

• STORIES IN STAMPS



Argentine Patriots Used "Fifth Column" Tactics

LEADERS of Argentina's revolt against Spain had never heard of "Fifth Columnists" when they started the revolution in 1810, but they had a working knowledge of the technique. Manuel Belgrano, military and political leader, pictured on the stamp above, was one of the group that successfully directed the coup.

Patriots demanded and secured a provisional government for the provinces of the River Plate, held places on the council which replaced the Spanish governor. Outwardly loyal to the king, they systematically discredited Spanish officials, finally ordered all high functionaries deported.

Belgrano became commander-in-chief of Argentina's armies. Although independence was not formally declared until 1816, the Argentine republic dates from his victories over Peruvian loyalists in 1811 and Bolivian partisans in 1813.

Belgrano played an important part in the Congress of 1816 where independence was formally proclaimed. He also undertook a diplomatic mission to England to seek British support.