

**Ambassador Guillermo E. Nielsen,
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**“200 Years Argentina and Germany
(1810-2010)”¹**

Introduction

It is a great honor for me to participate in this International Symposium organized by the German Historical Museum about overseas European history and in particular the transatlantic relations with Latin America. As Argentina will be celebrating its Bicentennial next year, my intention is to present the main issues that have dominated the relationship between Germany and Argentina since the May Revolution in 1810, prelude to Argentina’s Declaration of Independence in 1816. It is going to be a personal view of a non-historian, based obviously on the work of historians, but with the emphasis that comes from my own perceptions.

The presentation has 5 parts. First the Introduction where I briefly describe the path to Argentina’s Independence and its links to European events. The second part will focus on the economic ties between Argentina and Germany, the third section on German immigration and the fourth on the impact of German scientists. I end with an overview of Argentina’s presence in Germany.

¹ Special thanks to Dra. Silvia Kroyer and Second Secretary Maria Silvina Costa.

When preparing my speech for the national day, which for Argentina is May 25th, as a new Ambassador in Berlin last year, I tried to find out what, if any, was the relationship between Buenos Aires and Berlin in 1810, during the May Revolution Week and, not surprisingly, I found the trace of Napoleon, the most influential figure back in those days. It was in November 1806 when Napoleon defeated Prussia at the Battle of Jena and took the city of Berlin. Napoleon signed then the “Berlin Decree” on November 21, which prohibited the importation of British products to all continental European countries allied or dependent on France.

The Napoleonic Wars lasted 15 years and ended in 1815. During this period of French expansion in Europe, Napoleon’s main rival was the British crown, which possessed an invincible naval power. With the Berlin Decree Napoleon established a continental blockade in order to weaken Britain economically with the hope that this measure would eventually impact on its military power. This event led to a shift in the British economic interests outside Europe in search of access to new markets. Although the Latin-American colonies had always been part of the territories that the British crown desired, these had always been primarily in the hands of the Spanish.

What is known as the “English invasions” to the River Plate can be seen as the British attempt to take control of the Spanish colonies in order to expand its economic power and to compensate for the lost European markets. The first English expedition to the River Plate took place in 1806 when an English fleet landed in Buenos Aires. It was defeated in 45 days by a military army coming from Colonia del Sacramento, what today is Uruguay. The second British attempt to occupy the capital of the Viceroyalty of the River Plate occurred one year later, in 1807. It was thwarted by defensive troops from Buenos Aires which were composed not only of official troops but also by groups of militarized creoles.

The military invasion by one of the major powers of the time was a traumatic event that shook the placid colonial life. The inhabitants of Buenos Aires, compelled to fight for themselves with little direct help from the Spanish crown, overwhelmed the British troops in the street fighting. This contributed to a new awareness of their own value. The urgent need to take major decisions, such as the creation of militias, a power that had always been a task exclusive to the central authorities, instilled a new spirit of autonomy in the protection of their own interests vis a vis Spain. Viceroy Rafael de Sobremonte had fled during the First Invasion and abandoned Buenos Aires in 1806 in an attempt to save the treasury of the Viceroyalty and to avoid being forced to sign orders of surrender.

His flight, seen as an act of cowardice, provoked popular discontent and the people prevented his reinstatement as Viceroy. Instead the hero of the battle against the British forces, Santiago de Liniers, was installed. The unsuccessful British attempts to take Buenos Aires helped create the appropriate climate for the May Revolution.

The resistance of the people and its active participation in the defense of Buenos Aires increased the power and popularity of the Creole leaders as well as the influence and fervor of the independence groups. It also revealed the incapacity of the Spanish metropolis to defend its colonies in the context of the international conflicts of the time. Spain was suffering the French occupation. From 1808 to 1813 José de Bonaparte, Napoleon’s

brother, ruled Spain. Napoleon also announced in 1809 his unconditional support to the Latin American independence movement.

The Spanish control over its colonies in America weakened gradually, especially after the US Independence of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789. When Napoleon took power in 1799, America became a battle ground in the dispute with England. The Napoleonic Wars also impacted the Spanish American colonies, where the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution were gradually gaining ground to propel the process of emancipation of these colonies. The democratic and republican ideals influenced the patriots in Buenos Aires who were also concerned about the commercial monopoly exerted by the Spanish crown, which was suffocating the local economy.

In Argentina, after the English Invasions, the will of the people gradually prevailed over the interests of Spain and our country reached the revolutionary events in Buenos Aires on May 1810. The Viceroy Cisneros was replaced with the First Assembly of the Independent Government not designated by the Spanish Crown. However, this First Assembly (Provisional Governing Junta of the Provinces of Río de la Plata) of 1810 governed nominally in name of Spain's monarch Fernando VII, who had been deposed and imprisoned by Napoleon Bonaparte. This period between 1810 and the Declaration of Independence that took place during the Congress of Tucumán in 1816 is known as the mask of Fernando VII. Even though they asserted their loyalty to the King Fernando VII it was only a political maneuver to gain time to be able to truly reveal their revolutionary intentions of independence.

A former council member and legal advisor to the viceroy, Juan José Castelli, wanted both a change towards self-government and towards free commerce. Castelli cited traditional Spanish political theory and argued that the King being imprisoned, sovereignty had returned to the people. He based himself on the teachings of the Spanish Jesuit Francisco Suárez, who affirmed that political power does not reside in any one concrete person, and considered that the recipient of that power is the people as a whole.

The concept of popular sovereignty formulated by the German jurist Samuel von Pufendorf also formed part of the ideology that influenced the revolutionary leaders. Pufendorf stated: "when the royal family is absent, sovereignty returns to the people, who can exercise on their own or through its delegates all acts of sovereignty that it considers necessary for its conservation."

Trade and Economic Ties

We do not know for sure how many Germans inhabited Argentina at the time of our Independence Revolution in May 1810. We do know, however, that the first that landed in Argentina in 1535 were part of the fleet of 14 ships led by the Spanish explorer Pedro de Mendoza. Ulrich Schmidl, a German soldier from Bavaria who also participated in this expedition and in the first foundation of Buenos Aires in 1535. He chronicled these events and his account is the most important document from that time period. The first official account of Germans residing in Argentina dates to 1820s where several merchants are registered in official documents and during the government of Juan Manuel de Rosas. Some

of them were commercial agents of companies as the Rheinisch-Westindische Kompagnie and the Königlich Preussische Seehandlungs Societät and others were commercial representatives of the Kingdoms of Bavaria and Prussia and the free cities of Frankfurt and Hamburg.

The commercial representatives of manufacturing maritime and transport companies were often residing in Buenos Aires prior to their appointments. The Kingdom of Prussia designates Johann Eschenburg in 1824 as its first commercial agent in Buenos Aires. Argentina, in turn, accredited in 1835 her first official representative in Germany, Eduard Wilhelm Berckemeyer, as the General Consul of the Argentine Confederation serving at the hanseatic cities of Bremen and Hamburg.

In 1834 the government of the province of Buenos Aires decrees that it will not admit any Consul of any state or nation that had not previously recognized the independence of the Republic of the United Provinces of the River Plate. In April 1843 Bremen is the first German State to recognize explicitly the sovereignty and independence of the Argentine confederation. Hamburg recognizes our independence in 1844 and Prussia in 1845.

The recognition of Argentina's sovereignty by these German states marked a new stage in the commercial relationship and set the ground for the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation in September 1857 between the Argentine Confederation and the German Zollverein and the Kingdom of Prussia. This treaty signed by Doctor Bernabé López, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Argentine Confederation, and Mr. Hermann Friedrich von Gülich, Commercial Attaché and General Consul of his Majesty the King of Prussia, was the first bilateral treaty between the future Argentine Republic and Germany, both engaged in the process of nation building and not yet nationally unified. The Argentine Confederation was fighting with Buenos Aires, which finally annexed itself to the Confederation in 1862, while German unification occurred in 1871 under the leadership of Otto von Bismarck.

This Treaty of Friendship implied the gradual regularization and stabilization of commercial relations between our countries. Its 15 articles established facilities for navigation, for the importation and exportation as well as clauses for price agreements, private property protection and freedom of religion. It opened for the Argentine Confederation the doors to a potentially considerable immigration stream and increased trade with a new commercial partner which created fiscal income to a government that was economically weak as it did not participate, at that time, in the revenues from the Buenos Aires customs. For the German Zollverein and Prussia, the treaty signified a possibility to redirect its migration flow from the US to other destinations. The strategy of promoting the settlement of colonies in Argentine territory, allowed the new migrants to maintain a narrow bond with their native country. The treaty also helped propel German economic interests, principally of Prussia in the region.

The Treaty of Friendship came at a time of growing transatlantic commercial ties at the end of the XIX century which were transforming the international system of states into a more connected global world thanks to the technological transformations that were occurring on a global scale such as the telegraph, the steam ships and something that was going to have a

very big impact on the development of Argentina: the refrigerated shipping, which helped stimulate the beef trade between America and Europe, and transformed the economic landscape of the pampas. From the Argentine perspective, the treaty inserts itself in a context of national integration, of the fight for advancing her interests overseas and the economic and political openness that had begun after the fall of President Rosas in 1852.

Between 1880 and 1914, 26 representative offices of German commercial companies were opened in Argentina, to offer their products in the local market. In 1887 the Deutsche Bank opens a branch in Buenos Aires that was called the German Transatlantic Bank, which specialized in the financing needs of the bilateral commerce. In 1898 the Compañía Alemana Transatlántica de Electricidad (CATE) is created by the “Deutsche Überseeische Elektrizitätsgesellschaft”, founded in Berlin by AEG, and with the participation of the Deutsche Bank. CATE was until the First World War one of the most successful and important German company overseas. It provided electricity to various South American capitals. At the beginning of the XXth century many commercial representations of German companies that had been established during the second half of the XIXth century transformed themselves into subsidiaries of the parent companies.

Argentina started to distinguish itself as one of the major food providers of the world thanks to the expansion of its agricultural production. This was made possible by the expansion of the railways and the increased inflow of immigrants. In 1898 Germany was the principal client of our agricultural products: 15,2% of Argentine exports went to Germany and 14,3% to Great Britain, contrary to the widespread perception in Argentina where most if not all people think that Britain was our most important market at the turn of the century.

The German Company “Hamburg Südamerikanische Dampfschiffahrts-Gesellschaft” (Hamburg Süd) started working in Buenos Aires port since 1872, transporting cereals, fruit, cotton and leather from Argentina as well as the generations of German immigrants who arrived on its ships such as the Cap Roca, Cap Verde or Cap Arcona.

Argentina’s neutrality during the First World War helped maintain continuity in the trade with Germany although some German companies had to close their subsidiaries temporarily due to the English continental blockade. The uninterrupted existence of German companies was reflected in the foundation of the German Chamber of Commerce in Buenos Aires in 1916. Between 1919 and 1928, 90 German corporations registered in Argentina. After the 1929 crisis the bilateral trade thrived and reached its peak in 1937, thanks to the increased German demand for Argentine beef and the adjudication of several public tenders to German firms.

When the first German companies started to establish themselves in Argentina at the end of the XIXth century, many important industries were in English hands such as: the railways, the manufacturing of agricultural products, the public transportation and the slaughterhouses and cold storage plants for the exportation of meat. Of the total British investments in Argentina between 1885 and 1890, 35% went to government loans (national or provincial), 32% to railways and 24% to mortgage loans. Argentina experienced a massive foreign investment boom. A major part of the inflows took the form of sovereign

debt, the bonds being traded, primarily in London. In the late XIXth century Argentina benefited from that era of global finance where emerging markets were very present within London asset managers and bank portfolios, the major dealers of the time. It is important in these days in which there is a lot being written about globalization, to point this out. The largest bondholder of long-term cross border investment at the turn of the 20th century was the United Kingdom, accounting for nearly half of all cross-border investments. The value of emerging market debt traded in London was equivalent to 12% of world GDP.

Between 1900 and 1913 the USA began to be a serious competitor and even managed to displace Great Britain in the provision of some products increasingly demanded by Argentine firms, such as iron and its derivatives (wires, tools and electrical machinery), agricultural machinery (planters, threshers, and reapers), wood and lubricant oils. These four groups of products constituted approximately 65% of the total US exports to Argentina. In the years before World War I Argentina also imported North American cars and typewriters. For example, Ford established its first distribution facilities in Argentina in 1907.

German firms concentrated in sectors such as construction (Siemens Bauunion SA, GEOPE SA- subsidiary of Philip Holzmann), electricity (Siemens Schuckert SA, AEG SA), metalworking (Thyssen Lametal SA, Tubos Mannesmann SA) and chemical (Química Schering SA, Química Bayer SA). Banking subsidiaries, insurance and river transport companies also played a predominant role. In 1940 there were 200 subsidiaries of German firms registered in our country.

With the start of the Second World War and once again due to the British naval blockade, the commercial exchange between Germany and Latin America was practically paralyzed. When Argentina entered the war, practically at the end of the conflict, in March 1945, the commercial relations were officially broken for the first time after almost 100 years of constant commercial exchange.

Only in 1951 Argentina and Germany normalized their diplomatic and economic ties. The Argentine war declaration against Germany led to the confiscation of the so called “enemy property”. The return of these German assets to their previous owners was greatly delayed, it only ended in 1965.

Due to Argentina’s war declaration against Japan and Germany and their allies in March 1945 and the resulting confiscation of the “enemy property” in Argentina, the Argentine German relations were interrupted for the first time in their history. The confiscation of German companies as well as schools, associations and even bank deposits of German citizens led not only to a break of German investment in our country but also deprived the German community of its social and economic basis.

The confiscation of German property had a large impact on the post-war political and economic relations among both countries as well as on the investment policy of Germany in Argentina. The bilateral relationship was subjected to the solution of the “enemy property” issue. Only in 1957, with the return of part of this patrimony, in particular of the intellectual property, can one observe the beginning of an easing of the tense relationship. However,

the slow implementation of the return of German patrimony, in 1965 certain German associations continued being in the Argentine States hands, had a negative repercussion for Argentina. Political instability in Argentina was responsible for the delay. Only in the 1960s can one talk of normal bilateral relations.

The economic effects of this situation can be seen clearly, especially if one compares it to Brazil. The fact that Brazil is the first Latin American country receptor of German investments after 1945, having displaced Argentina, is clearly linked to the rapid solution of this topic in that country. Not only did Brazil benefit from our delay in solving the “enemy property” issue, but the space left by Germany in the Argentine market was taken over mainly by the US, but also by Italy and France. However, I should mention that Argentina was one of the few countries that returned intellectual property rights, brands and patents, without demanding the payment of huge sums by Germany. Nevertheless the protracted solution to the enemy property issue made Argentina lose a strong long run investor.

German Immigration

As I mentioned, the Germans who immigrated to Argentina were initially tradesmen that established themselves in the port city of Buenos Aires, but they were followed by others who founded colonies in the interior provinces, dedicating themselves mainly to rural tasks. Among the German groups that arrived in the second half of the XIXth century, were the so called “Volga Germans” were probably the most well known. They owed their name to the territory of the lower Volga in Russia where they had settled upon the invitation of Catherine the Great from 1764-1767. After having lost great part of the privileges that had been granted to them by Catherine II of Russia, they started to emigrate from the Volga in 1872. Soon after, thanks to the Law of Immigration, proclaimed by Argentina’s President Nicolás Avellaneda in 1876, Argentina became an attractive destination.

The first colony of Volga Germans was established in Olavarría (Hinojo), Province of Buenos Aires in 1878. That same year another one was formed in Diamante (General Alvear), Province of Entre Ríos. Some Volga Germans were Catholic and many of them chose South America as their new homeland because the official religion in Brazil and Argentina was Catholic. The ratio of Catholics to Protestant Volga Germans in South America was 7 to 1. In the Volga, however, Protestant Volga Germans outnumbered Catholics by 2 to 1. Today we find descendents of these first colonies of Volga Germans, principally in the provinces of Entre Ríos, Buenos Aires and Misiones, they still maintain their typical traditions, language and customs.

Protestant Germans were present in Buenos Aires since 1843 when the Congregation of the German Evangelical Church was established in Buenos Aires. It was the first evangelical parish in German language in the River Plate and functioned as mother church of various congregations that emerged later on in the interior of Argentina. In 1899 the German Evangelical Synod of the River Plate was created which affiliated itself with the German Evangelical Church in 1934 and has the name Evangelical Church of the River Plate since 1965.

It is noteworthy that early on the German community in Argentina had its own club “Deutscher Klub”, founded in 1858, its own hospital “Deutsches Spital”, founded in 1867, and its own newspapers, such as the “Argentinisches Tageblatt”, founded by the Alemann family in 1874. By 1920, according to the statistics of the Migrations Office, the German community reached around 150.000 habitants, which was equivalent to 2.3 % of the total population of Argentina.

Among the German immigrants that arrived in Argentina during the second half of the 20th century we have several examples. Perhaps it is worth mentioning Mr. Otto Bemberg, businessman, financier and German industrialist born in Köln in 1827, who was the founder of the Bemberg economic dynasty in Argentina. Otto Bemberg established himself temporarily in Argentina in 1852 founding a company dedicated to the importation of textiles and the exportation of cereals, later expanding to other areas with the help of the family Ocampo which was in the construction of roads and bridges. After spending various years in Paris he founded, together with his son Otto Sebastián, the Brasserie Argentine, later called “Cervecería Argentina” in the southern part of Buenos Aires in 1888. The production and sales of this modern brewery began in 1890 with the brand which paid homage to the indigenous name of the site: Quilmes, a native tribe from Jujuy that had been forcefully relocated to this area, south of the city of Buenos Aires. In 1925 the Quilmes Brewery had branches in Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Entre Ríos, and Córdoba. The Bemberg family acquired a near-monopoly of brewing in Argentina, then branched into public utilities, cotton, dairy products, wool and yerba mate. In 1930 the Quilmes factory was considered a truly industrial city. It was sold to the Belgian-Brazilian holding AmBev in 2006. The Bemberg family with its investment fund Bisa continues until today as a powerful investor group in Argentina.

The German presence in Argentina was also felt in the political arena. In 1881, 13 German immigrants founded the socialist association “Vorwärts” in the City of Buenos Aires. In its beginnings it gave assistance to the German immigrants, especially to those who escaped from a Germany where social democracy was prohibited by the Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. The Club edited one of the first working class newspapers of that time also called Vorwärts, published in German between 1886 and 1901. Already in 1884, “Vorwärts” was a point of reference for many German immigrants and the club organized on May 1st 1890 the first celebration in Argentina of Labor Day, putting into practice one of the resolutions of the International Workers Congress in Paris of the previous year. The club also promoted in 1896 the creation of the first Socialist Party of Argentina, whose foundational charter was signed at the headquarters of the Association. During both World Wars it became a meeting point for German citizens who were escaping from their native country.

Other German associations should also be highlighted such as the “Deutsche Wohltätigkeitsgesellschaft”, a non profit organization in charge of assisting the unemployed, the poor, the elderly and the sick. The school associations were also very important pillars of the German community in Argentina. The first German School was founded by Katharina Keppel in 1840. The “German School of Barracas” was created in 1893 and in 1897 the Goethe School, among others. In 2006 26 schools and institutions that teach the German language were registered in our country. By the way, I should have been

proficient in German language, if it hadn't been that the German school of Barracas closed by the end of World War II. I was born and lived until I was 7 years old across the street from that school!!

I should mention another German arrival to Argentina that made a lasting contribution to our popular culture. I am referring to the bandoneon, this German musical instrument created by Mr. Heinrich Band, became the soul of the tango and an intrinsic part of our national culture. It arrived with a German sailor to the port of Buenos Aires at the beginning of the 20th century. The tango is a musical style that represents our typical Argentine urban cities and is a cultural ambassador of Argentina. The intercultural exchange continues today with Berlin being one of the capitals of tango in the world.

It is not well known but worth emphasizing that between 1933 and until the end of World War II, Argentina received more Jewish German immigrants than the USA. World War II and later on, the arrival of former Nazis to our country divided the German community in Argentina and spurred the anti-Nazi movement "Das andere Deutschland" and the Pestalozzi School, a school that was founded once the German Embassy required that German schools that applied for subsidies from the Embassy could not have Jewish students. The first Director of the Pestalozzi School was Dr. Alfred Dang, a German Jewish and former SPD Member of Parliament that was himself a refugee.

During the second half of the 20th century after the end of World War II German aeronautical engineers led by Kurt Tank, one of the best aircraft designers of Germany, responsible for the creation of the famous Focke-Wulf Fw 190, arrived in Argentina, invited by the government to work on the construction of an Argentine jet. Tank got together a group of ex employees of the firm Focke Wulf and arrived in Córdoba to join the project of the future Pulqui II (which means arrow in the Araucan language). The first completed aircraft makes its first flight in 1950, piloted by Captain Edmundo Osvaldo Weiss. With a maximum velocity of 950 km per hour it was one of the most advanced jet fighters of the world at that time. Many design elements incorporated into the Pulqui II were new in the fields of aeronautical construction, placing the Argentine aero industry amongst the forefront of aviation technology during those years.

German Scientists in Argentina

After having described the commercial and immigration links with Germany I would like to mention the German scientific legacy in Argentina. In this context, Hermann Burmeister, who immigrated to Argentina in 1861, is one of the most outstanding examples. He was a naturalist, paleontologist and zoologist who had already had an important scientific career in Germany when he accepted the offer of the Argentine President Bartolomé Mitre and his Minister Domingo Faustino Sarmiento to direct the new Public Museum of Buenos Aires, institution founded by Bernardino Rivadavia in 1823. In 1856 as professor of Zoology in the University of Halle he had travelled to Argentina and Uruguay to collect zoological and paleontological samples.

Burmeister became the Museum's Director in 1862 and remained as such for the following 30 years. From 1864 onwards Burmeister published the scientific magazine "Annals of the

Public Museum of Buenos Aires” to transmit to the scientific world the objects of natural history of the museum. He also founded the Paleontologist Society of Buenos Aires and the Academy of Natural Sciences of the University of Córdoba, where he hired various German colleagues to help him establish the faculties of Mathematics and Physics, from which new science teachers and researchers would be formed. Sarmiento, who was elected president in 1868 and had as one of his main objectives to stimulate a government policy of educational and scientific progress, supported Burmeister’s efforts wholeheartedly. Burmeister became one of the pillars of Natural Sciences in Argentina and also contributed to the creation of the Museum of Natural Sciences of La Plata. He died in Buenos Aires in 1892. Thanks to his hard work Argentina had been transformed into a meeting place of the most famous scientists of German language.

Christfried Jakob was another eminent German scientist. He arrived in Buenos Aires in 1899, hired by Amancio Alcorta, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Argentina to organize the laboratory of neurobiology in the Hospice of Las Mercedes, today Hospital Borda – the most important neurophyquiatic hospital of Argentina. Jakob was a multifaceted scientist who excelled as a neurologist and psychiatrist and even as a philosopher and explorer. One of the lakes in the Argentina’s Patagonia is named after him. Jakob was the first tenured professor of Biology at the Philosophy and Literature Faculty of the University of Buenos Aires and taught Pathological Anatomy, Biology and Nervous System at the University of La Plata. He has written more than 20 books and 180 articles. His “Folia Neurobiológica Argentina” is a seminal article that condenses 40 years of work. Jakob dies in Buenos Aires in 1956. July 17 the day that Christfried Jakob arrived at the newly built laboratory in Buenos Aires is commemorated in Argentina as the Day of the Neuroscientific Investigator.

The last German scientist of the XIXth century that I would like to mention is Robert Lehmann-Nitsche, ethnologist and German doctor who joined the group of scientists that was led by Francisco Moreno at the Natural Science Museum of La Plata in 1897. Lehmann-Nitsche started to work on a study of the cultural characteristics of Argentina, focusing on the indigenous habitants, in particular on the Araucan Indians, gathering a large amount of narrative and mythical material. He also compiled information on folklore, using an ethnographic and anthropological methodology. Lehmann-Nitsche was the founder of scientific studies on national folklore. He died in Berlin in 1938. His collection of popular argentine literature, known as the “creole library” was bought by the Instituto Iberoamericano of Berlin in 1939.

Wilhelm Keiper, philosopher and pedagogue, arrived in Argentina during the first decade of the XXth century to be the first director of the Pedagogic Seminar. It was created by Joaquín V. González, Minister of Education of Manuel Quintana, in 1904 and was later called the National Institute of Secondary Professorship, to prepare teachers of superior education. Keiper called on a group of experts from Germany to help him in his task. Keiper worked at the Institute until 1916 establishing the first foundations of secondary pedagogic formation in Argentina. He also was President of the Argentine Scientific Association.

Regarding the current scientific relations between Germany and Argentina we should mention two German institutions linked to our country for many decades: The Alexander

von Humboldt Foundation and the German Service for Academic Exchange DAAD. The latter was founded in 1925 with the objective to foster the exchange of scientists through different scholarships. In Argentina there is an information center in Buenos Aires and there are German professors who are teaching in the Universities of Buenos Aires and Cordoba and at the Institute of Languages “Lenguas Vivas”.

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation supports the creation of elite researchers through the granting of scholarships to highly qualified international young scientists. Among Latin-American countries Argentina is the one that has most benefited from these scholarships, its fellows have distinguished themselves due to their scientific and academic excellence. At present there are 13 Argentine Humboldt fellows that are taking part in research projects in Germany. The Humboldt Club in Argentina also contributes to broaden the network of friends and collaborators of the Foundation, helping maintain a long term scientific relationship between Argentina and Germany.

I should also like to mention the Goethe Institute, founded in Buenos Aires in 1967. In its more than 40 years of existence it has become the most important referent of German culture in the city. Besides its main tasks of teaching the German language it also undertakes a large number of cultural programs designed to highlight the current cultural situations of both countries. We appreciate the fact that the Goethe Institute is always open to collaboration with other cultural entities private and public of Argentina.

Argentina in Germany

I would like to bring to your attention the Argentine jurist and diplomat Vicente Quesada, born in 1830. He was Minister Plenipotentiary in Berlin from 1902 to 1905. He also served as Minister of the government of the Province of Buenos Aires and as national congressman and was founder, together with his son Ernesto Quesada, of the "New Magazine of Buenos Aires". Besides his professional tasks Vicente Quesada published various articles in the field of history. However, a significant event from the point of view of the relations between Argentina and Germany was his designation in 1871 by President Domingo Faustino Sarmiento as Director of the Public Library of Buenos Aires. Between 1873 and 1874 Sarmiento sends him to Europe to study the organization of the public libraries. During this trip Quesada travels to Germany where he was greatly impressed by the methodology and professionalism of the Prussian library system.

Vicente Quesada and his son Ernesto were both passionate booklovers, collectors of books and manuscripts about Argentine and European history as well as on other disciplines. Ernesto Quesada inherited his father's private library which he also cultivated and expanded to more than 80,000 volumes. Ernesto Quesada developed strong ties with Germany thanks to the trips he had made with his father and his time spent as a student in Dresden. In 1927 he decided to donate his private library to the Prussian authorities, in that time a Province within the Republic of Weimar. Respecting his father's wish and his own, the donation came with the condition that the books would serve as the basis for the creation of an institution that would dedicate itself to the promotion of intellectual relations between Germany and Latin America. As a result, the Instituto Iberoamericano of Berlin was inaugurated in 1930. It became throughout the years, the principal source of

information on Latin America, Spain and Portugal for the German-speaking world. It integrates library services, cultural activities and scientific investigation for the German and Spanish speaking academic and cultural communities. Ernesto and Vicente Quesada have left a legacy that fulfills their wish to promote the dialogue between Argentina and Germany.

Another example of Argentines that had an important role in Germany is Juan Manuel Fangio. He was the only man to have won five Formula One World Championships, with 4 different brands, including twice with Mercedes-Benz. He was named Honorary President for life of Mercedes-Benz Argentina SA. In 1996 the factory of González Catán in the Province of Buenos Aires was baptized with the name “Industrial Center Mercedes-Benz Argentina Juan Manuel Fangio”. The Fangio Museum in Balcarce has a section dedicated to Mercedes Benz and the Mercedes Benz Museum in Stuttgart has a section dedicated to Fangio, and although most visitors would not note it, in that museum there are several objects and memorabilia that show the strong presence of Mercedes in Argentina. Fangio symbolized the excellent relationship between our countries.

I belong to a generation of Argentines that contrary to what had happened to previous generations, we grew up with the absence of German influence and presence in our daily lives. As a consequence of the war, the influence of German businessman and of German leaders almost disappeared. Luckily, that gradually changed. It was a slow process that started with German reunification, but that is today a realistic reflection of the importance of German presence in our country, and the important role that German firms in Argentina play in the implementation of exchanges in complementary economies.

For an Argentine that arrives in Germany these days it is a pleasant surprise to find out how some features from Argentine, or I should say from River Plate origin, are embedded into German daily life. Let me mention tango, beef and sports.

Berlin has a reputation of being one of the international capitals of the tango. Besides the International Festival of Tango in Berlin, there are similar annual festivals that take place in more than 20 different German cities such as in Leipzig, Hannover, Bonn, Frankfurt, Wuppertal, Munich, Freiburg and Hamburg. There is also an enormous number of tango schools. In Berlin there are more than 20. Events, concerts and milongas take place in Germany every day, reflecting the passion that our national dance has caused among many Germans.

For many decades now, Argentine high quality cuts of beef have found their main market in Germany. Today, in any big city of Germany you can find Argentine restaurants. It all started more than 30 years ago, with the concept being brought here by German businessmen that started chains like “El Churrasco”, followed later on by “Maredo” and many others. Germany gets the best beef from our country, without any doubt.

In sports we have a confrontational relationship, particularly in soccer. We are working for the celebrations of our bicentennial next year and we will start the events with a soccer match among both national teams. Germany and Argentina are both permanent members of

the five world powers of soccer. The TV transmission of this match will be followed by 180 million people all over the world!

In a more modest scale the other important Argentine sportive presence in Germany is polo. A presence that dates back to 1898 with the foundation of the Hamburg Polo Club with its ponies imported from Argentina. This continues today with many polo clubs in the most important German cities, including Berlin that has the most important polo stadium in the world, the Mayfield Stadium built for the 1936 Olympics. As part of our friendship we are also working with our friends from the Preussischer Polo and Country Club located in Phöben (Werder), to have a match between our national teams.

On the cultural side we have several events, as the sometimes successful participation of Argentine films in several Berlinales. But since we are running out of time I will end up mentioning that our country will be the "Guest of Honor" in the Frankfurt Book Fair of 2010 in commemoration of our bicentennial celebrations. The Argentine Organization Committee for the Argentine Participation at the Frankfurter Book Fair in 2010 is scheduling various cultural events that will take place in Frankfurt, Berlin and other German cities, along with the literary activities that will take place in the fair itself.

As Argentina's Ambassador in Germany it is going to be a great honor for me to be able to celebrate our bicentennial here in Berlin. This symposium at the German Historical Museum is a perfect start to remind us of the close bonds that have united both of our countries during Argentina's 200 years of independence.

Thank you.