

Juan Martín de Pueyrredón

PUEYRRREDÓN, Juan Martín, Argentine general and Supreme Director (1816–19), born in Buenos Aires, 18 December, 1776; died in Buenos Aires, 13 March, 1850. Their parents were Juan Martín de Pueyrredón y Labroucherie and Rita Damasia O'Doghan y Martínez de Soria. Juan Martín entered the royal college of San Carlos, but left it in 1791, when his father died, to take control of the family businesses. In 1795 he was sent to Cádiz where his uncle Diego lived. Then he traveled through Spain and France, and studied history, literature, Latin and philosophy in Paris. He returned to Buenos Aires in 1802, but the next year returned to Europe to marry his cousin Dolores. His marriage lasted two years, till 1805, when his wife died in May.



When the English general, Sir William Beresford, occupied Buenos Aires, 27 June, 1806, Pueyrredón refused to recognize the new authorities, and, leaving the city, began to organize the resistance. On 31 July, he organized a volunteer force, which, after a defeat at Perdriel, outside Buenos Aires, united with the army of Santiago de Liniers to recapture the city on 12 August. During the second invasion of the English, which ended by the capitulation of General Whitelocke, 7 July, 1807, Pueyrredón was in Spain acting as a representative from Buenos Aires.

In Europe, he witnessed the French occupation of Spain, and realized that the best choice for his country was the complete independence. In this sense, he advised the Buenos Aires authorities to ignore the rule of the vice-king Cisneros, but his letter was intercepted by Martín de Álzaga who asked the governor of Montevideo Elío to capture him. He escaped to Brazil and returned to Buenos Aires in June, 1809, where he decided with his friends Belgrano, Castelli, Vieytes, Beruti and Rodríguez Peña to propose Carlota Joaquina (at that time in Brazil) as ruler of Buenos Aires during the captivity of his brother, the king of Spain, Fernando VII. However, this project did not proceed as expected. Back to Buenos Aires, after the 25 May, 1810, revolution, Pueyrredón is appointed governor of Córdoba and Charcas (1810–11). After the battle of Huaqui, he rescued the treasury of Potosí, was made commander of the patriot army of the north (1811–12), and member of the first triumvirate at Buenos Aires (1812). After the fall of the triumvirate he was exiled to San Luis, where he lived from 1812 to 1815. There, he had meetings with José de San Martín, the governor of Mendoza.

In 1815, Pueyrredón married the 14 years old María Calixta Tellechea (their only son was the famous painter Prilidiano Pueyrredón, born in 1823). He was sent, as representative from San Luis, to the Congress of Tucumán, 9 July, 1816, where he is elected Supreme Director after the resignation of Carlos María de Alvear. He did his utmost to assist San Martín in the preparation of his expedition for the liberation of Chile, and, after the latter's departure, 17 January, 1817, forwarded re-enforcements and resources to him. In 1817 he obtained the transfer of the national congress to Buenos Aires, and in 1818 the congress decreed the a unitarian constitution, which caused general discontent and several revolts. Pueyrredón sent forces against the rebellious provinces, and ordered the army of the north against them, but the insurgents were victorious, and he decided to resign, 9 June, 1819.

While in power, Pueyrredón organized the public finances, founded the first national bank, the mint and the customs house, re-opened the San Carlos College, and organized the army and the military courts. After the battle of Cepeda in 1820, Pueyrredón took refuge in Montevideo. He returned in 1821. In 1828, the governor Juan Lavalle asked him to be part of a temporary government council, and carried out negotiations with Juan Manuel de Rosas. Pueyrredón and his family went to live to Europe in 1835 and returned in 1849, ending his days in retirement on his ranch, Bosque Alegre, at San Isidro, near Buenos Aires.

by José M. Carcione