

Uruguay commemorates 257 years since the birth of José Artigas

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Artigas died on September 23, 1850, in Asuncion, Paraguay. | Photo: Elobservador.com

Montevideo, June 19 (RHC)-- Uruguay commemorates this Saturday a new anniversary of the birth of the hero and independence leader, José Gervasio Artigas.

Artigas was born on June 19, 1764 in Montevideo and played a decisive role in the independence of Uruguay, a country that was under the yoke of the Spanish empire.

When the Río de la Plata was shaken by the Napoleonic invasion of Spain, the imprisonment of Ferdinand VII and the creation of Autonomous Boards to replace the king, Artigas joined the Junta de

Mayo of Buenos Aires (1810) and placed himself at its command.

In Argentina he was granted the rank of lieutenant colonel, with which he marched to the Banda Oriental, the name given to the territories located east of the Río de la Plata, part of which constitute today's Uruguay.

The leadership of Gervasio Artigas was firm in his fight against the Spanish governor of Montevideo, to the point of cornering him, and when he saw that he could be defeated, he decided to ask for help from Portugal, which caused the Revolutionary Junta to propose an armistice and return the power to Spain.

This decision led him to leave the so-called Banda Oriental and he settled with his followers in Ayuí to create in 1814 the League of Free Peoples or Union of Free Peoples, formed by the provinces of Entre Ríos, Corrientes and Santa Fe.

The objective of this league was to defeat the Revolutionary Junta, a goal he consolidated in 1815, took Montevideo and consolidated a federalist government in Santa Fe, but the Portuguese defeated them in 1820.

After the defeat, Artigas had to go into exile in Paraguay where he requested political asylum from President J. G. Rodríguez Francia, who granted it to him. Exiled with the support of Paraguayan rulers, he lived there humbly and died at the age of 86. Five years after his death, his remains were repatriated to Uruguay.

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