



Argentine Caudillo: Juan Manuel de Rosas (Latin American Silhouettes)

By John Lynch

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Argentine Caudillo: Juan Manuel de Rosas, is John Lynch's new edition of his 1981 book, which is now out of print. The original has been shortened, making it well-suited for classroom use.

The figure of Juan Manuel de Rosas dominates the history of Argentina in the first half of the nineteenth century. Charles Darwin, who met him on campaign against the Indians, described him as "a man of extraordinary character," the lord of vast estates and, for over twenty years, absolute ruler of Buenos Aires and its province. The present book studies the forces which made and sustained Rosas, and examines through him the roots of the caudillo tradition in Argentina. It reconstructs the world of great estates and the rise to power of their proprietors, establishing the relation of patron and client, of master and peon, the basis of political allegiance at that time. *Argentine Caudillo* follows the career of Rosas as a classical caudillo, who rescued his people from fear and anarchy and delivered them into the hands of a great dictatorship.

Leader of the gauchos, yet representative too of the powerful landed proprietors and cattle exporters, Rosas established an early prototype of a totalitarian state and employed systematic terror to defend his rule. The book helps to elucidate the concept and practice of caudillismo, or personal dictatorship, in the Hispanic world, and the use of violence to seize and defend power. It does this against a backdrop of transition from colony to independence, and then from anarchy to absolutism.

Argentine Caudillo provides a detailed study of the use of state terror as an instrument of policy, one of the few such studies for any period of Latin American history. There is no book which duplicates this work either inside Argentina or outside. In Argentina, Rosas has become a subject of fierce controversy, partly because of his nationalism, partly because of his reign of terror. Consequently, while there is a vast bibliography on Rosas, much of it is polemical and

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Argentine Caudillo: Juan Manuel de Rosas (Latin American Silhouettes) By John Lynch Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1106387 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Rowman n Littlefield Publishers
- Published on: 2001-05-01
- Ingredients: Example Ingredients
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.11" h x .41" w x 6.07" l, .70 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 185 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

Thanks to Scholarly Resources for making John Lynch's wonderful analysis of the Rosas era available in an accessible version for undergraduate class use. I look forward to using this extraordinary book in my classes. (Lyman L. Johnson, University of North Carolina at Charlotte)

Argentine Caudillo is an excellent abridged edition of Lynch's classic study on Rosas. In a volume widely recognized as one of the leading works in English on nineteenth-century Argentina, Lynch covers comprehensively the period of Rosas's ascendancy between the late 1820s and early 1850s. He portrays Rosas the man, the origins of his dictatorship, the objectives of his regime, the use of terror, and the causes of his downfall. Eloquent and incisively argued, this book will remain the standard study of its subject for many years to come. (David Rock, University of California, Santa Barbara)

A matchless portrait, in startling chiaroscuro, of a larger-than-life figure and his turbulent times. It's concise, judicious, compelling, and, above all, a joy to read. Lynch is a master. How fortunate that his biography of Rosas has been retooled for the classroom, and by the master himself! (John Charles Chasteen, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

About the Author

John Lynch is emeritus professor of Latin American history at the University of London.

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