Spanish-American War of 1898. Since the 1880s, as a somewhat more stable Spanish America came up with new exports and augmented its share of the world's economy, a large wave of immigrants had been steadily joining its population. Although they came from all over Europe, the largest contingent of some two and a half million arrived from Spain in the three and a half decades that preceded World War I. In a very short time they created sizable communities in several major cities, especially in Buenos Aires, Montevideo, Havana, Caracas and Santiago de Chile (Pereira Castañares 1992, 175-80). This kindled a renewed interest in Spanish America inside Spain. As early as 1885 a new organization was set up in Madrid, called the *Unión Ibero-Americana*. Its aim was to work for closer ties between Spain and the Spanish American nations, and particularly to encourage their commercial exchange. In 1890 the Unión was declared by the Spanish government an institution of 'public usefulness', a status which made it eligible for a state subsidy. But the number of its members was small, in the low hundreds, although they came from among liberals and conservatives alike. In the late 1880s the Unión had a branch in the capitals of the Dominican Republic and Mexico, where in the latter a special session to commemorate the discovery of America was held on 12 October 1887 in honour of Spain, Portugal, Brazil and all the Spanish American nations. Still, this seems to have been a singular event, as the Unión at that time had no such branches in other Spanish American capitals. Its monthly journal, which combined information on financial and commercial matters with articles on cultural and historical themes, had nothing to say in its issues of the late 1890s about the date of 12 October as a possible holiday (Pike 1971, 33-5; Pereira Castañares 1992, 183-5; Rama 1982, 180-3).

In the meantime an anniversary of importance had taken place – the commemoration of four hundred years since the discovery of America. As it turned out the Spanish world was anything but ready. Belatedly, and only after it was announced that the United States would be commemorating the anniversary with huge celebrations, the Spanish government organized several ceremonies, including an international naval parade near Palos, the harbour from where Columbus had set out on his voyage. Some of the ships that took part were from Italy and Argentina. In fact,

this was the first time that Argentine war vessels had visited Spain. In addition, a number of scientific meetings were held in Spain during 1892; the well-attended pedagogical congress in Madrid was joined by delegates from Spanish America, Brazil and Portugal. The Spanish press commented on these events, and the conservative leader, Canovas del Castillo, the most important politician of that period, suggested that all Spanish-speaking nations should adopt 12 October as a common holiday (Sánchez Mantero 1994, 83-4; Pike 1971, 35-6, 172; Pereira Castañares 1992, 183-5; Rama 1982, 180-3). But in Spanish America attitudes at the time were of a different mould. In Argentina, for example, although 12 October 1892 was declared a holiday, almost nothing was done in terms of celebrations. This brought complaints from *El Correo Español*, the Buenos Aires 'Spanish' newspaper. Apparently, the authorities merely asked the citizens to display on that day the Argentine flag and flags of 'the nations in which Columbus was born and accomplished his prophetic vision'. This peculiar phrasing obviously meant to appeal equally to both the Italian and the Spanish immigrant communities, without taking a precise stand as to the discoverer's exact nationality. In Peru, where the 1892 commemorations were limited to some comments in the press and to a few public speeches, the emphasis was on the accomplishments of Columbus the man, and on the far-reaching results of the discovery, an event said to have prepared the ground for the supremacy of Europe over the entire globe. The essential role of Spain in this saga was deliberately underplayed (Sánchez Mantero 1994, 84-5, 137-8).

### **Spain and Spanish America reconciled**

Nevertheless, the years ahead saw Spain's presence in Spanish America on the ascent. The change was linked with the existence of the Spanish immigrant communities, which by the 1890s were launching their own educational institutions, organizing their own social clubs and maintaining a network of periodical publications. Additionally, they continued to celebrate traditional holidays characteristic of the regions of Spain from which they had come. Even more important for their on-going ties with Spain were the habits of importing Spanish books and journals and bringing over from Spain theatrical and musical groups. Long-established Spanish American newspapers now responded to this new presence of Spain by dedicating more space to news related to her economy and politics, as well as to her drama and literature (Sánchez Mantero 1994, 91, 95-101, 104-5, 210-12; Pereira Castañares 1992, 181-2).<sup>2</sup>

These trends shortly acquired particular significance as a result of events on the international political plane. In 1898 Spain was defeated in war by the United States and divested of her last two American colonies. From now on she could be viewed in Spanish America as disinterested, removed from any imperialistic designs in the Western Hemisphere. On the other hand, the United States was acquiring, in the eyes of its southern neighbours, the image of a rapacious plunderer. To some extent this was the result of an unfortunate twist of events, because Washington went to war with the declared promise to bring about the independence of Cuba, which indeed was allowed to embark on her own political life in 1902 (although forced to accept the infamous Platt Amendment). Moreover, the United States also attempted in the first decade of the twentieth century to set in motion the Pan-American Union, an international body purporting to join all the American

states in ties of peace, friendship and commercial exchange.<sup>3</sup> But a string of aggressive acts and proclamations that occurred during the very same time convinced many in Spanish America that their powerful northern neighbour was addressing them in two idioms. 1903 saw the snatching of Panama from Colombia for the purpose of providing the United States with rights in the zone of the intended canal. In 1904 the Roosevelt Corollary supplied a new aggressive interpretation to the traditional Monroe Doctrine. Then came the rude and arrogant policies pursued by the Taft administration (1908-12), which became known as Dollar Diplomacy. Spanish America was then witness to a series of military interventions in Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, and shortly afterwards (by then under President Wilson) in Mexico and Haiti.

In Spain intellectuals responded to the disaster of 1898 with a call for national regeneration, stressing the need for closer ties with Spanish America. In a parallel manner, the reaction in favour of Spain inside Spanish America was now noticeably under way. To judge from Rodó's famous book-manifesto *Ariel*, which appeared in 1900, the rejection of the United States and the drawing closer to Spain evolved together. The great Nicaraguan poet, Ruben Darío, is a good example. Just before 1898 he still felt contempt for Spain, but in that year he travelled there and quickly made contacts with many literary figures. In 1905, during another visit, he expressed faith in the future of the Hispanic raza and at about the same time composed the 'Ode to Roosevelt', where the United States was severely downgraded, being viewed as 'the future invader' (Ugarte 1919, 52-3).

Darío's visits to Spain encouraged others to go, too. In 1910 the influential Argentine author Manuel Gálvez discovered in the old towns of Castile his true 'spiritual geography'. In the title of a book he published three years later, he also used the word *raza*, implying by it a Hispanic community on both sides of the Atlantic (Gálvez 1920). His fellow countryman, Ricardo Rojas, who spent several months in Spain during 1908, writing from there for the newspaper *La Nación* of Buenos Aires, noted the excessive rhetoric around him and the habit of referring to Spain and the Spanish American republics as *hijas* (daughters) reunited with their *Madre Patria* (Rojas 1948, 331-7). Receptions given in honour of the Spanish historian Rafael Altamira during his voyage through Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Mexico and Cuba, were filled with speeches that reverberated with this rhetoric (Pike 1971, 152-6; Pereira Castañares 1992, 189-90). During one gathering in Lima, José de la Riva-Agüero, already a commanding local voice, lamented that the need to integrate different groups of people distracted the Spanish American nations from working toward a higher goal. He then expressed the hope that one day all Spanish-speaking nations would form one spiritual confederation, 'a community of raza', together with Spain, their 'venerated mother' (Riva Agüero 1960, II, 38-9). In 1910, another Spanish historian, Adolfo González Posada, went to Argentina. In a banquet given in his honour in Montevideo, no other than the venerated José Enrique Rodó spoke of 'the sacred sentiment of the raza uniting Spaniards and the Spanish Americans' (Pike 1971, 156-7; Pereira Castañares 1992, 191).

Rodó's and Riva-Agüero's words were typical of the *hispanismo* of those years, an idea exalting in the newly forged cultural ties with Spain, but already aspiring to something more than that. As yet this idea was couched in secular terms, and it did not transgress the tenets of liberalism. Perhaps it should have sufficed on its own to provoke a suggestion to set up an annual date in celebration of

the historic ties between Spain and her American daughter-nations. Indeed, it is significant that 12 October was not marked out for that inside the Spanish world before 1912.<sup>4</sup>

### **Columbus Day as a precedent**

Surprisingly, the example to be emulated and competed with would be emanating from the civic culture of the United States. There the pattern had apparently been established by the Irish immigrant community, which had been allowed since the 1850s to observe an old national-religious holiday in a manner that expressed gratitude to its new homeland. It took place on St. Patrick's Day on 17 March, celebrated with great parades, chiefly in New York City and Boston. During the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 (also known as the Chicago World's Fair), a notable celebration was scheduled for 12 October, which afterwards helped to launch annual Columbus Day celebrations by societies belonging to the fast growing Italian immigrant community. In this case, too, besides Chicago, the largest communities were those of Boston and New York (Nelli 1970, 179). Beginning to take shape just before the turn of the century, by 1907 the celebrations of Columbus Day in New York assumed the form of a large-scale parade through the streets of Manhattan, marching to the tunes of brass bands, waving the flags of Italy and the United States, and ending with patriotic speeches by various public dignitaries. In March 1909, in spite of some opposition, the New York State legislature approved 12 October as an official holiday.<sup>5</sup> The action seemed to reflect a reluctance of many state politicians to antagonize their potential Italian voters. From now on the state's public schools and banks were closed on 12 October, though private businesses remained open; the route of the Manhattan parade was moved to Fifth Avenue up towards Columbus Circle. In April 1910 Massachusetts also declared 12 October a legal holiday. Other states quickly followed; by late 1911 their number was put at twenty-nine.<sup>6</sup> Besides the Italian societies, the Knights of Columbus, a Roman Catholic fraternal lay organization with branches all over the United States, was working for the adoption of the date as a legal holiday on a national scale as well. The fact that Columbus Day was accepted so quickly, even in states with negligible Italian immigrants and small numbers of Catholic residents, should probably be ascribed to the cult which had surrounded the image of the discoverer in the United States since the early nineteenth century (Handlin 1996).

It was only now, after Columbus Day had taken a hold in the civic timetable of the United States, that the Spanish world became susceptible to the idea. The turning point came in October 1912. On the third of that month a conference opened in Spain in celebration of one hundred years since the famous constitution enacted by the *Cortes de Cádiz*. Numerous delegates from all over Spanish America were present, including two former presidents of Argentina and Peru, together with Spanish leaders of various political shades. This gathering was organized in the wake of intensified cultural exchanges and gestures of friendliness in the previous two years (particularly made by Spain in the year 1910, when Spanish America commemorated one hundred years to the beginning of the rebellions for independence). The event brought the *Diario de la Marina* of Havana, the main newspaper of Cuba, to declare in a large editorial that this was the first time that the entire Spanish raza of both 'the peoples of America and the soldiers of Spain bent knees to pray the same prayer in the same language in front of the same altar'.<sup>7</sup> Other influ-

ential Spanish American newspapers also gave attention to the gathering, and in Argentina the associations of Spanish immigrant communities in Córdoba, Paraná, Rosario and Buenos Aires celebrated on 12 October both the anniversary of the discovery of America and that of the Constitution of Cádiz. In Madrid the Unión Ibero-Americana held a reception on that day in honour of the Spanish American delegates to the Cádiz conference.<sup>8</sup>

The enthusiasm surrounding the opening of the conference moved José María González, a young Spanish priest, to publish an article on 6 October in the *Diario de Cádiz*. Here he called upon the Hispanic world to celebrate *el Día de Colón* on 12 October of every year. González apparently came upon the idea during his stay in Cuba, where he took notice of Columbus Day celebrations in the nearby United States. In later years he was to claim that he had been the first to suggest the holiday in Spain (González 1933, 19, 51-2). Indeed, suggestions of how to give shape to the new sense of togetherness of all Spanish-speaking nations seemed to be the order of the day. One of the Cubans attending the Cádiz Centenary published an article urging the founding of an international organization with a centre in Madrid, where Spain and all the Spanish American states would join together to make 'the Hispanic American raza respected in the world' and an important factor in world politics.<sup>9</sup> With respect to the holiday, however, the most sustained activity was undertaken by the Unión Ibero-Americana. Early in 1913 it launched a campaign in its monthly magazine, calling for a holiday on 12 October. The Unión used its access to the Spanish government to have the ministry of foreign affairs communicate the idea to all the Spanish American diplomatic representatives in Madrid. But definite answers were not forthcoming. Only Mexico, then under the harsh dictatorship of General Victoriano Huerta, quickly agreed to commemorate the day in lectures to be given in all state schools. The Unión's campaign introduced, however, a new name for the holiday – 'La Fiesta de la Raza'.<sup>10</sup>

This new epithet was important. It meant to ensure that the planned holiday would have a Hispanic content, and that it would be distinguishable from the Columbus Day celebration as practiced in the United States. When one considers the pieces denouncing *yanqui* imperialism in the Western Hemisphere, which the Unión's journal published at the same time, this interpretation becomes more than plausible. As a matter of fact, the all-out Spanish bid for a 'holiday of race' coincided at that point with a modest attempt in the United States to have Columbus Day recognized as a celebration of all the American nations. The person behind it was John Barrett, director of the Pan American Union. In September 1913 he announced it publicly in Boston; he had written about the idea two years earlier in the Union's *Bulletin*.<sup>11</sup>

That the holiday could assume a 'Columbus Day' designation in a Spanish-speaking country as well is illustrated with the case of the Dominican Republic. On 2 October 1912 the Dominican government decided to make 12 October a legal holiday to be observed each year as *Día de Colón*; an executive decree to that effect was published three days later.<sup>12</sup> This move materialized during the very same days that the Cádiz Centenary was being celebrated in Spain, but the action of the Dominican government had nothing to do with it. The circumstances were indeed strange. Since 1905 the finances of the Dominican Republic had been under direct United States supervision. On 19 November 1911 President Ramón Cáceres was assassinated by political enemies, following which Alfredo Victoria, the head of the army, installed his uncle, Senator Eladio Victoria, as president. Victoria was

considered no more than a puppet, and soon had to face armed uprisings launched by veteran opposition leaders; the resulting civil war became the bloodiest ever. Finally, toward the end of September 1912, President Taft sent over a United States pacification committee accompanied by 750 marines. The intervention force arrived on 2 October 1912 with advance notice but not with the explicit permission of the Dominicans. President Victoria quickly decided on certain measures intended to placate the opposition, but on 26 November, when it turned out that even these were not enough to satisfy the Americans, he handed in his resignation. He was replaced by Archbishop Adolfo Nouel, who was a person more acceptable to rival political factions (Moya Pons 1995, 305-9; Welles 1981; Knight 1928, 48-52).

On the basis of these developments, what exactly motivated the Dominicans to declare a 'Columbus Day' holiday, a decision that they passed on the same day that the intervention force arrived at Santo Domingo? Clearly, it must have been contemplated by President Victoria as a gesture to please the Americans. In any case, it had as yet nothing to do with the growing ties of solidarity between Spain and Spanish America. This opinion gains credence when one examines the message that the Dominican foreign minister addressed on 20 November 1912 to all the states of America, suggesting to them to follow his country's lead. The idea behind the proposal, it said, was not just to honour the name of 'the illustrious Genovese navigator Christopher Columbus', but also to assure that 'all the American nations would have a common holiday'.<sup>13</sup>

In 1913 two versions of a 12 October holiday were about to compete with each other: a Columbus Day (Día de Colón) commemoration, which would celebrate a date and political ideals commonly meaningful to the United States and the other American nations, and the Fiesta de la Raza or Día de la Raza, which expressed the ties between Spain and her daughter-nations. At the time it seemed as though the Columbus Day version had the advantage. During 1913 a law to make Día de Colón an official holiday was put before the House of Representatives of Puerto Rico. On the other hand, the campaign launched by the Unión Ibero-Americana of Madrid was not yielding results. The celebrations of 12 October 1913 in several Spanish American capitals with large Spanish immigrant communities were rather subdued that year. In Montevideo, the event was practically confined within the walls of the Club Español, where the Spanish ambassador was the guest of honour. In Havana the huge Spanish clubs did nothing that would draw attention, and the press only reported on the ceremonies conducted by the local branch of the Knights of Columbus; the same thing happened in Panama. In both cases these were Catholic bodies linked to the United States, and in Panama the sermons delivered were even given in English. In Spain the celebrations on 12 October 1913 centred on the *Fiesta de la Virgen del Pilar de Saragossa*, a traditional religious and very popular holiday.<sup>14</sup>

In 1914, however, there was a noticeable shift. First, the Unión Ibero-Americana organized ceremonies in several places in Spain, the main event being held in its own quarters in Madrid, attended by some Spanish American diplomats. Second, the Unión contacted its branches in Spanish America as well as other Spanish associations and social clubs in an attempt to coordinate a wider range of celebrations. As a result of these efforts the Spanish colony in Venezuela celebrated 12 October for the first time (Sánchez Mantero 1994, 272). The attempts were most successful in Argentina. In Córdoba, where the local Spanish commu-

nity had already celebrated it in 1912, the authorities declared 12 October 1914 an official holiday. All public offices and stores were closed, and dignitaries surrounded by flags of Spain and Argentina attended a special ceremony in the main church. In Buenos Aires the main commemorative ceremony took place at the small Colón Monument as the joint effort of an Argentine patriotic society, the Spanish community and the university student federation. Manuel Ugarte, already known for his strong criticism of the United States, spoke on behalf of the students. He called the day 'a celebration of Latin American brotherhood', and explained that the memory of Columbus provided a theme for a 'common holiday of the raza'. Notwithstanding, he also saw in the celebration an act to honour Spain and Italy. The speaker for the Spanish community, however, emphasized the Hispanic sense of the holiday. The speeches still left unsettled the question of the precise nature of the holiday (which the press at this point simply designated as an 'anniversary of the discovery of America'). But the collaboration of the influential groups favouring the celebration of the holiday in Argentina now constituted a new and important development.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Uruguayan turnabout**

Celebrations of the anniversary in 1914 were affected everywhere by the recent outbreak of the 'Great War' in Europe. Since Italy was still neutral, the circumstances seemingly helped to magnify the size of the Columbus Day parade in New York City. Over 100,000 people lined Fifth Avenue to watch some 7,000 marchers, among them a few old Italian veterans who had served fifty years earlier under Garibaldi. The event was sponsored by some two hundred Italian clubs and societies then active in the city.<sup>16</sup> The anniversary afforded room for reflection in the Americas, north and south. As one Uruguayan writer put it, the sight of the vast destruction and the terrible loss of life in the Old World lifted yet higher the banner of 'a free, humanitarian and peace-loving America, serving as an example to the whole world'.<sup>17</sup>

These kinds of sentiments motivated the law which President José Battle y Ordoñez, about to complete his second term, put before the Uruguayan Congress on 19 January 1915. According to Battle, the opportunity to declare 12 October a legal holiday materialized after the Catholic Church had changed the religious ceremonies of Corpus Christi to Sundays, thus ensuring that yet another holiday would not cut down on the number of working days. In his message to congress, he mentioned the Dominican initiative of November 1912 and cited extensively from its text. He then concluded: 'The ties among the American countries are getting closer than ever and tend to encourage among them feelings of brotherhood, which will be useful for the moral and material development of the Pan American nations'. With this somewhat awkwardly phrased reasoning, he asked the legislature to approve 12 October as a national holiday in Uruguay under the name *El Día de América*.<sup>18</sup>

The law was passed in July 1915, under Battle's successor, Feliciano Viera. The new president went on to propose yet another holiday to be celebrated on 14 July, the 'anniversary of the glorious democratic revolution that culminated with the proclamation of the rights of man and citizen'. This strange adoption of the date of the assault on the Bastille as a Uruguayan celebration meant of course to express sympathy with beleaguered France, then under heavy German attacks, but

it did not signify that Uruguay was about to change its stand of neutrality and enter the war.<sup>19</sup> In fact, the two new holidays of 14 July and 12 October were approved together. The member of congress who spoke in favour of the holidays even thought that they complemented each other, because both holidays referred to ‘a day that belongs to mankind at large, not to a day of a specific country’.<sup>20</sup>

The new Día de América in Uruguay was not initially conceived as a Hispanic holiday; rather, it was meant to celebrate ‘Pan American’ or universal values. But when the actual event took place on 12 October 1915, the scales reversed. An announcement on 11 October in the paper *El Día* detailing the activities scheduled for the next day carried the title *La Fiesta de la Raza*. Whereas the Uruguayan government did very little to organize the day with activities, the local Spanish community headed by the Club Español of Montevideo devised various programmes of celebration. Its representatives promised to appear together for the march down the main thoroughfare, with bands playing music and the Uruguayan and Spanish flags streaming. The conclusion that the holiday was to have a Hispanic character inspired *El Día*, a publication enjoying an almost official status, to editorialize on 12 October 1915 in the following words:

In reality, this is a day of triumph and joy for the Latin family...Our best and worst traits are those that we have inherited from the great founding race. We have received from Spain the great gift of her splendid, abundant and sonorous language. The Latin people make up the greater part of the alluvial immigration that reaches our soil...Therefore, we are fully able to show to the world the extent of the profound and sacred ties that connect us forever to the glorious race from which we come and to that noble nation...Today our affectionate greetings go to heroic Spain...She has never been closer to our hearts than today.

What an about-face! The legislators had had contemporary heroic France in mind, but the participants had used the opportunity instead to express their feelings for the heroic Spain of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, President Viera behaved as though the event was still in accordance with the Día de América. He sent a telegram to the president of the Dominican Republic, congratulating him on the day that Uruguay had now adopted as a holiday in accordance with the Dominican initiative. But the parade of many thousands through Avenida 18 de Julio, which Viera and members of his cabinet saluted from a balcony, actually displayed symbols of a holiday expressing the ties of Uruguay with Spain.

### **A national holiday for Spain**

The Día de América holiday in Uruguay, actually celebrated as the *Fiesta de la Raza*, must be viewed as a dividing line. In fact, in 1915 celebrations throughout the Hispanic world began to show signs of a widely accepted commemoration. In Argentina, the same groups that had conducted the ceremony at the Colón Monument in Buenos Aires the previous year celebrated again. The student association sponsored a ‘literary-musical’ event at the Buenos Aires theatre where the minister of foreign affairs and envoys of Spain, Portugal and several Latin American countries were present. For the first time, following the direction of a circular issued by the ministry of public instruction, Argentine schools held classes on 12 October on the historical importance of Columbus and the Catholic Kings, and heard lectures on the theme of ‘the ties among the peoples of America and especially those that

exist between the Hispanic American nations and Spain'.<sup>21</sup> In Cuba the sumptuous dinner and ball at the Centro Asturiano was so impressive that the *Diario de la Marina* gave it front-page coverage with reportedly unbounded expressions of love between Cuba and Spain. That the Cubans had yet another big love was also registered on the same front page in a report on the winning game of the Boston Red Sox in the baseball 'World Series'. The paper reminded the readers that in the United States the day was celebrated as Día de Colón. But the event at the Centro Asturiano was billed as Fiesta de la Raza. The same heading was given to the report on the festivities held in Spain. The main event took place in the capital, again on the premises of the Unión Ibero-Americana. This time the Spanish minister of foreign affairs, the Marquis de Lema, was in attendance together with envoys from most of the Latin American nations. Lema declared that there was a growing opinion that Spain and the countries of Hispanic America should enter into a closer union.<sup>22</sup>

Over the next two years numerous and repeated signs seemed to confirm that the Spanish world was ready to formally adopt the new holiday. Editorials in influential dailies, letters by readers, declarations from gatherings of scientific and literary personalities – all made an appeal for it (Sánchez Mantero 1994, 107). Considering this sustained campaign, the Unión Ibero-Americana in Spain proceeded in a rather circumspect manner. Acting on its request, the city council of Madrid adopted a resolution on 12 October 1916 asking the government to institute the Fiesta de la Raza as a national holiday. In 1917 the Unión opened its celebrations of that year to the public (this had already been done in Barcelona, where local commercial interests behind the Casa de América headed by Rafael Vehils promoted the holiday). Equally important was the fact that King Alfonso XIII supported the issue, and took part by giving a speech.<sup>23</sup> The campaign in Spain to make the day an official event finally came to fruition on 8 May 1918, when Prime Minister Antonio Maura presented to the Cortes a law declaring 12 October of each year a national holiday as Fiesta de la Raza. In his address to the legislature he mentioned that already in 1892, when the date had been celebrated, the possibility of making it an annual event was discussed. He also explained that by adopting the holiday, Spain would come closer to the Spanish American republics that had recently made the day a national celebration. Indeed, the desire to reaffirm Spain's perennial ties with her offspring nations on the other side of the ocean served as the main argument for institutionalizing the holiday. Following this session in the Cortes, Maura signed the appropriate decree on 15 June 1918. However, due to the worldwide epidemic of influenza, which also hit Spain, the programme conducted during that year was limited. The first real Spanish national celebrations were held a year later on 12 October 1919 (Serrano 1999, 319).

Although it is somewhat outside the main course of our narrative, something should be said here about Spain's difficulty at that time of deciding on a date for a national holiday. There was a deficiency of civic celebrations compared with an abundance of religious ones. The deep social and political divisions in Spanish society made it almost impossible to agree upon a date to commemorate one single historical event as the basis for a national holiday. Ever since the nineteenth century the Spanish liberals had promoted an annual commemoration of 2 May 1808, the date of the national uprising against the armies of Napoleon, which had begun in Madrid. Although 2 May was declared a national holiday on 19 October 1906 by royal decree, it never gained broad acceptance. The left rejected it as bourgeois and

nationalist, and it also interfered with the proletarian and internationalist celebration on 1 May. The liberals began to have some misgivings about the event, since it had been undertaken mainly by the lower classes in Madrid. They considered its tone too anti-French. On the other hand, in the conservative provinces 2 May was always considered a Madrid celebration, rather than a national one (Alvarez Junco 1998, 442). The fact that 2 May remained a truncated festivity surely helped to advance the quick approval of 12 October that was backed by the national government of both conservatives and liberals. Nevertheless, some discrediting voices were heard. On 13 October 1918, one day after the first (partial) celebration, Miguel de Unamuno spoke in Madrid in a public meeting, calling on Spain to join the war on the side of the Allies and adhere to President Wilson's proposed League of Nations. 'Rather than this Fiesta de la Raza', said Unamuno, 'let us celebrate another holiday, that of humanity at large'. He saw in 12 October an affirmation of an attachment to the concept of empire and a sign that Spain was not ready for true civil democracy (Serrano 1999, 316-7, 322, 326-7).<sup>24</sup>

### **International Politics and the holiday in Argentina**

In the meantime, however, yet another American nation acted ahead of Spain and declared the anniversary of the discovery of the New World a national celebration. As mentioned, since 1914 some Argentine associations had begun cooperating with organizations representing the local Spanish community in conducting programmes commemorating the day. Late in 1916, during the sessions of an international scholarly conference held in Buenos Aires, three of the Argentine participants made a proposal to make 12 October an annual national holiday. The issue was quickly taken up by the *Asociación Patriótica Española*, an association closely connected with the Unión Ibero-Americana in Spain, which addressed a petition to that effect to the Argentine government (Sánchez Mantero 1994, 107). The man who had to deal with this petition was President Hipólito Irigoyen, the long-time leader of the Radical Party and the first executive ever to be elected in a democratic manner. As an enemy of the 'oligarchy', and purporting to heed the voice of the average man, Irigoyen was nevertheless a stubborn nationalist. Not long after he entered office, his stance on important questions of foreign affairs came to be tested.

On 6 April 1917 the United States declared war on Germany. Cuba immediately did the same and was shortly followed by Panama. Brazil had already severed relations with Germany in April, and declared war in October. Peru and Uruguay also showed solidarity with Washington and terminated their relations with Germany. Argentina was asked by Washington and London to at least cease diplomatic relations. As several Argentine merchant ships had been sunk by German submarines, public opinion in the country was ready for the move. Leading intellectuals, university students, the large Italian immigrant community, political leaders of all parties, and even members of the cabinet were demanding a break in relations. In September intercepted telegrams sent from Buenos Aires to Berlin by an official German emissary, Count Luxburg, were revealed to contain a remark about the need to sink Argentine ships without leaving any traces. Luxburg was declared *persona non grata*, but Irigoyen still refused to break off relations with Germany (Weinmann 1994, 115-28). Though his difficulties were compounded by a general strike of the railroad workers, he kept on making the issue of Argentine neutrality a

test of his leadership. To counter American and British pressure, Irigoyen suggested a consultation meeting of all the Latin American neutral nations; an idea that never got anywhere. In the midst of the crisis, however, he took action on the petition of the *Asociación Patriótica Española*. On 4 October 1917 he declared 12 October a national holiday, to be known as Día de la Raza.<sup>25</sup>

In the phrasing of the decree, Irigoyen revealed himself an ardent supporter of hispanismo. The discovery of America was presented as an incomparable occurrence in the history of mankind. All the advances that took place afterwards were indebted to this 'amazing event', which had both tangible and spiritual consequences. The honour for having accomplished the discovery and conquest was due to 'the Spanish genius', which had espoused the sublime vision of Columbus and performed that arduous and gigantic task 'that has no parallel in the annals of all peoples'. Spain had engaged for the enterprise the bravery of her warriors, the daring spirit of her explorers, the faith of her clergymen, the knowledge of her scholars and the labours of her workmen. In this way she accomplished 'the miracle of conquering for civilization the immense land where today the American nations flourish'. Therefore, it was just to dedicate the holiday to Spain, 'Mother of nations', to whom she gave the leaven of her blood and the harmony of her language.

The first celebration of Día de la Raza in Argentina took place only eight days after the signing of the decree. There were special evening programmes in social clubs in different parts of the country and the shops were closed. School children attended special classes to learn about the importance of the day. The main event, at the Teatro Colón of Buenos Aires, was attended by many dignitaries, including the envoys of Spain and the Latin American countries. In addition to speeches, the Argentine and Spanish anthems were played, followed by an especially composed 'Hymn to the Race'. Besides these programmes, the Patriotic League, a body close to the ruling Radical Party, organized a parade. Supporters of Irigoyen's policy of neutrality, and Spanish and German immigrants, largely participated. Along the way they clashed several times with crowds favouring a break with Germany. The worst incident occurred when the parade passed in front of the Jockey Club. The police had to intervene, charging the rioters with drawn sabres, which resulted in a number of wounded people.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, in nearby Montevideo across the Rio de la Plata, proceedings were diametrically opposite. On 8 October Uruguay severed relations with Germany. Although there was no formal declaration of war, the country was definitely in favour of the Allies. On 12 October an estimated 100,000 people took part in a huge meeting, where the main speaker was President Viera.<sup>27</sup>

In Peru, 12 October 1917 was celebrated in a similar tenor. Since his message to congress of 18 July, President José Pardo and his foreign minister had been reiterating a pledge to support 'the Pan-American solidarity based on the principles of international justice as proclaimed by the president of the United States' (Pike 1967, 209-10; Basadre 1964, XII, 416-8). On 5 October Peru severed relations with the Central Powers. Seven days later Lima witnessed a parade with decorated cars, musical bands and marching university students and boy scouts. It drew people of all classes who came to watch, and deserved the presence of Pardo, who sat on the balcony of the presidential palace with members of his cabinet. Although shouts in praise of Spain were also heard, the event appeared to express the bonds among the American nations at a time of war.<sup>28</sup>

### Triumph of the Día de la Raza version

Indeed, if there had been any likelihood that Spanish America would opt for a holiday that proclaimed Pan American rather than Hispanic values, its opportunity might have existed in 1917-18, when the United States was at war. John Barrett, still at the director's office of the Pan-American Union, had already felt in 1915 that as a result of the war the ties of the Latin American nations and the United States were markedly improved. As for the value of the organization, he even thought that 'if Europe had a Pan-European Union like the Pan-American Union in Washington, this great war would have been averted'.<sup>29</sup> Celebrations of Columbus Day in the United States were coloured by the war. As mentioned, the parade of 12 October 1914 in New York was particularly strong; some 100,000 people lined Fifth Avenue and Broadway to watch and cheer. But in 1915 the Italian community of the city decided (for the first time in eighteen years) not to stage a parade in deference to their countrymen, who were by then fighting and dying in Europe. That year the main event at Carnegie Hall included a speech by former president Theodore Roosevelt in front of 2,500 members of the Knights of Columbus. The speaker stressed the need to make Americans one nation, a goal which in his opinion could be achieved in a time of war when 'the son of a multi-millionaire and the son of the immigrant' would serve in the same army and share everything equally.<sup>30</sup>

The 1916 holiday had had no parade, but in 1917 with the United States having entered the war, it returned and was bigger than ever. The parade now assumed the character of a rally on behalf of the military efforts, and the anthems of United States, England, France, Russia and Italy were played. In 1918 Columbus Day was sponsored by the federal government. President Wilson proclaimed it 'a day of ardent rededication to the ideals upon which our government is grounded'. He urged US citizens to help finance the war by subscribing to the fourth Liberty Loan, and declared the anniversary a day of recess for all federal employees. That year the parade in New York featured many people in uniforms.

One Spanish American nation celebrated it in this manner as well. In Panama a 'Columbus Day-Liberty Day' procession took place, attended by the representatives of all the Latin American legations. Since Panama had also formally entered the war (May 1918), and was permitting the canal to serve the worldwide movement of Allied troops, the parade also had Chinese and Burmese units, some Sikh soldiers, and a group of riding *vaqueros* from nearby plantations.<sup>31</sup>

When the war ended, the rapprochement of Latin America and the United States appeared to be confirmed. The ever-optimistic Barrett could take satisfaction in the fact that of the twenty Latin American nations, thirteen had severed relations with Germany during the war, of which eight had also declared war. He noted furthermore that the other seven countries, including Argentina, Chile, Mexico and Venezuela, gave the United States access to their material resources in spite of their proclaimed neutrality.<sup>32</sup> But although the war seemingly solidified the links with the Colossus of the North, the trend towards identification with Spain continued to grow unabated in Spanish America on both the political and diplomatic level. Naturally, this affected the views of how the date of the discovery of America should be celebrated. Here is how a leading newspaper in Chile explained it on 12 October 1917:

From a holiday of a private character, which the communities of Spanish immigrants observed on the anniversary of the discovery, this great celebration of today has grown. Under the name of the raza, the American peoples and their Spanish brothers who live in the New World are together recognizing the Spanish origins of these peoples and asserting their aspiration for a greater proximity between Spain and Spanish America. This is the true meaning of the fiesta de la raza and its correct sociological interpretation. The sons of the peninsula, who had conceived it, wanted to demonstrate their solidarity with the nations born of the flesh and blood of Spain. The American nations, which accepted this beautiful idea, meant to give it a sense of a public expression of faith by which they admit that their origins are in Spain and that they regard her in the same manner that the Latin peoples looked at Rome in ancient times.<sup>33</sup>

The actual festivities of the day in Santiago confirmed the prognosis in the editorial. Although the holiday had as yet no official sanction, many Chileans joined members of the Spanish colony in several scheduled events, especially in the celebration that took place outdoors in one of the capital's parks. This mode of marking the day continued on in the next years. By 1919 *La Prensa* of Buenos Aires could report that in Santiago the 'Fiestas por el Día de la Raza' were noticed everywhere. All main streets were specially illuminated, cars were decorated and many people wore Spanish regional dresses.<sup>34</sup> Finally, in October 1921, as the anniversary was again approaching, a member of the Chilean congress raised the motion of making it a legal holiday. His suggestion was received with acclamations and quickly endorsed by the government. On the anniversary of the next year, the first time that Chile celebrated the day officially, President Arturo Alessandri eulogized Spain in a ceremony at the Teatro Municipal, where the envoys of Brazil, Mexico and Spain spoke as well. Spain, 'our motherland', was praised by Alessandri for her great historical triumphs, and for having transferred the 'Latin genius' to America.<sup>35</sup>

It appears that in Chile the legalization of the holiday proceeded in a more or less democratic manner, with the pressure for giving it an official status mounting gradually from the bottom up. In Venezuela, then under the tight guardianship of Juan Vicente Gómez, it depended on the desire of a caudillo. As mentioned, the Spanish colony in Caracas, urged from Madrid by the pleadings of the Unión Ibero-Americana, conducted celebrations on 12 October from 1914 onwards. These were eventually given the support of the Venezuelan government, and on 21 June 1921 the anniversary was made the country's fourth national holiday. The following year, festivities were marked by a *Te Deum* at the cathedral, and a civic procession in which university professors and foreign diplomats participated. The march, with raised flags of Spain and Venezuela, ended at Plaza Bolívar, although the Liberator had never been an admirer of Spain (Sánchez Mantero 1994, 273).

By 1918 the holiday had also become a very noticeable event in Cuba. This was to be expected, given the huge size of the Spanish community in the island relative to the size of the total population. But it should be recalled that it had been barely two decades since Cuba's liberation from 400 years of Spanish rule. Moreover, its national day of independence was celebrated on 10 October, the anniversary of the 'Grito de Yara', the proclamation of the rebellion against Spain in 1868. This created in Cuba the strange chronological proximity of an 'anti-Spanish' day and a day to be the occasion of giving thanks to Spain. Still, among the activities re-

ported on the front page of the evening edition of *Diario de la Marina* of 12 October 1918, it was mentioned that President Mario Menocal had sent telegrams of congratulations to the king of Spain, to President Wilson of the United States (with whom Cuba then was allied, having declared war against Germany), and to all the heads of the Latin American nations. The paper grouped all the reports on the events of the day under the heading 'El Día de la Raza'. Notwithstanding, the issue of the next day featured an article discussing the merits of three alternative designations for the holiday – 'fiesta de la raza', as against 'día de Colón' or 'día de América'.<sup>36</sup>

In 1919 even 'revolutionary' Mexico, then headed by Venustiano Carranza, marked the holiday. Events in the capital were organized by the municipal authorities and students of the National University with the aid of the local Spanish colony, and were judged to have been very successful.<sup>37</sup> The impression gained from reports of different newspapers is that by now the holiday was also celebrated in Paraguay and Peru, being promoted of course in both countries by associations connected with their Spanish communities. But it was not yet a significant event in countries with heavy Indian populations such as Bolivia and Ecuador. There should be no doubt, however, about the celebration having a truly continental dimension. Since 1917, consular representatives in New York of all the Spanish American nations and Spain began marking the day with a banquet offered by a local charity organization, the *Unión Benéfica Española*. The gathering of 12 October 1919 even made the columns of the *New York Times*, which also reported the idea advanced by one of the speakers at the banquet, advocating the unification of 'all Latin countries in South America into one great nation'.<sup>38</sup>

The interest in the commemoration and holiday in 1919 also arose because in that year Spain celebrated it on a grand scale for the first time as her national holiday. Both *The Times* of London and the *New York Times* stressed in their reports that the event appeared to be part of a reciprocal drift bringing Spain and Spanish America much closer.<sup>39</sup> A year later, the short report from Argentina in the *New York Times* said it all: 'Tribute to Spain, the mother country of the greater part of Latin America, was paid throughout the Spanish-speaking countries of this continent today in many celebrations in honour of the anniversary of the discovery of America, which is called "Race Day"'.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, some advocates of the holiday in the Spanish world were no longer satisfied with having established their own festivity, and began claiming exclusive rights over the commemoration. In 1921, when the Uruguayan consul general in France wanted to coordinate a 'Latin Week' together with the French government honouring the 429th anniversary of the discovery of America, newspapers in Madrid raised a cry that France had no rights to the personality of Columbus. As a result, the original plans were drastically curtailed.<sup>41</sup> In 1922 Ramiro de Maeztu published an article on 'the international policy of Spain' in the first volume of *Foreign Affairs* where he did not hesitate to claim that 'Spain considers the South American republics as her children, physically and intellectually, conceived during the supreme hour of her history' (Maeztu 1922, 136). A more objective observer opined at the time that although France still held an intellectual preponderance in Latin America, and the United States and England maintained a commercial and political ascendancy, it was with Spain as a nation that most Latin Americans felt solidarity (Warshaw 1922, 165).

In this new climate of rearranged loyalties, there really was no place for a common celebration of 12 October by Americans from both the northern and

southern parts of the continent. It is an oddity that this was ever attempted. On Columbus Day of 1920 the ambassadors of the American states to France held a festive meeting in Paris, where the main speaker was Gaston da Cunha of Brazil. He expressed his belief that the New World was the continuation of European civilization across the Atlantic ocean, and saluted 'our great sister of the North, ...the leading nation, which by an action of moral grandeur without equal in history, came forward to offer all the resources of its opulence to the cause of humanity'. In his answer, Ambassador Hugh C. Wallace said that his country helped to save the world from despotism, and 'may be called upon to save it from a barbarous proletariat'.<sup>42</sup> This took place during the last months of the administration of ailing President Wilson, whose initiative in launching of the League of Nations had gained the support of Latin America.

Three years later, on 12 October 1923, an editorial in the *New York Times* called upon all the nations of America to honour the memory of Columbus by erecting a giant lighthouse off the harbour of Santo Domingo 'as a Pan-American monument'. The call coincided with an attempt of the Pan-American Union to organize, on the very same day, a series of simultaneous conferences on the issues facing women in twelve different American nations, including Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and the United States. Whatever support these conferences added to the rights of women, they certainly did little to for making Columbus Day a holiday of the entire American continent. When referring to the day, speakers in the Spanish American countries mentioned the 'Festival of the Race'; in Buenos Aires one young participant even recited a poem, entitled 'Canto a España en el Día de la Raza'.<sup>43</sup> Still not satisfied, during the next year Washington attempted to launch an 'International Pan-American Committee' to promote the annual celebration of Columbus Day as 'Pan-American Day'. This committee was supposed to include some prominent Spanish Americans, but no names were given. In a letter from President Coolidge, dated 24 September 1924, to John Barrett, former director of the Pan-American Union and the intended chairman of the committee, it was explained that 'Columbus Day is the only secular holiday of the year in which all American countries have a common and sympathetic historical interest'. Apparently, nothing came out of the overture.<sup>44</sup> In 1925-26 Clarence H. Haring, one of the finest students of Spanish America, travelled in the area. He felt that it was saturated with propaganda denigrating the United States, the combined effort of both local and Spanish intellectuals. 'Columbus Day', he wrote, 'Race Day (Día de la Raza) as it is called in Spanish America – is more and more becoming an occasion for celebrating the reunion of the Hispanic nations of the world' (Haring 1928, 169-70).

### **Concluding remarks**

We may now address some of the issues related to the historical significance of setting up the Día de la Raza. First, what were the tangible results of the massive Spanish American trend of embracing Spain? They were apparently of small significance. The idea, much discussed at the time, to create in Madrid an organization that would rival the Pan-American Union in Washington never got off the ground. On the other hand, the institutionalization of the 12 October celebration was quite revealing in terms of the new cultural politics of nationalism in Spanish America. The same trend gathered momentum throughout the 1920s since the cul-

tural relations between Spain and Spanish America continued intensely. There were large-scale expositions, academic congresses, and visits of university professors. The Spanish American press carried extensive news items on Spanish politics, theatre and music, on the war in Morocco, even on important Spanish football matches. The peak of identification occurred perhaps in 1926, when the aviator Ramón Franco accomplished the long flight from Spain to Argentina, and was compared to Columbus himself (Rippy 1932, 474-5; Sánchez Mantero 1994, 108-9). These expressions of affection finally reflected on the political culture of Spanish America. Spain of the 1920s was to begin with a monarchy, and from 1923 to 1929 a dictatorship headed by General Primo de Rivera. Spanish Americans, who heaped so much uncritical praise upon Spain, admitted, indirectly at least, that they might value more the non-democratic manner of politics in the *Madre Patria* than the type of regimes in their own area, which at that point oscillated between oligarchy and constitutional legitimacy, and still barely managed to keep the military outside politics. This interpretation is based on hindsight of course, since we now know well what happened to Latin American politics after 1930. But the sort of political values that could be propped up by the *Día de la Raza* movement should have been understood even then. The symbols which the Spanish American press employed at the time to propagate the idea of the holiday were almost always those that referred to the imperial Spain of the sixteenth century, that is to the Spain without Jews (and without Moslems) which had achieved wonders in Europe and elsewhere under the banner of Catholicism.

There can be no doubt that the *Día de la Raza* holiday also took shape as an offshoot of the growing resentment in Spanish America towards the United States. As mentioned, overt antagonism had been on the rise at least since the publication of Rodó's *Ariel* in 1900. Of those who wanted Spanish America to have her own separate version of the celebration of the anniversary as distinct from the Columbus Day holiday in the United States, more than one remembered to refer to the threat presented by Anglo-Saxon civilization.<sup>45</sup> From the point of view of those critical of the United States, it was unacceptable that Columbus should be honoured in an English-speaking nation when he had had nothing to do with their origins, while the countries to which his discoveries were indebted neglected his contribution. Therefore the decision was not only to glorify the image of the discoverer, but also to set the historical record straight and acknowledge the debt to Spain as well.

The name chosen for the holiday was devised in Spain at the *Unión Ibero-Americana* and quickly accepted by the Spanish American press. Yet it was an awkward name from the start (even if we discount the post-World War II aversion to anything done in the name of 'race'). Even in the early part of the twentieth century it emitted the sense of a quest for exclusiveness, of one struggling desperately to defend one's own cultural pale.

As it happened, as soon as the *Día de la Raza* was firmly established, Spanish America became aware of the existence in its midst of another race, one that had been there all the time, although ignored, mistreated and exploited. This was the *raza indígena*, the descendants of the autochthonous 'Indian' population. In 1917 their existence and special rights to land were recognized in the new Mexican constitution; in 1920 Peru also saw fit to promise their communities protection and land. In the early 1920s young artists and intellectuals became champions of *indigenismo*, an idea advocating that the aboriginal civilizations, their unique social

institutions and cultural heritage be an inspiration to Spanish America. This trend was of course diametrically opposed to the hispanismo that had sponsored the Día de la Raza. Indeed, had the champions of indigenismo existed as a powerful voice six years earlier, it is doubtful whether the holiday in praise of Spain would have been set up as triumphantly as it was.<sup>46</sup>

Perhaps we can understand better what went on by juxtaposing Día de la Raza and indigenismo. In both cases, it seems, the issue was a collective search for identity. As is well known, indigenismo served in the 1920s as a rallying ideological orientation for a new left. Artists and intellectuals, some university students, and even a new generation of labour leaders accepted its radical cultural tenets. The same might be said about the campaign to establish Día de la Raza. Here too several groups can be identified, among them intellectuals, newsmen, clergymen, diplomats and university students, in addition to the more numerous members of recently established communities of Spanish immigrants, and segments of the urban middle classes.

The holiday, symbolizing a willingness to identify with the heroic Spain of the sixteenth century, anticipated a possible shift towards the political right. In the very early years of the twentieth century the Spanish American urban middle classes were more willing to espouse a secular orientation in matters pertaining to morals, education and politics. By World War I a trend towards traditionally bound values was making headway, especially in countries such as Argentina and Chile. The cognizance of this development may help us to grapple with the question of Spanish America's digression from the path of orderly constitutional politics in the ensuing years (McGee Deutsch 1999; Rachum 1993).

While the connection of Día de la Raza with a desire for a closer identification with Spain is self-evident, one might still raise questions as to a particular motivation behind it: Was it a quest for political alliance? The search for a different economic partner? Or merely a longing for a historic reconciliation, expressed by enhanced cultural relations? In the final account none of these questions are particularly helpful. The idea of instituting the new holiday does not seem to have been a part of a coherent programme linked to a powerful socio-economic group, such as importers, exporters, capitalists or the working class. Rather it was one of those ideas floating in the air of the times to which many people, though mostly from among the urban middle and upper classes, responded. It is not by accident that the trend had widespread support in countries with sizable numbers of Spanish immigrants such as Uruguay, Argentina, Chile and Cuba. But perhaps this was not as essential as the immigrant Italian communities working for instituting the Columbus Day holiday was in the United States. The difference between the adoption of 12 October in the two parts of the Americas is that in the north it simply added yet another event to a well-defined framework of civic celebrations, whereas in the south it turned out to be a partial response to a crisis of identity.

At the beginning of this article a reference was made to Benedict Anderson's concept of nationalism as an 'imagined community'. When he considered Spanish America in these terms, Anderson actually limited himself to dealing with the nationalism forged during the long struggle for independence from Spain, roughly in the years 1780-1830. This so-called 'Creole' nationalism was based on ideas conceiving of the separate social and ethnic groups of the former colonial society as making one people, belonging to a specific country, on proclaiming the equality of all before the law, on favouring a republican form of government, on adopting the

tenets of freedom of commerce with other nations, and on rejecting Spain as foreign and inimical. Compared with this early version of an 'imagined community', the adoption of Día de la Raza as a national holiday (together with Spain) in the second decade of the twentieth century might qualify as a case of a 're-imagined community'. By embracing Spain, her culture and values, Spanish America, or at least an influential part of its society, 're-imagined' its identity. This, therefore, was not an uncomplicated case of adopting a new date for celebration. It reflected a not yet fully defined crisis related to national culture and politics.

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## Notes

1. Material for this paper was gathered in 2000 when I was at the Smithsonian Institution for a short-term fellowship, for which I would especially like to thank Dr Harry Rand, Senior Curator of Cultural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.
2. On the huge size of membership of the Spanish social clubs in Cuba and the extent of their activities see also, for example, 'Habana: The Greatest Club City in the World', *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* (July 1917), pp. 24-43.
3. These ideals make up the title of John Barrett's *The Pan American Union; Peace, Friendship, Commerce* (Baltimore, 1911). The author, a former minister of the United States to Argentina, Panama and Colombia, served as director general of the organization from 1907 to 1920.
4. To balance an impression that all Spanish American intellectuals were leaning towards Spain, the case of Fernando Ortiz, the famous Cuban anthropologist and historian, is of consequence. In 1911 he published a book in Paris, where he strongly objected to *panhispanismo*, calling it a 'neo-colonial' idea, and where he also rejected the affinity to Spain on the basis of *raza* (Serrano 1999, 324). James Bryce, who traveled in Spanish America during 1910, wrote that compared with the interest in England that he had found in the United States, the interest in Spain in Spanish America was insignificant (Bryce 1912, 514-15).
5. See the *New York Times*, 13 October 1907, and also news items in the issues of 22 May and 16 October 1908, where early attempts to pass the bill are covered.
6. *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* (November 1911), pp. 887-93.
7. *Diario de la Marina*, 3 October 1912; and see also the paper's extensive coverage of the conference in the next ten days.
8. *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), 11-13 October 1912.
9. *Diario de la Marina*, 21 November 1912, p. 3. This piece by Rosendo Fernandez Gamonedá appeared a few days earlier in *El Liberal* of Madrid.
10. See the monthly issues of the *Unión Ibero-Americana* of the year 1913, especially XXVII, No. 6, p.10; also González, pp. 21, 56, 58.
11. *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* (November 1911), pp. 887-89; *New York Times*, 20 September 1913, p. 5.
12. *Bulletin of the Pan American Union* (December 1912), p. 1312; González, pp. 53-5, 81-4.
13. Having failed to find this text among officially published documents, I use here the extensive citation from the Dominican message as given in *El Día* (Montevideo), 21 January 1915, p. 5.

14. Consult *El Día*, *Diario de la Marina* and *Diario de Panama* of 10-13 October 1913.
15. See the reports in *La Prensa* (Buenos Aires), 13 October 1914.
16. *New York Times*, 13 October 1914, p. 15.
17. Leoncio Lasso de la Vega in *El Día*, 12 October 1914, p. 3.
18. *El Día*, 21 January 1915, p. 5.
19. See the report on the new Uruguayan holiday in the *New York Times*, 8 July 1915, p. 2, and a letter by the Uruguayan consul general in New York, published in the issue of 24 July, p. 8.
20. *El Día*, 11 July 1915.
21. *La Prensa*, 13 October 1915, p. 7.
22. *Diario de la Marina*, 13-14 October 1915.
23. The king's speech is printed in *Unión Ibero-Americana*, XXXI, No. 9 (December 1917).
24. The *Día-Fiesta de la Raza* well suited the government of Primo de Rivera in the 1920s and the Franco regime throughout its three and a half decades. Indeed, the last renamed it *Día de la Hispanidad* so as to link the holiday with the idea of one gathering of nations with Iberian traditions and values, led by Spain. Franco added yet another holiday, the *Día del Valor*, celebrated on 18 July to commemorate the beginning of his 1936 revolt against the republic. This holiday was discarded after his death, and later substituted with 6 December (*Día de la Constitución*) to celebrate the 1978 constitution, which is the basis of the current regime. But 12 October continued on as before, although it was re-christened in 1981 as the 'national holiday of Spain'. Since Catalonia and the Basque country have their own 'national' holidays, in recent years the date of the discovery of America is still getting the allegiance of most (but not all) Spaniards as one people.
25. On 5 October 1917 *La Prensa* reported on the new holiday and printed the entire text of the decree. The text can also be found in *Unión Ibero-Americana*, XXXI, No. 9 (December 1917), pp. 5-6.
26. *New York Times*, 14 October 1917, p. 1; *La Prensa*, 13 October 1917, pp. 4, 7.
27. *The Times* (London) 13 October 1917.
28. *El Mercurio* (Santiago) 13 October 1917.
29. J. Barrett, 'Latin America and the War', reprinted from *The Financial Review of Reviews*, London (March 1915) p. 4; and see also his 'The Pan-American Union and Peace', reprinted from *The Advocate of Peace* (1916).
30. *New York Times*, 13 October 1915, pp. 1, 5.
31. *New York Times*, 21 September 1918, pp. 1, 6; 14 October 1918, p. 15.
32. J. Barrett, *The Pan American Outlook* (Washington D. C., 1919).
33. *El Mercurio*, 12 October 1917.
34. *La Prensa*, 13 October 1919, p. 10.
35. *El Mercurio*, 12 October 1921, pp. 3, 15; 12 October 1922, p. 23.
36. *Diario de la Marina*, 13 October 1918, p. 4.
37. *Excelsior*, 12 and 13 October 1919.
38. *New York Times*, 13 October 1919, p. 14; *La Prensa*, 13 October 1919, p. 9.
39. *The Times*, 3 February 1919, p. 9 and 14 October 1919 p. 11; *New York Times*, 10 October 1919 p. 7 and 14 October 1919, p. 7.
40. *New York Times*, 13 October 1920, p. 25.
41. *New York Times*, 20 September 1921, p. 16.
42. *New York Times*, 13 October 1920, p. 17.
43. *Proceedings and Reports of the Columbus Day Conferences Held in Twelve American Countries on October 12, 1923* (New York, 1926), pp. 9, 27, 38.
44. *New York Times*, 1 October 1924, p. 18; 12 October 1924, p. 15.
45. See, for example, 'El expansionismo Yanqui' by G. Picon-Febres in *Unión Ibero-Americana*, XXVII, No. 6 (August 1913), published at the very same time when the journal introduced the new epithet *Fiesta de la Raza*; also 'Iberoamericanismo y Panamericanismo' by L. Suarez in the same journal, XXXIV (May 1920). González, pp. 28-30, cites extensively from a speech given in 1919 by the Dominican Americo Lugo, expressing love for Spain and fears of a possible United States domination.
46. On this issue, see, for example, F. Araya Bennett, 'Un debate revelador', *Revista de la Raza*, XIV, Nos. 153-4 (April-May 1928), pp. 51-4. The author argues against a group of Argentine writers, associated with the journal *Martin Fierro*, who had rejected the intellectual 'imperialism' of Madrid.

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