ARMIES, POLITICS AND REVOLUTION

Chile, 1808–1826
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Armies, Politics and Revolution

Chile, 1808–1826

Juan Luis Ossa Santa Cruz
To my beloved Oxonian daughter, Violeta
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Abbreviations

ABO: Archivo de don Bernardo O’Higgins
AGI: Archivo General de Indias
AGN: Archivo General de la Nación (Argentina)
AGNP: Archivo General de la Nación (Perú)
AHILA: Asociación de Historiadores Latinoamericanistas Europeos
AHM: Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Mendoza
AHMIP: Archivo Histórico Militar (Perú)
ALHIM: Amérique Latine Histoire et Mémoire. Les Cahiers
BACHH: Boletín de la Academia Chilena de la Historia
BROP: British Public Record Office
CDHICH: Colección de Historiadores y de documentos de la Independencia de Chile
CDIP: Colección documental de la Independencia del Perú
CG: Capitanía General
CM: Contaduría Mayor
DIBAM: Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos
FV: Fondo Varios
HAHR: Hispanic American Historical Review
IC: Intendencia de Coquimbo
JIVE: José Ignacio Victor Eyzaguirre
MG: Ministerio de Guerra
MI: Ministerio del Interior
MJTM: Manuscritos José Toribio Medina
RChHG: Revista Chilena de Historia y Geografía
REHMLAC: Revista de Estudios Históricos de la Masonería Latinoamericana y Caribeña
SCL: Sesiones de los Cuerpos Legislativos
VM: Vicuña Mackenna
Chile, 1780–1826
South America, 1780–1826
During the six years I took to research and write this book, I incurred many academic and personal debts. The first of these debts is to my doctoral supervisor in Oxford, professor Alan Knight, whose penetrating questions and stimulating ways of studying both Latin American and European history helped me understand the importance of never taking anything for granted, of always questioning what we are told as definitive answers. My good friend and professor Iván Jaksic has been my Chilean maestro since the days I was beginning to work on the Chilean military Francisco Antonio Pinto (2004). He read the entire manuscript, giving me insightful suggestions and always remembering me to keep on track.

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invited to participate with a paper summarizing the principal arguments of my thesis in a conference held at the Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, where I received useful comments and suggestions from Álvaro Góngora and Gabriel Di Meglio. Since then I have attended different seminars and symposiums in both Latin America and Europe that have enhanced my knowledge of the revolutionary period.

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Introduction

This book studies the political role of the Chilean military during the years 1808–1826. Beginning with the fall of the Spanish monarchy to Napoleon in 1808 and ending immediately after the last royalist contingents were expelled from the island of Chiloé, it does not seek to give a full picture of the participation of military men on the battlefield but rather to interpret their involvement in local politics. The main categories deployed in this study are 1) armies, 2) politics and 3) revolution, and the three are presented with the purpose of demonstrating that, as Peggy K. Liss has claimed, after 1810 Spanish American public life ‘became militarized; and the military, privileged’. I argue that the Chilean military became privileged because the demise of the Spanish monarchy in 1808 made them protagonists of the decision-making process. In so doing, this book aims to make a contribution to the understanding of Chile’s revolution of independence, as well as to discuss some of the most recent historiographical contributions on the role of the military in the creation of the Chilean republic. Although the focus has been placed on the career and participation of Chilean revolutionary officers,


2 For military studies published in Chile, see Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Militares, Primera Jornada de Historia Militar, siglos XVII–XIX (Santiago: Ejército de Chile, 2004); and Centro de Estudios e Investigaciones Militares, Segunda Jornada de Historia Militar, siglos XIX–XX (Santiago: Ejército de Chile, 2005).

this book also provides an overview of both the role of royalist armies and the influence of international events in Chile.

I. Armies

In his *Ensayo histórico sobre la noción de Estado en Chile*, Mario Góngora asserted that the war of independence in Chile was one of a series of military conflicts that played an important role in the socio-political development of the Chilean state. In his view, the building of the Chilean state was strongly influenced by warfare, as throughout the nineteenth century at least three generations of Chileans, whether as soldiers or as civilians whose lives were affected by war, experienced some kind of military confrontation. Diverse historiographical schools have cited Góngora’s hypothesis. However, this has not led professional historians of the last four decades to systematically study the military of the period 1808–1826. There are, of course, some exceptions, such as Frederick M. Nunn’s study of the Chilean military from 1810 to 1973; the prosopographical analysis published by Sergio Vergara in 1993; Leonardo León’s article on deserters which appeared in 2002; the last part of Gabriel Salazar’s *Construcción de Estado en Chile* (2005); Patricia Arancibia’s *El ejército de los chilenos* (2007); or several chapters of Julio Pinto and Verónica Valdivia Ortiz de Zárate’s *¿Chilenos todos?* Nonetheless, with the exception of these last two books, these studies do not tackle Chile’s revolution as a whole, but only specific problems related to it. Thus, the books by Jaime Eyzaguirre (1957), Sergio Villalobos (1961), Simon Collier (1967), Julio Heise (1978) and more recently Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt (1992), all of them samples of what can loosely be called politico-intellectual history, are still considered the most important works on the Chilean revolution published in the twentieth century.


INTRODUCTION

Without neglecting the contributions made by these authors, especially by Collier, Heise and Jocelyn-Holt, this book offers a new study of the Chilean revolution, focusing primarily, albeit not exclusively, on military men. My approach follows the historiographical line inaugurated by Lyle McAlister in the 1950s, which has been successfully continued by Allan Kuethe, Christon Archer, Leon Campbell and Juan Marchena. The originality of these authors lies in the fact that, far from considering the development of armies only in relation to war, they take into account the social, economic and political contexts of the Spanish American armies at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. None of these scholars has written monographs on Chile, nor have they specialized in the revolutionary years; yet their works on Cuba, Mexico, Peru and New Granada suggest ways in which the relationship between politics and military factors in Chile can be studied. To these contributions we must add Clément Thibaud’s Repúblicas en armas, which, unlike the books mentioned above, concentrates on the revolutionary years. Thibaud’s blend of great political events with small episodes is an example that I have followed in this work, where events like the re-conquest of Chile conducted by the Army of the Andes in early 1817 run parallel with less well-known episodes.

Años de formación y aprendizaje político (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1978); and Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt, La independencia de Chile. Tradición, modernización y mito (Madrid: Editorial Mapfre, 1992). It is worth stating, however, that the books by Eyzaguirre and Villalobos deal mainly with the prolegomena of the revolution.


An exception is Christon Archer (ed.), The Wars of Independence in Spanish America (Delaware: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2000).


In Alan Knight’s words: ‘there can be no high politics without a good deal of low
One of the main purposes of this study is to analyse how armies were organized in Chile in the period 1808–1826, as well as to comprehend why warfare became so central in Chilean life. The Araucanian region, with Concepción as its capital and military centre, was a hotbed of military leaders. Although the introduction of military reforms under the late Bourbons followed the relatively successful model of Cuba and New Spain, in Chile the militias and regular detachments never reached an adequate degree of professionalization to both fight the Indians and stop external threats. On the other hand, the Bourbons’ objective of, in David Brading’s and John Lynch’s words, ‘re-conquering’ Spanish America relying on Spanish-born bureaucrats and military officers for the administration of the colonies, did not have a long-lasting effect in Chile, where the local elites received new political and economic benefits in exchange for their military service. Geographical distance prevented metropolitan ministers from having control of the colony and, in fact, eighteenth-century Chilean elites enjoyed high degrees of political, economic and military autonomy. The installation of Intendancies in Santiago and Concepción, the creation of a Consulado in the capital, and the acceptance that military ranks be filled by either Chilean creoles or Europeans with a long experience of the region, show that, instead of consummating the ‘re-conquest’ of Chile, the Bourbons implicitly accepted that the most important administrative offices of the Chilean colony should be run by local-born people.\footnote{Juan Luis Ossa Santa Cruz, ‘La criollización de un ejército periférico. Chile, 1768–1810’, Historia, number 43, vol. 2 (July–December, 2010), pp. 413–48.}

Therefore, at the end of the eighteenth century the Chilean colony did not have a properly trained army, nor did it depend on Spanish bureaucrats for its administration. The first issue, which is the one I explore most in this study, was not exactly problematic: confrontations were sporadic and, in general, governors like Ambrosio O’Higgins favoured persuasion over force when dealing with the Indians. Matters changed when news of the Napoleonic invasion of the Peninsula arrived in Chile, both because the government introduced a new set of military reforms in Concepción and Santiago, and because political differences within the elites became increasingly resolved (radically and violently) on the battlefield. Santiago went through a series of events that allowed new military men, led by José Miguel Carrera, to militarize the political sphere. Carrera (born 1785) belonged to the generation of military o\footnote{Alan Knight, The Mexican Revolution. Porfirians, Liberals and Peasants (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), vol. I, pp. X–XI.}fficers born around the 1780s who were in command of Chile’s regular army when the war between revolutionaries and royalists broke out in 1813. We will see that well-known officers (revolutionaries and royalists), like Ramón Freire (1787), Juan Gregorio de las Heras (1780), Francisco Casimiro Marcó del Pont (1770), Bernardo O’Higgins (1778), Mariano Osorio (1777), Francisco Antonio Pinto (1785), Joaquín Prieto (1786), Manuel Rodríguez
INTRODUCTION

(1785) and José de San Martín (1778), but also a number of not so well-known soldiers, such as Rudecindo Alvarado (1792), Rafael Maroto (1783), Hilarión de la Quintana (1774), and José Ignacio Zenteno (1786), became protagonists in the years 1813–1826. They became protagonists because socio-political issues were intimately connected to military affairs. This book, in other words, follows Góngora’s argument that warfare played a leading role in the origins of Chilean society and state.

In their ¿Chilenos todos?, Julio Pinto and Verónica Valdivia have recently challenged Góngora’s hypothesis, arguing that independence did not improve the material conditions of rank-and-file soldiers, nor did warfare encourage their adherence to the new state. In their opinion, the lower classes were either excluded from the process of state building or were never truly interested in it, due to the fact that the ‘war of Independence was not a generalized and permanent experience’. Because the war did not change or improve the lives of the lower classes, these authors claim, Góngora’s hypothesis is inconsistent. This book challenges Pinto and Valdivia’s argument, showing that the revolutionary war was a prolonged experience that—for good or bad—had permanent effects on Chilean society. Independence did not change the material and political condition of the lower classes. However, it did change their lives. In all six chapters of this book I study phenomena related to the role played by armies and warfare in the making of Chilean society. The war begun in 1813 was a conflict that brought about military, economic, political and social consequences and, therefore, a large number of Chileans became involved in the conflict. Inquilinos were forced to be part of the armies (as militiamen, regular soldiers, night watchmen or rural guards); high-ranking officers usually had interests in both commerce and the haciendas; civilian elites were politically overshadowed by military officers; and some soldiers managed to rise socially. It is not surprising, therefore, that the country was ruled by military men until the 1850s, nor that Góngora should have emphasized the military aspects of nineteenth-century Chilean politics.

II. Politics

In his Modernidad e independencias, François-Xavier Guerra studied those who in his opinion led the consolidation of political ‘modernity’ in Spanish America, namely journalists, men of letters and civilian politicians. By

12 The rhetorical title of their book—¿Chilenos todos?—speaks for itself. It is worth stating, however, that sometimes Pinto and Valdivia confuse the concept of ‘identity’ with that of the ‘state’. Perhaps warfare did not shape ‘Chilean identity’, as these authors propose. Yet Góngora does not use such a concept in his analysis, and only stresses the close relationship between warfare and the ‘state’.
13 Pinto and Valdívia, ¿Chilenos todos?, p. 129.
‘modernity’ Guerra referred to the emergence of new ‘spaces of sociability’ (such as political clubs, coffee shops and tertulias) that went hand-in-hand with the fall of the old regime and the use of the press as an informative vehicle for the consolidation of political independence in Spanish America. Due to Guerra’s influence, in the 1990s and 2000s his students (with the exception of Clément Thibaud) neglected other actors and aspects of the revolutionary process, such as military men and warfare. There was, however, another trend—headded, as I have said, by McAlister and his students—that emphasized the importance of studying armies and warfare not just from a military but also political perspective. In line with this current, this book stresses five political points: 1) Chile’s revolution was influenced by international political events, both European and Spanish American; 2) from 1808 military affairs became extremely politicized; 3) the fall of the monarchy provoked a crisis of political legitimacy; 4) warfare changed the meaning and scope of sovereignty; and 5) the conflict in Chile had the characteristics of a civil war.

In tackling the first point, I take a broad view of the period 1808–1826, including evidence derived from the River Plate, New Granada, Peru and Mexico. The goal is to grasp the international scenario and thus be able to make comparisons where they seem pertinent and necessary. In this respect, I rely on two kinds of studies: general histories of the Spanish American revolutions; and works that study the importance of the so-called ‘Atlantic revolutions’. Regarding the first, John Lynch’s classic book on the Spanish American revolutions presents a good overview of the revolution in Spanish America. Jaime Rodríguez’s *The Independence of Spanish America* is one of the most cited studies written in recent decades by historians of this period. Throughout this book I discuss Rodríguez’s argument that the fall of the monarchy did not lead to an anti-colonial movement but, rather, to a political process in which continuities between the old and new regime were greater than the efforts to break the links with Spain.15 Here, suffice it to say that the fact that Chileans did not seek to declare independence in the period 1808–1814 does not mean that their political position was not revolutionary. Meanwhile, the commemoration of the Bicentennial in 2010 resulted in various international publications that present the political events that took place in both Spain and Spanish America after the fall of the monarchy. Two aspects emphasized by these works are the role of elections in the bienio 1808–1810, and the often tense relationship between capital cities and small towns and villages.16

16 Alfredo Ávila and Pedro Pérez Herrero (comps.), *Las experiencias de 1808 en Iberoamérica* (México DF: GM Editores/Espejo de Obsidiana, 2008); Roberto Breña (ed.), *En el umbral de las revoluciones hispánicas: el bienio 1808–1810* (México D.F: El Colegio de México, 2010); and Roberto Breña (coord.), ‘Iberoamérica en 1810:
Regarding the Atlantic perspective, I contend that, even though the outcome of the Spanish American revolution was moulded by neither the American nor the French revolutions, their influence is not to be overlooked.\textsuperscript{17} It is hard to find evidence that the Chilean revolution was part of a wider ‘revolutionary cycle’ that started during the American War of Independence, reinforced during the French Revolution and finished in the 1820s, when the Spanish American countries became independent.\textsuperscript{18} However, the documentation shows that political and military affairs in Chile were influenced by North American and European events, as well as by the American and especially the French ways of waging war. Like Clément Thibaud, I believe that the ‘Atlantic’ historical view can be useful for understanding how armies were recruited and how they fought. During the eighteenth century, reverberations of the Atlantic ‘imperial rivalry’ were felt in Chile, especially in defensive and economic terms; in the early nineteenth, Chilean revolutionaries and royalists unwittingly emulated the way the French waged war in the 1790s. In Chile there was never a Grande Armée developed by a ‘nation in arms’. Yet the revolutionary and royalist Chilean armies shared the French armies’ objective of annihilating the enemy.\textsuperscript{19}


The objective of annihilating the enemy proves how politicized was the war that broke out in Chile in 1813 between revolutionaries and royalists. The aim of the second political point addressed here is to show that the fall of the colonial governor in 1810 led the new authorities to give new political importance to the defence of the kingdom. While in the first period of the autonomist government (September 1810–February 1811) the main military objective of the Santiago Junta was to prepare the local army for a Napoleonic invasion of Chile, from March 1811 onwards Chileans debated the best strategy to face the new South American military scenario. That year, radical autonomists, moderates and outright royalists differed on a significant point: whether or not Chile should help the Buenos Aires revolutionaries with forces to stop Francisco Javier Elío’s counterrevolutionary offensive in the River Plate. Discussions over this and other matters divided the main provinces, Santiago and Concepción, but conflicts were not resolved on the battlefield during the period 1811–1812. The war in Chile began only in 1813, and not between santiaguino and penquista revolutionaries, but rather between Chilean revolutionaries and the viceroy of Peru, José Fernando de Abascal. A central hypothesis of this book is that, in the first two years of the Chilean revolution, the limeño viceroy reacted politically rather than militarily to the radicalism of revolutionary leaders like Juan Martínez de Rozas and José Miguel Carrera. However, in late 1812, when Carrera published a Constitutional Chart stating that Chile ought to obey no foreign authority other than the king himself, he provoked the military response of Abascal, who sent the first of a series of military expeditions to fight the Chileans. Consequently, santiaguino and penquista revolutionaries left their differences aside to fight the viceroy’s armies.

The third political point is that the power vacuum generated in Chile as a consequence of Napoleon’s attack on the Peninsula caused a crisis of political legitimacy. First, it was governor Francisco Antonio García Carrasco who became an illegitimate authority in mid-1810. Then, the various Juntas and military leaders (revolutionaries and royalists) struggled to establish political legitimacy. However, no military/politician, not even Bernardo O’Higgins...
when he arrived in Chile in 1817 after two and half years of exile, became legitimate in the eyes of the ruling classes for a period longer than five years. And that was because there was no consensus within the elites regarding by whom and how the country should be governed, nor how power should be generated. Independence was one political option, but not necessarily the most popular until well into the 1810s. To emphasize this argument is crucial, because it questions approaches that see independence from a teleological and inevitable perspective. At the same time, it challenges the idea that the political factions followed clearly defined ideological programmes. Political goals could change dramatically in short periods of time, as the various meanings given by Chileans to the words 'patria' and 'patriotism' show. In the eighteenth century, Chileans developed a sense of patriotism that did not necessarily stand against Spain. Indeed, Napoleon's attack on the Peninsula resulted in 'patriotic' reactions in Chile against the 'French intruder' and on behalf of Ferdinand VII. The meaning of patriotism changed as a consequence of viceroy Abascal's invasion of 1813. From then on, and in order to make their recruitment drives legitimate, revolutionaries began to identify their cause with 'real' patriotism. José de San Martín's 'American project', for its part, added a significant element to revolutionary patriotism: a marked anti-Spanish sentiment.

Napoleon's invasion of the Peninsula not only provoked a power vacuum and a crisis of legitimacy in Spanish America; it also changed the meaning of political sovereignty. The fourth point aims at answering an important question: who was to claim sovereignty in Chile? The king, one of the Spanish Juntas, the Santiago Junta, viceroy Abascal, the local army, the civilian elites? In 1810, the Santiago Junta became the only sovereign corporation of the kingdom. However, conflicts between the capital and Concepción soon arose, as a result of which the Santiago Junta could no longer claim to exercise sovereignty. Abascal's invasion in early 1813 created another focus within this conflict over sovereignty. On the one hand, royalists proclaimed themselves the sole representatives of imperial sovereignty; on the other, the revolutionaries defended their right to advocate a new model of sovereignty based on republican principles. When the war between Lima and the Chilean revolutionaries subsided in the early 1820s, a subterranean conflict between different emerging states that formed the Ejército libertador del Perú took place. We will see that in the early 1820s the struggle over sovereignty ceased to be a conflict between royalists and revolutionaries, and became a conflict between revolutionary officers who belonged to the same army but had different interests and political aspirations.

The fifth political point argues that the conflict over legitimacy and sovereignty in Chile was also a civil war between two armies made up of men born in, or with a long experience of, Spanish America. I therefore reject the argument that the war in Chile was carried out by two nations—‘Spain’ versus ‘Chile’—, stressing, on the contrary, that the Chilean nation was not born in 1810. In spite of the fact that eighteenth-century Chileans developed a sense of belonging to what can be called the ‘small patria’, I follow François-Xavier Guerra’s idea that independence was not the arrival but the departure point for the emergence of the Spanish American nations. Also, the civil characteristics of the war in Chile challenge the Manichaean approach that ‘Spanish’ royalists were absolutist, authoritarian, and anti-patriotic. In fact, revolutionaries and monarchists tended to use the same strategies to pursue and punish their enemies. This means that the failure of the counterrevolution cannot be explained by a simple approach of the ‘good’ versus the ‘bad’. Rather, we need to find political and military reasons why and how the revolutionary project became the preferred option amongst Chileans. An analysis of the royalist governments in the period 1814–1817 is thus crucial to understand the effects of this civil war within Chilean society, as well as to grasp the importance of day-to-day politics in Chile’s revolutionary and counterrevolutionary contexts.

III. Revolution

The third and last main category explored in this book is ‘revolution’. In his Sovereignty and Revolution, Jeremy Adelman has said that ‘the Spanish Atlantic went through a counterrevolutionary process before there was a real revolution: reaction preceded, indeed spawned, the revolution’. According to Adelman, prior to 1814, Spanish Americans sought to have ‘voice’ in imperial matters, rather than to ‘exit’ the empire. In his view, therefore, the counterrevolution started only when Ferdinand VII returned to the Spanish throne. Adelman’s argument is in accordance with Jaime Rodríguez’s view that the demise of the monarchy in 1808 did not produce a total break with the Peninsula, but only the creation of different local Juntas whose aim was not to become independent but to govern their respective territories on behalf of the king and the Spanish empire. The present study agrees with Rodríguez’s idea that in the period 1810–1814 most Chileans did not seek

22 This argument appears briefly in Eyzaguirre, Ideario y ruta, pp. 135–36, footnote 104.
23 The idea that ‘Chile’ fought a national war against ‘Spain’ became ‘official’ in the nineteenth century thanks to the work of Chilean historians like Diego Barros Arana and the Amunátegui brothers.
26 Adelman, Sovereignty and Revolution, chapter V.
to break their links with the metropolis. However, the fact that they had not sought to declare independence did not prevent them from putting forward a revolutionary programme.

Despite some continuity with the old regime and the conservative reaction of powerful elites, like the members of the Real Audiencia, the creation of the Santiago Junta brought about major political changes in the country. True, if we classify an event as revolutionary only by virtue of its radicalism, violence and/or popular characteristics, then we should conclude that neither the Junta nor future governments led by Chileans were revolutionary. However, the fact that the political movement that led to the installation of the Santiago Junta had not followed the popular and radical example of the French Revolution, which, in the words of Patricia Marks, ‘historians have too often taken to be the only model for events defined as revolutionary’, does not mean that it was less revolutionary. The expulsion of the governor in 1810 caused a peaceful yet decisive break with the authorities that governed Spain after Napoleon’s invasion. It was, indeed, an irreversible blow to the colonial regime, since Chile never returned to the status quo ante 1810, not even when Mariano Osorio led his military counterrevolution four years later. When Osorio disembarked in Chile in mid-1814 changes were too deep for the local inhabitants to accept going back to square one. Thus, at least in the Chilean case, the counterrevolution did not precede but followed the revolution.

According to Anthony McFarlane, ‘while it has long been assumed that American movements for independence, particularly those in Latin America, were never truly “revolutionary” since they did not match the French Revolution or modern “social revolutions”, historians are beginning to shift their views on this issue, as regards both British and Spanish America’. Now, McFarlane continues, there ‘is a growing tendency to emphasize the very considerable changes which affected monarchical societies which, in the course of conflict with their parent power, adopted ideas and practices which attacked ancien régime social distinctions, exalted the individual, and promoted wider political participation’. This book similarly argues that these revolutionary ideas and practices were present in Chile before Chileans became independentistas. Among those considered revolutionary, the military

played a leading role. Chilean historian Claudio Rolle has claimed that the military were ‘agents of the revolution’. This book shows that the military were ‘agents of the revolution’ because they became protagonists of revolutionary events, like the movement that ousted governor García Carrasco from power, the installation of the Santiago Junta, the preparation of the Constitutional Chart of 1812 and the foundation of Chile’s republican system. But their revolutionary behaviour was also evident on the battlefield. Recruiting drives in the countryside, the way of waging war by both armies and the radical punishment declared against enemies were all political/military decisions that followed the example of other revolutions, the French included. Thus to stress the revolutionary characteristics of the repercussions of the fall of the Spanish monarchy in Chile is crucial for understanding why and how armies fought; why and how the war became indeed a ‘general and permanent experience’.

IV. A note on sources and terminology

This book is based on primary documents collected from Chilean, Argentinean, Peruvian, Spanish and British archives. They are mostly political, though many refer to social and economic aspects. The study of criminal cases followed against rank-and-file soldiers reveal, for example, how the authorities reacted to specific problems related to the conduct of soldiers, and the extent to which the revolution affected the lives of the common people. However, for two reasons these pages deal mainly with high-ranking officers, not rank-and-file soldiers: first, because officers were more active in politics than soldiers. Second, because it is difficult to find written sources in both Chilean and other archives regarding common soldiers; in fact, when found they are generally coloured by the opinion of the small group of people who could read and write in a society of low literacy. Of course, this elite bias has not prevented Chilean historians or scholars interested in Chile from writing good studies of the lower classes. Yet it is important to state clearly that not even social historians like Julio Pinto and Gabriel Salazar have been able to break this documentary limitation. Their sources are generally the same as those used by political historians such as Simon Collier.

Many primary sources used in this book come from the same archives in which Collier, Salazar and Pinto have worked. Still, there are documents, including private correspondence, official reports, periodicals, military Instructions, lists of resources used by the armies, Bandos, Proclamas, Hojas de Servicio and consular reports, that have not generally been worked by historians of this period. The sources I have collected in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, the Archivo General de la Nación in Buenos Aires, the

Archivo Provincial de Mendoza and the National Archives in London (Kew Gardens) are especially relevant.

The personal papers of viceroy Abascal in the Archivo General de Indias offer an overview of the military objectives and political decisions made by the royalist authorities between 1808 and 1817. Because they make reference to the Spanish American revolution in general (i.e. Chile, Peru, Upper Peru and the Río de la Plata), they provide an international perspective on the conflict that Chilean sources do not usually reveal. Something similar can be said of Argentine sources: the information provided by these archives allows the historian to set the social, political and economic scene in the River Plate when the Chilean revolutionaries fled to the other side of the Cordillera and prepared a military offensive to fight Marcó del Pont’s army.

Regarding the documents of the Chilean revolution that are located in the British National Archives, the consular reports written between 1818 and 1826 are particularly important because they usually present this process much ‘less distortedly’ than those located in the South American archives. As Alan Knight has suggested when describing the empirical background of his The Mexican Revolution, consular reports ‘can provide a stream of valuable historical information’. Obviously, he says, ‘this source, like all sources, involves bias and must be used judiciously. But in many respects the bias of foreign observers […] is clearer, hence less distorting, than that of [national] observers’.

Finally, a note on terminology. Apart from the three principal categories analysed in this book—armies, politics and revolution—there is one other term recurrently used: ‘elites’. My approach to this word is more political than social. To argue that the Spanish American colonial ‘elites’ were ‘aristocratic’ or ‘noble’ is not, in Frank Safford’s words, ‘entirely appropriate’: ‘under the overwhelming influence of the European experience, both nineteenth-century Spanish Americans and twentieth-century historians have translated criollo hacendados and merchants into something like a Continental noblesse and bourgeoisie’. However, Safford explains, ‘Spanish America did not have an aristocracy in the European sense of a titled nobility’ […] In New Granada, if not in Mexico or Peru, titled nobles were too few in number to play a role as a corporate body or class’. Something similar happened in Chile. It is true that the Chilean colonial elites ‘regarded themselves (and were regarded) as nobles’. But it is also true that their use of the word ‘noble’ was not necessarily empirical. For them, ‘nobility’ was a vehicle to exercise their political power, especially in the army, where cadets were bound to show a ‘noble’ background—whether de facto, that is, through the purchase

32 Collier, Ideas and politics, p. 5.
of titles, or de jure—in order to be accepted as officers. Given that in Chile there were not many de jure noble titles, their use of the word ‘nobility’ was essentially political.\footnote{See Ossa Santa Cruz, ‘La criollización de un ejército periférico’, pp. 430–41.}

Did the revolution have an effect on the composition of the Chilean elites? Revolutionary warfare in Chile provoked an important change within the elites: it allowed military officers to become masters of their country and, consequently, to become more powerful than other elite members. This, for two reasons: first, because in the years 1813–1826 no serious political decision could be made without taking into account what occurred on the battlefield. Second, because civilians implicitly admitted and sometimes favoured the political supremacy of the military, especially when they believed that their interests were at stake. To make a strict differentiation between civilian and military elites is not advisable, not least because there were many civilians who became officers before or immediately after the outbreak of the war (Bernardo O’Higgins is perhaps the most famous). But when this happened the new officers tended to leave their civil aspirations behind and to enter the political sphere as military men. This is hardly surprising considering that it was warfare that allowed them to rise politically.
CHAPTER I

Building up a revolutionary army
in Chile, 1808–1814

This chapter studies the political and military consequences of the demise of the Spanish monarchy in Chile in 1808. News of Napoleon Bonaparte’s attack on the Peninsula provoked a series of political and military changes that led to the replacement of the Chilean governor, Francisco Antonio García Carrasco. García Carrasco’s failure to control Santiago’s political agenda prompted a group of the capital’s politicians, hacendados and military officers to oust him from power and establish a government more sympathetic to their interests. This government was embodied by a political Junta based in Santiago, whose objective was to govern the territory on behalf of the imprisoned king. The fact that the Junta had been created to ‘preserve’ the monarchical rights of Ferdinand VII shows that, although its establishment marked a revolutionary turning point with the administrative system that had historically ruled the colony, the santiaguinos did not seek to declare independence.

The establishment of an autonomous or revolutionary Junta in Santiago in September 1810 was seconded by the principal cities of the Chilean territory, which accepted Santiago’s role as depositary of political sovereignty. The relationship between Santiago and Concepción, the second biggest city of the Kingdom, was relatively fluid until the military officer José Miguel Carrera, who arrived from Spain in mid-1811, became supreme master of the capital. Differences between Carrera and the leader of Concepción, Juan Martínez de Rozas, intensified in December 1811, and for the first time Chileans had grounds to fear that the conflict might give way to a war involving autonomists from Concepción and Santiago. Nevertheless, as it will be proved in this chapter, Santiago and Concepción did not resolve their problems on the battlefield during the years 1811–1812, for political solutions between both centres prevailed.

The pacific relations between Santiago and Concepción did not, however, prevent the authorities from enacting military reforms throughout Chile. On the contrary, this was one of the most militarized periods of Chilean history. This was because the fear of being invaded by a European power forced the authorities to enhance the country’s military system and because the power vacuum produced by the Bayonne abdications allowed officers like
Carrera to take political control of the administration. The *juntistas* organized regular and militia detachments and improved the education of military officers during their time in office. When internal conflicts with Rozas ended and Carrera's new enemy, the Peruvian viceroy José Fernando de Abascal, declared war on the Chilean insurgents (January 1813), the process of militarization experienced by Chilean society finally became tested on the battlefield. The war against Abascal was cruel, violent, bloody and had the characteristics of a civil war. Indeed, as a consequence of Spain's inability to send troops to Chile from the 1780s, both armies were largely composed of men born in Spanish America in general and Chile in particular.

The last part of this chapter explains why Abascal, who in 1810–1812 concentrated his military efforts not in Chile but in Upper Peru, decided to declare war on the Chilean autonomists in early 1813. Abascal intervened in Chile militarily after acknowledging that the city of Valdivia had broken its dependency with Santiago and that Carrera’s government had printed an autonomous Constitutional Chart (the *Reglamento Constitucional de 1812*) that aimed to cut the links with any foreign authority other than the king—the Spanish Cortes and viceroy Abascal included. After the outbreak of the war royalists—as followers of Abascal began to be known—and revolutionaries introduced a sophisticated system to punish deserters and traitors. In the case of the revolutionaries the concept of ‘loyalty’ began to be used to differentiate ‘patriots’ and ‘anti-patriots’. Even two revolutionary officers as respected as Bernardo O’Higgins and Juan Mackenna were accused of treason and anti-patriotism when they signed a peace agreement with royalist Gabino Gainza near the river Lircay in May 1814. However, at the end of this chapter I will contend that the alleged treason of O’Higgins and Mackenna is less important than the consequences of the Treaty of Lircay: after four years of revolution, the highest royalist officer in Chile—Gainza—treated the rebels as members of a political state with which it was not only advisable but indispensable to negotiate. This meant, both in theory and practice, a remarkable triumph for the insurgency.

I. 1808–1810: internal responses to imperial crisis

When the Buenos Aires mail informed that Napoleon had invaded Spain, the creoles swore loyalty to the crown and prepared against a possible French incursion in Spanish America.1 Occupied as he was with the problems of the monarchical succession after the Bayonne abdications, Napoleon probably never thought of crossing the Atlantic Ocean and beginning a military incursion in the Spanish American colonies. In any case, geographical

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distance and lack of information prevented the creoles from knowing for certain the real significance of European events, and so they needed to be ready to confront any eventuality.

Throughout 1808–1809, people from Europe and the Americas participated in the constitutional debate triggered by the abdication of Ferdinand VII. From the very beginning, Chileans resented Napoleon’s presence in the Peninsula. Thus, for example, in the session of 19 September 1808, the Santiago Cabildo declared that the best way of helping the metropolis was to arm the Chilean people, prepare the kingdom in case of a foreign invasion, and collect money to ‘assist its sisters the European Spanish Provinces that are overthrowing the French yoke and defending the glorious cause of Ferdinand VII’s rights’.

The cabildantes were ‘persuaded that the defence of these countries is a cooperation for the wellbeing of the state in general, and of the mother country’, which was the same as claiming that the peninsular crisis was their own. But they also knew that the country was far from having a solid military system. To remedy this, on 19 September 1808 the Cabildo proposed seventeen solutions to governor Francisco Antonio García Carrasco to improve the defensive capacity of the kingdom. Mixing military solutions with economic and political recommendations, the Santiago cabildantes believed that the governor should mobilize ten thousand infantry militiamen in the capital, and another six thousand in Concepción. Urban inhabitants were preferable to rural. Nevertheless, given that people working in the countryside would have to abandon their agricultural tasks only on training days, it was thought they should also be employed in the event of an emergency.

According to the Cabildo, it was necessary to buy ten thousand muskets and three thousand ‘pairs of pistols’, besides ordering the manufacture of ‘fifty cannons in Lima’. To pay for weapons the government had to collect funds from the Chilean Royal Treasury, whose administrator had to stop financing public works that bore no relation to the ‘defence of the kingdom against foreign enemies’. On 22 September, the Cabildo decided to buy weapons through economic contributions to be collected in Santiago and Concepción, and which were to be kept ‘with the name of Fondo Patriótico in a chest of three keys of the General Treasury, one of which will be in charge of a person elected by the Cabildo’.

The Santiago cabildantes acted in the belief that Ferdinand VII was still their monarch, and that the Junta Suprema de Sevilla, established in Seville

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2 Guerra, Modernidad e independencias, chapter IV.
4 Ibid.
5 Guerra, Modernidad e Independencias, p. 126.
in May 1808, was his exclusive representative. From the perspective of the Santiago Cabildo, this loyalty to Spain should be rewarded by giving the Spanish Americans the possibility of participating in the political debate in the metropolis. In January 1809, the Junta Central (which was the corporation that centralized the decisions adopted in the Peninsula in September 1808) made a concession to the colonies and permitted them to send delegates to Spain to participate in the political negotiations, which proved that peninsular politicians had taken the expectations of the creoles seriously.

However, this decision was, to say the least, ambivalent. If in one of its documents the Junta Central had declared their intention of tightening the links with the colonies by means of a policy of equality, the use of the word ‘concession’ was offensive to the Spanish Americans, since the ‘participation in the national representation appears not as a right, but as [...] a recompense’. This inequality also appeared ‘in the number of delegates: 9 for Spanish America and the Philippines against 36 for the Peninsula, when both more or less had the same number of inhabitants’. As a consequence of these ambiguities and disparities, the distinction between loyal and disloyal subjects proved difficult to define. Some saw the election of delegates as an unprecedented opportunity to participate in metropolitan affairs, while others believed that it was unacceptable to be treated as inferiors.

The absence of reliable news coming from Spain confused the Chilean political scenario even more. The correspondence between the colonel of militias Juan Martínez de Rozas, inhabitant of Concepción, and the santiaguino José Antonio de Rojas gives an idea of this discontent. In a letter of 24 July 1809, Rozas told Rojas that reports from Europe were unclear and confused, and most confusing of all was the new role of Britain as an ally of Spain. Rojas shared the same scepticism regarding foreign reports, though he seemed to be more informed than his friend from Concepción. On 10 August, Rojas summarized for Rozas the principal military and political events in the Peninsula. In his opinion, the Spanish military situation was extremely precarious. This news made Rozas even more pessimistic about the situation in the Peninsula and its possible repercussions in Spanish America. In September 1809 Rozas expressed his latest thoughts. Painfully but pragmatically, he declared to Rojas that:

8 ‘Acta del Cabildo de Santiago, 26 de Octubre de 1808’, http://www.historia.uchile.cl
9 Víctor Peralta Ruiz, La independencia y la cultura política peruana (1808–1821) (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2010), chapter I.
10 Guerra, Modernidad e Independencias, p. 135.
11 Ibid. For the Chilean elections, see Miguel Luis Amunátegui, La Crónica de 1810 (Santiago: Imprenta de la República de Jacinto Nuñez, 1876), vol. 1, pp. 325–56.
12 Guerra, Modernidad e Independencias, pp. 133–38.
Since I saw in the gazettes and public papers that Zaragoza and Aragón were lost; that the French occupied Galicia after beating the English; that Cuesta was defeated in Medellín and the enemy occupied Extremadura; and, in short, that the Duque del Infantado was also defeated in la Mancha, losing all his artillery; since I saw all this, I say, I did not doubt, and I do not doubt for a moment, that everything is lost, and that the sickness does not have a cure. [...] Here, there is nothing we could do to help our mother country, unless sending money as we have done; but we can do plenty of things to save ourselves from all the foreigners who want to attack and conquer us; and nothing, we do nothing, because we reserve the remedies for the last minute.\footnote{CDHICH, vol. 30, pp. 28–29.}

It is not clear how governor García Carrasco reacted to these criticisms, not least because Rozas, without doubt the most radical of these reformers, was at that time García Carrasco’s most trusted supporter.\footnote{In 1810, García Carrasco broke his alliance with Rozas, declaring that the appointment of Rozas as his ‘private advisor’ had been a ‘disgrace’. AGI, Chile 206, García Carrasco to the King, 24 Nov. 1810.} It is clear, nevertheless, that some of the questionings analysed above were seen by García Carrasco as a serious threat not only to Ferdinand VII but also, and more important, to his own political position.

García Carrasco was a veteran officer from Concepción. He had been appointed governor of Chile in early 1808, in spite of the opposition of the Santiago Real Audiencia.\footnote{Sol Serrano and Juan Luis Ossa Santa Cruz, ‘1810 en Chile: autonomía, soberanía popular y territorio’, in Roberto Breña (coord.), ‘Iberoamérica en 1810: emancipación, autonomía y lealtad’, dossier published in Historia y Política, number 24, (July–December, 2010), p. 103.} He feared not only the radicalism of people like Rojas, but also the criticism of less radical minds, such as José Santiago Luco, the Junta Suprema de Sevilla’s envoy, who arrived in Chile in October 1808.\footnote{AGI, Chile 206, 17 Jun. 1808.} Luco was a Chilean military officer who had lived the last few years in Spain. On 17 June 1808, the Junta Suprema de Sevilla appointed him its delegate to Chile. His official objective was to convince the colonial authorities to remain loyal to Spain. With this brief, Luco was requested to arouse ‘the patriotic fervour’ of ecclesiastic and political authorities in the colony.\footnote{Ibid.} Luco accomplished quickly his two most important tasks in Chile: to be recognized as the Junta Suprema’s envoy by all the corporations of the colony; and to explain why Spain had declared war on France and signed an armistice with Britain, henceforth an ally of the Spanish monarchy. His third aim, that is, to collect money among the kingdom’s wealthiest inhabitants to pay for Spain’s defensive campaigns in the Peninsula, was much more difficult to achieve, since García Carrasco was opposed to handing
him the money.\textsuperscript{20} The governor was not convinced of the Junta Suprema’s role and doubted whether he should accept the economic demands of Luco, who, in his view, had made friends with ‘dangerous people’ [\textit{sugestos cabilosos y mal contentos}].\textsuperscript{21}

For the Santiago elites, the dispute between Luco and García Carrasco became a struggle of prerogatives. Should a governor who had refused to grant the envoy of the Junta Suprema de Sevilla the money he had requested to support Spain continue to be seen as a legitimate agent of Spain?\textsuperscript{22} There were a few \textit{santiaguinos} who came to doubt García Carrasco’s loyalty towards Ferdinand VII and the Junta Suprema. García Carrasco, for his part, believed that the creoles had local rather than imperial interests. Although the accusation was partly true, to have local and imperial interests was not necessarily incompatible. Thus, what the governor failed to understand was that not even the most radical politicians in 1810 aimed to overthrow the monarchy. At most, they tried to reform it from within.

García Carrasco even criticized an institution as conservative and attached to Spain as the Real Audiencia. In his opinion, family connections mattered more than any other factor in the Real Audiencia. \textit{Oidores} Concha and Aldunate had been born in Santiago, and had married into families with strong connections to the country. For his part, Manuel Irigoyen, although a \textit{patricio} from Buenos Aires, ‘has been for more than five years now engaged [\textit{liado}] and attached [\textit{apasionado}] to the House of Asesor Valdes. This is common knowledge; so evident, that it is the gossip around Town. He is given to all sorts of Women, who make him despicable and foreign [\textit{extraño}] to the politic stance and seriousness that his employment demands’. This is why, the governor claimed, ‘it is impossible for these ministers to act with impartiality’.\textsuperscript{23} García Carrasco not only demanded that those \textit{regentes} be expelled from the colony, but also that higher authorities should stop the Real Audiencia from appointing ‘people born in the country or married to [Chilean] families [with] real estates [\textit{fincas}]’.\textsuperscript{24} It seems that García Carrasco’s attitude had also been influenced by the letter he received in April 1810 from the new River Plate viceroy, Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros, telling him that rumours of seditious movements organized in Chile by important

\textsuperscript{20} MJTM, Document 5640, Microfilm MsM46, Luco to Señor Presidente y demás vocales de la Suprema Junta de Gobierno de España y de Indias, 9 Dec. 1808, p. 245–51.
\textsuperscript{21} MJTM, Document 5673, Microfilm MsM46, García Carrasco to the King, 23 Jun. 1809, p. 231.
\textsuperscript{22} García Carrasco finally accepted Luco’s economic request; but he did it only six months after Luco’s first demand. In MJTM, Document 5692, Microfilm MsM46, p. 235, Luco to Señor Presidente y demás vocales de la Suprema Junta de Gobierno de España y de Indias [?], 25 Apr. 1809.
\textsuperscript{23} AGI, Estado 85, N. 60, García Carrasco to Francisco Saavedra, 23 Apr. 1810.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
santiaguinos had reached Buenos Aires. This gave the Chilean governor a perfect opportunity to formally accuse those who had questioned his loyalty, and to demonstrate to the authorities in Buenos Aires and Spain that his power in the colony was supreme.

In order to prevent the military challenge of the santiaguinos, the governor stopped militia training, and sent most cavalry lances in the capital to Spain, thus depriving the inhabitants of Santiago of arms in case of a revolt. Astonished by the governor’s measures, the Cabildo sent him a letter on 4 May 1810 reproaching him that it was indispensable for the santiaguinos to retain ‘the only arms that its cavalry has’. Sadly for the cabildantes, García Carrasco was the highest-ranking military officer in the kingdom and, as such, he could make any military decision without even discussing it with the Real Audiencia. This was exactly what he argued at the Santiago Cabildo on 22 May 1810, when he declared that it was beneath his dignity to keep ‘engaging [with the cabildantes] in more discussions about his faculties’.

García Carrasco’s letter was a blow to the cabildantes, though it was not to be the last or the heaviest. On 25 May, the same day that the first Junta of Buenos Aires was held, García Carrasco imprisoned Bernardo de Vera y Pintado, José Antonio de Ovalle and José Antonio de Rojas for spreading seditious ideas within Chilean territory. Apparently, Ovalle, who was the Santiago Cabildo’s attorney, used military arguments to explain what would happen in Chile if France definitively defeated Spain. According to a Spanish witness interrogated by the governor, Ovalle had told him that ‘the people of the kingdom had the military capacity’ to defend the ‘independence’ of Chile. Even though it seems that Ovalle referred to independence only in relation to Napoleonic France, for the governor the use of military arguments was a proof of Ovalle’s revolutionary goals, and thus he and his political fellows had to be deported to Lima to be sentenced by the viceroy.

The obstinacy of the governor led Santiago’s elites to prepare a political-military movement to oust him. On the night of 14 July 1810, the cabildantes agreed to ‘repel force with force and constitute a provisional government’. To realize their project, the cabildantes ‘considered the forces that the governor counted with, which reached two hundred infantry soldiers from Concepción, fifty Dragones de la Reina and 60 artilleries’. According to Néstor Meza Villalobos, ‘to defeat these forces and secure the success of the project, they decided to bring together on the morning of Tuesday 17 [July]
a large number of peasants from the outskirts of the capital. With this aim every cabildante would inform the landlords about the plan, bringing all the people they could from their estates.\textsuperscript{31} The position of the capital’s elites is a proof that ideological shifts were undermining the legitimacy of Spain’s most important official in Chile. For the first time in Chile the santiaguinos had gained sufficient power to depose the governor from office. On 16 July 1810 the Real Audiencia named the old hacendado and local merchant Mateo de Toro y Zambrano as his successor. The fall of García Carrasco provoked a change in the way power had been constituted. Neither the metropolis nor the Peruvian viceroy had any influence on García Carrasco’s dismissal, which meant that political power rested, from that moment and until a Junta was established a couple of months later, on the Cabildo.

In his various written defences García Carrasco claimed that these events had been accompanied by a fair amount of violence. In a letter to the king of 27 August 1810, he declared that even those who ‘in good faith’ had protested against the imprisonment of Ovalle, Rojas and Vera had threatened him with knives. After drinking alcohol in Santiago’s coffee houses [Cafes], young creoles had, ‘on behalf of what they called the patria, intimidated the good people [pueblo honrado]’, a report that also included an allusion to the reduced number of persons who had really been involved in his removal. According to the deposed governor, the July revolt was led only by fifty-two people. This included regular military officers like Manuel Olaguer Feliú, Francisco Javier Reina, Juan de Dios Vial and Juan Mackenna; and militia officers like Ignacio de la Carrera, Juan José Carrera, Luis Carrera, Martín Larraín, José Antonio Villota, Santos Izquierdo, and García Carrasco’s old enemy, José Santiago Luco.\textsuperscript{32}

The involvement of the military in politics grew with time. On 8 September, García Carrasco reported that Reina was receiving in his house ‘other fanatics to the system of independence [sic]’, such as sergeant major Juan de Dios Vial, Lieutenant Pedro José Romero and militia colonel Ignacio de la Carrera.\textsuperscript{33} The political activity of the military became so evident that on 17 September the Real Audiencia reported to governor Toro y Zambrano that its members were surprised that Santiago’s troops had been assembled in circumstances where there were no serious reasons to fear

\textsuperscript{31} Meza Villalobos, La actividad política, p. 121.

\textsuperscript{32} AGI, Chile 206, García Carrasco to the King, 27 Aug. 1810. Examples of García Carrasco’s worries about the intervention of military men in politics can easily be found in the documentation held in the Archivo de Indias. On 6 Nov. 1810, for example, the former governor told the king that the Santiago Junta was levying taxes with the aim of ‘creating new troops to resist not the common enemy [Napoleon] […], but to repel the authorities who were appointed by You [the king] in order to remedy [remediar] these scandalous disorders’. In AGI, Chile 315, García Carrasco to the King, 6 Nov. 1810.

\textsuperscript{33} AGI, Chile 206, García Carrasco to the King, 8 Sep. 1810.
a foreign attack. Besides, the members of the Real Audiencia continued, the kingdom’s principal authorities were Chilean-born, a condition that ought to prevent the military chiefs from using their men against them. To be born in Chile was, in the Real Audiencia’s view, a sign of patriotism. Toro y Zambrano should, therefore, encourage the rest of the santiaguinos to regard Napoleon as the sole enemy of the kingdom. Unless the French emperor prepared an invasion of Spanish America, the military should be kept out of politics.

Toro y Zambrano answered the Real Audiencia’s letter that same day. He argued that there were no good reasons to fear the military, as many of them ‘lacked the necessary training’ to subvert the status quo. He urged the Real Audiencia to remain calm. However, he also told the regentes to bear in mind that official news from Spain allowed ‘these Americas to form a Congress’, a solution that, ‘considering the present circumstances’, appeared to be of ‘great necessity’. Hence, Toro y Zambrano played a double game: on one hand, his main intention was to avoid unnecessary friction with the Real Audiencia, as its members could form an alliance with him should the radicals gain excessive influence. On the other, he had to convince the Real Audiencia to accept some of the aspirations of the group that had not only backed the dismissal of García Carrasco, but that now was in favour of creating an autonomous government to rule the country until the return of Ferdinand VII.

The Cabildo Abierto—‘an open meeting of the chief notables of the city’ of Santiago—of 18 September reflected Toro y Zambrano’s dilemma. This event was attended by nearly 350 people, and its Acta made two major claims: first that ‘Chile is to be preserved for King Ferdinand VII and defended against his enemies’. Second, that a Junta, presided by Mateo de Toro y Zambrano, should govern the Chilean territory. The creation of this Junta was a bold step taken by the santiaguinos. Bold, because it reinforced the idea that the corporations in the Peninsula—the Junta Suprema de Sevilla, the Junta Central and, after the latter was dissolved, the Consejo de Regencia—no longer represented the interest of the santiaguinos. Even though the establishment of the Junta was a transanctional, corporate action, ‘the blow received by Chile’s colonial organization was irreparable’. This became

34 AGI, Chile 315, the Real Audiencia to Toro y Zambrano, 17 Sep. 1810.
35 AGI, Chile 315, Toro y Zambrano to the Real Audiencia, 17 Sep. 1810.
36 Collier, Ideas and Politics, p. 48.
37 Pinto and Valdivia, ¿Chilenos todos?, p. 21.
38 Collier, Ideas and Politics, p. 49.
clearer when the newly created Junta of Santiago promised, on 18 September, to summon a Congress.⁴⁰

Any attempt to return to the old days was now impossible. Independence was hardly sought by the people who backed the installation of the Junta. The juntistas recognized Ferdinand VII as their king,⁴¹ and promised that Chile would remain a part of the Spanish empire.⁴² However, in political terms, revolutionary changes were sealed that day. Santiago were able to oust García Carrasco and form their own government. The next objective was to convince the rest of the colony that September’s decisions had been taken to favour not just the capital, but all the regions of the kingdom.

II. A conflict of politics, a conflict between provinces

When the Santiago cabildantes invited the representatives of Santiago’s inhabitants to participate in September’s open meeting, they did it on behalf of the entire kingdom. As Simon Collier showed, ‘the most significant aspect of [the creation of the Junta] is that the Santiago Cabildo was, in effect, playing an exaggerated and “national” role. It was attempting to run the affairs of the entire country’. But the fact that Santiago had unilaterally arrogated the right to represent the ‘whole people of the Captaincy-General’ was not applauded by the rest of the provinces of the kingdom.⁴³ Historically, the relationship between the greatest provinces of the colony had not been very controversial. The regular military of Concepción respected the political supremacy of the old hacendados of Santiago. Differences appeared as a consequence of García Carrasco’s election as governor of Chile in 1808. Some of the most important corporations of the capital objected that the highest-ranking military officer of the south should be chosen to lead the colony. From then on, problems would haunt the relationship between the two provinces.

Differences did not materialize immediately. At the beginning of the government of Santiago’s Junta, seventy-three military men from Concepción, headed by Juan Martínez de Rozas, declared their loyalty to the capital’s juntistas.⁴⁴ This was followed by the arrival of Rozas in the capital in November 1810 to become a vocal of the Junta. Although Rozas was not an

⁴⁰ Collier, Ideas and Politics, p. 49, and Eyzaguirre, Ideario y ruta, p. 123. The Acta of 18 Sep. can be found at http://www.historia.uchile.cl
⁴¹ There were important military officers who swore loyalty to the Junta. These were: colonel Marqués de Montepío; militia colonel Manuel Fernández Valdivieso; sergeant major Juan de Dios Vial; commander Juan Miguel Benavente; and commander Juan Manuel de Ugarte. AGI, Chile 202, pp. 141v–42v.
⁴² ‘Revolutions did not begin as secessionist episodes’, says Adelman, ‘An age of Imperial Revolutions’, p. 320; they began, in fact, as ‘revolutions within the empire’.
⁴³ Collier, Ideas and Politics, p. 58
⁴⁴ The names and military ranks of these officers appear in Jorge Allendesalazar, ‘Ejército y Milicias’, in BACHH, number 67 (1963), pp. 229–30. See also Armando
advocate of independence when he arrived in Santiago, the revolution was effectively propelled by his influence. Hence the accusations he faced during the months following the fall of the governor that his goals were too close to those of Buenos Aires, considered by García Carrasco the most radical centre of the South American revolution. These accusations rested on solid ground: connections between the two sides of the Cordillera became patent at the beginning of February 1811, when it was reported from Mendoza that the Spanish general Francisco Javier Elío had disembarked in Montevideo with the aim of ‘subjugating the Viceroyalty of the River Plate’ and establishing a counterrevolutionary government. Santiago’s Junta hastened to write to Mendoza offering military help, specifically sending troops from Concepción to Buenos Aires to support the porteños.

On 18 February 1811, Buenos Aires accepted Santiago’s offer, requesting that ‘without losing time the troop of armed veterans of the city depart to Mendoza’. But the other authorities of the kingdom did not approve this offer. When the Santiago Junta asked the military chiefs whether it was reasonable to send men to Buenos Aires, not all gave their approval, and some even claimed that it was irresponsible. The majority of those who voted against it did so because they believed that the troops must be kept in Chile in case of an emergency. The Santiago Cabildo backed this opinion. This did not, however, prevent the Cabildo from considering Buenos Aires ‘the first bastion of our security’. This showed that their vote against sending troops to Mendoza was merely a strategy to stop the Junta from taking important decisions. But Rozas prevailed and made his point: on 7 March the Junta decided to dispatch the troops from Concepción to Buenos Aires. Radicals like Rozas used this to strengthen their relationship with the porteño revolutionaries.

It is not clear whether the Concepción army approved Rozas’ decision; at least some of its officers seem to have disapproved. This appears to have been the case of Tomás de Figueroa, who on 1 April 1811 led a revolt against the Junta. According to the classic interpretation, Figueroa wanted to ‘re-establish the old regime’, offended as he was by the radical stand of Rozas and his close supporters. Yet Figueroa was not as counterrevolutionary as historians

45 García Carrasco wrote, rather sarcastically, to Abascal that the members of Buenos Aires’ Junta were ‘disciples of Machiavelli’. AGI, Chile 206, García Carrasco to Abascal, 19 Oct. 1810.
48 The discussion can be followed in AGI, Buenos Aires 40, 3 Mar. 1811.
49 AGI, Buenos Aires 40, 6 Mar. 1811.
50 Ibid.
51 AGI, Buenos Aires 40, 7 Mar. 1811.
like Diego Barros Arana believed. He had explicitly supported the Junta in September 1810, arriving at Santiago from Concepción as one of Rozas’ most trusted advisors. True, the revolt happened on the day the delegates to the Congress were to be elected, so it could be argued that Figueroa reacted to the elections. Still, it is scarcely credible that Figueroa aspired to dethrone the Junta because of the elections, and it is much more likely that he rebelled in protest at the inadequacy of the military programme put together by Santiago’s authorities. Although he was born in Spain, his career had been made in Concepción, that is, in the region where the bulk of veterans was concentrated. Thus, it is probable that the lack of reliable information about who was the real enemy—Napoleon, the politicians in the Peninsula, Elío, or one of the different internal factions—influenced his decision to rebel, especially considering that his brothers-in-arms of Concepción would be in the front line of defence.

Yet if Figueroa did not rebel merely because of political differences with the radicals, the reaction of the authorities to the revolt reflected how far the extremism of some of the juntistas—Rozas above all—had gone. Given that the soldiers who backed Figueroa gathered to the cry of ‘Long live the King, death to the Junta’ [Viva el Rey, muera la Junta], the immediate response of Rozas was not surprising. What was surprising in the Chilean context was that Rozas convinced the Junta that arresting and prosecuting Figueroa was the only possible way out of the conflict.

When Figueroa was captured the most complicated part of the process began. Rozas asserted that he should be condemned as a traitor to the patria, whose sovereignty, according to Rozas, rested exclusively in the Santiago Junta. Such a verdict meant that Figueroa must be executed, a punishment that could serve as a deterrent to future revolts against the Junta. This point of view was shared by the Junta’s vocal Juan Enrique Rosales, but vocales Ignacio de la Carrera and Francisco Javier Reina voted for exile. The final decision was agreed when the president of the Junta, vocal Márquez de la Plata, supported those who favoured the death penalty. With this sentence,
the Spanish colonel became the first casualty after the installation of the Junta in September 1810; moderates and counterrevolutionaries later used this fact to accuse Rozas of excessive violence.⁵⁷

After this execution, Rozas concentrated his efforts on winning as many seats as possible for himself and his supporters in the elections to the first Congress. Rozas led a faction of deputies from the Concepción region, including the deputy from Los Ángeles, Bernardo O’Higgins.⁵⁸ There were marked differences amongst those who represented the province of the south. Such were the cases of the former crown official, Manuel de Salas and the two most famous ‘exaltados’, or radicals, Rozas and O’Higgins.⁵⁹ But sometimes their aims were similar, in particular when the wellbeing of Concepción was at stake. On 8 August, Salas claimed that since Concepción had enjoyed ample autonomy since the establishment of the system of Intendancies in 1785, the city should be ‘conveniently represented in the Executive Power’ (i.e. a new Junta). He was of the opinion that Santiago’s thirty delegates should elect two representatives for the Junta, and that Concepción’s twelve delegates should choose one.

Salas’ project was sponsored by Valparaíso’s representative, Agustín Vial, who suggested the creation of a third province comprising ‘the districts of the north and to be called Coquimbo’. The delegates of this province would also have the right to elect one of the Junta’s vocales, and thus all the provinces of the kingdom would be proportionally represented. However, their plan was not accepted by the moderates, who saw Rozas as Concepción’s most appropriate candidate for the position of vocal of the Junta. In response, the radical deputies abandoned the room in which the Congress met and, on 13 August, Rozas and the city of Rere’s delegate, Luis de la Cruz, left for Concepción.⁶⁰ As Collier claimed, together with his ‘radical phalanx’ Rozas prepared the ground for setting up ‘an independently minded Provincial Junta’ in Concepción, an objective that he finally accomplished on 5 September 1811.⁶¹

The first declaration of the Junta of Concepción summarized the political position of the exaltados. On behalf of the pueblo of Concepción, 187 individuals elected Pedro José Benavente commander-in-chief of the Frontier and

⁵⁷ Rozas suspected that the magistrates of the Real Audiencia helped Figueroa in his attempt to overthrow the government, and so at the end of April 1811 the Junta decided to dissolve this traditional tribunal. As we will see in the next chapter, the Audiencia was re-established in March 1815, after a successful counterrevolutionary military campaign led by the Spanish general Mariano Osorio.⁵⁸


⁵⁹ Collier, Ideas and Politics, p. 94.

⁶⁰ Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. VIII, pp. 269–70.

⁶¹ Collier, Ideas and Politics, p. 94. See also Cartes Montory, Concepción contra ‘Chile’, chapter VI.
president of the provincial Junta. The other vocales were Rozas, Luis de la Cruz, Bernardo Vergara and Manuel Novoa. Article 7 of this declaration stated that the city should maintain a direct contact with Santiago’s authorities, although only after securing the rights of representation of Concepción.⁶²

In Santiago, meanwhile, one day before the creation of Concepción’s Junta, a revolt commanded by José Miguel Carrera, ‘who had just returned to Chile from gallant service in the Peninsular War’,⁶³ purged important members of Congress and prepared to govern the kingdom. Carrera’s case is one of the most interesting examples of the sort of military leaders who played an important political role during these years. Carrera ‘was not a replica of Bourbon general captains; he was a modern military’ leader, one whose actions reflected ‘the image of French young revolutionary officers who “domesticated” the Revolution or simply the image of the governor soldier, that is: Napoleon’.⁶⁴ Carrera was an officer who arrived in Chile in order to turn the military into ‘agents of the revolution’.⁶⁵ For better or worse, the political vacuum created by the fall of the monarchy in 1808 allowed regular military officers like Carrera to become as powerful politically as civilians like Manuel de Salas and militia chiefs like Rozas. The difference between them and Carrera was that, after September 1811, the latter would be in control not only of the political affairs of the capital but also, and more significantly, of its armed forces.

The military revolt of 4 September in Santiago led Carrera to promptly gain the confidence of other young officers, and that of the Larraín family, better known as the group of the ochocientos.⁶⁶ The revolt was planned by Luis and Juan José Carrera, brothers of José Miguel, and was supported by most officers of both the Batallón de Granaderos and the Húsares, besides some of the artillery.⁶⁷ José Miguel rapidly took charge of the revolt, and in a manifesto of 5 September he and his supporters claimed that one of the reasons they had to rise in arms against the Congress was the ‘infamous’ treatment veteran officers had received from the authorities.⁶⁸ It is not clear

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⁶² AGI, Buenos Aires 40, Sep. 5, 1811.
⁶³ Collier, Ideas and Politics, p. 94.
⁶⁵ For the group of the ochocientos, see Mary Lowenthal, ‘Kinship politics in the Chilean Independence Movement’, in HAHKR, vol. 56, number 1 (1976), pp. 58–80. They were called ochocientos [eight hundred] because of the high number of persons who were connected to the Larraín family.
to which specific ‘infamous’ event they referred to; yet, in view of events to come, it is remarkable that as early as September 1811 they aimed at keeping their programme as closely tied to the military as possible.⁶⁹

As in Concepción, Santiago’s radicals established an executive Junta to act as a counterweight to the moderates. This Junta was composed of powerful exaltados: Juan Enrique Rosales, Rozas, Martín Calvo Encalada, Juan Mackenna and Gaspar Marín.⁷⁰ The fact that Rozas had been appointed a member of the Santiago Junta suggests that politicians in the capital were unaware of what had occurred in Concepción on 5 September. In any case, it is interesting that the new authorities in Santiago wanted to establish a direct relationship with the leader of the penquistas, as well as with the highest military engineer of the kingdom (who was, at the same time, married to a Larrain): Juan Mackenna.⁷¹

Relations between the Juntas of Santiago and Concepción went relatively well until 15 November 1811, when, in a strategy that recalls the Napoleonic coup d’état of 18 Brumaire (9 November 1799),⁷² Carrera and his brothers dissolved the Santiago government that they had created in September. At first, the moderates of the capital saw Carrera’s action as an opportunity to recover their position and return to the status quo ante 1810.⁷³ But Carrera’s objective was not that of the moderates. José Miguel and his brothers were not looking to stop the radical course of the revolution. They were seeking to control the revolution, and for that they needed to control the army and transform their military colleagues into more active and powerful politicians.

On 16 November, a new group was invited to assemble. However, on this occasion José Miguel Carrera allowed only those who demonstrated a ‘known patriotism’ to gather. Consequently, moderates were excluded.⁷⁴ Carrera’s next step was to form a new Junta governed by him and, on 2 December, to close the Congress. This decision was ‘viewed with distaste by Rozas and his followers in the South’. They ‘warned Carrera that praetorianism was no substitute for orderly civil government’.⁷⁵ For the first time Chileans feared that conflicts might give way to a war between Concepción and Santiago,

⁶⁹ Of course, not all of Santiago’s inhabitants backed Carrera’s revolution. For a criticism of this revolt formulated by the porteño Isidro Castro, see AGN, room VII, Colección Carlos Casavalle, vol. 2307, Castro to Cornelio Saavedra, 10 Sep. 1811.


⁷¹ Mackenna was married to Josefa Vicuña Larrain. His marriage certificate [licencia] can be found in MG, vol. 1.


⁷³ Labarca, ‘José Miguel Carrera y las clases populares’, pp. 100–02.

⁷⁴ Labarca, ‘José Miguel Carrera y las clases populares’, pp. 104.

⁷⁵ Collier, Ideas and Politics, p. 95.
similar to that to be waged by centralistas and confederados in New Granada in 1812–1814.⁷⁶

Almost a fortnight after the closure of Congress, Carrera sent O’Higgins, who was residing in Santiago, to Concepción to convince Rozas that the capital wanted to ‘eliminate every disagreement between the two provinces’.⁷⁷ But the same day Carrera began gathering the militias of the Central Valley with the aim of cutting communications between the capital and Concepción. His intention was to organize an army on the northern bank of the river Maule, the boundary between the two provinces, and stop any armed revolt by Rozas. In February and March of 1812 the dangers of an armed confrontation intensified. O’Higgins, who had changed sides, encouraged Rozas, who ordered him to go to Los Ángeles, to ‘organize its regiment and take command of it’.⁷⁸ It is difficult to know exactly how O’Higgins brought together his army (around 1,000 soldiers), but it seems that peasants from Las Canteras, his estate, helped to fill the ranks.⁷⁹

O’Higgins thought the army of the south should attack Carrera’s forces directly and without waiting for negotiations.⁸⁰ Rozas, on the other hand, decided to withdraw his troops as long as the army of the north promised to do the same. Carrera accepted, knowing that Rozas had lost influence and that his own position in the south had revived. On 8 July 1812, Rozas’ Junta in Concepción ‘was deposed and replaced by a war Junta, which rapidly initiated communications with José Miguel Carrera’.⁸¹ That was the end of Rozas, who was exiled by Carrera to Mendoza, where he died in May 1813.

Even though Carrera became the undisputed master of the Central Valley, his influence south of Concepción was much weaker. At the end of 1811, the inhabitants of the city of Valdivia backed Carrera’s ideas of making Santiago the centre of Chile’s political administration.⁸² Nevertheless, they eventually claimed that decisions made in the capital should lead neither to a radicalization of politics nor to a future break with the Peruvian viceroy, who was beginning to see Carrera’s revolutionary decisions with critical eyes. Valdivia’s stand was not surprising, because throughout the colonial period the transfer of money—i.e. the Situado—from Lima, which paid the wages

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⁷⁶ For the war between centralistas and confederados in New Granada, see Clément Thibaud, Repúblicas en armas, pp. 222–23 and 242.
⁷⁷ Jaime Eyzaguirre, O’Higgins (Santiago: Editorial Zig-Zag, 1946), p. 82.
⁷⁹ Eyzaguirre, O’Higgins, p. 82.
of Valdivia's military, had created a sort of dependency that most valdivianos were unwilling to relinquish. For them, viceroy Abascal was an ally and his authority should not be questioned. Carrera did not share their opinion; not because he considered Abascal an enemy to be faced on the battlefield, but rather because he believed the viceroy should not intervene directly in Chilean affairs. When in June 1812 the valdivianos broke their alliance with Carrera and put their city ‘under the authority of the Peruvian viceroy’, the government of Santiago was forced to ‘cut all communications with Valdivia’.⁸³

But as in the case of Concepción, during this period conflicts between Santiago and Valdivia were not conducted on the battlefield, but in the political arena. Differences between these three provinces provoked potentially serious confrontations, but in the end no major violence broke out; that is why I have called this period a conflict of politics, a conflict of provinces. According to Clausewitz, ‘the less involved the population and the less serious the strains within states [in this case, the Chilean provinces] and between them, the more political requirements in themselves will dominate and tend to be decisive. Situations can thus exist in which the political object will almost be the sole determinant’. The relationship between Santiago, Concepción and Valdivia in the years 1811–1812 resembled Clausewitz’s argument, as political requirements and solutions dominated and tended to be decisive.⁸⁵ This is not to say, however, that military affairs did not matter. In fact, whoever was in power seemed well aware that the radicalization of politics was bound to force Chileans to take sides, and that the military would be asked to play an important role in the process.

III. Revolutionary warfare in Chile

After establishing the Junta of September 1810, the Santiago authorities devoted themselves to enhancing the military preparation of the kingdom.⁸⁶ They sought to accomplish two goals: first, to create new regular corps and militias, giving them proper training and weapons. Second, to organize an

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84 AGI, Chile 207, Pedro José Benavente to Valdivia’s governor, 2 Dec. 1812, p. 273v.
86 The reforms introduced in the army by the Chileans were based on eighteenth-century Spanish military regulations. See, for instance, *El Monitor Araucano*, vol. II, number 3, Dec. 10, 1813, where the government quoted the *Ordenanzas* to stress soldiers should not be employed as officers. In spite of the radicalism of the porteño officers, Buenos Aires’ authorities also applied the colonial *Ordenanzas* as a model when reforming the rioplatense army. See Alejandro Rabinovich, ‘Obedecer y comandar. La formación de un cuerpo de oficiales en los ejércitos del Río de la Plata, 1810–1820’, *Estudios Sociales. Revista universitaria semestral*, vol. XXI, number 41 (2011), pp. 41–67.
educational system to teach Chilean officers the general principles of the ‘art of war’. The recruitment drive of the Chilean government went through two phases: 1) the period 1811–1812, when conflicts between Santiago and Concepción demanded the attention of the authorities; and 2) the years 1813–1814, when José Miguel Carrera and Bernardo O’Higgins left their differences aside to jointly confront a succession of forces dispatched by viceroy Abascal from Lima. The latter period embodies the beginning of what this book calls revolutionary warfare.

The number of detachments of Chile’s army had not significantly increased after governors Agustín de Jáuregui, Ambrosio Benavides and Ambrosio O’Higgins introduced reforms in the second half of the eighteenth century. To improve this situation, on 16 December 1810 the Santiago authorities approved the formation of an artillery corps in the capital to be headed by the veteran and Junta vocal, Colonel Francisco Javier Reina. This decision was followed a few days later by the creation of an infantry battalion in the capital (known as the Granaderos de Chile), whose staff was led by José Antonio Luco. On Christmas day, a cavalry battalion was also organized in Santiago, and José Joaquín Toro was appointed its first commander. The first of these detachments consisted of 280 men; the second of 699, and the third of 300. Together they formed a force of 1,279 men.

The September Junta also attempted to buy new weapons. At the end of 1810, the juntistas signed a contract with an English merchant called Diego Whitaker by which he committed to bring from Britain 10,000 rifles, 10,000 pistols, 2,000 sabres and 2,000 military uniforms. Whitaker feared that Britain might deny him permission to export the cargo, so he recommended that the Junta write to the British Foreign Secretary, Richard Wellesley, to explain that the requested weapons would be used to defend the interests of Ferdinand VII, at that moment Britain’s ally. But, according to Barros Arana, there was no full delivery of such weapons. The Junta’s plan to entrust José Antonio Rojas with the building of a weapons factory was not successful either, since the costs of the plan considerably exceeded the economic capacity of Chile. The poverty of the Chilean regular army was also evident in other areas. The uniforms of the common soldiers were completely aged, as a contemporary caricature of early 1811 featuring a group of well-dressed officers followed by a soldier in tatters illustrates. In October 1811, the authorities attempted to regularize the uniforms of the recently created Batallón de patriotas de Santiago, ordering its officers to wear a black jacket, boots, white trousers and ornamentations of gold.

90 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. VIII, pp. 183–89.
The organization of the militias was also a preoccupation of Santiago's authorities. José Miguel Carrera was especially keen on improving the training of the militias. Thus, for instance, in the *Prospecto* of the first Chilean periodical, *La Aurora de Chile*, the author explicitly referred to the importance of having a respected mounted guard [*Gran Guardia Nacional de Caballería*] that could discipline the militias of the kingdom and train them to resemble those of Europe.⁹³ Two months later, when the conflict between Santiago and Concepción was at its peak, José Miguel Carrera complemented this periodical's proposal by appointing colonel Domingo Díaz de Salcedo ‘General Inspector of Militias’ of the kingdom, a position that was supposedly to be recognized by all the ‘officers and soldiers of the army’.⁹⁴

In November 1812, Carrera ordered the cavalry militias of Valparaíso and Quillota to conduct drills on Sundays and other holidays. The officers in charge of the militias—veteran officers—also had to meet twice a week at the house of the lieutenant colonel, who should ‘teach them everything related to tactics’.⁹⁵ Two days later the government recommended that the militia officers were to be chosen from the same districts where companies were organized, emphasizing that they must be of ‘noble birth’ and have a ‘suitable age and agility’.⁹⁶

On the other hand, the Chilean authorities and men of letters attempted to improve the education of elite officers. Manuel de Salas’ idea of establishing a military school in Santiago was the most important project until then (October 1811). In Salas’ view, education was the ‘public basis of happiness’ and it must be ‘the first object of a good constitution’. Accordingly, Salas backed the idea of organizing a military school and recommended it be put under the supervision of the *Director de la Academia de Matemáticas*. The main objective of this institution was to fulfil the requirements of the army cadets whose knowledge, especially mathematics, was not sufficient. Salas intended to make the officers ‘useful’ to their patria, as in France, where the military preparation of the officers included the study of mathematics and other practical matters.⁹⁷ This was an aim that every talented person had to accomplish, and a functional educational system was the basic tool to achieve it.⁹⁸

⁹³ La *Aurora de Chile*, ‘Prospecto’, p. 2.
⁹⁴ AGI, Chile 207, p. 378, 6 Apr. 1812.
⁹⁵ JIVE, vol. 19, pp. 42–42v, Carrera to Valparaiso’s governor, 4 Nov. 1812.
⁹⁶ VM, vol. XXXIX, pp. 90v–91, Nov. 6, 1812. This order was repeated on 15 Jan. 1813. See MG, vol. 1.
⁹⁸ AGI, Chile 206, 21 Oct. 1811.
The education of military engineers was largely discussed a year later. In its forty-fifth number, *La Aurora de Chile* published a letter sent by the Senate to the Santiago Junta in which Camilo Henríquez, Francisco Ruiz-Tagle and others discussed the role of engineers in an era when the ‘whole universe is under arms, and every American region is successively transforming itself into a battlefield’. Although the National Institute had not yet opened its doors to the public, the senators expected that in its classrooms officers would learn mathematics, specifically geometry and trigonometry. It was recommended, nevertheless, that the training of military engineers remained separate from that of the artillery students, because both branches were ‘too vast’ to be studied at the same time.⁹⁹

Meanwhile, a serious attempt to institutionalize recruitment began in 1811. This was more or less at the same time that conflicts between Santiago and Concepción were beginning to destabilize Chilean politics. In October 1811, Santiago’s government published a *Bando* ‘calling on all “free men” to present themselves in the new military bodies, threatening those who did not obey this disposition to be “recognized as enemies”’.¹⁰⁰ The introduction of conscription mainly affected the lower classes, since common soldiers tended to come from the bulk of *inquilinos*, miners, slaves and vagrants of the Central Valley. According to Leonardo León, the task of ‘enlarging the ranks of the regiments was for the *peonaje* no more than that: a task, never the defence of a principle nor a doctrinaire conception’.¹⁰¹ The army, León continues, ‘reproduced the old relationship between bosses and dependents under a new nomenclature of officers and soldiers’, an argument that, although exaggerates the alleged manipulation of the lower classes by the elites to join the army, is not entirely mistaken.¹⁰² An example of this sort of relationship was given by O’Higgins, who in a letter to Mackenna in early 1811 told the Irish engineer that ‘regiment number 2 of La Laja […] was composed of his own *inquilinos*’.¹⁰³ In the following years, O’Higgins repeatedly relied on his *inquilinos* to enlarge his army.¹⁰⁴

León’s approach helps us understand the second phase of recruitment in Chile (1813–1814). This period covers more than twelve months of war between the Chilean insurgents and a counterrevolutionary army organized

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¹⁰⁰ Quoted in León, ‘Reclutas forzados y desertores de la patria’, p. 260.
¹⁰¹ León, ‘Reclutas forzados y desertores de la patria’, p. 259.
¹⁰² León, ‘Reclutas forzados y desertores de la patria’, p. 259.
¹⁰³ León, ‘Reclutas forzados y desertores de la patria’, p. 264.
¹⁰⁴ That most detachments of the army were formed by ‘labradores’ and ‘inquilinos’ is clear from the following document: ‘the troop of the [Maipo] Regiment is formed by *inquilinos* of the same Hacienda[s] of this district; some of them are Labradores, other *Arrrieros*. […] Generally, [they are] skilled riders, although most of them have just one mistreated [horse]’. In MG, vol. 1, without exact date (although it says 1813 in one of the margins of the document).
in Chile but commanded by officers sent by viceroy Abascal from Peru. Abascal reacted to Carrera’s goals by sending brigadier Antonio Pareja from Peru to fight the Chilean revolutionaries. Pareja’s attack prompted José Miguel Carrera and Rozas’ lieutenant, Bernardo O’Higgins, to put their differences aside and confront Abascal’s forces together. The transition from a political conflict between Carrera’s and Rozas’ factions to a bloody war confronting Pareja’s ‘royalist’ forces and Carrera’s and O’Higgins’ ‘revolutionary’ army brought about a complete rearrangement of the role of armies. From 1813 the war in Chile involved explicit winners and losers, a typical characteristic of the revolutionary wars of the second half of the eighteenth century and the Napoleonic wars. But the war in Chile was not only violent; it was also a civil war in which soldiers born mainly in Chile were for the first time dragged into the battlefield (whether to fight for the monarchist or the revolutionary army).

Pareja arrived in Chiloé on January 1813 accompanied by a small detachment of no more than 100 men. Rapidly, he took command of the island, received the support of the authorities, mustered 1,370 soldiers, and embarked his army to Valdivia. There, he recruited another 700 men with whom he advanced to the north, seizing the port of Talcahuano, close to Concepción, on 26 March. Very soon, 4,110 royalist soldiers controlled the entire province. The Junta Gubernativa del Reino, which at the time was presided by José Miguel Carrera, learnt of Pareja’s invasion on 31 March 1813, and immediately reacted by appointing Carrera general-in-chief of the

105 Lynn, ‘International rivalry and warfare’, p. 190, explains the main characteristics of revolutionary wars, among which Chile’s wars during the revolution should be included. He claims that in the old regime wars were fought ‘as processes’, their principal characteristic being the ‘indecisive character’ of their performance, the ‘slow tempo of [their] operations’ and ‘the considerable emphasis given [by the military] to ongoing diplomatic negotiations’. However, as a consequence of the French Revolution, wars started to be fought ‘as events’, which was a much more decisive form of warfare than the ‘traditional’ one (as were the cases of Austerlitz and Wagram, where Napoleon eliminated two of his greatest enemies). It is true that there were many bloody battles during the European old regime, as the battles of the War of Spanish Succession show. Yet from the 1790s the option of annihilating the enemy became not just accepted but advisable. In the case of Chile, where military confrontations did not occur very often during the colonial period, the war was to the death from the moment it started in 1813.

106 In 1814, the third royalist general sent by Abascal, Mariano Osorio, was the first to disembark in Chile accompanied by a Spanish-born contingent (500 men), the so-called Talaveras de la Reina. However, they constituted only one fifth of his force. Four years later, Osorio travelled to Chile with 1,800 Spanish-born soldiers from the Regimiento de Burgos, but they did not remain there long.

107 I have collected these figures from Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. IX, p. 14, footnote 8, and p. 15.

108 Arancibia, El Ejército de los chilenos, p. 72.
army. Informing the *pueblos* of this decision, Carrera published a *Proclama* in which he called on Chileans to take sides: ‘the grievous voice of *moderantismo* has been erased from Chile’s political dictionary’.109

Only a couple of weeks after Antonio Pareja’s assault on the port of Talcahuano, *El Monitor Araucano* published a *Bando* ordering the *hacendados* to allow their *inquilinos* to join the army: ‘by this *bando* we order the landowners not to charge the *inquilinos* who have gone to war for the lease of this current year’.110 A decree setting the rules for ‘the general recruitment of citizens’ was published a month later. In three articles, the *vocales* of the Junta agreed that: 1) the authorities would distribute a document [*papeleta*] to the officers and soldiers of every military body, punishing those who did not have it with them when inspected; 2) commercial stores would be closed in the afternoons, when the military exercises had to be carried out; 3) every inhabitant—military or not—must ‘present’ [*presentar*] his arms to the commandants of the *Guardias Cívicas*.111

Thanks to these measures, in May 1813 the revolutionary army numbered around 8,000 men.112 Although it exceeded Pareja’s army by almost 4,000 men, Carrera’s forces were unable to detain the royalists in the combat of Yerbas Buenas, near the *villa*. Disorder, fear and uncertainty among revolutionary troops helped the royalists obtain an easy victory. But when Pareja sought to cross the river Maule and pursue the enemy north, volunteers from Chiloé and Valdivia refused to follow him. With only 1,700 men, a dying Pareja had to withdraw his troops to Chillán and transfer his command to Juan Francisco Sánchez, who served as the senior royalist officer until Gabino Gaínza arrived from Lima in early 1814. In Chillán, Sánchez assembled his army, while the insurgents besieged the city for almost 45 days. For both Carrera and Sánchez it was clear that neither the revolutionaries nor the royalists had sufficient military training to perform well on the battlefield. But whereas the latter found in Chillán a relatively safe place to rest and train, the former suffered multiple desertions and casualties.113 As a contemporary

111 *El Monitor Araucano*, vol. I, number 13, May 6, 1813. There were a few ‘profesiones’, however, that were exempted from serving in the army. This was the case, for example, of miners and the employees of the post office. See *El Monitor Araucano*, vol. I, number 38, Jul. 3, 1813; and *El Monitor Araucano*, vol. I, number 54, Aug. 10, 1813.
113 Fernando Campos Harriet, *Los defensores del Rey* (Santiago: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1958), p. 23, argued that in the *Sitio de Chillán* Juan Francisco Sánchez received the help of two ‘allies’: ‘the Franciscans of Chillán and the 1813 winter, the “General Winter of 1813”, one of the most decided defenders of the king’. For the support given by the Franciscans to the royalist army, see Jaime Valenzuela, ‘Los franciscanos de Chillán y la independencia: avatares de una comunidad monárquista’, *Historia*, number 38, vol. I (June, 2005), pp. 113–58.
author noted: ‘in this state, the daily rains and cold being so excessive that a sentinel could not remain five minutes in his post without dropping his weapon, the [revolutionary] army began to disappear. Soldiers deserted or died out of starvation; horses and cattle suffered the same fate’.114

A series of skirmishes between the revolutionary army and royalist guerrillas weakened the revolutionaries even more. Harder to combat and resist than regular troops, Sánchez’s guerrillas surprised Carrera’s forces in October 1813 in the combat of El Roble. Carrera’s mistakes and misfortunes prompted the Junta to dismiss him from the post of general-in-chief, and replace him with Bernardo O’Higgins, ‘who had built up a solid reputation for tactical skill and personal valour during the preceding campaigns’115 and who, in the end, obtained a psychological victory in El Roble when he forced the royalists to ‘cross the Itata River in the most evident disorder’.116 At the same time, the Junta Gubernativa del Reino moved south to Talca to take control of the ‘military situation in general’.117

But despite O’Higgins’ psychological victory in El Roble, the position of the royalists was still much stronger than that of the revolutionaries. The royalist army became even more powerful when a new envoy of Abascal, Gabino Gainza, arrived from Lima in early 1814 to take command. In his instructions to Gainza, Abascal ordered that he consolidate the royalist soldiers into a single army. Gainza should disembark in Arauco and then move north in order to re-conquer Concepción and the river Maule, thus forcing the revolutionaries to concentrate their troops in Santiago. Before entering Santiago, however, Gainza should attempt peacefully to convince the insurgents to return to the fold of the monarchy. If the revolutionaries ‘agree to lay down the weapons that without a serious cause they have taken against the king and the supreme national government’, then they ‘will be treated with courtesy and humanity. We should stop the hideous shedding of our precious blood and stop the calamities of a civil war’. Abascal finished his instructions by stressing that any attempt to sign a peace agreement with the insurgents in terms other than those stipulated by the viceroy should be approved by Abascal previously. We will see that Gainza’s failure to obey this clause prompted his dismissal from the position of general-in-chief of the royalist army.118

Gainza disembarked in Arauco on 31 January 1814 with 200 men, and immediately departed for Chillán, where the bulk of the royalist army was stationed.119 There, Gainza met Juan Francisco Sánchez. Although Gainza

118 These instructions can be found in Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. IX, pp. 237–39.
never got along well with Sánchez and the rest of the royalist officers, in the first months of 1814 the Spanish general succeeded in cutting the communications between the two main divisions of the rebel army (the first led by Juan Mackenna in what is now the province of Ñuble, the other by O’Higgins in Concepción). The lack of communication between the insurgent divisions was as problematic as the lack of food and men. In October 1813, the revolutionary government issued a short Reglamento provisional de aprovisionamiento,\textsuperscript{120} which was complemented a year later by another, much more comprehensive Reglamento.\textsuperscript{121} Both of them vested responsibility for the supply of the army in a bureaucratic official called the Proveedor General, who had a fluid communication with the provinces (through the so-called provincial juntas de auxilios). However, neither Reglamento was able to overcome the serious problem of lack of food.

Meanwhile, in order to enlarge the army the Santiago authorities introduced forced conscription on 14 January 1814. On that occasion, it was decided that ‘every Santiago inhabitant is a soldier. In each of its eight headquarters an infantry regiment or battalion will be formed, composed of the individuals who reside in them’.\textsuperscript{122} The main ‘obligation of any inhabitant of the country was to improve his “knowledge and military instruction to defend the patria, especially when tyranny [Abascal] is making its utmost efforts to destroy it”’.\textsuperscript{123} In March, a recruitment law ordered that ‘every citizen and every American individual, between the age of sixteen and fifty, who had not yet enrolled either in the regular bodies of the army or in the militias, should present himself in the square of the Tribunal de Justicia for the formation of the Guardia Cívica’.\textsuperscript{124} Furthermore, in September 1814 José Miguel Carrera promised to free the slaves of Chile in exchange for their military service, which eventually caused a bitter debate between the government and many hacendados who still owned slaves.\textsuperscript{125} The hacendados were apparently dissatisfied with the government’s plan of paying the cost of the slaves ‘progressively’ instead of immediately, giving the hacendados half the soldiers’ wage every month. The criticism of the hacendados became so evident that, on 4 September 1814, the authorities published a Bando ordering the ‘amos’ to free their slaves under severe penalties.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{120} FV, vol. 238, 1 Oct. 1813, pp. 79–82.
\textsuperscript{122} Quoted in León, ‘Reclutas forzados y desertores de la patria’, p. 273. The decree is called: ‘Decreto [en que] se hace obligatorio el Servicio militar, Talca, 14 de enero de 1814’.
\textsuperscript{123} León, ‘Reclutas forzados y desertores de la patria’, p. 273
\textsuperscript{124} El Monitor Araucano, vol. 2, Extraordinary, Mar. 12, 1814.
\textsuperscript{126} Guillermo Felíu Cruz, La abolición de la esclavitud en Chile (Santiago: Ediciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1942), p. 77. For the history of the Batallón de Infantes de la
These laws did little to improve the delicate situation of the revolutionaries. The Junta Gubernativa del Reino returned to Santiago on 1 March 1814. This allowed the royalist Ildefonso Elorreaga to take Talca, and on 29 March a royalist contingent defeated a revolutionary division that had been recently sent from the capital. It was in this context that the santiaguino politicians decided to dismantle the Junta Gubernativa and gathered the executive power into a single, powerful public office. Antonio José de Irisarri voted for the appointment of Valparaíso’s military governor, Francisco de la Lastra, as Supreme Director of the country, a motion that was rapidly seconded by the capital’s principal inhabitants.127

As Supreme Director, de la Lastra ordered O’Higgins and Mackenna to negotiate a peace treaty with Gainza. The reason why Gainza agreed to sign the Treaty of Lircay of 3 May 1814 was purely military, although, as we shall see in the next section, it brought about profound political repercussions. Despite the victories that his army had obtained in the period February–April 1814, in Gainza’s opinion the royalist army was in a state of complete disarray. While he referred to Sánchez as a ‘despot’, he criticized his soldiers for being poor fighters. He believed that ‘500 European soldiers are more valuable than 2,000 Chileans’, a statement that uncovers how few European contingents the royalist army had.128 Two months later, when Abascal had dismissed Gainza’s negotiation with the insurgents, Gainza argued that he had signed the treaty because he was certain that if the war resumed its course the insurgents would receive the support of Buenos Aires and organize an army that, in his view, would be ‘stronger than ours’.129 Judging by the origins of the military plan that two and half years later allowed José de San Martín to re-conquer Chile, Gainza was not far wrong.

*Patria*, a detachment composed of ‘negros, morenos, mulatos, pardos and zambos’, see Hugo Contreras, ‘Artesanos mulatos y soldados beneméritos. El Batallón de Infantes de la Patria en la Guerra de Independencia de Chile, 1795–1820’, in *Historia*, vol. 44, number 1 (June, 2011). It is worth stating, however, that, in comparison to other American regions—such as Guadeloupe and New Granada, where the participation in the army of coloured people was quite significant (especially on the royalist side, as Marcela Echeverri has recently argued for the case of Popayán)—, the participation of slaves in the Chilean revolution was much more limited. See Marcela Echeverri, ‘Popular Royalists, Empire, and Politics in Southwestern New Granada, 1809–1819’, *HAHR*, vol. 91, number 2 (2011). For debates on citizenship and slavery at the end of the eighteenth century in Guadeloupe, see Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787–1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

128 AGI, Diversos 3, Gainza to Abascal, 26 Apr. 1814.
129 AGI, Diversos 3, Gainza to Abascal, 23 Jul. 1814.
IV. The political legitimization of a revolutionary movement

This section discusses the military implications of the most important political projects of the period 1810–1814. The first of these political projects was the Santiago Junta’s resolution of October 1810 to appoint a commission headed by the Irish officer Juan Mackenna and the man of letters Juan Egaña to prepare a new Defensive Plan to resist possible incursions from abroad. Their document combined political with military topics, as shown by their recommendation to integrate the island of Chiloé (which since 1768 depended on the Peruvian viceroy) into Chilean territory. They thought that the ‘political relations with Peru’ could change, and that the Junta should be ready to administer regions that, until then, had been Lima’s responsibility. In their view, such a significant military possession as Chiloé could not ‘belong to a different kingdom [Lima]’. Yet neither this statement nor future political decisions made by the junistas weakened the relationship between the Chilean authorities and viceroy Abascal. In comparison with other South American regions, notably Buenos Aires, Chile’s autonomist movement was, in the opinion of the viceroy, ‘much more moderate’, a statement which explains why Abascal concentrated his counterrevolutionary efforts not in Chile but in the regions where Buenos Aires’ influence was most patently felt (Upper Peru). The difference between the Chilean and the porteño Juntas was not that the behaviour of the former had been less revolutionary than the latter. Both Juntas responded to the principle that in the absence of the king the power had to return to the people. Rather, the difference was that 1810 was not a very violent year in Chile, as it had been in Buenos Aires.

The historical economic links between Lima and Chile also played a part in Abascal’s decision to postpone any action against the establishment of the September Junta. Taking into account the ‘necessities that this kingdom [Peru] has of some of Chile’s economic goods and also the profits that Peru obtains from their exchange’, the viceroy stated, Lima ‘persisted in its economic relations with Chile’. In a sense, Cristián Guerrero’s hypothesis that the active commercial exchange between both countries prevented the viceroy from sending an expeditionary force to attack the Chileans in the

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130 In Fray Melchor Martínez, *Memoria Histórica sobre la Revolución de Chile* (Santiago: Editorial de la Biblioteca Nacional, 1964), vol. I, p. 261. The Plan was presented to the authorities on 27 Nov. 1810.
131 Serrano and Ossa, ‘1810 en Chile’, p. 111.
132 AGI, Diversos 2. This opinion appears in a rough draft that was part of a letter to Evaristo Pérez de Castro.
133 Vicente Rodríguez and José Antonio Calderón (eds.), *Memoria de gobierno del Virrey Abascal*, CSIC (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1944), vol. II, pp. 163–64.
period 1810–1812 is perfectly plausible. Not even the declaration of Free Trade made by the Santiago junstistas in February 1811, which theoretically affected the alleged monopoly rights of the limeño merchant guild, caused significant frictions between the viceroy and the Santiago junstistas.

Conflicts between the Chilean authorities and Abascal began to be more explicit only in mid-1812, as a consequence of the rupture between José Miguel Carrera’s government and the city of Valdivia. According to Abascal, the decision of the valdivianos to put their city ‘under the dependency of the Peruvian viceroy’ had prompted him to ‘issue the appropriate orders to defend’ the valdivianos ‘from the attacks that the Santiago revolutionaries might carry out’ against them. Divergences deepened as a consequence of a series of administrative decisions made by Carrera throughout the second half of 1812. In the first place, and contravening the metropolitan order that demanded the Constitución de Cádiz be put into practice, on 27 October 1812 the Chilean government published its own Reglamento Constitucional. Article 3 of this Reglamento asserted that Ferdinand VII would still be considered the king of Chile, but that he ought to accept ‘our Constitution in the same way as that of the Peninsula’. This declaration explicitly contravened Abascal’s disposition of 19 October that Chileans were obliged to obey the Spanish ‘national constitution’. At the same time, article 5 of the Reglamento stated that ‘any decree order or direction emanating from any authority or court outside the territory of Chile has no effect’. On 13 November the Santiago Cabildo wrote Carrera that the Peruvian Viceroyalty ‘has nothing to do with the Chilean state’ and that ‘our duty is to cut the links with an enemy [Abascal] who is both proud and impotent’. Six days later La Aurora de Chile felt entitled to condemn the ‘insults’ and ‘hostilities’ of the viceroy:

Yesterday the Junta de Corporaciones and military chiefs read a letter sent by Lima’s viceroy [Abascal] to the vocales of the administrative Junta. Everyone agreed that the insults of the viceroy demanded the immediate closing of the ports, a measure that in the end was not approved since the people of Lima, composed of our brothers, should not be harassed because of the viceroy’s fault. However, we will make the viceroy understand that he is mistaken in his calculations, based on negligible reports, and so the inhabitants of this kingdom can be assured that the government’s sole purpose is to encourage safety and general happiness.

135 Cristián Guerrero Lira, La contrarrevolución de la Independencia en Chile (Santiago: DIBAM, 2002), p. 16.
137 Rodríguez and Calderón, Memoria de gobierno del Virrey Abascal, p. 166.
138 Quoted in Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, volume VIII, p. 436.
139 Quoted in Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, volume VIII,, p. 437.
140 La Aurora de Chile, number 41, Nov. 19, 1812, p. 172.
From the articles of the Reglamento it would be correct to conclude that José Miguel Carrera’s purpose was to prepare the ground to establish a constitutional monarchy in Chile after Ferdinand VII’s return to the throne. This was an objective similar to that sought by the delegates to the Spanish Cortes when they drew up their Constitución de Cádiz (which was promulgated on 19 March 1812). However, it is unlikely that the writers of the Chilean Reglamento used the Spanish Constitution as a model when they did their work. In fact, the article that announced that Ferdinand VII would act as king of Chile only under the condition that the king must give their constitution the same value as that of the Peninsula, suggests that the writers of the Chilean Reglamento knew of the Spanish constitution but did not think it should have validity in Chile. A good example that reveals the differences between the Constitución de Cádiz and the Reglamento is related to the role assigned by both charts to the post of viceroy: whereas the Constitución de Cádiz recognized some of the authority of the Spanish American viceroys, the Chilean Reglamento prevented the Peruvian Viceroyalty from intervening in local politics.

We saw that Carrera’s radical stand prompted Abascal to dispatch Antonio Pareja to combat the Chilean revolutionaries in their own territory. This measure entailed both military and political consequences. The war in Chile forced the Chileans to take sides and, therefore, to accept that moderate positions could be easily confused with treason. Loyalty became, in this context, one of the most popular words to define an individual’s political position, regardless of whether he was a monarchist or an insurgent. For the latter, there were two ways to show loyalty to the revolution: to enrol in the army, and to acknowledge the successive Juntas Gubernativas and afterwards the institution of the Supreme Director as the sole legitimate authority of the country. To be a good and faithful ‘patriot’ became, in fact, synonymous with being loyal to whichever revolutionary government happened to be in power.

141 A similar argument appears in Jocelyn-Holt, La Independencia, p. 188.
142 As Víctor Peralta Ruiz, En defensa de la autoridad. Política y cultura bajo el gobierno del Virrey Abascal. Perú, 1806–1816 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2002), p. 116, has said, in theory the Constitución de Cádiz reduced the political power of the viceroys but maintained their military dominance over the rest of the Spanish American institutions. In any case, Abascal never truly subordinated himself to the Constitution.
143 There were some Chilean officers who, at the same time, praised the Constitución de Cádiz but criticized the intervention of viceroy Abascal in Chilean politics. That was the case of lieutenant-colonel Manuel Bulnes Quevedo. See Peter Heywood, A Memoir of the Late Captain Peter Heywood, R.N. with Extracts from his Diaries and Correspondence by Edward Tagart (London: E. Wilson, 1832), p. 253–58. For an analysis of the influence of the Constitución de Cádiz on Chilean politics, see Juan Luis Ossa Santa Cruz, ‘Revolución y constitucionalismo en Chile, 1808–1814’, Revista de Historia Iberoamericana, vol. 5, number 1 (2012), pp. 111–39.
The argument that every inhabitant should be a defender of his patria was a recurrent strategy used by the authorities to boost recruitment. This idea appears, for instance, in a Catecismo Patriótico para instrucción de la juventud del Reyno de Chile, which, although lacking an official date, became popular in Chile around 1811. Its author claimed that:

The salaried [troops] that now exist in the different parts of the Reyno should be enough in time of peace. In times of War may the Milícias be disciplined, and may all men be Soldiers. [...] May one hundred thousand citizens save the Patria in case of an external invasion, so the enthusiasm that inspires self-preservation can circumvent the attempts of all European powers.

A similar approach was advocated in March 1812 by Camilo Henríquez. In La Aurora de Chile, Henríquez favoured the idea that the defence of the country must be conducted by ‘virtuous citizens’ turned into ‘soldiers’:

The country’s emblem must point out the virtuous citizen. [...] In a system of civic freedom each man is, with the force of expression, a soldier of his country. The odious differences of the state are finally over. Militiamen are armed citizens, and each citizen is a warrior who sustains the rights of society. May the humiliating idea of mercenaries, who have seen despotism as the satellites of tyranny, be completely vanished. May every single class of the secular state use the TRICOLOUR ROSETTE [ESCARAPELA TRICOLOR] that has been given to the Army.

For ‘citizens’ Henríquez meant ‘inhabitants’, all of whom should receive ‘not only a civil but also a military education’. Yet, at the same time, the editor of La Aurora de Chile was aware that the defence of the territory could not be exclusively undertaken by individuals gathered in the citizen body par excellence, i.e. the militia, but had also to involve the regular troops. Henríquez believed that if in the past things ‘could have come to the point

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144 This supposition arises from the fact that a copy of this Catecismo can be found together with other personal papers of viceroy Abascal that are dated to 1811. See AGI, Diversos 2. For the role of Catecismos during this period, see Rafael Sagredo, ‘Los actores políticos en los catecismos patriotas americanos. 1810–1821’, Historia, number 28 (Santiago: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 1994); and Rafael Sagredo, De la Colonia a la República. Los catecismos políticos americanos, 1811–1827 (Madrid: Prisma Histórico, 2009).

145 AGI, Diversos 2. The emphasis is mine.

146 La Aurora de Chile, number 24, Jul. 23, 1812, p. 102. Capital letters in the original.

147 La Aurora de Chile, number 5, Mar. 12, 1812, pp. 23–24.

148 In this, Henríquez opposed Juan Egaña’s argument that the defence of the territory should rest with the militia. See Vasco Castillo, La creación de la República. La filosofía pública en Chile, 1810–1830 (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2009), pp. 49–51; and chapter VI of this book.
that every citizen could have been a soldier, and every soldier a hero; if the military education could have formed well-trained officers [...] if continuous exercises [...] could have converted every citizen into a Lacedaemon’, then the security of the state could have rested solely upon the militias. But in the present circumstances, Henríquez concluded, only ‘a regular and permanent army would bring us a solid and durable liberty’. This point is crucial to understanding the process of militarization that Chileans experienced after the outbreak of war in 1813.

Henríquez’s approach did not produce an immediate practical response. Recruitment was hardly voluntary and, in fact, desertion and draconian recruitment laws were the main trends of the period 1813–1814. The reasons why soldiers deserted varied depending on where and when they deserted. Thus, we find that in November 1813 the artilleryman Matías Larenas told his investigators that he had deserted during the battle of El Roble (17 October 1813) after hearing a Portuguese shopkeeper [pulpero] saying that the enemy’s army was much stronger than the revolutionaries. Larenas, in other words, fled the army because he was afraid that the royalists could arrest him and treat him badly, a statement that he probably used to justify his actions before his accusers. In most cases, however, soldiers did not desert individually but en masse. In April 1814, for example, the government ordered Rancagua’s militia colonel, Juan Francisco Larraín, to pursue the deserters of the División Maipú, who, according to the authorities’ estimation, were 65% of the total of the soldiers originally recruited (130 of 200).

From the government’s point of view, desertion was an act of treason that deserved exemplary punishment. Only a few days after the royalists


150 My analysis of desertions during this epoch is based on León, ‘Reclutas forzados y desertores de la patria’.


152 MG, vol. 1, 27 Apr. 1814.

153 The radicalization of the war can also be seen in the excesses committed by both armies in the villas and pueblos they seized. See, for instance, León, ‘Rechutas forzados y desertores de la patria’, p. 265; and CDHICH, vol. 8, p. 99.
attacked the port of Talcahuano in March 1813, Carrera ordered the militia commander of Concepción, Antonio Mendiburu, to remit to Curicó ‘escorted and imprisoned with a bar and shackles’ the militiamen who did not ‘blindly obey Mendiburu’s orders’. Almost a year later, the revolutionary government claimed that anyone who ‘excuses himself’ from defending his country should be punished under the ‘declaration of being spurious [expurio, sic] to the patria’. This Oficio was followed by another Bando at the end of March 1814: ‘every individual who hides or flees from the army will be treated as a traitor; his possessions, meanwhile, will be confiscated, burned and destroyed’.

Of course, desertion was only one of the many types of treachery that an individual could commit during this time of political uncertainty. ‘Every good citizen who is aware of a secret conspiracy against the actual system’, claimed an 1811 Vigilance Junta Regulation, ‘must immediately inform one of the persons who compose the Junta de Vigilancia. If he does it, […] he will be treated as a liberator of his patria; if he keeps silent […] he will be rigorously punished according to law’. This Junta de Vigilancia was composed of fifteen individuals from Santiago and Concepción, of whom at least three were militia officers.

In September 1811, the executive Junta published a Bando to reinforce the loyalty and patriotism of the Chileans. In the view of the juntistas, every person who had been employed by the state had to demonstrate his patriotism at all times and in any circumstance. A year and a half later, the revolutionary authorities’ published a Bando explaining their position regarding this theme: ‘the government does not cease to promote and advance the common adherence to the sacred cause that the Chilean people have entrusted to its hands, both exciting the virtuous citizen and seriously admonishing the ungrateful, the indolent, and the disseminator of unrest and discord. Consequently, this junta has agreed not to recruit civilians and military who are not devoted to the Patria, stating, as well, that the anti-patriot or individual who has contrary views must be stripped off [despojado] of his current position.

The radicalization of the political process and the outbreak of the war changed the meaning of ‘patriotism’: while until 1810 ‘patriots’ could be advocates of both the metropolis and local territories like the Chilean kingdom, more and more defenders of the ‘patria’ began to be identified with the revolutionary programme. The problem was that within the revolutionary group there were at least two different factions that struggled

155 Quoted in León, ‘Reclutas forzados y desertores de la patria’, p. 263.
156 MG, vol. 1, 19 Mar. 1814.
158 AGI, Chile 207, 10 Jun. 1811.
159 They were: Ignacio Carrera, Domingo Díaz Salcedo and Manuel Pérez Cotapos.
to achieve political supremacy and represent ‘real’ patriotism. The conflict between these factions became evident in May 1814, when revolutionaries and royalists signed a peace agreement near the river Lircay (the revolutionaries were represented by Bernando O’Higgins and Juan Mackenna, the royalists by Gabino Gainza). The main articles of the Treaty of Lircay asserted that the ‘Chilean government’ would administer the territory with some degree of autonomy but not independent of either the Peruvian viceroy or the metropolis. Article 1 stated that Chile was ‘an integral part of the Spanish monarchy’. It also recognized Ferdinand VII as king of Chile, adding, however, that ‘the internal [Chilean] government retains all its power and authority to trade with allied and neutral nations, especially with Great Britain, to which Spain owes its political existence’. Article 2 contended that hostilities between both armies were over. Furthermore, Gainza agreed to withdraw his forces from Talca within thirty hours of having signed the agreement.\textsuperscript{161}

Of these articles, the one which stated that Chile ‘was an integral part of the Spanish monarchy’ was the most resented by the faction led by the Carrera brothers. People like Manuel José Gandarillas argued that ‘America cannot and should not attain her prosperity in pious brotherhood with Spain’.\textsuperscript{162} José Miguel Carrera, for his part, condemned the performance of O’Higgins and Mackenna in the negotiations and labelled them as traitors.\textsuperscript{163} Even Francisco de la Lastra, the Supreme Director who ordered O’Higgins and Mackenna to sign the Treaty on behalf of the ‘Chilean government’, declared a couple of weeks later that his administration had not sincerely sought to remain a part of the Spanish empire. On 27 May, twenty-four days after the Treaty of Lircay was concluded, de la Lastra wrote to the Chilean delegate to London, Francisco Antonio Pinto, that Chile ‘is resolved to be free at any cost, that the more she knows her rights the more she hates slavery, that she has completely forgotten the old system, that she wants a liberal system which will provide this part of America—the most abandoned and downtrodden part—with those advantages which until now it has not experienced. These are the true and intimate sentiments of Chile’. In writing this, Collier says, de la Lastra accepted that he ‘had agreed to the Treaty only as a means of buying time’.\textsuperscript{164}

\textsuperscript{161} A not very well preserved copy of the Treaty of Lircay can be found in FV, vol. 812.
\textsuperscript{163} In his diary, José Miguel Carrera suggests that O’Higgins and Mackenna signed the Treaty of Lircay to get rid of him and his brothers; apparently, one of the implicit decisions made during the negotiations was that the Carreras would be imprisoned in Chile and sent to Lima to be condemned by the viceroy. See his \textit{Diario del Brigadier General D. José Miguel Carrera Verdugo} (Santiago: Academia de Historia Militar, 1986), vol. III, pp. 164–67.
\textsuperscript{164} Mariano Osorio, \textit{Conducta militar y política del General en Jefe del Ejército del Rey en
Viceroy Abascal also utterly rejected the Treaty. He argued that the terms under which the Treaty was signed contradicted Abascal’s previous instruction that negotiations with the rebels ought to be approved by him first. Abascal, it seems, was ready to accept that Chileans had some degree of political autonomy—quite a novel position considering his ‘absolutist’ credentials. However, neither Carrera’s Reglamento of 1812 nor the Treaty of Lircay, whose second article stated that Gainza had to withdraw his forces from Chilean territory, could be tolerated by Lima.

Abascal’s position regarding the Treaty proves that negotiations between revolutionaries and royalists had more profound effects than historians have usually believed. True, sooner rather than later the insurgents reached a conclusion similar to that of Abascal: the Treaty could not satisfy either side. This explains why the struggle between revolutionaries and royalists continued throughout that year, ending in Rancagua, where the royalist troops of Mariano Osorio defeated the remains of the first Chilean revolutionary army and forced its leaders to cross the Cordillera and settle in Mendoza. But more important than the motives behind the articles of this Treaty, and perhaps more significant than its short duration, is the very fact of its existence. Thanks to the armistice both sides agreed that only the derecho de gentes could put an end to the conflict. This means that for the first time the most important royalist agent in Chile—Gainza—admitted that the Chilean ‘rebels’ should be treated in accordance with international rather than penal law. Abascal himself was ready to accept this, although not before giving his approval to the terms of the negotiation.

Abascal rejected the detail of the Treaty not because he believed that rebels were unsuitable for negotiations, but rather because he concluded that the Treaty was too lenient. And he was right. Although historian Jaime Rodríguez is correct when he says that with the Treaty the revolutionaries sought not ‘independence but rather a form of government concordant with the principles of the Spanish Nation’, Gainza’s acknowledgment of the Chilean revolutionaries’ right to govern their territory was a triumph for the rebels. The articles of the Treaty, in fact, formalized some of the most profound political changes introduced in Chile since 1810. It did not institutionalize

oposición con las de los caudillos que tiranizaban el Reyno de Chile (Santiago: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1814), p. 16. The English translation is by Collier, Ideas and Politics, p. 118.

165 Rodríguez and Calderón, Memoria de Gobierno del Virrey Abascal, pp. 176–78. See also AGI, Diversos 3.


167 Rodríguez, The Independence of Spanish America, p. 143.
independence (not least because it is doubtful that O’Higgins, Mackenna and even Carrera had sought independence in 1814), but it institutionalized the idea that a revolution had indeed occurred in Chile. The armistice epitomized the views and goals of two communities that, at least in theory, were sovereign (otherwise no treaty between these two parties could have been signed). Moreover, the signature of the Treaty by the representatives of two states, ‘Spain’ and ‘Chile’, proves that Gainza saw in Chile a distinct counterpart with which it was acceptable and indispensable to negotiate. \(^{168}\) This was without doubt a more important triumph for the revolutionaries than any previous gains on the battlefield.

This chapter has discussed the repercussions in Chile of the Spanish imperial crisis of 1808. Immediately after learning about the abdications in Bayonne, the Chilean elites reaffirmed their loyalty to the imprisoned king and the successive corporations that governed the empire on behalf of the monarchy. The arrival in Chile of the envoy of the Junta Suprema de Sevilla, José Santiago de Luco, strengthened the loyalty of the santiaguinos towards Spain, though it created friction with the local governor, Francisco Antonio García Carrasco. Differences between García Carrasco and Luco affected the relationship between the governor and the local elites, as Luco allied with important figures who were discontented with García Carrasco’s ‘mal gobierno’. The dismissal of the governor in June 1810 opened the door to deeper administrative changes, even though none of them aimed to cut the links with the metropolis. The juntistas, in other words, led a political revolution to change the local government from within the empire.

By stressing in section II that the creation of the Junta was a political move led mainly by the Santiago elites, I introduced an important yet often forgotten political aspect of this period: that the Junta pressured to represent not only the capital but the entire kingdom. At first, Concepción reacted positively to Santiago’s preeminent position, and even one of its leading and most radical figures, Juan Martínez de Rozas, gladly became a member of the Junta. The radical stand of Rozas was approved by some but resisted by others, which explains why in mid-1811 Rozas decided to return to Concepción and form a government more in line with his political beliefs. His example was followed by a group of radicals from Santiago who, thanks to the support they received from the regular military officers headed by José

\(^{168}\) This idea can be compared to that amply worked by Clément Thibaud, *Repúblicas en armas*, pp. 475–90 when he analyses the consequences of a peace treaty signed by revolutionaries and royalists in the ex-viceroyalty of New Granada in 1821. A short version of his argument can be found in Clément Thibaud, ‘Definiendo el sujeto de la soberanía: repúblicas y guerra en la Nueva Granada y Venezuela, 1808–1820’, in Manuel Chust and Juan Marchena (eds.), *Las armas de la Nación*, pp. 217–18.
Miguel Carrera and his brothers, established a new Junta and made contact with Rozas’ followers in Concepción. The involvement of the military in politics was soon criticized by Rozas.

Despite Rozas’ critical view of Carrera’s ‘praetorianism’, the September Junta unleashed a process of militarization in the entire kingdom. The uncertainty regarding Napoleon’s plans for Spanish America, or how the rest of the Spanish American colonies would react to the newly created Junta, led the new authorities to strengthen the defence of the country. They needed to be prepared to stop a foreign invasion, and so they did not delay in implementing a military reform that included the professionalization of the officers and the systematic recruitment of new troops. The end of the conflict between Santiago and Concepción coincided with the cutting of ties between the Carrera government and Abascal. The decision of the viceroy to send a series of expeditionary forces to combat the Chilean revolutionaries caused a civil war in Chile that, as we shall see in future chapters, lasted until 1826.

The last section addressed the political causes of the outbreak of the war, as well as the political repercussions of some of the most important military decisions made by the Chilean authorities in the years 1810–1814. It was argued that Valdivia’s break with Santiago and the publication in October 1812 of Carrera’s Reglamento Constitucional prompted Abascal to send the first royalist force, stressing, nonetheless, that such a chart did not follow the model of the Constitución de Cádiz. This is an important point, because it shows that although Chileans were influenced by foreign affairs they did not react monolithically to them. At the same time, I rejected the traditional view that the so-called Treaty of Lircay did not have long-term consequences, underlining that its very existence allowed the Chilean revolutionaries to start being seen for the first time as members of a sovereign political community.
CHAPTER II

Political and military counterrevolution in Chile, 1814–1817

This chapter discusses the political and military characteristics of the counterrevolutionary government established in Chile in October 1814, which was successively led by Mariano Osorio (October 1814–December 1815) and Francisco Marcó del Pont (December 1815–February 1817). The first section argues that the revolutionaries lost one of the bloodiest battles of the revolution in Rancagua after recognizing that the Treaty of Lircay could satisfy neither side. Beginning with Miguel Luis and Gregorio Víctor Amunátegui in the 1840s, Chilean historians have stressed the ‘disastrous’ consequences of this battle for Chilean society. By so doing they have overlooked the fact that in 1814 the political programme of the royalists was as popular and viable as that of the revolutionaries. This historiographical myth has disregarded the fact that Rancagua forced the revolutionaries to redesign completely their political strategy, especially after realizing that initially Osorio was applauded by many of the same elites that had given their support to the insurgents prior to October 1814.

Osorio enjoyed reasonable levels of support during his first months in office, as the public manifestations in favour of the royalists during their entrance into Santiago demonstrate. However, we will see that the Spanish governor failed to follow a coherent course of action regarding the way the radical insurgents should be judicially prosecuted both in Chile and outside the country. Osorio’s erratic behaviour affected his image, and at the end of his administration the elites refused to grant him the economic resources that, according to the governor, were needed to defray the costs of the royalist army. Osorio’s ambivalence, in any case, did not cause his fall. It was viceroy Abascal’s decision to write to Spain asking for his removal, and Ferdinand VII’s consequent appointment of Marcó del Pont in his place, that triggered Osorio’s fall.

In comparison to 1815 (the year when Osorio was in office), the year 1816 was much more agitated for the royalists. The organization of a revolutionary army on the other side of the Cordillera (the subject of the next chapter of this book) led the authorities in Chile to prepare for an invasion and, therefore, to strengthen the internal defensive system of the country. Following historian
Cristián Guerrero Lira, we will see that Marcó’s policies, historically seen as despotic and impolitic by Chilean historians, are to be understood taking into account this context of military and political awareness. This questions the contention that the counterrevolutionary government fell because Chileans reacted to Marcó’s alleged tyrannical personality. The counterrevolution, I will argue, collapsed not only because the revolutionaries managed to carry out a successful military campaign, but also because, after eighteen months of royalist presence in Chile, important sectors of the elites had become cool towards Spain’s political project. The absolutist option provoked by Ferdinand VII’s return to power lost adherents as time went by, and at the end of Marcó’s government even the most conservative members of the elites doubted whether they should relinquish the political rights they had achieved since 1810. In short, the royalist regime in Chile failed to survive because neither the governors of the period 1814–1817, nor Spanish ministers, realized that in order to maintain the colony within the empire it was necessary to grant Chileans the privilege of having some degree of self-government.

I. Rancagua: a revolutionary battle or a historiographical disaster?

Even though royalists and revolutionaries did their best to put the Treaty of Lircay into practice, differences between the Spanish commanding general, Gabino Gainza, and the revolutionary leaders prevented the armistice from materializing. Stipulation 2 of the treaty was challenged by Gainza, who understood that viceroy Abascal was hardly in the position of consenting to the withdrawal of the royalist army from Chilean territory, as this would have meant an explicit recognition that the war had ended. As a result, Gainza delayed the promise of taking his forces out of Chile for as long as the revolutionary government accepted his arguments for keeping his men in the country. Problems surfaced at the end of July 1814, when a political insurrection ousted Francisco de la Lastra from office, an event that empowered the critics of the treaty, especially José Miguel Carrera’s supporters. Eventually, Carrera undertook his third personal coup d’état against the constituted authorities, forming a Junta composed of himself, Julián Uribe and Manuel Muñoz, whose first action was to expel one of the representatives of the ‘state of Chile’ during the negotiation of the treaty, Juan Mackenna, to Mendoza.1 O’Higgins’ troops, which were quartered in Talca, refused to recognize the new Junta. A small confrontation between the two revolutionary factions soon followed at a place called Tres Acequias.2

Before long, however, Carrera and O’Higgins once again put their differences aside and joined forces against a new royalist invasion headed by Mariano Osorio. Osorio had landed at the port of Talcahuano on 13 August

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1 Amunátegui and Amunátegui, La Reconquista española, pp. 154–55.
1814, and by the middle of September his army was in control of much of the southern part of the territory. Previously, he had received orders from viceroy Abascal to urge the insurgents to return to the monarchical fold and thus avoid a bloody military campaign. Carrera did not accept this proposition, nor did Osorio do much to convince the revolutionaries of Abascal’s intentions, which in any case were designed simply to gain time after learning that Buenos Aires’ forces had occupied Montevideo. Hence, at the end of September both armies knew that only a direct confrontation would put an end to the uncertainty that the new royalist invasion had provoked in Chile.

According to O’Higgins, the city of Rancagua, located 87 kilometres south of Santiago, was the best place to stop the royalists from advancing on the capital. He believed that the revolutionary army (of around 3,900 men) was sufficiently prepared to confront Osorio’s troops (around 5,000 men), and so he insisted on assembling in Rancagua. José Miguel Carrera, on the other hand, thought the revolutionaries should wait until the army was better organized. In his view, Rancagua was not safe enough; he preferred to fight the royalists in Angostura de Paine, not far from Santiago. In the end, O’Higgins’ argument proved stronger: two of the three revolutionary divisions (one commanded by himself, the other by Juan José Carrera) sheltered in Rancagua’s main square and remained there until the royalists decided to attack. In the early morning of 1 October 1814, Osorio’s forces advanced through the outskirts of Rancagua towards the square. The first royalist attack was headed by the Talaveras, a Spanish contingent of 550 veterans recently arrived from Lima (the first to arrive in Chile for decades). Although the attack was initially stopped by O’Higgins’ troops, the Talaveras kept advancing and engaged the revolutionaries in fierce man-to-man combat. No battle of the Chilean revolution had started as violently as this.

Violence increased in the course of the day. Making reference to the fact that this was a war to the death, the royalists led a second attack carrying black flags. According to Jaime Eyzaguirre, the Talaveras made their attack crying ‘traitors, surrender! Surrender, insurgents, or die!’, while the

5 Amunátegui and Amunátegui, La Reconquista española, p. 159.
6 Encina, Historia de Chile, p. 680. Amunátegui and Amunátegui, La Reconquista española, p. 164, also speaks of an army of around 5,000 men.
7 According to the Amunátequis, La Reconquista española, pp. 160–61, O’Higgins’ division had 1,155 men and Juan José Carrera’s 1,861 (a total of 3,016 men). Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. IX, p. 429, argues that the revolutionaries started the combat with less than 1,700 men.
revolutionaries responded by shouting ‘death to the sarracenos!’ (a word used by the Spanish Americans to insult the peninsulares). The intensity of the fighting diminished in the evening, but during their third attack Osorio’s troops set the city on fire, which resulted in almost as many casualties as those of the morning.

Aware of the weakness of his forces, O’Higgins asked José Miguel Carrera to send his division to Rancagua to reinforce the revolutionaries. O’Higgins’ emissary arrived back at the city with news that Carrera agreed, and that they should expect him at dawn. Before Carrera’s arrival, however, two new royalist attacks further weakened the insurgents. The revolutionaries lacked munitions, water and provisions. As the monarchists were launching their sixth and last assault, royalist guerrilla groups were dispatched from Rancagua to prevent Carrera’s division from crossing the river Cachapoal and joining O’Higgins’ forces. Even though his division numbered almost five times the royalist guerrillas, Carrera withdrew his troops and left O’Higgins and his brother, Juan José, to face certain defeat. It is unclear whether Carrera did this because he wanted to blame O’Higgins for the defeat or, rather, because he thought it was better to save his troops in case they had to confront the royalists nearer Santiago. Whatever the reason, his decision forced O’Higgins to escape from Rancagua (he departed almost immediately for Mendoza, on the other side of the Cordillera) and to accept that the royalists had won their most important victory of the Chilean revolution.

There is little controversy about what occurred in Rancagua with regards to facts, although in historiographical terms the discussion about the political and military consequences of the battle is still open to debate. Traditionally, Chilean scholars have considered this engagement as one of the gloomiest episodes of the period 1810–1814. The idea that Rancagua was not simply a battle but a ‘disaster’ has solidified in Chile’s national memory in ways that its main propagators, the nineteenth-century historians Miguel Luis and Gregorio Víctor Amunátegui, perhaps never expected. Undoubtedly, Rancagua was the cruelest and longest battle of these years. In two days there was a balance of nearly 900 deaths, a significant number if we consider that neither army numbered more than 5,000 men. In this sense, the Amunátegui brothers were right when they deemed this battle a ‘disaster’ for the revolutionaries. The problem with their approach is that they assumed that the ‘disastrous’ consequences of the battle were felt by the majority of the local inhabitants. In fact, there were many people who not only applauded the result of the battle but also supported the counterrevolutionary government that was installed in Santiago in the wake of Rancagua.

8 Eyzaguirre, O’Higgins, p. 138.
9 The first point was put forward by Vicuña Mackenna, Vida del capitán, p. 208, the second by Amunátegui and Amunátegui, La Reconquista española, pp. 170–71.
10 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. IX, p. 429. According to Barros Arana, the revolutionaries lost 600 men and the royalists 300.
Bearing in mind that the Amunáteguis wrote their work at a time when history was beginning to be used as a vehicle to promote nationalism, it is hardly surprising that they have emphasized the ‘disastrous’ characteristics of the battle. For them, in Rancagua ‘Spain’ triumphed over ‘Chile’. However, with the exception of the Talaveras, the royalist army was formed, like the revolutionary one, by people born in Chile. Furthermore, it seems difficult to prove that the revolutionaries were, at this specific stage, seeking to build a national state as we currently understand it. Full independence was not yet the aim of all the different revolutionary factions: there were still many people who thought that enjoying some sort of autonomy within the empire was better than cutting all the links with the metropolis. It could be argued that O’Higgins and the Carrera brothers were independentistas in late 1814; however, their cases were an exception, and it is not even clear that they were independentistas in the same way as the revolutionaries in the 1820s (we will see that O’Higgins declared the independence of Chile only in 1818). In a sense, what is surprising is that historians in the twentieth century failed to question the Amunáteguis’ view, taking it for granted that Chilean society as a whole resented the outcome of the battle and the government that followed it.

Fortunately, in the last decade this trend has tended to subside. In the opinion of Cristián Guerrero Lira, events such as the battle of Rancagua should be contextualized rather than utilized to suit ideological projects (e.g. nineteenth-century nationalism). As he correctly

11 Revisionist historian Alfredo Jocelyn-Holt, *La Independencia de Chile*, p. 168 also uses the word ‘disastrous’. Historians have usually seen the battle of Rancagua as the event that ended the so-called Patria Vieja (i.e. from September 1810 to October 1814), and started the much more uncertain and—at least from the revolutionary perspective—difficult period of the Reconquista (i.e. 1814–1817). However, in my opinion, the word ‘revolution’ better defines the period 1810–1814 than Patria Vieja, not least given the latter’s obvious teleological connotation: if the Patria Vieja existed it means that a Patria Nueva must have followed it (something that Chilean historiography has traditionally believed happened after O’Higgins’ ‘heroic’ return to power in 1817). On the other hand, the royalist ‘re-conquest’ did not start, as the Amunáteguis stated, in October 1814 but in March 1813, when Antonio Pareja invaded Chile. In fact, Osorio’s entry into the capital in October 1814 marked the turning point at which the royalists began to introduce ‘counterrevolutionary’ policies in a country that had already been ‘re-conquered’. This explains why I prefer to use the words ‘counterrevolutionary governments’ when analysing Mariano Osorio and Francisco Marcó del Pont’s administrations (1814–1817). Patria Vieja appears, for example, in Barros Arana, *Historia General de Chile*, vol. IX; Encina, *Historia de Chile*, vol. VI. Even a historian as original and stimulating as Simon Collier, *Ideas and Politics*, p. 101, utilized Patria Vieja in his work on ‘Chilean Independence’. The term ‘counterrevolution’ was advanced by Guerrero Lira, *La contrarrevolución*. I thank the latter for suggesting in a private conversation the importance of seeing Pareja’s invasion as the first royalist attempt at ‘re-conquering’ Chile.
claimed, if for the revolutionaries this battle was a ‘disaster’, for the royalists it was a ‘triumph’.12

We need, therefore, to try to understand how the royalists obtained such a triumph. The concept of ‘revolutionary warfare’ provides an answer to this question. According to historian John Lynn, and as I have already commented, by the turn of the nineteenth century European wars had begun to be fought not as ‘processes’ but as ‘events’, becoming much more intense and direct than the old regime’s wars, especially during the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period. This way of waging war spread to Spanish America, where the demise of the monarchy provoked major cleavages in the colonies that could not be solved in the political arena and had to be settled on the battlefield. In Chile, the origins of revolutionary warfare are to be found in March 1813; a year and a half later, violence reached its peak, as the study of the battle of Rancagua demonstrates. On that occasion, the use of weapons was implacable, and only desperate flight allowed O’Higgins’ men to escape from what could have turned into a massacre. War to the death was the cry of both armies.

I argue, then, that Rancagua exemplified a typical revolutionary confrontation. Royalists and insurgents understood that such cases demanded explicit winners and losers, and that there was no space for diplomatic negotiation. The battle was indeed a ‘disaster’ for the revolutionaries, but this should not lead us to believe that society as a whole regarded it that way. The use of the word ‘disaster’ says more about the history of Chilean historiography and the role played three decades after Independence by nineteenth-century historians in the construction of a nationalistic historiographical tradition than about the political process of the years 1810–1814.

II. Mariano Osorio’s political and military conduct
Viceroy Abascal’s decision to dispatch Mariano Osorio to Chile was made after realizing that Gainza’s position was too weak to preserve him as governor. Abascal wrote his instructions to Osorio in July 1814, that is, almost three months before the battle of Rancagua. As in the case of Gainza, in these instructions we appreciate Abascal’s intention to pardon the Chilean revolutionaries should they lay down their arms, an idea reinforced by Osorio on 20 August: ‘Lima’s viceroy has disapproved the agreement signed on 3 May last [1814]. He, therefore, has both entrusted me to command the [royalist] army [in Chile] and authorized me to propose peace, if indeed you lay down your weapons, renew the oath to Ferdinand VII, to the Constitution of the Spanish monarchy and to the government of its courts’.13

It is interesting to note Abascal’s call for Chileans to ‘renew’ their loyalty oath not just to the king but also to the Constitución de Cádiz and the

12 Guerrero Lira, La contrarrevolución, p. 80.
Spanish Cortes. Given that the *Constitución de Cádiz* went into effect in Chile only for a month in November–December 1814, it could be said that his words were aimed at persuading Spanish Americans in general that Lima would forgive them if they gave up the insurgency. Article 21 of Abascal’s instructions informing Osorio that Chile ought to be used as a platform to re-conquer other regions—chiefly Buenos Aires and Upper Peru—reaffirms this hypothesis. Thus, although the viceroy was an absolutist who disliked the *Constitución de Cádiz*, at that moment he could not but obey Spain’s order to enforce the Cadiz Code.

But the clauses where Abascal speaks of a future pardon are neither as significant nor as numerous as the ones that allude to the course of action Osorio should take if the revolutionaries did not obey Abascal’s instructions. The viceroy ordered Osorio to mobilize the royalist troops and find out ‘the exact number of men that the cavalry, the infantry and the artillery possess’. Articles 8 and 10 referred to prosopographical matters: whereas number 8 stated that, according to an ‘*estado de fuerza*’ of January 1814, there were 2,086 men enrolled in the revolutionary army, number 10 reported that the royalists counted on 2,462 men. Article 11 reported that the king’s army was reinforced with the *Talavera* battalion, which, in Abascal’s words, would prevent the ‘enemies from beginning an incursion in the countryside’. If they decided to attack, Abascal continued, Osorio must wait until the end of the winter, when he would be able to ‘confront the revolutionaries wherever they are found and without giving them the chance of recovering in case of being defeated’.

Once Santiago was seized, Osorio was expected to give the country a new administration. Article 12 instructed him to demand ‘a moderate but general economic contribution from the inhabitants of the kingdom, with which the army will be paid and improved’. The next clause instructed him to imprison the ‘leaders of the revolution and send them to Juan Fernández until they were judged according to the law’. Afterwards, Abascal ordered the creation of a military body to be called the ‘*Concordia Chilena*’ to be composed of Americans and Europeans in equal numbers. Finally, clause 17 requested the annulment of military promotions granted by the Spanish generals without the viceroy’s explicit approval. For Abascal it was vital to

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14 As Guerrero Lira put it in *La contrarrevolución*, p. 74: ‘we can say that the final objective of this military campaign was not [to take control over the Chilean] territory but the *trasandino*’.

15 In November 1814, Osorio asked Abascal to inform him whether he should or should not put the *Constitución de Cádiz* into practice, adding that news of its abolition had reached the Chilean coast and the local inhabitants were beginning to doubt its validity. See AGI, Diversos 3, Osorio to Abascal (without exact date). The *Constitución* was finally derogated in Peru on 7 Oct. 1814, a situation acknowledged by Osorio only on 6 Dec. See Peralta Ruiz, *En defensa de la autoridad*, p. 250; and AGI, Chile 206, respectively.
place the administration of the army in the hands of loyal officers, and so he insisted on being secretly informed about the loyalties of his men.\(^\text{16}\)

Thus, Abascal wrote his Instructions with two different scenarios in mind: the first considered the possibility of convincing the insurgents to return to the fold of the monarchy. The second, on the contrary, considered the possibility that many rejected his call to disarm; the outcome of the battle of Rancagua confirms that the latter scenario prevailed, and that the royalists were able to present themselves as the legitimate authorities. Equally, Pablo Morillo in New Granada, the royalists’ arrival in Santiago in October 1814 was congratulated by the santiaguinos, who saw in Osorio the leader who would put an end to a fratricidal civil war. In this sense, Rebecca Earle’s argument that the ‘inhabitants of New Granada were deeply disillusioned with their new republican leaders’ could be applied to the case of Chile.\(^\text{17}\)

The monarchist troops began their entry into the capital at 8 am on 5 October. Both private and public buildings were adorned with royalist flags; the bells of the churches sounded stronger than ever, and even small rockets [coheteros] were launched in signs of joyfulfulness. According to Barros Arana, ‘the royalist troops occupied the headquarters that had been abandoned by the patriots, and officers were affectionately hosted by supporters of their cause’. That same day, Osorio, who had decided to make his entrance into Santiago on 6 October, wrote a Proclama calling on his soldiers to behave with decency and moderation, a call that was praised by those who did not think the royalists should act with a spirit of revenge.\(^\text{18}\)

Celebrations to commemorate the royalist triumph continued throughout November 1814, and not only in Santiago. During that month the principal villas of the country swore loyalty to the king: in Linares, the oath was taken in presence of the ‘vecindario de esta Villa y Milicias de todo el Partido’; in Rancagua, ‘the Infantry detachment of this garrison formed in a V-shape in front of the stage; it was accompanied by two militia detachments that were distributed on both sides of the stage in identical formation’. In Santa Cruz, a theatre stage was installed to celebrate the return of the royalists; in San Felipe, Petorca, Quillota and Santa Rosa de Los Andes similar events were organized throughout that month.\(^\text{19}\)

Loyalty was also inculcated through the exaltation of the royalist figures killed by the revolutionaries, the example of Tomás de Figueroa being the most evident. I have already questioned whether Figueroa was as much of a royalist as the traditional historiography has claimed. However, more important is that Osorio saw in him a martyr to be recognized and admired, and that, in a ceremony intended to give

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19 This information comes from AGI, Chile 206.
Figueroa a proper burial, his ashes had been relocated to Santiago’s Cathedral on 20 February 1815. With these ceremonies Osorio sought to make a clear distinction between the radicalism of the insurgents (who had voted for Figueroa’s assassination) and the moderation of the royalists.

Yet actions like the ones noted above were sometimes accompanied by other, less encouraging, resolutions. For example, in December 1814 Osorio ordered the coining of silver medals to be given to ‘the heroes who re-conquered Chile’. On one side, the medals depicted the face of Ferdinand VII followed by the phrase ‘Fernando VII, Rey de las Españas’. On the other, the chosen phrase was: ‘Santiago re-conquered on 5 October 1814’. According to Timothy Anna, the use of the word ‘re-conquered’ caused discontent among those who did not think that Chile had ever been ‘conquered’. This is why it was ‘requested that the medals distributed among loyalist forces in Chile with the words “Santiago reconquistada” engraved on them should be changed to “Santiago pacificada”, owing to the harmful public reaction to the word “reconquered”’. This claim was seconded by ‘the fiscal of the council of the Indies’, who pointed out ‘that one was not even supposed to use the word “conquered” for American territories restored to legitimate control. The council agreed. The king, however, resolved to the contrary: “Continue with the line it has”, he ordered’.

To commemorate the first anniversary of the battle of Rancagua was not a very clever political decision either, as there were many santiaguinos who, although they did not support the revolution, were related to some of the émigrès who fled to the other side of the Cordillera in the aftermath of the battle. The report sent by Santiago’s post office director, Juan Bautista de Aeta, to his colleagues in the Peninsula gives an idea of the bombast of this festivity:

On the day of Our Lady of Rosario, we commemorated the victory with which this Reino was re-conquered and which the King’s Arms secured the Town of Rancagua. The function was the best this Capital has ever seen. [...] It has been said that the Captain General gave a feast to the Troops, choosing 6 individuals from the Soldiers’ class, drums and whistles of each detachment, and their respective officers, with whom he had dinner. In the evening there was a magnificent procession whose path was followed by troops on both sides of the street. The Plaza Mayor was thoroughly cleaned and cleared, covering the four corners with artillery to take the Salute [para hacer la Salva]. The beautiful Cuerpo del Regimiento de Talavera, using its new military outfit for the first time, lined up on the

20 Gaceta del Gobierno, Feb. 23, 1815, p. 106.
21 Gaceta del Gobierno, Dec. 8, 1814, p. 37. This information can also be found in AGI, Chile 315.
east side by the Cathedral. The *Cuerpo de los Carabineros de Caballería de Abascal* formed on the south side by the Real Audiencia, with their Horses exquisitely dressed and saddled. The richly adorned *Cuerpo de la Concordia de Lima de Cavalleria* was assembled on the west side.\(^\text{23}\)

In military terms, Osorio also committed mistakes that ended up alienating the local elites from his political project. One of Osorio’s first actions was to reward the *Talavera* officers with the same salary that they enjoyed in Lima. Because the salary of the royalist officers in Chile—the majority of whom were American born—was significantly lower than in Peru (i.e. a captain whose career had been built in Chile earned 50 pesos, whereas a *Talavera* captain received 250), Osorio’s measure provoked friction between the *Talaveras* and the Chilean military. This difference led Barros Arana to understand Osorio’s decision as a strategy to keep his compatriots content, and also as a way of making clear that he would favour Spanish-born officers whenever possible. Indeed, the Spanish officers who had traditionally belonged to the Chilean army but who did not form part of the *Talavera* regiment, such as Ildefonso Etorreaga and Antonio Quintanilla, ‘were rewarded with other commissions […] that allowed them to have a higher position than their comrades in arms’.\(^\text{24}\)

Why did Osorio do this? Could he have foreseen the political consequences of this measure? As I will state in the last section of this chapter, ultimately these sorts of measures affected Osorio’s political image. At this point, suffice it to say that his decision to favour some of his men over the rest was clearly influenced by the organization of an insurgent army on the other side of the Cordillera whose objective was to carry out an attack on royalist Chile. Even though in 1815 José de San Martín’s army was not sufficiently trained to undertake a serious military incursion into Chile, the royalists were conscious that Mendoza’s governor was training his forces to attempt an invasion. As early as November 1814, Osorio declared: ‘Chile, or rather its intrusive government, used to work in agreement with Buenos Aires. The insurgents trust that the United Provinces will assist them with forces’. According to the Spanish general, the Chilean émigrés in Mendoza (described by the royalist authorities as ‘murderers, thieves, incendiaries, heretics and pirates’) were planning to ‘increase their troops and military training’ to try to invade Chilean territory.\(^\text{25}\) This is why he ordered Chileans to treat the inhabitants of Buenos Aires as ‘rebels and enemies of the state’, while claiming, however, that this conflict was not ‘a war between independent nations’. Giving an international connotation to the war ‘was the equivalent of accepting that the vassals achieved a status

\(^{23}\) AGI, Correos 87, Aeta to Señores Directores Generales de la Real Renta de Correos de España y las Indias, 3 Oct. 1815.


\(^{25}\) AGI, Chile 315, 8 Nov. 1814.
they did not deserve'. What he did not realize was that raising the salaries of the Spanish-born at the expense of the Spanish Americans contradicted Osorio’s own aim of preventing the Chileans from seeing the revolution as a conflict between two nations.

On 18 May, Osorio wrote to the mayor of the villa of San José, Antonio de la Torre, asking him to prepare a plan to stop future incursions of Mendoza’s revolutionaries into Chilean territory. Two months later, the governor demanded the military commanders of Aconcagua, Los Andes, Coquimbo, San Fernando, Curicó, Chillán, La Ligua, Petorca, Huasco, Copiapó, Talca and Rancagua to prevent the movement of people between their villas and the other side of the Cordillera. At the same time, Osorio improved the military training of the Chileans, above all the militiamen. In June 1815, Osorio requested that Domingo Díaz de Salcedo should restore an old militia regiment that had been dissolved by the insurgents. In August, meanwhile, the Spanish general informed Antonio Quintanilla that San Felipe’s Regimiento de Caballería de Milicias must be reformed in accordance with the articles of the colonial Reglamento de Cuba. Although in the period 1810–1814 the revolutionaries accepted that both the Reglamento de Cuba and Charles III’s Ordenanzas were the best regulations they could use to administer their army, there is no record that they accepted this explicitly. For the royalist authorities, on the other hand, Ferdinand VII’s return to the throne was an opportunity to reintroduce the old regime’s regulations in the colonies, the Reglamento de Cuba among them. In a letter to the Spanish Secretary of State, Osorio reported that one of the first actions made by the ‘revolutionary government’ was to ‘disorganize the militia detachments that had been approved by the king, changing the size of their forces, their denominations and officers, and creating new ones’. After the royalists regained control of Chile, Osorio continued, ‘I found it necessary to give these detachments their original status, and fill them with officers and commanders of proven loyalty. To this end [...] I have sent inspectors to the Partidos to review the army and put these arrangements into effect’.

Another measure adopted by Osorio was to investigate the political behaviour of revolutionaries and moderates who did not escape to Mendoza. Even though in March 1815 Osorio sent colonel Luis Urrejola and the attorney Juan Manuel de Elizalde to Madrid to obtain an acquittal from

26 AGI, Chile 315, 8 Nov. 1814. He even claimed that this was a ‘civil war’ between ‘nationals’.
27 MI, vol. 26, p. 100v, Osorio to de la Torre, 18 May 1815.
30 MI, vol. 26, p. 115, Osorio to Quintanilla, 18 Aug. 1815. Another reference to the Reglamento de Cuba can be found in AGI, Chile 207, p. 373, Osorio to Secretario de Estado, 30 Nov. 1815.
31 AGI, Chile 207, Osorio to Secretario de Estado, Nov. 28, 1815, pp. 313–13v.
Ferdinand VII for the insurgents ‘who did not act as promoters or leaders [caudillos] of the insurrection’,\(^2\) during Osorio’s time in office the rebels were constantly investigated and prosecuted. They faced two kinds of trials: the so-called juicios de infidencia and the procesos de vindicación, the latter being instituted to investigate the political conduct of government employees during the revolution. Punishments varied depending on whether the defendant was accused of ‘passive’ or ‘active’ obedience to the insurgency.

In the words of Guerrero Lira, ‘it is possible to identify three levels of behaviour deemed criminal by the authorities. In the first group we find political crimes, which referred to: the obtaining and holding of political positions during the “intrusive government” […]; attempts to disrupt the administrative system; the changing of local authorities […]; and the inadequate implementation of justice’. On a second level, there were the ‘accusations related to public opinion: to have expressed oneself in favour of the revolution or against the king and the monarchical system; to have prohibited the publication of ideas opposed to the revolution; to have celebrated the victories of the insurgency and, lastly, to have edited, copied, distributed and carried revolutionary papers and periodicals’. Finally, ‘in the third group we find military crimes: to have effectively served in the revolutionary army and contributed to both its provisioning and functioning’.\(^3\) In most cases the sentences were based on the information gathered by both local courts and the Real Audiencia, which was re-established in March 1815.\(^4\)

To the first two groups studied by Guerrero Lira belonged the radical insurgents who in November 1814 were exiled to the island of Juan Fernández.\(^5\) Two of the most important men of letters of the period, Juan Egaña and Manuel de Salas, in addition to a few high-ranking military and militia officers, like Juan Rafael Bascuñán, Pedro José Benavente, Manuel Calvo Encalada, Ignacio de la Carrera, Luis de la Cruz, Francisco de la Sota and Diego Lavaqui, were amongst those exiled.\(^6\) For the royalists, this group of exiles was, together with the émigrés who escaped to Mendoza, guilty of

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32 Barros Arana, *Historia General de Chile*, vol. X, p. 151. Urrejola and Elizalde also sought to convince the metropolitan politicians that Osorio should be confirmed as governor of Chile, an aim that, as we shall see, they did not achieve.


34 The amount of information gathered by the royalist authorities on the political behaviour of the revolutionaries was immense, as a letter written by Osorio to viceroy Abascal illustrates: ‘I have a bulk of papers which assess the conduct of every single individual during the Revolution. Nobody can be employed without having been investigated; there are many wolves in sheep’s clothing’. In AGI, Diversos 3, Osorio to Abascal, 12 Dec. 1814.

35 Osorio informed Abascal of the expulsion on 14 Nov. 1814. See *CDHICCh*, vol. 35, p. 134.

36 The complete list is in Guerrero Lira, *La contrarrevolución*, pp. 304–08. The number of civilians exiled to Juan Fernández was, however, much higher than members of the military, not least because most revolutionary officers fled to the River Plate.
the ‘disastrous’ consequences brought about by the previous administrations. In November 1814, for instance, Osorio told Abascal that he was trying to ‘give form to this amorphous machine’, thus pointing to the political chaos ostensibly caused by the revolution.37 This criticism was backed by many individuals who thought warfare had provoked too many problems in the economic system of the haciendas—not just because most inquilinos took up arms, but also because governments depended on the haciendas’ produce to feed the army—to carry on with the belief that the revolution would make the lives of the Spanish Americans better.38

In a letter to Abascal, Pedro Díaz de Valdez summarized the opinion of the royalists.39 In the first place, he linked events in Chile with the political ‘convulsions’ that had taken place in France in recent decades, thereby proving that royalists regarded Chile’s revolutionary struggle as negatively as the eighteenth-century European revolutions. On the other hand, when making reference to the economic distress brought about by the revolution, Díaz de Valdez emphasized that labradores, comerciantes and artesanos all experienced the rigours of the conflict. The lower class [clase inferior] was the most affected by the revolution, as it was forcefully dragged into the battlefield [Campo de Marte] to join either army. In so doing, Valdez continued, the revolutionaries acted as ‘despots’, an accusation that indicates how volatile the political terms during this period had become: whereas for revolutionaries like José Miguel Carrera and O’Higgins viceroy Abascal’s decision to send an expeditionary force against Chile showed his ‘despotism’, people like Díaz de Valdez believed that the radicalism of the insurgents was also ‘despotic’.40

Returning to the last group of crimes studied by Guerrero Lira, we find a lawsuit against a British subject known locally as ‘Juan Antonio Barnard’. In November 1814, Ambrosio Gómez was asked to appear in court before fiscal

37 AGI, Diversos 3, Osorio to Abascal, November 1814 (without exact date).
38 For royalists ‘it was not clear whether independence would be to their best interest’ (this is a phrase used by Timothy Anna, The Fall of the Royal Government in Peru (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), p. 24, to explain why Peruvian royalists took so long to cut their links with the Peninsula, but it can be used to analyze the political behaviour of the most recalcitrant Chilean royalists).
39 AGI, Diversos 3, Díaz de Valdez to Abascal, 27 Dec. 1814.
40 With the aim of demonstrating the radicalism (mixed with despotism) of the revolutionaries, in February 1815 the official royalist periodical published a letter sent by José Miguel Carrera to his brother Luis in which the former refers to the kinds of punishments introduced by his government before the battle of Rancagua: ‘Concepción and its immediate parties have improved a lot. [...] Tomorrow a mister Casaca will be flogged, and tonight I will make him carry the portrait of Ferdinand so he can pray to him. I have filled this whole part of the province with respectable guerrillas, thanks to whom I have been able to imprison many rogues [pícaros]. More than eight of them will be hanged the day after tomorrow’. Osorio considered Carrera the ‘Chilean Robespierre’ [el Robespierre Chileno]. Gaceta del Gobierno, Feb. 9, 1815, p. 93.
Prudencio Lazcano, who was investigating the participation of Barnard in a case of arms trafficking during the revolutionary period. Gómez informed Lazcano that, in his position as the sobrecargo of the English frigate *Emily*, Barnard sold guns and swords to the insurgents. Barnard, who was in Chile at the time of the trial, did not deny the charge but stated that a number of pistols were purchased by private merchants who did not necessarily support the revolutionary government. Besides, Barnard claimed, he sailed from England in 1812, that is, when the war against Peru had not yet started and, consequently, when the commercial relationships between both countries were normal. When he arrived in Chile, the revolutionaries had already declared war on Peru, a situation that, however, did not lead him to immediately sell his arms to the insurgents. The sale took place when Barnard realized that his merchandise could be requisitioned by the revolutionaries because they had not been inspected by the customs office. In short, he was forced by unexpected circumstances to help the insurgents.

Lazcano requested Barnard to present the bills of landing of the *Emily* in order to prove that what he had stated was true. The defendant answered that British ships did not travel with these types of documents and that the only license they carried was that which allowed them to sail and transport goods from England. For Lazcano this was not sufficient evidence of Barnard’s innocence. He added that the defendant transgressed three royal dispositions: a Real Orden of 24 May 1813, the laws inserted on title 9 of the *Recopilación de Indias*, and the commercial treaties signed by Spain and Great Britain. In Lazcano’s view, the government should confiscate Barnard’s possessions in favour of the crown, as he had taken advantage ‘of an indecent free trade regulation established by the insurgent government in opposition to that issued by the king, whose rights [Barnard] should have never violated’. Thus, in April 1815, Osorio ordered the expulsion of Barnard, forcing him to pay the 3,170 pesos he collected from the commercial transaction with the revolutionaries.⁴¹

It is noteworthy that in this and other cases the authorities had based their sentences on the old regime’s legal codes (i.e. *Recopilación de Indias* and other Real Ordenes). In so doing, Osorio made clear that the institutional and juridical changes introduced by the insurgency interrupted but did not modify the political programme of the metropolis. This is an important point, since it shows how little the authorities were willing to accept that some of those changes had been introduced precisely because in 1808 the Spanish Peninsula was unable to continue ruling over the Spanish Americans. In other words, they forgot that the Chilean Junta of 1810 (the installation of which was, as we have seen, not opposed by Abascal) was to promote profound changes in the Chilean political system, and that Ferdinand VII and Abascal’s aim of rolling back time was, after

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⁴¹ The analysis of this is based on Guerrero Lira, *La contrarrevolución*, pp. 156–57.
five years of revolution, not possible. Even the most conservative royalists were content that the Spanish administrative bodies that governed in the absence of the king agreed that Spanish America was a constitutive part of the empire rather than an agglomeration of colonies. In a sense, Ferdinand VII, Abascal, Osorio and the rest of the counterrevolutionary officials failed to understand that the reutilization of the *Recopilación de Indias* and other *Reales Órdenes* to condemn the insurgents clashed with the legal and political achievements gained by the local elites—not only by outright revolutionaries but also moderates—during the previous four years.

Something similar can be said of the repercussions provoked by the introduction in July 1815 of a new taxation system to pay for the expenditures of the royalist army, and which the Chilean elites rejected. Between July and October 1815 Osorio negotiated with the different corporations of the kingdom—the Real Audiencia, Cabildo Eclesiástico, Cabildo Secular, Tribunales del Consulado y Minería, and Real Hacienda—the amount of money Chileans ought to provide to the state. At first, a *Junta* composed of these corporations charged the inhabitants a monthly amount of 83,000 pesos for one year. In September, however, the *Junta* informed Osorio that, given that the insurrection had almost destroyed the Chilean economy, of the 48,500 pesos that the corporations had to collect in the capital, only 22,100 had finally reached the royal treasury. Negotiations continued in the following weeks, and at the end it was decided that the *Pueblos del Reino* would contribute a monthly amount of 43,174 pesos (i.e. a little more than half of the total originally envisioned). Santiago was the city that benefited most from this decision: the authorities collected only 21,074 pesos from its inhabitants.

For the *santiaguinos* this was without a doubt an important triumph; Osorio’s political position, on the contrary, was certainly weakened by the negotiation. The Santiago elites preconditioned their support on the tacit promise that their interests would not be harmed by the introduction of new policies and taxes. Although in the case of Osorio there were people who voluntarily donated their money to the royal treasury, the aim of the elites was to enjoy military and administrative stability (that is why they applauded Osorio’s entrance into the capital in October 1814), but without spending much of their money in the process of consolidating a new institutional order. Osorio’s ambivalence was paid with indifference.

Sadly for Osorio, Chileans’ opposition to paying compulsory taxes was not the only challenge he faced at the end of 1815; viceroy Abascal soon declared him his personal enemy. According to Barros Arana, Abascal reacted against Osorio’s plan of presenting himself in Madrid as the real strategist behind

42 AGI, Correos 87, 20 Oct. 1815.
43 AGI, Correos 87, Aeta to Señores Directores Generales de la Real Renta de Correos de España y las Indias, 31 Oct. 1815.
44 For example, in August 1815 a group of Coquimbo’s inhabitants gave the authorities 1,110 pesos. See *Gaceta del Gobierno*, Aug. 13, 1815, p. 231.
the royalist triumph in Rancagua. In his first report about Osorio’s entry into Santiago, the viceroy acclaimed the governor’s military qualities.⁴⁵ Before long, however, Abascal understood that ‘Osorio was exaggerating his participation in the triumphs’ of the royalist army, and so he ‘did not hesitate to present him to the king as a person who became a vain officer after the role he played’ in Chile.⁴⁶

Bearing in mind that Osorio’s agents in Spain (i.e. Urrejola and Elizalde) were unable to obtain his confirmation as Chile’s governor from the metropolitan authorities, it seems it was Abascal’s offensive against Osorio that decided the latter’s immediate fate. This is even more probable considering that the decision to depose him was taken in Madrid at a date as early as June 1815, that is, no more than twenty days after Abascal’s last report arrived in the metropolis.⁴⁷ Osorio, in any case, learnt about his removal only on 25 November 1815; a month later, Marcó del Pont arrived in the capital, where he was received ‘con muchas aclamaciones de viva el Rey’.⁴⁸ It was the end of Osorio’s government, although not the last opportunity he had to lead the royalist counterrevolution in Chile.

III. Francisco Marcó del Pont: facing an external threat

Historians have generally argued that Marcó del Pont’s government was, in comparison to Osorio’s, much more authoritarian, and that the main reason for this resides in Marcó’s ‘authoritarian’ personality.⁴⁹ From Marcó’s correspondence with his subordinates in Chile and the ministers in the Peninsula, it can be inferred that the new governor had, in fact, a strong and arrogant personality.⁵⁰ However, it is also clear that the personal characters of

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⁴⁵ This report can be found in Rodríguez and Calderón, Memoria de gobierno del Virrey Abascal, pp. 187–88.
⁴⁷ The report arrived in Madrid on 22 May 1815. Ibid., p. 154, footnote 7.
⁴⁸ AGI, Diversos 4, Marcó to Abascal, 19 Dec. 1815. Marcó assumed power on 26 Dec. 1815.
⁴⁹ For an analysis of how historians have traditionally seen the public performance and respective personalities of both Osorio and Marcó del Pont, see Guerrero Lira, La contrarrevolución, pp. 187–212.
⁵⁰ A few clues about Marcó’s arrogant personality can be found in his correspondence with Abascal, in which he not only condemned his predecessor—Mariano Osorio—but also exaggerated his own political credentials. A few examples of his criticism towards Osorio are: ‘I have found things quite disjointed, and I am very much disgusted by the disorders and excesses that my predecessor’s aides have committed [...] I do not know when Osorio will leave [Chile]; I think that he has little desire to do so as he just moved to another house’, in AGI, Diversos 4, Marcó to Abascal, 3 Jan. 1816; ‘I have been reassured by very intelligent and sensible people, and it has been confirmed by experience, that if I had delayed my arrival here the Reyno would have been in imminent danger of being lost due to the indifference and apathy of my
both governors do not explain by themselves the complexity of their administrations. It is difficult, if not deterministic, to explain Osorio’s ambivalence vis-à-vis the Chileans on the grounds that he had an indecisive character. It is also risky to claim that Marcó’s alleged ‘despotism’ was based on his pedantic personality. Much safer than using psychological explanations is to study the political context faced by the two Spanish governors during their respective times in office. Osorio, as I will try to demonstrate later in this chapter, was unable to build an enduring relationship with the local elites because he and Abascal failed to deal with the fact that in 1814 there were still people who were neither outright revolutionaries nor recalcitrant royalists. Marcó del Pont’s political performance, meanwhile, is to be understood in the light of the complicated context of total warfare he encountered in Chile. Indeed, he assumed office facing an increasingly dangerous external threat, which compelled him to organize an elaborate, and sometimes unpopular, security system.\footnote{51}

In his third week in Chile, Marcó published a \emph{Bando} (without asking the authorities of either the metropolis or Lima) to make clear that his government would fight the revolutionaries following its own political programme:\footnote{52} according to this \emph{Bando}, any person caught attempting to recruit royalist soldiers to join the insurgency would be executed and his properties confiscated.\footnote{53} Five days later, Marcó ordered the organization of a \emph{Tribunal de Vigilancia y Seguridad Pública}, whose responsibilities were defined in 36 articles, all of which reaffirmed the important political role entrusted to military officers by the authorities. The Tribunal’s president, for instance, had to be ‘of military class’ (on this occasion, the \emph{Talavera} captain Vicente San Bruno was elected president). Another purpose of the Tribunal was to convince the Chileans who had abandoned the capital without a convincing reason to return to the city. Marcó feared that they might give shelter to ‘unknown people’ in their \emph{haciendas}. The remainder of the articles refer to the internal administration of the Tribunal, numbers 33 and 35 being worth mention: while the former ordered the creation of sub-committees throughout the kingdom to support the work of the central Tribunal, the latter stressed that ‘every sensible man should know that the dispositions of this \emph{Reglamento} are designed to safeguard the good people; the correction and punishment of the wicked is only its second objective’.\footnote{54}

\footnote{51} Guerrero Lira, \emph{La contrarrevolución}, pp. 199–212.
\footnote{52} The fact that Marcó did not notify the superior authorities of the publication of this \emph{Bando} can be inferred from a ‘dictamen’ written by the \emph{Consejo de Indias} in which the metropolitan politicians criticized the governor’s ‘illegal, impolitic and absurd’ document. See AGI, Estado 85, N. 64, 28 Aug. 1816.
\footnote{53} AGI, Estado 85, N. 63, 12 Jan. 1816.
\footnote{54} AGI, Correos 87, 17 Jan. 1816.
The creation of the Tribunal de Vigilancia was followed in April 1816 by the publication of a Reglamento de Policía, in which the authorities assigned the Alcaldes de Barrio the responsibility of informing the state about the political and military behaviour of the inhabitants. The Alcaldes were asked to obtain reports from ordinary people (such as coffee house owners) that could be utilized later by the Teniente de Policía to denounce the government’s enemies. The royalist police was created to persecute the internal foes of the regime, many of whom, although moderate royalists, had strong family connections with the revolutionaries who escaped to Mendoza or were exiled to Juan Fernández. For a Spanish military officer like Marcó, whose links with Chile’s prominent families were scant (not because Chileans repudiated Spaniards, but because his short time in the country had prevented him from building a solid relationship with the local population) family connections were the most powerful weapon the revolutionaries had.

It was so powerful that even the oidores of the Real Audiencia were putting aside their loyalty to the king to protect their revolutionary relatives. In a phrase that echoes the criticism directed by Francisco García Carrasco in 1810 against the members of the Real Audiencia, Marcó claimed that at least four oidores were linked to the revolutionaries: decano Concha’s daughter was married to an insurgent; decano Aldunate was considered a revolutionary; decano Bazo was ‘married in the country’; and decano Caspe, ‘who is the one who dominates them all, has a sordid and evil conduct’. In short, ‘they are all related and colluded. I completely distrust them and, because of that, I have asked His Majesty to remove them to other Audiencias and provide this one with literate ministers of notorious probity’.

Family connections between decanos from the Real Audiencia and the revolutionaries was one of the reasons why Marcó hesitated to implement the pardon in Chile that Osorio’s emissaries obtained from the monarchy and which included both the moderate insurgents who did not escape to Mendoza and the radicals who were exiled to Juan Fernández. According to the governor, if the Juan Fernández ‘villains’ ['bribones'] were allowed to return to their houses they would ‘never stop intriguing and plotting with their allies of Buenos Aires in order to re-introduce the civil war’. The Real Cédula announcing the pardon arrived in Chile in September 1816, and it stressed that the ‘fugitives’ in Mendoza should not be included among the beneficiaries. However, five days later, the governor told Abascal that he was ready to ‘persecute the unruliest insurgents [who still lived in Chile], imposing such taxes on their properties that they will be equal to a formal

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55 The copy I have found of this Reglamento was sent by Marcó del Pont to Abascal and is located in AGI, Diversos 4. Although Abascal resigned his post of viceroy in early 1816 and returned to Spain, Marcó kept writing to him throughout that year.
56 AGI, Diversos 4, Marcó to Abascal, 19 Jul. 1816.
57 Ibid.
This was the first sign of Marcó’s reluctance to put the pardon into practice; at the end of October he reasserted his position by trying to convince the politicians in the Peninsula that the king’s pardon would inevitably bring negative consequences to the country.

Claiming that Osorio’s agents in the Peninsula had deceived Ferdinand VII with arguments that underestimated the effects provoked by the revolution, Marcó wrote a long, well-articulated report attacking the insurgents. First, he enumerated those events most incriminating to the revolutionaries: the publication of José Miguel Carrera’s Reglamento Constitucional in 1812; the instructions given by the 1813 Junta to the Chilean delegate to London, Francisco Antonio Pinto⁶⁰; the acceptance of foreign consuls in the country; the recognition of the United States of ‘Chile’s independence’ [sic]; and the ‘embracing confederation with Buenos Aires and the so-called Estados Soveranos del Río de la Plata’. These events would not have been so reprehensible had they not been accompanied by three factors that made the revolutionaries in Chile much more dangerous than the metropolitan ministers believed: their family ramifications, their wealth and their immense haciendas:

Their family ramifications, wealth, ties and large Haciendas de Campo, in which they sometimes behave similarly to Lords [Señores] with servants [Colonos], make them powerful and fearsome. They have the power to use their peasants for any conjuración, as they did against governor Francisco Antonio Garcia Carrasco when, backed by the Real Audiencia, they threatened him with ten thousand men if he did not abandon power. There are other Letrados who support the Popular and Republican system who have set up Plans and encouraged the revolution. Neither group escaped [to Mendoza] because they could not transport their Haciendas and families with them.

This was not all: according to Marcó, many revolutionaries who escaped to Mendoza after the battle of Rancagua were allowed to return to Chile by his predecessor and enjoy a peaceful life in the capital. Yet, ‘abusing Osorio’s trust’ the insurgents devoted themselves to gathering whatever information about Chile’s political, economic and military situation San Martín could use when attacking the kingdom. In other words, they worked as ‘spies of the rebels of Buenos Aires’, and behaved as ‘leaders of independence [corifeos de independencia]’. In his view, the revolutionaries in Chile

Are few but unruly, smart, arrogant, rich and have connections in the whole Reyno. […] This is why I think these subjects should be expelled

⁵⁹ AGL, Diversos 4, Marcó to Abascal, 10 Sep. 1816.
⁶⁰ I have analysed Pinto’s diplomatic mission in Juan Luis Ossa Santa Cruz, ‘Francisco Antonio Pinto en los albores de la República, 1785–1828’ (Santiago: Tesis para optar al grado de Licenciado en Historia, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2006), chapter II.
from [South] America; it is more just and reasonable that they feel the pressure to leave their Country, than a Reino as beautiful as Chile should back into anarchy or never free itself from concerns and crisis [sobresaltos].

‘The government must always be alert’ [‘es preciso que el Govierno, este siempre receloso’] is the phrase that summarizes best the governor’s efforts to keep the kingdom safe from the revolutionary menace. The creation of political tribunals to investigate Chile’s inhabitants and the publication of police regulations were measures developed to combat the internal threat. The external threat, meanwhile, had to be faced with a well-organized military force, a force that, in Marcó’s opinion, the country did not have. This is why on 4 January 1816 the governor wrote to Abascal that the new Peruvian viceroy, Joaquín de la Pezuela, had the moral obligation to assist the Chilean royalists with arms and troops. These were needed to patrol Chile’s territory, especially the Central Valley. A fortnight later, Marcó informed the metropolis that rumours had reached the capital reporting that a powerful fleet, captained by naval officers from France and the United States, was being prepared in the River Plate with the purpose of backing up San Martín’s army. If the authorities did not act promptly, Chile would be seized by a combination of international forces.

Even though in this specific letter Marcó did not ask the peninsular politicians to dispatch contingents from abroad, such an international invasion could be stopped only with the assistance of external forces, above all Peruvians. The chances of being aided by Spanish forces vanished in early 1815 when the metropolis decided to send Pablo Morillo’s army not to its ‘original destination, the Río de la Plata’, but to Venezuela, considered ‘the focal point of revolution and counter-revolution, from which New Granada could be re-conquered, Peru reinforced and the way opened to the Río de la Plata and Chile’. Given the violence and radicalism of Venezuela’s revolution, it is not surprising that the metropolitan authorities had sent Morillo to the northern region of South America. What is surprising is that the same authorities had really believed that Morillo, busy as he was fighting against both regular and irregular armies in Venezuela, would be able to eventually undertake an expedition against the River Plate.

Along with other royalists, Marcó never stopped hoping that his army

61 AGI, Chile 208, Marcó del Pont to Secretario de Estado y del Despacho Universal de Gracia y Justicia, 30 Oct. 1816.
would be helped by external forces. But this did not prevent him from confronting the revolutionary military threat by his own means. There were three defensive issues that Marcó tackled in order to deal with San Martín’s army: first, he improved and strengthened Chile’s royalist army, not just reforming the military but also collecting weapons throughout the kingdom. Second, he introduced a system to measure how committed his officers and rank-and-file soldiers were to the royalist cause. Third, he negotiated with the indigenous communities of the south of the country to get their support should the insurgents invade the country.

Educated under the regime of the last Bourbons, Marcó’s first objective was to give his army an administration that was as centralized as possible, for which reason he requested his subordinates to carry out a thorough review of the royalist detachments, their weapons, clothing and utensils. In the same way as his predecessor, Marcó based many of his decisions on the military regulations established in the Ordenanzas of 1768, stressing the importance of collecting the Hojas de Servicios of soldiers and officers in the manner ordered by title 8, treaty 3 of the Ordenanzas. There was, however, a marked difference between both governors: whereas Osorio improved the discipline of the militias, Marcó preferred to reinforce the regular army. For Marcó, excepting the Talaveras, the royalist troops were ‘abandoned’, their commanders being ‘hated by their own troops’. This was a criticism directed not only against the officers of the loyalist army who had built a solid relationship with the Chileans (e.g. Rafael Maroto), but also against Osorio and his alleged incapacity to keep his men disciplined.

As late as December 1815 Chilean royalists still believed Morillo’s expedition would be sent not to Venezuela but to the River Plate. In a letter to viceroy Abascal, the bishop of Concepción declared: ‘according to letters recently intercepted in this province [Concepción] [...] the people from Buenos Aires have announced their upcoming arrival to this Reyno within four months. But it is a well-known fact that they are impoverished and that this is another of their props [tramoyas], with which they try to maintain alive the hope of their followers. They have made them believe through their Gacetas that Pomacahua still exists [...] and that Bonaparte triumphs in Europe as an ally of our King Ferdinand, who, they claim, has lost his troops and therefore cannot come to [South] America. May God make possible the arrival in the River Plate of the Cadiz expedition so it can put an end to this nonsense!’. AGI, Diversos 4, Diego Antonio Obispo de Concepción to Abascal, 20 Dec. 1815.

Marcó’s willingness to rely upon Spanish regulations for the administration of his army appears also in the following letter to the artillery commandants: ‘the twenty copies you gave me of the Regulations of the Real Cuerpo en Indias are to be sold at two pesos to the officers and individuals of this Department. According to your order of 11 Jul. 1815, the collected amount shall be remitted to the dirección general. I entrust you with its compliance, and for that effect I am returning to you these regulations except for one, which I have kept for my own use’. MI, vol. 26, p. 240.

AGI Diversos 4, Marcó to Abascal, 15 Apr. 1816.
Another difference between Osorio and Marcó was the latter’s tendency to concentrate his forces in Santiago at the expense of the rest of the provinces. At the beginning of his administration, Marcó gave the provincial troops some power; this was the case, for instance, of the troops quartered in Aconcagua and Los Andes, which were placed under the supervision of colonel Ildefonso Elorriaga. Yet a couple of weeks later the governor’s plan to fortify the principal villas of the Central Valley was scuppered in favour of concentrating the royalist forces in the capital. In letters of 16 and 18 July 1816, Marcó expressed his wishes that the Dragoons Squadron of Concepción and Coquimbo be ‘brought in this capital to be trained and prepared for the next campaign’. This decision was in tune with that made in March of that year of building a fortress in the Cerro Santa Lucía, whose strategic location in the heart of Santiago made it the royalist army’s principal headquarters in the kingdom. Nineteenth-century historians, such as the Amúnátegui brothers, condemned the construction of this fortress, arguing that both the conditions under which soldiers and prisoners worked were inhuman and that its very existence proved the repressive treatment of the governor on the santiaguinos. Certainly, some of these criticisms ought to be considered seriously. However, in a state of total warfare as that experienced in Chile since 1813 these sorts of defences were relatively common. I shall return to this question at the end of this chapter.

Whereas the majority of the royalist forces were bound to assemble in Santiago, weapons to arm them had to be collected throughout the kingdom. That is, Marcó knew that the defence of Santiago was dependent on the aid the provinces could provide to the central state. This is made clear in the second part of the Bando of 12 January 1816, where the authorities demanded that the Chileans deliver their weapons to captain Vicente San Bruno and his officers. Punishments inflicted on those who did not obey this order were severe, and included the death penalty. In his Historia general, Barros Arana argued that Marcó’s need of weapons was inspired by the ‘arbitrariness’ that Ferdinand VII’s return to power inflicted on Spain and her colonies. Barros Arana’s impression is not incorrect, but it misses an important point: royalists and revolutionaries followed a similar strategy when assembling their weapons.

70 CG, vol. 1048, pp. 278–79v, Marcó to Ministros Generales de Estado y Real Hacienda, Mar. 1, 1816. Lists with the names of the individuals who donated money to build this fortress appear in Gaceta del Gobierno, Feb. 23, 1816, p. 79; Gaceta del Gobierno, Mar. 1, 1816, p. 84; Gaceta del Gobierno, Mar. 5, 1816, p. 86; Gaceta del Gobierno, Mar. 8, 1816, pp. 88–89; Gaceta del Gobierno, Mar. 12, 1816, p. 91.
71 Amúnátegui and Amúnátegui, La Reconquista española, p. 275.
72 AGII, Estado 85, N. 63, 12 Jan. 1816.
Indeed, Marcó’s letter to the intendant of Concepción in March 1816 instructing him to investigate why the troops of his city were so short of bayonets could easily have been written by either José Miguel Carrera or one of his agents two years previously. The truth is, there were other policies introduced by Marcó that echoed those implemented by the revolutionaries. As well as their enemies, the royalists faced the important problem of how to convince their men that their political project was viable and to be trusted. In so doing they had to inculcate loyalty amongst their men, especially among the hacendados and officers who were in charge of training the inquilinos who formed the majority of rank-and-file soldiers. Understanding the value of having the support of the hacendados, on 8 February 1816 Marcó entrusted the inquilinos of the Marqués de Larraín with the mission of patrolling the river Cachapoal. The governor’s aim was to persuade Larraín to ‘assist with weapons when necessary’, assuming that the men who would be in the first line of defence would be his workers. To argue that Larraín’s inquilinos (like other inquilinos) understood the political implications of this call in the same way as the hacendados did would be risky. But more important is the fact that Marcó, as Carrera before him, gave the hacendados some of the responsibility for building a solid army. This was a smart move to identify where the country’s most powerful men stood politically.

From Marcó’s official and private correspondence, it is clear that the governor believed that the loyalty of the soldiers and officers of the royalist army had to be constantly tested. Thus, for example, one of the tasks of the captains of the body of Dragoons was to ‘carefully examine the devotion of his men to the king’, since the ‘love of the royal service is to be considered the first element when approving their military posts’. There were apparently some officers who did not meet the basic requirements of loyalty. What was the nature of these requirements? An answer to this question can be found in a letter written by Marcó to Abascal on 19 July. There, he expressed to the former viceroy that ‘he did not trust the local troops much’, stressing once again that it was better for the defence of the kingdom to rely on Spanish rather than Spanish American soldiers. Marcó, in other words, thought that the political behaviour of his men was conditioned or influenced by their places of birth.

Marcó’s proneness to divide Chilean society into Spanish and Spanish Americans was not, however, new in the context of the revolution. Before 1814 El Monitor Araucano claimed ‘South Americans’ should protect themselves ‘from their enemies’, a statement that classified as enemy any person born

74 MI, vol. 26, pp. 207–07v, Marcó to the intendant of Concepción, 19 Mar. 1816. This letter can be compared with the piece of news published in El Monitor Araucano, vol. II, number 64, Jul. 25, 1814 (i.e. two days after Carrera’s last coup d’état).
75 MI, vol. 26, pp. 182–82v, Marcó to Juan Francisco Sánchez, 8 Feb. 1816.
76 MI, vol. 26, p. 186v, Marcó to commander of the body of Dragoons, 8 Feb. 1816.
77 AGI, Diversos 4, Marcó to Abascal, 19 Jul. 1816.
outside the New World. Osorio used a similar argument, although from the opposite side: he decided to favour Spanish-born officers at the expense of Spanish Americans. The problem with this Manichean division is that it was not only simplistic but also not entirely true (if true at all). To invoke the argument of nationality was to overlook the fact that both armies were mainly formed by people whose connections with the country were profound and historical (either through birth or tradition). There were, of course, Spanish-born leaders such as Osorio, Marcó and the Talavera officers who were not strongly attached to Chile. Yet their cases were unusual, and so it can hardly be said that the peninsulares represented the majority that Osorio and Marcó hoped for.

Moreover, the differentiation between ‘Chileans’ and ‘Spanish’ left out a large segment of the population: the indigenous communities. Where did the indigenous people fit in this division? Had they not also been born in Spanish America? How relevant for both royalists and revolutionaries was their military help? In future chapters we will see that, in general, the Indians backed the royalist army in its struggle against the revolutionaries in the south of the country. They seemed to have been sceptical about changing an authority they knew and respected—the king—for another—the revolutionary—whose political project was still unclear to them. The royalists, in turn, were aware of the relevance of this aid, even though they never explicitly recognized the Indians as equal subjects of the Spanish king. Marcó sought to use the military forces of the Indians but without stipulating the role they would play in the new political scenario opened by the dissolution of the monarchy in 1808. It is not surprising, therefore, that the royalists never clearly defined which demographic category the indigenous fitted in: obviously, they were not Spanish-born, but neither were they regarded as creoles. This ambivalence would never be seriously addressed by either the royalists or the revolutionaries.⁷⁸

Considering the resistance of the royalists to clarify the situation of the Indians, why did the latter support the king’s army? A simplistic answer would be that the Indians were forced by the royalists to fight on behalf of the king. But the decision to assist the royalist army was much more conscious and thoughtful. The Indians, in effect, negotiated their alliance with the monarchists, especially in the months preceding San Martín’s invasion, when Marcó understood that it was advisable to negotiate an alliance against the

⁷⁸ In February 1819, the revolutionary government, at the time led by Bernardo O’Higgins, stated that from then on Indians should be called ‘Chilean citizens and have equal voice and representation as any other inhabitant of the Estado, concuring by themselves to celebrate contracts, defend their cases, marry, trade, choose the arts to which they feel inclined, and exercise “las carreras de las letras y de las armas” in order to obtain the political and military position that correspond to their capacities’. However, this declaration of principles was rarely respected in practice (at least during the first half of the nineteenth century). In ABO, vol. 19, pp. 109–10, 13 Feb. 1819.
revolutionaries rather than draft Indian troops against their will. Marcó’s eagerness to secure the aid of the Indians became clear soon after he took office. At that time, the governor started planning a strategy to confront one of the few indigenous communities that stood at the insurgents’ side and which was headed by an Indian called Venancio. Although Venancio was an exception among the Indians of the south of the country, it was too dangerous to allow him to spread his rebellious ideas to the rest of the communities.⁷⁹

Together with the intendant of Concepción, Marcó created a defensive and offensive confederation with the Junta de Caciques de los Llanos to annihilate the rebel [Venancio]. The purpose of the governor was not so much to force as to convince the Indians to assist him militarily. In order to fulfil this task it was advisable to ‘give the most powerful caciques a special treatment and entertain them with gifts. Thus, we will ensure that they are the ones who hand Venancio’s head over to us’. If the caciques wanted to parley with the authorities, then the intendant should ‘provide them with passports and the accustomed aid’ to travel towards the capital.⁸⁰ A couple of weeks later, Marcó ordered Curico’s military commander to follow a similar method with the pehuenches: any reliable information that these Indians could provide about San Martín and his army should be generously rewarded.⁸¹

The Franciscan priest and future chronicler of the revolution, Melchor Martínez, shared Marcó’s approach to the Indian issue.⁸² Martínez was one of the most active civil agents in Indian territory and, consequently, one of the people who best knew their behaviour. The close relationship that Martínez had built with the Indians prompted Marcó to appoint him as his representative in the Araucanian region. Martínez’s mission was to ‘ensure the adherence of the Indians of our frontier and also to attract those of the Mapuche Indians were divided into four Butalmapus or confederations that covered the Araucanian region: those settled near the Pacific Ocean were known as costinos; those in the so-called Depresión Intermedia as llanistas; those in the foothills of the Andes as huilliches; and those in the higher zones of the Cordillera as pehuenches. In chapter V I will explain in more depth which Indian communities supported the revolutionaries and what the royalists in the period recognized as the Guerra a Muerte (1818–1822). Here, it is sufficient to say that Venancio belonged to the llanistas. See Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte (Santiago: Editorial Francisco de Aguirre, 1972), pp. 121–23.

⁸² According to Valenzuela, ‘Los franciscanos de Chillán’, pp. 140–41, ‘the Seraphic presence in the [Araucanian] zone was critical in maintaining loyalty amongst the Mapuche and the Pehuenche after the outbreak of the war in 1813’. To reaffirm this, Valenzuela quotes Melchor Martínez, Memoria Histórica sobre la revolución de Chile, vol. II, pp. 112–13: ‘[we need] to preserve the natural adherence to the just cause of the king, and prevent them from supporting the revolutionary system [...]. If Indians take sides for the insurgent party, the total loss of Chile might be irreparable’.
Mendoza’, for which it was better to use persuasion rather than coercion. In a letter to the military commanders and sub-delegates of the Central Valley, Marcó explained his strategy:

The election of good emissaries must be the work of wisdom and personal knowledge. We need to pull the strings with secrecy and appropriate precautions, giving gifts to the most influential Caciques and Indians in their Ayllereguas [...]: Fr. Melchor Martinez, who is loved by the Indians, knows their territory well and has prudence, will be from now on in charge of this mission.³³

Martínez’s first report on the situation of the Indians was dated 19 November 1816, and was based on the declaration given to the Franciscan by an individual named Rudecindo González. González’s aim was to collect first-hand information from the Indians and, thus, act as an intermediary between Martínez and the principal caciques. It was thanks to the research conducted by González near Talca that Martínez learned that a group of thirty people had recently crossed the Cordillera from Mendoza, their purpose being to ‘assist the robber [salteador] Neira with four loads of rifles’. In the next chapter I will discuss in more depth Neira’s role during this time; here, suffice it to say that he was a guerrilla officer who in recent years had become close to Manuel Rodríguez, regarded by the royalist authorities as one of the most dangerous insurgents operating in Chile.

González also informed Martínez that on one occasion he and his men persuaded a cacique who supported the insurgents that they were envoys of the ‘patriots of Chile’, enabling them to gather details of San Martín’s army and the putative date of the revolutionary invasion. From this part of González’s report, it seems that there were a few local communities that did not back the royalist army and that, sometimes, the king’s troops utilized subterfuges and even lies to obtain the information they were seeking. According to González’s informants, San Martín’s army was formed by 8,000 men, many of whom were black, and that its plan was to start crossing the Andes in late December 1816.³⁴ Of these pieces of information, only the first was exaggerated or inaccurate: during his years as general-in-chief of the Army of the Andes San Martín mustered only 4,000 men, among whom slaves and other blacks reached at most one third of the total. ‘In early January 1817’, meanwhile, ‘the army of the Andes [did indeed] begin to move westwards’.³⁵

In late 1816, Marcó’s government was, therefore, more or less aware of San Martín’s programme. Gone were the days when the royalists thought it

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³⁴ Martínez’s report can be found in MG, vol. 13, pp. 14–15.
was possible to undertake an attack on the River Plate. In 1816, the enemies of the monarchists became more numerous and powerful; in the case of the Indians, at the end of the year most communities still supported Marcó’s government, but the royalists were incapable of preventing Venancio from conducting new attacks. The preparation of Marcó’s army was insufficient to tackle the defence of the territory properly. However, in spite of the military weakness of his army, the governor refused to negotiate with the insurgents. Marcó destroyed all chances of coming to terms with the revolutionaries on 13 December, when he repudiated an envoy sent by San Martín. Claiming that it was unacceptable to negotiate with a delegate of a state that had recently declared its independence from Spain (the ‘Independence of the United Provinces of the River Plate’ had been signed on 9 July 1816 in Tucumán), Marcó replied to San Martín that his men were ready to defend the king’s rights militarily.

By sending a delegate to parley with Marcó, San Martín was not seeking to negotiate with the royalists but to gain an accurate idea of the zones of the Cordillera that his army could use. At the beginning of February 1817 (that is, a few days before the battle of Chacabuco) Marcó was still unable to set up a proper defensive plan, the capital being the only city relatively well garrisoned. As he himself told the metropolitan ministers on 4 February, the vastness of the territory was his main enemy. He did not have enough men or resources to garrison all the cordillerano paths that run from Copiapó to the Araucanian region. This is why, Marcó explained, the bulk of the army had been stationed between Maule and Aconcagua, requesting both Concepción’s and Coquimbo’s inhabitants to prepare the defence of their city with their own means.

At the end of his letter, Marcó moderated his pessimism, reporting that a royalist expeditionary force had emerged victorious after a small engagement

86 On 26 Dec. 1816, Marcó told the intendant of Concepción that he had heard that a priest from Valdivia, Pedro José Eleizegui [?], had joined Venancio’s forces. See MI, vol. 26, p. 287. On 20 Jan., Marcó wrote to the same intendant that Venancio had surrendered his forces to the royalists, but only four days later he revealed his surprise that the Indian chief had, once again, risen up against his government. See MI, vol. 26, pp. 259v–60; and MI, vol. 26, pp. 294–94v.
89 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. X, pp. 292–96. According to Lynch, San Martín, p. 90, Álvarez Condorco ‘travelled to Chile by the Los Patos pass, the longer northern route, on the pretext of delivering to Marcó del Pont an official copy of the Act of Independence of the United Provinces, assuming that the Spanish commander would send him packing by the shortest route back, which was Uspallata further south. This would be the opportunity for a final reconnoitre mapping the routes’.
against the revolutionaries in Uspallata.⁹⁰ However, in comparison to San Martín’s army, Marcó’s troops were too untrained and few to face the insurgents. Unfortunately for the royalists, this situation did not improve in the days that followed, and San Martín inflicted a heavy defeat on the royalist army in the fields of Chacabuco.

IV. Was it possible to re-conquer Chile?

In the next chapter, I will analyse the building up of the Army of the Andes in Mendoza, the main characteristics of the battle of Chacabuco of 12 February 1817, and the tactical reasons for the royalist defeat. Here, I would like to offer a few answers to a simple yet important question that refers not so much to military but to political factors: why did the royalists fail? Leaving aside the obvious fact that San Martín had a much more powerful and disciplined army, we need to consider the political context under which Osorio and Marcó del Pont ruled and how that context affected their actions. Moreover, it is worth asking if the end of Marcó’s government was a surprise for royalists and revolutionaries, and also if the return of Ferdinand VII to the throne of Spain in 1814 reverberated in Chile with the same vigour as in other parts of Spanish America, such as Mexico.

We saw that both governors enjoyed reasonable levels of support at the beginning of their respective governments. Yet we have also seen that Osorio and Marcó committed mistakes that confused the Chileans. Thus, for example, to raise the salaries of the Spanish-born military officers at the expense of the Spanish Americans implicitly contradicted Osorio’s own belief that the revolution should not be judged as a war between two ‘independent nations’. Marcó himself remarked that dividing Chilean society between ‘Europeans and Americans’ was ‘odious’ and inadvisable,⁹¹ even though only four months later he stressed that the political behaviour of his men was influenced by their places of birth.

Marcó committed other mistakes, the most important of which was the publication of the Bando of January 1816. This Bando was condemned even by the peninsular ministers, who considered it ‘illegal, impolitic and absurd’. The criticism by the metropolitan ministers was seconded, although not for the same reasons, by the Amunáteguis to prove Marcó’s ‘arbitrariness’. What these historians forgot is that the methods of persecution by royalists


⁹¹ MI, vol. 26, pp. 209–209, Marcó to Coquimbo’s sub-delegate, 22 Mar. 1816. It is interesting to note that in this source Marcó first used the words ‘royalists and patriots’; however, in order to stress his belief that the war should not be seen as an international war, he changed them for ‘Europeans and Americans’. In his view, referring to royalists as ‘Europeans’ and patriots as ‘Americans’ was a mistake, but he needed those words so his argument would become clearer.
and revolutionaries were similar. Both sides were accused by their respective enemies of abusing their power while in command. Furthermore, if Marcó was more ‘arbitrary’ than Osorio it was not simply because the former had a stronger and more arrogant personality than his predecessor, but mainly because his administration faced a much more complicated military scenario. In comparison to 1816, 1815 was a relatively quiet year for the royalists. The last months of Marcó in Chile, on the contrary, were marked by the uncertainty of not knowing exactly how and when San Martín’s attack would take place.

From his conflict with the Real Audiencia, it is possible to conclude that Marcó’s enemies were not only outright revolutionaries but also moderate royalists. The oidores were the ones who resented Marcó’s policies least, since, contrary to the insurgents who fled to Mendoza, they encouraged Ferdinand VII’s return to power and also the sending from Spain of governors like Marcó to defend the interests of the monarchy. But throughout 1816 the family relationships of the oidores with the rebels appeared to have outweighed their loyalty to the king. Marcó’s differences with the oidores echoed the disputes that governor García Carrasco had with the corporations of the country. In 1810, García Carrasco complained that the oidores had strong ties to many of those who voted for his dismissal, a criticism similar to that directed by Marcó against the Real Audiencia when he claimed that the oidores helped the insurgents mainly because they were related. Connections between revolutionaries and royalists were not, however, relevant only because they were based on family ties. They were also important because revolutionaries and royalists with a long experience of Chile shared the view that the Chilean elites should enjoy the same rights as the peninsular elites (both economically and politically). There were recalcitrant royalists; that was the case of archbishop José Santiago Rodríguez Zorrilla and Pedro Díaz de Valdez, whose loyalty to the king was unquestionable. Nonetheless, there were also royalists who did not look askance at the idea of strengthening some of the political privileges the colonials had achieved since the breakdown of the monarchy in 1808.

Did these royalists become moderate autonomists as time went by? It is difficult to argue that the revolutionaries considered them their allies after they recovered the control of the government in early 1817; yet neither were they seen as partners by the royalist governors. On which side of the political spectrum do these autonomist royalists fit? In his book on the fall of the royal government in Mexico City, Timothy Anna presents some ideas that are worth bearing in mind when studying why the counterrevolutionary project in Chile collapsed, and the role played by people who were supposedly royalists in its fall.

According to Anna’s analysis, the words ‘legitimacy’ and ‘authority’ explain the principal characteristics of the crisis in which the Mexican royalists became involved in the period 1816–1821, a crisis that led a royalist-turned-revolutionary—Agustin de Iturbide—to seize the Mexican
government. Anna proposes that the ‘Spanish imperial government lost its authority in about 1816—as a result of events of the eight preceding years. This fact did not become manifest until 1821 because, before the appearance of Iturbide on the scene, there was no one in whom, or no idea upon which, the nation could vest authority’. Anna uses the word authority similarly ‘to the more widely recognized term legitimacy’, although it ‘is somewhat broader’. Quoting Carl J. Friedrich, he argues that ‘authority is not “legitimate power” as is often claimed, for legitimate power may be without authority, a situation which arises in the approach to a revolution’. ‘Authority’, continues Anna, is given by the community, ‘albeit unconsciously, to the state or the regime. It is the right to possess sovereignty, the right to govern. It is thus based upon the ability of the established authority to prove to the governed its right to continue governing them’. In this sense, ‘it is essential to distinguish between authority and legitimacy in the case of the Mexican example because the royal regime remained the only legitimate regime for some years after it ceased to possess authority’ [1816].

In Chile, the metropolis lost its ‘authority’ in 1810, but the ‘legitimacy’ of the captive king lasted for several more years. When Osorio tried to re-implement the ‘authority’ of the royal regime, he found that the Chilean elites were slowly but surely abandoning the idea that the Spanish absolutism had the ‘legitimate’ right to represent their interests. The insistence of the santiaguinos on reducing the amount of taxes allocated by Osorio to the corporations in the capital illustrates the tenuous yet effective detachment of the Chileans vis-à-vis the monarchist programme. But the same elites were aware that the revolutionary government prior to 1814 was not ‘legitimate’ either. This means that, in addition to an armed conflict, Antonio Pareja’s invasion in 1813 provoked a vacuum of ‘legitimacy’ and political ‘authority’. I argue that it was only after the triumph of O’Higgins and San Martín in 1817 that both ‘authority’ and ‘legitimacy’ returned to work in concert.

Hence, the difference between the counterrevolutionary government and the independent administration that followed lay in the fact that, at least in theory, San Martín and O’Higgins’ political plan was, like Iturbide’s Plan de Iguala in Mexico, politically more acceptable for the elites than either the programme of the revolutionaries before 1814 or the counterrevolutionary administrations. This is not to say that O’Higgins was immediately backed by the moderate royalists. But in comparison to Osorio and Marcó, O’Higgins managed to gain the confidence of the majority of the inhabitants of the Central Valley and create a serious and respected political regime.

Osorio and Marcó del Pont were not supported blindly by the Chilean elites, not least because the return of the absolutist option under Ferdinand VII in 1814 clashed with the rights won by the Spanish Americans in recent years.

92 Timothy Anna, The Fall of the Royal Government in Mexico City (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p. XIV.
93 Anna, The Fall of the Royal Government in Mexico City, p. 187.
Even some of the most conservative allies of the king (e.g. the oidores of the Real Audiencia) criticized the idea of ‘turning the clock back’, that is, to remove once and for all the achievements of the creoles in matters of self-governance.⁹⁴ The establishment of a constitutional monarchy could have been supported by some men of letters and landowners, but to re-conquer Chile in order to return to the status quo ante 1810 was not a possibility. It was there that Ferdinand VII failed; there where the intransigent position of officials such as viceroy Abascal began to weaken in the uncertainty over how to confront the inescapable fact that the Spanish American elites celebrated and clung to their autonomist triumphs proudly. Not surprisingly, a total break with Spain slowly developed from being a project championed by a group of exiled radicals to an increasingly widespread desire within the Chilean elites. The future triumphs of the revolutionaries on the battlefield would confirm this trend.

The outcome of the battle of Rancagua allowed the royalist Mariano Osorio to enter Santiago and establish a counterrevolutionary government. Rancagua was one of the cruellest and bloodiest battles of this period of the revolution. However, its negative or ‘disastrous’ result does not seem to have affected Chilean society as a whole, as in the aftermath of the battle Osorio was able to find the support of the elites. The fact that the main cities and villas of the country had rapidly sworn loyalty to the king proves that in late 1814 there were many people who believed the radicalism of José Miguel Carrera or Bernardo O’Higgins was counterproductive for the political stability of the country. For royalists and moderate revolutionaries, Osorio played a similar role to that of Pablo Morillo in New Granada during his first months in the New World: both leaders were seen as the only one who would put an end to a fratricidal civil war.

According to Rebecca Earle, Spain lost New Granada because Morillo and his men did not maintain a good and long-lasting relationship with the Neogranadans, a failure that Osorio also experienced during his time in office in Chile. There was, however, a marked difference between Morillo’s men and Osorio’s men: while the former behaved despotically and even vulgarly in Spanish America, the latter were not particularly impolite.⁹⁵ The accusation that Osorio and Marcó del Pont’s subordinates were despotic was put forward in the 1850s by the Amunáteguis and other nineteenth-century historians, and since then it has been repeated time and again by scholars interested in this period (with the exception of Cristián Guerrero Lira). Nonetheless,

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⁹⁴ The phrase ‘turning the clock back’ is used for the Venezuelan case by Adelman, ‘An Age of Imperial Revolutions’, p. 335.
the royalist policies were hardly more despotic than those introduced by the revolutionaries until 1814 and immediately after they re-conquered Chile in early 1817. This is why I have argued that the fall of the counterrevolutionary government should be explained by highlighting the political mistakes made by both governors, rather than by assuming that their capitulation was due to a reaction led by the insurgents against the alleged despotism of the royalists.

Osorio failed to balance his negotiating policy with his policy of investigation and prosecution of the insurgents. Although the decision not to implement the acquittal granted by the king was made by Marcó del Pont, during his time in office Osorio did not stop investigating the rebels who, in theory, were to be included in the pardon. In so doing, he adhered strictly to the legal codes of the monarchy, which, on the one hand, prevented his subordinates from acting with a spirit of revenge but, on the other, alienated many moderates who believed that Chileans must be prosecuted according to local rather than imperial laws. Marcó del Pont, for his part, had an even more distant relationship with the Chilean elites. He broke with the most recalcitrant royalists, the oidores of the Real Audiencia; he criticized the Spanish officer Rafael Maroto because he had too close a relationship with the inhabitants of the country; he preferred to concentrate his army in Santiago, thus losing almost all contact with his men in the south. Marcó never assembled a well-trained army to stop San Martin, a fact that accounts for the rapid defeat suffered by the royalist troops in the battle of Chacabuco. But the most serious mistake committed by Marcó was to further advance the project of Ferdinand VII, Abascal and Osorio to obliterate once and for all the political achievements attained by the Chileans since the beginning of the revolution. In this scenario, and as we shall demonstrate in future chapters, it is not surprising that with the passage of time O'Higgins had been able to create a much more permanent political regime.
CHAPTER III

The Army of the Andes: Chilean and rioplatense politics in an age of military organization, 1814–1817

This chapter studies Chilean and rioplatense politics in an age of military organization. Its aim is to understand why and how the Army of the Andes was created in the years 1814–1817, examining both the support given by the Buenos Aires government to José de San Martín’s plan to re-conquer Chile from the royalists and the role played by Chileans in this military enterprise. There are two main schools that have studied the organization of San Martín’s army: the first stresses the ‘patriotic’ fervour that allegedly allowed not only the creation of the Army of the Andes but also the revolutionary triumph in the battle of Chacabuco. The most recognized advocates of this current, such as nineteenth-century historians Diego Barros Arana, Bartolomé Mitre and Gerónimo Espejo, emphasized the ‘glorious’ efforts of a few, brave men whose commitment to the South American revolution is presented as a vehicle of nationality.¹ In the words of Mitre, San Martín was ‘the new Liberator Alexander’, as well as one of the indispensable men who brought about Chilean independence.²

The second current, of which Patricia Pasquali and John Lynch are the best exponents, gives a much more sophisticated overview of why San Martín became supreme master of the Army of the Andes.³ Their works help us understand the political relationship between Chile and the River Plate during the revolutionary years; San Martín’s decision to use the re-conquest of Chile as a springboard to other conquests in the Southern Cone; and the significance of the creation of the Army of the Andes for the understanding of the Spanish American revolution. This is why some passages of this chapter

2 Mitre, Historia de San Martín, p. 200.
3 Patricia Pasquali, San Martín. La fuerza de la misión y la soledad de la gloria (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 2004); Lynch, San Martín.
The creation of the Army of the Andes was the logical response to the counterrevolutionary programme developed by Peru’s viceroy, José Fernando de Abascal, since 1810. As we saw, Abascal’s objective was to retake control of the country lost to the Chilean radicals after the fall of the Spanish monarchy to Napoleon precipitated the beginning of a war confronting royalists and revolutionaries. While the outcome of the battle of Rancagua in October 1814 enabled the royalists to retake control of the Central Valley of the country, it forced the Chilean revolutionary army headed by Bernardo O’Higgins to escape to the province of Cuyo, which included the cities of Mendoza, San Luis and San Juan, and was under the political control of Buenos Aires. Sections I and II of this chapter study the economic, political, social and military changes experienced by the province of Cuyo after the emigration, analysing the effects of the relocation in the River Plate of hundreds of Chileans and the consequences of San Martín’s decision to appeal for Buenos Aires’ help to re-conquer Chile. With the purpose of explaining why San Martín (who was appointed governor of Cuyo in 1814) and the Buenos Aires government allied with O’Higgins, both sections discuss Chilean and rioplatense politics. The aim is to explain how and why the other Chilean revolutionary leader, José Miguel Carrera, was excluded from San Martín’s plans.

Sections III and IV revise the role played by Chileans in the Army of the Andes and the crossing of the Cordillera by approximately 4,000 men in the summer of 1817. Challenging the idea that Chileans had prominence in the Army of the Andes, section 3 shows nevertheless that they played a key role in the guerra de zapa that preceded the attack on Chile, whether as spies or guerrilla officers. The last section, meanwhile, addresses the final preparations before the departure of San Martín’s army to Chile. I argue that Buenos Aires’ decision to appoint O’Higgins Supreme Director of Chile after the battle of Chacabuco (February 1817) was the quintessence of an alliance sealed not between two national states but between two specific political factions.
I. Chilean émigrés in a foreign territory

The flight of the revolutionaries to Mendoza began almost immediately after the battle of Rancagua, as did the recriminations between Bernardo O’Higgins and José Miguel Carrera. Opinion among the Chilean émigrés polarized between those who resented Carrera’s failure to help O’Higgins with men and resources in Rancagua and those who believed that his decision was sensible. The first group accused Carrera both of treason and cowardice, and also of taking the treasury of the revolutionary government from Santiago to use for his own benefit. Even San Martín became involved in this tricky dispute: on 15 October, the governor of Mendoza ordered his men to search Carrera’s baggage, which the Chilean general refused to allow. However, two days later, when Carrera was about to enter Mendoza, the local authorities were able to inspect his baggage and that of his brothers, Luis and Juan José. Although no money was found, some argued that the treasury was indeed taken out of the capital after the battle of Rancagua but that it was seized by the royalists a couple of days later.⁴

From his involvement in the affair of the Chilean treasury one can conclude that San Martín chose to support O’Higgins as early as October 1814.⁵ In a recent book on José Miguel Carrera, Beatriz Bragoni has stated that O’Higgins’ links with the rioplatenses who had controlled the porteño government since 1812 and were involved in the Logia Lautaro, a secret Masonic lodge led by San Martín and Juan Martín de Pueyrredón explained in part why the mendocino general associated himself with O’Higgins.⁶ Even though it is difficult to assert that O’Higgins had ‘close links’ with the Buenos Aires government in 1814, it is clear that San Martín’s alliance with O’Higgins was both political and personal.⁷ Above all, San Martín objected to Carrera’s claims of being ‘governor of Chile’ in Mendoza. In his opinion, all inhabitants of the city were under the authority of the governor of the province of Cuyo; accepting Carrera’s authority in Mendoza would be tantamount to accepting that San Martín’s political faction was no longer supreme master of the region. This view was shared by other military officers and politicians in Mendoza, especially by those who did not see José Miguel Carrera as the sole, legitimate

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⁶ Felipe Del Solar, ‘La Francmasonería en Chile: de sus orígenes hasta su institucionalización’, REHMLAC, vol. 2, number 1 (2010), pp. 6–7; Felipe Del Solar, ‘Masones y Sociedades Secretas: redes militares durante las guerras de independencia en América del Sur’, ALHIM, number 19, (2010) has said that ‘while Pueyrredón had the mission to administrate the Logia inside the United Provinces, San Martín was in charge of its expansive project’.
authority of the ‘Chilean state’. O’Higgins’ followers insisted that Carrera had stolen the Chilean treasury and that he was responsible for the defeat of the revolutionaries in Rancagua. This point of view was reinforced by the River Plate delegate to Santiago, Juan José Paso, who referred to the Carrera brothers as ‘indecent’, ‘famous criminals’ and ‘inept’. Paso believed that the Carreras should leave Mendoza, an opinion that San Martín seconded on 19 October, when he asked them to leave the city (‘asked’, because he was careful not to demand that they depart).

That same day, however, a group of supporters of the Carreras claimed that they would never be politically subordinated to the ‘head of this small village [pueblecito], but only to the government of Buenos Aires’. This was the first time that the unruly émigrés accepted the interference of Buenos Aires in Chilean politics, although on the condition that San Martín would not have command over them. On 30 October, San Martín responded by writing (now in peremptory terms) to Carrera saying that, since ‘all the Chilean émigrés are subject to the protection of the supreme government of the United Provinces’, he must immediately put his troops at the disposal of Marcos Balcarce. Realizing that San Martín’s forces were much stronger than his own (San Martín led around 1,000 men, compared to the 400 who remained loyal to Carrera), Carrera laid down his arms to the authorities. He and his relatives left Mendoza on 3 November, arriving in Buenos Aires at the end of that month.

Once Carrera was expelled from Mendoza, the émigrés began to rebuild their lives in the River Plate. According to a document written by Carrera, 708 Chilean military crossed the Cordillera after the defeat in Rancagua, a number that is more or less in accordance with a list in Argentina’s National Archive that speaks of 162 officers and 595 men (total: 757). However, only a few émigrés—mainly officers—were allowed to live in Mendoza, as San Martín sent most Chilean soldiers away from the province (either to Buenos Aires or to Upper Peru, where the army of Manuel Belgrano was fighting the royalists). The main reason why San Martín dispatched the Chilean soldiers was that he and his subordinates did not see them as good military men. In January 1815, for example, Balcarce criticized the fact that Chileans had only 63 muskets, some 30 machetes and ‘a few pistols’. Furthermore, Juan Gregorio de las Heras complained that his soldiers were obliged to

10 Juan de la Cruz Vargas to San Martín, 19 Oct. 1814, AHM, box 235, doc. 38.
14 Balcarce to San Martín, 19 Jan. 1815, AGN, room 10, 42–5, p. 63.
gather the weapons (‘most of them useless’) that the émigrés abandoned in the Cordillera. This would have not been so reprehensible, Las Heras argued, if the Chileans had not intended to enter Mendoza carrying the weapons simply as a way to gain the admiration of the local inhabitants.¹⁵

The émigrés who stayed in Mendoza were compelled to live in the city. Those who tried to escape from Mendoza to royalist Chile were usually prosecuted as traitors. This was the case of Miguel Zañartu, who, after declaring in January 1815 that he aimed to return to Chile, was accused by Buenos Aires’ politicians of ‘contributing actively to the division of the Chilean army’. In an unsigned and ‘reserved’ letter to San Martín, one person closely related to the Supreme Director of the River Plate referred to Zañartu as ‘an undercover enemy of the American cause’, an accusation designed to prevent Mendoza’s governor from allowing Zañartu to return to Chile.¹⁶ Bartola Morales Reyes experienced a similar situation. On 10 March, San Martín prevented her from going back to Santiago, arguing that as the sister of the secretary of Chile’s royalist governor, Mariano Osorio, she would inform the royalists of the military preparations in the River Plate.¹⁷ Twenty days later, the Supreme Director, who in January had given Morales a passport to travel to Chile, accepted San Martín’s resolution.¹⁸

Desertions of this kind continued throughout 1815. In San Martín’s view, going back to Chile was an act of treason that only untrustworthy citizens could commit. A Bando of 22 August stated:

> The insolent impudence, and scandalous reiteration with which many inhabitants of these provinces and many Chilean émigrés [...] go over to the Enemy is already an insult to the generosity of the Government and it would have degenerated into criminal weakness if kept in disguise for much longer, affecting the honour of the Good Citizens, the trust of the people and the safety of the Patria. Therefore, [...] [the government] declares for the last time that whoever is apprehended in the direction of Chile [...] or whatever individual justifies this conduct or whoever keeps the slightest communication in words or writing with Chile, will irrevocably be executed 24 hours after the process has begun.¹⁹

While San Martín thought that the émigrés wished to return to Chile because they were selfish individuals unable to appreciate the ‘generosity’ of the River Plate government, the émigrés had more pragmatic reasons to think

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¹⁵ Las Heras to San Martín, 21 Jun. 1815, AGN, room 10, 4–2–5, p. 212. The letter makes reference to an event occurred on 8 Nov. 1814.
¹⁷ San Martín to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 10 Mar. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5–5, p. 240.
¹⁸ The Supreme Director of the United Provinces to San Martín, 31 Mar. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5–6, p. 239.
¹⁹ 22 Aug. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5–6, p. 186.
that their life in Mendoza was intolerable. Doubtless, the most complicated problem faced by the émigrés in Mendoza was to find suitable places to live. Of the 391 exiles identified by historian Cristián Guerrero Lira, eighty-four requested housing from the authorities, the majority of whom were military men. Indeed, although only sixty-one of his list of exiles ‘exercised in Chile military functions or were part of the militias’, as many as fifty-eight of them requested a house. This was due to the lack of a system to pay the wages of the soldiers (especially during the first year of the exile, when San Martín had not yet organized the Army of the Andes). The large number of military men seeking housing is also confirmed by documents that I have consulted. Out of a total of fifteen people who sought housing, ten were military officers (the rest of the applications were signed by three housewives, a barber and a court clerk).

The arguments employed by the applicants to secure accommodation in Mendoza usually followed the same pattern: starting with a brief description of why they emigrated to the River Plate, they stressed the importance of being assisted by authorities. Diego Eduardo’s application, however, did not follow this trend and is, therefore, worth quoting. At the beginning of his application, Eduardo declared that he joined the revolutionary army immediately after Juan Martínez de Rozas organized a military company in Cauquenes. In 1813, ‘we had the misfortune that the enemy invaded the City of Concepción and that the militias of that province opted for the unjust cause of the King. […] My own body and the infantry took flight in speed to Talca to join the Army of the Patria’. After losing his ‘few possessions’, Eduardo ‘had no other reward than fulfilling his duties in the military service’. The outcome of the battle of Rancagua prompted Eduardo to emigrate to Mendoza: ‘today, I find no means and, weighed down by the burden of keeping two other fellow countrymen who suffer a worse fate than me, I find myself living in the street with them, not having the money to pay for the room where we live and which belongs to mayor Jose Clemente Venegas, to whom I owe nearly two months of rent’. After analysing his application, the authorities gave Eduardo accommodation at Estanislao Pelliza’s house, a type of benefit that thirteen other applicants of my list also enjoyed.

In March 1816, meanwhile, Mendoza’s Cabildo reported that seventy-six émigrés (of whom forty-seven were military men) were living at the houses of sixty mendocinos.

But obtaining a house did not guarantee the émigrés a livelihood. It was

21 AHM, box 497, doc. 9.
22 Eduardo to the governor of Mendoza, without exact date, AHM, box 497, doc. 9.
23 The decisions of the authorities appear in the top left margin of every application.
24 Camilo Alarcón, ‘Soldados sin ejército: la vida de la emigración militar patriota en las Provincias Unidas del Río de la Plata (1814–1817)’, *Cuadernos de Historia Militar*, number 5 (December 2009), pp. 46–47.
only after the Army of the Andes was properly organized that wages started to be systematically paid, which means that in 1815 the Chilean officers lived in an almost complete state of destitution. Even senior officers like lieutenant colonel Venancio Escanilla suffered the prevalent local poverty. In his application, Escanilla reported after emigrating that he had retired to the countryside to work as a farmer. After sixteen months, he and his family returned to the city and requested the assistance of the authorities. In another case, we find lieutenant Ezequiel Noya reporting that for more than a year he and his father survived with a small remuneration of 10 pesos that the latter received from Mendoza’s Cabildo for working as its secretary. That small amount, Noya explained, was insufficient to ‘pay for food, room and the services of a washerwoman’. The clerk José María González, for his part, was so desperate that he promised to compensate the help that the state could give him by assuring that, when he had grown up, his fourteen-month-old son would become a soldier of the patria. It was in this context of economic distress that the first plans to confront the Chilean royalists were developed. O’Higgins, who spent 1815 in Buenos Aires defending the interests of his political cause, presented the Supreme Director, Ignacio Álvarez Thomas, with a detailed military programme to re-conquer Chile. His aim was to assemble 6,000 men and then divide them into four divisions, each with the mission to cross into Chile from a specific region (the first three would go via Antuco, Río Claro and Coquimbo, the last through the port of Arauco). Carrera also prepared a plan to ‘restore the Chilean state’. He believed that the revolutionaries should attack the royalists in the winter, regardless of the complications entailed by the closure of the Cordillera. In Carrera’s words, ‘this invasion can be made across Coquimbo […] with only 500 Chilean soldiers and 1,000 muskets. It is known that Coquimbo’s garrison is no more than 100 men and that they are willing to receive the assistance of the liberators’. In practical terms, Carrera’s plan was the more unrealistic of the two and, when Álvarez Thomas asked the opinion of San Martín, the governor answered that, in order to re-conquer Chile, the army required ‘3,500 to 4,000 strong and disciplined men’. However, at that stage O’Higgins’ plan was not practicable either. Álvarez Thomas needed empirical proof that the efforts of Buenos Aires would not be

25 Escanilla to the governor of Mendoza, without exact date, AHM, box 497, doc. 9.
26 Noya to the governor of Mendoza, 7 Feb. 1816, AHM, box 497, doc. 9.
27 González to the governor of Mendoza, without exact date, AHM, box 497, doc. 9.
29 Quoted in Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. X, p. 143. A copy of Carrera’s plan can be found in AGN, Paso de Los Andes, pp. 245–46.
30 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. X, p. 144. San Martín’s answer can be found in AGN, Paso de Los Andes, pp. 246–47.
in vain, and for that San Martín had to convince him that Chile was where the royalists should be attacked first.

II. The Army of the Andes and the militarization of civil society

During his time as governor of Cuyo, San Martín’s main task was to keep the province in a state of alert in case the royalists invaded the River Plate. There were three regions from which the enemy could enter into the former viceroyalty: from one of the Atlantic ports, from Chile, or from Upper Peru. Of these, the first was the most dangerous for the revolutionaries, as only an expedition as powerful as the one being organized in Spain and led by Pablo Morillo would dare to disembark near Buenos Aires. When the Buenos Aires authorities learnt that Morillo had finally been sent to Venezuela, the idea of going on the offensive began to win supporters. San Martín favoured an attack on Chile, but the general opinion in 1815 voted for sending Manuel Belgrano to fight the enemy in Upper Peru. Despite this setback, San Martín did not abandon the idea of undertaking an invasion of Chile, and the plan to confront the army of Francisco Marcó del Pont can be traced back at least to the second half of 1815.

Buenos Aires’ politicians accepted San Martín’s proposal of creating a local army in Cuyo, although they did not immediately commit to spending the capital’s treasury to solve the financial problems of the army during its first year of life (i.e. from mid-1815 until mid-1816). The army lacked three elements: regular soldiers, resources and discipline. Mendoza’s Cabildo addressed the first deficiency in April 1815. The cabildantes were opposed to sending a contingent to Buenos Aires, arguing that the winter closure of the Cordillera would not be an obstacle for the Chilean royalists if they attempted to attack Mendoza. Just as the ‘helpless mob of the emigration’ [chusma desvalida de la emigración] had done six months earlier, the ‘enemy of the west’ could cross the Cordillera with 2,000 peones and destroy the city’s weak defence. Hence, the Cabildo recommended keeping Mendoza’s contingents in Cuyo.

In order to reinforce the troops of Cuyo, in August 1815 San Martín published a new recruitment Bando. In its first article, the governor explained that enrolment should be voluntary, and that it would last as long as the enemy was ‘in possession of the kingdom of Chile’. Yet, anticipating the difficulty of filling the ranks with volunteers, in the second article San Martín ordered the recruitment of soldiers in Cuyo through a lottery in which every single man older than 16 and younger than 50 would be included. Article 3 stated the cases in which exceptions could be requested: if recruits were only children and their mothers were widows; if they had orphan sisters; if

31 Vicuña Mackenna, *Vida del capitán*, p. 221, footnote 124.
32 Mendoza’s cabildantes to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 2 Apr. 1815, AGN, room X, 5–5-5, p. 282–83.
they had a disease; or if they had recently worked as ‘mayor, councillors or judges’ [alcaldes, regidores o jueces de partido]. Those who were deemed to have useful jobs (such as farmers and merchants) could be also exempted from military service.33

The publication of this Bando was the starting point of a progressive militarization experienced by Cuyo’s society.34 In September 1815, the first contingents arrived at the camp of El Plumerillo, where they went through strict professional military training.35 The army was improved also in more practical terms: a gunpowder factory was built, an English physician, Diego [James] Paroissien, was appointed surgeon-major of the army, and an engineer was hired to build a water-powered woollen mill [batán] to produce uniforms.36 At the same time, Bernardo de Vera y Pintado was elected Auditor of War.37 On 20 November, meanwhile, Buenos Aires determined that ‘every commander-in-chief [of the army of the United Provinces] who considers himself to be facing the enemy is authorized to execute his orders’ without discussing them directly with the porteños, a decision that empowered military chiefs who, like San Martín, operated far from the capital.38

San Martín’s reforms to Cuyo’s army allowed him to mobilize around 5,000 men by the end of December 1815, of whom only 1,543 were regular soldiers (the rest were militiamen).39 In April 1816, the infantry and the artillery numbered 1,300 soldiers, the cavalry 473.40 In the following two months, only 36 fresh recruits were enrolled, but on 1 August the army reached a total of 2,166 men (182 artillerymen, 1,412 infantry and 569 cavalry).41 The inclusion of slaves in the army explains in part the increase of Cuyo’s troops.42 San Martín’s relation with slavery was somewhat contradictory: while he seemed to have been willing to free black men in exchange for their military service, it is difficult to assert that they were actually emancipated. Moreover, the slaves were usually ‘rated’ and ‘bought’ from their owners, which indicates

33 14 Aug. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5–6, pp. 115–16.
34 Lynch, San Martín, p. 73.
35 Espejo, El Paso de Los Andes, p. 365.
37 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. X, pp. 244.
38 The Supreme Director of the United Provinces to the governor of Mendoza, 20 Nov. 1815, AGN, room X, 4–2–5, pp. 442–42v.
40 April 1816, AGN, room 10, 4–2–6, p. 162.
41 1 Jun. 1816, AGN, room 10, 4–2–6, p. 283; 1 Aug. 1816, AGN, room 10, 4–2–6, p. 344. Detailed reports of the development of the army between December 1814 and February 1816 can be found in AHM, box 485.
that they did not lose their status once recruited for the army. In Peter Blanchard’s words, the use of slaves ‘as soldiers in the Río de la Plata did not alter fundamental realities. The failure to honour the promise to free the combatants certainly demonstrated that the views of slaves had not changed: they continued to be property, not citizens’. Black men, therefore, may have enjoyed a better life in the army, but to argue that they were subject to the same treatment as white men or that the army acted as a social ladder for slaves is a hypothesis that still needs to be tested.

But perhaps more important were the political effects of their recruitment. We will see in the last section that from 1815 San Martín tried to introduce a fictional division between ‘Spaniards’ and ‘Americans’, the former supposedly being defenders of the royalist cause, the latter of the revolution. Here it suffices to say that slave recruitment was usually accompanied by an anti-Spanish discourse, without questioning whether Spaniards living in Cuyo were royalists or revolutionaries. Thus, for example, in January 1815 San Martín ordered the ‘European Spaniards to hand over their slaves to the army or pay a fine of five hundred pesos per slave’. If the authorities suspected that Spaniards living in the province had not delivered their slaves to the government, they were obliged to display numbers, documents and witnesses to explain why they had kept them. Nine days after this Bando was published, the authorities collected 23 ‘useful’ slaves (old and sick slaves were qualified as ‘not useful’) from 24 Europeans. These slaves were assessed at 4,432 pesos.

However, the inclusion of black men in the army explains only in part why the military forces of the province grew at the rate they did in the second half of 1816. There were political factors that led San Martín to form a formidable army in Cuyo, and these factors involved Buenos Aires and Upper Peru. It was in the rioplatense capital that San Martín found one of his most loyal allies: Tomás Guido. As minister of war, Guido stressed the importance of using the re-conquest of Chile as a springboard for other territorial conquests:

46 Lynch, San Martín, p. 76.
47 There is an interesting example in AHM, box 368, doc. 5 (it is dated between late January and early February 1815). The name of the person investigated was Francisco Segura.
48 4 Feb. 1815, AHM, box 368, doc. 7.
49 4 Feb. 1815, AHM, box 368, doc. 8.
'the occupation of Chile should be the government’s principal aim. First, because it is the flank in which the enemy is weaker; second, because it is the shortest, easiest and safest way to free Upper Peru; and third, because the restoration of freedom in that country can consolidate the emancipation of America'.\textsuperscript{50} On the other hand, the situation in Upper Peru also played its part. Indeed, it was only after Belgrano was defeated by the Peruvian army led by Joaquin de la Pezuela and forced to undertake a defensive strategy in the region (May 1816) that San Martín was able to obtain the attention not only of Guido but also of other River Plate politicians. The \textit{rioplatenses} changed their view regarding an invasion of Chile when they were gathered at the Congreso de Tucumán, which was installed in March 1816. Two months later, Tucumán’s congressmen appointed a widely respected military officer, Juan Martín de Pueyrredón, as Supreme Director of the River Plate. Astutely, San Martín sent an emissary to convince the new chief executive of the importance of invading Chile, and a couple of weeks later the general personally discussed his plan with Pueyrredón. It is unclear what the two leaders talked about. What is known is that, more or less at the same time that the Congreso de Tucumán proclaimed the independence of the United Provinces (9 July 1816), San Martín persuaded the Supreme Director both to attack royalist Chile and to expand the contingents of the army that were undergoing training in Cuyo.\textsuperscript{51} As San Martín told his friend Tomás Godoy Cruz, ‘in two days with their respective nights, we reached an agreement. There is nothing else we can do but act’.\textsuperscript{52} Once back in Mendoza, San Martín resumed command of the organization of the Army of the Andes. Together with Bernardo O’Higgins, who arrived in Mendoza from Buenos Aires at the beginning of 1816, the governor put into practice his plan to re-conquer Chile. Recruitment of veterans intensified in the second half of 1816. At the same time, new contingents of slaves were incorporated in the army, above all as infantrymen: ‘the best infantry soldiers we have’, claimed San Martín in May 1816, ‘are the Negroes and mulattos’.\textsuperscript{53} According to O’Higgins, in September 1816 there were about 600 slaves enrolled in the army.\textsuperscript{54} Nonetheless, as John Lynch argues, ‘San Martín led the way not only in the more obvious work of recruiting and training troops […], but also in the unpopular tasks of raising money’.\textsuperscript{55} In a letter to Buenos Aires of 16 January 1815, San Martín calculated that Mendoza required over 14,000 pesos monthly to survive, and that the city

\textsuperscript{51} San Martín was appointed general-in-chief of the Army of the Andes on 1 Aug. 1816. See Lynch, \textit{San Martín}, p. 86.  
\textsuperscript{52} Quoted in Lynch, \textit{San Martín}, p. 267.  
\textsuperscript{54} O’Higgins to Secretary of War, 14 Sep. 1816, AGN, room 10, 4–2–7, p. 57.  
\textsuperscript{55} Lynch, \textit{San Martín}, p. 75.
could manage to raise only half of that amount. In his opinion, the capital should cover the other half. Despite the governor's insistence, Buenos Aires' politicians refused to fulfil this request.

It was due to this refusal that San Martín began to think about other means of finance. Following the tendency of the Bando of 26 January, the governor ordered the European Spaniards to surrender their cash to the state. On 15 February, he received 6,800 pesos from 40 Spaniards, a significant amount considering that the city needed 14,000 pesos to pay for its services. Soon after, San Martín was aided by non-European hacendados who voluntarily donated money and goods to clothe and feed the army. In a document of 10 March we find a list of people giving money, shirts, vests, jackets, shoes, wheat, flour, barley, nuts, maize, potatoes, wine, horses, cattle, and so on.

Yet the authorities took months to actually achieve adequate funding. The help they enjoyed from the local inhabitants was invaluable, but never enough. Reports written between September and October 1815 by the newly appointed Commissioner of Food [Comisario de Viveres] of the army, Domingo Pérez, give an idea of the army's needs: cattle, salt, chili pepper, biscuits, wine, garbanzos, alfalfa, brandy (aguardiente), candles, sugar, tobacco, paper, pots, funnels, balances, blankets, ponchos, reins, saddle girths, stirrups, spikes, axes, etc. The lack of clothing in 'the middle of the winter', San Martín wrote on 2 May 1816, was especially worrisome, because 'it exposes the soldier to sicknesses that are currently appearing, and incites him to desert from the army in order to find the shelter he does not find in military service'.

On 23 August 1816, when the decision to invade Chile had already been taken, the governor claimed that it would be impossible to 'act on Chile' if Buenos Aires did not give Cuyo assistance. On this occasion, the capital responded by promising to send 8,000 pesos every month, an amount that nevertheless did not satisfy all the needs of the army. In October, for instance, the governor asked the secretary of war to dispatch as many mules

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56 San Martín to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 16 Jan. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5–5, pp. 72–72v.
57 Supreme Director of the United Provinces to San Martín, 9 Feb. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5–5, pp. 71–71v.
58 San Martín to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 15 Feb. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5–5, pp. 155–56.
59 10 Mar. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5–5, p. 237. For a list of donations given by merchants, shoemakers and 'cart owners' [dueños de carretas], see Mar. 10, 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5–5, without exact pages.
60 Sep.–Oct. 1815, AHM, box 500, doc. 1.
61 San Martín to Secretary of War, 2 May 1816, AGN, room 10, 4–2–6.
62 San Martín to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 23 Aug. 1816, AGN, room 10, 4–2–6, p. 402.
as he could gather from Buenos Aires. Without those mules, San Martín argued, the army would not be able to cross the Cordillera.\textsuperscript{64} On 6 December, meanwhile, the general called for the same authority to deliver 3,000 bags for the infantry, and a month later San Martín reported that the cavalry was short of 400 sabres.\textsuperscript{65} Mendoza, San Juan and San Luis were bankrupt and could not keep financing an army that, the mendocinos thought, was organized not only to free Chile but also to combat royalists in other regions of South America, especially Upper Peru.\textsuperscript{66}

One way or another, the demands that the creation of the army placed on Cuyo’s society provoked the resistance of local inhabitants who believed some demands were exaggerated and unfair. An interesting criticism was advanced by three ‘civic infantry leaders’, who were forced to close their shops and supply houses (casas de abasto) in order to attend military training. Their complaint was not directed so much against the idea of attending the military drills as against the fact that royalist shopkeepers were exempted from being enrolled in the army and so they were not compelled to close their shops. Therefore, the jefes cívicos de infantería asked the governor to shut all the shops of the city—including those of the royalists—during the afternoons that the army conducted its training:

The cuerpos cívicos of the infantry, created by their determined patriotism to dedicate Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons to military discipline, have expressed the damages which they suffer in their shops and supply houses for having to close them in order to attend these exercises, while others who live off the same trades, and who are exempted from this military obligation—either because they are Godos [a derogatory term of addressing the Spaniards] or suspects of being against our system of freedom and independence—take advantage of sales that should have been ours. [...] In representation of the arms of service under our command [...] we ask You to order that on the said days in the afternoons all shops and supply houses be closed during the time of compulsory exercises.\textsuperscript{67}

Although I found no reply to this letter, its existence indicates elements that are worth highlighting. First, the use by the jefes cívicos of the words ‘Godos’, ‘independencia’ and ‘libertad’ reflects how the new political vocabulary of the revolution could be employed in both public and private spheres. In fact, a public decision (i.e. to close the shops during the afternoons of military drills) caused the response of three individuals whose aim was to defend

\textsuperscript{64} San Martín to Secretary of War, 21 Oct. 1816, AGN, room 10, 4–2–7, pp. 199–99v.
\textsuperscript{65} San Martín to Secretary of War, 6 Dec. 1816, AGN, room 10, 4–2–7, p. 263; San Martín to Secretary of War, 4 Jan. 1817, AGN, room 10, 4–2–8, p. 21.
\textsuperscript{66} For summaries of the amount of money and resources spent by these three cities, see AHM, box 368, doc. 2, and AGN, room 10, 5–5–7, pp. 200–05.
\textsuperscript{67} Nicolás Aranda, Pedro Molina and Manuel Corvalán to the governor of Mendoza, 20 Aug. 1816, AHM, box 489, doc. 50.
their private interests. Second, this document proves that the organization of
the army was difficult in terms of discipline. It is unlikely that San Martin
considered the jefes cívicos’ request a threat to his government, or to the
administration of the Army of the Andes. However, it would be an error not
to see these petitions in their entirety, that is, as manifestations of discontent
that, in one way or another, affected military discipline in Cuyo.

During his period as governor and later as general-in-chief of the Army
of the Andes, San Martín faced frequent discontent, most of it manifested in
the form of crime. We saw in the first section that the émigrés who tried to
return to Chile were severely punished, as were deserters. But there were
other crimes just as damaging to the discipline of the army as desertion.
Public fights between soldiers were common in the province of Cuyo. This
was the case of a street fight in May 1815 between a soldier of the second
company of pardos and a lieutenant of Battalion 11. In his position as sentinel
at the Comedia [theatre], Pedro López of Battalion 11 was charged with
preventing ‘people with ponchos’ from entering the theatre. Ignoring this
elitist provision, the pardo Cristóbal Tobal tried to force his way in at the main
entrance of the theatre, but he was seized and beaten by López and his men.
In defence, Tobal threatened the lieutenant with his knife; López, however,
overwhelmed Tobal and took him to headquarters. When the authorities
investigated Tobal’s cause, they ordered the accused to explain why he was
carrying a knife when it was known that soldiers were not allowed to carry
arms when off duty. His explanation that he had spent the afternoon killing
[carmeando] an animal did not satisfy San Martín, who sentenced Tobal to
be drafted into the army for another five years.

Chileans living in Mendoza committed similar crimes; a short list of cases
includes a Chilean officer who was imprisoned after he attacked a person in
a coffee shop; a Chilean soldier who was prosecuted for forcing the door of
the women’s jail; an émigré who was incarcerated for living with a married
lady; and a Chilean soldier accused of being a thief. San Martín ‘never gave
up on discipline’, says Lynch. ‘He still had time, in September 1816, to issue
a lengthy order on military crime and punishment listing forty-one offences
including blasphemy, sedition, desertion, malingering, troublemaking, the
rape and robbery of women, all with drastic punishments intended to keep
order in the ranks and an example before the eyes of the people.’ However,
as we shall see, these were not the only problems San Martín faced in
Mendoza. Perhaps more complicated than political, economic or criminal
difficulties was the process of gathering reliable information about the royalist

68 A good example of a case followed against two Chilean deserters can be found in:
AHM, box 442, doc. 13, Mar.-Apr. 1815.
69 AHM, box 442, doc. 42, 28 May 1815.
70 Sep. 1815, AHM, box 442, doc. 36; Sep. 1815, AHM, box 442, doc. 40; Oct. 1815,
AHM, box 233, doc. 87; Dec. 1815, AHM, box 443, doc. 11.
71 Lynch, San Martín, p. 89.
army, and the best ways to enter Chilean territory. The next section studies the governor’s strategy to weaken the loyalists outside the province of Cuyo, specifically through the employment of irregular agents.

III. Chileans in the Army of the Andes: Spies, military intelligence and the guerra de zapa

In April 1816, some of the émigrés San Martín had allowed to stay in Cuyo were requested to form part of a commission to organize ‘the veteran forces of the Chilean army’. This commission was formed by officers José María Benavente, Venancio Escanilla, Antonio Hermida, Antonio Merino, Juan de Dios Vial and Pedro Antonio del Villar, and their mission was to elaborate a working programme to mobilize the émigrés in the three traditional arms of service: infantry, cavalry and artillery. Their efforts, in any case, were to be ‘adapted’ to a plan previously designed by San Martín.⁷²

According to San Martín, the Chilean infantry should be organized in eight battalions, each led by a captain, two lieutenants and one second lieutenant. The cavalry should consist of three squadrons, also led by a captain, two lieutenants and one second lieutenant. The artillery battalion, for its part, ‘will consist of three batteries, each one with a captain, two lieutenants and one second lieutenant’. The commission had the power to appoint the officers in charge of the arms of service. It was vital that officers be chosen taking into consideration their ‘good knowledge, valour, patriotism and integrity’, as this was the only way that the army would ‘attract the approval of the people’ [‘la opinión de los pueblos’]. With these characteristics in mind, the commission agreed to name Juan de Dios Vial commander of the infantry battalion of Chile. Antonio Merino was appointed inspector of the cavalry militias, and Joaquín Prieto commander of the artillery. These corps began their military training in El Plumerillo in July 1816. In October 1816, meanwhile, a Legión Patriótica de Chile was created to organize the émigrés who were not yet enrolled in the army.⁷³

However, the efforts of San Martín and the commission to make Chileans participate in the re-conquest of their country did not succeed. As Gerónimo Espejo claimed, ‘no body was created under the flag of Chile. Chilean historians who argued that the Army of the Andes should be called the United Army’ were completely wrong, since San Martín’s forces were ‘purely Argentine’.⁷⁴ Even though Espejo’s view was somewhat exaggerated and clearly nationalistic, the short time that the émigrés spent in Cuyo in 1816 was insufficient to create military divisions formed only by Chileans; in fact, the few Chileans who participated in the re-conquest of their country were mainly officers, not soldiers. There was one scenario, nevertheless, in

⁷² Alarcón, ‘Soldados sin ejército’, p. 50.
⁷⁴ Espejo, El Paso de Los Andes, p. 420. See also pp. 477–78.
which Chileans living in Cuyo had an active participation during the years 1814–1817: the so-called guerra de zapa.\textsuperscript{75}

The guerra de zapa, or irregular warfare, ‘went through three defined stages. In the first, the rebels sent spies or emissaries to scrutinize the territory. The second aimed to spread revolutionary propaganda in Chile […]’. In the third, by far the most difficult and risky, the rebels sought to disperse [the royalist] forces by employing small guerrilla bands’.\textsuperscript{76}

San Martín’s work was heavily dependent on spies and rural guerrilla groups. He used spies from the beginning of his government in Cuyo. Thus, on 24 February 1815 two spies notified him that British ships were ‘blockading and harassing’ the Chilean ports. In the view of the anonymous author of this letter, the British attitude reflected opposition to Osorio, who had recently confiscated the cargo of three British ships. It seemed that the British ships had London’s implicit permission to blockade neutral ports if they felt they were in danger.\textsuperscript{77}

In February 1815, too, San Martín received news from his spies that Osorio was planning an invasion of the River Plate.\textsuperscript{78} Considering that in early 1815 Buenos Aires’ politicians were mostly concentrating on facing the royalist threat in Upper Peru, it is not surprising that San Martín’s spies in Chile informed him of Osorio’s moves to help Pezuela’s army. On 3 May 1815, San Martín wrote to the Supreme Director that the report he had sent on 9 April should be discarded, for he had recently learned from his spies that Osorio had dispatched to Upper Peru not 300 men, as the previous report suggested, but 1,500 men.\textsuperscript{79} The change of figures in this case exemplifies the many difficulties faced by irregular agents when conducting their missions. Dates, numbers, locations and topics could vary from one report to another, sometimes because the spies consciously lied so they were not caught, others because the enemy hid the real information concerning the royalist army.

The most complicated aspect of a spy’s work in Chile was to win the confidence of the royalist authorities, sceptical as they were of any émigrés who returned from Mendoza. Arriving in Mendoza from Chile in September 1815, Francisco Silva was interrogated by the Auditor of War, Bernardo Vera

\textsuperscript{75} Lynch, San Martin, p. 79, defines de guerra de zapa as ‘an underground war of espionage and sabotage, with a network of spies in the mountain provinces reporting on the movements of the enemy, directing black propaganda across the Andes, keeping the cause alive and the resistance movement active in readiness for the invasion, while San Martín himself organized hit-an-run attacks on the enemy’.

\textsuperscript{76} Leopoldo Castedo, Resumen de la Historia de Chile de Francisco Antonio Encina (Santiago: Editorial Zig-Zag, 1954), vol. 1, pp. 609–10.

\textsuperscript{77} 24 Feb. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5-5, pp. 142–43v.

\textsuperscript{78} San Martín to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 8 Feb. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5-5, pp. 159–60.

\textsuperscript{79} San Martín to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 3 May 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5-5, p. 304.
y Pintado, about his role as a spy in Chile, where he had been sent by San Martín in January. Along with details of the number of Osorio’s soldiers, Silva reported that the royalist governor treated him with respect because he managed to convince Osorio that he was an ‘enemy of the American cause’.  

Other spies, however, did not have Silva’s luck. Two days after Vera y Pintado wrote his report, San Martín told the Supreme Director that two of Buenos Aires’ best spies, Domingo Guzmán and Ramón Picarte, had been ‘imprisoned by the enemy while they were crossing the Cordillera’. Although it is probable that, as Barros Arana said, Guzmán and Picarte contrived their incarceration in Santiago in order to collect information, this outcome obstructed their plans.

Despite these setbacks, at the end of 1815 San Martín’s spies were able to give him a detailed account of Osorio’s troops and their distribution throughout Chile. Thanks to his spies San Martín was also able to discover details of who his enemies were and how they performed. On 27 November José Zapiola sent him an intercepted letter in which an unknown correspondent referred to San Martín in harsh terms. Reminding his recipient (a certain ‘Matías’) not to forget that ‘he had been born a gentleman and had eaten the bread of the king’, the author of this letter advised his friend to ‘distrust that bloody San Martín, because he has a very dirty tail [cola muy sucia] and should never socialize with good men. The fear that this letter may be lost to the rebels prevents me from going deeper into this subject’. We do not know whether Zapiola or San Martín found out who the author of this letter was; however, it is more relevant to stress the number of people participating in this case (Zapiola, ‘Matías’, San Martín and, of course, a series of unknown intermediaries who helped Zapiola to obtain the letter): this suggests the persuasive effect that the revolution had on Spanish Americans in general.

The sophistication of the reports written by San Martín’s spies grew as time went by, as did the money spent on the ‘espionage service’. Regarding the first point, in January 1816 San Martín received a document signed by a so-called ‘Español’. It reported a series of events in Chile, mixing them up without any apparent logic, but clearly enough to be understood by well-informed readers like San Martín. Providing details of the construction

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82 Nov. 1815, AGN, room 10, 4–2–5, p. 461.

83 Zapiola to San Martín, 27 Nov. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5–5–6, pp. 351–52.

84 According to Ricardo Latcham, *Vida de Manuel Rodríguez. El guerrillero* (Santiago: Editorial Nacimiento, 1932), p. 151, ‘Español’ was one of the pseudonyms used by the spy Manuel Rodriguez.
of the Santa Lucía fortress in Santiago, the recruitment drive of the royalists, the doubts that the revolutionary spies spread within Chilean society and the economic hardship suffered by San Martín’s emissaries, ‘Español’ provided Cuyo’s governor with useful data about Marcó del Pont’s administration in no more than six paragraphs. His report was accompanied with eight ounces of gold that the wife of the Chilean émigré Gaspar Marín had collected for him.85 With regard to the second point, San Martín’s personal intervention in Buenos Aires in order to obtain higher wages for his spies elicited a significant increase in money used for ‘espionage service’ between February 1815 and February 1816. The Estado que manifiesta el dinero dado por esta Tesorería por Orden del Señor Gobernador Intendente para gastos secretos de Guerra en el año pasado y dos más de este was summarized on 9 March 1816 as follows:

| Year 1815:   | February | 68 pesos |
|             |         | 92 pesos |
|             | June    | 175 pesos |
|             | August  | 131 pesos |
|             | September | 368 pesos |
|             | October | 635 pesos |
|             | November | 764 pesos |
|             | December| 490 pesos |
| Year 1816:  | January | 1,712 pesos |
|             | February| 496 pesos |
|             |         | TOTAL    |
|             |         | 4,931 pesos |

‘This night 800 pesos are to be sent to Chile’ to pay the spies, continued this document signed by San Martín.86 Almost a month later, Buenos Aires’ Supreme Director ‘approved’ the expenditures made by Cuyo’s governor and even encouraged him to dispatch new ‘well-briefed emissaries, thus disheartening the [royalist] troops, introducing division amongst them and inspiring confidence in the patriot side’.87 Doubtless, the support granted by Buenos Aires to San Martín’s plan had a profound impact on Chile, where the royalist authorities had neither men nor mechanisms to break down the military intelligence set up by the revolutionaries. Marcó del Pont himself recognized his inability to deal with San Martín’s spies in his communications with his subordinates. In August 1816, Marcó ordered San Fernando’s military commander to conduct an investigation into why his men had not prevented San Martín’s spies from entering Chilean territory. Marcó was particularly suspicious of the cordillerano guards and of the political and military chiefs stationed in Curicó, Maule and their surroundings.88

85 AGN, Paso de Los Andes, pp. 298.
86 AGN, Paso de Los Andes, p. 307.
87 AGN, Paso de Los Andes, p. 308.
During this period, San Martín’s emissaries had already been able both to spread revolutionary propaganda and to form guerrilla groups to fight Marcó’s regular soldiers. Since the mid-nineteenth century historians have been interested in analysing the role of irregular agents in subverting the royalist government, not only as spies but especially as guerrilla fighters [guerrilleros], the case of Manuel Rodriguez being worthy of mention. Rodriguez was a relatively respected lawyer who, despite his elevated social background, from 1814 lived as an outlaw, made friends with low-class fugitives who eventually turned into guerrilleros, and became one of San Martín’s closest allies in Chile without once having been captured by Marcó.⁸⁹

Rodriguez left Mendoza for Chile at the beginning of 1816. His mission was twofold: on one hand, to make contact with José Miguel Neira, a rural bandit whose actions in the Central Valley intimidated the royalists as much as the prospect of facing San Martín’s regular men. On the other, to discover the details of Marcó del Pont’s military dispositions. Behind San Martín’s decision to dispatch Rodriguez to Chile was his plan to exhaust the royalists with rapid and effective attacks commanded by Rodriguez, Neira and other guerrilleros in the major towns south of Santiago. In so doing, San Martín believed, he would be able to understand the functioning of Marcó’s defensive system, and thus prepare the ground for a future invasion by the Army of the Andes. How effective was this strategy? If Ricardo Latcham was correct and ‘Español’ was one of Rodriguez’s undercover names, it can be assured that Rodriguez had already made contact with San Martín in January 1816, and that, consequently, his idea of sending him to the other side of the Cordillera was indeed useful. Still, it is also probable that the royalist authorities did not know of Rodriguez’s guerrillas until August or September of that year, which means that their assaults were circumscribed to a very restricted area.

The first document that I have found where Marcó del Pont made reference to Rodríguez is dated 12 September 1816. There, the royalist governor included the ‘son of Carlos Rodríguez’ among the ‘outlaws [facinerosos]’ sheltered in the Cordilleras of Colchagua and Maule, where they carry out their incursions and attack innocent travellers’. Marcó feared that Rodriguez and his men could enter Concepción and, from there, make contact with the Indian Venancio.⁹⁰ Two weeks later, the governor repeated this order to Antonio Quintanilla, emphasizing that, until Rodriguez’s ‘gang of salteadores’ was captured, Quintanilla’s troops must stay in the region. The decision to pursue the guerrilla bands and not use those troops to reinforce Rancagua and other places in the Central Valley is to be explained by Marcó’s decision to contain specific threats instead of having a general military plan

⁸⁹ See Ricardo Latcham, Vida de Manuel Rodríguez; Gabriel Salazar, Construcción de Estado en Chile (1800–1837). pp. 466–67; and Ernesto Guajardo, Manuel Rodríguez. Historia y leyenda (Santiago: Ril Editores, 2010).

for facing the insurgents. In fact, the disorganization of the royalist army led Quintanilla’s men to spend their days as local policemen rather than as professional military.

How did Rodríguez’s small guerrilla groups manage to attack towns like Melipilla and then disappear without trace? It was Marcó himself who answered this question in a letter to Abascal. For him, the insurgents had an advantage over the royalists, especially over the Talaveras and other Spanish-born officers: they knew the territory better. In this report, Marcó mentioned to Abascal that he imprisoned ‘three confidants of San Martín, all of them Chileans, who are in charge of fostering the revolution, and giving San Martin news about the state of discipline and weaponry of the [royalist] army. They have been also ordered to inform on the regions effectively occupied by the army, so they can plan a victorious invasion of this kingdom’. On 4 January 1817, continued Marcó, ‘a band of armed insurgents, captained by the Chilean-born lawyer, Carrera’s secretary and San Martín’s principal agent, Manuel Rodríguez, invaded the villa’. They were aided by both ‘a famous bandit called José Miguel Neira and other Chilean émigrés, who have committed many forms of harassment and violence in the haciendas’, and also by the local people who ‘inform them about the impenetrable forest trails’ of the Central Valley. Moreover, the guerrilla bands ‘are protected by the hacendados, who give them horses, provisions and whatever they need, since all of them are their supporters’. And, in a phrase that summarizes Marcó’s desperation, the governor concluded that ‘this way of harassing us is in accordance with San Martín’s instructions. San Martín has ordered Rodríguez to get together as many horses as possible and distribute them in small groups near the Cordillera until he arrives’ in Chile.

Marcó’s letter to Abascal (written only two weeks before the battle of Chacabuco) is a proof of the political and military weakness of Chile’s royalist government, proving also that San Martín’s system of military intelligence was successful. Despite the economic and administrative problems of the Army of the Andes, in 1816 San Martín achieved a number of moral victories on the Chilean side of the Cordillera. The three stages of the guerra de zapa were tackled with intelligence and expertise by his emissaries. His spies not only gathered useful information about the royalist army, but they also spread revolutionary propaganda (usually by word of mouth). Guerrillas like Rodríguez, meanwhile, launched a type of war that until then had not been very common in Chile. Revolutionary warfare in the period 1813–1814 was radical, bloody and cruel. Nonetheless, during that time confrontations generally involved regular soldiers and officers whose military training, although rudimentary, followed those of other regular armies of the region.

92 Marcó to Abascal, 28 Jan. 1817, Archivo General de Indias, Diversos 5.
Irregular warfare, on the other hand, introduced new elements to the fight, radicalizing further the conflict between royalists and insurgents. At the end of January 1817, Marcó del Pont’s administration was almost completely powerless. The publication during that month of a series of Bandos announcing severe punishments for the rebel montoneros is another proof of his vulnerability.⁹³ None of these Bandos had, however, the expected result. San Martín’s men had begun to cross the Cordillera and a new confrontation between both armies was inevitable.

IV. Crossing the Cordillera

During its last months in Mendoza, the high command of the Army of the Andes continued conducting military drills and preparing the ground for an invasion of Chile. From the beginning of the negotiations with Buenos Aires, San Martín favoured an attack on the other side of the Cordillera. However, he believed that Chile should not depend on the River Plate in matters of internal administration. In principle, the Supreme Directors of the period 1815–1816 were of the same idea, even though, in the end, the River Plate politicians ended up interfering in Chilean politics much more than anticipated.

In September 1815, San Martín asked the Supreme Director, Ignacio Álvarez Thomas, to advise him about the political conduct he should follow in Chile should his men seize Santiago: ‘what sort of governmental system must be established? If this is to be formed by locals, which party ought to dominate: the Larraines [i.e. O’Higgins’ group] or the Carrera brothers?’, San Martín asked.⁹⁴ In his answer, the Supreme Director stated that ‘given that one of the Chilean parties has to dominate, then I declare myself in favour of the Larraines’. It is possible that O’Higgins’ stay in Buenos Aires helped his faction achieve the approval of Álvarez Thomas.⁹⁵ But this approval was contingent upon political factors rather than on any personal support. In April 1815, Álvarez Thomas was amongst those who precipitated the fall of Carlos María de Alvear, who had recently become one of Carrera’s closest allies in the River Plate and, in turn, San Martín’s most dangerous internal enemy. Thus, Álvarez Thomas’ decision to back the Larraines was clearly influenced by his political differences with Alvear and his allies.⁹⁶

But during his time in office Álvarez Thomas did not have the opportunity to make his preference known. It could be said that Juan Martín de Pueyrredón, who was the Supreme Director of the River Plate when the

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⁹⁴ San Martín to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 26 Sep. 1815, AGN, room 10, 5-5–6, pp. 197–97v.
⁹⁵ Sepúlveda, Bernardo, p. 301, says that during his time in Buenos Aires O’Higgins met Álvarez and was introduced to the Logia Lautaro.
⁹⁶ The Supreme Director of the United Provinces to San Martín, 30 Oct. 1815, AGN, room X, 5-5–6, p. 199.
expedition to Chile was launched, was more impartial than Álvarez Thomas. In his Instructions to San Martín, Pueyrredón ordered him to bear always in mind that the objective of the Army of the Andes was to assist the Chileans to re-conquer their territory, but that any attempt to ‘keep possession of the aided country’ must ruled out. In the second section of the Instructions, the neutrality of Buenos Aires in relation to Chilean politics was stated: ‘being notorious the division in two parties in which Chile found itself before the entrance of the King’s troops [...] we will procure to extinguish the seed of disorder with impartial proclamations, without justifying either party and preventing the renewal of the causes of that fatal clash’.

But to show impartiality in internal politics should not preclude San Martín from convincing Chileans to be part of a general ‘American government’ and ‘constitute one single nation’:

Although the general has been warned that he should not interfere either by action or through fear in the establishment of the supreme government of the country, he should procure to use his influence and persuasion to make Chile send deputies to the general congress of the United Provinces so that a general form of government might be created in America, united in purpose and identity and whose cause, interests and objective might constitute one single nation. But, above all, he shall procure that a government be established in accordance with the one our Congress will create, and that whatever form of government that country might adopt must include a constitutional alliance with our provinces.⁹⁷

Why was Buenos Aires insisting on the importance of constituting an ‘American nation’? We must look to both political and military factors to explain the ‘American project’ and its principal aims. If during 1808–1814 the concept of ‘patriotism’ was indistinctively used to refer to the king, America, small localities and even the Spanish empire (i.e. loyalists considered themselves ‘patriots’ just as much as the insurgents), by 1816 its meaning was almost exclusively invoked by the revolutionaries to refer to America. However, because the royalist contingents were, like the revolutionaries, composed above all of people born in the New World, it is safe to say that ‘patriotism’ was used in political rather than geographic or demographic terms. Although in the declaration of the War to the Death in 1813 Simón Bolívar had tried to ‘found the identity of two belligerents, and establish them in different nations’ (America and Spain), the war never lost its civil characteristics. According to Clément Thibaud, Bolívar created ‘an ambiguous identity fiction, where the “Spanish” figure was the scapegoat of the war. Through this act of naming the “Spanish” enemy in the political sense of the term, the “American” party acquired sense and consistence in compensation’.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ The Instructions, which are dated 21 Dec. 1816, are in AGN, Paso de Los Andes, pp. 284–87. The emphasis is mine.
⁹⁸ Thibaud, Repúblicas en armas, p. 130.
so doing, the insurgents sought to legitimize the use of violence and justify
the idea that this was a ‘just’ cause against an ‘unjust enemy’: ‘the aim was
to *exterminate* an unjust enemy to obliterate three centuries of oppression
and ignominy’.\(^9\) Pueyrredón and San Martín, for their part, introduced the same
‘fictional’ division between ‘Spain’ and ‘America’, as shown by their attitudes
against Spanish slave-holders in Mendoza.\(^1\)

Yet there are also military reasons that explain why Buenos Aires called
upon Chileans to ‘Americanize’ the revolution. Like San Martín, Pueyrredón
was convinced that an attack on Lima would annihilate the royalists in South
America, and that to undertake such an attack it was essential to organize
an army in Chile formed both of Chileans and *rioplatenses*. The Army of
the Andes should be the basis of that force, though it was hoped that in the
future Chileans would engage in the defence of the revolution. In the view of
the Supreme Director, the allegiance of Chileans to local defence was key to
putting the military aspects of the American project into practice. However,
he also believed that Chileans must understand that the struggle against
the ‘Spanish yoke’ was extremely onerous, and that Buenos Aires would not
always be willing to assist its fellow revolutionaries. So Pueyrredón decided
that, after re-conquering Chile, the Chilean government was to ‘repay the
United Provinces with two million pesos to cover the enormous expenses of
the campaign’.\(^1\)

By the time these Instructions were written (21 December 1816), the
training of the Army of the Andes was at its height. Yet contrary to what one
might have thought, San Martín spent his last days in Mendoza busy with
symbolic rather than military issues. He ‘knew the importance of spectacle
and liturgy’, a fact that accounts for his decision to encourage the loyalty
of his men by religious means.\(^1\) San Martín and Cuyo’s new governor,
Toribio de Luzuriaga, were Catholic themselves, which is why in their
attitudes towards religion one can hardly find traces of atheism or even signs
of irreligion.\(^1\) Following the example of Manuel Belgrano, who in Upper
Peru had named Our Lady of la Merced *General del Ejército* and insisted
that ‘the revolution exported by Buenos Aires was neither against religion

\(^9\) Clément Thibaud, ‘La ley y la sangre. La “guerra de razas” y la constitución
viewFile/771/pdf
\(^1\) Other example of San Martín’s anti-Spanishness is a proposal on 28 Oct. 1815 to
expel all Spaniards from Mendoza (San Martín to Secretary of Government, AGN,
room 10, 5–5–6, pp. 254–54v).
\(^1\) AGN, *Paso de Los Andes*, p. 287.
\(^1\) Lynch, *San Martín*, p. 91.
\(^1\) Luzuriaga was appointed governor of Cuyo in October 1816 so San Martín could
devote himself exclusively to preparing the invasion of Chile. See Enrique Díaz
Araujo, ‘Historia institucional de Mendoza. Notas para servir a su estudio’, *Revista
nor were their followers savage invaders’, San Martín consciously linked his cause with the teachings of the Church.\textsuperscript{104} Phrases such as ‘the churches of the capital had begun to implore the protection of the God of the Armies’; ‘let us unite our vows at the Sacred Altar, so God can bless our weapons and grant a double spirit to the brave Legions that are prepared for the fight’; ‘it is a duty of every good patriot to participate in these acts of piety’, were repeatedly used by Luzuriaga in his Bandos between late December 1816 and early February 1817.\textsuperscript{105}

Without doubt the festivity of 5 January 1817, in which Our Lady of Carmen was designated Patroness of the army and the first rioplatense flag was blessed, was the most popular of all these ceremonies. According to Pablo Ortemberg, San Martín introduced the cult of Our Lady of Carmen in Mendoza because it was an ‘invocation venerated on both sides of the Cordillera’.\textsuperscript{106} In the words of Luzuriaga, ‘the fifth [of January] is marked by the august and sacred ceremony of the oath to the Patroness of the army of Our Lady of Carmen and by the blessing of the flag under whose auspices the struggle against the victimizers of the Kingdom of Chile will be undertaken. Shall we mark with a mysterious Thau the place where the banner of our liberty will be hoisted’.\textsuperscript{107}

Drums, fifes and other musical instruments had a special place on that day. ‘On 5 January’, Carmen Gutiérrez reports, ‘the bands of the infantry, cavalry and artillery played’ military music, as they also did when the Army of the Andes began to cross the Cordillera.\textsuperscript{108} It is not surprising that, in a period marked by the influence of the Marseillaise, San Martín made his soldiers play and sing military music, nor that in 1818 Chileans sang their first anthem (which was written by the Auditor of War of the Army of the Andes, Bernardo de Vera y Pintado) to the same rhythm and music as those of the anthem of the River Plate.\textsuperscript{109} From the anecdote that in his odyssey across the Cordillera San Martín more than once ordered ‘the band to play the Argentine national anthem, the music echoing high through the mountains’, it can be said that the musicians of the Army of the Andes brought the rioplatense anthem into Chile and popularized it.\textsuperscript{110} San Martín himself sang

\textsuperscript{105} 31 Dec. 1816, AHM, box 4, doc. 50; 1 Feb. 1817, AHM, box 4, doc. 55.
\textsuperscript{106} Ortemberg, ‘Las Virgenes Generales’, p. 33.
\textsuperscript{107} 3 Jan. 1817, AHM, box 4, doc. 5.
\textsuperscript{109} The lyrics of this anthem can be found in AGN, Paso de Los Andes, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{110} Lynch, San Martín, p. 93.
the anthem in a reception held in Santiago to celebrate the revolutionary triumph in Chacabuco.\footnote{Lynch, \textit{San Martin}, p. 97.}

After designating Our Lady of Carmen Patroness of the army and blessing the flag, San Martín started to dispatch his forces. He was well aware that to cross the Cordillera was a major task. As he told Tomás Guido in June 1816, his main preoccupation was not as much the ‘opposition that the enemy may present, but to cross those immense mountains’.\footnote{Barros Arana, \textit{Historia General de Chile}, vol. X, p. 377. This is a quote from a letter sent by San Martín to Tomás Guido on 14 Jun. 1816.} However, he overcame his fears and concluded that the bulk of his army should break into Chile from two central passes: Uspallata and Los Patos.

The Army of the Andes was, according to an \textit{Estado general de su actual fuerza, armamento y municiones} dated 31 December 1816, formed by 195 officers, 14 commanders and 3,778 soldiers (total: 3,987 men). The artillery had 258 men, the infantry 2,928 and the cavalry 801.\footnote{Espejo, \textit{El paso de Los Andes}, p. 525.} This total diminished in the first weeks of January, after the loss of 400 men (because of desertions, disease or death).\footnote{Barros Arana, \textit{Historia General de Chile}, vol. 10, p. 372, footnote 5.} Tactically, the army was organized in two major divisions. The first was under the command of Juan Gregorio de las Heras, its objective being to advance through Uspallata to Santa Rosa de Los Andes. The second was led by Miguel Estanislao Soler, and its aim was to enter into Chile through Los Patos and ‘seize San Felipe de Aconcagua the same day that Las Heras took control of Santa Rosa de Los Andes’.\footnote{Lynch, \textit{San Martin}, p. 92; Barros Arana, \textit{Historia General de Chile}, vol. X, p. 382.} Soler’s division was, in turn, divided into three: Soler was in charge of the vanguard, Bernardo O’Higgins of the centre, and San Martín of the reserve. To them were added small columns, the first of which left Mendoza on 9 January.\footnote{Lynch, \textit{San Martin}, p. 92.} This column was led by Juan Manuel Cabot and was sent to Coquimbo. Five days later, another small column headed by Ramón Freire was dispatched to the southern regions of the Central Valley so he could get into Chile from Curicó and Colchagua. Las Heras’ division of 800 men started to cross the Cordillera on 18 January. He was followed by Soler’s vanguard, which left Mendoza between 19 and 20 January. O’Higgins’ centre left between 21 and 22 January, while San Martín and the Army Staff set off on 24 January.\footnote{Barros Arana, \textit{Historia General de Chile}, vol. 10, p. 384 and footnote 14 of that page.}

By giving O’Higgins command of a quarter of the army, Pueyrredón and San Martín empowered the man they deemed their most strategic ally in Chile. And the truth is that this was not the only mission assigned to O’Higgins by the \textit{rioplatenses}. Only a day before Las Heras’ division began their advance towards Chile, Pueyrredón agreed with San Martín that, if
the Army of the Andes succeeded, O’Higgins should be appointed ‘president
or Supreme Director of the Chilean state’.

O’Higgins’ appointment, for
them, ensured that Buenos Aires’ continental strategy would be politically,
militarily, and economically supported by the Chilean government and
treasury. Thus, even though San Martín and Pueyrredón rejected the idea
of naming one of the military chiefs of the River Plate governor of Chile,
they actively participated in the decision that allowed O’Higgins to become
Supreme Director of Chile in February 1817.

The divisions of the Army of the Andes took about twenty days to cross
the Cordillera. The day-to-day life of the divisions during this period can
be followed in a book published by Hans Bertling in 1908, which reveals
that the crossing was exhausting, dangerous and unpredictable. Thus, for
instance, we find a letter of Las Heras of 25 January notifying San Martín
that a minor confrontation had taken place between his men and 60 of the
enemy. Two days later, Las Heras asked San Martín to send the surgeon-
major of the army with medicines to Uspallata, as he did not want to leave his
sick soldiers behind. These setbacks did not, however, stop Las Heras, and
on 2 February he was already in Juncalillo (located on the Chilean side of the
Cordillera). Las Heras wrote to San Martín from Juncalillo that he had ‘taken
control of the heights of the Cordillera’, informing him also that in order to
monitor the ‘movements of the enemy’ he had sent a spy accompanied by a
guerrilla band of 30 men to a place called La Guardia (which was where the
royalists were allegedly assembled).

O’Higgins’ troops also experienced setbacks during the crossing of the
Cordillera. On 1 February, the Chilean general told San Martín that the
cold temperatures of the Andes were causing suffering amongst his men,
and that ‘a black soldier’ [un negrito] had recently died due to the severity
of the weather. O’Higgins was able to relieve the suffering of his men only
by giving them wine. But like Las Heras’ division, O’Higgins’ and Soler’s
men kept marching. Once in Los Patos, the second division of the army was
ordered to ‘open communications with Las Heras and then march directly
to Chacabuco’. In Lynch’s words, the royalists ‘were alerted to the danger of
a junction of the two divisions, which they could prevent by dominating one
of the passes and so stop the Army of the Andes from occupying the plain’.
San Martín, however, foresaw this threat and ‘sent in a unit of twenty-five
mounted grenadiers, whose epic charge on 4 February—the first of a series—
put to flight the Spanish detachment, taking their stores and equipment’. On

118 AGN, Paso de Los Andes, p. 287, Pueyrredón to San Martín, 17 Jan. 1817.
119 Bertling, Documentos históricos referentes al paso de Los Andes efectuado en 1817
por el General San Martín (Concepción: Litografía e Imprenta Concepción, 1908).
120 Bertling, Documentos históricos, p. 39.
121 Bertling, Documentos históricos, p. 48.
123 Bertling, Documentos históricos, p. 10.
February, Lynch continues, ‘San Martín’s men united on the Chilean side as planned, truly a miracle of timing. They took up position on the heights overlooking the hill of Chacabuco, which blocked the north end of the Central Valley of Chile and was the key to the advance on Santiago’.124

The battle of Chacabuco started early in the morning of 12 February 1817, and only O’Higgins’ and Soler’s divisions were active on the battlefield.125 O’Higgins had orders not to engage in a direct attack until the forces of Soler, who had been sent to confront the enemy’s right, joined the rest of the army. San Martín had ‘always planned a single massive attack on the Spanish forces’, and so he could not afford to have his army destroyed because of a sally by a subordinate. However, impatient as he was, O’Higgins disobeyed and ‘threw his men in alone against the Spaniards’, who were led by Rafael Maroto.126 O’Higgins’ aim was to attack the enemy’s left flank, to which end he led the infantry himself. But, as Barros Arana wrote, ‘such a charge did not produce the expected results’.127 Furthermore, ‘this one impulsive act threatened the whole strategy of San Martín’, who saw from the heights how his men had ‘to retreat in disorder, leaving on the field “a heap of poor negroses”’.128 To remedy this risky situation, San Martín ordered Soler to ‘hasten the march of his division’ and help O’Higgins’ troops to destroy the forces of the enemy. With two squadrons of grenadiers, San Martín ‘charged the right of the enemy and routed them’, thereby ‘encouraging O’Higgins infantry to renew their attack with a fierce bayonet charge’.129

Soler’s division arrived more or less at the same time that San Martín engaged personally in the combat. In a pincer strategy, the rioplatense general appeared from the right, though he finally attacked the left flank of the enemy. The royalists were ‘caught between O’Higgins’ infantry and the main body of Soler’s division, which cut off their retreat’.130 As a result, the insurgents lost 150 men between dead and wounded, while almost 600 royalists died and another 600 were captured (of these, 32 were officers). In addition, the insurgents captured the enemy’s artillery and the flag of the Regimiento de Chiloé.131

The battle of Chacabuco put an end to a period known for the inability of both sides to build a solid administrative project, even though it did not put an end to the military confrontations between royalists and insurgents in

124 Lynch, San Martín, pp. 93–94.
126 Lynch, San Martín, p. 94.
128 Lynch, San Martín, pp. 94–95.
129 Lynch, San Martín, p. 95.
130 Lynch, San Martín, p. 95.
131 Bertling, Documentos históricos, p. 135.
Chilean territory. This, because after the battle of Chacabuco of 12 February 1817 the insurgents re-conquered only Santiago and its surroundings, the royalists, now led by José Ordóñez, being able to reassemble their forces in Talca and Concepción and deploy them throughout the south of the country. San Martín’s statement of 22 February that in twenty-four days the Army of the Andes ‘defeated the tyrants and freed Chile’ was, therefore, exaggerated. In the words of Lynch, Chacabuco was ‘a victory squandered’, not least because of the revolutionaries’ decision not to chase the enemy. The insurgents retook control of Santiago. They even imprisoned Marcó del Pont and his closest allies. But they did not consummate independence militarily. That remained far off.

The battle of Chacabuco of 12 February 1817 was the last event of a process initiated in October 1814, when the first contingents of Chilean émigrés began to arrive in Mendoza after the royalist triumph in Rancagua forced them to escape to the other side of the Cordillera. This chapter has analysed the process of militarization experienced by Cuyó’s society during these two and half years. We have seen that San Martín engaged himself personally in the various stages of the creation of the army, especially from mid-1816, when the decision to assist the Chilean revolutionaries in re-conquering their country was finally made. Also, we saw that the participation of Chilean officers in both the preparation of the army and the battle of Chacabuco was marginal, as most émigrés were sent out of the province to combat the royalists in other parts of the River Plate. Yet there was a small group of Chileans who crossed the Cordillera with the rest of the army to fight the royalists. They were backed by a number of Chilean spies who either remained in the country or were sent by San Martín to Chile in order to collect information about Marcó del Pont’s government and army.

These pages have also highlighted the relationship between the Buenos Aires politicians and San Martín, as well as the important support given by Pueyrredón to the plan of invading Chile with a rioplatense force. Pueyrredón agreed to spend money, resources and men to re-conquer Chile because he believed that this would allow Buenos Aires to attempt an attack on Lima, the centre of the counterrevolution. This explains why Pueyrredón and San Martín never aspired to establish a rioplatense government in Chile, but rather to secure O’Higgins’ appointment as Supreme Director of the country. O’Higgins’ appointment was a political move that ensured that neither the Carrera brothers nor other Chilean revolutionary leaders (like Manuel Rodríguez) would interfere with the plans of the Logia Lautaro to re-conquer Lima. Thus, Pueyrredón and San Martín did not seal an alliance

132 Lynch, San Martín, p. 95.
with the Chilean state (i.e. this was not an international agreement based on international law), but rather with the political group that was most likely to second their revolutionary programme.

The military commitment of the River Plate politicians to the re-conquest of Chile was accompanied by what is usually referred to as ‘Americanism’. The development of an ‘American’ sentiment in opposition to Spain and Spaniards was a substantial element of San Martín’s revolutionary discourse. This discourse was, as in Venezuela, based on a fictional and Manichean division between ‘Americans’ and ‘Spaniards’ that identified them respectively as ‘revolutionaries’ and ‘royalists’. However, it is one thing to argue that, from 1816 onwards, the revolutionaries invoked ‘patriotism’ to refer exclusively to America, but quite another to state that all Americans defended the insurgency. After all, this was a civil war fought by two armies formed mainly by American-born combatants.

Differences between insurgents and loyalists in the River Plate and Chile were, therefore, political, not cultural or geographic. These differences became irreconcilable by 1817, when San Martin’s army entered Santiago and the royalists were compelled to seek refuge in the south of Chile. The battle of Chacabuco did not secure independence, although the capital and the northern regions never again fell to the royalists. The Army of the Andes, with all its economic and administrative problems, finally managed to accomplish its original task and ‘freed’ the Central Valley from the ‘Spanish yoke’. The next goal was to gain the support of the local elites, for which it was essential to present O’Higgins as the only legitimate authority of the country and stress that, without Chilean resources and troops, an attack on Lima was not possible. The departure from Valparaíso of the Liberating Army to Peru in August 1820 confirms that, at least in political terms, San Martín’s 1816 aim to use Chile as a springboard to invade Lima was indeed successful.
CHAPTER IV

The establishment of a military regime in Chile, 1817–1823

The arrival in Santiago of José de San Martín after the battle of Chacabuco provoked a realignment of Chilean politics. For the first time in more than two years the insurgents took control of the capital. In this chapter we will see that the santiaguinos became actively involved in politics, and that military affairs were at the centre of their political agenda. This was the case because decisions concerning the war were made in Santiago, and also because Bernardo O’Higgins’ political programme was designed and implemented by his military allies.

Immediately after his entrance into Santiago, O’Higgins devoted himself to establishing a new revolutionary regime, which was designed to strengthen the power of the Supreme Director vis-à-vis 1) the royalists, and 2) those opposed to him and San Martín within the insurgent faction. The main difference between the royalist governments of the years 1814–1817 and the O’Higgins administration is that the revolutionaries prosecuted and sentenced those who, although revolutionaries, were at odds with the central government. An analysis of the functioning of the Logia Lautaro is, in this case, crucial to understanding the participation of Buenos Aires’ politicians in the organization of O’Higgins’ government and the pursuit of unruly insurgents.

The establishment of this new administration in Santiago and its surroundings was made possible thanks to the military triumphs in Chacabuco (12 February 1817) and Maipú (5 April 1818). But to have control of the Central Valley did not guarantee the insurgents dominion over the rest of the country, the south especially. Irregular warfare continued in the period 1818–1821 in the Concepción and the Araucanian regions, O’Higgins being unable to carry out a long-term military plan to expel the enemy from Chilean territory. Eventually, O’Higgins’ indecision regarding how the royalists should be confronted created friction between the government’s envoy in the Araucanian region, Joaquín Prieto, and colonel Ramón Freire, the chief of the Army of the South. This friction marked the start of a political conflict that, in early 1823, prompted the deposition of O’Higgins in favour of Freire.
O’Higgins’ indecision was influenced by his choice to concentrate policy making in the Executive. The last section of this chapter deals with the main political characteristics of the O’Higgins government (1817–1823), which followed the model of Roman republican dictatorship. Through a series of measures, including the installation of the first military academy, the creation of a Legión de Mérito to award officers and soldiers, and the writing of two very personalistic constitutions, O’Higgins sought to secure both his political position and that of his military fellows in the new Chilean republic. In general, the elites reacted positively to the intervention of military officers in politics, but criticized the excessive power assigned constitutionally to the Supreme Directorship. The Constitutions of 1818 and 1822 alienated provinces like Concepción, which, as chapter VI will show, in 1823 voted for the deposition not of O’Higgins the military officer but of O’Higgins the ‘despotic’ ruler.

I. Ruling over an unruly population

San Martín arrived in Santiago two days after Chacabuco. The morning after the battle, Francisco Marcó del Pont escaped to Valparaíso, hoping to take the first ship to Lima. However, before Marcó reached the port, a squad of revolutionaries took him back to the capital, where he was imprisoned. After a private conversation with the Spanish general, San Martín sent Marcó to Mendoza to be sentenced by Cuyo’s authorities. Toribio de Luzuriaga confined Marcó to San Luis, where he lived for two years. He eventually died in the rioplatense city of Luján, imprisoned and poor.

Other important royalist figures from Santiago also escaped from the capital. These included Santiago’s Administrador de Correos, Juan Bautista Aeta, who experienced a real odyssey in finding a ship that could take him and his family to Lima.1 Aeta’s consternation at the defeat was total, as also was that of Juan Manuel Mendiburu, who, on 20 March 1817, wrote to former viceroy Abascal from Guayaquil to report on events at Chacabuco. Mendiburu expressed his astonishment at the rapidity with which Marcó’s army had been defeated, arguing that the Chilean royalists had chosen not to resist San Martín vigorously, but rather wait until they had learned more of Buenos Aires’ political and military plans. What is more, Mendiburu implicitly said that the weak resistance of the santiaguinos was due to the latter’s interest in signing a political alliance with Buenos Aires.2 Bearing in mind the conflicts between Marcó and the Santiago elites, Mendiburu seemed to have been correct.

After entering the capital, San Martín sought to build bridges with the Santiago ruling classes. The nomination of O’Higgins as Supreme Director

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1 AGI, Correos 87, 26 Mar. 1817.
2 AGI, Diversos 5, Mendiburu to Abascal, 20 Mar. 1817.
of Chile on 16 February was the first step towards the consolidation of San Martín's plans in Chile. Once in office, O'Higgins furthered this strategy, both in his communications with Juan Martín de Pueyrredón and in his public acts in Santiago during the first months of 1817. While in his correspondence with Buenos Aires we perceive O'Higgins' gratitude to San Martín for helping recover Chile, in his actions in Santiago we appreciate his efforts to make Chileans understand the important role played by Buenos Aires in the re-conquest of their country. A good example of the first case is a letter of 4 March to Pueyrredón in which O'Higgins told the Supreme Director of the United Provinces that 'we find ourselves in an Octavian tranquility [...] Events in the south [of Chile] do not offer material worthy of the pen'. Two examples of the second are the opinion of the *Gaceta del Supremo Gobierno* that 12 of February was a 'glorious day for Chile and the Argentine Nation', as well as O'Higgins' statement on 17 February thanking 'our friends, the sons of the River Plate', for helping the Chileans to regain their freedom. At the same time, the creation of the Army of Chile [*Ejército de Chile*] and the establishment of a military academy in Santiago in March 1817 were designed to tighten the 'alliance with the government of Buenos Aires [...] whose aim was to take the war into Peru'.

As it was argued in chapter III, the alliance between the Chilean and the rioplatense revolutionaries was strengthened in the aftermath of the battle of Rancagua. This became clear already in 1815, while O'Higgins was living in Buenos Aires and became involved in the *Logia Lautaro*. The *Logia* can loosely be defined as a 'hybrid form of sociability, a combination of Masonic Lodge and patriotic society'. It derived from a group called *Caballeros Racionales* that was created in Spain during the Napoleonic occupation of the Peninsula. It is probable that San Martín's old enemy, Carlos Alvear, was a member of the *Caballeros Racionales* and that he launched a branch of the

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3 Julio Alemparte, *Carrera y Freire*, p. 151, claims that the election of O'Higgins was seconded by people like the Marqués de Larraín and Conde de Quinta Alegre, which proves that at that time there were moderate royalists who were beginning to see the advantages of some degree of self-government for Chile. Cf. the last section of chapter II of this book.

4 AGN, room X, 4–2–8, p. 218, O'Higgins to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 4 Mar. 1817.

5 *Gaceta del Supremo Gobierno de Chile*, vol. 1, number 1, Feb. 26, 1817. A couple of months later, the Chilean government ordered the coining of medals to celebrate the triumph in Chacabuco and which should start circulating in the *porteño* capital on 25 May 1817, that is, the day of the commemoration of the installation of Buenos Aires' Junta. See AGN, room X, 4–2–8, p. 348, San Martín to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 3 Jun. 1817.


7 Barros Arana, *Historia General de Chile*, vol. XI, p. 26. I discuss in more depth the importance of this military academy in the fourth section of this chapter.

8 Del Solar, 'Masones y Sociedades Secretas'.
lodge in Buenos Aires once he returned to Spanish America. In any case, in 1816 the Logia Lautaro, as this branch was called, was led by Pueyrredón and San Martín, who set about ‘creating an affiliate lodge in Mendoza and afterwards another one in Santiago’. In Felipe Del Solar’s opinion, the Logia Lautaro responded ‘to a process of regional military organization, whose ultimate objective was to overthrow the royalists from the Peruvian Viceroyalty’.

The Logia had political and military purposes, and both converged on the expulsion of the royalists from Spanish America. According to Jaime Eyzaguirre, the aim of the Logia was to secure the independence of Spanish America. The Logia did not act as a modern political party, but rather as a ‘patriotic society’ in which military activities went hand in hand with the introduction of a new political regime. It is not surprising, therefore, that the principal members of the Logia Lautaro had been officers, nor that they had become key political figures in the 1820s. Some of the better-known Chilean officers who participated in the Logia Lautaro of Santiago were O’Higgins, Ramón Freire, Luis de la Cruz and Manuel Borgoño, to whom we must add a group of rioniplatense military men led by San Martín, Hilarión de la Quintana and Rudecindo Alvarado.

Their involvement in the Ejército Libertador that was created with the remains of the Army of the Andes and other troops recruited in Chile to liberate Peru. Their involvement in the Ejército Libertador del Perú was one of the many elements shared by these officers. San Martín, O’Higgins and the other officers and civilians who participated in the re-conquest of Chile had the impression that Spanish Americans were not only different from, but also more virtuous than peninsulares. The first edition of the revolutionary periodical Gaceta del Supremo Gobierno de Chile pointed out the alleged differences between Europeans and Spanish Americans, as San Martín had done in Mendoza when he organized the Army of the Andes and created a division between ‘Americans’ and ‘Spaniards’. For San Martín and O’Higgins it was vital to convince the Gaceta’s readers that the royalists’ greatest crime was their foreign origin. The author of the article even brought up the coincidence that the battle of Chacabuco was fought on the same day that the first Spanish

11 Del Solar, ‘Masones y Sociedades Secretas’.
12 In the opinion of Klaus Gallo, ‘Political instability in post-independence Argentina’, in Anthony McFarlane and Eduardo Posada Carbó (eds.), Independence and Revolution in Spanish America (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1999) p. 109, the participation of Alvear and San Martín in the Logia Lautaro ‘illustrates a tendency among rioniplatenses to value the presence of military men at the highest levels of politics’.
‘usurper’, Pedro de Valdivia, founded Santiago in 1541: the grave of Valdivia ‘accompanies the shameful flight of the miserable remnant of the Spaniards who survived the triumph of Chacabuco’.14

Two weeks later, the Gaceta underscored this point once again, though this time its criticism focused on what the editors saw as the responsibility of the Spaniards in bringing violence to Chile. The so-called ‘sistema de pura sangre’ was in the heart of every ‘Spanish barbarian’. Nothing was more indicative of the Spanish ‘cruelty’ than the four gallows the royalists had set up during Marco’s government in the main square of Santiago and upon which the ‘independientes’ looked with horror when they arrived in the capital. In contrast to the ‘Spanish barbarians’, the revolutionaries had pardoned twenty-three royalist spies and treated Marcó’s emissaries with respect. Also, while the Ejército Restaurador led by San Martín was sober and loyal, the royalists had confiscated and spent the fortunes of hundreds of Chileans. ‘Nobles’ as well as the lower classes [labradores] faced the ‘brutality of the Spaniards’, not only in Chile but throughout Spanish America. An example of this last point was the killing of one thousand ‘citizens’ in Chuquisaca on general La Serna’s orders.15

José Antonino Sapiain, a revolutionary regional leader from Huasco, was of the same opinion. In a long, well-articulated ‘Proclama’ Sapiain explained the invasion of Chile on the grounds that San Martin and his men had crossed the Cordillera to free their fellow revolutionaries from the Spanish yoke. ‘Every American carried a chain’ during the colonial period, said Sapiain, adding that the worst crime of the Spaniards was to deny that Americans ‘were a substantial part of the monarchy’. Things had changed in the last seven years (i.e. from 1810), and now the same Americans who once had struggled to be considered as a constitutive part of the empire had decided to cut their links to the metropolis. ‘The inequality of rights was scandalous’, as it opposed the ‘natural state of free men’. Sapiain’s reference to ‘nature’ was not new. According to Simon Collier, Chileans usually defined liberty in natural terms: ‘the law which created a suitable framework for the operation of liberty had to be as “natural” as possible. It had to be consonant with the eternal yardstick of the Natural Law. Natural Law, to the Chileans, was fixed in a permanent and unshakable position in the universe’,16 ‘Thus, Sapiain’s position was in conformity with Santiago’s plan to reinforce the argument that the battle of Chacabuco allowed the Chileans to recover their ‘natural freedom’.17

14 Gaceta del Supremo Gobierno de Chile, vol. 1, number 1, Feb. 26, 1817.
15 Gaceta del Supremo Gobierno de Chile, vol. 1, number 3, Mar. 12, 1817.
17 AHM, box 702, doc. 9, 23 Feb. 1817.
Because the Spanish regime was ‘unnatural’, its followers had to be punished. Notwithstanding the belief that the insurgents were lenient while the royalists were vindictive and despotic, O’Higgins’ reprisals did not differ much from those of Osorio and Marcó del Pont. On 12 March 1817, for instance, the Gaceta stated that the ‘patriots whose possessions [bienes] were seized by the tyrant deserve a reciprocal reward’. Accordingly, O’Higgins stated that 1) ‘all properties belonging to residents of Spain and its domains, whether continental or ultramarine, be immediately confiscated, excepting those belonging to exiles or prisoners’ of the previous regime; 2) that ‘everyone who possesses such properties should hand them over within 48 hours of this publication’; 3) that ‘those who do not declare them on time will suffer a total confiscation of their possessions’; 4) and that ‘after this denunciation process [delación], the government will open a new book of delaciones in which accusations against those who had hidden their intentions will be recorded’. These orders were followed a week later by the following admonition: ‘whoever after two months has not qualified as a Patriot will lose his job and remain with no further option of employment’.

Dismissals and detentions of royalist civil employees and military officers began almost immediately after the publication of the Bando of 12 March. The rioplatense officer Hilarión de la Quintana, who performed as interim Supreme Director while O’Higgins was in the south fighting the royalist guerrillas, took personal charge in executing this task. On 24 April 1817, de la Quintana informed O’Higgins that he had instructed his subordinates to imprison ‘all the officers who served in the enemy’s army’. Three days later, he informed O’Higgins that all suspected individuals, from hacendados to inquilinos, had been removed from the coast, and that ‘true patriots’ had been appointed as coast guards. He added proudly that ‘patriot priests’ were helping the authorities to ‘preach’ the new ‘system’.

These general measures were accompanied by the systematic pursuit of specific individuals who had relations with the previous government. Defendants were generally accused of ‘realismo’, although the word ‘realismo’ could mean very different things. There were at least two levels of ‘realismo’: the first was related to what we might call ‘high politics’, the second to

18 Gaceta del Supremo Gobierno de Chile, vol. 1, number 3, Mar. 12, 1817.
19 Gaceta del Supremo Gobierno de Chile, vol. 1, number 4, Mar. 19, 1817.
20 Quintana was Supreme Director of Chile (Delegado) from April to September 1817. He was replaced by a Junta Gubernativa formed by Luis de la Cruz, Francisco Antonio Pérez and José Manuel Astorga until O’Higgins retook office (24 Mar. 1818). See Alemparte, Carrera y Freire, p. 158; and Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XI, p. 173.
21 MG, vol. 34, p. 16, de la Quintana to O’Higgins, 24 Apr. 1817.
22 MG, vol. 34, pp. 20–21, de la Quintana to O’Higgins, 27 Apr. 1817.
23 For lists of prisoners, see AHM, box 496, docs. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26; and AHM, box 497, docs. 33, 34, 38.
mundane issues. While in the former case the royalists were investigated because the authorities were suspicious of their ‘political conduct’, in the latter the defendants were prosecuted for minor ‘crimes’, such as giving the royalists shelter or aiding them with food and other goods during the war.

As under Mariano Osorio, investigations could last months before a verdict was passed, and the defendants could be either common people or relatively powerful figures. Regarding common people, we find a ‘criminal case’ followed in San Felipe against the ‘godo europeo’ and second lieutenant of the royalist army, Esteban del Campo, between March and May 1817. Del Campo faced three charges: to have escaped with his family to ‘enemy territory’ [campo enemigo]; to have ‘denounced’ an individual called Juan Naranjo ‘for speaking in favour of the patriots’; and to have stolen gold from the ‘patriots who fled to Mendoza’ after the battle of Rancagua. However, after two months of investigations the authorities had not reached a final sentence. Consequently, del Campo asked to be released, admitting nevertheless that he had stolen money from some of the soldiers who migrated to the other side of the Cordillera, but stressing that he was innocent of the other accusations. The authority in charge of his case agreed to release him after he paid a small fine.24

Other defendants were more powerful and important than del Campo, and therefore O’Higgins involved himself directly in the formulation of charges. Rafael Beltrán was a respected vecino of Santiago who, according to O’Higgins, ‘showed the most obstinate adherence to the right and the cause of the King’ during Osorio’s and Marcó’s governments. O’Higgins continued: ‘three days before action at Chacabuco he [Beltrán] protested in the Act of 9 February 1817 the most solemn hatred of the patriotic system, swearing to uphold the monarchy with his life, belongings and honour’. After the revolutionary triumph in Chacabuco, Beltrán ‘escaped to Lima’, where he offered ‘enormous amounts of money to assist the expedition’ that Joaquín Pezuela organized in 1818 in order to ‘subdue Chile’ (I will return to this expedition later in this chapter). But on 1 June 1818 Beltrán was captured and ‘now it seems fair that due to the charges mentioned above, which can also be applied to other vecinos of this capital, the accused should be prosecuted’.25 Though I was unable to find the verdict in this case, I have located a document in which Agustín Díaz confirmed O’Higgins’ accusations. In Díaz’s words: ‘I certify as true that, during the governments of Osorio and Marcó, Rafael Beltrán expressed the most determined commitment to the rights and cause of the king’.26

There were other individuals who were prosecuted for minor ‘crimes’. Manuel Bello and José León were charged by the soldier Lorenzo Flores of

26 MG, vol. 78, 29 Jul. 1818. Other examples of ‘political cases’ in AGN, room X, 4–2–9, pp. 314–14v, 9 Dec. 1817; and AHM, box 703, doc. 16, 17 Jan. 1818.
providing ‘bread, chili, wine and other goods’ to the enemy. It is not clear whether Bello and León helped the royalists for ideological reasons or, rather, because they had a commercial relationship with them. Flores could not ascertain if Bello and León handed letters to the royalists when they delivered their provisions, nor if they were spies of Juan Francisco Sánchez. What he could say for certain was that other individuals, such as Benito Lazo, Juan Lazo, Josefa Bello, Isabel Bello, Martina Bello and Juana Bello, participated in this traffic. He also stated that Sánchez had given them ‘free passage for them to come and go, and they came and left this city with no obstacles’. The sentence in this case is unknown, but the entire Bello family declared that the accusation was false and that Manuel Bello and José León should be released.27

Cases such as these show that royalists and revolutionaries shared a common belief with regard to how their respective enemies should be investigated and punished. The division of society between those who ‘opposed’ and those who ‘supported’ the political regime that happened to be in power was an approach typically employed by both royalists and revolutionaries. When persuasion failed, both sides used coercion. There was, however, a marked difference between royalists and revolutionaries regarding this matter: the former rarely prosecuted their fellow royalists,28 while O’Higgins and his closest allies did not hesitate in condemning those insurgents who opposed the intervention of the Logia Lautaro in Chilean politics or the way O’Higgins ran his government.29 O’Higgins’ enemies within the insurgent faction were both civilians and military men, but the government feared the latter more. This was because men like the former spy Manuel Rodríguez, who a couple of months after the battle of Chacabuco became O’Higgins’ enemy,30 and the Carrera brothers, who were supposedly plotting in the River Plate against the Chilean government, still had some influence in the army.

The responsibility of O’Higgins for the pursuit and subsequent murder of Rodríguez in May 1818 has traditionally been a subject of controversy among Chilean historians, though, in general, it is accepted that O’Higgins ordered his assassination. O’Higgins’ intention to appoint Rodríguez as the Chilean

27 MG, vol. 6, 4 Jul. 1817.
28 Although Marcó del Pont had problems with the Real Audiencia, he never carried out a system of persecution of its members. Cf. sections II and III of chapter II of this book.
29 We must not confuse ‘internal political’ enemies with ordinary ‘criminals’. For an interesting example of a legal action initiated against an ordinary ‘criminal’ during O’Higgins’ government (in this case, a military man who raped a woman), see AGN, room X, 4–2–9, pp. 191–93, 2 Oct. 1817. For how O’Higgins’ government recruited vagrants and criminals for the army, see MG, vol. 34, 28 Nov. 1817.
30 In fact, although Rodríguez and his guerrilleros supported San Martín’s plans to invade Chile, all his biographers coincide that Rodríguez was a supporter of José Miguel Carrera.
delegate to the United States (March 1817) and then to the River Plate (August 1817) indicates that at first he favoured persuasion over coercion when dealing with this ‘disruptive’ insurgent. This changed a couple of weeks later when, as we will see, news about the imprisonment in Mendoza of Luis and Juan José Carrera reached Santiago, and de la Quintana ordered the imprisonment in Chile of Rodríguez and other figures linked to the Carrera brothers. After that, Rodriguez was relentlessly pursued as one of the most dangerous enemies of the government.

However, on 22 March 1818, after learning of the revolutionaries’ defeat at Cancha Rayada, Rodríguez spread rumours that O’Higgins had died in the battle and took control of the capital. He was then appointed head of a new government together with Luis de la Cruz, from which position he organized a cavalry body of 200 men called the Húsares de la Muerte and whose highest ranks were given to the partisans of Carrera.

But O’Higgins did not die in Cancha Rayada (he was only wounded, as the next section will show), and nor did his political power. Only a day and half after Rodriguez was appointed head of the government, O’Higgins returned to the capital and retook command of the administration of the country. Rodriguez was eventually taken prisoner and shot. Ricardo Latcham, the biographer of Rodríguez, noted that the former spy was assassinated by a lieutenant named Navarro. It is probable that O’Higgins ordered his death.

In any case, what is undeniable is that in 1818 O’Higgins believed that the political stability of his government depended on the ability of his subordinates to get rid of enemies like Rodriguez.

For O’Higgins and his allies, the political foes within the revolutionary faction were as dangerous as recalcitrant royalists, especially those who criticized the influence of the Logia Lautaro in Chilean politics. Juan José and Luis Carrera, who were imprisoned in August 1817 in Mendoza for ‘conspiring against the state’, were among those who most openly criticized the methods of the Logia, including its secrecy. It is not clear what the authorities meant by ‘conspiracy’, nor whether Juan José and Luis planned an attack on Chile with José Miguel, who lived in Montevideo. The only clear fact is that Juan José and Luis tried to return to Chile, but that they were stopped in Mendoza. The judicial process faced by the Carreras in Mendoza was led by Toribio de Luzuriaga, but the O’Higgins government, represented

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31 Ricardo Latcham, Vida de Manuel Rodríguez, p. 221, 230.
32 Fernando Campos Harriet, José Miguel Carrera (Santiago: Editorial Orbe, 1974), pp. 87–89.
33 Ibid., pp. 242–45; Alemparte, Carrera y Freire, pp. 179–81.
34 Latcham, Vida de Manuel Rodríguez, p. 232.
35 Ibid., pp. 263–69. See also Alemparte, Carrera y Freire, pp. 185–89; and Salazar, Construcción de Estado, p. 475.
36 FV, vol. 817, 9 Sep. 1817.
37 Campos Harriet, José Miguel Carrera, p. 87.
by commissioners José Ignacio Zenteno and José Silvestre, conducted its own investigation to track down their followers in Chile. Some of the individuals who were asked to give evidence about the political behaviour of the Carreras were Juan Egaña, and one of the most influential civil insurgents, the rioplatense Hipólito Villegas. While Egaña stated that his knowledge of the defendants was superficial and that he could not make ‘more specific comments about their internal affairs’, Villegas gave a detailed account of why he believed the Carreras were as dangerous as the royalists.

Villegas stated that the political conduct of the Carreras ‘has been a web of all sorts of inequities, of crimes of high treason or lesa patria, of squandering the public treasury, of rapes, murders, lootings’. Villegas’ accusation that José Miguel Carrera had committed the crime of rape [estupro] was the most serious, and in many ways the most original of all. Nobody until then had ever accused the Carreras of other ‘crimes’ that were not political. In Villegas’ words:

Ask colonel Antonio Mendiburu whether is not true that Jose Miguel, President of the Junta and general in Concepción, committed several rapes and put in jail several honest fathers under the pretext of being godos [...] and with the purpose of summoning to his presence their daughters without their mothers being present, supposedly to give evidence of secret domestic events but in fact to force their virtue: these were painful scenes which had begun before in Talca, where I was stationed as comisario del ejército and had the opportunity to hear about them.

Villegas finished his statement making reference to the participation of the Carreras in ‘logias’ created in San Juan and Buenos Aires. Villegas, in other words, implicitly answered the accusation that O’Higgins and his allies were members of a Lodge by claiming that their enemies were also involved in this sort of ‘secret club’. Apparently the aim of those logias was ‘to put an end to the existence of certain rivals and to get rid of the Argentine troops’ and ‘as experience [had] demonstrated’, they ‘had begun to set in motion their plans’. That is, like the Logia Lautaro, whose objective was to overthrow the ‘Spanish yoke’ as well as to get rid of as many internal enemies as possible, the aim of the logias in which the Carreras participated was to destroy the group headed by San Martín and O’Higgins.

The defence of Juan José and Luis in Mendoza was led by Manuel Araoz, whose promise that the prisoners would never again set foot in Chile if the authorities commuted the death penalty for permanent exile did not produce the expected results. On 8 April 1818, three days after the battle of Maipú,
Juan José and Luis Carrera were shot in the main square of Mendoza. It is common knowledge that after the battle O’Higgins asked San Martín to dismiss the judicial case against the Carreras, a request which, according to O’Higgins’ supporters, proves that the Supreme Director was unaware that the defendants had already been shot. However, it is less well-known that O’Higgins callously ‘sent the bill for the costs of the case against his sons to Ignacio de la Carrera’. To this were added a series of requisitions faced by the Carrera family during the O’Higgins government, which illustrates that the Supreme Director employed the same radical measures as the Carreras when they were in power.

But what about José Miguel, who was the most experienced and, therefore, the most dangerous of the three brothers? After he was expelled from Mendoza in November 1814, José Miguel devoted himself to preparing alternative plans to those of San Martín to re-conquer Chile. We saw that he presented a plan in early 1815, but was rejected by the Buenos Aires authorities. He then travelled to the United States and requested the economic aid of the Americans to fight the royalists. After fourteen months in the US, Carrera was able to gather a small cuadrilla to fight the royalists. Although in the end only a small number of ships arrived in Buenos Aires from the United States, a significant group of American and French officers joined Carrera in his expedition. In the case of the French officers, they were veterans of the Napoleonic wars willing to continue their military career in the New World.

José Miguel arrived back in Buenos Aires while San Martín was crossing the Cordillera. Carrera reported his achievements in the United States to Pueyrredón, but his idea of using his cuadrilla to attack the royalists by sea was rejected by the Supreme Director. At the end of March 1817, Carrera was imprisoned in Buenos Aires together with his brother Juan José, who had been charged with conspiracy. However, they escaped from prison: while Juan José fled to Chile (not reaching his destination, as we have seen), José Miguel went to Montevideo. He lived there during 1817–1818, publishing articles criticizing the role in Chile of the Logia Lautaro. After leaving

41 Campos Harriet, José Miguel Carrera, p. 92. See also Bragoni José Miguel Carrera, chapter 4.
42 Campos Harriet, José Miguel Carrera, p. 93. See also Alemparte, Carrera y Freire, pp. 168–70.
43 Some details of the requisitions can be found in FV, vol. 237.
44 Alemparte, Carrera y Freire, p. 154.
45 A list of these officers appears in Campos Harriet, José Miguel Carrera, p. 79. See also Patrick Puigmal, ‘Influencia militar francesa durante la independencia chilena’, in Patrick Puigmal (ed.), Memorias de Jorge Beauchef (Santiago: DIBAM, 2005), pp. 41–45.
46 Alemparte, Carrera y Freire, p. 158.
47 Alemparte, Carrera y Freire, pp. 272–75. On 25 May 1819, a worried minister of state, Joaquín Echeverría, requested the Chilean delegate to the River Plate, Miguel
Montevideo he helped the regional leader Francisco Ramírez to overthrow Pueyrredón. He was even able to besiege Buenos Aires for more than two weeks (July 1820), a military accomplishment which was too ephemeral to achieve his goal of putting his friend Carlos Alvear back at the head of the *rioplatense* government.

When colonel Manuel Dorrego was appointed governor of the River Plate, Carrera was forced to leave Buenos Aires and reorganize his forces in the *Pampa* (November 1820), where he experienced one of the darkest periods of his life. He led a guerrilla faction formed by Chilean and *rioplatense* regular and irregular soldiers (including many Indians). He then tried to get closer to the Andes, seizing San Luis and San Juan, but not for long. In late August 1821 he was finally stopped by the army of Mendoza, and on 4 September he, like his brothers three years earlier, was shot by a *mendocino* firing squad.⁴⁹

Was O’Higgins involved in José Miguel’s death, as he supposedly was in the case of his brothers? Apart from the novelistic aspects of the last years of José Miguel in the River Plate, what are the political/military conclusions that one can reach from his death? Even though O’Higgins’ responsibility in José Miguel’s death is much less clear than in the case of Juan José and Luis, to argue that O’Higgins’ regime did little if anything to stop it is almost tautological. Like Manuel Rodriguez, José Miguel Carrera was viewed as a serious threat to a still weak government. For O’Higgins, San Martín and the other members of the *Logia Lautaro* the annihilation of José Miguel Carrera became a requisite to accomplishing stability. At some point, this impression became an overarching opinion among the ruling classes. In Jocelyn-Holt’s words: ‘the tolerance [of the elites] towards O’Higgins’ dictatorial and person-alistic characteristics was founded on the fear that other, more charismatic and less malleable figures might prevail. The internal and external threat of Carrera until 1821 explains the rigour that was used in the prosecution and punishment of the *carrerino* side. The ruling elites preferred the [alleged] docility and opacity of O’Higgins rather than the leadership of his romantic and aristocratic rival’.⁵⁰

Although the support for the Carrera brothers did not die with them, it is undeniable that if the elites had not backed O’Higgins’ project with the enthusiasm they did, the government’s political achievements in the period 1818–1822 would have been much more difficult to attain. The appointment of O’Higgins as Supreme Director was applauded by the *santiaguinos*, especially by those who saw in O’Higgins the twin of San Martín (who was without doubt the most popular figure in Chile at that time). Even the installation

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of the Logia Lautaro did not create serious friction at the beginning of the O'Higgins government. These frictions began only in the second half of 1817, when the followers of the Carreras opposed the role played by the Logia. However, these criticisms did not prevent the Logia from putting its goals into practice, and this was because in general the ruling classes accepted the Logia’s role as a power in the shadows. This explains in part why the years 1818–1821 were, politically speaking, so successful for O'Higgins. The revolutionary triumph in Maipú—the subject of the next section—explains a good deal more of this success.

II. Maipú: battle for territorial dominance

During 1817 Bernardo O'Higgins spent much of his time in the south of the country pursuing the royalist forces that escaped from Chacabuco. In their first communications to the royalist José Ordóñez, O'Higgins' lieutenants stressed that they were not willing to pursue the royalists. Thus, on 11 March 1817 Ramón Freire wrote to Ordóñez that his superiors were not aiming ‘to ‘tyrannize, nor to oppress, but to restore the rights that for so many years were neglected’ by Spain. A month later, Juan Gregorio de las Heras reinforced this idea by sending Ordóñez a letter signed by Marcó del Pont in which the former governor recommended that the new royalist chief lay down his arms and put an end to the conflict.

But it was one thing to state that the revolutionaries had peaceful intentions, and quite another to fulfil that statement. Ordóñez was clearly aware of the policy of prosecution by the revolutionaries when he answered Las Heras. According to the royalist officer, Marcó del Pont’s letter ‘does not deserve a reply, both because his faculties as governor have ceased, and because he is an oppressed man whose signature was surely extracted by force’. O'Higgins’ resolution of April 1817 to delegate the responsibility of governing the country to Hilarión de la Quintana in order to personally lead the Army of the South, probably increased Ordóñez’s fears. In fact, the

51 A report of 14 May 1817 says that the royalist army had 1,805 men, distributed as follows: 599 of the Batallón de Infantaria de Concepción; 34 mariners; 21 valdévianos; 120 Voluntarios de Infantaria ligera de Talcahuano; 182 of the Infantaria de la reunión de Chile; 284 of the Caballería de Dragones de Chile; 75 Lanceros de la Frontera; 73 Auxiliares voluntarios de la Frontera; 162 Dragones de Chillán; 175 of the Artillería de Concepción; and 80 of the Artillería venida de Lima. One hundred of these men were ‘in hospital’. In AGI, Correos 87.
52 AGI, Diversos 5, Freire to Ordóñez, 11 Mar. 1817.
53 AGI, Diversos 5, Las Heras to Ordóñez, 15 Apr. 1817. Marcó’s letter is dated 24 Feb. 1817 and can be found in AGI, Diversos 5.
54 AGI, Diversos 5, Ordóñez to las Heras, 16 Apr. 1817.
55 For O’Higgins’ resolution, see MG, vol. 28, O’Higgins to San Martin, 9 Apr. 1817. For O’Higgins’ military performance in the south of the country throughout 1817, see ABO, vol. 21.
arrival of O’Higgins in the south coincided with the beginning of a merciless war there (the so-called Guerra a Muerte), in which hatred and extreme violence were the order of the day.

During this campaign in the south, O’Higgins tried to conduct an attack on Talcahuano, but was repulsed by Ordóñez. A couple of weeks after this setback, O’Higgins learned that the limeño royalists were organizing a new expeditionary force to attack Chile. The expedition was prepared by viceroy Pezuela, financed by a group of limeño merchants and conducted by an old acquaintance of Chile: Mariano Osorio. In his Instructions to Osorio, Pezuela (who had recently become Osorio’s father-in-law) highlighted the two main reasons which led him to invade Chile; one was economic, the other military. In his view, the commercial relations between Peru and Chile were too close to let the rebels create an independent, free-trade state. Peruvians needed Chilean wheat as much as Chile needed Peru’s sugar, and Peruvian merchants still believed that they could monopolize trade with Chile. At the same time, Pezuela believed that if Peru did not attack the insurgents in their own territory Chileans would organize an expeditionary force to invade Peru. Before this happened, it was advisable to take the offensive.

Osorio departed from Lima in December 1817 with a contingent of 3,260 men, but hoping to add some 1,300 additional troops from the army commanded by José Ordóñez in the Concepción region. Osorio set out to accomplish three tasks in Chile: first, to seize Talcahuano and join forces with Ordóñez; second, to go northward in order to disembark his army in San Antonio, a small seaside town near Valparaíso; and finally, to attempt an attack on the capital. Pezuela hoped that Osorio would achieve these objectives in the shortest time possible, as this was the only way to prevent the insurgents from assembling the troops that were scattered throughout the Central Valley. The royalist troops disembarked in Talcahuano between 5 and 10 January 1818. According to Barros Arana, they were mainly composed of veterans of the Napoleonic wars (i.e. the battalion of Burgos).

When he ascertained that Pezuela was preparing a new invasion of Chile, O’Higgins left Concepción to reassemble his forces nearer Santiago.

56 For this attack, see Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XI, pp. 202–12.
58 Osorio’s Estado de fuerza can be found in AHM, box 702, doc. 64, 9 Dec. 1817. Of these 3,260 men, around 1,800 were Spanish-born and belonged to the Regimiento de Burgos and the Regimiento Infante don Carlos. This was without doubt the largest Spanish-born contingent to arrive in Chile, although it did not remain long in the country. See Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XI, p. 232, footnote 5.
60 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XI, p. 231.
This decision made clear that the revolutionary army was unable to exert influence in regions far from the capital. In other words, O’Higgins’ army was in the same position as immediately after the battle of Chacabuco: it controlled Santiago and its surroundings (as well as northern regions, like Coquimbo), but the south of the country was controlled by the royalist regular army or by guerrilla fighters. Thus, his plan, which was prepared in concert with San Martín, was to withdraw his forces to Talca and join them with the other half of the revolutionary army at Chimbarongo. In doing so, they would hopefully prompt Osorio to leave Talcahuano and seek the final battle north of the river Maule, where the bulk of the insurgents were gathered.

Once O’Higgins reached Talca he signed the Proclamation of Independence (12 February 1818, although the Act says 1 January 1818), by which the Chilean state followed the rioplatense example and broke all political links with the metropolis. The signature of the Acta of independence was an outstanding symbolic act, but it did not have much effect in practical terms; at least not in the months following the proclamation. In March the revolutionary army formed a respectable force of 6,600 soldiers, thereby exceeding the royalists by more than two thousand men. Osorio, moreover, had fallen into San Martín’s trap and led his army towards the river Maule. If all went as planned, the revolutionary army should have had no trouble in beating Osorio’s army. However, in the first major confrontation between both armies, Osorio surprised and inflicted a heavy defeat on the insurgents. Osorio’s men wounded O’Higgins, killed 300 insurgent soldiers, took half of the revolutionary artillery and ‘a considerable number of beasts of burden that were scattered on the battlefield’. Osorio was so pleased with the victory that he wrote a sonnet to honour the victors of Cancha Rayada:

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\text{Viva viva el Exercito Valiente} \\
\text{que en los campos de Talca perseguido} \\
\text{con solo imaginarlo a destruido} \\
\text{la banda feroz del Insurgente.} \\
\text{La fama alorve[sic] nuestras glorias cuente} \\
\text{en tanto que mi pecho ágradecido} \\
\text{rieja el laurel con que le ha ceñido} \\
\text{con lagrimas de goso tiernamente.} \\
\text{Marchad, pues á Santiago en derechura} \\
\text{Europa admirara vuestra victoria} \\
\text{ya no resiste el enemigo vando} \\
\text{Triunfad que mi palabra os ásegura.} \\
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64 See AHM, box 703, doc. 21, Balcarce to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 6 Mar. 1818.  
News of the defeat in Cancha Rayada reached the capital a couple of days later, and, among its immediate consequences, the accession of Manuel Rodríguez to power was without doubt the most important. Santiago was in need of trained military men, and it was feared that, as Osorio’s sonnet claimed, the enemy could be marching on the capital. Luis de la Cruz, who was Rodríguez’s comrade in the new government formed in the wake of the defeat, but also one of O’Higgins’ most loyal supporters, reported to Cuyo’s intendant on 22 March that there was no serious reason to be worried, as the revolutionaries had ‘a force which will be irresistible as soon as the help which is being collected in haste is gathered’. Nonetheless, two days later, he complained to the same intendant that there were many pusilánimes who were ‘infusing their bad spirit in the inhabitants of the capital’. De la Cruz, in short, was confident that the army would recover from the defeat of Cancha Rayada, but could not hide the fact that there were people who still supported the royalists.

O’Higgins arrived in the capital on 24 March and rapidly managed to get rid of Rodríguez. He then gave assurance that the revolutionary army was not lost and that there were good reasons to believe that Cancha Rayada had been a serious but not definitive defeat. The arrival of San Martín in Santiago on 25 March helped to calm things further, and at the end of the month the revolutionary army was already reassembled in the Maipo Valley (to the south-west of Santiago) under the leadership of San Martín. The decision to gather the insurgent army in Maipo was made to prevent Osorio from advancing towards the capital. On 5 April 1818, the two armies fought a battle comparable in importance only with the battle of Rancagua, although the condition in which the battle of Maipú was fought was quite different. To begin with, around 9,000 men participated in this battle (4,500 men on each side) in comparison to the much lower number at Rancagua. In addition, the battle of Maipú was fought on an open plain, whereas Rancagua took place in the central square of the city. Finally, if the royalist forces in Rancagua were tactically superior to the revolutionaries, in Maipú both armies were equally prepared.

The revolutionary army that fought in Maipú was divided into three divisions, and was formed of a combination of soldiers from the Army of Chile and the Army of the Andes. The division on the left was led by

66 AGI, Correos 87. This document is undated, but is located together with Juan Bautista Aeta’s papers of March 1818.
67 AHM, box 703, doc. 21, de la Cruz to Cuyo’s intendant, 22 Mar. 1818.
68 AHM, box. 703, doc. 21, de la Cruz to Cuyo’s intendant, 24 Mar. 1818.
69 According to an Estado de fuerza of 30 Nov. 1817, the Army of the Andes had 4,449 men, and the Ejército de Chile 4,765. In total they reached the considerable amount
Rudecindo Alvarado (cazadores), that on the right by Juan Gregorio de las Heras (grenadiers) and the reserve by de la Quintana. The field artillery was placed in the centre, the artillería volante on the flanks. The revolutionary artillery, operated by Manuel Blanco Encalada, opened fire at the onset of the battle. San Martín opened fire at 11:30 on the morning of 5 April. Half an hour later, he ordered Alvarado’s and Las Hera’s divisions to charge the enemy. While Alvarado’s men were defeated by the royalist right led by Ordóñez, Las Heras managed to overcome the royalists’ left led by Joaquín Primo de Rivera. San Martín then ordered de la Quintana’s reserve to join battle, with which the revolutionaries were able to bring their forces together and inflict heavy casualties on the enemy. However, the royalist battalion Burgos was reluctant to surrender and continued fighting under the cry ‘Here is the Burgos! Eighteen battles won! None lost!’ According to Francisco Antonio Encina, the remaining royalist forces followed the example of the Burgos, thus leading to a ‘furious, almost point blank, combat’. It was only through exhaustion that the royalists were finally defeated: the Burgos repelled the attacks of the revolutionaries, but Primo de Rivera and Ordóñez could do little to stop the insurgent offensives. At 14:15 the ‘battle was decided, and even though the royalists retired in fairly respectable number and order, everything seemed to indicate that their destruction would be complete and final before nightfall’.

O’Higgins, who did not participate in the battle because he was still wounded, arrived at Maipo when the struggle was almost finished. Together with San Martín the Supreme Director witnessed how the enemies were hunted down and captured. According to a letter written that afternoon by San Martín to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, the revolutionaries took around 1,500 prisoners, among them Ordóñez, Primo de Rivera and more than 45 other officers. Two days later, José Ignacio Zenteno reported that the number of prisoners had reached 2,000 (of whom 150 were officers), while the number of deaths in the enemy force amounted to ‘more than 1,600’. San Martín and O’Higgins returned to Santiago later in the


72 AHM, box 498, doc. 11, San Martín to the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, 5 Apr. 1818.

73 AHM, box 703, doc. 29, Zenteno to Cuyo’s intendant, 7 Apr. 1818. A list of prisoners can be found in AHM, box 703, doc. 33, 28 Apr. 1818. Barros Arana, Historia general de Chile, vol. XI, p. 331 says that the revolutionaries lost 800 men and 1,000 were wounded.
evening of 5 April. One of their first acts was to reward the officers of both the Army of the Andes and the Army of Chile by promoting them.⁷⁴ A couple of days later, San Martin resolved to leave Santiago for Buenos Aires ‘to raise support and resources for the next surge forward. He was away for six months’.⁷⁵ O’Higgins, for his part, stayed in the capital in order to accomplish the three main tasks of his government: to dispatch a military force to pursue the royalists who had not participated in the battle of Maipú and were stationed in the south of the country; to give his government a republican shape; and to prepare an expeditionary army to attack Peru. The first of these goals will be analysed in the next section, the second in section IV, and the last in chapter V.

What about Osorio? The royalist general fled on the day of the battle, first in the direction of Valparaíso but finally towards Talcahuano. He abandoned the battlefield with 240 soldiers; upon arrival at the port on 12 April 1818 his followers numbered no more than twelve. In the words of the contemporary traveller Richard J. Cleveland, ‘a la Buonaparte’ Osorio ‘effected his escape, with ten or twelve followers; the only remains of the proud army, which left here [Talcahuano] a few weeks since’.⁷⁶ In Talcahuano, Osorio published a document calling on Chileans to join the king’s army; in his view, the royalists had not been completely defeated in Maipú, and so there was still time to launch a fresh campaign. Relying especially on the loyalty of the inhabitants of Concepción, Osorio promised that anyone who voluntarily enlisted in the army would be rewarded with land.⁷⁷ Yet Osorio’s enterprise failed, because he was unable to persuade the penquistas to carry out an immediate expedition to the northern regions of the Central Valley. In a letter to viceroy Pezuela seven days later, he reported that the gathering of the royalist forces could take two or three months, ‘in which time Talcahuano may be lost’.⁷⁸

Osorio’s pessimism was shared by other royalists, and not just those from Chile. On 16 June 1818, Joseph Morales reported to Abascal, who was back in Spain, the anxiety in which the limeños lived as a consequence of the outcome of the battle of Maipú. In Morales’ opinion, ‘there is hardly a family in this city [Lima] which does not mourn the loss of a father, husband, brother or relative’, and the prospect of cutting commercial links with Chile ‘makes the cry resonate even more’. He believed that the royalist soldiers assembled in Concepción were too few to take the offensive. Only reinforcements from Lima, a rather unlikely possibility, could help the royalists ‘recover Chile

⁷⁵ Lynch, San Martín, p. 104.
⁷⁸ AGN, room VII, Colección Carlos Casavalle, box 2301, Osorio to Pezuela, 5 May 1818.
and retain Talcahuano’. And in a phrase that depicts how the limeño elites were beginning to detach themselves from viceroy Pezuela, Morales stated: ‘meanwhile, nothing is done to provide for [abastecer] the people; prices increase, there are shortages in the market and the only thing that grows daily is discontent and desolation’.\(^7^9\)

Morales’ fears were further deepened a couple of months later, when Osorio returned to Lima. Osorio made this decision after realizing that Lima’s own internal problems prevented the viceroy from assisting him with resources and men. Juan Francisco Sánchez assumed charge of the army. Before departing, Osorio wrote his Instructions to Sánchez, the most important of which stated that, if the revolutionaries organized a ‘formal expedition against the forces stationed in Concepción’, the new general-in-chief should retreat south ‘and arm the Araucanian Indians to prolong the war as much as possible’. He also recommended reinforcing the royalist presence in Valdivia and Chiloé, as both could ‘constitute vigorous centres of resistance’.\(^8^0\) Osorio finally left on 8 September 1818, arriving a couple of weeks later in Lima.

It appears that only Pezuela and a few others welcomed him there.\(^8^1\) The Spanish general met with a society that was perfectly aware that in the battle of Maipú the royalists had lost not only some 1,500 men but also territorial dominance. The royalists were forced to seek refuge in the south of the country, a position from which they could never recover. It is true that the war did not end with Maipú and that irregular and sporadic confrontations continued until well into the 1820s. It is also true that in geographical terms the territory that runs from Concepción to Chiloé comprises more than 800 kilometres. Yet it was in Santiago that the most important political decisions were made. As Collier writes, ‘though the war in the South of Chile was to continue for several years, the heartland was never again threatened’.\(^8^2\) Maipú was undoubtedly a political triumph for O’Higgins: in the aftermath of the battle the revolutionaries took an irreversible step towards the political consolidation of Chilean independence. The question was whether O’Higgins’ government would have the same strength to secure independence militarily.

III. Irregular warfare in the south of Chile

The irregular war that afflicted the south of Chile began immediately after the battle of Chacabuco on 12 February 1817. Contrary to the opinion of Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna, who chose the battle of Maipú (April 1818) as the starting point of his *La Guerra a Muerte*, warfare in the south ran parallel to O’Higgins’ government’s policy of pursuit of royalists and unruly

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79 AGI, Diversos 5, Morales to Abascal, 16 Jun. 1818.
81 Anna, *The Fall of the Royal Government in Peru*, p. 137.
82 Collier, *Ideas and politics*, p. 231.
insurgents. O’Higgins’ major task throughout the second half of 1817 was to seize Talcahuano and force the enemy either to surrender or to seek refuge further south. The revolutionaries attempted to attack the port several times, but the royalists were able to stop them time and again. Aeta noted that the withdrawal of the revolutionaries from Talcahuano was followed by looting. He was a die-hard royalist, so his accounts must be taken with caution. Still, considering the conditions in which the war was fought, it seems conceivable that the revolutionaries ‘looted the churches […], convents and houses [of Concepción] […]. They destroyed the furniture that they could not carry with them, setting fire both to the houses of the royalists and the palace of the Ilustrísimo Señor Obispo’. A month later, Aeta reported that a group of insurgents had ‘devastated the villas and haciendas’ near Chillán. ‘They set fire to the houses, ranches and crops [sementeras]’, Aeta continued, ‘so the royalist army could not find resources. They abandoned many families after stealing their jewels and clothes, leaving […] many women completely naked [“quedando muchas mujeres sin tener con que cubrirse las carnes”]’. But the royalists were not strangers to these practices either. On 17 December 1817, Luis de la Cruz acknowledged O’Higgins’ claim that the kind of war carried out by the enemy was ‘characteristic of men who know their strength: otherwise, they would not keep their forces scattered, harassing helpless travellers as thieves seeking to plunder’. In a later communication, de la Cruz referred to the groups of royalist guerrillas as bandoleros, hoping that a decisive action would eliminate them. Sadly for de la Cruz and the other revolutionaries, such a decisive action did not take place in the next few years, as small but bloody confrontations became the norm in the period 1818–1823.

In November 1818, San Martín tried to put an end to the war by means of negotiation. On that occasion, the revolutionary general sent a letter to Juan Francisco Sánchez, the general-in-chief of the royalist army after Osorio’s departure, urging him to lay down his arms and surrender. San Martín assured him that he would ‘spare no means to avoid bloodshed and reach a rational agreement [avenimiento]. If you order your army to cease the hostilities after three days of receiving this letter and you want to withdraw to this capital [Santiago] or leave for Lima, I promise you that you and your properties will be respected’. Otherwise, San Martín finished his letter, ‘you will be responsible for the bloodshed and the evils caused by your futile resistance’.

83 Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte.
84 AGI, Correos 87, Aeta to Señores Directores Generales de la Real Renta de Correos de España y las Indias, 30 Jan. 1818.
85 AGI, Correos 87, Aeta to Señores Directores Generales de la Real Renta de Correos de España y las Indias, 26 Feb. 1818.
86 MG, vol. 34, p. 226, de la Cruz to O’Higgins, 16 Dec. 1817.
88 VM, vol. XLII, pp. 44–47, San Martín to Sánchez, without exact date (although the source is dated in November 1818).
In his answer of 3 December, Sánchez stated that he would not receive any delegate sent by San Martín, adding that any proposal for negotiations must be addressed to the viceroy in Lima. In the meantime, and with ‘the aim of avoiding bloodshed, I will willingly agree to sign an armistice if your troops withdraw to the other side of the [river] Maule [near Talca].’\(^{89}\)

However, neither San Martín nor Sánchez were genuinely looking to finish the fight. In the case of Sánchez, a couple of months before writing his response to San Martín, he published a *Bando* promising to pardon deserters who ‘go back to their respective detachments within three days’ and agree to ‘hold the sacred rights of the throne’.\(^{90}\) He also seemed aware that undertaking negotiations with the revolutionaries could cost him his post as general-in-chief. Moreover, in what kind of negotiations could Sánchez become involved if the insurgents had recently proclaimed Chilean independence? To accept San Martín’s offer and leave the country was the same as accepting the independence of Chile. For San Martín, meanwhile, to withdraw his troops to Talca was tantamount to relinquishing the territorial dominance that the revolutionaries had gained after the battle of Maipú. The war, then, was more alive than ever, even though Sánchez would not participate in it much longer.

In April 1819, with the aim of reassembling his forces in what was one of the royalist regions par excellence, Sánchez sought refuge in Valdivia, leaving Vicente Benavides in charge of the Araucanian region. Compared to Sánchez, Benavides was much more prone to launching irregular assaults.\(^{91}\) Communications between Sánchez and Benavides were sporadic, and the assistance that the general-in-chief sent to his subordinate between April and June 1819 was ‘reduced to a few loads of articles of war’.\(^{92}\) According to Vicuña Mackenna, even such small assistance was interrupted by the viceroy’s decision to summon Sánchez to Lima to explain why he had withdrawn to Valdivia. Sánchez never returned to Chile (he died in Peru soon after his arrival), and so Benavides became the new general-in-chief of the royalist army.\(^{93}\)

Benavides was a Chilean-born soldier, whose humble background prevented him from entering the army as an officer. At first, he joined the revolutionary army, and in 1813 he was sergeant of a cavalry force created in Concepción by José Miguel Carrera. But he deserted in February or March 1814 and joined the royalists. He fought in the battle of Rancagua and then worked as an instructor in Valparaíso, where he was promoted to lieutenant. During

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92 Vicuña Mackenna, *La Guerra a Muerte*, p. 97.
93 It appears that Benavides was never officially appointed general-in-chief of the royalist army. However, viceroy Pezuela referred to him as ‘comandante don Vicente Benavides’ and, in fact, after the departure of Sánchez and until Benavides’ death, there was no higher officer in Chile than Benavides. Vicuña Mackenna, *La Guerra a Muerte*, p. 99.
Osorio’s government he moved to Concepción; there, he married Teresa Ferrer, whose father was, according to Vicuña Mackenna, a revolutionary. Following Vicuña Mackenna’s account, this family alliance led Benavides to betray the royalists immediately after the battle of Chacabuco, a crime for which Ordóñez put him in jail. He was quickly forgiven, and in May 1817 was already back on the battlefield. Apparently he fought in the battle of Maipú, after which he was imprisoned by San Martín’s men and sentenced to be hanged for desertion. However, Benavides managed to escape death, and at some point he requested an appointment with San Martín to prepare a plan to deceive Sánchez and incite the Indians against the royalists. San Martín agreed to the plan, but once again Benavides betrayed the revolutionaries and enlisted on the monarchist side.⁹⁴ In mid-1819 he became the general-in-chief of the royalist army, a position he held until his death in February 1822.

Benavides’ biography is a good example of two important facts related to the revolutionary process: first, that warfare allowed common soldiers like Benavides to become officers of either army. Soldiers were usually rewarded with promotion, which, in turn, enabled them to ascend socially. But Benavides’ biography proves also that such social mobility was not necessarily accompanied by a fervent political commitment. Benavides was one of the many who was not motivated by ideological grounds, but moved by their personal interests. At least until late 1818, Benavides did not behave as an outright revolutionary or as a convinced royalist; rather, his actions varied according to which side was likely to win on the battlefield.

By mid-1819 his commitment to the royalist cause was stronger than his pragmatism, as his declaration of War to the Death demonstrates. On 27 August, Benavides issued his ‘Instructions to which the commanders and officers under my command must comply, who will undertake a march with their troops towards the other side of the Bio-Bio, and which must be obeyed at all times by everyone in compliance of his duties’. This Instruction defined the modus operandi that officers of the royalist army should follow when facing the revolutionaries. The battles of Rancagua and Maipú had been to the death, with both armies aiming to annihilate the enemy with whatever strategy or weapons were available. In practical terms, therefore, Benavides’ War to the Death was not new; what was new was his decision to describe its characteristics in writing and make explicit what until then was implicit. Of the sixteen articles of Benavides’ Instruction, numbers 5, 12 and 13 were especially important. While articles 5 and 13 show Benavides’ radicalism (number 5 stated that the main objective was ‘the destruction of the enemy according to his strength’; number 13 that ‘the commander should execute prisoners […] who cannot be led to a safe place’), number 12 defends the idea that attacks should be executed by flying squads. For the

first time, the royalists recognized that the guerrillas were the best, and often
the most reliable, military force for the kind of war carried out in the south
of the country. O’Higgins, too, convinced himself of the usefulness of the
guerrillas, although it is probable that, as we will see, he favoured their use
to counter criticism for not dispatching a proper regular force to the south to
assist Freire (who at that time was intendant of Concepción and the general-
in-chief of the Army of the South). One of the first documents in which the
Supreme Director advocated the use of guerrillas is an instruction sent by
O’Higgins to José María Palacios in May 1819 explaining how the war in
San Fernando had to be conducted: ‘the war he will wage will not consist
in fighting in line, but in attacking by surprise. Therefore he must not use
his forces but split them into guerrillas, taking all possible advantages of the
locality and the resources that practice might offer’. To this document we have to add a source entitled Régimen que observarán
los comandantes de guerrillas, which does not have an official date but was
probably issued between 1819 and 1821. In this military regulation,
O’Higgins once again praised the role of the guerrilla fighters: ‘Guerrilla
soldiers will be flattered by the commander; he will assist them with horses,
food and everything they need. [...] The government, for its part, offers them
whatever is taken from the enemy: the land and the property of the godsos,
without distinction’.

In tactical terms, the regulation asserted that ‘the guerrillas will operate
especially by the coast. [...] The guerrilla commanders can act together or
separately, but they must always report to the government. They will never
attack the enemy without having agreed to a meeting point should they be
dispersed. These instructions will be destroyed immediately if [the guerrilla
soldiers] find themselves in danger’.

With such unrestricted support given to the guerrillas by royalists and
revolutionaries alike it is not surprising that accounts of actions conducted
by irregular troops proliferate in Chile’s National Archive. Indians were

95 Benavides’ Instruction can be found in Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte,
pp. 797–801.
96 VM, vol. XXIV, p. 259, O’Higgins to Palacios, without exact date (although the
source is dated in May 1819).
97 Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte, p. 129, footnote 2.
98 These Instructions appear in La Guerra a Muerte, p. 129, footnote 2.
99 For instance, we find that in November 1818 Manuel González reported to Freire
that a group of royalist soldiers attacked an hacienda to steal alcohol. In revenge,
González recommended undertaking a raid by the river Itata in order to terrorize
the region. See VM, vol. XLII, pp. 57–58, González to Freire, without exact date
(although the source is dated in November 1818). In December 1819, Pedro Andrés
Alcázar wrote to Freire that a revolutionary guerrilla led by a so-called Molina had
killed four royalists and stolen four loads of supplies. See VM, vol. XLII, p. 170,
Alcázar to Freire, 10 Dec. 1819.
particularly good guerrilla fighters, as implied by the eagerness of both sides to have their military support. At this stage of the war the Indians of the Llanos were more prone to support the revolutionary cause; Venancio and Juan Colipi, two of the closest Indian caciques to the insurgents, were llanistas. The costinos, huilliches and pehuenches, in turn, tended to back the royalists. However, within the llanistas there were also many royalists, and not all the costinos, huilliches or pehuenches backed Benavides.100

The Indian communities were powerful enough to negotiate when deciding to whom to give their support. O’Higgins’ men, for their part, were aware that persuasion was a much more useful strategy than coercion when approaching the Indian communities. At the end of 1819, Pedro Andrés Alcázar explained to O’Higgins how the Indian problem should be tackled. He recommended pacifying the Indians or ‘at least inciting one against the other’ [por lo menos ensañarlos los unos contra los otros].101 Venancio and Colipi were allies whom the O’Higgins administration could trust and depend on; however, having them as allies brought unavoidable costs, such as the refusal of their rivals to join the revolutionary side. How to get these rival communities to work in concert? For Alcázar the answer was simple: the revolutionaries should try to gain the confidence of the Indians by giving them gifts. This did not ensure their total commitment, but at least guaranteed it in some cases. Thus, on 18 November 1819, Alcázar reported that the caciques of Angol (one of whom was Colipi) returned to their communities with two dozen handkerchiefs [pañuelos] and two boxes of indigo that Alcázar had given them.102 The result was so satisfactory that a month later Alcázar requested Freire to send him another two dozen handkerchiefs, as well as knives, indigo, bridles, spurs and jackets for the caciques of Angol.103

But despite the use of guerrillas and the sporadic assistance of the Indians, in early 1820 the military situation of the revolutionaries was extremely precarious. Santiago never drew up a long-term policy to address the situation in the south. Thus, for example, O’Higgins’ Bando of 3 December 1819, indicating that he had donated money from his family estate to pay the expenses of the army, speaks well of his personal attributes, but it did nothing to solve the much deeper problem that the lack of resources

100 For a report describing the assistance given by the Indians to the royalists, see AHM, box 704, doc. 6, Antonio González Balcarce to San Martín, 31 Jan. 1819; and MG, vol. 52, p. 133, Antonio de Quintanilla to Benavides, 25 Jul. 1821.
101 Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte, p. 181.
103 VM, vol. XLII, pp. 254–56, Alcázar to Freire, 31 Dec. 1819. The loyalty of the caciques of Angol to the revolutionaries became patent on 22 Dec. 1819, when they imprisoned a soldier called Eugenio Barrio for trying to convince them not to believe ‘the promises of the patria’. Barrio was prosecuted by a military tribunal in Los Ángeles and sentenced to death (he was shot). See VM, vol. XLII, pp. 224–25, 22 Dec. 1819.
implied. Furthermore, O’Higgins’ decision to spend treasury money to prepare the Expedición Libertadora del Perú instead of sending reinforcements and economic resources to the south did little to overcome the problems of the revolutionaries, and in fact the whole idea of the Expedición alienated the military of the south and the elites who supported Freire. Given that the Chilean state was able to finance the organization of the expedition to Lima, it can hardly be said that the local treasury lacked the resources to pay for the war in the south when it first began in 1817. Rather, that war did not receive the attention it deserved because O’Higgins opted to use available funds to assist San Martín’s plans to attack Peru. It was, in other words, not as much an economic or military as a political decision that denied Freire and the rest of the officers of the Army of the South well-equipped troops: for O’Higgins, San Martin and the Logia Lautaro an attack on Peru was essential to consolidate the independence of the Southern Cone. Moreover, in their view, an assault on Lima would indirectly benefit the Army of the South, since the viceroy’s energies would be concentrated on defending Peru rather than aiding Benavides.

The lack of men and resources forced Freire to stay in Concepción, unable to take the offensive. Carlos María O’Carroll, an Irish officer who after the Napoleonic wars enrolled in Chile’s revolutionary army, asserted in December 1819 that the squadron under his command had 200 ill-equipped men: only half of them had proper uniforms, and they lacked saddles, spurs and bridles. In April 1820, O’Carroll told Freire that his men were literally dying of hunger. José Verdugo, a subordinate of O’Carroll, corroborated this in his Memorias: in Tucapel ‘we lacked many necessities. We had to eat the meat of as many dogs as we could catch. Later, we even ate mares and horses, always choosing the skinnier’. With these reports in mind, Freire wrote to O’Higgins in January 1820 seeking the money that was required to pay the salaries of the military from the Supreme Director. Freire reminded O’Higgins that the situation was much worse than in 1817, when O’Higgins himself commanded the Army of the South:

You know very well that money is needed to pay the militias. You can imagine in what situation I find myself when I have received only 1000 pesos from the commissary to pay spies and everything else. Twice the army has had to sustain itself from a province that is exhausted: provisions

104 FV, vol. 928a, 3 Dec. 1819.
105 Of course, after years of war, the Chilean treasury was in a bad state, as shown by a report written in 1821 by the Chilean minister of finance, Agustín Vial. My argument, therefore, is not that the O’Higgins government was rich, but rather that the little money accumulated in the coffers was spent in organizing the expedition to Peru instead of the south of the country; this was a political, not economic, option. For Vial’s report, see Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte, p. 528, footnote 1.
107 Quoted by Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte, p. 243, footnote 1.
and everything else have suffered; you cannot believe the effort displayed to obtain them to avoid the damages suffered by the troop [...]. You [...] can appreciate the effort involved if you remember what you had when this province had resources and was not in the state it now finds itself.\textsuperscript{108}

In 1820, Freire was still a faithful subordinate, but he could not idly wait until the authorities decided to help him. Consequently, in March of that year, he travelled to the capital in order to obtain the assistance of the Supreme Director. He stayed in Santiago until late June, but could not accomplish much; O’Higgins and San Martín agreed to send just a small cavalry detachment to the south.\textsuperscript{109} Afterward the government appointed Joaquín Prieto as commandant of Chile’s second division of the Army of the South (the first was under the command of Freire) allegedly to assist Freire. However, paradoxically Prieto’s appointment widened the gap between the central government and Concepción.

To begin with, Prieto had orders not to cross the river Maule. In addition, in his Instructions the minister of war, José Ignacio Zenteno, claimed once again that, if conditions allowed the revolutionaries to take the offensive, they should give the guerrillas—not the veterans who were under Prieto’s command—the responsibility of attacking Benavides’ men. For Zenteno, the best way to stop the royalist montoneras was utilizing their methods: ‘against the war of disorder and of guerrillas which the enemy is pursuing you must try to oppose a similar one’.\textsuperscript{110} Pedro Arriagada received similar instructions from Zenteno; nonetheless, in this document the minister of war went further, as he ordered Arriagada to encourage the participation of the guerrilla fighters by promising them that during their attacks they would be free to loot and steal at will.\textsuperscript{111}

With these orders, the O’Higgins government recognized two important facts: first, that Santiago did not have enough men to stop the royalists if Benavides continued moving north. That is why Zenteno vehemently urged Prieto not to cross the river Maule. Second, that in order to neutralize Freire’s criticism it was better to send Arriagada’s guerrillas than to wait for things to improve for the revolutionaries. But, again, this was not a long-term policy that could solve the problems of the Army of the South. Such a policy was never designed by the O’Higgins administration. If Freire and Prieto achieved some success in the last months of 1820 and the first of 1821 it was because they acted independently of the government: Freire in the military arena, Prieto in the political. Indeed, Prieto did not follow the instructions


\textsuperscript{109} Vicuña Mackenna, \textit{La Guerra a Muerte}, pp. 222, 268. See also \textit{CDIP}, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 70, San Martín to O’Higgins, 14 May 1820.

\textsuperscript{110} Quoted by Vicuña Mackenna, \textit{La Guerra a Muerte}, p. 810 (this document is dated 18 Oct. 1820). The emphasis is in the original.

\textsuperscript{111} Quoted by Vicuña Mackenna, \textit{La Guerra a Muerte}, p. 815.
that ordered him to stay on the north side of the river Maule, because he opposed Zenteno’s decision to give the guerrillas the responsibility to take the offensive against the royalists. Prieto advanced south to the city of Chillán, where he carried out a persuasive—‘political’, as he called it—strategy to pacify the south.\textsuperscript{112} The climax of this strategy was the publication of a \textit{Bando} pardoning the royalists if they ‘abjured their cause in the following fifteen days’.\textsuperscript{113} He did not ask the permission of the capital to publish this \textit{Bando}, nor did he tell Freire about its content.

Apparently, O’Higgins chose to turn a blind eye to Prieto’s autonomous actions, and that this was due to Prieto’s role as a secret informant of the government. In the most important of his reports to the capital, Prieto suggested that Freire was in conversations with the supporters of José Miguel Carrera to overthrow the Supreme Director. On 18 December 1820 he accused the Serrano family (relatives of Freire, whose second surname was Serrano) to ‘claim throughout this province that marshal Freire will shortly be [Supreme] Director’.\textsuperscript{114} The truth of this rumour is very difficult to ascertain, and it seems that what moved Prieto to disclose it was his animosity towards Freire. Still, it gives us an idea of the conflict between the officers who represented the interests of the capital and the allies of Freire. Chapter VI will study the last stage of the irregular war in the south of Chile, stressing that the tension between the central government and the general-in-chief of the Army of the South intensified in 1822, and that this explains why Freire joined the provincial movement that overthrew O’Higgins in January 1823.

The aim of the next section is to address the militarization of politics in Chile in the period 1817–1822, as well as one of the main characteristics of the O’Higgins regime: the concentration of power in the Supreme Directorship.

### IV. The personalization of politics

At the same time that O’Higgins pursued the enemies—both internal and external—of the revolution, assembled an army to fight the royalists in the battle of Maipú, and monitored the war in the south of the country from a distant Santiago, he also developed a sophisticated political programme to achieve and legitimize the independence of Chile, as well as to justify the power of the Supreme Director. In both areas O’Higgins was backed by civilians and military men, though it was the latter who gave his regime its distinct personalistic and militarized character.\textsuperscript{115} Among the many decisions made by O’Higgins in order, first, to reward the military for their participation on the battlefield and, second, to reinforce the power of the Supreme

\textsuperscript{112} Vicuña Mackenna, \textit{La Guerra a Muerte}, p. 437, footnote 1.

\textsuperscript{113} Vicuña Mackenna, \textit{La Guerra a Muerte}, p. 430.

\textsuperscript{114} Vicuña Mackenna, \textit{La Guerra a Muerte}, p. 446. The emphasis is in the original.

\textsuperscript{115} For O’Higgins’ preference to give military men the responsibility for the administration of the provinces, see \textit{ABO}, vol. 17, pp. 193–98 (March 1817).
Directorship, the installation in Santiago of a military academy, the creation of the Legión de Mérito de Chile, and the publication of the Constitutions of 1818 and 1822 are worthy of mention. In all these decisions we see one of the most distinctive characteristics of the years 1817–1822: that with few exceptions, the ruling groups accepted the intervention of the military in politics, thereby prefiguring a relationship between civilians and the military that, with ups and downs, lasted throughout the decade of the 1820s (and beyond). When in early 1823 the elites decided on O’Higgins’ abdication, they did it using not anti-military arguments but rather criticizing the excessive power of the Supreme Power.

The idea behind the establishment of a military academy in Santiago can be dated back to 1811, when Manuel de Salas presented a plan to organize a military school to be supervised by the Director de la Academia de Matemáticas. Such an idea was revived five weeks after the revolutionary triumph at Chacabuco. On 19 March 1817, the Gaceta del Supremo Gobierno de Chile issued an article reporting the government’s decision to create an Academia Militar de Matemáticas, which, in the opinion of the editors, would ensure both the ‘existence of the Patria’ and ‘national freedom’ (the military engineer Antonio Arcos was appointed its Director). The formation of the academy responded to immediate defensive needs, but also to longer-term goals. The first of these goals was to ‘assemble a regular force educated in that sublime and fearsome doctrine of war’, which, according to the Gaceta, would allow the revolutionaries to ‘fight the barbarian endeavours of our invaders’. The second appears itemized in the Reglamento of the academy, and also in the three parts [sesiones] into which its Organización was divided. The main articles of the Reglamento stated that

[1°] Every officer […] who is not currently enlisted cannot aspire to have an employment in the army if he is not first aggregated to the Military Academy. [2°] The class of cadets is completely abolished. Those who exist in the detachments of the army will pass into the Academy to be promoted; it must be understood that, from this moment, the only way to be an officer is by means of acquiring the knowledge that is indispensable to obtain and perform this distinguished position.

The fact that no future officer could be enrolled in the army without having studied at the academy shows the willingness of the government to professionalize the training of officers—of the cavalry and the infantry—of the newly created Army of Chile. The academy was to give education to three kinds of officers: the first sesión gathered cadets; the second, sergeants

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116 Cf. chapter I of this book.
117 This article appeared in Gaceta del Supremo Gobierno de Chile, vol. 1, number 4, Mar. 19, 1817 (the decree that created the academy is dated 16 Mar. 1817).
118 The first building in which the academy functioned was the Convent of Saint Augustine of Santiago. See MG, vol. 62, p. 19, 5 Apr. 1817.
and *cabos*; and the third, the *oficiales agregados*. The first sesión ‘will consist of all cadets who are currently serving in the army, as well as honest and well-behaved young people whom the Director considers worthy of admission. There are 100 places available to fill this sesión’. The second ‘will consist of well-behaved individuals, who can read and write. [...] For the moment this sesión is going to be formed by two companies of sixty men’. The last sesión ‘will consist of all the officers who have served previously in the army of the *Patria* and wish to continue their service after acquiring the knowledge in the new tactics’. Socio-economically, the group of cadets belonged to the highest sectors of society, as shown by the fact that the applicants were bound to pay for their education. However, it was declared that no proof of nobility was required to be accepted in the academy as cadets, and that only ‘merit, virtue and patriotism’ were needed. The training of sergeants and *cabos*, meanwhile, was to ‘be paid by the army’.

What were the tactical principles on which the academy based its educational system? In the section called *Instrucción técnica y práctica de la Academia* we find a loose, though interesting, answer: the curriculum of the academy must ‘follow the infantry and cavalry tactics published in France in 1792, with all the amendments introduced until the last edition of 1815’. The influence of imperial France in the Chilean military academy is important, both because it gives an idea of the role played in Chile by a number of French officers who left their country after Napoleon was finally defeated in 1815, and also because it demonstrates that the Spanish American revolutionaries followed the tactical model developed in France since the Comte de Guibert published his *Essai général de tactique* in 1770.

Regarding the influence of French officers in the implementation of the...

119 On 28 Mar. 1817, the Supreme Director reported that twelve of these 100 places would be occupied by young people from the province of Cuyo. See MG, vol. 62, p. 8.

120 *Gaceta del Supremo Gobierno de Chile*, vol. 1, number 4, Mar. 19, 1817. O’Higgins probably made reference to the *Règlement concernant l’exercice et les manœuvres de l’infanterie du 1er août 1791* (Paris: De l’Imprimerie du Laillet, 1792) (which can be read at http://gallica.bnf.fr). This supposition can be reaffirmed by the request made by O’Higgins to Hipólito Villegas in August 1816 regarding the purchase of a book of French tactics, ‘the more modern the better’. In a handwritten note made by Villegas on the back of this letter, we find the following: ‘I have bought the Instruction concerning the cavalry manoeuvres, in two volumes for 14 pesos. Item the *Reglamento concerniente al ejercicio y las maniobras de infantería*, for one peso, August 1791, printed in 1813’. It seems clear that O’Higgins read the latter book, which was, as can easily be deduced, a translation of the *Règlement*. In *ABO*, vol. 7, pp. 42–43. I thank Clément Thibaud for informing me of the existence of the *Règlement*.

121 Of course, there were those who criticized the ‘ambition’ and ‘pride’ of the French officers. See, for instance, AGN, room X, 4–2–9, pp. 25–26v, 14 Jul. 1817 (it is not clear who wrote this document, though it was sent to San Martín).

Chilean academy, it is interesting to note that its Director, Antonio Arcos, was a Spanish-born engineer who, notwithstanding his origin, fought as an officer in the French army after Napoleon invaded the Iberian Peninsula.\textsuperscript{123} Arcos was aided by Jorge Beauchef, a French cavalry officer who arrived in Chile shortly after the battle of Chacabuco. On 23 October 1817, Beauchef was appointed commandant of the cavalry section of the military academy.\textsuperscript{124} In his memoirs, Beauchef provides an overview of the type of exercise performed by his students, who after three months of training could be seen ‘carrying their rifles and backpacks with grace’.\textsuperscript{125} Sadly for the French, San Martín appointed Mariano Pascual Necochea as Beauchef’s direct chief, a decision that, in his view, hastened the closing of the academy a couple of months later. Apparently, Necochea ‘knew nothing about administrating’ the academy.\textsuperscript{126}

The military academy, despite its brief existence, was created to make Chileans better soldiers.\textsuperscript{127} ‘The Legión de Mérito, which was instituted by a Bando of 1 June 1817 as a means of rewarding the commitment and participation of the military throughout the revolution,\textsuperscript{128} enabled O’Higgins to strengthen the close relationship that, he believed, should exist between politics and the armed forces.\textsuperscript{129} The Legión glorified ‘the memory of the year 8 of la Libertad’ (i.e. counted from 1810), and its ‘born leader’ [jefe

\textsuperscript{123} Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. X, p. 243. See also Patrick Puigmal, ‘Los organismos de formación de los ejércitos de Argentina y Chile bajo la influencia militar napoleónica (1810–1830)’, in Cristián Guerrero Lira et al., El lazo de Los Andes, p. 122.

\textsuperscript{124} MG, vol. 34, p. 175, Francisco Antonio Pérez, Luis de la Cruz and José Manuel Astorga to O’Higgins, 23 Oct. 1817.

\textsuperscript{125} Patrick Puigmal, (ed.), Memorias de Jorge Beauchef (Santiago: DIBAM, 2005), p. 92.

\textsuperscript{126} Puigmal, Memorias de Jorge Beauchef, p. 93. For the internal functioning of the academy, see the documents published in \textit{ABO}, vol. 25, pp. 119–56.

\textsuperscript{127} The Constitutions of 1818 and 1822 included an article that stated that every Chilean should be ‘virtuous, honest, charitable, a good father, good son, good friend, good soldier, [and] obedient to the law’. See also the \textit{Reglamento del recluta} of 22 Mar. 1822, a document that was issued in order to explain that the government’s aim was to enroll soldiers who did not think they were being forced into the ranks. In \textit{ABO}, vol. 35, pp. 647–48.

\textsuperscript{128} According to Puigmal, ‘Influencia militar francesa’, p. 40, the Legión was a ‘faithful copy of the Legión de Honor created by Napoleon in 1804’.

\textsuperscript{129} It is not surprising that most civic celebrations had been connected with military triumphs. Thus, 12 February (the day of the battle of Chacabuco) and 5 April (the day of the battle of Maipú) became ‘official days’ during O’Higgins’ government. These were accompanied by 18 September (the day of the first Chilean Junta, and now Chile’s ‘national day’). For this subject, see \textit{ABO}, vol. 15, pp. 32–34, 17 Feb. 1821 (when the ‘civic celebration’ of 12 February was institutionalized); and article 86 of the Constitution of 1822 (where the authors speak of 18 September, 12 February and 5 April as ‘civic anniversaries’). For a recent analysis of this topic, see Paulina Peralta, ¡Chile tiene fiesta! El origen del 18 de septiembre (1810–1837) (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 2007).
nato] was the Supreme Director, that is, the Executive chief of the Chilean state. The Legión was created to honour ‘the victors of Chacabuco’, but also those who, although they had not participated in the battle, deserved to wear the medal of the Legión due to their contributions to the achievement of freedom. Among those who were awarded the Legión de Mérito were the Supreme Director of the United Provinces, the generals who commanded the revolutionary army in Chacabuco, all the chief officers who were present at the battle, one captain of every body of the army, three captains and three junior officers of the regiment Granaderos a Caballo, two captains and two junior officers of the infantry battalion, and a junior officer of the artillery. Also, and this is one of the most important and original aspects of this Bando, the O’Higgins government stated that ‘twenty-five sergeants, cabos or soldiers chosen for their merit from the general mass of the army’ were also to enjoy the privilege of wearing the medal of the Legión de Mérito.

Institutions like the Legión de Mérito show the interest of the insurgent leaders in strengthening the ideological commitment of officers and rank-and-file soldiers. In their book ¿Chilenos todos?, Julio Pinto and Verónica Valdivia have argued that the civilian elites never approved the institution of the Legión, since they regarded it as an institution that reinforced the power of the military at the expense of their own. To prove this, the authors cite the debates in which the Senate decided to cut the funding of the Legión and, eventually, abolish it in June 1823, when O’Higgins had already fallen from power. Nonetheless, a detailed examination of these debates does not illustrate a tension between the civilian elites and the military as sharp as these historians claim. Rather, the abolition of the Legión de Mérito responded to the Senate’s desire to prevent the Legión from becoming an o’higginista stronghold. In a phrase that summarizes the position of the Senate vis-à-vis O’Higgins very well, the senators referred to the Legión as an institution created by a ‘provisional authority’ (i.e. O’Higgins). Such an institution had to inevitably ‘disappear after the establishment of the new legislative authority, which was set up in order to llamar a juicio everything that was done in earlier times’.

130 The Bando that instituted the Legión de Mérito can be found in MG, vol. 62, pp. 26–29, 1 Jun. 1817. At the end of this Bando O’Higgins affirmed that in the future the Legión would be granted not only to military men but to every citizen who contributed to the country’s development, such as scholars and artists. However, he also stressed that these activities were less ‘heroic’ than the military.
131 Pinto and Valdivia, ¿Chilenos todos?, p. 149. On 10 Mar. 1823, the periodical Tizón Republicano, number 3, criticized the Legión de Mérito for being ‘the work of tyranny’.
132 Pinto and Valdivia, ¿Chilenos todos?, p. 150.
133 SCL, vol. VII, p. 198 (annex 319), 16 Jun. 1823. A few officers who were awarded the Legión include: Hilarión de la Quintana, Rudecindo Alvarado, José Ignacio Zenteno, Joaquín Prieto and Ramón Freire. See CG, vol. 1055, pp. 151–511, 12 Jul. 1822. The defence of the Legión in 1823 was personally led by Freire. This may lead some to
To better understand the position of the Senate in 1823 we need to go back to 1818, the year when O’Higgins issued the first of two very personalistic constitutions. Although constitutions do not necessarily reflect the aspirations of society as a whole, they give an idea of the ideological pillars upon which specific regimes build their political programmes. In the case of O’Higgins, the two constitutions that were issued during his time in office show clearly his tendency to concentrate decision-making in the Supreme Directorship, which explains also why his enemies, senators among them, tended increasingly to call him a dictator.

O’Higgins’ favourite political model was, indeed, Roman republican dictatorship. True, the Proclamation of independence of 12 February 1818 stands out for its lack of governmental definition: there is no mention of the type of administration that should govern Chile. The Proclamation did not promise to create a republic, claiming only that Chile would, from then on, be independent of Spain. However, at this stage of the revolution O’Higgins favoured republicanism over any other political system and, of the many variants of republicanism, he preferred a strong Executive. According to Simon Collier, ‘by the time [O’Higgins] came to assume supreme power in 1817, he believed in the necessity for a strong, energetic government to carry the country through dangerous times and to implant a programme of radical reforms’. Furthermore, ‘dangers at home and abroad […] forced him think that the position of the Senate regarding the Legión was inspired by a supposed opposition of the civilian elites to the military, Freire’s included. However, the main reason for the senators abolishing the Legión was more economic and political than military. In their view, O’Higgins had abused his power when he ordered the Legión to be funded with money coming from the property seized during his administration. Besides, in 1823 the Legión had not only been granted to military men, but also civilians. See SCL, vol. VII, May to June 1823, pp. 159–69, 181–182, 198 and 223–24 (annexes 256, 285, 319 and 355). For the funding of the Legión, see CG, vol. 3, pp. 535–35, 30 Jul. 1822.

134 The Proclamation of independence was published in Gaceta de Santiago de Chile, Feb. 21, 1818, pp. 3–4

135 Collier, Ideas and politics, p. 251.

136 In 1818 most revolutionary leaders preferred a republican system: ‘a republic was the only form of government that allowed the sovereignty of the people a just and legitimate representation. […] Republican government, in the Chilean concept, amounted to representative government. Representation was the logical solution to certain dilemmas implied by the first principles already described: the need to delegate sovereignty, and the equally pressing need to prevent the advance of despotism on the one hand and the inevitable chaos, on the other, which would be caused by direct democracy in the Aristotelian sense of the word’, Collier, Ideas and politics, pp. 146–47. See also Jocelyn-Holt, La Independencia, chapter VII; Castillo, La creación de la República; Juan Luis Ossa Santa Cruz, ‘Monarquismo(s) y militarismo republicano en Chile, 1810–1823’, in Roberto Breña (editor), Cádiz a debate: su actualidad, su contexto, su importancia y su legado, El Colegio de México (forthcoming).
to assume dictatorial privileges, in the manner of ancient Rome. “From the beginning I was charged with the Supreme Directorship, without limitation of powers. In the same way, the free state of Rome, in moments of greatest crisis, used to hide the tablets of the law beneath a veil and entrust absolute power to a Dictator”.

In his analysis, Collier made clear that O’Higgins ‘never forgot the authoritarian government could easily degenerate into despotism’, and that he always tried to be ‘responsible to the people’. He, in other words, ruled as a dictator, ‘but his democratic instincts were constantly hinting at the limits of authority’. Collier’s statement is, in principle, correct; to argue that he was an ‘anti-democratic’ governor is certainly an anachronism. Yet we must not forget that, in comparison to other civil and military leaders (like Freire, as we shall see), O’Higgins concentrated political power in the Executive, and that the Constitutions of 1818 and 1822 were designed to strengthen his political status. The Constitution of 1818 contained, as Collier himself held, ‘no proposals for any popular elected assembly’, and the creation of an ‘advisory Senate to help the Supreme Director govern’ was its boldest concession. The fact that the Supreme Director had enjoyed the right to choose all members of the Senate—five—illustrates how little independence this advisory board really had (title I, chapter II, article 1). The Supreme Director even had the right to cast a decisive vote whenever the senators did not agree on a particular motion (title III, chapter III, article 12). Bearing this in mind, it is not surprising that in 1823 the Senate tried to eliminate O’Higgins’ influence from public life, seeking, among other things, to abolish the Legión de Mérito.

137 Collier, Ideas and politics, pp. 240–41 (O’Higgins’ phrase is quoted by Collier). O’Higgins saw also in Bolívar a good model to follow. For O’Higgins’ admiration for the Libertador, see FV, 250, p. 16; and CG, 1055, p. 151v, 12 Jul. 1821. For Bolivar’s authoritarian republicanism, see Lynch, Simón Bolívar, chapter VII.


139 Collier, Ideas and politics, p. 246.

140 For a well-articulated criticism of those who have seen O’Higgins as an ‘anti-democratic’ leader, see Julio Heise, O’Higgins, forjador de una tradición democrática (Santiago: Talleres de Artesanía Gráfica R. Neupert, 1975), pp. 75–93.

141 In many ways, the Chilean Constitutions of 1818 and 1822 were similar to the Brazilian Constitution of 1824, which, in the view of Jeffrey Needell, ‘Variaciones para un tema: las vicisitudes del liberalismo durante la monarquía brasileña’, in Iván Jaksic and Eduardo Posada Carbó (eds.), Liberalismo y poder. Latinoamérica en el siglo XIX (Santiago: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2011), p. 248, was based on the Constitution written by Benjamin Constant for Napoleon.


143 The idea of having a Senate that could act as a supporter of the Executive power was also popular among the American federalists. See Castillo, La creación de la República, pp. 85–86.
The Constitution of 1818 assigned the Supreme Director other faculties. Title IV, chapter I, article 4 stated that the Supreme Director was not only the executive chief of the government, but also Captain General of the army. The next article declared that the ‘command and organization both of the armies and the armed militias’ were among his powers, while article 10 of that same title and chapter asserted that the Executive power had the right to appoint all the secretaries of state (i.e. Gobierno, Hacienda and Guerra). Moreover, the Executive was entitled to nominate the military governments of Valparaíso, Talcahuano and Valdivia (title IV, chapter V, article 2), and the ministers who composed the Supreme Judiciary Tribunal (title V, chapter II, article 3). The Supreme Director also had the prerogative to ‘confirm or revoke criminal sentences against the military’ (title IV, chapter I, article 21), as well as ‘the faculty to suspend executions, grant pardons and commute sentences’ (title IV, chapter I, article 22). Among his obligations, perhaps the one calling upon him ‘to maintain the closest possible alliance with the supreme government of the United Provinces of the River Plate’ was the most significant (title IV, chapter I, article 8). By means of this provision O’Higgins gave a constitutional status to his relationship with the rioplatense military officers and politicians, thus assuring that the expedition to Lima could count on the support of Chilean citizens, whose foremost obligation was to show a ‘complete allegiance to the Constitution’ (title I, chapter II, article 1).

The Constitution of 1818 prevailed until May 1822, when a new Convention was elected. The Convention met between July and October 1822, and ‘produced a new Constitution which was in many ways moderate and wise’. This Chart is considered to be the most serious constitutional work drafted in twelve years of revolution, though its main aim was similar to that of its predecessors: to consolidate the position of the Supreme Director over the other powers. In the Constitution of 1822 we find a much clearer separation of powers; the independence of the Legislative and Judicial powers is explicitly stated throughout the carta. The Legislature was formed by two chambers: the Senate (with more members than the Senate of the Constitution of 1818), and the Cámara de Diputados. The representatives in this latter chamber were to be chosen following a complicated system of indirect election, in which a number of electores had to form a junta electoral, which in turn had responsibility for electing the diputados. Military men who owned real estate and did not command regular troops were eligible as electores (article 37) and, from the article stating that the ‘members of the Cámara de Diputados should not be military who command regular troops’ (article 39, subsection 4), it can be inferred that the military who had been allowed to be electores could become diputados. Among the attributions of

144 For an interesting contemporary analysis of the 1818 Constitution, see El Sol, number 10, 11 Sep. 1818, pp. 1–4.
145 Heise, O’Higgins, forjador, p. 88.
146 Collier, Ideas and politics, p. 234.
the Congress, there were six that referred to military matters (article 47, subsections 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12): Congress could declare war at the request of the Executive; establish the ‘force required by the nation on land and sea’; provide the Ordenanzas for the army, the militia and the navy; recruit new troops; command troops outside the state; and face foreign troops in Chilean territory.

Nonetheless, in a clever strategy to prevent the Legislature from exceeding the faculties of the Executive, a series of other articles of the Constitution of 1822 acknowledged the political and military supremacy of the Supreme Director. Although the Legislature had the right to establish the ‘force required by the nation on land and sea’, the Executive had the prerogative to ‘organize and direct the army, navy and militias’ (article 90). Besides, the Supreme Director was entitled to appoint the chief generals of the army (article 92) and, together with the Legislature, all military positions from brigadiers up (article 94). In short, he enjoyed more or less the same military privileges as those granted in the Constitution of 1818. Regarding the political attributions of the Supreme Director in the Constitution of 1822, article 81 declared that the post of Supreme Director should always be elected, never inherited, and that each period of six years could be extended to ten. Article 84, for its part, stated that ‘the election of the Director (O’Higgins) by the present 1822 legislature shall be considered the first election’. This, of course, was not well received by O’Higgins’ enemies; in early 1823 Freire led a political uprising against O’Higgins to stop the Supreme Director from transforming both the Executive power and the city of Santiago into his personal bastions.147

Freire’s movement was supported by civilians from Santiago, Concepción and Coquimbo. This proves that the aim of the civilian elites was to change not so much the militarized system established in Chile in 1817 as its visible face (otherwise, they would have not insisted on having Freire as the new head of the government).148 There were, obviously, some civilians who, like Juan Egaña, overtly opposed the intervention of the military in politics. Yet they were an exception. In the case of the senators, they did not criticize the military in general, but only the ‘abuses’ committed by O’Higgins during his period in office (we shall see that even Egaña would change his mind and adopt a similar position to that of the senators who opposed O’Higgins’ personalism). The very fact that in the early 1820s the regime had given the officers the responsibility for administering the country shows that the war acted as a political catalyst. As Véronique Hebrard has argued for Venezuela, ‘political and military actions were, of course, intertwined: the military

147 Collier, Ideas and politics, pp. 234–35.
148 Jocelyn-Holt, La Independencia, p. 231, correctly argues that the civilian elites ‘tolerated the personalistic and dictatorial’ characteristics of O’Higgins’ regime until 1822. However, the war in the south and the publication of the Constitution of 1822 in October alienated them from the Executive.
defended the political and the political, in turn, rewarded those who enlisted in the army’, an hypothesis that, despite the obvious differences between these countries, can be extrapolated to the Chilean case.149

I shall return to this subject in the last part of this book, where I will claim that Freire’s government was much less personalistic than that of O’Higgins but just as dependent on the military as his. The two leaders were republicans; both believed—O’Higgins less fervently than Freire—in the separation of powers; and both thought that some degree of popular representation was needed. However, while O’Higgins’ model was closer to the authoritarian republicanism of ancient Rome, we will see that Freire’s was somewhat closer to the European liberal model that promoted the limitation of power.

Throughout the years 1817–1823 the revolutionary faction led by San Martín, O’Higgins and the Logia Lautaro consolidated a new political system that was different to both the insurgent governments that had ruled the country until the battle of Rancagua, and the royalist administrations of the period 1814–1817. In military terms, O’Higgins’ regime did not differ much from that of José Miguel Carrera, although in terms of policy-making O’Higgins’ was much more sophisticated and permanent. In the process of building his regime O’Higgins was helped by two important circumstances: first, by the acceptance of the santiaguino ruling groups, who saw him as the alter ego of the widely respected and admired San Martín. The latter’s popularity was used by O’Higgins to justify the prosecution and punishment of royalists and ‘unruly’ revolutionaries. O’Higgins and San Martín crossed the Cordillera knowing that the confrontation with the supporters of the Carreras, Manuel Rodríguez among them, was inevitable, and that assassination was an extreme, though practical, solution for getting rid of them. With the passage of time not only O’Higgins’ military subordinates but also civilians, like Hipólito Villegas, applauded the radical measures introduced by the government to fight the Carrera brothers and their allies in Chile.

Second, the O’Higgins administration was helped by the fact that the royalists were almost entirely ousted from the Central Valley: some of them escaped to Lima (e.g. Aeta and Osorio), others were imprisoned and exiled (e.g. Marcó del Pont and Ordóñez), and the rest sought refuge in the south of Chile (e.g. Sánchez and Benavides). This allowed the revolutionaries to achieve political control of the principal regions of the country, with the exception of Concepción and Valdivia, the first of which changed hands more than once. More than just military triumphs, the battles of Chacabuco and Maipú were, consequently, important political victories for O’Higgins.

However, the irregular warfare in the Araucanian region that followed the battle of Chacabuco destabilized his government, creating serious frictions between Santiago and the officers of the Army of the South. The decision of the central government to devote Chilean resources to San Martín’s expedition to Lima instead of sending a regular force to deal with the royalists in the south provoked the reaction of Freire and the provincial elites who, in late 1822, demanded the deposition of O’Higgins. Although this is a key point of the last chapter of this book, it is worth making reference to it now in order to show that sending a division led by Prieto and formed by regular soldiers to the south did nothing to appease the criticisms of O’Higgins’ political decision to finance the Ejército Libertador del Perú.

The provincial movement that ousted O’Higgins from power also aimed to defy the personalistic characteristics of a government that strengthened the Executive at the expense of the other political powers. It is important, nonetheless, not to confuse ‘personalism’ with ‘militarism’. In general civilians accepted and sometimes even encouraged the participation of the military in politics, which means that the project of the elites who backed Freire was directed not against O’Higgins the military officer, but against O’Higgins the personalistic republican dictator. Revolutionary warfare served as a political—and on rare occasions also social—springboard for many members of the military who, once the war entered its final stage, became representatives of the various factions into which the political spectrum (and therefore also the army) was divided in the 1820s. In a sense, the actions of the provincial elites who voted for O’Higgins’ removal suggest a different conception of republicanism, an important fact considering that debates over different republican models marked public discussion in Chile in the period 1823–1826.
Chapter III stated that one of the most salient characteristics of the militarized regime established in Chile in the wake of the battle of Chacabuco was its anti-Spanish sentiment. This chapter will show that the anti-Spanish reaction of the O’Higgins government was accompanied by the American military project developed by San Martín prior to the crossing of the Cordillera. We saw that San Martín’s Americanism had both political and military elements. Politically, he followed Bolívar’s model of dividing society between those who favoured and those who opposed the ‘American cause’. It is difficult to grasp what San Martín and his fellow revolutionaries, like Pueyrredón, meant by ‘American cause’, not least because within the ‘American’ faction there were those who preferred more radical changes and those who at most sought to enjoy autonomy within the empire. What is clear is that the creation of an American Congress was part of their programme. They also introduced the idea that Spanish-born people supported the metropolis and American-born people the revolution. Indeed, the American-born who fought on the royalist side were treated as traitors. Militarily, San Martín’s plan included the creation of the Army of the Andes, the re-conquest of Chile and the preparation of a new army, now formed by soldiers of the Army of the Andes and the Army of Chile, to invade Lima. This chapter discusses the organization of this army—known as the Ejército Libertador del Perú—and the political consequences brought about by its creation. I will contend that the military aspects of San Martín’s American plan succeeded, since he was able to enter Lima in 1821. However, I will also argue that the idea of ‘constituting one single’ American nation failed, partly because San Martín decided to create a sovereign, independent state in Peru and partly because the Chilean officers in Peru became increasingly disenchanted from his Protectorate.

The first section presents an overview of the origins of the Ejército Libertador del Perú, studying three aspects: O’Higgins’ whole-hearted support of San Martín’s American military programme; the reluctance of Buenos Aires to finance an expedition that was originally prepared in concert with the Chilean government; and the role played by Thomas Cochrane in the creation of the first Chilean navy. The second section examines the political
context in Peru before and immediately after the invasion carried out by San Martin. The aim here is to stress that the limeño elites gave only lukewarm support to San Martin. The third section addresses San Martin’s failure to consolidate his Protectorado in Lima, and his subsequent political fall. The final section presents the idea that both the defeats of the revolutionaries in the combats of Moquegua and Torata and the lack of resources and men caused a sort of moral crisis in the high command of the Ejército Libertador. This crisis deepened, at least from the Chilean perspective, as a consequence of what the highest Chilean military officer in Peru, Francisco Antonio Pinto, saw as the ‘arrogance’ of the officers of the other South American armies vis-à-vis the Chileans. This ‘arrogance’ was connected to economic and military matters, though their consequences were related to three, much more subtle, issues: the emergence of divisions within the Ejército Libertador del Perú, the creation of a properly Chilean army and the origins of a Chilean sovereign state.

I. The organization of the Ejército Libertador del Perú and the first Chilean navy

The re-conquest of Chile was just the first stage towards a much bolder and more ambitious plan to expel the royalists from South America. San Martin always aimed to use the invasion of Chile as a springboard to attack Lima, an idea that was articulated in both political and military terms. According to Collier, the officers and soldiers of the Army of the Andes and the Army of Chile were aware that ‘their own cause was linked to a more general movement’, politically known as Americanism. The press was one of the favoured vehicles to spread Americanism. In Collier’s words: ‘the progress of the patriot cause in northern South America was continually reported in the newspapers, while the ties between Chile and Argentina—and Chile and Peru—exercised a profound influence on the course of the revolution’.¹ But such a project needed a military dimension, and so San Martin and O’Higgins continuously stressed that it was imperative to undertake an offensive against Lima. ‘The interest of America demands [an expedition to Peru]’, said the rioplatense Bernardo José de Monteagudo in April 1820, ‘the people of Peru wants it, the existence of Chile depends on it, and peace in the provinces of the River Plate may result from it’.²

The Peruvian expedition required ‘great sacrifices, even beyond the effective forces’.³ New recruitment laws issued in 1818 enabled the authorities to raise an army of more than 8,000 men, by far the largest figure of the revolutionary army in this period.⁴ According to an estimate made by

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¹ Collier, Ideas and politics, p. 217.
² El Censor de la Revolución, number 1, Apr. 20, 1820.
³ Pinto and Valdívia, ¿Chilenos todos?, p. 122.
⁴ Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XII, p. 41, footnote 30.
San Martin at the end of 1818, the expeditionary army needed 6,100 men, divided into 5,400 infantrymen, 400 artillerymen, 200 cavalrymen and 100 sappers [zapadores]. An army this large was very expensive to mobilize and feed. In another calculation, San Martin informed the Chilean Senate that taking the war into Peru would cost nearly one million pesos, half of which should be paid by Buenos Aires, the other by Chile. On 25 November 1818, the senators promised to raise 200,000 pesos in cash and 300,000 in food and other goods. However, problems soon arose. In December 1818, O’Higgins asked the Chilean Senate to provide another 270,000 pesos, a request that was denied by the senators, who claimed that the government had assured them that the amount originally raised by them and Buenos Aires should be enough to cover the expenses of the expedition. What the senators did not yet know was that politicians in Buenos Aires were beginning to conclude that the participation of the River Plate in the expedition bring more harm than good.

In February 1819 the Chilean government commissioned Antonio José de Irisarri to sign a treaty with the United Provinces in Buenos Aires to ensure that the ‘costs of the expedition would be paid by both contracting parties’. Articles 5 and 6 of this treaty summarized the main points of an agreement that was designed not only to find the best way to finance the invasion, but also to plan how Peru should be governed after the expulsion of the royalists from Lima. On behalf of the Supreme Directors of Chile and the River Plate, Irisarri and Gregorio Tagle agreed that a combination of forces from both countries should expel the ‘present rulers of Lima’, and that the future government had to be elected ‘freely by the inhabitants’ of Peru. Yet that same article (number 6) also declared that if the ‘states of Chile, the United Provinces and Lima concurred, the [liberating] army will be allowed to stay’ in Peruvian territory. Thus, Chile and the River Plate made clear that they intended to mount a military expedition against Peru, but also to intervene in Peruvian political affairs.

In the end, this treaty did not have practical effects, since the Buenos Aires government never endorsed it. Both the threat of a royalist expedition of 10,000 men from Cadiz and the threat posed by provinces that had broken away from Buenos Aires, compelled the porteño authorities to focus on internal problems. In October 1819 the Supreme Director of the River

5 Barros Arana, *Historia General de Chile*, vol. XII, pp. 42–44.
6 A copy of this treaty can be found in VM, vol. XCIV, pp. 22–24v.
7 Barros Arana, *Historia General de Chile*, vol. XII, p. 61.
Plate ordered San Martín, who was in Mendoza, to march with the Army of the Andes to Buenos Aires to face a potential provincial uprising.⁹ San Martín, nevertheless, opted to stay out of domestic politics. In John Lynch’s words: ‘distancing himself from his colleagues’ preoccupation with Spain, Uruguay and provincial montoneros, he set his sights on a different route, and he sacrificed his loyalty to Argentina in favour of his greater loyalty to America. In an act of “historic disobedience”, as it has been called, he ignored orders to return with the Army of the Andes to Buenos Aires and committed himself completely to the liberation of America’.¹⁰ An indirect consequence of San Martín’s ‘historic disobedience’ was that it obliged the Chilean state to bear the entire economic burden of the expedition. Militarily, however, the Liberating Army was made up of both the Army of Chile and the Army of the Andes. Writing to O’Higgins from Mendoza on 9 November 1819, San Martín told his good friend: ‘keep me informed of the results of Cochrane’s movements so I can go with the entire division [of the Army of the Andes] to Santiago […]. I am aware that this decision will bring upon me a terrible responsibility; but if we do not undertake the expedition to Peru, then everything will go to the devil [todo se lo lleva el diablo]. Inform me of the state of the artillery, because, if needed, we can take the artillery we have here’.¹¹

To understand San Martín’s reference to the English captain Thomas Cochrane we need to go back to early 1817, when O’Higgins, flushed with the triumph at Chacabuco but conscious that the war was not over, delivered his famous phrase that ‘this victory [Chacabuco] and a hundred others, will be of no account unless we gain command of the sea’.¹² At that time, the revolutionaries had no fleet to face the royalist navy.¹³ At most, they could give letters of marque to freelance vessels to act against the royalists on their behalf.¹⁴ This changed in early 1818, when the government bought an ‘East Indiaman of 800 tons and thirty-four guns called the Windham’ in London, and rechristened it the Lautaro. The Lautaro was ‘manned by a mixed crew of English, North Americans and Chileans, and placed under


⁹ Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XII, p. 401.

¹⁰ Lynch, San Martín, p. 108.

¹¹ Quoted by Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XII, p. 403.


¹³ For an overview on how the Chilean navy was built and developed, see Donald E. Worcester, El poder naval y la Independencia de Chile (Buenos Aires: Editorial Francisco de Aguirre, 1971).

¹⁴ Mario Cárdenas, ‘Corso y guerra marítima en Chile’ (Santiago: Universidad de Chile, 1984).
the command of Lieutenant William O’Brien, late of the Royal Navy'. To the *Lautaro* were later added the *Chacabuco* (*ex*-Coquimbo), the *Araucano* (*ex*-Columbus), the *San Martin* (*ex*-Cumberland), a vessel sent by Pueyrredón called the *Intrépido*, and the brigantines *Galvarino* and *Maipú*. According to Stephen Clissold, ‘the officers recruited for the new navy were mainly English volunteers, the ratings Chilean, English, American, and other nationalities’, and its command ‘was given to a twenty-eight year old Chilean [sic], Manuel Blanco Encalada, whose dash and enthusiasm were supported by an experience only of land operations’. In September 1818 the Chilean navy was on its way to becoming one of the strongest navies in the Pacific, a fact acknowledged by *Hullet Hermanos y Compañía* in a letter to Bernardino Rivadavia, then based in London: ‘others have received the news that the ship *Cumberland* had arrived in Valparaíso. Thus, the Chilean navy will have a marked superiority over the Spanish in the South Sea and, if it can count on good officers, it will come to Talcahuano as soon as possible and afterwards will deal with Callao’.

These purchases were followed by the recruitment in London of Thomas Cochrane, a man who, in the opinion of Chile’s envoy to London, Antonio Álvarez Condardo, ‘will be the terror of Spain and a pillar of American liberty’. O’Higgins at first doubted the advisability of endorsing the contract, worried as he was that the hiring of Cochrane, who had recently ‘fallen foul of the British government’, could delay the delivery of a million-pound English loan sought by the Chilean administration. Yet the need to recruit Cochrane outweighed O’Higgins’ fears, and so the Supreme Director accepted Álvarez’s plan. Cochrane disembarked at Valparaiso on 28 November 1818, becoming a citizen of Chile a couple of weeks later. The Chilean government appointed him general-in-chief of the Chilean navy, while Blanco Encalada was appointed admiral and second-in-command. On 9 January 1819, Cochrane received orders to ‘blockade the port of Callao, to cut off the maritime forces of the Viceroy of Lima [...] and by so-doing

16 Ibid.
17 The *Galvarino* and *Maipú* were sent from Buenos Aires and, according to Miguel Zañartu, they were manned by people ‘from the countryside’. In *ABO*, vol. 5, Zañartu to O’Higgins, 15 Sep. 1818.
18 Clissold, *Bernardo O’Higgins*, p. 177. Blanco Encalada, who in fact was born not in Chile but in the River Plate, was the chief of the Chilean navy from February 1817 until December 1818, when Cochrane took charge. For Blanco’s performance, see Worcester, *El poder naval*, pp. 54–58; and Cárdenas, ‘Corso y guerra marítima en Chile’, pp. 104–6.
19 AGN, room VII, Documentos del Museo Histórico Nacional, doc. 914, 9 Sep. 1818.
21 Clissold, *Bernardo O’Higgins*, p. 178
enable them to be defeated in detail'. In the words of the editors of the *Gaceta Ministerial de Chile*: ‘the chiefs of Peru and their troops have repeatedly ravaged the territory of Chile, indiscriminately plundering the peaceful inhabitants of the haciendas and the coast; and now the formidable thunder [rayo] of war has inevitably turned to those who have indulged themselves in slavery and the annihilation of your brothers’. The navy was divided into two flotillas. The first, composed of the four biggest ships, the San Martín, O’Higgins, Lautaro and Chacabuco, set sail for Peru between mid-January and mid February 1819. It had a crew of 331 Chileans and 254 foreigners, besides 137 cadets, 128 artillerymen and 255 infantry soldiers. All the captains were foreigners. The second flotilla was led by Blanco Encalada, and was composed of the Galvarino, Araucano and Pucyrredón. Cochrane carried out his first attack on 28 February and the following day he declared a blockade of the port of Callao. In his correspondence with viceroy Pezuela reporting on these actions, Cochrane introduced himself as the representative of the ‘supreme government of Chile’. In doing so, he sought to put the Chilean state on the same level as the Peruvian, thereby using international law to legitimize this and future actions by the revolutionaries in Peruvian territory. Santiago applauded Cochrane’s move, and on 24 April 1819 the *Gaceta Ministerial* decreed that ‘vessels that present themselves in front of one of the blocked ports shall be sent to Valparaiso to be judged under the law of Nations’. Pezuela, however, would not give Chile a status that, according to Spain, rebel governments did not merit. The Chilean revolutionaries were still seen as insurgents; therefore, Cochrane’s invocation of international law was not valid in the eyes of Pezuela. Not surprisingly, when Cochrane offered Pezuela an exchange of prisoners the viceroy agreed to free only a small number of them. In Pezuela’s view, the prisoners of the brigantine *Maipo* could not be released, as they were ‘pirates’ who served under an ‘unknown flag’. He, in other words, did not recognize ‘the Chilean flag because he considered it illegitimate’.

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24 *Gaceta Ministerial de Chile*, number 5, Jul. 26, 1819. Together with giving Cochrane orders to attack the Peruvian coasts, O’Higgins sent Rafael Garfias to Lima on a ‘secret mission’. Among the Instructions given to Garfias, the government asked him to ‘determine’ the amount of men that general La Serna had, as well as the number of royalist forces established in Lima. O’Higgins also told Garfias to ‘circulate’ in Lima a series of proclamas, letters and public papers to encourage the ‘progress of our cause’. In FV, vol. 281, pp. 92–93v, 26 Feb. 1819.


28 Cárdenas, ‘Corso y guerra marítima en Chile’, p. 67. It is possible that Pezuela’s refusal to treat the insurgents according to international rather than penal law had
Along with seeing the revolutionaries as rebels, Pezuela ordered the royalist fleet to let time pass in order to exhaust both Cochrane’s patience and the food supplies of the Chilean navy. In early April, Cochrane left Callao to find supplies in other ports on the Peruvian coast; Blanco Encalada, meanwhile, was instructed to maintain the blockade. Things went relatively well for the revolutionaries outside Callao, but in May 1819 Blanco Encalada was compelled to leave the blockade and return to Valparaiso to fetch supplies. Irritated with Blanco’s decision, O’Higgins disapproved of his action and put him on trial for disobeying his superiors. The commander of the Lautaro, the English captain George Guise, was ordered to go back to Callao immediately to join forces with Cochrane. But in the end Guise did not sail for Callao, since, after searching in vain for the second flotilla, Cochrane and the rest of the navy returned to Valparaiso in mid-June.29 Thus, the first blockade of Callao finished badly: after a couple of months of blockade, Pezuela’s defensive strategy thwarted Cochrane’s objective of inflicting an attack on Lima.

During his months in Chile Cochrane devoted himself to preparing a new expedition to Callao. In July 1819 he voted for the pardon of Blanco Encalada, a motion seconded by the other members of the War Council and confirmed by O’Higgins.30 Two months later, Cochrane received new instructions from the government. This time, O’Higgins stated that ‘the sole purpose of this expedition is to strengthen in our hand the domain of the Pacific so that […] the expeditionary army can set sail from our ports to liberate Peru and ensure the independence of South America’.31 The Chilean navy arrived at Callao on 27 September 1819 for the second time in nine months. Cochrane realized that the port had been reinforced with new defences, and that a contingent of about 3,000 men manned its forts. On 2 October, Cochrane ordered the use of Congreve rockets to respond to the sporadic attacks of the royalists,32 who, encouraged by rumours that an expedition had finally departed from Cadiz to assist Pezuela, were much more willing than a couple of months before to confront the revolutionaries directly.33 Cochrane’s letter to Pezuela offering him an honourable fight between equal forces was answered with a

been influenced by the negative impression he had of foreigners, especially the English, who ‘protected and assisted’ the insurgents. See AGI, Estado 85, N 66, Secretario del Despacho de Estado to minister of war, 19 Jun. 1818.

32 Worcester, El poder naval, p. 103.
33 This expedition never set sail, as Rafael del Riego and other Spanish officers refused to leave for Spanish America, thus provoking a major political crisis and eventually a change of government. This revolt led to the Trienio Liberal. See Anna, Spain and the Loss of America, chapter VI.
definitive ‘no more correspondence’.34 But, once again, Pezuela did not attack the Chilean navy. Cochrane then attempted an attack on Guayaquil, which was also under royalist control. Although Cochrane seized a few vessels in the river Guayaquil, he could not reach the city.35 It was now December 1819, exactly a year after Cochrane’s arrival in Chile. During this period, the vice-admiral had created an effective navy, but gained little in military terms. Cochrane’s critics soon appeared. Among them was San Martín himself, who, after acknowledging that—following orders from Cochrane—Blanco Encalada had returned with the Lautaro to Valparaíso, demanded that the Chilean government dispatch a new naval force to blockade Callao.36

Donald Worcester argues that these criticisms played a part in Cochrane’s decision in January 1820 to attempt an invasion of Valdivia, the Chilean royalist stronghold par excellence. To have control of Valdivia would prevent Vicente Benavides from using the city as a supply centre, as well as helping Cochrane to regain the approval of the authorities. Hence, instead of going back to Valparaíso with the rest of the Chilean navy, Cochrane travelled to the south of the country in complete secrecy; not even O’Higgins was informed of his plan. Cochrane reconnoitred Valdivia on 17 January 1820, finding out ‘that the Spanish brig Potrillo was due shortly with money for the payment of the Valdivia garrison’.37 He then headed north to Talcahuano, where he met Ramón Freire and learned about the irregular war in the south of Chile. Freire, Cochrane recalls, ‘gave him a hospitable welcome, “and after explanation of my plans, placed two hundred and fifty men at my disposal, under the command of a gallant Frenchman, Major Beauchef”’. The Moctezuma and the Intrépido, two ships anchored at Talcahuano, ‘were persuaded to join the expedition’. The squadron departed for Valdivia on 25 January, its mission being to seize a fort defended by nearly 2,000 men.38

The disadvantage posed by the huge difference in manpower was somewhat counterbalanced by Cochrane’s audacity. His men seized Valdivia between 2 and 4 February, after an admirable action by Beauchef and his men.39 This was undoubtedly one of the greatest military triumphs of the revolutionaries, comparable to the battles of Chacabuco and Maipú. It allowed the O’Higgins government to gain 360 kilometres of coast, ‘10,000 cannon shot, 128 guns, 1,000 hundred-weight of gunpowder, 170,000 musket cartridges, a large quantity of small arms, and the ship Dolores which

34 Quoted by Barros Arana, Historia General, vol. XII, p. 325.
37 David Cordingly, Cochrane, p. 280.
38 Ibid. See also Clissold, Bernardo O’Higgins, p. 185.
was later sold for $20,000.\(^{40}\) The news of Cochrane’s ‘astounding victory came as a complete surprise’ to the authorities in Santiago,\(^{41}\) who not only welcomed him as a hero when he returned to Valparaíso on 6 March, but also overlooked Cochrane’s failure to seize Chiloé a couple of weeks after he entered Valdivia.\(^{42}\) Undoubtedly O’Higgins’ decision not to spend the state’s resources aiding Freire was influenced by Cochrane’s achievement in Valdivia, especially considering that his victory led to the ‘destruction of Benavides’ operational base’ in the south of the country.\(^{43}\)

It was in this context that San Martín requested that O’Higgins keep him informed of Cochrane’s campaign in the Pacific in November 1819, so he could return to Chile with the Army of the Andes and attempt the invasion of Peru. We saw that San Martín’s decision had important results. For one thing, it enabled him to stay out of rioplatense politics and concentrate his energies on the military aspects of his American project. But it also meant that Buenos Aires would have little to do with the preparation and consumption of the invasion, and that, at least until the Peruvians joined the revolution, the army of the ‘republic’ would have to bear the economic and human costs of the expedition. By the army of the ‘republic’ the authorities referred to both the Chilean contingents and those of the Army of the Andes who travelled back to Chile with San Martín from Mendoza. As O’Higgins told the Senate in May 1820, it was inevitable that the ‘liberating army of Peru be composed mainly of battalions from this republic. Politics, reason, decency and the reputation of the republic demand it; it is absolutely necessary, therefore, to reorganize and create new detachments to increase the army’.\(^{44}\) According to new calculations by San Martín, the army required 4,000 infantry soldiers, 300 cavalrymen and 100 sappers.\(^{45}\) This was a much more modest army to pay and organize than the army of 6,100 men envisioned by San Martín in late 1818.\(^{46}\)

The O’Higgins government spent the first months of 1820 preparing the expedition to Peru.\(^{47}\) To encourage recruitment, O’Higgins agreed with the

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41 Cordingly, Cochrane, p. 284.
43 Cárdenas, ‘Corso y guerra marítima en Chile’, pp. 122, 124.
44 Quoted by Pinto and Valdivia, ¿Chilenos todos?, p. 122.
45 Pinto and Valdivia, ¿Chilenos todos?, p. 123.
46 San Martín believed that his army should be backed by Juan Bautista Bustos’ army, stationed in Upper Peru. See AHM, box 286, doc. 119, San Martín to Bustos, 16 Feb. 1820. This document can also be found in AGN, room X, 4–4–2. For Bustos’ performance in early 1820, see Ovidio Giménez, Vida, época y obra de Manuel Belgrano (Buenos Aires: Ciudad Argentina Editorial de Ciencia y Cultura, 1999), p. 688.
47 The organization of the expedition can be followed in the documents published by Félix Denegri Luna in CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2 pp. 3–142. There, we find all sorts of sources related to the economic, political and military aspects of the liberating army.
Senate that soldiers, corporals and sergeants enrolled in the army would be compensated with an annuity that ‘will consist of the fourth part of the wages earned by soldiers at the time of their retirement’.48 However, from the numerous desertions in the period March–August 1820, it appears that such a measure did not have the expected effect; not at least among the rank-and-file soldiers who were forcefully recruited from the small towns north of Santiago, and who tended to desert en masse.49 In early June 1820, the large number of desertions led San Martín to request that O’Higgins establish militia detachments throughout the country to prevent the escape of soldiers. The riskiest points were Limache, Ocoa, Puchuncaví, La Ligua and El Melón, all of them small villas near Quillota, where the army was quartered.50 Desertions continued until the embarkation of the troops, as shown by a note sent by San Martín to O’Higgins on 8 August (only twelve days before the departure of the expedition), urging him to order his subordinates to take all arrested deserters to their respective detachments.51

Apart from desertions, other issues, related to the political consequences of the expedition, are worthy of mention.52 Consider, for instance, San Martín’s letter to O’Higgins of 11 May 1820 acknowledging the Chilean government’s decision to call the newly created army the Ejército Libertador del Perú.53 Although today it may sound obvious (in general, historians speak of the army without giving much detail about the origin of its denomination), the decision to adopt that name involved a serious political issue. Following one of the points negotiated in February 1819 between the Chilean and rioplatense delegates, Antonio José de Irisarri and Gregorio Tagle, the revolutionary authorities in Chile intelligently used the words Libertador and Perú to stress that San Martín’s main objective was to free, not to conquer, Peru. From then on, soldiers recruited to the army would no longer represent the interests of either the Army of the Andes or the Army of Chile, and Peruvians would have the chance to enrol in the army and to freely decide their political future.

But of these goals only recruiting troops in Peru was actually accomplished by San Martín. To begin with, the authorities tended to speak of the detachments of the Ejército Libertador del Perú according to whether they had historically belonged to the Army of the Andes or to the Army of Chile.54

49 Cases of desertions can be found in CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2.
52 The army, of course, faced other types of complications apart from desertions.
53 Perhaps the most damaging was the plague of smallpox that affected the soldiers who were stationed in Quillota in the days prior to the shipment of the troops. See CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 112, San Martín to O’Higgins, 8 Aug. 1820.
54 CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 69, San Martín to Secretary of War, 11 May 1820.
55 See, for example, CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 113, San Martín to Zenteno, 9 Aug. 1820.
That is, although it received a new name, the Ejército Libertador never became a completely different integrated army, but remained a combination of forces taken from the Army of the Andes and the Army of Chile. We will see that in 1822 the Army of Chile was formed by many Peruvian-born soldiers, while the Ejército Libertador del Perú had many Chileans in its ranks.

On the other hand, it is not entirely clear that San Martín sought to liberate Peru so that it could be governed by its own people. We saw that Irisarri and Tagle agreed that if the ‘states of Chile, the United Provinces and Lima concurred’ the Ejército Libertador would be allowed to ‘stay’ in Peruvian territory. San Martín was aware that his role in Peru should be not only military but political. Hence his confidential letter to O’Higgins of 12 June 1820, asking him for advice if the limeño viceroy ‘wants to negotiate with me’, that is, as representative of the Chilean government.\(^{55}\)

In August 1820, San Martín was appointed general-in-chief of the Ejército Libertador. O’Higgins gave ‘clear instructions to Cochrane that General San Martín had “exclusive control of the operations of this great enterprise, and you are to act strictly in accordance with the plan which he will provide”’.\(^{56}\) The army was composed of 4,118 soldiers, 296 officers and the General Staff (a total of around 4,500 men, divided more or less equally into Chileans and rioplatenses).\(^{57}\) In addition, small arms, 35 pieces of artillery, fifteen thousand muskets, and around two thousand sabres to arm ‘the new corps to be formed in Peru’ were shipped to the soldiers.\(^{58}\) The General Staff carried a printing press to publish bulletins and proclamations, a ‘weapon’ that San Martín used in Peru as effectively as firearms.\(^{59}\) The artillery, supplies, soldiers and horses were transported in seventeen cargo ships, which were ‘escorted by eight [sic] warships under the command of Cochrane’.\(^{60}\) They were: the O’Higgins, San Martín, Lautaro, Independencia, Araucano, Galvarino and Moctezuma. In total they had 231 cannon and 1,928 crew.\(^{61}\)

The expedition departed on 20 August 1820 from Valparaiso, the ‘key

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56 Lynch, San Martín, p. 121.
57 According to an Estado de fuerza of 15 Jul. 1820, there were 4,642 men enrolled in the Ejército Libertador. See CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2 (document inserted between pages 94 and 95).
58 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XII, p. 454. See also Lynch, San Martín, p. 120.
59 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XII, p. 455.
60 Cordingly, Cochrane, p. 287.
61 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XII, p. 456, footnote 24, See also AGI, Indiferente General 1569; and AHM, box 704, doc. 51, O’Higgins to Cuyo’s intendant, 20 Aug. 1820. In this last source, O’Higgins asserted that there were nine warships that accompanied the army.
point of America';

for Peru. The British colonel William Miller recounted in his Memoirs that ‘it was in truth an imposing and exciting spectacle to behold that bay crowded with shipping, under patriot banners, which formerly received only one merchant vessel annually. As the several corps, marching from cantonments, with music playing, through cheering multitudes, severally arrived upon the beach, they were taken off to their respective transports in the greatest order, and without the occurrence of a single accident’. This celebratory atmosphere was crowned with a long poem called Despedida de las chilenas al Ejército Libertador del Perú, which was probably published in the days prior to the shipment of the troops. The main lines of the poem said:

Qué terrible contraste,
O dulce Patria amada,
La expedición deseada
Causa en el corazón!
Ya es tiempo de cumplirse
Tu orden irrevocable:
La Libertad amable
Lidia con el amor.

[...]
Defensores de Chile
Corred a la victoria,
Y volved con la gloria
Que os adquiera el valor.
El cobarde que ceda
Al menos noble empeño
Vea siempre airado el ceño
[...]
Hermosuras de Lima
Nobles y generosas
Recibi obsequios
Los hijos del valor.
Otro mérito no hallen
Ante esos ojos bellos
Que el que se ganen ellos
Venciendo al opresor.64

Appealing to the limeño women to welcome the soldiers of the Ejército Libertador, the last stanza of this poem anticipated one of the most difficult problems faced by San Martín and his men from the moment they set foot in Peru: the reluctance of the local elites to join the revolution. While the

62 El Censor de la Revolución, number 7, 10 Jul. 1820.
preparation, organization and financing of the expedition fell under the
countrol of the O’Higgins government, the reaction of the Peruvians to San
Martín’s invasion was beyond its control.

II. Lima: royalist stronghold

Lima was the most important counterrevolutionary centre in South America.
In a recent publication, Víctor Peralta has tried to demonstrate that politics in
Lima in the 1810s and early 1820s were much more dynamic and participa-
tive than previous scholars had believed. Such dynamism, Peralta argues, is
shown by the participation of politicians and men of letters in public debates
about the meaning and scope of revolution. Peralta tells us that opposition
to viceroy Abascal and his successor, Joaquin Pezuela, was not confined to
a small group of ‘radicals’, but spread throughout Lima (and beyond). In a
sense, it would no longer be possible to assert that Lima was a land of recalcit-
trant royalists, whose attitude towards the revolution was merely defensive
and reactive.⁶⁵

Accepting that some of Peralta’s arguments are not only interesting but
also convincing, especially when he stresses the role of the press in building
an informative and politicized society, only small groups of the limeño
elites backed the revolutionary project prior to the 1820s.⁶⁶ The historian
must not confuse opposition to Abascal and Pezuela with support for San
Martin. When the revolutionary expedition set sail for Peru, O’Higgins, San
Martín and the officers of the Ejército Libertador were explicit advocates of
independence (though they differed on the type of government that should
be implemented to replace the Spanish monarchy). However, promoters of
independence in Lima were hardly a majority. There are various reasons why
independence did not prosper among the limeño elites before the early 1820s,
though the fear that the insurgency might jeopardize their socio-economic
status was the most evident. ‘The Peruvian aristocracy—an aristocracy of
land, office and trade—clung fanatically to their power and privilege’, Lynch
has claimed. ‘The propertied classes of Lima were terrified by the “licentious-
ness of the populace and the coloured people of this city and its environs, who
exceed the whites by a third or a fifth and who are arrogant, insubordinate
and lawless”. The elite preferred security to change and were not prepared
to risk their social predominance for the sake of independence’. This is
why the ‘Peruvian liberals’, also members of the elites, ‘did not produce an

⁶⁵ Peralta, La independencia y la cultura política peruana, especially parts 2, 3 and 4.
⁶⁶ For historiographical debates on when and how Independence was conceived and
accepted by the limeño elites, see John Fisher, Bourbon Peru, 1750–1824, Liverpool:
Liverpool University Press, 2003, chapter 106; John Fisher, ‘The royalist regime in the
1 (February, 2000), pp. 55–84; and Natalia Sobrevilla, ‘La nación subyacente: de la
monarquía hispánica al estado en el Perú’ (forthcoming).
independence movement. Prisoners of their society, they demanded no more than political reform and equality for creoles within the colonial framework.\textsuperscript{67} This fits Timothy Anna’s argument that it was one thing to be a defender of independence, but quite another to advocate ‘creole advancement’ in state employment. While the first option was cheered only by a few, the second was welcomed by most elite members.\textsuperscript{68} Thus, San Martín’s belief that ‘time was on his side and that he had only to use the weapons of bluff and intrigue for the Viceroy’s army to melt away and allow him to enter Lima without bloodshed’ did not quite correspond to reality.\textsuperscript{69} We will see later that San Martín’s failure to recognize that independence in Lima was not as popular as he thought when he first departed from Chile delayed not the proclamation of independence in Peru but its consolidation. If San Martín was supported by some members of the ruling classes, they were largely from the provinces, Lima being in essence the royalist stronghold of South America.\textsuperscript{70}

After seizing the city of Pisco in September 1820, San Martín made use of one of his favourite strategies: the issue of Proclamas to explain to Peruvians the political goals of the Liberating Army. In one, San Martín assured Peruvians that the revolutionaries would respect the ‘public morals and customs of the country’, a strategy he used to persuade, rather than coerce, the provincial leaders to join the revolution.\textsuperscript{71} On 20 September 1820, San Martín ordered the printing of a Bando to explain to the wealthiest inhabitants that his policy of recruiting of slaves would not harm their economic interests: ‘every owner of slaves who had been enrolled to serve in the Liberating Army […] is entitled to resort to the chief of the General Staff to ask restitution of the value of his slaves, which will be paid after the establishment of a National Government in Peru’.\textsuperscript{72}


\textsuperscript{68} Anna, The Fall of the Royal Government in Peru, p. 152. For a good example of why the elites felt threatened by the revolution, see the report sent by the Archbishop of Lima to Abascal in November 1819. There, we find an interesting account both of the ‘arrogant’ behavior of the insurgents in the years 1818–1819, and the negative impression they caused among the limeño ruling classes. In AGI, Diversos 5, 27 Nov. 1819.

\textsuperscript{69} Clissold, Bernardo O’Higgins, p. 189.

\textsuperscript{70} And the truth is that the support of the provinces for San Martín’s programme is not so clear either, as new investigations are beginning to show. See Elizabeth Hernández García, ‘Crisis de autoridad en una región periférica: la vecindad piruana frente a la nueva Patria (Perú, 1821–1824)’, paper given in the XVI Congreso Internacional de AHILA. El nacimiento de la libertad en el Penínnsula Ibérica y Latinoamérica, San Fernando, Spain, September 2011.

\textsuperscript{71} Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XIII, pp. 42–43.

\textsuperscript{72} CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 145, 20 Sep. 1820. Three days later, San Martín reported to the Chilean minister of war that he had been able to recruit 650 slaves from the haciendas near Pisco. See Ibid., 144–145.
At the end of 1820, San Martín’s strategy seemed to be paying off, both militarily and politically. On 5 November, Cochrane captured the Spanish frigate *Esmeralda*, ‘the best royal warship on the Pacific’,\(^\text{73}\) while on 29 December the marquis of Torre Tagle, governor of Trujillo, proclaimed independence in the northern province and swore loyalty to San Martín’s army.\(^\text{74}\)

San Martín acknowledged Trujillo’s move towards independence in a letter to Santiago on 2 January 1821. San Martín told José Ignacio Zenteno how pleased he was that ‘the spirit of devotion to the Cause of Independence is becoming increasingly evident in the northern provinces’. In his view, events in Trujillo exemplified the usefulness of having conversations with the provincial elites.\(^\text{75}\) It was in the provinces, in fact, that the revolutionary army recruited most of its Peruvian contingents. By mid-February, the army had increased its contingents by more than two thousand men from the provinces, an impressive accomplishment considering the short period of time spent by the Liberating Army in Peruvian territory. The *Estado general del Ejército Libertador* of 15 January 1821 amounted to 6,699 men.\(^\text{76}\)

At the same time as negotiating with provincial leaders like Torre Tagle, San Martín had conversations with the royalist authorities. The first contacts between the two sides were held during the last week of September 1820. In the words of Anna, ‘Pezuela agreed to negotiations because he had been ordered to do so by the new government in Spain’. San Martín, for his part, ‘agreed to talk because he had frequently claimed that his object was not to conquer Peru […] but to provide an alternative to help Peruvians make up their own minds about their political future’.\(^\text{77}\) The fact that Pezuela had received San Martín’s envoys is a proof that Rafael Del Riego’s January 1820 revolt in Cádiz not only ushered in a liberal government in the Peninsula, but also brought about a change in the relationship between the Spanish American revolutionaries and Madrid. ‘Rebels’ were suddenly summoned to parley, and military officers like San Martín began to be seen by the viceroy as representatives of a sovereign state. In his communications with San Martín, Pezuela addressed the *rioplatense* officer as ‘Excmo. señor general de las tropas de Chile don José de San Martín’, which, in comparison to the treatment given by Pezuela to Cochrane a year before, was quite novel.\(^\text{78}\) For the first time in a decade, revolutionary delegates were officially received by a Peruvian viceroy, which was obviously the consequence of events in Spain.

However, the repercussions in Spanish America of the change of government in the metropolis should not be exaggerated. San Martín’s envoys and Pezuela did not reach an agreement when they met at Miraflores, near Lima.

\[^{73}\] Ibid., p. 164.

\[^{74}\] *CDIP*, tome VI, vol. 2, pp. 219–21, 29 Dec. 1820.


Pezuela’s mission was to get the revolutionaries to send delegates to Spain to find a way out of the conflict, stressing, nevertheless, that he was not in a position to recognize the independence of Chile and the River Plate. San Martín’s envoys, for their part, proposed to create a constitutional monarchy in Peru, but only after Spain agreed to recognize the independence of the country. Ferdinand VII could not, these delegates claimed, continue as king of Peru. With objectives as different as these it is not surprising that negotiations ended completely on 1 October 1820. San Martín’s delegates went back to Pisco, while Pezuela returned to Lima.

Back in the capital, Pezuela realized how much influence he had lost within the royalist army. The same day that the negotiations in Miraflores finished, José La Serna and other royalist generals presented Pezuela with a plan for the defence of the capital. Asserting that ‘everything had already been arranged’, Pezuela ‘informed his Junta of War [...] that the necessary orders had already been given and that he would not agree to the generals’ suggestions’. Pezuela criticized not so much the detail of the plan as the fact that it was crafted without his consent. In any case, Pezuela and La Serna ‘differed profoundly over the role Lima should play in the crisis now confronting them’. While La Serna, José Canterac and Jerónimo Valdés ‘were convinced that it was impossible to defend Lima owing to the difficulties in supplying the city, its vulnerability to Chilean naval blockade, and the apparent increase of political dissidence among its civilians’, Pezuela believed that under no circumstances should Lima be abandoned. La Serna wanted to re-concentrate forces in Upper Peru, while Pezuela asserted that Lima ‘will be sustained as long as I exist’. The loss of Lima would, in Pezuela’s opinion, precipitate the fall of Upper and Lower Peru.

Pezuela fell from power in late January 1821, after nineteen military chiefs, supported by powerful limeño merchants, demanded that he resign in favour of La Serna. This meant not only a political defeat for Pezuela, but also a political triumph for San Martín, who could show his critics in the Ejército Libertador, especially Cochrane, that his policy of intrigue was bearing fruit. The British admiral believed that time was not on San Martín’s side, and that the safest way to defeat the royalists was by conducting a direct attack on the city. Rather reluctantly, in March 1821 San Martín authorized Cochrane to carry out an expedition to Intermedios, in the south of the country. Aided by William Miller, Cochrane gained important victories in the southern region, penetrating ‘successfully as far inland as Tacna and Moquegua’. Juan Antonio Álvarez de Arenales, for his part, ‘defeated a royalist detachment at Pasco,

81 Anna, The Fall of the Royal Government in Peru, p. 170. That these military were backed by the limeño merchants is the main hypothesis of Marks, Deconstructing legitimacy.
82 Worcester, El poder naval, p. 126.
and in May advanced as far as Tarma’. Arenales then proposed that San Martín undertake an expedition to the sierra, ‘leaving Lima to the efforts of the navy and the guerrillas’. San Martín did not agree, and ‘when Arenales reached Jauja he received news that [a] ceasefire had been negotiated’.

The ceasefire was negotiated by La Serna and San Martín in April–May 1821; the delegate of the Spanish liberal government, Manuel Abreu, played an important role in it.

The signing of the armistice was followed by an unexpected event: the abandonment of Lima by La Serna’s army. Just a few days after the armistice ended, La Serna’s second-in-command, general José Canterac, left Lima for the sierra with the royalist cavalry and infantry. The royalists left the Peruvian capital because ‘it did not provide a suitable military base from which to defend the rest of the country’.

Thus, neither party had much confidence that the armistice would lead to a final settlement. The revolutionaries would not leave the country until they proclaimed the independence of Peru (what type of political regime should be implemented after independence was another matter). On the other hand, any decision made by the royalists regarding the future role of Spain in independent Peru needed to be approved by the metropolis, a process which could take months. La Serna, therefore, had no option but to abandon Lima: the city and the port of Callao were blockaded; the lack of supplies and illnesses were affecting the morale of the royalist army; and Spain was too wrapped up in its own problems to expect that metropolitan ministers would spend much time solving the limeño crisis.

San Martín entered Lima on 12 July 1821. Rumours announcing the almost certain fall of the royalist capital had reached Chile in April of that year. On 24 April, the British envoy to Valparaíso, H. Brown, summarized the latest news regarding the war in Peru to Thomas Farrer:

We deferred writing to you after the arrival of our [ship?] from England, in the daily hopes of being able to announce to you the fall of Lima and consequent liberation of all Peru from the yoke of Spain, by which we should have been able in a short time after to give you a better idea of the probable consumpt[ion] for your articles generally on this side of the Continent of South America, but we are still unable to say such has been the case.

Brown believed that the fall of Lima ‘will give more life to the Trade of

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84 For negotiations for the ceasefire, see Anna, *Spain and the Loss of America*, p. 238; Anna, *The Fall of the Royal Government in Peru*, p. 175; AGI, Indiferente General 1569, 18 Mar. 1820; and AGI, Lima 800, San Martín to Abreu, 23 Mar. 1821.
this side of the country [Valparaíso]. Nevertheless, he warned Farrer against what he saw as the main problem in Chile: the lack of a ‘middle Class’ that could become Britain’s economic partner. In his view, British merchants should reduce their exports to Chile, as the ‘lower class of Inhabitants use very few European articles yet’.88

One of San Martín’s first actions in Lima was to recover the flags of ‘the Chilean state’ lost to the royalists in the battle of Rancagua in October 1814.89 This was a symbolic triumph for the revolutionaries, as was the proclamation of the independence of Peru on 28 July 1821. Indeed, the declaration of independence was an important symbolic act, although it did not cause immediate major political changes within Peruvian society.90 Most of the limeño elites who signed the declaration of independence did so simply because La Serna abandoned the city. In Anna’s words, Peruvian independence came ‘by default’:91 ‘quite simply Lima had no choice but to declare independence’.92 The war of opinion so vehemently defended by San Martín as the best strategy to face the opposition of the royalist elites was never as productive as the rioplataense general believed. The distribution of Proclamas promising to respect and defend the privileged position of the ruling classes had little effect. So little, that in many cases the new authorities had to ‘pressure’ elite members to sign the Acta of independence. Hence, at least for Lima’s nobility, the ‘rebels’ claim that independence was the “general will” of Lima’ was not entirely true.93 The indecision of the elites about the political regime to be established in Lima after the declaration of independence proves that those who backed San Martín did not aim to change colonialism into republicanism, as Chileans did—for good or ill—during the O’Higgins government. San Martín’s monarchical ideas prevent us from asserting that his Peru was ‘meant’ to be republican, or that those who signed the declaration of independence were explicit supporters of republicanism.94

Of course, on 28 July 1821, the day when Peruvian independence was proclaimed by San Martín, nobody could have foreseen that he would fail to shape a solid political coalition to uphold his government. But in mid-1821 San Martín was already in the position to realize that not only within the elites but also within the revolutionary ranks some officers were beginning to feel estranged from his government. San Martín’s appointment on 3 August as Protector of Peru was a political move by his allies to ensure that his

88 BPRO, E 140/26/1, pp. 16–16v, Brown to Farrer, 24 Apr. 1821.
89 AGN, room X, 23–2–5, San Martín to O’Higgins, 21 Jul. 1821.
90 For the ceremony of the proclamation of the independence of Peru, see Lynch, San Martín, pp. 131–32.
91 Anna, The Fall of the Royal Government in Peru, p. 163.
92 Anna, The Fall of the Royal Government in Peru, p. 179.
93 Anna, The Fall of the Royal Government in Peru, p. 181.
94 I will refer to San Martín’s flirtations with monarchism later in this chapter.
power in Lima was supreme; not only *vis-à-vis* the royalists but also, and more important, *vis-à-vis* his revolutionary allies. Yet the question remained whether such a move would silence both internal and external opposition. In the next section we will see that San Martín’s opponents increased during the period August 1821–September 1822, and that his resignation from the Protectorate was largely due to his inability to cope with problems caused not so much by the royalists as by the revolutionaries.

III. Internal conflicts, external consequences

San Martín usually favoured persuasion over coercion when facing the royalists. This was not, however, the kind of plan designed by Cochrane when he left Chile in August 1820. The British commander would have preferred not to disembark in Pisco but to ‘take immediate possession of the capital’.

Almost a year later, when the revolutionaries entered Lima, Cochrane voted for the immediate pursuit of the enemy: to allow Canterac’s and La Serna’s forces to freely withdraw to the sierra would allow the royalists to rearm and, eventually, launch the re-conquest of the capital. As Lynch put it, while ‘San Martín behaved as though the war was over’, Cochrane ‘was convinced that it had still to be fought’.

Cochrane and San Martín differed also on political and economic matters. Cochrane reproached the *rioplatense* general that his appointment as Protector of Peru had not been agreed with the navy, later adding that his decision to delay the offensive had caused problems in the payment of Chilean sailors. The inactivity of the navy had prevented Cochrane from resorting to privateering to pay his crew, and now, Cochrane said, San Martín had to defray the wages of the navy. San Martín answered that ‘I never promised to pay’ the wages of the navy, since ‘this debt belongs to Chile, whose government hired the sailors’. San Martín’s provocative response led Cochrane to seek resources in the port of Ancón, where he seized the local treasury to pay his men. San Martín reacted indignantly. In a letter to O’Higgins, the Protector reported that ‘the money which this villain [Cochrane] has stolen places us immediately in a critical situation, but this state [the Peruvian] is capable of making good the loss quickly. The trouble is that this devil is

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98 Lynch, *San Martín*, p. 135. The state of destitution of the Chilean sailors was in part solved in August 1821, when the Chilean government sent salted meat and biscuits to feed the navy. See AGNP, box 3, O.L. 20–22, Jose Antonio Rodríguez Aldea to San Martín, 20 Aug. 1821.
going to commit thousands of robberies which will severely compromise you and me".\(^{101}\)

Cochrane was a pragmatist, but so too was San Martín. San Martín’s argument that it was Chile’s responsibility, not Lima’s, to pay the wages of the navy illustrates that, after a year of action in Peru, the aim of the Protector was to set up a government in Peru independent not only of Spain, but also of Chile. Indeed, behind the conflict between San Martín and Cochrane, as well as in the differences between Chilean and *rioplatense* and Peruvian officers (this being the topic of the last section), lies a question of political sovereignty: should Lima be the focus of an American project or, rather, the capital of an independent state? We will see that San Martín ended up favouring the second option.\(^{102}\)

San Martín’s search for political sovereignty for Peru had consequences not only in Peru but also in Chile. One of the first acts of the Protectorate was to appoint a new general-in-chief of the *Ejército Libertador* to replace San Martín, busy as he was with his political responsibilities. On 17 August 1821, San Martín’s secretary in Peru, the *rioplatense* Bernardo José de Monteagudo, reported to the Chilean government that the general command of the *Ejército Libertador del Perú* had been bestowed on the *porteño* Juan Gregorio de las Heras, while the former position of Las Heras (chief of the *Estado Mayor General* of the army) had been filled by another *rioplatense*, Rudecindo Alvarado. Monteagudo conceded that Chile was entitled to approve or disapprove of Las Heras and Alvarado as chiefs of the ‘troops belonging to that state [Chile]’, but he hoped that ‘this measure will be accepted by the Chilean Supreme Director’. In other words, Monteagudo acknowledged that the O’Higgins government could appoint different officers to command the Chilean forces in Peru, but insisted that the *Ejército Libertador* would be run by the ‘designated officers’. In so doing, he implicitly referred to the Liberating Army as a exclusively ‘Peruvian’ force; the Army of Chile was, at best, its auxiliary.\(^{103}\)

Citing health problems, Las Heras resigned his post as general-in-chief of the *Ejército Libertador* a month later.\(^{104}\) Las Heras removed a burden from O’Higgins’ shoulders, as the last thing he wanted was to engage in a conflict over prerogatives between Chile and Peru. Yet the Chilean Senate was about to intensify the differences between the two countries. Indirectly answering

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\(^{101}\) Quoted in Lynch, *San Martin*, p. 135.

\(^{102}\) This, in spite of the fact that, on 27 Sep. 1821, San Martín declared: ‘during my administration I will not omit any means to make the ties that bind our nations [Chile and Peru] indissoluble, and I shall always express to you the gratitude that I feel towards the great virtues and the eminent services Your Excellency [O’Higgins] has rendered to the general cause of the heroic Chilean nation’. In *Gaceta Ministerial de Chile*, number 18, p. 21.


Monteagudo’s note of August 1821, senators José María Rozas and José María Villarreal defended O’Higgins’ right to decide whom to appoint as general-in-chief of the Ejército Libertador. Because the army was financed by Chile and San Martín received his Instructions from O’Higgins, the Ejército Libertador should remain ‘dependent’ on Chile:

The Army that left from Chile, commanded and financed by this State [Chile], even if it included a division from the [Army of the] Andes, which is why it was called the united Army, can neither be deprived of its name nor of its dependence on this State [Chile] by him who was appointed as its general-in-chief [San Martín] nor by other subordinates.

If the Peruvian authorities did not accept the senators’ view, O’Higgins was then entitled to appoint San Martín’s successor, ‘at least with regard to the detachments of Chile’. This last clarification resembled Monteagudo’s argument that the Ejército Libertador was no longer a ‘united’ ['American'] force. The only difference was that the senators spoke from the Chilean perspective:

The general-in-chief [San Martín], whom your excellency chose, ceased in that position owing to his ascent to the Protectorate of Peru. According to the Constitution [of 1818], it corresponds to you to appoint his successor, at least as far as the Chilean detachments are concerned, so that according to your instructions [the new general-in-chief] might in future provide his services with the honour, propriety, distinction and independence that Chile’s flag deserves. The Senate must not doubt that the Supreme Government of Peru will grant him the distinction which he deserves in the same manner that this State [Chile] did with the Army of the Andes when it was our auxiliary.¹⁰⁵

The tension between the Chilean state and the Protectorate increased during the following months. Shortly after the Senate expressed its opinion about the best method to choose San Martín’s successor, O’Higgins’ sent senator Rozas to Peru to ensure that at least part of the expenses incurred by Chile in preparing the expedition would be paid by the Protectorate. In response, Monteagudo claimed: ‘the Peruvian government will defray those expenditures when Chile pays Buenos Aires the money spent by that government to organize the 1817 expedition’.¹⁰⁶ Monteagudo’s answer could be seen as rude and impolitic; however, one might also argue that Monteagudo reacted as any politician would in trying to obtain the greatest benefit for his state (Monteagudo was a rioplatense by birth, but he was now speaking on behalf of the Peruvian Protectorate). Monteagudo, in fact, acted as representative of both a sovereign and of a newly created state. Peru, San

¹⁰⁵ CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 320, Rozas and Villarreal to José Antonio Rodríguez Aldea, 13 Nov. 1821.

Martín’s allies believed, was reborn in 1821, and therefore any commitment made before that date was nullified, economic debts included.\textsuperscript{107}

Another event that illustrates the gap between Peru and Chile occurred in January 1822, when, with his mission in Peru over, the Spanish government’s delegate Manuel Abreu arrived in Chile. On 2 January, Abreu wrote to O’Higgins saying that, after realizing that the ship taking him back to Europe would stay in Valparaiso longer than expected, he had come to Santiago to present himself in person before the Chilean authorities. Abreu had not found the Supreme Director in the capital, but hoped that, given the cordial relationship he had established with San Martín in Peru, O’Higgins would allow him to stay in Santiago for a couple of days.\textsuperscript{108} The Chilean foreign minister, Joaquín Echeverría, told Abreu that he should not have travelled to the capital before receiving O’Higgins’ permission. Also, Echeverría continued, when Abreu had been asked in Santiago to show ‘the credentials of his legation and his license to travel’, he had shown just a passport given by the ‘Excelentísimo Señor Protector del Perú’, thus forcing the intendant of Santiago to ‘leave him in solitary confinement and with a guard of soldiers’.\textsuperscript{109}

Abreu defended himself by asserting that the passport he had obtained from the Protector was the best proof of his ‘good faith’. Furthermore, because Abreu had originally been sent from Spain to negotiate a peace agreement with the Chilean government, O’Higgins should have treated him as a diplomat.\textsuperscript{110} Echeverría responded two days later arguing that the Chilean government did not know that Abreu was meant to proceed to Chile instead of Peru, which explained why the authorities had reacted so drastically against him. However, more important than that, Echeverría reminded Abreu that ‘the Peruvian state is independent from the Chilean’ and, therefore, the negotiations held between Abreu and San Martín ‘had no significance in this republic’.\textsuperscript{111} Hence, what on 2 January had started as a simple request by a diplomat to remain in Santiago, six days later became a major political statement: no agreement reached between San Martín and Abreu was binding in Chile. If San Martín had negotiated with Abreu on behalf of Chile, that was clearly an abuse of power by the Protector. As Abreu told viceroy La Serna on 13 March 1822: ‘meanwhile I shall tell You that the Supreme Director of Chile has assured me that not only had he ignored all that occurred between the gathered Diputaciones, You, the Junta and San

\textsuperscript{107} For a historiographical analysis of the idea that Spanish Americans were reborn after 1810, see Germán Colmenares, Las convenciones contra la cultura (Bogotá: Tercer Mundo Editores, 1989), chapters III y IV.

\textsuperscript{108} AGI, Lima 800, Abreu to O’Higgins, 2 Jan. 1822.

\textsuperscript{109} AGI, Lima 800, Echeverría to Abreu, 2 Jan. 1822.

\textsuperscript{110} AGI, Lima 800, Abreu to Echeverría, 4 Jan. 1822, and AGI, Lima 800, Abreu to Echeverría, 6 Jan. 1822.

\textsuperscript{111} AGI, Lima 800, Echeverría to Abreu, 8 Jan. 1822.
Martin, but also that my commission had come to reach an agreement with his Government; not even San Martín had the powers he claimed to have.\(^{112}\)

The Abreu affair demonstrates that the O’Higgins government was as interested as San Martín’s in enforcing Chile’s sovereignty over the other South American states. The position of the Chilean Senate and Echeverría was a reaction to Monteagudo’s argument that Peru was independent of all external powers. Hence, at some point in late 1821, the two states understood that the rhetoric of the American project was no longer sufficient to sustain politically the revolution in either Chile, Peru, the River Plate or any other South American territory. The royalists were still strong in Peru; therefore the establishment of a combination of forces between the Ejército Libertador, the Army of the Andes, the Army of Chile and Colombian detachments seemed the most reasonable choice to make. But such a combination was the result of the merging of four independent armies representing four sovereign states—not just one. In the case of the Chilean army, the freedom of action of its officers in Peru grew as a consequence of Las Heras’ resignation as general-in-chief of the ‘united’ army in September 1821. On 12 February 1822 the Chilean Supreme Director appointed Luis de la Cruz as the first general-in-chief of the Army of Chile in Peru, with which the existing de facto separation between the Chilean and the rest of the revolutionary forces fighting the Peruvian viceroy finally became de jure.\(^{113}\)

De la Cruz remained as general-in-chief of the Army of Chile until late 1822, when he ‘delegated’ his post to Francisco Antonio Pinto.\(^{114}\) This transfer of power took place when Chilean politicians were beginning to lose faith in San Martin. Lynch refers to the last months of the Protector in Lima as ‘beleaguered’ by difficult local circumstances and decreasing popularity among Chile’s politicians. He argues that San Martin’s decision to send Juan García del Río and James Paroissien to Europe ‘not only to secure European recognition of Peruvian independence, but also to offer a crown to a European prince’ was viewed with scepticism by Chilean republicans. Because García del Río and Paroissien ‘were to proceed via Chile and the United Provinces’, the envoys were able to grasp that the political climate in Santiago was becoming more and more hostile to San Martin’s monarchical preferences.\(^{115}\) In Lynch’s

\(^{112}\) AGI, Lima 800, Abreu to La Serna, 13 Mar. 1822. The emphasis is mine.


\(^{114}\) CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 332, de la Cruz to the Chilean minister of war, 3 May 1822. On 12 Feb. 1822, Pinto had been appointed chief of staff of the Army of Chile. See MG, vol. 93, f. 67. Officially, de la Cruz continued as general-in-chief of the Army of Chile until 1823, when Pinto was appointed en propiedad in his place. This is why, when the expedition to Intermedios was organized in October 1822, de la Cruz occupied the post of general-in-chief of the Chilean division, while Pinto was in charge of the General Staff. See Gonzalo Bulnes, *Historia de la Expedición Libertadora del Perú* (Santiago: Rafael Jover Editor, 1887), vol. II, pp. 418–22.

words: ‘public opinion was hostile to the idea of a monarchy, sympathetic to Cochrane and unimpressed by San Martín’s conduct of the war’.116 ‘Feelings here are resentful towards you and your advisors’, wrote García del Río to San Martín from Chile in March 1822, ‘and people take delight in the news of what Cochrane accomplished in Ancón’.117

By mid-1822, the military and political situation in Peru was also unfavourable for San Martín. To the problem created by the Protector’s successor as general-in-chief of the Ejército Libertador were added two important factors: 1) 1822 was the year when San Martín’s defensive military strategy failed; 2) the repercussions of the so-called ‘Conference of Guayaquil’ held between San Martín and Simón Bolívar in July 1822 had the unexpected result of forcing the Protector to resign from office. This is not the place to discuss at length what happened at Guayaquil, although some comments may be useful to understand why San Martín transferred his power to Bolívar, and to know how their meeting was viewed by Pinto, one of the few Chilean officers who, years later, wrote about this event.

The first point to note is that it was San Martín, not Bolívar, who had to travel to Guayaquil to meet his counterpart. Bolívar had recently seized ‘the whole province of Quito, including Guayaquil, for Colombia’, a manoeuvre which allowed him to present himself before San Martín as the region’s hegemonic leader.118 The Protector left Lima with three objectives in mind: to obtain the annexation of Guayaquil by Peru; to convince Bolívar to send Colombian troops to Peru to fight the royalists; and to obtain Bolívar’s acceptance of a constitutional monarchy to rule the new states.119 However, Bolívar acceded to none of San Martín’s requests; at least, not as they were originally devised by the Protector. Guayaquil remained for several years a part of Gran Colombia; Colombian troops entered Peru, though San Martín did not command them; and no constitutional monarchy was introduced in Spanish America. We do not know why Bolívar rejected San Martín’s ideas, but certainly part of the explanation is that over time both Liberators represented different interests. It is not that Bolívar was a republican, while San Martín was an outright monarchist. Indeed, Bolívar also flirted with monarchism. In a document written in 1853, Pinto advanced this argument:

Today it is not a secret. General San Martín would have preferred a constitutional monarchy for the political organization of Peru. With this object in mind, he sent a commission to Europe composed of señores García del

116 Lynch, San Martín, p. 158.
117 Quoted by Lynch, San Martín, p. 159.
118 Lynch, San Martín, p. 186.
Río and Paroissien, the former from New Granada, the latter English, to request that a prince from the House of Bourbon assume the Peruvian throne. If San Martín aspired to be emperor (because in this century it has become more fashionable to be emperor rather than king), he would have lasted longer than [Agustín de] Iturbide. [...] To obtain the help of Bolivar, or at least to ensure that he would not oppose to his plan [of having a Bourbon on the throne of Peru], San Martín went to Guayaquil as soon as he learned about his [Bolivar's] arrival in the town. It seems that Bolivar did not dislike the plan on its merits, but rather in terms of the dynasty. According to Bolivar, it would cause alarm among Spanish Americans to see a Bourbon on the throne of the Incas.120

The goal of building a monarchy in South America did not trouble Bolivar much, as he led a centralized and authoritarian republican regime (even more centralized and authoritarian than O’Higgins’). This made him more powerful than a constitutional monarch. Pinto continues: ‘in respect of the truth it must be said that the constitutional monarchy envisioned by San Martín was a hundred times more liberal than that enacted and sworn in Bolivia, where the president was for life and had the right to appoint a successor: a privilege that not even the autocrat of Russia enjoys’.121 Thus, if Bolivar distrusted not so much the idea of a constitutional monarchy as the notion of this being headed by a foreign prince, the political defeat of San Martín in Guayaquil is to be explained in other terms, chiefly military. Bolivar’s military base was much stronger than San Martín’s in 1822. He was a victorious general, and his lieutenants, Antonio José de Sucre and Francisco de Paula Santander, were respected and admired military chiefs.122 San Martín’s decision not to pursue La Serna and to remain in Lima had, on the contrary, created the idea among the revolutionary officers in Peru that the Protector had neither the skills nor the desire to keep on fighting.123 San Martín was no longer the triumphant military leader who had re-conquered Chile and organized one of the largest and best trained armies in South America. While Bolivar was at the peak of his success, San Martín was in decline.

When San Martín arrived back in Lima from Guayaquil he found a restless city. In his absence, the limeños rebelled against Monteagudo, thereby provoking a power vacuum in the capital. The Protector was conscious that he was in part responsible for the fall of his protégé, so he took action. He devoted August 1822 to finding a solution to the problem. In the end, San

120 Guillermo Feliú Cruz, San Martín y la campaña libertadora del Perú. (Un documento del general don Francisco Antonio Pinto) (Santiago: Imprenta Universitaria, 1951).
121 Feliú Cruz, San Martín y la campaña libertadora del Perú, p. 49.
122 See Quintero, El sucesor de Bolívar, and David Bushnell, The Santander Regime in Gran Colombia (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 1954).
Martín and the *limeño* elites decided on the establishment of a Congress in Lima (whose first session was held on 20 September 1822), which was accompanied by San Martín’s resignation. He immediately travelled to Chile, where he was received by O’Higgins and the few friends he still had in the country. After fourteen months in office, San Martín had obtained little in military terms; his political victories, meanwhile, had been important but insufficient to consolidate the insurgency. He proclaimed the independence of Peru, won the support of some of the middle classes and opened the Peruvian economy to the international market. However, he also committed mistakes that alienated his allies, such as never reconciling his monarchism with the creation of the Peruvian state. Bolívar (who did not enter Lima until September 1823), on the other hand, seemed a much more determined leader, a characteristic that, in any case, did not necessarily guarantee a better government, nor a more fluid relationship between those who led the revolution. We will see below that in general the Chilean officers in Peru did not become followers of the Bolivarian project, and that their discomfort in Peru grew along with their desires to return to Chile.

IV. Becoming a Chilean army

Conflicts between the Peruvian and the Chilean states in the period October 1821–May 1822 prompted O’Higgins’ decision—likely influenced by the Senate—to appoint de la Cruz as general-in-chief of the Army of Chile. As a consequence, the Chilean officers in Peru, Cochrane included, began to behave as members of an autonomous army that represented the interests of a different political state. However, other, perhaps more prosaic, quarrels involving officers from Chile, Peru, the River Plate and Colombia from mid-1822 onwards destabilized the relationship between the revolutionary allies as much as conflicts like the Abreu affair.

After San Martín resigned, the Peruvian Congress created an Executive Junta, headed by general José de la Mar. Along with Congress, the Junta prepared a new expedition to pursue the royalists garrisoned in the region of

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125 For a sample of Cochrane’s activities in early 1822, see AGNP, box 4, O.L. 32–158.

126 The freedom of action of the Chilean officers is not just to be analyzed in relation to conflicts between states; we need also to consider that de la Cruz’s appointment meant that, from then on, the Army of Chile would be run by its own people and following its own rules. Examples of this can be found in AGNP, box 5, O.L. 38–212, Guido to minister of finance, 3 Sep. 1822; and AHMIP, Ministerio de Guerra, box 2, file 15, doc. 33, Bascuñán to minister of war and navy, 26 Sep. 1822.

127 Gonzalo Bulnes, *Últimas campañas de la independencia del Perú* (Santiago: Imprenta y Encuadernación Barcelona, 1897), pp. 21–25
Intermedios. The expedition was led by the rioplatense Rudecindo Alvarado, but it was meant to be a joint venture between the different revolutionary armies. The news of the expedition arrived in Chile in September 1822, and the ‘Chilean state’ was asked to send 300 horses to enlarge the cavalry of the ‘united’ army. Chilean officers in Peru, meanwhile, actively participated in the preparation of the expedition and the various skirmishes with the royalists in Intermedios. Officers of battalion 5 were especially keen on participating in the action, as shown by a request to Alvarado to be included ‘together with our brothers-in-arms in the following campaign’. Alvarado agreed, and so de la Cruz travelled south as general-in-chief of the Chilean division while Pinto was put in charge of the General Staff.

The expedition, which included some 4,000 men, of whom around 1,500 belonged to the Army of Chile, sailed for the port of Arica in October 1822. The army experienced a real odyssey during a voyage that took the lives of ninety men. The exhausting journey—it lasted seventy days—and the lack of food and water prevented the troops from disembarking in good shape. On 12 December, only a couple of days after the troops arrived in Arica, Pinto reported to O’Higgins the ruinous state of the Army of Chile. Food was especially needed because the ‘coast is desolate and the army is eating what we brought from Callao’. Besides, men were in need of horses and mules from Chile to pursue the royalists, who had stationed their troops in Torata, a small village four leagues from Moquegua. ‘Due to the lack of mobility of our army, we are giving [the enemy] enough time to collect as many forces as they are able to gather and destroy whatever they think could be used by us’.

This was the first of a series of reports sent by Pinto to his government between December 1822 and March 1823. On 30 December, Pinto wrote to O’Higgins that conflicts within the Ejército Libertador had led Chile’s ‘allies’ to treat his men as inferior subordinates. ‘We have the feeling’, said Pinto, ‘that our plans had been frustrated because of the inveterate arbitrariness of those governments [Peru, the River Plate and Colombia] to do and undo everything that belongs to Chile’. Although in this and future reports Pinto spoke of the ‘arbitrariness’ of the revolutionary armies as if Chile’s allies had acted in concert against his officers, we need to look at his individual criticisms to understand more clearly what he meant.

128 The expedition was originally planned by San Martín, but in the end he did not participate in it.
129 AGNP, box 5, O.L. 38–22, 7 Sep. 1822.
130 AHMIP, Ministerio de Guerra, box 2, file 8, doc. 376, Alvarado to Secretary of War and Marine, 29 Sep. 1822.
131 Bulnes, Últimas campañas, p. 60.
132 Bulnes, Últimas campañas, pp. 59–60.
133 Feliú Cruz, San Martín y la campaña libertadora del Perú, p. 34.
134 VM, vol. XCII, pp. 94–95v, Pinto to O’Higgins, 12 Dec. 1822.
In the case of the *rioplatenses*, Pinto claimed that because the Chilean army had never had a proper cavalry in Peru it had always 'depended on that of the [Army] of the Andes'. For Pinto, there was nothing more damaging to an army than 'executing movements with a borrowed cavalry'. Even worse, when two months later Pinto acknowledged the arrival of a detachment of 300 cavalrymen from Chile, he stated that they knew nothing about their functions, and so the Chilean cavalry remained inadequate. ‘Since the Army of Chile set sail from Valparaíso’, wrote Pinto in other report, ‘it has consistently been at the discretion of general San Martín and other chiefs, whose objective has been to present it in Peru in so small and insignificant a way, that everybody has always considered it an accessory of the Army of the Andes and tried to redeploy its soldiers into the ranks of the other armies’. Pinto was as critical of the officers of the Army of Peru as he was with those of the Army of the Andes, and that was because most senior officers of the former were also *rioplatenses*. However, in the case of the Peruvian force he went even further, as he blamed its officers for the high number of desertions from the Army of Chile. According to an *Estado de fuerza* of 29 June 1822, the Army of Chile amounted to 2,060 men, divided into 300 artillerymen and 1,760 infantry. That is, after a year in Peru, the Army of Chile was not significantly reduced in number. Six months later (30 December), when the expedition to the region of Intermedios had already set sail, the army totalled only 1,377 men. In Pinto's view, the reason for the decrease was less from casualties and more from desertions—desertions that were undertaken neither to enrol in the royalist army nor to escape from the battlefield, but in order to enlarge the Army of Peru.

Pinto's next report is dated 1 March 1823. There, he told the new Chilean government, led by Ramón Freire, that a revolution in Lima headed by the 'sons of Buenos Aires' had erased any possibility of finding a solution to the conflict between Chile and Peru. The governor appointed after the revolution, José de la Riva Agüero, 'was a simulacrum of an authority, always at the discretion of the sons of Buenos Aires, who now more than ever depict themselves as arbiters of the government'. Part of the responsibility lay with

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136 CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, pp. 397–98, Pinto to Chile's minister of war, 6 Feb. 1823.
137 CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, pp. 398–400, Pinto to Chile's minister of war, 23 Feb. 1823.
140 It is worth noting that sometimes Peruvian-born soldiers served in the Army of Chile. In March 1823, Andrés de Santa Cruz requested the Peruvian minister of war allow two Peruvian sergeants of the Artillery of Chile to 'fight under the flags of their nation [Peru], where their services are better rewarded'. In AHMIP, Ministerio de Guerra, box 4, file 17, doc. 14, 12 Mar. 1823. Another example in AHMIP, Ministerio de Guerra, box 4, file 15, doc. 48, José Prieto to Peru's minister of war, 16 Dec. 1823.
San Martín: ‘because General San Martín took good care of appointing porteño chiefs at the head of the army of Peru, it has been easy for them, after causing the miseries of the expeditionary army, to plot against the central army and to precipitate the ruin and all imaginable tragedies on this country’. Therefore, five months after San Martín’s fall and six after Monteguado’s, the influence of the rioplatenses in Peru was still powerful, not only in the Army of the Andes but also within the Army of Peru.141 In this context, Pinto’s advice was to ‘save the precious remains’ of the Army of Chile and ‘use them [in Chile] as the basis of a brilliant force’. He emphasized that ‘there is no Chilean officer who is not persuaded of this’,142

It is possible that in these reports Pinto tried to explain two severe defeats experienced by his men at Moquegua and Torata in January 1823, and also to prepare and justify a possible withdrawal of the Army of Chile from Peru.143 This is all the more true if we consider that, in late 1822, the Army of Chile acquired a new indirect enemy: Bolívar’s army. In his report of 30 December 1822, Pinto asserted that ‘every day Bolivar and his agents gain more terrain’ in Peru. After a year and half of ‘anarchy’, Pinto stated, Lima ‘would finally be at the disposal of either the Spaniards or the Colombians. If this does not happen I will believe that there are miracles in politics’. In his view, in the event of a revolution in the Peruvian capital the Chilean navy would probably serve the ‘Colombian faction’, a statement that confirms that Pinto’s concerns were not merely military but also political. ‘All factions in Lima deem us their enemies’, he concluded, and so it ‘is time for us to start thinking about our own security’. For ‘our own security’ Pinto meant leaving the country. I will return to this subject at the end of this chapter.144

Pinto’s negative impression of the Colombians increased throughout time. ‘The troops of Colombia have presented themselves as invaders rather than as auxiliary’, he wrote on 23 February 1823.145 And he was right. As a result of the recent defeats of the ‘united’ army, Bolívar sent General Sucre to Lima

141 Rudecindo Alvarado, the porteño who led the expedition to Intermedios, did not participate in this revolution. In a letter to San Martín, Alvarado criticized what he saw as the ‘indiscretion’ of the officers of the Army of Andes: ‘since Your [San Martín’s] departure there had been transcendent aspirations in the Army of the Andes, followed by a scandalous division of opinions, and [illegible] rivalries which became public in this country [Lima]. [...] Since the landing in Arica [December 1822] [this division of opinions] took a more dreadful turn, because a just [?] rivalry between the Chilean Army and the Army of the Andes resulted from the indiscretion of the latter’s commanders’. In AGN, room VII, Documentos del Museo Histórico Nacional, doc. 1434, 23 Mar. 1823.
142 CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, pp. 406–07, Pinto to Chile’s minister of war, 1 Mar. 1823.
143 For the combats of Moquegua and Torata, see Feliú Cruz, San Martín y la campaña libertadora del Perú, pp. 33–41; and Bulnes, Últimas campañas, pp. 75–95. For the Chilean reaction to these defeats, see AGN, room X, 23–2–5.
145 CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 400, Pinto to Chile’s minister of war, 23 Feb. 1823.
to find out whether President Riva Agüero would be willing to subordinate his government to the military power of his Colombian representatives. Sucre arrived in Lima in May 1823, his mission being not just to start planning Bolívar’s arrival in Peru,146 but also to overcome the negative effects of the defeats of Torata and Moquegua in January 1823. Sucre spent the month of May organising a third expedition to Intermedios, now under the command of Andrés de Santa Cruz. The Chilean army, which was led by Pinto, was added to the Colombian division, under Sucre.147 However, when the expedition was ready to depart, the revolutionaries learned that a royalist force was about to attack Lima, thereby forcing the revolutionaries to seek shelter in the port of Callao.148 Sucre never abandoned the idea of an expedition to Intermedios, and on 23 June he wrote to the Chilean minister of war to ensure that, ‘taking into consideration the sacrifices made by the Republic of Colombia for the independence of Peru’, the Chilean government would not ‘give up the idea of an expedition to the Peruvian coast’.149 Moreover, on that same day he requested the Chilean government to send him fifty thousand pesos to pay for the expedition.150

The Freire government agreed to prepare a new expedition to help Pinto and the remains of the Army of Chile.151 José María Benavente was put in charge of the expedition, and his mission was to give Pinto fresh instructions. Although Pinto never read these instructions, their contents show the position of Freire regarding the military and political behaviour Chileans should follow in Peru. The instructions stressed that Chileans had been sent to Peru to help Peruvians to fight ‘the Spanish armies, which are the common enemy of the allied states’. This is why Pinto should ‘avoid mixing in any internal quarrel if parties, factions or revolutions arise’, a warning that Pinto himself had long ago decided to heed. Finally, Pinto had to make sure that the Chilean detachments would not be split up, and that the Chilean soldiers would fight under no other flag than the Chilean. If casualties occurred, then ‘the Peruvian government has to give the Chilean soldiers the same treatment

146 On 28 May 1823, Pinto wrote to O’Higgins that Bolívar was in his way to Lima. Apparently, the Peruvian capital was divided between those who believed that Bolívar should behave as a generalísimo and those who thought that he should rule as a dictator. See VM, vol. XCII, p. 98.
147 VM, vol. XCII, p. 98, Pinto to O’Higgins, pp. 98–98v, 28 May 1823.
148 Bulnes, Últimas campañas, pp. 184–92.
150 CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 425, Sucre to Chile’s minister of war, 23 Jun. 1823. A couple of weeks later, Pinto negotiated a loan with the limeño merchant José Ramón Mila de Roca to pay the Chilean troops. See MG, vol. 139, pp. 39v–45, Pinto to Chile’s minister of war, 11 Jul. 1823.
151 As early as March 1823, Chileans reported to Mendoza’s intendant their resolution to send a new expedition to Peru. See AHM, box 704, doc. 80, Agustín Eyzaguirre, José Miguel Infante and Federico Errázuriz to Mendoza’s intendant, 4 Mar. 1823.
as those of the allied army', thus 'putting an end to the preferences that have caused so many grievances and demands'.

Benavente disembarked at Arica on 26 October with 1,887 men, hoping to receive positive news from Santa Cruz, who had finally set sail to Intermedios. Soon, Benavente learned that Santa Cruz had been defeated, and that Arequipa was occupied by five thousand royalists. In Arica Benavente also learned about Peru’s political problems. A damaging struggle had recently exploded between Bolívar—who had arrived in the capital on 1 September—and Riva Agüero, whose operational centre was located in the north of the territory. Santa Cruz and admiral Jorge Martín Guise supported Riva Agüero, and in a series of letters to Benavente tried to convince him to join their cause. Benavente had his doubts, but in the end he accepted Santa Cruz and Guise’s proposal, re-embarking his division north between 11 and 12 November. However, their plan crumbled. At the same time that Benavente was embarking his troops in Arica, Sucre requested Pinto—who had remained in Callao—to go to Cobija to get his men ready for a new military campaign. Sucre’s idea was to use what was left of Pinto’s army to distract the enemy in the south. Pinto obeyed and departed for Cobija in mid-November 1823. At sea, Pinto’s division encountered Benavente’s, who informed the general-in-chief of the plot prepared in Arica. Pinto reacted indignantly, asserting that Chileans were not supposed to take sides in internal divisions. He consequently ordered Benavente’s ship to turn back and take the two Chilean divisions to Cobija.

But seeing that this port did not have enough food to feed the troops, Pinto changed course and headed towards the Chilean port of Coquimbo, ‘where he hoped to re-concentrate his forces, procure the necessary assistance and prepare to return to Peru under better conditions’. Pinto reported his decision to Sucre, who, trusting that the Chilean government would continue sending help to Peru, applauded the measure. Pinto, for his part, wrote to Santiago on 30 November to explain why he had withdrawn to Coquimbo. He cited military and political reasons. Regarding the former, he asserted that both the ‘lack of weapons of the Army of Chile and the scattering of forces in Pisco, Callao and Cobija’ led him to the conclusion that the best and most ‘rational’ option was to ‘go to one of the Chilean ports, assemble the army in

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152 Bulnes, Últimas campañas, footnotes to pages 294–96. For the preparation of this expedition, see CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, pp. 428–37.
153 The number of men is in accordance with an Estado de fuerza of 4 Nov. 1823, and which can be found in CDIP, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 447.
158 Bulnes, Últimas campañas, footnote 64 of page 191.
order to take it to wherever the Supreme Director dictates’. Politically, Pinto argued: ‘I have also made this resolution considering the pitiful state of Lima, which is preparing itself for a disastrous civil war. Today the war against Spain is almost forgotten’. The worst-case scenario would have been to allow the troops to ‘catch’ the rebellious mood. It was much safer to ‘preserve these forces and use them intelligently, especially considering the numerical superiority of the enemy, which might be very prejudicial for Chile’.\(^{159}\)

Two days later, Pinto described a similar picture to O’Higgins.\(^ {160}\)

Judging by the critical state of the Chilean army, Pinto’s decision was correct.\(^ {161}\) Of course, criticisms from Santiago did not take long to appear;\(^ {162}\) yet none of the military who accompanied Pinto questioned him. Bolívar himself considered that the strategy had been well-conceived, and when he asked the Freire government to send the auxiliary division back to Peru, he requested that it be commanded by ‘the same accredited [acreditados] chiefs’\(^ {163}\). Such help, however, never materialized; not because Pinto did not want to go back to Peru, but rather because internal problems in Chile forced Freire to concentrate his strength on expelling the remaining royalist troops that were still operating in the island of Chiloé. Thus, when Pinto returned to Chile the official participation of the Army of Chile in Peru ended. There were a few contingents that remained in Peru, and at some point O’Higgins travelled north to join Bolivar in his last military incursions against La Serna. However, these were sporadic efforts made by some Chilean officers and soldiers for the state of Peru. Pinto never left his country again, beginning a successful public career that allowed him to become one of the most powerful members of the military who entered politics in the 1820s. This is one of the main subjects of the next (and last) chapter of this book.

San Martin and O’Higgins rapidly grasped that the battle of Chacabuco in February 1817 allowed them to regain control of the Chilean Central Valley, but that in order to oust the royalists from South America they needed to undertake a much riskier enterprise: the invasion of Lima. To take the war into Peru was almost inevitable, and so the Senate and Chile’s principal military chiefs gave San Martin and O’Higgins their full support. Buenos Aires, on the contrary, withdrew its support as internal conflicts with the \textit{rioplatense} provinces escalated. Thus, the organization of the first Chilean

\(^{159}\) \textit{CDIP}, tome VI, vol. 2, p. 452, Pinto to Chile’s minister of war, 30 Nov. 1823.


\(^{161}\) For the disembarkation of the Army of Chile in Coquimbo, see Ferdinand B. Tupper, \textit{Memorias del Coronel Tupper} (Santiago: Editorial Francisco de Aguirre, 1972), pp. 101–04.


\(^{163}\) Quoted in Bulnes, \textit{Últimas campañas}, p. 308.
navy as well as the sending of forces to Peru in August 1820 were entirely financed and led by Chile. Hiring Cochrane was an expensive move, but one that was worth making considering that, before it, Chile’s revolutionary presence in the Pacific was almost non-existent.

But if O’Higgins and San Martin thought that preparing the Ejército Libertador del Perú would result in Lima’s almost immediate fall, they were mistaken. Lima was South America’s strongest royalist stronghold and, as such, it was reasonable to expect that the revolutionaries would need more than San Martin’s persuasive strategies to enter the capital and consolidate independence. San Martin confused criticism of viceroys Abascal and Pezuela with support for his army. The limeño elites favoured creole advances in state employment, but this did not make them outright separatists. The elites in Lima—many of whom aimed at reforming the empire from within—feared losing their privileged social, political and economic status.

The change of government in Peru did not mean the immediate introduction of republicanism. Like many other politicians and military men of his generation, San Martin supported monarchism. Monteagudo’s influence on San Martin played a part in the Protector’s preference for a constitutional monarchy for Peru (a preference that Bolivar shared). But Monteagudo’s influence was obvious not only in relation to monarchism; he was, in fact, one of the politicians in Lima who gave form to the state of Peru, that is, a state independent not only from Spain but also from its American allies. Monteagudo was a clever, although sometimes intransigent, politician, as shown by his quarrels with the Chilean Senate when, on one hand, he informed the government in Santiago that Las Heras had been appointed general-in-chief of the Liberating Army in place of San Martin and, on the other, defended Lima’s right to not pay the debts owed to Chile until Chileans did the same with Buenos Aires. Chile’s reaction was swift: in February 1822 the O’Higgins government appointed Luis de la Cruz general-in-chief of the Army of Chile, with which the ‘united’ army (if it ever was ‘united’) became a conglomeration of armies defending different sovereign states.

My approach to the concept of sovereignty in this chapter is similar but not identical to that used by Jeremy Adelman in his Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian world. Similar, because I think Adelman is correct when he stresses that in 1810 Spanish Americans did not seek to break their ties with the metropolis but to enjoy some degree of political sovereignty (i.e. home rule or administrative autonomy). When the war began and Spanish Americans finally proclaimed their independence, they became, at least in theory, completely sovereign states—in the sense that they no longer depended on other states. Yet this process happened above all in theory, because, and here lies an important difference with Adelman’s work, to be independent from the metropolis did not guarantee full independence from

164 Adelman, Sovereignty and Revolution, especially chapter 9.
the other Spanish American states. Adelman argues that in the aftermath of the revolution a ‘multitude of sovereignties’ emerged; however, his multitude of sovereignties were not so much the result of conflict between states as between local military leaders fighting over federalism and centralism; between regional rulers and centralized politicians.\textsuperscript{165} As we have seen in this chapter, at some point in the late 1810s San Martín’s idea of the creation of an ‘American nation’ lost relevance, and Chile’s struggle—along with that of Peru, Colombia and the River Plate—against Spain turned into a damaging fight between not only different internal political projects but also ‘allied’ states. Indeed, what in the end secured the independence of Chile was not just the break with the metropolis but also, and especially, the break with the other South American countries.

The Army of Chile had been created immediately after the battle of Chacabuco in early 1817. However, it did not become a properly Chilean force until 1822, and that was intimately connected to the process that led the Chilean state to be independent from its allies. In the last chapter I will argue that Pinto’s decision to return with his men to Coquimbo reaffirmed the power of decision of the Chilean officers in Peru, confirming at the same time that local politics would be, from then and throughout the 1820s, the main preoccupation of the Chilean military.

\textsuperscript{165} Adelman’s interest in Chile is superficial, and so many of his hypotheses cannot be automatically applied to the Chilean case.
CHAPTER VI

The political role of the military in the making of the Chilean republic, 1822–1826

The aim of the final chapter of this book is twofold: first, to provide an overview of the last four years of revolutionary warfare in Chile. Second, to analyse the political participation of officers during the years 1823–1826, that is, the period when political discussions no longer centred on whether or not to break ties with Spain, but rather on determining the role the Army of Chile should play in the new republic. While chapter IV examined O’Higgins’ strategies to secure political power for himself and his closest subordinates, this one studies O’Higgins’ fall, as well as the often tense relationship between the new Supreme Director, Ramón Freire, his ministers including Francisco Antonio Pinto, and the Chilean Congress. It will be argued that divisions within the revolutionary army did not prevent the introduction of a series of political reforms that ended up consolidating the military over the civilian elites.

After the death of their general-in-chief, Vicente Benavides, in February 1822, the struggle against royalists in the south of the country continued for a couple of years but without the intensity and radicalism of the first period of irregular warfare analysed in chapter IV. But the fact that irregular fighting had declined does not mean that it lacked political implications. The first section will state that O’Higgins’ fall in early 1823 was largely due to the opposition he faced from regional military leaders from the south of the country, who acted in response to the ‘despotism’ of the central government. The analysis of the Proclamas issued by the Asamblea de los pueblos libres de Concepción in December 1822 will be of great help in understanding why and how O’Higgins fell.

The following section shows how Francisco Antonio Pinto exemplified the ways in which officers became involved in politics after O’Higgins’ abdication. Pinto’s case reveals clues about how the war changed the lives of many officers. Pinto was first and foremost a military officer, though his military career was influenced by political events, such as the demise of the Spanish crown in 1808, his defence of the economic and political rights of the officers of the Army of Chile in Peru, and his willingness to be part of Freire’s government. His roles as minister of government and foreign affairs
in 1824 and as Coquimbo’s intendant in 1825 reveal his political credentials quite clearly.

The third section studies the politicization experienced by the Army of Chile as a consequence of discussions in Congress. Because some officers were elected members of Congress and military affairs were constantly deliberated in parliament, the wellbeing of the Army of Chile was the cornerstone of the new republican system. My goal is to prove that, despite some protest from civilian elites, the tendency (inaugurated with José Miguel Carrera and strengthened by O’Higgins) to give the military the responsibility to rule the country continued during the 1820s. This is an important point, as it proves that political questions continued indissolubly linked to military matters. Elections, discussions of constitutional projects, debates about institutionalizing a National Guard, and representaciones written by veterans of the revolutionary wars to seek economic benefits for them and their men (to name a few), were all issues discussed in detail in Congress.

Finally, I will consider the last confrontations between royalists and revolutionaries on the island of Chiloé. The ‘last’ confrontations because, although Benavides’ royalist successors—the Pincheira brothers—were not defeated by the central government until the early 1830s, the action of Spain’s direct agents was concentrated in Chiloé rather than in the Araucanian region. Antonio Quintanilla, the last royalist commander in Chile, built an allegedly inaccessible military stronghold on the island. Indeed, Chiloé was a vital recruiting centre for the royalists during the war: Antonio Pareja’s expedition in 1813 was, for example, reinforced with local people. As with the valdivianos prior to 1820, the Situado paid by Lima led the chilotes to feel more attached to the monarchy than to any of the revolutionary governments. When in early 1826 Freire finally defeated the royalists on the island, the relationship between the chilotes and the revolutionaries became more fluid, although the island was not immediately annexed to the Chilean state.

I. The revival of Concepción and the Army of the South

At the same time that San Martín entered Lima and launched his Protectorate, the Chilean revolutionaries faced a resurgence of the War to the Death in the south of the country. In May 1821, Joaquín Prieto, general of the second division of the Army of the South, wrote to the capital that ‘the war was not over yet’, and that the army should be prepared to ‘formally open a new campaign in the coming spring’. At that stage, the insurgents were still concentrated on fighting Benavides’ guerrillas, who, after a few setbacks, had recovered their strength. As Joaquín Echeverría reported to the Chilean plenipotentiary to London in late September 1821, the capture of the British brigantine Ocean allowed Benavides to collect 3,000 muskets, 500 guns and

1 Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte, p. 513.
300 sabres, thanks to which he had ‘formed a new army and is on his way to invade the province of Concepción’.  

However, Benavides did not invade Concepción, and nor did he survive much longer: the revolutionaries captured him in early February 1822, after a group of followers betrayed him. When Benavides arrived in Santiago on 13 February to be executed, the minister of war, José Antonio Rodríguez Aldea, made him wear his royalist colonel’s uniform, ride a donkey and walk throughout Santiago carrying on his hat a sign that read: ‘I am the traitor and infamous Benavides, unnatural American [americano desnaturalizado]’. The sentence stated that Benavides should be ‘hanged in the most public way. His body is to remain hanged until sunset, and his head and main parts of his body sent to the province of Concepción so the intendant can show them in the places where he committed his greatest crimes. The rest of his body must be burned by the executioner in the outskirts of the city [Santiago]’. He was hanged on the morning of 23 February 1822.

With the capture and execution of Benavides other royalist officers began to fall. Yet only two of the most powerful leaders shared Benavides’ fate: a Chilean-born priest called Juan Antonio Ferrebú and Juan Manuel Pico, a Spanish-born merchant turned guerrillero. Regarding the ‘soldier-priest’, as Vicuña Mackenna called Ferrebú, he was betrayed by his guerrilla band, which took him as a prisoner to the town of Colcura, where he was executed on 2 September 1824. Pico was also betrayed by two of his men, Mariano and Pedro Vergara, who had recently been punished by Pico for having stolen a pair of spurs from him. He was executed on 29 October 1824, and his head was publicly shown in Concepción and other towns of the Araucanian region.

Why were Benavides, Ferrebú and Pico betrayed by their men? The royalist guerrilleros who betrayed their respective chiefs did not change their allegiances following the example of people like José Antonio Rodríguez Aldea, who went from being the advisor of the Spanish general Gabino Gaínza in early 1814 to O’Higgins’ personal secretary and minister of war. Nor did they act like the vocales of the Real Audiencia who, in 1816, withdrew their support for governor Marcó del Pont. In these two cases we see members of the elite deciding to back the O’Higgins government after concluding that the revolutionary programme was politically more viable than the counterrevolutionary one. In the case of the guerrilleros, their decisions were influenced by the outcome of the war rather than by ideological questions. However, like Rodriguez Aldea and the vocales of the Real Audiencia, they changed sides because they also believed that the revolutionary government could provide

2 ABO, vol. 4, p. 164, Echeverría to Chile’s plenipotentiary to London, 29 Sep. 1821.
3 Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte, p. 583.
4 Quoted by Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte, p. 586.
5 Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte, p. 762.
6 Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte, p. 790.
them with something that a distant Spain could not: personal and political stability. The case of Antonio Carrero, a Spanish-born royalist close to Ferrebú, demonstrates this very clearly: he laid down his arms after ensuring that the revolutionary authorities would accept him as sergeant major of the cavalry of the Army of Chile.⁷

After the death of Pico and the capitulations of Carrero and the rest of the principal royalist chiefs, the government concentrated on pursuing the last band of ‘royalists’ in Arauco: the Pincheira brothers. The analysis of their guerrillero activity in the south exceeds the scope of this book, not least because the government defeated them only in 1832, when colonel Manuel Bulnes’ men killed Pablo Pincheira, the last member of the family. Also, their commitment to the king’s cause is questionable; in fact, it seems that the goal of the Pincheiras was not so much to defend the rights of Ferdinand VII as to fill the power vacuum that the demise of Benavides and Pico provoked in the Araucanian region.⁸ Therefore, as Vicuña Mackenna stated, it is safe to claim that the war in Arauco finished with Pico’s death. But to argue that the war against the royalists in Arauco ended with Pico’s death is not the same as saying that, leaving the threat of the Pincheiras aside, the situation in the province of Concepción automatically normalized. At the same time that the Army of the South fought Benavides’ successors, the revolutionaries experienced one of the most traumatic political episodes of the period 1813–1823: the political uprising led by Ramón Freire that brought about O’Higgins’ abdication.

Freire’s uprising had economic, military and political causes, and all of them were related to O’Higgins’ failure to recognize the importance of having a well-trained and properly fed army in the south. Economically, it is true, the government had few resources to alleviate the poverty of the Army of the South. ‘The situation of the state’, said minister of finance Agustín Vial in September 1821, was financially precarious. The Army of the South was so ‘hungry and naked’ that, after ‘eighteen months of claims’, Freire travelled to the capital to personally demand a solution. Valdivia had no Situado from which to draw money; the treasury owed more than 300,000 pesos in debts; soldiers had not received their wages in months; and the wives of the artisans who had been forcibly recruited had received nothing in compensation. Prieto was of the same impression. On 9 September 1821 he wrote: ‘I fear the approach of the enemy, because I see the evil and find no remedy with our small cavalry and lack of resources. It troubles me that Chillán has no means to resist. However, it troubles me more that there is not a single grain of wheat, no ox, not a single bushel [fanega] of beans, nothing, nothing with which to feed the troops in this city [Concepción]’.⁹

⁹ Quoted by Vicuña Mackenna, *La Guerra a Muerte*, p. 527.
References to the critical economic state of the country, but especially of the province of Concepción, abound in the series of documents written by the members of the Asamblea de los pueblos libres de Concepción (APLC) in December 1822 to justify a possible revolt against the central government. The first important document related to the APLC refers to Freire’s symbolic resignation of his political and military powers so the province could be administrated by the representatives of Concepción.  It was symbolic, because the APLC rapidly handed power back to Freire, assuring him that his ‘generous’ resignation was the best proof of his adherence to the ‘laws that we have created’. For them, Freire was the only one capable of ‘freeing the Pueblos from the intrigues of power and the ambition of those who degenerate into despots’, which was a direct criticism of O’Higgins. O’Higgins’ political behaviour was all the more striking considering that the Supreme Director was a ‘son of the country’, that is, a penquista. When at the beginning of the revolution conflicts broke out between the capital and the southern province, O’Higgins had sided with his political and military ‘brothers’ of Concepción. Eleven years later, however, O’Higgins had ‘reduced his unfortunate brothers of this province to a state of complete destitution’, as ‘the lack of money to pay the army, the nakedness, hunger and all sorts of misery’ in Concepción showed.

After ten years of warfare it was to be expected that not only the economy of Concepción but that of the entire country would be on the verge of bankruptcy, and the APLC was aware of that. Yet the APLC believed that other elements, related not so much to the war as to the incapacity and arbitrariness of the government, were equally important in explaining the breakdown of the economy. According to the APLC, the government’s indecision regarding how the war in the south should be financed had forced the authorities in Concepción to ‘deprive the labrador of his animals’ and ‘curtail the collection points of the hacendados’ fincas’. Furthermore, the permission given to a few ‘specific men to export the wheat’ of Concepción to Santiago, ‘in circumstances where the people of [Concepción] are almost dying’ of hunger, had irreversibly damaged the local economy. Of course, O’Higgins’ decision to spend much of the money of the Chilean treasury to pay for the Peruvian campaign had done little to lift the provincial economy.

Regarding the military causes of Freire’s uprising, it is worth repeating

10 AHM, box 704, doc. 69, Freire to APLC, 9 Dec. 1822. The Asamblea was formed on 8 Dec. 1822 after Freire summoned the cabildos of the province of Concepción to elect a provincial authority that could be a counterweight to the power of the Supreme Director. See Eyzaguirre, O’Higgins, p. 360; and Salazar, Construcción de estado en Chile, p. 173.
11 AHM, box 704, doc. 69, APLC to Freire 10 Dec. 1822.
12 AHM, box 704, doc. 69, APLC to O’Higgins, 11 Dec. 1822.
13 AHM, box 704, doc. 69, 27 Dec. 1822.
14 AHM, box 704, doc. 69, APLC to O’Higgins, 11 Dec. 1822.
that O’Higgins never developed a coherent military strategy to face the royalist threat in the south, and that, if the revolutionaries managed to defeat Benavides and the other royalist officers, it was surely not due to O’Higgins’ intervention. The APLC was especially critical of the ‘contempt with which the government has viewed the just demands of this Pueblo for the termination of this bloody war that has devastated this province’.¹⁵ ‘What could Freire do [to finish the war if he had] no resources, troops, cavalry and the other [indispensable] elements to make war?’, asked the APLC in late December 1822.¹⁶ Sending a second division to Concepción headed by Prieto did not improve matters, and eventually political conflicts between Prieto and Freire became as damaging as the government’s lack of military initiative. Rather than solving military problems, the arrival of Prieto in Concepción hastened the creation of different political factions in the province and, with it, the fall of O’Higgins.

Although the factions that opposed the government did not always work together, they tended to agree on one, significant point: they all resented the political intervention of O’Higgins’ secretary, Rodríguez Aldea, in the decision-making process. As Thomas Cochrane told O’Higgins in November 1822:

I wish to give your Excellency one more proof of my attachment by imploring you to open your eyes to the general discontent prevailing amongst all classes regarding both the declared and the secret measures of Minister Rodríguez, who has fallen in the public esteem, though he does not realize it, lower than Monteagudo himself, when the populace demanded his resignation and then his punishment. Should Your Excellency then attempt to continue your protection of him, you will yourself be involved in the most serious harm, possibly leading to the destruction of your work and of your personal endeavours for the welfare of the state.¹⁷

Freire also referred to Rodríguez in a letter to O’Higgins of 22 October 1822, when conflicts between Concepción and Santiago had not yet reached their climax. Writing to his ‘respectable and distinguished friend’, Freire reported to the Supreme Director that the role of Rodríguez as minister of war was alienating the officers of the south. ‘Although it is true that I have no reason to distrust your friendship’, Freire said to O’Higgins, ‘I cannot affirm the same of Rodríguez’. The minister of war was responsible for the fact that soldiers had not received their wages in months, and so it was reasonable to expect that the military would ‘act boldly’. It was too soon to conclude that the army was in a general ‘state of corruption’ and formed by ‘anarchists’; yet it was also clear that Rodríguez Aldea had done little to meet the demands of the military. Freire finished this letter stressing once again that O’Higgins

¹⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶ AHM, box 704, doc. 69, 27 Dec. 1822.
¹⁷ Cited by Clissold, Bernardo O’Higgins, p. 197.
had no reasons to doubt his loyalty; however, he also asserted that his support was subject to an important condition: ‘help me properly and I guarantee the loyalty and faithful behaviour of these provinciales’ ['auxílieme como corresponde, y yo garantizo la lealtad y fiel procedimiento de estos provinciales'].

The publication on 30 October of the Constitution of 1822—in whose preparation Rodríguez played a leading role—explains much of the penquistas’ political discontent with the government. They especially resented article 84 of the Constitution, which, as we saw in chapter IV, stated that O’Higgins could remain in power for another period. Concepción resented this article not just because O’Higgins’ appointment was decided without the approval of the provinces, but also because it was planned deliberately by O’Higgins’ group of advisors long before the Constitution entered into force. As a letter sent by Thomas Hardy, who at that time was in Bahia, Brazil, to John Wilson proves, the decision was made weeks, if not months, before the issue of the Constitution. On 29 October 1822 Hardy reported: ‘the Director General O’Higgins had tendered his resignation of the supreme command of the government, which was not accepted; and reports have reached Rio de Janeiro, that he was afterwards elected Supreme Director for three years’ (in fact, the Constitution ‘provided O’Higgins with another six-year term’).

In the letters and Proclamas written by the penquistas we find various references to the Constitution of 1822; and all of them are negative. One of the first of these references appears in the document in which the APLC both acknowledged Freire’s resignation and re-appointed him Gobernador Intendente, Mariscal de Campo de los Ejércitos de la Patria and General en Jefe del Ejército del Sur de la República. In the oath taken by the APLC to Freire, the penquistas made him promise that he would defend the rights of the province, as well as ‘blindly obey the Constitution and Laws that the Supreme Government of the Republic might form with the representatives freely chosen by all the Pueblos’ of Chile. With this phrase, the APLC assumed that the Constitution issued in October 1822 was null, and that a new Chart would be published after hearing the opinion of the Chilean Pueblos (i.e. the villas and cities that formed the three Chilean provinces: Coquimbo, Santiago and Concepción). On that occasion, Freire promised to ‘meet and fully satisfy’ the requirements of the APLC.

19 BPRO, FO/16/1, p. 53v, Hardy to Wilson, 29 Oct. 1822.
21 AHM, box 704, doc. 69, 11 Dec. 1822. A similar argument had been advanced by the ‘inhabitants of the province of Concepción’ in a document they sent to the other provinces of ‘the Republic’ on 1 Dec. (the fact that APLC was created only on 8 Dec., explains why this document is not signed by its members but by the ‘province of Concepción’). See AHM, box 704, doc. 69, 1 Dec. 1822.
The APLC repeated its arguments in the note they sent to O’Higgins on 11 December. There, they stated that the province would no longer obey the dictates of the government, arguing that the ‘illegitimate means used by You to perpetuate your power’ excluded O’Higgins as a valid interlocutor. Among those illegitimate means, the Constitution of 1822 took pride of place. ‘The constitutional articles [recently] issued convince us that a partial and indelicate hand [Rodríguez Aldea] has sought to flatter You by means of convincing you to build your power without the consent of the Pueblos’, affirmed the APLC. The Asamblea demanded that O’Higgins call for new elections so that the Pueblos could elect ‘their diputados to create a general Congress aimed at establishing the best form of government’.22 The penquistas had, therefore, two major political grievances: first, they resented the mechanism designed by Rodriguez to ensure that O’Higgins would remain in office for another period. Second, they criticized that the Constitution had been issued without the consent of all the pueblos of the state.

If the penquistas thought that O’Higgins would consider some of their demands, they were mistaken. First of all, he refused to get rid of his protégée, claiming that charges against Rodriguez were exaggerated and slanderous.23 So he did not seek to negotiate but to directly face the ‘infamous anarchy’ in the provinces; and for that he needed the help of his allies, not only internal but also external. On 28 December 1822, the Supreme Director asked for the support of the Junta Gubernativa del Perú to stop the penquistas. O’Higgins said that, after the death of the Carreras, the government had hoped that the Chilean state would shortly reach ‘prosperity’. Sadly, O’Higgins wrote, ‘there are always unnatural [desnaturalizados] enemies of their country who use any pretext to deceive the innocent people and use them for their vile ambition’. By ‘enemies’, O’Higgins meant supporters of the Carreras, who, taking advantage of the ‘misfortunes faced by Concepción as a result of the poor harvest of wheat of the previous year’, had managed not only to foment the revolution in that province but also, and what is more incredible, to seduce general Freire up to the point that he has declared himself against this government’. O’Higgins, in other words, reduced the problems in Concepción to a particular economic juncture, when the penquistas also had military and political grievances. O’Higgins’ approach was compounded by the support he explicitly solicited from the Peruvians: ‘I do not doubt that the Junta del Perú will see with preoccupation this event and that, persuaded of the negative consequences of a bad example, it will help the [Chilean] government to fight against traitors and restore order. Not just Chile but all the governments in South America should be interested in this’ enterprise. Thus, O’Higgins asked the Peruvian government to prevent ships from sailing from Callao to Talcahuano, ‘since whatever support the insurgents may receive will prolong

22 AHM, box 704, doc. 69, APLC to O’Higgins, 11 Dec. 1822.
23 Eyzaguirre, O’Higgins, pp. 361.
a war that is not just painful but a war between brothers’. Ten days later, O’Higgins requested the governor of Mendoza to send him 200 quintals of rifle bullets, reminding him that this help was all the more needed given the attempts of Concepción to ‘turn the whole nation into an ominous anarchy’.

O’Higgins did not have time to gain the support of either Peru or Mendoza. Peru was too wrapped up in its own problems to dispatch a force to help O’Higgins; Mendoza experienced a similar situation, although a letter sent by the APLC to Mendoza’s Cabildo denouncing O’Higgins’ ‘despotism’ had influenced their decision to keep out of Chilean politics. In this note we find one of the central pillars of the republicanism followed by the penquistas: the notion that republicans should stand against all forms of tyrannical domination. If, in 1817, the province of Cuyo had sent an army to Chile to fight royalist despotism, the APLC argued, now, in 1823, it was unthinkable that its ‘inhabitants and the municipality [Cabildo] that represent them would be willing to assist any despot who attempts to shackle [Chileans] with heavier chains’. O’Higgins, for the penquistas, had illegitimately developed into a despot, and so Mendoza should avoid negotiations with the Chilean Supreme Director. For the penquistas, there were only two legitimate political bodies in Chile with which the mendocinos should have relations: the APLC and a provincial Asamblea created in Coquimbo, whose members ‘have followed the same liberal path’ as Concepción. Even though the province of Coquimbo ‘had not been ravaged by the war, [...] it had been affected by numerous taxes to finance the military plans of Santiago’.

Sensing that the political scenario was completely adverse, on 7 January Rodríguez resigned from his post of minister of war. O’Higgins, for his part, remained in office, but not for very long. According to Vicuña Mackenna, after Rodríguez’s resignation tensions between the capital and the other provinces of the country decreased. To prove his argument, Vicuña Mackenna referred to O’Higgins’ decision of 18 January to send delegates to Concepción and Coquimbo to reach an agreement that could prevent the outbreak of a civil war. But, as Vicuña Mackenna himself admitted, at that point there was little that O’Higgins could do to stop his enemies. Even Santiago, where the Supreme Director had built his power in recent years,

25 AHM, box 704, doc. 69, O’Higgins to the governor of Mendoza, 7 Jan. 1823.
26 AHM, box 704, doc. 69, APLC to Mendoza’s Cabildo, 15 Jan. 1823. In order to give more weight to their claims, the members of the APLC sent copies of the bulk of documents they issued in December 1822. This explains why the sources related to the APLC that I have worked come from Mendoza’s provincial archive.
27 Salazar, Construcción de estado en Chile, p. 176.
was filled with opponents. In the words of Valparaiso’s governor, José Ignacio Zenteno: ‘talking to you [O’Higgins] with the frankness of a faithful friend, I assure you that the capital, that capital, is as revolutionized as Concepción’.  

And he was correct: on 28 January 1823 a group of santiaguinos gathered inside the building of the Consulado and invited the Supreme Director to hear the claims of the people’. The word ‘people’ was used by the cabildantes not so much to defend the interests of the lower classes—as Gabriel Salazar has argued—but those of the towns, cities and provinces of the country. Their use of the word pueblo was, indeed, more territorial than socio-political. Still, Salazar is correct when he stresses the rebel characteristics of this Cabildo Abierto: the santiaguinos did not so much invite O’Higgins to hear their grievances as to ‘relinquish his command before a respectable assembly formed by the vecindario of Santiago to obtain the immediate pacification of the Republic’. O’Higgins agreed, and an administrative Junta headed by Agustín Eyzaguirre, José Miguel Infante and Fernando Errázuriz was set up to govern the country.

What kind of role would Concepción and Coquimbo play in the new government? Did the Santiago Junta represent the aspirations of penquistas and coquimbanos? From the events that happened between the abdication of O’Higgins on 28 January 1823 and the appointment of Freire as Supreme Director in late March, we can conclude that neither province was satisfied with the change of government. In the case of the members of the APLC, they disapproved of the fact that the Santiago Junta had unilaterally arrogated the right to govern on behalf of the whole ‘state’. Their objective was, on the contrary, to install a government in the capital made up of three individuals—each representing a province—whose main task was to convoke a general Congress.

The APLC also sought to convince Santiago and Coquimbo to agree on the appointment of Freire as Supreme Director, which proves that Concepción did not aspire to reduce the participation of the military in politics but rather to replace O’Higgins with one of the APLC’s allies. Freire’s use of his military base to pressure the Santiago Junta to hear the demands of the APLC proves that the backbone of the political power of

31 Quoted by Salazar, *Construcción de estado en Chile*, p. 179.
33 My analysis of these events is based on Barros Arana, *Historia General de Chile*, vol. XIV, pp. 9–38; and Salazar, *Construcción de estado en Chile*, pp. 181–90.
34 Quoted by Barros Arana, *Historia General de Chile*, vol. XIV, p. 18.
the *penquistas* was the Army of the South. Freire travelled to Valparaíso and then to the capital only after ensuring that officers as important as Beauchef would back his pretensions. Upon arriving at the port, Freire ordered the imprisonment of O'Higgins—who was staying at Zenteno’s house,— but his desire to get to Santiago as soon as possible made him desist from this order. More important than having O'Higgins in jail, Freire realized, was to ensure that the 600 cavalrymen who had left Concepción would join with him in Casablanca (near Valparaíso) and enter the capital with him. And they did it: on 17 February 1817 Freire met with the Santiago Junta and, together, they resolved that the capital should create its own provincial assembly and that plenipotentiaries from the three provinces would be in charge of calling for elections for a new Congress. In February Freire was appointed *comandante general de armas* of Santiago and general-in-chief of the Army of Chile, while in late March 1823 the plenipotentiaries elected him Supreme Director of the ‘Chilean state’.35

Freire became Supreme Director on 4 April 1823. The main lines of the Act by which the Congress of plenipotentiaries confirmed his appointment stated that Freire was ‘the only citizen […] who is in the position to gather all the *voluntades* and put into practice the act of union’.36 For the plenipotentiaries Freire was the only person who could guarantee that the Chilean state would remain ‘one and indivisible’, which was not a superficial statement considering that, a couple of months before, the APLC had implicitly declared its independence in relation to the capital. At the same time, Freire seemed able to keep the peace between the provinces, as his entry into Santiago without bloodshed illustrates.37 In effect, despite its political radicalism, the rise of Concepción was peaceful and did not lead to a civil war between the major provinces of Chile. In many senses, it mirrored the conflicts between Santiago and Concepción in 1812, which were also resolved in the political arena rather than on the battlefield. The following section studies a few aspects of the Freire regime, for which I will focus on the political career of Freire’s most powerful minister, Francisco Antonio Pinto. It will be contended that, as O’Higgins before him, Freire placed the responsibility of running the country upon the military. However, in contrast with that of O’Higgins, Freire’s political regime was closer to some elements of European liberalism than to the model of Roman dictatorship.

II. The political role of the military in the 1820s: the case of Francisco Antonio Pinto

Francisco Antonio Pinto’s public life provides clues for understanding the political role played by the revolutionary officers in the 1820s. His case may

35 Quoted by Barros Arana, *Historia General de Chile*, vol. XIV, p. 35.
36 *Clamor de la Patria*, number 3, 4 Apr. 1823.
37 Salazar, *Construcción de estado en Chile*, pp. 179.
serve as an example of how officers who were born around the 1780s—Bernardo O’Higgins, José Miguel Carrera, Ramón Freire, Manuel Rodríguez, Francisco Antonio Pinto and Joaquín Prieto, to name only a few—became active political actors. Pinto was, after Freire, the most powerful politician of the second half of the 1820s, and this was not only because his military experience in Peru allowed him to become one of the highest-ranking officers of the Army of Chile but also, and especially, because he had outstanding political and intellectual credentials. These enabled him to reach a much more ambitious goal in 1827: the vice-presidency of Chile.

Born in 1785, Pinto studied Law at the University of San Felipe, and in 1807 he enrolled in the militia detachment created by the Santiago Cabildo in the outskirts of Santiago in order to defend the kingdom against a feared British attack from Buenos Aires. Upon learning of the Napoleonic invasion of the Peninsula, Pinto joined the autonomist movement. Between late 1811 and mid-1812, he was the Chilean delegate to Buenos Aires, where he became friendly with important revolutionary leaders, such as Bernardino Rivadavia. He was then sent by José Miguel Carrera’s government to Europe to obtain recognition of Chile’s autonomist aspirations from Rome, France and Great Britain. However, his mission met with failure, and in mid-1815 he decided to travel to the River Plate (he could not go back to Chile, because it had been seized by the royalists).

In the River Plate, Pinto enlisted in a military detachment created in Tucumán with the purpose of fighting the royalists in Upper Peru. Soon, this contingent was put under the supervision of Manuel Belgrano, a military officer and diplomat who had lived in London at the same time as Pinto. Pinto rapidly gained the confidence of Belgrano, and together they confronted the regional leaders who jeopardized Buenos Aires’ aim of building a single, centralized state in the River Plate. After waiting three years in Tucumán to enter the war, the regional conflict forced Belgrano and his men to withdraw to Buenos Aires, from where Pinto returned to Chile. Not long after he arrived in Santiago, O’Higgins ordered him to lead one of the Chilean divisions of the Ejército Libertador del Perú. In Peru, Pinto was a privileged observer of San Martín’s political fall, as well as of conflicts between the different states that formed the Liberating Army. From his post of general-in-chief of the Chilean forces, he criticized the military allies’ ‘arrogance’ towards Chileans. He also experienced the consequences of the change of government in Chile in early 1823, the most important of which was Freire’s decision to send a new contingent to reinforce Pinto’s troops.

This contingent did not remain long in Peru, as Pinto believed that the best way to keep his men out of internal political quarrels was by returning to the port of Coquimbo (November–December 1823), where, he hoped,
the Army of Chile would get resources and new troops to undertake a new attack on Peru. Although in Coquimbo his men recovered from a long, arduous campaign, in the end Pinto did not lead that expedition. There were two reasons for this: first, because Freire’s government was concentrating its military strength for an attack on the island of Chiloé, due to which the idea of sending a large Chilean division to Peru lost urgency (more of this in the last section of this chapter). Second, because Freire appointed Pinto intendant of Coquimbo.

By then, political discussion in the capital centred on whether or not the Constitution enacted in December 1823 to replace O’Higgins’ Code of 1822 should remain in force. In this Constitution, which was written by Juan Egaña, we find an explicit defence of the Senate’s role in politics. To Egaña, the so-called poder físico (i.e. the Executive) should always be subordinated to the ‘moral power’, which ‘is vested in the Senate’.⁴⁰ In Vasco Castillo’s view, ‘everything is designed as if Egaña had aimed to make the Senate the leading institution of the Constitution’.⁴¹ The Supreme Directorship was, in turn, subject to a number of constraints, thereby losing many of its traditional prerogatives.

These articles were criticized by Freire, who, after he returned to Santiago from his first expedition to Chiloé, claimed before the Senate that the three powers of the state should be concentrated on the Supreme Director and that, only after this had been accomplished, a new Constitution ought to be issued. Freire’s insistence that the Executive power should continue to be the key institution of Chilean politics proves that Chile’s political regime did not substantially change as a consequence of O’Higgins’ abdication. Freire’s power was similar, if not stronger, than O’Higgins’. However, there were profound differences between their respective governments, especially regarding the importance given by the Freire government to both ‘liberal’ reforms and parliamentary discussions.

The complete abrogation of Egaña’s Constitution was made possible after the Senate named Mariano Egaña, Juan’s son and Freire’s minister of government and foreign relations until April 1824, as Chile’s delegate to London. Mariano was ‘the Constitution’s chief defender’ and from his post of minister had worked ‘vigorously to implement it’. With his departure, ‘it became clear that the days of Juan Egaña’s political creation were numbered’, and that a new political era was approaching.⁴¹ On 12 July 1824, Freire appointed Pinto to replace Mariano Egaña,⁴² his mission being twofold: first, to ensure that Egaña’s Constitution would no longer have effect; second, to close the Congress and get the Senate to entrust Freire with the full administration of

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39 Castillo, La creación de la República, p. 130, footnote 70.
40 Castillo, La creación de la República, p. 136.
41 Collier, Ideas and Politics, p. 263.
42 Pinto’s appointment can be found in MI, vol. 61, p. 256. Pinto’s resignation from the Coquimbo intendancy is dated 26 Jun. 1824. See IC, vol. 17, p. 408.
the state, at least for three months.⁴³ Although Freire was the major winner in this negotiation with the Senate, Pinto’s ideas were behind this political move. As intendant he had seen at first hand the difficulty of implementing Egaña’s Constitution in the provinces and, therefore, he felt politically prepared to challenge it. Like other liberal politicians, Pinto was ready to increase the power of the Supreme Director. It is true that the closure of Congress could be regarded as a serious threat to the principles of representation defended by the political movement that had allowed Freire to take power. Yet the two basic liberal arguments for abrogating Egaña’s Constitution—i.e. that it respected neither the autonomy of the provinces nor religious tolerance—were in many ways also backed by Concepción and Coquimbo.⁴⁴

The second reason defended by the liberals was especially important. Most Chilean men of letters, politicians and military officers of the 1820s endorsed one of the different variants of republicanism. They differed not so much on the type of regime—i.e. republicanism—that should govern the country as on the characteristics that such a regime should have. One of the main differences between the two major political factions of that time—pelucones or conservatives and pipiolos or liberals—referred to the public role of religion. The conservative sectors sought to maintain the power of the Church. The liberals, on the contrary, intended to reduce as much as possible the influence of Catholicism in the new republic, but without banishing it completely. For them, the best way to guarantee that all citizens were equal before the law was to make the civil power equal to or greater than the Church. Furthermore, the pipiolos believed that there was an obvious connection between Spain and Catholicism, and that the Church was responsible for the worst aspects of the alleged oscurantismo of the colonial period. Thus, the priests who supported the royalists but remained in Chile after Osorio left the country in September 1818 were considered dangerous because they could influence the Chilean people and, therefore, intervene in areas that the state considered its exclusive jurisdiction.

That was the case of Santiago’s archbishop, José Santiago Rodríguez Zorrilla, who had not only been one of the most serious opponents of the revolution, but also had great influence over the pelucones. Although in 1824 he was no longer a monarchist, he was one of the pipiolos’ most powerful enemies; so powerful that the Freire government deprived him of his apostolic credentials. The first liberal attack on Rodriguez Zorrilla came on 2 August 1824, when Pinto convinced Freire that the archbishop was a serious threat to the government and ordered the expulsion of Rodriguez from his diocese.⁴⁵ Pinto argued that the main reason for the archbishop’s removal was the

⁴⁴ Heise, Años de formación y aprendizaje políticos, p. 156.
⁴⁵ MI, vol. 61, pp. 261v–62, Pinto to Rodríguez Zorrilla, 2 Aug. 1824.
‘constant opposition he has shown against national independence in all the periods of the revolution’, as well as the ‘scandalous protection he has given to the priests who have distinguished themselves the most by their hatred of the revolution and outstanding services to the Spaniards’. That is, Rodríguez Zorrilla was not punished for being a priest, but rather because the government believed that his stand against independence could have an impact on Chileans. In place of Rodríguez, Freire named José Ignacio Cienfuegos, a well-known priest who backed the revolution.⁴⁶

Yet behind Rodríguez’s expulsion lay a much more serious issue: should the government or the Church inherit the right of the Spanish kings to appoint the ecclesiastical authorities? Rodríguez had opposed the revolution and was an outright enemy of the government; yet more important was the fact that throughout the first half of the 1820s Rodríguez had strongly defended the right of the Church to appoint its own authorities, which, in Pinto’s view, challenged the government’s goal of subordinating all corporations—civil and religious—to the state. Discussions about the Ecclesiastical Patronato gained momentum when, in February 1824, an ecclesiastical mission arrived in Chile from Rome led by monsignor Juan Muzi, his secretary, Juan Maria Mastai (the future Pope Pious IX), and José Sallusti. For the delegate of Rome, the removal of Rodríguez Zorrilla was illegal, since, ‘according to the Council of Trent’, only the Pope had the right to appoint and dismiss clerics. The Spanish kings had enjoyed the Patronato, but only after the Pope ‘conceded’ them this right. Consequently, any attempt by the Spanish American republics to inherit such a right had to be explicitly accepted by the Pope, for which the government should first obtain the recognition of Chile’s independence from Rome.⁴⁷ Since Spain was one of Rome’s closest allies against both revolutionary and ‘impious’ governments, the recognition of independence by the Pope did not seem probable.

The conflict between the Chilean state and the Church became more acute when the Freire government, led once again by Pinto, began to secularize Catholic rituals and ecclesiastical orders. As regards to the former, Pinto sought to reformulate the contents of sermons and reduce the number of festivities. On 2 August, Pinto reported that a priest called Manuel Mata had preached ‘a subversive eulogy’ in the Cathedral, and that another named Juan Crisóstomo had recently been imprisoned in the Recoleta Dominica for ‘being a die-hard enemy of national independence’.⁴⁸ Five days later, Pinto wrote to Muzi that the reduction of festivities was ‘intended to prevent the ills that these days provoke in society’, as ‘they can discontinue the administration of justice and other public offices to the serious detriment of citizens’.⁴⁹ Seeing that the government would not yield in this matter, Muzi reluctantly agreed

⁴⁶ MI, vol. 61, p. 262v, Pinto to the Ecclesiastic Cabildo, 2 Aug. 1824.
⁴⁸ MI, vol. 61, p. 263, Pinto to Santiago’s intendant, 2 Aug. 1824.
⁴⁹ MI, vol. 61, pp. 266v–67, Pinto to Muzi, 7 Aug. 1824.
to reduce the annual festivities from seventeen to twelve. The reform of the regular orders also created friction between the government and the Church. In 1824, religious orders in Chile were in an anomalous situation: although the revolution had prevented contact with Rome and Madrid, they still came under their authority. To solve this anomaly Pinto ordered the regulars to obey neither Rome nor Madrid but the diocesan governors in Chile, who had the confidence of the government.

The new regulation for the regular orders was issued on 6 September 1824, and all its articles were devised and crafted by Pinto. It began by stating that all regulars were bound to live in convents, but those who wished to ‘attain their secularization’ could approach the governors of their dioceses to do so. The fifth article prevented individuals under the age of twenty-one from becoming monks, and the seventh stated the closure of convents with less than eight people. The tenth exonerated the regulars from the administration of Church property (which became state-owned property), so they could be ‘exclusively devoted to their ministry’ and not ‘distracted by profane activities’. A few days later the government ordered all priests to defend independence in religious services, which was accompanied by the publication of a decree that regulated the content of sermons. From then on, priests were forced to finish their eulogies and sermons ‘praying for the conservation of the Catholic religion and the progress of national independence and the Republic of Chile’. Ecclesiastic officials also had the duty of helping Chile remain ‘an independent nation from Spain’, and explain to the pueblos ‘the advantages, utility and convenience of independence’. Thus, the government did not openly oppose Catholicism (in fact, priests should ‘pray’ for its conservation), but rather sought to use its influence to promote independence.

At first glance, Pinto’s attacks on the Church seem a political reaction based on the Jacobin principle that all corporations, especially the Church, should be under the supervision of the state. It is likely that Pinto had the French Civil Constitution of the Clergy in mind when he ordered the secularization of the Chilean regular orders. But while the offensive of the French revolutionaries against the Church did not stop with the issue

52 MI, vol. 61, pp. 274–74v, Pinto to Muzi, 13 Aug. 1824.
in 1790 of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy and continued to the point where Robespierre and the Jacobins created their own civil religion, the Freire government never aimed to replace the role of the Church with a state religion. Pinto was clearly aware of the strong influence that Catholicism still had within Chilean society, and so instead of banning the Church he used its rites and priests to spread republicanism. Thus, Freire, Pinto and other members of the 1824 Chilean government adopted some of the ideas and arguments of the branch of French liberalism that ‘thought that freedom entailed the rational control of power rather than its limitation’, and that saw ‘the state as a potential emancipator of the individual from the power of “feudalities” and the grip of corporate privilege’. However, because religion was not eliminated in Chile, the branch of French liberalism that emphasized the importance of religion was also considered an example by the Chilean liberals of the mid-1820s. In my studies of Pinto I did not find any proof that he had read Benjamin Constant’s *De la Religion*, which, according to H.S. Jones, shows that ‘religious preoccupations were at the heart of the liberal world-view’, the French included. Yet it is clear that Pinto’s approach to the question of religion was implicitly influenced by the idea that, even though the state should ensure that corporate privileges were as weak as possible, the Chilean government could not—and should not—banish religion from the public sphere.

The Freire government was also influenced by other currents of European liberalism. For example, the relationship between government and people established in Chile was inspired by the branch of British liberalism that stressed the importance of free trade.

55 H.S. Jones, ‘Las variedades del liberalismo europeo en el siglo XIX: perspectivas británicas y francesas’, in Iván Jaksic and Eduardo Posada Carbó (eds.), *Liberalismo y poder. Latinoamérica en el siglo XIX* (Santiago: Fondo de cultura Económica, 2011), p. 46. My approximation to this topic is based on Jones’ article, whose most important argument is that the two major variants of European liberalism—the French and the British—should not be seen as watertight compartments. Contrary to the common view, the limitation of power was not exclusively defended by nineteenth-century British thinkers, nor is it accurate to affirm that all nineteenth-century British liberals were advocates of this sort of liberalism. There were, in fact, famous French men of letters, like Sieyès, who endorsed ‘the modern liberalism’, as well as celebrated British scholars, like Bentham, who ‘conceived liberty as the rational control of power, rather than as its limitation’. The quotations are from the English manuscript, which was kindly e-mailed to me by Iván Jaksic. I have, however, respected the numeration of the Spanish version.

56 Jones, ‘Las variedades del liberalismo europeo en el siglo XIX’, p. 44.

57 For the Chilean admiration of the Anglo-Saxon world, see Collier, *Ideas and Politics*, pp. 201–06.
Canning on 17 March 1825 that, ‘during the six months ending the 31st December 1824’, 64 British vessels have ‘entered and cleared from this port [Valparaiso]’, almost double the amount of vessels from the United States (37), which had the second largest commercial presence in Chile on a list that included Chilean, rioplatense, Peruvian, French, Dutch, Genoese and Portuguese vessels. The high number of traders from the United States in Valparaiso had a role in the recognition of Chilean independence by the US in March 1822, a move that had two important consequences. On one hand, it allowed for a more fluid economic relationship between Chileans and US citizens. On the other, it led to religious frictions between Chilean Catholics and US Protestants in Valparaiso.

In early 1824, the new US plenipotentiary, Heman Allen, arrived in Santiago with the purpose of formalizing diplomatic relations between the two countries. The agent was treated cordially by the Santiago authorities, who believed that the new role of the United States in the international economy could lead other powers to recognize the independence of Chile. Allen was of the idea that, as long as Chileans encouraged freedom and had respect for the law, republican institutions would flourish and consolidate. But in mid-1824 a minor conflict over religious tolerance turned into a major political problem that threatened the survival of the diplomatic relationship between Chile and the United States. In the few months he had lived in Chile, Allen had formed an idea of how Chileans regarded his compatriots, both in commercial as well as religious terms. Regarding commercial terms, Allen had no major complaints, knowing that over time the trading activity between the two countries would be formalized and invigorated. Allen’s religious concerns were, nevertheless, much more profound, especially with regard to the burials of his compatriots who died in Chile. On 24 August 1824, Allen reported to Pinto his thoughts on the question of cemeteries. Allen argued that due to the ‘laws and customs of Chile, his compatriots, as well as other many foreigners, are deprived from their right to exercise freely their accustomed worship and their solemn burial rites’. Allen wrote to Pinto that he had been informed that Chileans had ‘committed shameful indecencies’ with the dead bodies of his compatriots, and that he was ‘forced by his obligation and duty, as representative of the citizens of the United States, to respectfully call the attention of the government of Chile about the need


59 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XIV, p. 336. The sending of British consuls to Chile was part of Great Britain’s plans to recognize the independence of the South American countries (especially after George Canning succeeded Lord Castlereagh as foreign secretary). Full recognition, however, came only in 1841. See Theodore E. Nichols, ‘The Establishment of Political Relations between Chile and Great Britain’, in HAHR, vol. 28, number 1, (1948), pp. 137–41.
to provide a law to protect the privileges that they [i.e. the US citizens] are accustomed to enjoy’. ⁶⁰

Pinto answered Allen’s letter four days later, in a tone sympathetic to the requests of the plenipotentiary. On that occasion, Pinto took the opportunity to highlight the differences between the new regime and the colonial period, arguing that the acceptance of Protestant worship was only possible in a political system that respected economic freedom and religious tolerance. In addition, Pinto hinted that the Supreme Director was willing to meet the needs of US citizens in Chile:

The undersigned [Pinto] is convinced of the justice of [Allen’s] claims and finds them not only subject to the respectable interests of good morals and customs, but also very important for the progress of this republic. The relics of the colonial education received from the least educated nation in Europe [Spain] prevented the new governments from building their [own] religious institutions, thereby being forced to progress slowly so the pueblos became capable of receiving and adopting them. The Supreme Director, convinced of the importance of a law that protects foreigners in the enjoyment of their privileges, […] is working to issue it promptly. […] He has also ordered me to inform the Plenipotentiary Minister of the United States that the Supreme Director will provide U.S. citizens all guarantees to ensure they have a peaceful life in Chile.⁶¹

Needless to say, the will of Pinto was not enough to stop a conflict that lasted throughout the nineteenth century.⁶² However, it is remarkable that discussions had begun in a period as early as 1824, because it reveals that, after fourteen years of revolution, debates regarding such controversial subjects as religious tolerance were becoming increasingly common. The periodical press was a vehicle of information used by the government and the opposition to defend their respective political and economic interests. El Liberal, for example, noted that the Church should show a more tolerant face if it was to continue having influence within Chilean society, adding that the ‘ignorance and bigotry in which the country is submerged [sumido]’ could affect future diplomatic negotiations with countries like the United States.⁶³

Statements like this one abound in the Chilean press of the 1820s, and they show that religious topics were intimately connected to political, economic

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⁶¹ Quoted in Donoso, Las ideas políticas en Chile, p. 241. Pinto was very critical of colonial education. See his ‘Apuntes Autobiográficos’, in BACH, number 17 (1941), pp. 69–71.

⁶² For the tense State-Church relations in nineteenth-century Chile, see Sol Serrano, ¿Qué hacer con Dios en la República? (Santiago: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2008), especially chapters II and IX.

⁶³ Donoso, Las ideas políticas en Chile, p. 242.
and cultural issues. Pinto and the rest of the Chilean ministers agreed that, in order to overcome its enemies, the Freire government ought to deliver as comprehensive a programme as possible. Furthermore, they all tended to agree that such a programme ought to be as ‘national’ as possible, and Pinto was a key figure in this decision.

Pinto resigned his post as minister of government and foreign relations in February 1825, but was rapidly reappointed intendant of Coquimbo.⁶⁴ There, he emphasized that intendants were not just regional leaders but representatives of the Chilean ‘nation’. He seemed to have deliberately used the word ‘nation’, both in the documents of 1824 as well as in his political interventions in Coquimbo, to express something that until then was vague and meaningless: that the new republic should represent not just revolutionaries, but all Chileans.⁶⁵ For Pinto, the word ‘nation’ had a clearly territorial and inclusive meaning: the more Chileans, from north to south, were included in the ‘national’ project the better. To be involved in the ‘national’ project was tantamount to being part of one, clearly defined territory that was to be politically controlled by the two main powers of the central state: the Executive and the Legislature.

Pinto took advantage of the particular political circumstances of 1825 to spread the ‘national’ idea among coquimbanos, constantly arguing that, notwithstanding its regional ambitions, Coquimbo should not become an independent territory but remain a province of ‘Chile’. In a period when federalism was gaining adepts, Pinto’s stand was not necessarily the most popular. Yet, as an envoy of Freire in Coquimbo, he could not—and did not want to—act otherwise. He firmly believed that the Chilean republic was to be embodied in a single administrative unit, and that regional aspirations should not clash with the creation of a centralized state. If Pinto applauded the creation of the Asamblea Provincial de Coquimbo on 22 May 1825,⁶⁶ that was not because he flirted with federalism, but rather because he saw in the assembly a means of more fluid communications with politicians in the capital, who were also in the process of establishing their own provincial assembly. The objective of the Santiago assembly was to ‘reflect the general will of the province by appointing two plenipotentiaries’, who, ‘in accordance with those appointed by the assemblies of Concepción and Coquimbo’, were to draw the ‘electoral law for a [new] central legislature’.⁶⁷ Indeed, the Congress, which had reinitiated its sessions on 22 November 1824, was once

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⁶⁵ On 30 Jul. 1824, Freire and his minister Pinto published a decree stating that, from then on, official documents would no longer use the word Patria but that of ‘Chile’, which is in accordance with Pinto’s belief that the Chilean state should incorporate not just revolutionaries but Chileans as a whole. See Vicuña Mackenna, La Guerra a Muerte, p. 792, footnote 1.
⁶⁶ IC, vol. 17, p. 482.
⁶⁷ Quoted by Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XIV, p. 382.
again closed in May 1825 because it could not count on the approval of the provinces. The Santiago assembly was, therefore, instituted as a means of guaranteeing that the new ‘central legislature’ would be the result of negotiations between the capital, Concepción and Coquimbo.68

In Coquimbo, preparations for the opening of the provincial assembly were led by Pinto.69 He was present the day that the members of the assembly promised to maintain ‘the integrity of the State and the province’.70 That same day, Pinto delivered a long speech before the assembly, proposing modifications to the education system of the province, as well as changes to improve the economy. He asserted that public education guaranteed the ‘immortality’ of liberty and the consolidation of ‘civilization’. He also stated that such a system should be the result of a joint effort between the central government and regions like Coquimbo; an effort that, in his opinion, would allow the government to disseminate elementary schools, ‘the basis of education’, throughout the country.71

His speech continued with a detailed analysis of the economy of Coquimbo and its potential. Pinto argued that the province could exploit its ‘industry’ by welcoming foreign investment and protecting private property. For centuries, the ‘monstrous trade regulations’ had prevented Spanish Americans from having fluid economic relations with territories that did not belong to the Spanish empire. Now, he claimed, Chileans had the chance to create economic ties with other countries.72 In addition to opening their economy to international trade, coquimbanos should exploit their natural resources, and facilitate the economic exchange between the various pueblos that made up the province. Pinto asserted that in an underdeveloped economy like Coquimbo’s, which was based on agriculture and mining, the state should enforce trade laws and promote the modernization of mining, but never stifle private initiative. Speaking of foreign investment in mining, but extending his arguments to general production, Pinto affirmed that mining had bright prospects, as long as the state allowed entrepreneurs to ‘enjoy freedom and equal access to franchises’.73

I have found no proof that Pinto had read Adam Smith, but, as happened with Constant’s On Religion, it is probable that he had at least heard of

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69 IC, vol. 10, pp. 51–52v, 24 Jun. 1825. This is the document by which the assembly was constituted. It is signed by Pinto.
72 He made reference to the creation in England of two mining companies whose aim was to ‘introduce capital to work the mines’ of Coquimbo. In September 1825, meanwhile, the Chilean Mining Association established itself in La Serena. See Simon Collier, ‘El Diario de Carlos Lambert, 1825–1830’, in RChHG, number 161 (Santiago: 1994–95), p. 301.
The Wealth of Nations. As Jones has recently reminded us, Smith’s criticism was not directed ‘against the state as such’. Smith fully recognized, Jones continues, ‘that the market mechanism—to use a twentieth-century term rather than an eighteenth—or nineteenth-century one—depended on a legal framework which would, for example, counter the tendency of businessmen to conspire against the public; and he fully appreciated the role the state had to play in the provision of primary education, which was essential to resist the tendency of the division of labour to sap the springs of public spirit’. Pinto’s economic beliefs resembled Smith’s, in that he considered the state as the institution guaranteeing that commercial laws were enforced and observed by all individuals. Therefore, Pinto was implicitly following one of the most important authors of eighteenth-century British economic liberalism when he approached economic issues.

Pinto finished his speech in front of the Coquimbo assembly asking his members to participate in the process that would elect the new Congress: ‘although the national representation does not yet exist, the laudable zeal of the Supreme Director to conserve the rights of the Chilean people cannot tolerate the absence of a legislature. He, therefore, asks you to [send to Santiago] two delegates to form a national legislature in accordance with those appointed by the other [provincial assemblies]’. Pinto managed to convince the members of the assembly to support Freire’s political programme: ‘the province of Coquimbo is an essential part of the Republic of Chile’, said the first article of a Ley Fundamental issued in Coquimbo on 1 July. In the fifth article, the coquimbancos recognized Ramón Freire as Supreme Director of the republic of Chile, adding in a later article that, if the other provinces of the country agreed to sanction a specific law without the approval of the assembly of Coquimbo, its members would nevertheless abide it. In no respect did the assembly seek to proclaim the independence of the province; on the contrary, seeing that Freire was willing to hear the requests and demands of Coquimbo, they felt comfortable with the central government and agreed to play a ‘national’ role in Chilean politics.

However, before the government’s good intentions came to fruition, conflicts in Santiago aborted the negotiations between the provinces and the capital. Unexpectedly, on 12 July Freire called on the inhabitants of the country to elect a new Congress that would take office on 5 September 1825, forgetting that the plenipotentiaries of the three provinces had first to agree on the best electoral mechanism to ‘elect the central legislature’. In a letter to the minister of government on 28 July, the coquimbancos expressed their dissatisfaction with the way in which the electoral law for the new legislature

74 Jones, ‘Las variedades del liberalismo europeo en el siglo XIX’, p. 49.
75 IC, vol. 17, pp. 489v–90.
76 IC, vol. 17, p. 493.
77 IC, vol. 17, p. 493.
had been prepared. They insisted that such a Congress was ‘premature’ and ‘contrary to our interests’. ⁷⁸

Following these events, Pinto found himself in a difficult dilemma. As the government’s official in Coquimbo, he had to inform the *coquimbanos* of whatever decision was made by the Supreme Director. But, at heart, he probably condemned Freire’s move. Now, the credibility achieved by the intendant was at stake: many could assume that Pinto had responsibility for a decision that, in fact, had been made unilaterally in the capital. Although documents do not show an explicit discontent amongst the *coquimbanos* with Pinto, they reveal that, in August 1825, the relationship between the province and the Freire regime was almost destroyed. On 13 August, the minister of government answered the letter of the *coquimbanos* of 28 July, asserting that a ‘reunion of a Junta of plenipotentiaries of the province’ would delay the reestablishment of ‘national and governmental unity’. ⁷⁹ Consequently, the minister urged the *coquimbanos* to join the government’s initiative; otherwise, the province would have no representation in the Legislature. And that was exactly what happened. In August 1825 elections for Congress were held in the towns that formed the province of Santiago and, on 15 September, its sessions were inaugurated.

The tense relationship between Coquimbo and Santiago gives an idea of the conflicts caused by the emergence of different factions. The revolution brought about not only a change of political regime, but also the emergence of diverse political groups. These groups tended to agree on one, paramount aspect: they were all republicans. The problem was that the two principal republican alternatives (i.e. the one which favoured a strong Executive power; and the one which, even though supportive of a powerful Executive, was more prone to introduce ‘liberal’ reforms and situate the political discussion in parliament) were poles apart. Like its predecessors, the Congress of 1825 became the focus of debates between federalists, *pipiolo* and *pelucon*.⁸⁰ In the following section we will see a few examples of the types of discussion in Congress in the period 1823–1825.

III. Politicizing the army in the Chilean Congress

This book has argued that a major consequence of the revolution was that it compelled the military to become active in Chilean politics. However, I have

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⁸⁰ I am including the so-called *estanqueros* and *ohigginistas* within the *pelucón* faction. Although sometimes their political goals differed, in general they tended to act in accordance against the *pipiolo* government. For a rather schematic yet useful summary of the principal characteristics of Chilean political factions in the 1820s, see Wood, *The Society of Equality*, pp. 24–29.
also argued that, during the first decade of revolutionary warfare (1813–1823), the political role of officers was chiefly concentrated on the Executive rather than on the Legislature. In theory, Freire shared the same principle, which explains why he demanded the closure of Congress and strengthened the influence of the Supreme Director. But during the Freire regime the role of Congress was much more visible, and that was largely because Freire and his ministers were convinced that political discussion could not be exclusively centred around the Supreme Directorship. They closed parliament in mid-1824 and again in May 1825, but they also insisted that the writing of a new Constitution should result from debates held in Congress.

The legislatures of 1823, 1824 and 1825 gathered discussions of various kinds, military matters amongst them. Most of the discussions that this section analyses dealt with the same context and aimed to answer the same questions: what should the role of the Army of Chile be in the new republic? Should the military have a direct responsibility in politics? Opinions varied according to vested interests: from those who believed that the best way to reward the military for their involvement in the war was by giving them special treatment and the right to participate in politics, to those who opposed the Freire government’s tendency to make the army the most powerful institution of the state. The first position was clearly defined in 1823 by the author of a periodical pertinently called El Amigo de los Militares [The Friend of the Military]. According to the Prospecto of this periodical, there were many in Chile who wanted to ‘denigrate the most respectable corporation of all states: the military, the one that is undoubtedly the most brilliant of society’. The author added that ‘the military career […] is unfortunately on the bottom rung of society, and exposed to fall prey to the cassock [sotana] and gown [toga]’. By the words cassock and gown, the author referred to priests, lawyers and men of letters, who, in his view, controlled the ‘moral power of the state’.

It is possible that the author of this article had aimed at criticizing Egaña’s Constitution of 1823. Egaña openly opposed the political power of the military. As early as in 1811, he warned against the ‘danger of having an almighty Executive, particularly when it has a considerable military power’. In his first constitutional project (1811), Egaña recommended banning a permanent army, preferring to give the militias the responsibility of defending the territory. In article 67 of Title III of this proto-Constitution, Egaña stated that ‘the honest citizen is a defender of the state: he must be instructed in military discipline, and be a soldier (if the republic does not use him in another capacity)’. However, Egaña also claimed that ‘the military [‘lo militar’] must always be subject to civilian authority’. Twelve years later, Egaña devoted a substantial part of the Constitution of 1823 to defining and

81 El Amigo de los Militares, number 1, Apr. 12, 1823.
82 Castillo, La creación de la república, p. 49.
83 Quoted in Castillo, La creación de la república, p. 50.
limiting the power of the military, making this code the most articulated response to O’Higgins’ militarism. Of the ten articles in which the section *De la fuerza pública* is divided, let us highlight five: 1) article 226: ‘the military force is essentially obedient: no armed body may deliberate’; 2) article 227: ‘each year the Senate decrees the number of men in the permanent army, and this is the only force of the state’; 3) article 229: the military force ‘cannot make requisitions of any sort without the approval of civilian authorities’; 4) article 230: ‘every Chilean must be registered in or exempted from the National Militia records from the age of 18’; 5) article 232: ‘the military force is divided into veteran and national militias’. In the last two articles, Egaña picked up his 1811 idea that the country’s defence should be led by militiamen—that is, citizens who were called up only in emergencies—instead of veterans of the regular army.

But Egaña did not aim to ‘extinguish’ the army, as the editor of *El Amigo de los Militares* wrote later in the article. At most he sought to put the Army of Chile under the supervision of civilians, a political position that did not prevent him from accepting that in times of war the civil elites were inevitably dependent on the armed forces. Egaña, furthermore, does not seem to have sought to banish the military from the political sphere; and that was because, at least until late 1825, the Chilean military respected the rules of the new republican system. The military were proud of the government they had helped to build, and when they stood against a constituted authority (i.e. O’Higgins) they did it on behalf of political legitimacy. They became involved in politics because they agreed that politics was the best means to strengthen republican principles. In August 1823, Luis de la Cruz, at the time *comandante general de armas* of Santiago, made all detachments under his command ‘swear allegiance to the Supreme Congress’. This decision was in line with the participation of veterans of the revolutionary wars as both voters and candidates in elections for the Legislatures of 1823–1825. The congressional elections of 1823 were held on 7 July and among those eligible to vote were officers who had a ‘military grade from ensign [alférez] up’. At the same time, rural lieutenants and headquarters inspectors had the responsibility to ‘ensure that all entitled to vote attend the election on the day and at the time determined’. Thus low-ranking officers became equally involved in the electoral process, not necessarily as voters but as subordinates of those in charge of guaranteeing that elections were orderly and periodically carried out throughout the territory.

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84 I have read a copy of the Constitution of 1823 in BPRO, FO/16/1, pp. 151–83.
85 *El Amigo de los Militares*, number 1, Apr. 12, 1823.
86 *SCL*, vol. VIII, p. 53, de la Cruz to Congress, 19 Aug. 1823.
87 *SCL*, vol. VIII, p. 8.
88 Ibid.
89 My approach to Chilean elections is influenced by J. Samuel Valenzuela’s works, where he presents the hypothesis that, although voting restrictions were strict,
In the elections of July 1823 two of the most talented men of letters of the period, Manuel de Salas (Santiago) and Juan Egaña (Santiago), were elected, alongside colonels José Manuel Borgoño (Santiago), Manuel Cortés (Los Andes), Francisco Fontecilla (Colchagua), Eugenio Muñoz (Colchagua), José María Palacios (Colchagua) and Lorenzo Montt (Casablanca); lieutenant-colonel Manuel Bulnes (Coelemu); and field-marshals Francisco Calderón (Itata) and Joaquín Prieto (Rere).⁹⁰ Of these, Prieto was the most active in politics. In 1823, Prieto was part of a commission, formed by deputies Francisco Calderón, José Manuel Borgoño and Luis de la Cruz, to write the draft of a project that was to decide the number of the ‘permanent force of the army’ and the best ways to finance it.⁹¹ This draft was the basis of a Constitución Político-Militar that was prepared by Diego José Benavente in March 1824, and discussed and amended by members of Congress. In this Constitution we find an explicit defence not only of the existence of a standing army and a ‘national guard’, but also of the leading role that the military should play in politics.

According to Benavente, ‘all Chileans, between the age of eighteen and fifty, are required to defend the Patria’. The armed forces were divided into ‘standing troops’ and ‘national guards’, which, in turn, were divided into ‘active service’ and ‘reserve guards’. More importantly, it was stated that the mission of the armed forces was not just to ‘defend the Patria from external enemies’, but also to ‘sustain public order’ and ensure ‘the execution of laws’. This is not to say that Benavente sought to make the army independent from either the Executive or the Legislature. In fact, article 8 of his Constitución Político-Militar asserted that every year the Executive should propose the number of troops of the standing army, and that such a proposal ought to be discussed and accepted by Congress. It also stated that the Legislature


⁹¹ CM, vol. 53, pp. 80v–81, 10 Dec. 182. The name of Luis de la Cruz does not appear in the list of deputies for the Congress of 1823. However, he appears as substitute deputy (diputado suplente) for Los Ángeles in the list of 1824–1825.
was entitled to decide the quota that every province had to ‘contribute for the formation of the standing army’.  

Of the thirteen suggestions made by Congress to the draft of the Constitución Político-Militar, only two could be deemed threatening to Benavente’s project. Article 19 of the Constitución declared that ‘Chileans who do not serve in the standing army will suffer the penalty prescribed for deserters’. Congressmen claimed that this clause was ‘unjust’, because ‘citizens who have not yet enrolled in the army’ should not be punished as deserters. Article 27, meanwhile, stated that ‘no military may be deposed from his job, until he has been legitimately investigated and sentenced’. The legislative commission, for its part, recommended adding the following sentence at the end of this article: ‘except those included in the class which can be constitutionally censored’. These modifications, however, did not alter the substance of the Constitución Político-Militar, which means that, overall, congressmen agreed on the importance assigned by Benavente to the participation of the army in politics.

An indirect consequence of the issue of the Constitución Político-Militar was the significant increase in the size of the standing army between September and December 1824. This, in spite of the fact that the press charged that, due to economic reasons, the government was downsizing the regular army. Historian James A. Wood quotes an article which appeared in El Liberal on 5 January 1825, whose author reacted, in Wood’s opinion, ‘against the rapid downsizing of the regular army’ and the decision to replace it with a national guard. The reasons for reducing the army are given by Wood himself: ‘budget revenue shortfalls, the political impossibility of raising taxes, and a weak financial bureaucracy’, all of which ‘made the [national] guard appear to be a more cost-effective option than the regular army’.  

Were the editors of El Liberal correct? A Resumen General de Fuerza of 1 September 1824 establishes the number of troops of the Army of Chile: 449 artillerymen, 2,358 infantrymen and 1,519 cavalrymen, totalling 4,317 men. Three and half months later, the government requested that Congress ‘augment the forces of the State and provide future means for the regularity of the payment of the Troops’. Consul Nugent summarized the political and economic background of this ‘Memorial’ to George Canning:

How far the publication of this Memorial may be a politic step on the part of this Government I am at a loss to conjecture; but its aim, I am told, is to compel the rich landed Proprietors to come forwards with their immense wealth and take a full share in the distresses of the country; for they have, hitherto, by an overawing influence, avoided every sort of tax,

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92 The Constitución Político-Militar can be found in MG, vol. 139, pp. 1–6, 16 Mar. 1824.
93 Changes made by Congress can be found in MG, vol. 139, pp. 7–8v, 22 Mar. 1824.
94 Wood, The Society of Equality, p. 44.
95 VM, vol. XXII, p. 269v, 1 Sep. 1824.
loan or contribution—content that the mercantile world might be borne down by the pressure of taxation if they themselves stood exempted, even to the most trivial share of public supply.\footnote{96}

But according to a military commission composed of José Manuel Borgoño, José Santiago Luco, Domingo Torres and Manuel Merino (all of them congressmen),\footnote{97} the government—and with it, also its official organ, El Liberal—was asking for the approval of a step that had already been taken: in December 1824, the Army of Chile had doubled its size, amounting to 8,431 men. Therefore, the commission argued, the role of Congress should be simply to find the best way of financing it.\footnote{98} Why did the army experience such a significant increase? Undoubtedly, the fear of being invaded by a royalist army from either Spain or Peru and enlarged with chilote troops explains in part the increase of the army.\footnote{99} Yet the issue of the Constitución Político-Militar, especially the article that stated that ‘all Chileans, between the age of eighteen and fifty, are required to defend the Patria’, also played a part in this phenomenon. Moreover, the support given by congressmen to this project was key in the government’s success in increasing the troops of the standing army. Not even Juan Egaña opposed the Constitución Político-Militar, as proven by the fact that the few modifications introduced by Congress to Benavente’s project were sent to the Supreme Director by Egaña himself.\footnote{100}

We should not conclude from this that all civilians and congressmen applauded the expansion of the army. In the session of 8 June 1824, for example, Congress agreed that a commission to ‘organize the finances’ of the state should decide whether the dismissal of military officers could help reduce the expenditures of the treasury.\footnote{101} We see a similar position in the repercussions of an economically motivated action led by three veteran officers of the revolutionary wars between April and May 1825. On 12 April, the Santiago chief officers, José Rondizonni (infantry), Jorge Beauchef (infantry) and Benjamin Viel (cavalry), informed de la Cruz of their decision to leave the capital and settle their detachments in the countryside to find something to

\footnotesize{96} BROPE, FO/16/1, p. 347v-348, Nugent to Caning, 22 Dec. 1824.

\footnotesize{97} See the list of deputies for the period 1824–1825 (SCL, vol. X, pp. 7–9).

\footnotesize{98} SCL, vol. X, p. 162, military commission to Congress, 15 Dec. 1824. In his report, Nugent mistakenly reported to Canning that ‘the Military Regular Force of Chile is under 4,000’ (p. 348v).

\footnotesize{99} This is clear from the Spanish copy of the ‘Memorial’ sent by Nugent to Canning, and which is also held in BROPE, FO/16/1, pp. 350–353v (it is dated 11 Dec. 1824).

\footnotesize{100} MG, vol. 139, p. 6, Egaña and Gabriel Ocampo to the Supreme Director, 22 Mar. 1824.

‘feed their men tomorrow’. According to de la Cruz, the commanders told him that their decision had been previously approved by the Supreme Director.

De la Cruz wrote a report on the situation, which was sent to Francisco Ramón Vicuña, minister of government and war, who, in turn, sent it to the Congress. Congress did not decide immediately on the matter; in fact, it was not until early May that one of the congressmen, Carlos Rodríguez (brother of the guerrillero Manuel Rodríguez), elaborated on the subject, not with a view of supporting the commanders but declaring that ‘the troops had no right to demand their wages in times when the treasury cannot pay those of the rest of the [public] employees’. Rodríguez added that, if soldiers were discontent, they could go to work in the countryside, where there were tasks that ‘give employment to many hands’. Hence, Rodríguez argued that the personnel of the army ought to be diminished.

Rodríguez’s speech was followed by an offensive led by Rondizzoni, Beauchef and Viel. On 8 May, de la Cruz informed Vicuña that these officers had sent him three representaciones written immediately after Rodríguez’s speech with the purpose of achieving a positive answer to their economic demands from Congress. The three representaciones sought more or less the same goals: they did not seek to put Congress into question, but to get a positive response to their demands. Besides, they sought to censure Rodríguez’s speech, arguing that his words offended the ‘liberators of Chile’. Beauchef’s introduction to the representación of the battalion 8 of the infantry summarizes their grievances well: ‘you know the efforts I have made and continue to make to sustain the morale of the force that the Republic has entrusted me. Just when day after day I comfort the officers and troops with hopes that rewards and improvements for the militia from a grateful nation will promptly come, […] we find one of the members of the Congress of Chile [Rodríguez] who sent us at once as peones to work the chácaras. And at once he destroys the illusory hope of these well-deserved rewards, and attacks the morale of the army on its bases: what do we get now, Mr. General, urging the patience of these officers if the Sovereign Congress does not look fondly at all veterans!’ Beauchef respected the deliberative power of Congress, but demanded that his men be equally respected by Rodríguez.

103 Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XIV, p. 326. I have not found the exact date of Rodríguez’s speech in the Sesiones de los Cuerpos Legislativos, nor does Barros Arana give this data. However, from the following events, probably he delivered it during the first days of May 1825.
104 The artillery wrote also a representación, but it appears that Congress did not consider it.
105 The representaciones can be found in SCL, vol. XI, pp. 241–43, and are dated between 5 and 7 May 1825.
106 SCL, vol. XI, pp. 242–43, Beauchef to Jefe del Estado Mayor General [Luis de la Cruz].
Rodríguez’s answer was swift: ‘public testimony and the general feeling of all good Chileans are the best guarantee I can give of the truthfulness of my arguments. I swear I am not moved by particular interests and that only the duty and desire to uphold the rights, honour and peace of my beloved Patria, have made me firmly attack what I think outrages it. I refrain myself from knowing whether colonel Beauchef, as I am informed, had told his officers to beat me or assassinate me. My person is worth nothing to either the Congress or the public, and I am willing to take risks without anyone’s help. Nothing intimidates me’. In a phrase that indirectly disapproved of the foreign origin of the officers involved in the preparation and writing of the representaciones (Beauchef and Viel were French, Rondizzoni Italian), Rodríguez added that ‘the Chilean credit exceeds my existence. I do not want it if the character and national honour is to be desecrated with impunity’. And concluding with a not so clear and rather exaggerated sentence aimed at criticizing the officers who believed that independence had been accomplished with weapons only, as well as the responsibility of O’Higgins in the death of his brother Manuel, Rodríguez asserted: ‘shall my case, gentlemen, serve as an example [to stop?] the military. It has been said that Congress and the people owe their freedom to [the army], when [Congress] enjoys its benefits in abundance and when it only takes a bullet or a bayonet to kill a Rodríguez without any responsibility’.107

Six days later, congressmen asked the minister of government to make de la Cruz and the rest of the officers step down from their respective posts, ‘until Congress decides what is just and convenient’.108 This resolution was not adopted because only a couple of days later the Freire government closed the sessions of Congress, but it shows the two positions held at that moment by congressmen regarding the size of the army and the political role of the military. The first position was defended by people like Rodríguez, who distrusted the participation of officers in public debates. Rodríguez was especially annoyed by Beauchef’s alleged animosity against ‘the highest corporation of Chileans’, the Congress, as well as by his proneness to ‘depress the national credit and spirit of the country’.109 On the other hand, the call to make the officers step down from their posts but without inflicting a serious punishment on them was the opposite of Rodríguez’s opinion in the sense that it implicitly stated that the officers had not sought to attack the ‘representation of the people’ as such, but only one of its members. This was a much more conciliatory position than Rodríguez’s, and it was influenced by these officers’ commitment to the law and Constitution. Indeed, throughout their stay in Chile, Beauchef, Viel and Rondizzoni defended the principle that, although the military were entitled to participate in politics, the army was a non-deliberative force. Their strong defence of the Constitution of 1828 and

107 SCL, vol. XI, p. 244, Rodríguez to Congress, 8 May 1825.
109 SCL, vol. XI, p. 244, Rodríguez to Congress, 8 May 1825.
the constituted government during the civil war of 1829–1830 proves this point very clearly.\textsuperscript{110}

Let us explain the conciliatory position of the majority of Congress regarding military affairs by studying one last example; in this case, the discussion was not economic but political. In the session of 12 September 1825, the so-called Asamblea de diputados de la Provincia de Santiago, which was the body in which the Santiago deputies gathered before the reopening of Congress on 15 September, congressman José Miguel Infante condemned the ‘recruiting excesses committed by the troops’ the previous night. According to his description, soldiers had ‘climbed the walls and entered the houses’ of private individuals in order to recruit ‘the domestic’ servants. ‘What is the object of this recruitment? Is there an enemy that threatens us? Is there an expedition to be made? If so, why has the Legislative Body not been informed? Can the Executive order such recruiting without previously asking the Representation?’, asked Infante. He added later: ‘the Legislative Body should make the Supreme Director understand that he cannot enlarge the armed force without the consent of the Legislature; and, above all, aren’t those individuals who have been recruited the people we represent? Aren’t they inhabitants of the province of Santiago? Can we tolerate that they have been dragged to the barracks, suffering the greatest humiliations by the troops? Where is individual security? Can we believe that there is [individual security] when [soldiers] break into and violate citizens’ homes?’.

Deputy Gaspar Marín agreed with Infante, claiming that the ‘excesses of the troops are obvious; for some time now they have committed outrageous attacks’, such as the attempt by a group of soldiers to rape a young, elite lady [señorita de las principales], whose ‘natural robustness’ had luckily enabled her to escape from her attackers. Juan Egaña, who had remained silent had a similar opinion, but somewhat moderated: he defended the right of the government to recruit, but criticized the ‘abuses’ committed by soldiers: ‘everyone is required to defend the Patria when so requested by the one who is in charge of the government. He has requested it and, therefore, the only [censurable] thing here is the way’ in which this recruiting was done. While Egaña believed that the government needed no special regulation to carry out recruitment, Infante claimed that there should be a law to guarantee that ‘citizens will not be dragged into the barracks’. Infante, in short, insisted that a law discussed in Congress should decide the extent to which the Executive was unilaterally entitled to make recruitments.\textsuperscript{111}

After this heated debate, the deputies formed a commission to obtain from the Supreme Director the immediate ‘release’ of recruits enlisted the previous night (with the probable exception of those who decided to remain

\textsuperscript{110} See Heise, Años de formación y aprendizaje político, pp. 191–206; and Salazar, Construcción de Estado en Chile, pp. 455–90.

\textsuperscript{111} The details of this debate in SCL, vol. XI, pp. 354–59.
in the army). The commission reported that Freire had ensured that all citizens would be released, and that his subordinates had not received orders to commit excesses. Freire’s positive response reassured the members of Congress. Furthermore, the fact that, throughout his administration, the Supreme Director had encouraged the participation of Congress in the decision-making process favoured a fluid relationship between the two powers of the state. Rodriguez, Infante and Egaña had a clear civil agenda, but only Rodriguez seriously tried to reduce the contingents of the regular army. Infante and Egaña, for their part, denounced the ‘excesses’ of the army, but did not aim to banish military officers from the public sphere. The army was, together with the Church, the most powerful Chilean body in the 1820s, which explains why civilians reacted with fear and indignation when soldiers and officers committed ‘abuses’. But this did not provoke a wave of criticism, and the army remained in the 1820s as popular as during the first years of the war. In this sense, the transformation of Egaña is symptomatic: he went from insisting in his Constitution of 1823 that the defence of the country had to be led by militiamen to argue that, if the Supreme Director was not allowed to recruit forces for the standing army, the entire defensive system of the republic could collapse.

Egaña and the rest of the men of letters and lawyers who played an active part in Congress did not seek to disband the detachments that were organized during the war because they knew that the ‘wellbeing’ of the republic depended on them. The royalists had not yet been expelled from Chiloé, and the Army of Chile was the only body in a position to lead an expedition in the south of the country. The support given by politicians to Freire’s plans to assault Chiloé in the summer of 1826 proved once again the relationship of dependency that, for good or ill, still existed between civilian elites and the military in late 1825.

IV. Chiloé: the end of revolutionary warfare

The island of Chiloé, located almost 1,200 kilometres south of Santiago, was the last royalist stronghold in Chile to fall to the revolutionaries. Chiloé was not involved in direct clashes after the war broke out in 1813, though it was a hotbed of recruitment for the royalist army. Its historical economic dependence on Lima (through the Situado) prevented the revolutionary governments from gaining political and military control of the island. Throughout the conflict the chilotes remained loyal to the king and the viceroy of Lima, a

113 It is interesting to compare the Chilean case with that of the River Plate. While the Freire government shared the same reformist spirit as Rivadavia’s, the latter had a much more marked anti-military stance. See Klaus Gallo, ‘Political instability in post-independence Argentina’, p. 116.
political option that was constantly exercised by the Peruvian government, both to recruit rank-and-file soldiers and to defend in Madrid the idea of the island becoming the centre from which to re-conquer revolutionary Chile. The participation of chilotes as royalist soldiers began in early 1813, when brigadier Antonio Pareja arrived in Chiloé from Lima and organized a battalion of veterans and militias to attack the principal regions of the south. According to an account written by the Spanish-born Antonio Quintanilla, the last royalist chief in Chiloé, Pareja recruited around 1,000 men in Chiloé.\(^{115}\)

The revolutionaries did not dispute Spain’s political and military sovereignty over Chiloé until the early 1820s, and that this was due to Chiloé’s remoteness.\(^{117}\) Barros Arana reported that O’Higgins once argued that ‘the conquest of Chiloé is the necessary complement for our national independence; without it, we will have to fear the king’s supporters’.\(^{118}\) However, the O’Higgins government never undertook an expedition against Chiloé; on the contrary, O’Higgins favoured persuasive strategies to make the chilotes join the revolution. On 5 April 1821, O’Higgins wrote a report in order to convince the chilotes that, given the ‘numerous armed forces that Chile has in its interior’, they ‘should abandon their present attitude’. There were two ways for Chiloé to join the revolution: either by surrendering peacefully, or ‘after a vain resistance’. The second option ‘competes openly with the principles of humanity that characterize [the island] and the effective desires that animate it’. Making reference to the consequence of the liberal revolution of 1820 in Spain, O’Higgins argued that Chiloé would never be aided by the metropolis, as the Spanish ministers were too focused on a civil war in the Peninsula that was more damaging ‘than the Seven Years’ War’. ‘If Chiloé wants to save herself’, O’Higgins continued, the chilotes should ‘accept the offer that with the most intense brotherhood the Republic of Chile solemnly makes them’. O’Higgins promised that, if they surrendered, the political and military authorities of the island would preserve their jobs, regardless of ‘their conduct [...] in the course of the current war’. Finally, he guaranteed that the island would have access to free trade with ‘all nations’.

O’Higgins’ report had little or no effect on the chilotes. Eight months later,

\(^{115}\) Quintanilla became governor of Chiloé in late 1817. See Diego Barros Arana, Las campañas de Chiloé (1820–1826) (Santiago: Imprenta del Ferrocarril, 1856).

\(^{116}\) Quintanilla’s document is called ‘Apuntes sobre la guerra de Chile por el brigadier D. Antonio de Quintanilla’, and can be found in CDHICl, vol. 3, pp. 207–36 (Quintanilla’s reference to Pareja’s army is from page 208).

\(^{117}\) If the revolutionaries did not have real control over the island, nor did Spain. For an example of Spain’s difficulties in administering Chiloé, see AGI, Chile 179, 30 Sep. 1818.

\(^{118}\) Barros Arana, Las campañas de Chiloé, p. IX.

\(^{119}\) VM, vol. XII, pp. 71–75, 5 Apr. 1821.
O'Higgins addressed Quintanilla directly. This time, he claimed that ‘the fate of Chiloé in the natural order of events is deduced: the happy time has come to meet with the citizens of Chile, to which [the island] belongs by natural boundaries and their political and religious relations’.

We shall see that this sort of argument would be employed later by Freire’s government when dealing not only with Spain but also the wishes of Great Britain and Bolívar to gain some degree of sovereignty over Chiloé. But, once again, O’Higgins’ claims did not have the expected result. The remoteness of Chiloé was damaging for Quintanilla and his men; but that same remoteness safeguarded them from the dangers of the war. According to Quintanilla, his military position was not as weak as O’Higgins believed. In a note to the Chilean Supreme Director, the royalist chief asserted that he ‘had plenty of resources, brave troops, weapons and other implements of war’. He was equipped enough to attempt an incursion on Valdivia, recently seized by Cochrane. From O’Higgins’ insistence to send delegates to negotiate with Quintanilla (i.e. the Supreme Director sent a priest to parlay with the chilotes), it can be inferred that, in 1821–1822, the royalists were in a better position to keep the control of the island than the revolutionaries. If Spain was too busy in its own problems to help Chiloé, so was O’Higgins to undertake an attack on the island.

According to a document of January 1822 signed by Zenteno, Chiloé had 1,000 veterans (800 infantrymen and 200 artillerymen), besides 3,000 militia, a force large enough to repel a not so well prepared army. And that was exactly what Quintanilla did in early 1824, when Freire personally led the first of two expeditions to the island and was humiliatingly stopped by the royalists. This expedition departed from Talcahuano on 27 February, and was composed of 2,149 men, divided into three infantry battalions (led by Isaac Thompson, Rondizonni and Beauchef), two battalions of the Guardia de Honor, a small cavalry detachment and 24 artillerymen. On 25 March Freire’s men were able to seize the small fort of Coronel and reach Chacao, in the north of the island. Yet, Freire’s subsequent decision to split his forces into three divisions instead of attempting a concerted attack on Castro (i.e. Chiloé’s capital) did nothing but benefit Quintanilla. The combat of Mocupulli on 1 April was extremely bloody, though neither side took full

120 VM, vol. XII, p. 84, O’Higgins to Quintanilla, 20 Dec. 1821. Although this document does not show the name of the recipient, it is most probable that this letter had been directed to Quintanilla.

121 MG, vol. 164, Quintanilla to O’Higgins, 27 Jan. 1822. The fact that Quintanilla was better positioned than O’Higgins believed is clear from the military and economic aid that he sent to Benavides in July 1821. See MG, vol. 52, pp. 134–36, Quintanilla to Benavides, 25 Jul. 1821.

122 VM, vol. XII, p. 10, Zenteno to Rodriguez Aldea, 1822, 16 Jan. 1822. Although this document does not show the name of the recipient, it was surely directed to Rodriguez Aldea.
advantage of the result. This is why on 10 April, only a month after the first revolutionary ships began to arrive in Chiloé, Freire and the rest of the officers agreed to withdraw to Valdivia. The withdrawal was undertaken in the midst of a serious rainstorm that damaged the frigate *Lautaro*, which prevented Freire from going back to Talcahuano immediately. He arrived in the port on 24 April.  

Two months later, consul Nugent wrote an interesting report of the outcome of events in Chiloé. In his words:

The Expedition has been repulsed with considerable loss (the amount I cannot procure); and the Government attribute the failure to the lateness of the Season. —I cannot venture so far, as to deny the case; but, with all allowance for the short space of time I have had for observation, must express my doubts of the Military, or Naval Capacity of Chile, either to invade, with any prospect of Success, the possessions of the Royalists, or even of its ability, in the event of attack from Europe, to resist. Indeed, the Military appearance of the Country is not imposing.

His criticism of the preparation of the Army of Chile was circumstantial, compared with what became a favourite theme of Nugent in 1824–1825: the possible occupation of Chiloé by Great Britain. In another part of this letter to Canning, Nugent declared that ‘the Island of Chiloe [...] is in possession of the Royalists, and must, from its maritime situation, be of the utmost consequence to either party. It is covered with Timber, fit for all naval purposes, and has a fine Harbour. In the hands of Great Britain it would be the key to the whole Western Side of South America’.

In mid-1825, Nugent’s idea that the British should exercise sovereignty over Chiloé had an indirect ally: Quintanilla. Clearly aware that the state of affairs had changed in South America and that advocates of republicanism in Chile were now a majority, Quintanilla addressed captain Thomas Maling of H.M.S. Ships in the Pacific to ask him whether he would be an intermediary between him and the Spanish ambassador to London. Quintanilla sought to make contact with anyone closely connected to the Spanish government to find a solution for his ‘absolute incommunication [sic]’ since the ‘loss of the army commanded by Viceroy La Serna’ in Ayacucho in December 1824, and he found no better strategy than resorting to British neutrality. ‘Should You, Sir, agree with me in thinking that it is not opposed the Neutrality which Great Britain observes between Spain and her revolved Colonies’, Quintanilla wrote to Maling, ‘I hope that in addition to rendering me the singular favour of forwarding the enclosed Despatch, You will Communicate to me by the first Ship sailing to this Port any intelligence you may possess relative to

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124 BROP, FO/16/1, pp. 141v–42v, Nugent to Canning, 4 Jun. 1824.
Spains [sic] sending any other expedition of Troops for the pacification of her American dominions: or whether the Spanish Government has adopted any Sovereign resolution as to the fate of those Countries'.

Maling sent this letter to Nugent, who sent it to Canning. We do not know if the Spanish ambassador ever read it. However, more important is the fact that Quintanilla had written it and sent it to Maling, thereby showing the complete abandonment of Chiloé by the metropolis. Equally, Nugent’s promptness to dispatch Quintanilla’s letter to London confirms his interest in keeping Canning abreast regarding the future of Chiloé.

Nugent continued sending reports about Chiloé to London during the second half of 1825. In July, he told Canning that ‘General Bolivar has, through the Agent of the Colombian State, signified to the Government of Chile his intention of employing an expedition for the reduction of the Island of Chiloé to the Government of Peru, if the State of Chile takes no measures, on their own part, to regain so desirable an occupation within Three Months’. Nugent informed Canning that Bolivar’s intentions should not be taken lightly, as he had not only seen the original letter written by Bolivar but ‘have also been put into possession of the Fact by a private letter from Colonel O’Leary, aid-de-camp to General Bolivar’. According to the British consul, Bolivar’s aspirations were threatening not only to Chile but also Great Britain, not least because he had heard rumours that ‘General Quintanilla had expressed a wish to put Chiloé into the hands of the English’. If this was to be the case, Nugent argued that Great Britain should write a declaration stating that ‘the British Government absolutely disclaimed any desire of appropriating to itself any portion of the Spanish colonies’, which, nevertheless, should not prevent ‘His Majesty’s Naval Commanders in the Pacific’ from taking possession of the island once they had been allowed to do so.

Four months later, Nugent made reference once again to the possibility of Great Britain having some sort of presence in Chiloé. On this occasion, Nugent forwarded a letter to Canning written by James Ashcroft stating that the people of Castro ‘are extremely hospitable and friendly and strongly prepossessed in favour of the English character’. Nugent forwarded this letter to Canning on 15 November 1825, probably expecting that the British minister would finally acknowledge his claims about Chiloé. But when the British government answered Nugent’s reports in May 1826 it was too late for Great Britain to achieve sovereignty over Chiloé. On 28 November 1825, Nugent himself had sent yet another note to Canning

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127 BROP FO/16/3, 197–198, Ashcroft to Nugent, 5 Oct. 1825.
128 BROP FO/16/5, 14–14v, J. Bidwell to Nugent, 26 May 1826. Canning told Nugent that Great Britain would not take possession of the island. However, he added that if the chilotes ‘shall fully establish their Independence, it is unnecessary to say, Great Britain will not be the last Power to recognize their new character’.

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informing him that the Freire government had decided to undertake a new expedition to the island and that, this time, the troops were ‘in good condition and the Director anticipated a successful result to their undertaking’. On 2 October the Chilean Congress ‘approved the expedition to Chiloé proposed by the Executive’, authorizing the government to ‘draw 103,000 pesos […] that still exist from the London loan’ to pay the expenditures. This was an explicit support for Freire and his military project, proving once again that differences between Congress and the Executive tended to subside whenever the country needed the intervention of the Army of Chile.

Freire departed for the second time to Chiloé from Valparaíso on 28 November 1825, and his army amounted to 2,575 men (between infantry, artillery and cavalry). Quintanilla, who was in a precarious position after the battle of Ayacucho, managed to muster around 2,300 men. The similarity of forces between the two armies was not sufficient for Quintanilla to stop the revolutionaries. Between 9 and 14 January 1826, Freire’s men carried out a well-planned offensive, and on 16 January almost the entire island fell under the control of the Chilean state. Seeing that he would not be able to overcome these military defeats and that Spain was unable to send reinforcements, Quintanilla capitulated on 18 January 1826.

The capitulation of Chiloé was signed more or less at the same time that the port of Callao fell to the revolutionaries. The context of both capitulations was different, each responding to particular reasons and events. Yet both reflect the same historical process: after nearly fifteen years of revolutionary warfare, the Spanish empire had almost completely disintegrated and the Spanish American colonies (with the exception of Cuba and Puerto Rico) had become new, independent states. In the case of Chile, the fall of Chiloé meant the end of confrontations between revolutionaries and Spain’s direct agents, which is not the same as to claim that internal conflicts ended, nor that all Chilean territories automatically became part of the state. Two immediate consequences of the revolutionary wars in Chile were the poverty

129 BROP FO/16/3, 205–205v, Nugent to Canning, 28 Nov. 1825. For the preparation of the expedition, see SCL, vol. XI, p. 388, Freire to the Asamblea de Coquimbo, 21 Sep. 1825.
131 For the second campaign to Chiloé, see Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XIV, pp. 433–47. For a summary of events in English, see BROP FO/16/5, pp. 54–60. The terms of the capitulation were summarized by Nugent to Canning on 28 Jan. 1826. The most important article stated: ‘The Terms of the Capitulation are, the incorporation of the Province and Archipelago of Chiloe with the Republic of Chile, with an equal enjoyment of Rights to the inhabitants as Chileno-Citizens’. In BROP FO/16/5, pp. 40v–42, Nugent to Canning, 28 Jan. 1826.
of the new state and the incapacity of the central government to exercise sovereignty in places distant from the capital. Regular taxation and standard military recruiting were very difficult to accomplish for nineteenth-century Chilean governments. Chile became a complete sovereign state in 1826, but the national project—one of whose principal elements was the integration of the territory under the same economic, political and military laws—was just beginning.

Starting with the last confrontations of the Chilean War to the Death, this chapter has shown that military men had an active role in the construction of Chile’s republican system, both as political actors and as members of a privileged body whose status was constantly discussed in Congress or the Executive. In previous chapters we saw that the connection between politics and the army became evident from the beginning of the revolution, and that José Miguel Carrera was chiefly responsible for this. But it was only after O’Higgins’ rise to power that the military began to control the political scene. O’Higgins was one of the most politicized officers of the revolution, though his government was not necessarily supported by all branches of the army. Officers of the Army of the South, led by Freire, turned into O’Higgins’ most dangerous opponents, even more dangerous than the royalists and the Carrera brothers. The uprising of the military of the south in 1822 had economic, military and political causes, which explains why the different factions that arose during the revolution did not always act in concert. Nevertheless, the people who opposed O’Higgins in 1822 agreed on three important points: they all resented the intervention of Rodríguez Aldea in politics, the mishandling of the war in the south by O’Higgins and the personalism of the Supreme Director.

Documents issued by the APLC in 1822 to justify a possible break with the capital show that military questions were at the heart of the grievances of the penquistas. Furthermore, they show that the Army of the South was the armed wing of the APLC, and that Freire became indispensable for penquistas and coquimbanos to reach power. The struggle against the royalists had taught them an important lesson: all types of despotism were condemnable, regardless of the political credentials of those who happened to be in power. O’Higgins was a revolutionary hero, but one who, according to penquistas and coquimbanos, had turned into a despot; that is why they called for his abdication so vehemently. But not only did they demand O’Higgins’ abdication; they also sought to put one of their closest allies in charge of the Supreme Directorship. Section II of this chapter aimed at proving that the Freire government was politically inspired by different currents of European liberalism rather than by the model of the Roman dictatorship, as O’Higgins’ was. Yet despite their differences, Freire shared with O’Higgins the tendency to staff cabinets with military officers. The
case of Pinto exemplifies the kinds of role played by revolutionary officers in the Freire regime.

Among the many areas in which Pinto intervened during the mid-1820s, whether as minister of government or intendant of Coquimbo, two are worthy of mention: first, the relationship built by the government with the Anglo-Saxon world, both economically and culturally. Second, the idea that the state should guarantee that all Chileans be part of the ‘national’ project. In my analysis of Pinto I argued that his defence of religious tolerance was influenced by the current of British liberalism that promoted free trade. The arrival in Chile in 1824 of a US plenipotentiary made the economic relationship between the two countries more dynamic; however, it also created friction between Chile’s Catholic society and US Protestants established in Valparaiso. Pinto promised to defend the right to worship of US citizens, although this did not put an end to a conflict that lasted until the 1880s. Pinto did not seek the extinction of religion from the public sphere, but he believed that the state should defend the individual from ‘the grip of corporate privilege’, especially the Church. In his view, the state had two other responsibilities: to guarantee private property and foment public education. His insistence that Coquimbo should encourage mining extraction and agricultural activity at the same time as participating in the formation of a single, united government reflects very clearly his two major goals as intendant.

The Executive was not the only space where these topics were discussed. The aim of the third section was, on one hand, to show that, in the legislatures of 1823–1825, high-ranking officers became members of Congress and, therefore, participated actively in legislative debates. On the other, to prove that Chilean politicians tended to concur in that the consolidation of independence could only be achieved with the help and intervention of the army; this, in spite of the fact that civilian elites did not always approve of the participation of the military in politics or stand in favour of having a large and powerful army. The outcome of the two cases analysed in this chapter (i.e. the representaciones written by veteran officers, and the debate regarding the abuses committed by the government in the September 1825 recruiting) was similar: in both cases congressmen agreed to reprimand the military without convicting them. The conciliatory tone of congressmen like Juan Egaña vis-à-vis the army is to be explained by the relationship of dependency between civilians and soldiers that still existed in 1825. The war in the Araucanian region was nearly completed by then, but Chiloé still remained a royalist stronghold. When in October 1825 the Chilean Congress approved the expedition to Chiloé, the army was once again viewed as the only body qualified to expel the enemy from Chilean territory. The end of revolutionary warfare in January 1826 confirmed that civilians and military men could indeed work in concert for the wellbeing of the new state.

Would this complementary relationship survive in the years to come?
Conclusion

This book has argued that armies played a key political role in the Chilean revolution—hence its three main analytical categories: armies, politics and revolution. It has endorsed Mario Góngora’s hypothesis that warfare was central to the process of state building in Chile, and that the revolution was a prolonged experience that had a permanent effect on Chilean society. The invasion of the Peninsula by Napoleon’s forces changed completely the political and military scenario in the colonies, causing a power vacuum that was only partially resolved when Spanish Americans created local Juntas in Buenos Aires, Caracas and Santiago (among others). These Juntas were revolutionary responses to the immediate problem provoked by the fall of Ferdinand VII, although they did not solve the political crisis caused by the disintegration of the Spanish state. The Santiago Junta posed more questions than answers, not least because the santiaguinos’ claim to politically represent the whole kingdom was disputed by other provinces. In addition, the radicalism of some juntistas was questioned by a majority of moderate autonomists and royalists who did not think that the installation of the Junta should lead to a break with either the metropolis or viceroy Abascal. Abascal, in turn, accepted the Santiago Junta as the less bad option. However, by 1812 the radicalism of the Carrera brothers (who, among other things, published an exaltado Constitutional Chart) led him to prepare the first of a series of military expeditions to stop the Chileans. Antonio Pareja’s disembarkation in Talcahuano in March 1813 marked the beginning of revolutionary warfare in Chile, which was not only a bloody but also a civil conflict confronting people born mainly in Spanish America.

The civil war in Chile produced two important consequences: first, it deepened the conflict over political legitimacy caused by the demise of the monarchy. Governments in the period 1812–1817 lacked legitimacy because there was no consensus within the elites regarding who and what political system should govern the country. The successive governments led by the Carrera brothers were supported by many radicals and some sectors of the revolutionary army. But when Mariano Osorio entered Santiago after the battle of Rancagua, the royalists were equally supported; not by outright
revolutionaries, but by the majority of moderates who did not escape to Mendoza following O’Higgins and Carrera. Soon, nevertheless, Osorio and his successor, Francisco Marcó del Pont, were perceived as illegitimate by the elites. It was not as much the alleged impolitic behaviour of the royalists as their misguided insistence on returning to the status quo ante 1810 that hastened their fall in early 1817. Hence my argument that Osorio and Marcó committed political mistakes that alienated the same elites that had applauded their respective appointments. For the elites, Osorio and Marcó became illegitimate because they did not respect the political rights that Chileans had won since the fall of the monarchy. Legitimacy and authority returned to work in concert only after O’Higgins’ rise to power in 1817: from then on, there was a consensus that a government based on republican principles was the best for the country.

The second consequence brought about by the war was the re-definition of the meaning of patriotism. To be a good, loyal patriot became synonymous with being a supporter of the government that happened to be in power. However, between 1812 and 1814 the word ‘patriot’ began to be used to define someone who backed the revolutionary side. The problem was that there were different factions within the revolutionary side—e.g. O’Higgins and Mackenna, on the one hand; the Carrera brothers, on the other—and so whatever decision was made without the acquiescence of the other faction—e.g. the signing of the Treaty of Lircay—could lead to accusations of treason. Critics of the Treaty of Lircay accused O’Higgins and Mackenna of treason and anti-patriotism. O’Higgins, for his part, became increasingly estranged from Carrera and his way of understanding patriotism during his stay in Mendoza. In Mendoza, O’Higgins met José de San Martín and became acquainted with the rioplatense’s American project. One of the central arguments of this book is that San Martín’s ‘Americanism’ added a clear anti-Spanish sentiment to the concept of patriotism; but, I have also argued that the division between ‘Americans’—revolutionaries—and ‘Spaniards’—royalists—did not comply with reality, since both armies were mainly represented by American-born people.

San Martín’s American project had both military and political elements. San Martín’s American military strategy—i.e. to use the re-conquest of Chile as a springboard to conquer Lima—was successful: his entry into Lima in July 1821 proves this clearly. The political aspects of San Martín’s American project did not, however, meet the same fate. San Martín and Juan Martín de Pueyrredón’s idea of creating an ‘American government’ in order to constitute an ‘American nation’ clashed with the building of independent, sovereign states in the early 1820s. The organization of the Ejército Libertador del Perú allowed the revolutionaries to conquer Lima, but it also caused disputes between the different states that formed the Liberating Army. As a result of these disputes, the Chilean chiefs of the liberating army left Peru, criticizing the ‘arrogance’ of rioplatenses, Peruvians and Colombians vis-à-vis the Army of Chile. Thus, the creation of an American government failed
because San Martín declared the independence of Peru, and also because Americanism lost importance as sovereign states emerged.

After the creation of independent states in Peru, Chile and the United Provinces, the Chileans focused primarily on internal matters. In 1817–1818, the O’Higgins government became the best alternative for filling the power vacuum of the 1810s. Yet, because most resources were spent not in Chile but to prepare and maintain the Ejército Libertador del Perú, one cannot say that O’Higgins focused exclusively on Chile. O’Higgins fell from power in early 1823 because he never managed to reconcile his adherence to San Martín’s strategy with a thoughtful military and economic plan to finish the war in the south of Chile. Ramón Freire’s insistence that the Chilean government should spend more money in the south made him the most popular and powerful figure in the Araucanian region, a fact that accounts for the support he received from the penqistas to oust O’Higgins (now considered an illegitimate despot). Freire’s rise to power inaugurated an era in which the military became increasingly involved in day-to-day Chilean politics, the building of a national political regime being their principal objective.

This was the scenario that the revolutionary officers faced in 1826, the year when this book ends. That year marked a turning point in Chilean history, and events in Chiloé were crucial: on one hand, the conquest of Chiloé by Freire allowed the revolutionaries to take control of the last royalist stronghold and finish the war against Spain. On the other, only three months after the royalists were expelled from the island a rebellion led by Pedro Aldunate and supported by followers of O’Higgins—then in exile in Peru—inaugurated a period of risings which, although small in scope, were sufficient to jeopardize the political stability of the republic. The uprising in Chiloé reflected three major questions: what role should the military have in the republican project? Now that the war was over, should the military still dominate the public sphere? Would they become a threat to the state, as the rebellion in Chiloé had shown? In 1826, most of the elites were republicans. However, they differed over the characteristics that a republican regime should have. Some supported a strong Executive, as shown by the example of the o’higginistas. Others, led by officers like Freire and Francisco Antonio Pinto, voted for concentrating the process of decision-making in Congress and for empowering the provinces. The latter were no less keen on having powerful institutions than the o’higginistas. The difference is that they followed the branch of European liberalism that favoured the separation and limitation of power, while O’Higgins explicitly stated that his political model was Roman dictatorship.

Differences about the best way of introducing republicanism explain in part why, between 1826 and 1830, veterans of the revolutionary wars

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1 For this uprising, see Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. XV, pp. 16–23, 40–42; El Peruano, number 6, 17 Jul. 1826; MG, vol. 164; documents sent by consul Nugent to Canning held in BROP, FO/16/5; and CG, vol. 337, pp. 1–12.
repeatedly took up arms against the government. The war had made them politicians, but politicians who based their power upon the army. This is why, when the war finished they did not go back to civil society, but aimed at keeping control of politics. It is worth noting, in any case, that the uprisings of the period 1826–1828 were easily defeated by the governments of Freire, Manuel Blanco Encalada and Francisco Antonio Pinto. This trend changed in 1829–1830, when a conservative uprising ousted the constituted government. This movement, led by Joaquín Prieto, had two consequences: first, it ended a period known for its liberal reforms, the most important of which was the preparation of the Constitution of 1828 (written by José Joaquin de Mora, and proclaimed by vice-president Pinto). Second, the new conservative government decided that, in order to avoid future insurrections, liberal officers (like Freire, Pinto, Beuchef, Rondizzoni, Borgoño and de la Lastra) should be dismissed from the Army of Chile. For the first time, a major sector of the army was banned from the public sphere.

Although the dismissal of these officers did not eliminate the political role of the liberal officers (Prieto’s government faced some ten different insurrections, and his powerful minister, Diego Portales, was killed by a group of officers in 1837), throughout the 1830s the armed forces were increasingly subordinated to the civil power. The Guardia Nacional was increased by Portales with the purpose of reducing the regular army. This was a novelty in Chile, where, as we have seen, the revolution had militarized decision-making and made the military the most privileged and powerful body of the country. Until 1826, the civil elites accepted the supremacy of the armed forces, because the royalist threat was still present. But from 1830 onwards the army was overshadowed by civilians, this being the triumph of a group of civilians led by Portales. Military officers continued leading the country until

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2 For these events, see Barros Arana, Historia General de Chile, vol. 15, chapters XXVIII–XXXIII; Encina, Historia de Chile, vol. IX, chapter XV; Encina, Historia de Chile, vol. X, chapter, pp. 515–52; Heise, Años de formación y aprendizaje político, pp. 180–206; Jocelyn-Holt, La independencia, pp. 252–65; Sergio Villalobos, Portales, una falsificación histórica (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1989), pp. 84–105; Salazar, Construcción de Estado en Chile, pp. 315–77. In mid-1830, José Joaquin de Mora published a periodical called El Defensor de los Militares llamados Constitucionales to defend both the dismissed officers and his Constitution of 1828. These officers were expelled from the army because they believed that the Constitution should be respected by the armed forces. They, in other words, defended the legally constituted government, and saw Prieto’s movement as no more than an illegitimate insurrection.

3 In 1827, the vice-president prepared a military reform, one of whose aims was to ‘reduce the size of the officer corps’. However, this reform was insignificant in comparison to that of 1830. The quotation is from Wood, The Society of Equality, p. 45. See also Nunn, The military in Chilean history, p. 32.

4 See Villalobos, Portales, una falsificación histórica, pp. 172–211.

1851 (i.e. Prieto was President of Chile in 1831–1841, and Manuel Bulnes in 1841–1851), but the construction of republican institutions fell upon civilians like Andrés Bello, Manuel Montt and Antonio Varas. Future investigations should try to reveal the role of the liberal officers (who were allowed to return to the army in the early 1840s) during an epoch increasingly headed by civilians, and study how they accommodated to a system they had helped to build during the revolutionary wars but which could only survive in times of internal peace.

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