1976

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Duncan Stewart Young
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THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BACKGROUND FOR  
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The Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College,  
Ph.D., 1976  
History, modern  

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THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BACKGROUND FOR THE CHILEAN
ARMY'S ROYALIST POSTURE DURING THE
PATRIA VIEJA (1810-1814)

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Latin American Studies

by

Duncan Stewart Young
B.A., Louisiana Tech University, 1969
M.A., University of New Mexico, 1971
August, 1976
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply indebted to my major professor, Dr. Jane DeGrummond, for the invaluable assistance and guidance which she gave me in the preparation of this paper. Without her personal interest and guidance, the research would have been much more difficult. I wish to also thank the other members of my committee, especially Dr. Paul Hoffman and Dr. Robert Becker, for their technical advice and suggestions on the colonial period, and Mrs. Miriam DeHart of the Latin American Studies Institute.

I extend my gratitude to those Chileans who so wholeheartedly lent their assistance to a foreigner who came to write their own colonial history. Among these were Professor Ricardo Donoso, Antonio Dugnac, and the staff of the Archivo Nacional. To Azucena Torres, custodian of the Sala Medina, and to Patricia López of the Central Library of the University of Chile, I express my sincere gratitude for their interest and helpful advice.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife Nancy for her encouragement and devotion during the past three years.
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ABSTRACT

The Chilean military performed a distinctive role during the late eighteenth century—it was engaged in an on-going frontier war against the Araucanian Indians, a conflict which over a period of nearly three centuries had diminished but not subsided. This was in sharp contrast to other areas of Spanish America where the subjugation of the native race had been completed in a few years after the conquest. While other colonies were approaching the zenith of their development, Chile was engaged in a debilitating war of attrition along its southern frontier.

As a result of its active role in protecting Spanish society, the military became one of the most influential institutions of the colony. This prominence was characterized by the presence of a continuously mobilized army, a network of forts along the Araucanian frontier, and a military budget which nearly equaled all other expenses of the colonial treasury combined. Throughout the South, all of these features combined to create a strong military tradition, personified by the intimate association between the army and society.

Most of the army was stationed in the South, a factor which largely isolated it from contact with the
capital of Chile and the mainstream of its society. However, there was also a great deal of status isolation, brought on by the army's predatory role and a reputation for crime and corruption. Lawlessness and violence within the army were closely linked to the rough frontier existence and were also factors which set the military apart culturally from the rest of the colony.

One of the most influential features in the development of the Chilean army was the dominant role played by Peru. The influence of the viceroy was solidified through the situado, a mechanism for supplying the isolated garrisons in the far South. This, combined with Peruvian jurisdiction over the fortresses of Valdivia and Chiloé, partially drove a wedge between the army and the government in Santiago.

These characteristics of the colonial army were influential in the formation of its political loyalties during the early phase of the independence movement, or the patria vieja (1810-1814). They were factors which ultimately turned the army against the patriot forces and made it a staunch arm of the royalist cause.

After the creation of the first patriot junta in Santiago in 1810, the veteran forces in the South became even more distant from the capital and the course of the liberal movement. In Santiago, the civilian militia and creole aristocracy emerged as the base of a new patriot
array, which rivaled the regular veteran forces in size. Enthusiasm for the independence movement and efforts by political leaders (such as José Miguel Carrera) to insure their continued political power, made possible the creation of this new army. While the veteran troops in the South should have logically served as the nucleus for the new army, they were almost completely disregarded. Dissension and rivalry between competing patriot factions and preoccupation with the defense of the capital against possible royalist invasion from Peru prevented the army of the South from being incorporated into the patriot camp and left it dangerously exposed to Peruvian subversion.

When hostilities broke out in 1813, Chile was split into a patriot north and a royalist south. The success of the royalist forces in counteracting the patriot movement was directly related to the loyalty of the veteran troops in the South to the king. This was due to the army's traditional geographic and status isolation from central Chile and a long history of economic and administrative dependence on the Peruvian viceroys.
ABBREVIATIONS

Archival Sources

ABA - Archivo Barros Arana
ACG - Archivo de la Capitanía General
ACM - Archivo de la Contaduría Mayor
AFA - Archivo Fondo Antiguo
AMG - Archivo del Ministerio de Guerra
AMV - Archivo Morla Vicuña
ARA - Archivo de la Real Audiencia
AV - Archivos Varios
AVG - Archivo Vidal Gormaz
AVM - Archivo Vicuña Mackenna
JMDI - Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de Chile

Periodicals

AEA - Anuario de Estudios Americanos
AHR - American Historical Review
AUC - Anales de la Universidad de Chile
BACH - Boletín de la Academia Chilena de la Historia
HAHR - Hispanic American Historical Review
HIST - Historia
Published Documents

ABO - Archivo de don Bernardo O'Higgins

CHDC - Colección de historiadores de Chile y documentos relativos a la historia nacional

CHDI - Colección de historiadores y de documentos relativos a la independencia de Chile

SCL - Sesiones de los cuerpos legislativas de la republica de Chile, 1811-1845
INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this study are twofold: first, to examine the Chilean military during the late eighteenth century, especially with regard to its basic characteristics and its role in colonial society; and second, to ascertain how this colonial role influenced the army's political orientation during the early phase of the independence movement, or the period known as the patria vieja (1810-1814).

The army is defined as veteran troops, those regular soldiers paid by the crown and serving on a full-time basis. Very little research has been done on its organization and structure. American scholars have limited their research to the Araucanian Indians and cultural aspects of their struggles with the Spanish. Surprisingly, few Chilean scholars have undertaken investigations of the eighteenth-century army, despite the existence of a long military tradition in colonial society. For the most part, they have concentrated only on specific aspects of its organization.

The most comprehensive Chilean study is that of Roberto Oñat and Carlos Roa, Regimen legal del ejército en el reino de Chile, a general study of the army throughout the colonial period which emphasizes the effect of Spanish military legislation on the Chilean army. A work by
Jorge de Allendesalazar Arrau, *Ejército y milicias del reino de Chile, 1737-1815*, is largely a survey of the genealogy of veteran and militia officers. Another Chilean, Pedro Toledo Sánchez, has examined the application of Spanish military penal codes in the colony in his book *Esquema del derecho penal militar indiano y su jurisprudencia chilena*. Also of value are several works by the Jesuit priest, Gabriel Guarda, concerning the history of southern Chile and the fortress of Valdivia.

Each of these works has contributed to an understanding of a particular aspect of the subject. However, there is a need to combine these various topics into a cohesive, overall concept of the army and its role in society. This encompasses more than simply a blow-by-blow narrative of the Araucanian wars. Recent emphasis on such topics as the racial composition and socioeconomic background of the troops, the political effects of Bourbon military reforms in America, and conflicts between the army and civilian institutions, are increasingly important for an understanding of the military as an institution in society. These studies also help to isolate colonial factors which may have determined military behavior during the independence period and the subsequent development of praetorianism. This specialized study of the Chilean military is a contribution to the growing reservoir of knowledge of the colonial armed forces in America.
The thesis of this dissertation is that the army in the south of Chile was royalist in 1813 because of geographical, cultural, and status isolation from central Chile and a tradition of economic and administrative dependence on Peru. This is significant in that the initial phase of the independence movement, and to a large extent the wars which lasted until 1820, consisted of a division between a patriot north and a royalist south. The army in the South comprised a majority of all the colony's forces, nearly all of whom followed the royalist banner. These forces were the deciding factor in the initial defeat of the patriot army in 1814, and they were the backbone of the royalist opposition in the protracted struggle which followed.

The first part of this dissertation is a study of several basic features of the Chilean army which characterized its colonial existence. Foremost among these was the distinct geographic and cultural separation of the southern army from the center of colonial population in the central valley and the Santiago area. Most of the troops were isolated along the southern frontier or in coastal garrisons, effectively segregated from the mainstream of society in central Chile. The rigors of army life bred a soldiery that was frequently undisciplined, prone to corruption and violence, and professionally lax. Numerous soldiers were former convicts, impressed into the service to fulfill manpower shortages. Social flux within the army accentuated
its isolation from the capital and earned it a reputation as a predatory institution. Because the coastal fortresses in the South were supplied and administered from Peru, the troops there inevitably developed closer ties with the viceroys in Lima than with the Chilean government.

The second part of this work deals with the role of the army during the first three years of Chilean independence, up to the Peruvian invasion in 1813. The majority of studies of this period have emphasized the patriot viewpoint and events in Santiago, center of the movement for autonomy from Spain. There has been a corresponding neglect with the participation of the South, perhaps because of its royalist sympathies and reactionist stance. Yet, the South was the scene of equally vigorous political movements, one of which occurred within the military. In part, the royalist attitudes of officers in 1813 was due to internal dissension within the patriot camp and the failure to actively court the political support of this influential institution. The personal ambitions of José Miguel Carrera and other leaders led to a series of revolts in Santiago during 1811 and 1812, resulting in complete disregard for the potential of the southern forces. Political discord between the provinces of Concepción and Santiago was another powerful factor in the neglect of strong veteran forces in Valdivia, Chiloé, and along the Bio Bio River.

However, there had always been a pervading royalist
sentiment in the army, instilled by factors of its colonial existence. Geographic segregation from the capital, close ties with Peru, and the volatile character of army life were not conducive to strong bonds with Santiago. A steady flow of peninsular or Peruvian officers to the southern forts almost guaranteed troop loyalty to the crown.

Research for this study was carried out in the National Archives in Santiago, Chile, during 1973-1974, with the assistance of a research fellowship from the Organization of American States. Primary sources constituted a major portion of the materials analyzed, and among the more useful archival collections were those of the Capitanía General, Real Audiencia, and the Contaduría Mayor. Of additional aid were the holdings of the Sala Medina in the Biblioteca Nacional. Of particular use were the Colección de documentos inéditos para la historia de Chile, original documents transcribed by the historian José T. Medina.

A number of published documents proved useful, one of which was the Colección de historiadores y de documentos para la historia nacional, relating to the colonial history of Chile. Included in this collection are such works as the Relación histórico-geográfica del reino de Chile, by the army officer Vicente Carvallo y Goyeneche. This is an extremely rich source of data about the army, as perceived by a participant in the frontier Indian campaigns. First-hand accounts and diaries of soldiers have been used
whenever possible to gain a picture of how the military functioned.

Another useful collection of documents used was the Colección de historiadores y documentos relativos a la independencia de Chile. This contains many of the important papers relating to the independence period, including the acts of the various governing juntas. For a general interpretation of the colonial period, the Historia general de Chile of Diego Barros Arana has been followed most closely.
Chapter 1

ARMY ORGANIZATION AND COMPOSITION

The war between the Spanish and Indians in southern Chile lasted throughout the colonial period, considerably influencing the course of the colony's development. At the time of the Spanish arrival the aboriginal population numbered perhaps 500,000.\(^1\) The most notable of the tribes were the Araucanians, an appellation which the Spanish improperly applied to all of the natives living in southern Chile.\(^2\) Unlike the Incas or more advanced races, the Araucanians never attained a high degree of social or political organization. The very simplicity of their tribal structure rendered them nearly unconquerable by the Spanish, as there was no central government which could be toppled to bring about the surrender of all its subjects. Each tribe was an autonomous unit which must be subdued individually.

The conqueror of Chile, Pedro de Valdivia, stood


apart from many of his colleagues by his intellect and farsightedness. In contrast to the widespread greed for gold of that time, he envisioned Chile as a land of future agricultural wealth, of colonists who would reap the more lasting benefits of the soil. ³ He was an ambitious man, however, and in his zeal to pacify the land, he committed an error common to many early Spanish—he attempted to conquer too much territory with too few resources. From the founding of Santiago in 1540 until his death in 1553, he founded eight cities in the heart of Araucanian lands, all isolated and defended by only a handful of soldiers. ⁴ His ultimate goal was that of conquering all the territory down to the southern tip of the continent (see Map 1).

Valdivia persuaded himself that he had reduced the colony to Spanish control, when in fact he had only imprudently diffused his troops throughout a vast, hostile territory. After an initial period of shock, the Araucanians regrouped their forces and launched an implacable war which was to continue intermittently until the end of the colonial period. This proliferation of frontier settlements, without adequate colonists to populate them, was one of the great


The overextension of Spanish civilization into hostile Indian lands affected the entire development of the southern half of the colony. During the early 1600's, a chain of forts was constructed, stretching from the foothills of the Andes mountains to the sea, along the Bio Bio River (see Map 2). By fortifying this perimeter it was hoped that Spanish settlements to the north could be protected, and that this line could be gradually pushed southward as the Indians were either pacified or conquered. Yet, the colonizing force of the Spanish was not forthcoming; there was an acute shortage of settlers, and the Indians stubbornly resisted the colonization of their lands.

In the 1700's, this line of forts remained roughly the same as it had in previous times, and the lands to the

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5 Miguel Luis Amunátegui, Los precursores de la independencia de Chile (Santiago: Imprenta Barcelona, 1910), II, 65-66.

6 The strategy of a fortified line along the Bio Bio River was part of a broad policy of defensive warfare implemented during the term of President Alonso de Ribera (1601-1605). A short interlude of peace followed, but hostilities had resumed by 1613. The Bio Bio remained the demarcation line between Indian and Spanish lands until the end of the 1700's (Eugene H. Korth, S.J., Spanish Policy in Colonial Chile. The Struggle for Social Justice, 1535-1700 [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968], 121-23.

7 For a Spanish account of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Araucanian wars, see Alonso de Ovalle, Histórica relación del reyno de Chile (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1969).
Map 2

Military Forts Along the Araucanian Frontier, 1800*

*Indalicio Telléz, Historia militar de Chile, Appendix, Vol. I.
Map 3

Layout of the Fort of Los Angeles, 1794*

*"Expediente sobre renovar los Edificios, Quarteles, y foso de la Plaza de los Angeles, 1794," *ACG, DCCCLXIX, 18.*
south were hardly more than uncharted forests.\(^8\) Valdivia, Concepción, the frontier forts and settlements on the island of Chiloé, all continued their solitary existence. However, they were isolated in the heart of Indian lands, deprived of commercial and social contact with the rest of the colony and forced into a crude, backward existence. Thus, a principal tenet of Spanish military policy widened to include not only territorial expansion but also the defense of existing settlements in the South.

By the mid-1700's, the veteran army consisted of roughly 1,700 men. The wars of attrition of previous times had subsided to the level of an uneasy truce, marked by occasional outbreaks of violence. During the course of the century, there were only a handful of what could properly be called Indian revolts and only two major, extended clashes (1723 and 1767). The situation was more indicative of what the Chilean historian Mario Góngora terms a "little war"—an interminable procession of cattle thievery, robbery, smuggling, and occasional killings.\(^9\) Still, this violence was a sufficient threat to necessitate a standing army.

In terms of strategic location, the army was divided

\(^8\)During the 1700's there were approximately eighteen of these forts in operation. For a description of these, their construction, defenses and population, see "Instrucción y noticia...," [c 1755], Doc. No. 4292, JMDI, CLXXXVIII, 14-25.

\(^9\)Mario Góngora, Vagabundaje y sociedad fronteriza en Chile, Monograph of the Centro de Estudios Socioeconómicas, Universidad de Chile, Santiago (1966), No. 2, 22.
into two broad groups. In the far south was one portion, consisting of an infantry battalion on the island of Chiloé and another battalion in the coastal fortress of Valdivia. Together, they comprised almost forty percent of all veteran forces and were primarily designated to protect the coasts against corsairs or European invasion. Both garrisons were segregated from the rest of the colony by the Indian lands and were regularly supplied by the Peruvian viceroy. Near Concepción was stationed the second major division of the army, guarding the chain of forts along the Bio Bio River.

The presiding chief of the army was the president, who did not necessarily have to possess a career background in the army. His additional title of captain-general made him the automatic commander-in-chief of all military forces. Below him were four military governors, each appointed by the king and each entrusted with the civil administration and military security of his district. Foremost among these was the Intendant of Concepción (usually of brigadier rank), whose jurisdiction included the entire southern half of the colony. Following him was the governor of Valdivia, likewise a brigadier or colonel, who governed the town and its infantry battalion. The governor

10 The leader of the colony combined in his person the positions of governor, captain-general of the army, and president of the audiencia, and could be referred to by any one of these titles.

11 Diego Barros Arana, Historia general de Chile (Santiago: Rafael Jover, 1884-1902), VII, 341.
of Valparaiso administered a similar jurisdiction but one of less prestige, for the only regular troops under his command was a single company of artillerymen. Finally, there was a governor on the island of Juan Fernández, in charge of a handful of soldiers and several hundred civilian residents.  

Infantry comprised the major branch of the army, and its troops bore the brunt of the Indian attacks along the frontier. It was composed of two battalions, one stationed in Concepción and one in Valdivia. The Valdivia battalion was composed of six companies of whites, or soldiers of sangre limpia, and one caste company, the compañía de pardos. The latter was alternately referred to as the compañía de obreros, as its lower racial status relegated the members to performing menial tasks and doubling as construction laborers. Because Valdivia served as a penal colony, its battalion contained many convict draftees who were of decidedly lower quality than other enlisted troops. The batallón fijo, or fixed battalion of Concepción, had originally been a unit of peninsular troops and was composed of eight companies of fusiliers and one of grenadiers.

These companies were distributed throughout the various forts

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12 Ibid., 341.
13 "Razón de los Sueldos..., 1800," ACM, XLIX, No. 5.
14 Lucas Molina to President O'Higgins, Valdivia, October 15, 1792, AMV, XXI, 318.
along the Bio Bio River, with one company being stationed on the island of Juan Fernández.15

Mounted dragoons composed the second major division within the army. Dragoons were a product of the sixteenth-century French army, originally consisting of mounted arcabuses troops capable of fighting either on horse or on foot.16 Chilean horse troops were identical in their armament, possessing both a musket and sabre, whereas regular cavalry used only swords and pikes.17 The bulk of these troops were formed into the escuadra de dragones de la frontera (frontier dragoon squadron), consisting of eight companies distributed throughout the forts along the frontier. An additional company of dragoons was stationed in Santiago, known as the compañia de dragones de la Reina Luisa. This company was created by President Manuel de Amat y Junient in 1758 as a police force to combat rampant crime in the capital, which the militia could not contain.18

Several decades later, President Gabriel de Avilés found that the original company was insufficient for the needs of patrolling and police duty, and in 1797 increased the force

15 "Razón de los Sueldos..., 1800," ACM, XLIX, No. 3.
16 Barros Arana, Historia general, VI, 393.
17 Ibid. According to a review of 1808, each dragoon possessed three horses, two of his own and one furnished by the crown ("Revista de..., 1808," ACM, CCVI).
18 Royal cédula of October 12, 1760, Doc. No. 8773, JMDI, CCXCIII.
by thirty additional men, all foot soldiers.¹⁹

Admittance to this company was a mark of social distinction. Membership was restricted to appointment only, and the applicants were of upper-class origin, endowed with the title of "don."²⁰ Their duties were not only constabulary, but included serving as the president's personal bodyguard, administering the customhouse and participating in public ceremonies. At times when European invasion appeared imminent, they were divided into picket detachments to serve in the coastal ports.

The artillery branch was composed of three companies, one assigned to each of the coastal ports of Valparaiso, Concepción and Valdivia. In Spain, the artillery corps had always enjoyed a unique status, much as the royal engineers, and qualified for privileges such as its own tribunals.²¹ In Chile, the artillery companies were somewhat less than special; if anything, they were set apart only because of the inexperience and ineptitude of their members. There were far too few artillerymen to be distributed among the coastal garrisons, in some cases less than one man per gun.²² Most of these men were of lower-class origins. They

¹⁹"Razón de los Sueldos..., 1800," ACM, XLIX, No. 1.
²⁰Jorge de Allendesalazar Arrau, Ejército y milicias del reino de Chile, 1737-1815 (Santiago: Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 1960), 127.
²¹Ibid., 167.
²²"Razón de los Sueldos..., 1800," ACM, XLIX, No. 7.
were either enlisted or drafted from the regular infantry companies, hardly the best method of grooming skilled gunners. According to a military ordinance of 1753, artillerymen were required to drill every two weeks in summer and once a month in winter, but due to shortages of ammunition and a general laxity in their training, there was little compliance with such regulations.\textsuperscript{23}

A single company of officers and non-commissioned personnel was stationed in Santiago, called the \textit{asamblea de caballeria}. Contrary to its title the company was not a cavalry unit, but a group of instructors brought from Spain in 1768 to train civilian militia in the military arts.\textsuperscript{24} The members of the company were assigned to the various frontier towns or to northern port cities such as La Serena, Coquimbo and Valparaiso, where they helped to bring the militia up to the level of competent support troops for the veterans. The king alone conferred commissions to this small but prestigious unit, which was theoretically entrusted with the training of over 15,000 militia.\textsuperscript{25}

In response to the permanency of the Araucanian wars, the Spanish crown created a group of Indian officials to

\textsuperscript{23}Fernando Guarda Geywitz, \textit{Historia de Valdivia, 1552-1952} (Santiago: Imprenta Cultura, 1953), 162.

\textsuperscript{24}Allendesalazar, \textit{Ejército y milicias}, 126-27.

\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid.}
serve as liaison agents, interpreters and guardians of Indian welfare. Usually, these men were soldiers, theoretically selected on the basis of their empathy with Indian problems and their ability to resolve disputes between the two races. The most important of these officials were the capitánes de amigos, or captains of friends, who were soldiers assigned to live among those tribes which had declared themselves peaceful to the Spanish. The position of capitán was roughly analogous to that of the corregidor, but adapted to the unique circumstances of Chile.

The Indian lands were the scene of much contraband trade between the tribes and itinerant merchants, which invariably led to quarrels and bloodshed as both sides attempted to cheat each other. Capitánes were charged with suppressing this illegal commerce before isolated disputes escalated into war. The opportunities for self-gain naturally led to a certain amount of despotism among the captains, which was taken into consideration by their superiors. A just but practical captain could increase his meager income by serving as a commercial middleman, while at the same time generally promoting the Indians' welfare. Unfortunately, many were unscrupulous and a cause of animosity, rather than peace. They conspired with traders

26 "Instrucción y noticia...", [cl755], Doc. No. 4292, JMDI, CLXXXVIII, 28.
27 Ibid.
to defraud their wards or sold the Indians into slavery.  

By 1800, the army remained constant at a level of around 2,000 men, distributed in the following manner:

Table 1

| Army Strength Around 1800, Including Staff, Officers and Enlisted Men |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Units                              | Personnel |
| Dragoon Company of the Reina Luisa (Santiago) | 84 |
| Dragoon Squadron of the Frontier (Los Angeles) | 436 |
| Infantry Battalion of the Frontier (Concepción) | 689 |
| Infantry Battalion of Valdivia | 535 |
| Artillery Company of Valparaiso. | 64 |
| Artillery Company of Concepción. | 55 |
| Artillery Company of Valdivia. | 23 |
| Asamblea de Caballeria (Santiago). | 50 |
| **TOTAL**                      | **1,936** |

The selection of upper-echelon military officers paralleled that of the civilian hierarchy; both were controlled from Spain. The king had always reserved the immutable right of personally selecting such positions as president, audiencia oidores, treasury officers, as well as high-ranking army officers and members of the general staff.

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28 Francisco Encina, Historia de Chile desde la prehistoria hasta 1891 (Santiago: Editorial Nascimiento, 1942-1952), IV, 473.

29 "Razón de los Sueldos..., 1800," ACM, XLIX, No. 5.
The crown also jealously guarded the right of confirming many other civil posts and army personnel, some of whom were appointed from Peru.  

At the heart of this paternalism was the goal of implanting quality administration, but there was also a desire that positions of importance be occupied by peninsulars. This mentality was personified by the Spanish Minister of State, the Conde de Floridablanca, whose suspicions of antimonarchial plots bordered on the maniacal. In an instrucción reservada of July 8, 1787, Floridablanca wrote that the use of peninsulars was designed to control sedition and rebellion on the part of the creoles. In his estimation, the veteran forces in the colonies were necessary to combat foreign invasions, but their primary function was in "maintaining good internal order." Peninsular Spaniards were to be shown preference at all times as army officers and staff, and Spanish regulars should always be stationed in the "principal locations" to assure the loyalty of the army.  

Positions of great military importance may have

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30Barros Arana, Historia general, VII, 341.


32Amunátegui, Los precursores, III, 19. The contents of instrucciones reservadas were of a classified nature and were transmitted only among higher government officials.

33Ibid.
generally been the exclusive domain of peninsulares, but it is incorrect to assume that the crown systematically denied creoles positions as officers in the army. In the following chart of the Chilean officer corps around 1800, officers were classified according to the country of their birth (see Table 2). The results show that native-born Chileans were substantially represented, and actually comprised a majority of all officers.

In each of these major units, a common characteristic throughout was the predominant peninsular composition of the staff officers, or plana mayor. Even more constant is an almost geometrical decline of peninsulars as one descends from the staff down to the rank of sergeant. At the level of sergeant, the ratios are almost reversed, with creoles outnumbering those of European descent by a margin of ten to one.

In scanning the general staff, one notices several officers whose country of origin was Ireland, which was not uncommon in the Chilean army. Many Irish Catholics fled to Spain in the 1640's after their country fell under English domination and the subsequent imposition of the Puritan regime. In Spain, they were hospitably received and freely admitted to posts in the government and military.

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35 Barros Arana, Historia general, VII, 8.
Table 2
Nationalities of Enlisted Officers and Men

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationalities</th>
<th>ASAMBLEA DE CABALLERÍA (Santiago) (December, 1800)</th>
<th>DRAGOON SQUADRON OF THE FRONTIER (Los Angeles) (December, 1800)</th>
<th>INFANTRY BATTALION OF VALDIVIA (December, 1800)</th>
<th>INFANTRY BATTALION OF THE FRONTIER (Concepción) (December, 1805)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Staff</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Chile 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spain 4</td>
<td>Spain 1</td>
<td>Spain 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captains</td>
<td>Lieutenants</td>
<td>2nd Lieutenants</td>
<td>Sergeants</td>
<td>2nd Lieutenants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Chile 5</td>
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<td>Chile 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spain 1</td>
<td>Spain 1</td>
<td>Spain 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeants</td>
<td>Chile 8</td>
<td>Minorca 1</td>
<td>Chile 5</td>
<td>Chile 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spain 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>Spain 1</td>
<td>Spain 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36"hojas de servicio," 1800 and 1805, ACM, CLXV and CLXXXIII.
A number of Irish officers came to Chile in the 1700's, the most notable of whom was Ambrosio O'Higgins, who came to the colony as an engineer's assistant and later became one of the most able and respected presidents of his time. Irish officers were discriminated against in Chile but excelled in their professions, a number of them becoming governors or other prominent officers.37

The rank and file veteran soldiers were nearly all Chileans, much more so than the officers. After the arrival of the infantry battalion of Concepción in 1778, no more major detachments of peninsular troops were sent by the crown. In 1796, one of the infantry companies of the Valdivia battalion was made up of seven peninsulars and seventy Chileans, a figure illustrative of the predominate Chilean composition.38 In 1800, the frontier dragoons were distributed in the following manner, according to their country of origin:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buenos Aires</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minorca</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>419</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37A few of the prominent Irish officers in the army were Juan Mackenna, Alejandro Eagar, Juan Clarke and Tomás O'Higgins.

38"Revista de..., 1796," ACM, CX.

As a by-product of the protracted Indian wars, the army became a dominant force in the society of southern Chile. Presidents of the colony were frequently military men of distinguished records in Europe, for whom the colony was another testing ground. Here, they sharpened their administrative and military skills before ascending to higher positions, frequently in Peru. Several presidents during the 1700's later became Peruvian viceroys, among them José Manso de Velasco, Ambrosio O'Higgins, Manuel de Amat and Agustín de Jáuregui.

Officers were proud of their profession and their role in combating the Araucanians. Whether of Chilean or peninsular extraction, they shared a common fraternal bond of long years of hard work (or persistence) to attain their rank. A study of the service records of the frontier dragoon squadron in 1800 reveals that the median age of its seven captains was 49.8 years. Most had originally enlisted as young men (probably as cadets) and had served an average of 33.4 years in the army. The captains were 43.4 years old before being promoted to that rank, after having served a full 27 years of active service. Most of the other units displayed a similar age pattern in their advancement. The officers of the Valdivia infantry battalion were an exception, for they seem to have been subject to slower promotions than the other units. In the same year (1800),

40Ibid.
the battalion lieutenants also averaged 49.8 years of age and were 43.2 years old before attaining the rank of lieutenant.\textsuperscript{41} This means that the Valdivia lieutenants required the same number of years to attain a full rank lower than their fellow officers in Concepción.

The camaraderie within the officer corps was manifested in a number of ways, one of which was the perpetuation of the military tradition through two or more generations in a family. The sons of many officers were enrolled as army cadets at early ages, frequently as young as eight or nine years old.\textsuperscript{42} Officer marriages often required prior approval by the crown, but the officers themselves guarded their social prestige by selecting brides from as high a social strata as possible.\textsuperscript{43} These men were understandably sensitive to civilian challenges to their authority in the administrative posts which they sometimes held. They especially looked down on militia officers, whose rank and titles were often honorary, unaccompanied by the years of frontier duty which they were forced to undergo before attaining positions of command.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42}"Revista de..., December, 1795," ACM, CIII.
\textsuperscript{43}Encina, Historia de Chile, V, 439, 532.
\textsuperscript{44}Before leaving Chile to become Viceroy of Peru in 1796, President O'Higgins appointed a militia colonel, José de Aldunate, as interim military governor of the port of Valparaiso ("Informe del..., September 15, 1796," Doc. No. 5430, JMDI, CCXIII). Francisco Borja de Araus, a veteran
Personal pride in their profession was one of the few things which veteran officers could attain, for there were few tangible benefits from a career of soldering. Infrequent promotions, displacement from home and family, the backward living conditions of garrisons, and physical dangers were factors which kept most of these men from attaining social prominence in the aristocracy. The pay was lower than in comparable civilian professions, and one officer noted that after forty or fifty years of service, "... the men go to eternity, leaving their families wrapped in misery and mendicancy."  

As an institution, the Chilean army seems to bear little resemblance to its counterpart in Mexico. In the viceregal center of New Spain, the size and organizational complexity of the army spawned an organization which was more sophisticated, acutely aware of its social status, and

lieutenant colonel of artillery, angrily wrote to the king that he should have been selected for the post by virtue of a cédula of August 2, 1789, which automatically gave preference in such cases to the senior veteran officer present. He was joined in his outcry by two other prominent officers who similarly asserted the right of Borja de Araus ("Carta de..., June 14, 1796," Doc. No. 5425, JMDI, CCXIII). The author has been unable to detect any record of sustained jurisdictional disputes between the regular army and militia; when challenged by civilians, however, they were quick to assert what they felt was their privilege in administering strategic districts.

45Encina, Historia de Chile, V, 439.

more apt to become embroiled in jurisdictional rivalries with other groups, such as merchant guilds or the bureaucracy. Especially in the capital and in urban areas, the army and militia may have been useful mechanisms for social advancement or aristocratic pretensions. As Lyle McAlister points out, acrimonious disputes arose between the army and civilians over the application of military privileges, or fueros. Although McAlister restricts his study principally to militia, the character of urban veteran units seems to follow the same pattern of development: frequent jurisdictional conflicts with competing civilian interest groups.

Chile was a more simple, unsophisticated colony. As the army was largely stationed in inaccessible forts, there was little basis for institutional rivalry or a self-inflated image which could bring on jurisdictional conflicts. Nor did a praetorian tradition emerge. Being immersed in Indian campaigns and purely military matters, officers had little idle time to have their honor affronted by civilians. Instead, the officer corps pursued a more undramatic but

47Ibid., Chapters 3 and 4. 48Ibid. 49In Christon Archer's study of the Mexican coastal garrison of Veracruz, there is further evidence of the hypothesis that proximity to colonial centers of government was conducive to the growth of military prestige and influence. In the Veracruz area disease, terrible living conditions, and poverty combined to deter individuals from using the army as a means of social advancement (Christon I. Archer, "To Serve the King: Military Recruitment in Late Colonial Mexico," HAHR, LV [May, 1975], 226-60).
noteworthy role—that of the protector of Spanish society along the frontier.

This contrasted sharply with the case of Peru, where the absence of internal threats cast the army in a relatively weak role in society. Peruvian viceregal power was traditionally based on the church and civil bureaucracy, and the military reforms of the later Bourbon rulers failed to professionalize the existing veteran forces. The Chilean army was a pervasive and influential factor in the predominately rural south. It was a functional institution, and its importance in preserving Spanish civilization there established it as a vibrant and essential force.

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51 Peruvian military reforms during the second half of the 1700's centered not around the veteran forces, but the civilian militia. The proliferation of new militia units, financially supported by rich creoles, was envisioned by colonial leaders as a means of simultaneously decreasing expenditures and bolstering military readiness. However, neither the veteran army nor the militia proved effective, as shown by their ineffectualness in quelling the Túpac Amaru revolt in the early 1780's (Leon G. Campbell, "The Army of Peru and the Túpac Amaru Revolt, 1780-1783," *HAHR* [February, 1976], 31-57).
Chapter 2

COASTAL DEFENSES

The Indian struggle was an inherent part of the colonial history of Chile, perhaps the single most influential element in the formation of the colonial character. Militarily, the threat of foreign interlopers in the Pacific almost rivaled the frontier war in importance. As a result, nearly half of all veteran troops were stationed along the coasts as a defense against possible invasion. Chileans were thus compromised in combating separate enemies on two fronts—the restive Araucanians in the interior and European intruders along the coasts. Regardless of the manner in which the army was deployed, its back was turned to one of these threats at all times.

To all appearances, it would seem that Chile was amply protected by its own peculiar geography; a number of natural barriers isolated and separated the land even from contiguous Spanish possessions. Chile was thousands of miles distant from Europe, a journey requiring eight to ten months to complete. On the southern flank was Cape Horn, the most formidable obstacle to vessels entering the Pacific. To the east lay the Andes mountains, stretching
almost the entire length of the colony. And to the north was the barren Atacama desert.

Despite these natural defenses, geography was the very undoing of the colony, the impediment which complicated its defense. The 2,300 mile coastline was largely uninhabited and filled with an infinite number of deserted bays and inlets, offering ideal sanctuary to foreign enemies. The extended length of the colony made the supplying of the far-flung garrisons a matter of considerable difficulty, not to mention coordinating army movements and the dispatching of reinforcements. In consideration of these limitations, the Spanish had constructed a number of forts in the principal harbors to counteract the periodic sorties of pirates and the possibility of European naval invasion.

Valparaiso was the principal port of the colony and the focal point of commercial activity. Through its warehouses passed the bulk of Chilean commerce, most notably the wheat shipments to Peru. Its strategic importance was enhanced by its proximity to Santiago, which made it the hub of governmental comings and goings. The bay was capable of holding numerous ships, although it was exposed along the north and northeast to strong winds which buffeted the anchorage, leaving vessels in jeopardy during the fierce winter gales.¹

¹Vicente Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción histórico-geográfica del reino de Chile (Santiago: Libreria del Mercurio, 1875), CHDC, X, 81.
The first defenses of the bay dated from 1676 when the castle of Concepción was constructed, containing eight cannon. In 1684, President José de Garro initiated the construction of the castle of San José at the foot of the high bluffs facing the bay entrance as a precaution against the raids of the English pirate Bartholomew Sharpe. Until the middle of the 1700's, the port was not Valparaiso proper but the castle of San José, which with its ten cannon served as the governor's residence, troop barracks and military warehouse.

By the late 1700's, four forts overlooked the bay. San José and Concepción were located on either side of the bay mouth. Both were hardly more than flimsy batteries, poorly constructed. Two more forts protected the interior of the port: Baron on the north side and San Antonio along the southern shore, the latter constructed to frustrate a possible landing of troops along the beach. In reality, San Antonio was merely a battery situated at water's edge at the base of a high rock bluff, leaving its defenders highly vulnerable in the event of an attack. Both of these forts were incapable of defending the entire scope of the bay and

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2Ibid., 82.

3Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna, Historia de Valparaiso (Valparaiso: Imprenta del Mercurio, 1872), II, 110.

4"Relación que dejó el señor marqués de Avilés, presidente de Chile, a su sucesor el señor Joaquín del Pino, 1796-1797," AUC, XLVII (1875), 452.
could only protect Spanish ships lying at anchor beneath their guns. There were no pilotboats, cannon launches, or other naval vessels which could be used for defense or reconnaissance.

In 1790, the total of Valparaiso's cannon numbered seventy, thirty-seven of which were of bronze. The complement of veteran troops consisted of only one artillery company (40 men), dubiously reinforced by four urban militia companies (a total of 280 men) and a squadron of militia cavalry (134 men), bringing the total force to around 450 men. Valparaiso was regarded as the strongest port of the colony, after Valdivia, and was considered to be reasonably well fortified.

In contrast to Valparaiso, the bay of Concepción was immense, by far the largest in Chile and capable of safely holding the largest naval squadrons. Furthermore, it was the best port along the coast because of its sheltered anchorage and facilities for refitting and revictualing. Concepción was not a commercial center and was thus visited by only two or three merchant ships each year, which took on

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5"Expediente formado sobre...cureñas, 1790," ACM, XCIX. Bronze cannon were stronger than those of iron and were preferred in coastal fortresses as they would not rust.

6Vicuña Mackenna, Historia de Valparaiso, II, 114.

7Amadeo Francisco Frezier, Relación del viaje por el mar del sur a las costas de Chile i el Peru durante los años de 1712, 1713, i 1714 (Santiago: Imprenta Mejia, 1902), 12.
board modest quantities of wine and wheat for export.

Although an excellent port, the bay was so vast in size that defense was rendered almost impossible. One governor noted that because of the bay's expanse and the numerous anchorages, "... total defense is morally impossible." In view of this fact, the Spanish contented themselves with constructing several batteries at key positions overlooking the major anchorages. Merchant vessels could thus be protected against a lone corsair or two, but not against an invasion taskforce.

The mouth of the bay was almost blocked by the island of Quiriquina. On its south side, the pass was only deep enough to permit entry of shallow draft lighters. The northern pass was a full two miles wide but defended by only a small battery on Quiriquina. While most ship captains preferred to enter the bay to the north by sailing close to the shelter of the island, the middle of the channel was also navigable. This would allow an enemy to enter almost out of cannon range. Inside the bay was another coastal battery near the site of the original settlement of Concepción. The new town was located inland to the south, just off the harbor between the Bio Bio and Andalibién rivers.

8"Sobre Reparo..., 1763," ACG, DCCVII, 18.

9Melchor Martinez, Memoria histórica sobre la revolución de Chile, desde el cautiverio de Fernando VII, hasta 1814 (Valparaíso: Imprenta Europea, 1848), 266.

10"Sobre Reparo..., 1763," ACG, DCCVII, 18.
Another battery protected the wharf and main anchorage in front of the village of Talcahuano, a small cluster of huts and warehouses which became the principal port of Concepción.\(^{11}\) This battery was of no practical use because enemy ships could anchor at any number of points to the north, facilitating the safe landing of troops out of gun range. An isthmus of land separated Concepción bay from a much smaller bay, overlooked from surrounding bluffs by the rude settlement of San Vicente. It too, was a good port and defended by a battery, but this defense could not prevent troops from landing on the far side of the bay.\(^{12}\) Both settlements had little more than a few dozen residents at most, and could thus be regarded as only token defenses against a determined foe.

The veteran forces of Concepción consisted of a single company of artillerymen, augmented by several rustic militia and artillery companies. As in the case of Valparaíso, these were considered to be grossly insufficient for the needs of the port. A positive factor was the proximity of the bay to the frontier infantry headquarters in Los Angeles and to troops stationed along the chain of frontier forts. With these troops and militia from the nearby settlements, it was judged possible to amass over 1,000 men to the bay area in less than twenty-four hours.\(^{13}\)

\(^{11}\)Ibid.  \(^{12}\)"Relación que dejó...," AUC, XLVII, 454.  
\(^{13}\)Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, X, 95.
Valdivia occupied a very special position in the scheme of Chilean defense, and was often referred to in military correspondence of the time as the "key to the kingdom" and "stronghold of the Pacific." Not only did it comprise the strongest and most extensive fortification works of the colony, but was comparable in strategic importance to such fortresses as Callao and Panama. Although it could not rival the labrynthian fortifications of Cartagena, Valdivia was the primary defense of the southern Pacific and the guardian against foreign incursions around Cape Horn. A complex of seventeen castles and batteries with over one hundred cannon ringed the entire bay. The Spanish had expended enormous sums of money to accomplish these ends. One source estimated that from its refounding in 1645 until 1750, over 36 million pesos were consumed in the construction of defenses and fortifications.

The bay was broad, and according to one estimate was capable of holding up to twenty large ships at one time, along with numerous others of smaller size. Around the southern perimeter were high bluffs upon which rested the most formidable works, well above the fire from enemy

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15 Memorias de los vireyes que han gobernado el Peru, durante el tiempo del coloniaje español (Lima: Librería Central de Felipe Bailly, 1859), VI, 305.
16 Martínez, Memoria histórica, 262-63.
17 "La verdad..., 1782," AFA, XXV, 1.
vessels. To the north of the bay, eleven miles upstream along the winding Valdivia and Tornagaleones rivers, was the city of Valdivia, accessible to deep draft vessels. While the bay was spacious, the many sand bars, shifting currents and prevailing winds dictated that ships must maneuver and anchor only in specific areas. With this in mind, the Spanish had taken detailed soundings of the entire harbor floor in order to ascertain where vessels could navigate and consequently, where forts should be constructed (see Map 4). The positioning of each cannon and reduct was the result of meticulous calculation, with the knowledge that a single weak point could be crucial in the control of the entire bay. There were three areas of defense: the entrance to the bay, the anchorage, and the city and its approaches.

The southern side of the bay entrance was guarded by several fortifications, the first of which was the lookout post of Morrogonzalo on the promontory at the very edge of the sea. As it was the most forward position, a sentry was continuously posted here to detect the approach of enemy vessels. Next in line toward the bay was Aguada del Inglés, a small reduct initially consisting of three cannon. It was situated on a rocky cliff to impede a troop disembarkation along the beach. It possessed a protective ditch, parapet and a barracks capable of housing 80 men. The

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18Ibid., 7.

19Gabriel Guarda, La toma de Valdivia (Santiago: Zig Zag, 1970), 37.
Map 4

The Bay and Fortress Complex of Valdivia*

*Atlas de don Lázaro de Rivera. Sala Medina, Biblioteca Nacional.
fort of San Carlos was constructed by the engineer Juan Birt in 1762 on a tiny peninsula defended by up to twelve 24-calibre cannon and a furnace for turning out red hot shot. As it was a key to the bay entrance, the presence of a 100-man garrison was considered imperative, although the actual number never approached this figure.

To the side of San Carlos was the battery of El Barro, constructed in 1687 and provided with two barracks capable of housing 100 troops. Its ten cannon were positioned in such a manner as to flank the entire beach and land approaches to Aguada del Inglés, preventing a force from taking the forts from the rear. At the narrowest point of the bay entrance was the castle of Amargos, mounting twelve 24-calibre cannon. Like San Carlos, Amargos possessed an oven for red hot shot. Built under the direction of the Conde de Alba y Liste in 1677, the structure was imposing. Its cannon pointed towards the pass to cross fire with those of Niebla on the opposite side of the bay. Completing the defenses of the southern approach was Chorocamayo Bajo, a light battery of six cannon designed to complement the fire from Amargos.

It was between Morrogonzalo and Aguada del Inglés that an enemy landing was deemed most likely. In positioning

20 "La verdad..., 1782," AFA, XXV, 19.
22 Ibid., 340.
guns to cover the land flanks of this area, the Spanish were aided by the rocky shoreline, which afforded no smooth beaches for disembarkation. From Aguada all along this portion of the coast was undergrowth so dense that the garrison troops were accustomed to by-pass this route by water. Cannon fire from Aguada, El Barro and Chorocamayo Bajo was designed to rake the shore line with shot and gain valuable time until infantry reinforcements could be brought to bear on the threatened area. These reinforcements, combined with the uneven terrain and undergrowth through which the enemy must pass, could ideally stall a frontal attack until the enemy's ammunition was exhausted. The guns from these batteries were also designed to defend the flanks of Amargos, which jutting seaward with its cannon facing the bay mouth was exposed to attack from the rear.

Initiating the line of defenses along the northern shore of the bay entrance was the battery of El Molino, analogous in location to Morrogonzalo on the southern shore. Constructed in 1779 with four 24-calibre cannon, its function was to prevent an infantry landing along the narrow beach at its front, from which Niebla could be stormed from the rear. El Molino overlooked the only beach along the rocky shore line and was naturally defended by currents and undertows which made troop disembarkation a dangerous undertaking. The fort of Niebla was situated on the northern side

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23 Ibid., 341.  
24 Ibid., 343.
of the narrow strait leading to the harbor. During the 1760's, it mounted approximately nineteen cannon, which were positioned to present a deadly cross fire with Amargos, directly across the strait.25

An enemy assault by sea would be forced to actually penetrate the harbor. In order to accomplish this it would be necessary to sail close to the shore line in the initial approach to avoid the dangerous currents which swept up the coast from the south, all the while exposed to fire from the southern perimeter forts. A precise channel existed by which ships could enter the narrow strait, being forced to pass between the rocky coast of Niebla and the large sand bars in the center of the bay.26 It was inconceivable to the Spanish that a ship could maneuver through the channel, unfamiliar with its peculiar currents and winds, while simultaneously enduring cannon barrages from Amargos and Niebla.

Assuming an invading squadron passed the strait intact, it faced the second area of defense--the bay. The anchorages were of special importance, for although the harbor could hold a number of ships, these could safely anchor at only certain points. A roadstead existed in front

25Vicente Rodríguez Casado and Florentino Pérez Embid (eds.), Memoria de gobierno del virrey Amat (Sevilla: Editorial Católica, 1947), 651-52.

26Jorge Juan and Antonio de Ulloa, Noticias secretas de América (Madrid: Editorial Madrid, 1918), I, 66.
of Niebla capable of holding two or three vessels but was unused as it was exposed to strong winds which could drive ships onto the rocky shore. The only secure anchorage was the inlet sheltered by high bluffs in front of the castle of Corral. This fort was originally composed of three separate units: Argolla, the northern portion; San Sebastián, the southern reduct; and La Cortina, the great wall that joined both into a single structure. The walls were defended by twenty to thirty 24-calibre cannon which could be loaded with red hot shot, making this the most formidable structure on the bay. The walls of the interior fort were over 110 feet wide and nearly 20 feet high. Inside were stone barracks spacious enough for 200 troops.

To the immediate west of Corral was the battery of Bolson, which mounted nine cannon and pointed towards the anchorage. Atop the bluffs to the west of Bolson was Chorocamayo Alto, the most strategically placed battery of all with a minimum of six to a maximum of seventeen cannon. Its elevated position rendered it immune to fire from ships, while at the same time giving the gunners a clear field of

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27 Ibid., 66.
28 Guarda, La toma de Valdivia, 36.
29 "La verdad..., 1782," AFA, XXV, 2.
30 Guarda, La toma de Valdivia, 36.
31 Ibid.
fire over all ships transiting the bay from the entrance to the anchorage. In addition to furnaces for red hot shot, this battery was armed with chain cannon balls, used to dismast enemy vessels.

The third area of defense was that of Valdivia and the approaches to the city. To the southeast of Corral was the battery of Santa Rosa, defending the entrance to the inlet of San Juan. The island of Mancera was located midway between the mouths of the Valdivia and Tornagaleones rivers, with three forts to block upstream traffic. San Pedro de Alcántara, founded in 1645, became the principal fort but was later abandoned in 1779. In the extreme southwest of the island was Baides, defending the entrance to the Tornagaleones River, but likewise dismantled in 1748. Another battery of eight cannon rested upon a hill facing towards Corral.

Guarding the entrance to the Valdivia River on the Niebla side was the battery of Piojo with two 24-calibre cannon. On the other side of the river lay Carboneros, with three cannon. These batteries were normally manned only in times of impending attack. It was believed that without possession of the city an invader would soon exhaust his supplies and be forced to abandon the bay.

32Martínez, Memoria histórica, 262.
33Guarda, La toma de Valdivia, 32.
34"La verdad..., 1782," AFA, XXV, 4.
To the infrequent merchant ships entering the bay, the sight of over one hundred cannon must have certainly presented a formidable, if not fearsome, appearance. Yet, Valdivia possessed a certain contradictory quality. On the one hand, it was Spain's bastion in the south Pacific, where great sums of money had been spent in erecting fortifications. On the other hand, the city and garrison were dependent for survival on an annual supply ship, while the infantry battalion was composed of rogues and convicts. These were only two of the flaws which undermined Valdivia's defense.

In terms of the deployment of defenses there were visible shortcomings. The island of Mancera, which ideally should have been almost invulnerable, was considered accessible on nearly every side except that which faced the anchorage. This was due to the faulty positioning of its cannon. It was considered useless as a defensive position. Actually, the batteries of Piojo and Carboneros were originally constructed to protect Mancera, rather than defend the Valdivia River against ships sailing upstream. Amargos similarly presented a weak field of fire because its guns pointed away from the land, leaving open the possibility of a flanking attack by foot soldiers. And Niebla was regarded by a number of tacticians as obsolete. In their opinion, its location so far forward on a point of land subjected it to enfilades of fire down its entire length.

35 "Sobre Reparo..., 1763," ACG, DCCVII, 12.
from ships passing between it and Mancera.  

Finally, in 1765, an officer of the garrison, Pablo de la Cruz y Contreras, noted ten points inside the bay where troops could be landed without being menaced by cannon fire.  

In view of the many batteries encircling the bay, it was logical to assume that an enemy would not dare to venture into the harbor to meet the onslaught of massed cannon but would land on the shore behind them, taking the forts one by one. This was perhaps the most obvious weakness of the entire complex. The engineering officer Juan Mackenna reflected in 1810 that the forts on the southern perimeter were so isolated and helpless with their guns facing toward the sea that an enemy force of 400 to 500 men could disembark behind San Carlos on the beach of Aguada del Inglés with relative safety. By then advancing along the heights behind the forts, these troops could catch the Spanish completely exposed to their fire and force them to surrender.  

Ten years later, the invading squadron of Lord Thomas Cochrane took Valdivia by duplicating this strategy. Cochrane landed 600 men from two ships in front of Aguada del Inglés, who took the entire succession of forts in less than two days.

A key to the protection of the bay was the cannon

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36 Martinez, Memoria histórica, 262.
37 Guarda, La toma de Valdivia, 50.
38 Martinez, Memoria histórica, 262.
cross fire from the various forts, which could saturate approaching vessels from two sides. In particular, the Spanish regarded the cannon trajectories from Niebla, Amargos and Mancera as a theoretically deadly triangle of cross fire against any hostile warship. Among the proponents of this cross fire theory was the military engineer Olaguer Felitú, who claimed the power of the guns was such that shots from these forts could cross to the other side of the bay, "... their balls ricocheting or rebounding on the opposite shores." And yet, the distances within the bay were such that one may seriously doubt whether the Spanish were secure in their logic, if not flatly deceived by the judgment of Olaguer. Over one full mile of water separated Amargos and Niebla, the narrowest point of the bay entrance. In addition, Niebla was separated from Corral by a distance of a mile and a half. In any attempt to force the bay entrance by an enemy, gunners from either fort would be forced to fire at moving targets over half a mile away with a high degree of accuracy. Considerable damage could be wrought in this manner, but crippling the aggressor in his passage of the straits is questionable.

The answers to these and similar questions went largely unanswered, for the bay was not besieged during the

39 "Informe sobre la defensa..., 1807," AMG, C.

40 The maximum range of eighteenth-century cannon was roughly one mile. (Albert Manucy, Artillery through the Ages [U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., Reprint, 1956]), 32.
eighteenth century. One element was certain, however. The weakest link in Valdivia's defense was not the ring of stone fortifications but the troops who manned them. The entire concept of the bay's defense revolved around the coordination of artillery fire and the mobility of troops in moving to threatened landing points, maneuvers involving infinite skill and precision. These qualities were almost absent because of the low quality of the average soldier and the woefully insufficient number of troops. At some point in his administration, nearly every governor voiced the urgent need for increased numbers of troops. The garrison force of four to five hundred infantry barely sufficed for protection of the forts themselves, not counting the many support troops which would be necessary to repel an invasion. In February, 1796, a defense council in Spain concluded that a minimum of 1,200 combat troops would be needed to thwart an enemy landing.41

As heavy ordinance constituted the principal weaponry of Valdivia, it was essential that enough qualified artillerymen be kept on hand for any contingency. The artillery squadron of Valdivia consisted of only six master gunners and seventeen artillerymen, a somewhat ludicrous number when considering that they were charged with the operation and firing of over one hundred cannon.42 When

41"Oficio del..., February 18, 1796," Doc. No. 9096, JMDI, CCLXLV, 118.
42"Razon de los Sueldos..., 1800," ACM, XLIX, No. 7.
Captain Tomás O'Higgins inspected the fortress in 1797, he expressed the most severe reservations as to the garrison's ability to repel an enemy. He noted that the cannon were loaded and ready but that should an attack occur, "... these could not be counted with more than one shot for each cannon." In this statement, he was referring to the deficiencies of the artillerymen, not the capacity of the cannon. It was this substandard quality of the troops and their insufficient numbers which comprised the real vulnerability of Valdivia.

The province of Chiloé was the southernmost stronghold of the Spanish, the very first line of defense against enemy ships rounding Cape Horn. The arduous journey from Europe was of such duration that even if a corsair stopped in the Azores or along the Atlantic coast of South America, the first objective after entering the Pacific was normally that of putting in at a sheltered inlet to obtain fresh food and water. Not only would Chiloé serve as a temporary shelter, it would also provide an excellent base of operations against Valdivia or other ports along the coast. The Spanish realized that with so few vessels at their disposal, this island fortress might be nearly impossible to retake if

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43"Viaje de ... Tomás de O'Higgins, 1796-1797," AFA, XXXIII, 11.
overrun by an enemy.\textsuperscript{44} With the implementation of registry shipping in the Pacific during the 1740's, the island came to be regarded as an especially likely target for visit by enemy vessels.

The archipelago of Chiloé consisted of over one thousand small islands, but the only one of importance was Isla Grande, an elongated island paralleling the mainland and separated from it by a broad channel of water. The western or seaward side contained no settlements, but along the sheltered eastern shore were three fortified positions: Castro, Chacao and San Carlos.

The fort of San Carlos was constructed in a well-sheltered inlet of the Bay of Lacuy, along the northern shore of Isla Grande. It consisted of stone walls with parapets and positions for up to twenty-four cannon.\textsuperscript{45} After 1767, it was the chief fortress of the island, housing the provincial government, royal officials and governor. As the only port of Chiloé directly exposed to the Pacific, it was thought to be the most likely target for attack.\textsuperscript{46}

To the east of San Carlos lay the fort of Chacao on

\textsuperscript{44}In 1767, the president of Chile acknowledged the receipt of communiqués from Spain warning of possible English attacks in the Pacific. According to Spanish intelligence sources, the English planned to establish a base not on the mainland, but on the islands between Chiloé and the Strait of Magellan ("El Gobernador..., February 23, 1767," Doc. No. 4566, JMDI, CLXLIV, 25).

\textsuperscript{45}Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, X, 317.

\textsuperscript{46}Martínez, Memoria histórica, 261.
the southern shore of the narrow Chacao Channel, which separated Chiloé from the mainland. It was through this strait that boats passed to reach settlements on the eastern side of the island. A small fort and a few cannon were posted here, although the chief deterrent to attack was the powerful current which rushed through the straits at great velocity. The town of Castro was located in the center of the island's eastern side. The fort there was likewise a very minor structure with several cannon overlooking the anchorage. In addition to these defenses, there was another fort named Calbuco located on a small island to the northeast of Isla Grande, just off the mainland. It defended the northern shore of the Chacao Channel and acted as a communication outpost with the mainland. Its only population was the military garrison and families of the troops.

During most of the 1700's, the veteran forces on Chiloé consisted of one dragoon company (53 men) defending San Carlos and Chacao, an infantry company (53 men) stationed in Calbuco, and an artillery company (33 men) in San Carlos. Late in the 1700's, these forces were increased substantially to battalion force, or around 400 troops. The militia

47Ibid. 317. 48Ibid., 316.
49"Relación que..., February 15, 1773," Doc. No. 7491, JMDI, CCLIX, 131-32.
50"Discurso que hace..., 1782," Doc. No. 7492, JMDI, CCLIX, 254.
comprised 23 companies, or a total of 680 cavalry and 1,145 infantry.  

The island of Juan Fernández served as a fortress not from any intrinsic value of the land but because its location on the same latitude as Valparaiso could make it attractive as a base for enemy vessels preying upon Spanish shipping. Discovered in 1585 by the explorer Antonio Veci and his pilot, Juan Fernández, the island remained deserted and forgotten until the 1740's when Lord Anson's English squadron used it to repair their damaged ships. Alarmed that the island might be used as a base for foreign intervention in the Pacific, the Spanish crown instructed President Ortiz y Rozas to colonize and fortify it with all the resources at his disposal. In March of 1750, a ship departed from Valparaiso carrying the island's first colonists—one infantry company, 171 settlers, and 22 convict laborers.

The island was fortified along its eastern shore, which was somewhat sheltered from strong winds and offered several small bays in which ships could anchor. By 1800,

51 Carlos Olguín, Instituciones políticas y administrativas de Chiloé en el siglo XVIII (Santiago: Editorial Jurídica, 1970), 95, 97.

52 Thaddeus P. Haenke, Descripción del reino de Chile (Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1942), 67.

53 Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, Juan Fernández, historia verdadera de la isla de Robinson Crusoe (Santiago: Rafael Jover, 1883), 269-70.
some forty-one cannon protected the eastern side, arranged in seven batteries from Puerto Francés to Puerto Inglés.\(^{54}\) There were two gunpowder storehouses, several clusters of houses for the troops and settlers and the fort of Santa Barbara. Normally, one company of troops from the frontier infantry battalion served there, being augmented in times of danger by one or two additional companies. Through necessity and custom, the convicts incarcerated there also served as soldiers and were armed when the occasion demanded.

That the island should remain fortified was seldom in question; it would offer a prime base of operations for the infrequent incursions of corsairs. However, there was no consensus on the role of Juan Fernández in the scheme of Chilean defense; that is, defense against foreign aggression.\(^{55}\) For this reason, only a detachment of troops were stationed there to maintain token sovereignty. While the Spanish presence did prevent the island from being utilized as a European base, it could in no way safeguard other parts of the colony. It is ironic that the nearby island of Mas Afuera became a well-known haunt of foreign seal hunters and whalers.

These were the coastal defenses of the colony. In providing for the maintenance and security of these positions, the Spanish faced a number of formidable obstacles.

\(^{54}\)Ibid., 376.  
Letter of O'Higgins, Santiago, October 1, 1794, AMV, XXI, 136.
The most acute of these was the financing of fortifications, a persistent preoccupation not only in Chile but in all of Spanish America. Defense was an ambiguous concept, contingent not so much upon actual need but upon the availability of royal funds; the recommendations made by a procession of visiting military engineers and technical experts were never fulfilled intact, but normally served as a set of priorities from which only the most pressing project might be selected. Their meticulous charts and prolific analyses were largely ignored by governors who strove to balance their slim budgets against royal exhortations to maintain an ever-vigilant defense. So insistent was the crown in trimming military expenditures that Chilean troops were normally forced to pay for their own uniforms, so that when President Ambrosio Benavides broke precedent in the 1780's by presenting each soldier with a complete, free uniform, one officer observed that "... this grace is not frequent in that land."

As long as the colony was preoccupied by an intermittent Indian war, virtually no amount of royal money could secure the coast, because the simultaneous need to maintain the frontier garrisons split and diffused the veteran troops. During the frequent intervals when Spain was involved in

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56 "Informe expedido..., March, 1793," Doc. No. 5300, JMDI, CCXI, 35.

57 Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, X, 424.
continental wars, it was commonplace for the coastal forces to be considerably reinforced against a possible invasion. This could be done only by reducing the frontier forts to mere skeleton garrisons. One of the most calamitous prospects of a president was the possibility of a simultaneous Indian uprising and the presence of foreign ships along the coast. This condition of splintered forces and a two-front war prevented the army from containing either threat with any degree of success.

It was also feared that European enemies might capitalize on the Indian animosity by making an alliance against the Spanish. President O'Higgins was especially mindful of this possibility, urging the Intendant of Chiloé:

In all of your activities, particular care should be lent to ascertaining if foreigners initiate communication with the Indians. You should continually warn them of the cunning, deceit, and intentions they have of establishing settlements along the coasts, for the purpose of illicit trade or perhaps to invade these lands.\(^{58}\)

One of the primary Spanish objectives in the parliaments with the Indians was to obtain pledges of alliance or at least their acquiescence in the eventuality of European invasion. At such times when war was declared in Europe, the major Indian chiefs were sought out in order to obtain their

\[^{58}\text{O'Higgins to the Intendant of Chiloé, Santiago, November 5, 1791, ACG, DCCLXXXII, 490.}\]
verbal support against the enemies of the crown.59 The doubtful nature of Indian loyalties added another dimension to the insecurity of the colony. Because the Indians could not be trusted, colonial leaders wavered uncertainly between armed aggression and overtures of peace, depending on the magnitude of foreign threat.

Leaders of the colony were all too aware of the position of weakness from which they dealt. In his discourse concerning the defense of Chile in 1806, the secretary of government Judas Tadeo Reyes was of the opinion that:

It must be surmised that it is physically impossible to maintain the necessary defenses in the extension of nearly six hundred leagues of open coasts with innumerable ports, coves and inlets that compose the colony. Even confining ourselves to the most important fortified points of Valdivia, Talcahuano, Valparaíso, city of La Serena and islands of Juan Fernández, we are totally exposed for lack of proportionate garrisons.60

Discounting the threat of individual corsairs, it was believed that a coordinated invasion would consist of several thousand well-armed troops with their accompanying baggage and artillery, abundant munitions, and with the intent of establishing a permanent foothold in the Pacific.61 With its forces dispersed along the frontier or in isolated

59 "El Presidente..., October 8, 1780," Doc. No. 4752, JMDI, CLXLVII, 142-47.
60 "Informe sobre..., September 14, 1806," AV, CCXXXVII, 12.
61 Ibid., 14.
pockets in the coast, the Chilean army would have been obliged to meet the enemy from a definite position of weakness.

Cognizant of the many points of entry along the coast and the limited number of troops on hand, colonial military officers followed the principle of concentrating the available forces among only the most vital ports. Spanish strategists were of a like opinion. During a meeting of the royal junta de fortificaciones in Madrid in 1805, one of the topics submitted for consideration was the possibility of fortifying Paposo, a deserted bay near Antofagasta. The junta resolved that it would be folly to fortify the bay, not only because of the great costs involved, but also because this would only present an enemy with another enticement for sacking and pillage. Besides spreading the chain of defenses even thinner, it could only offer additional incentive to corsairs who otherwise would have had no reason to anchor along the empty coast. 62

The crux of the defense problem was the lack of adequate Spanish sea power in the Pacific, which left merchant shipping vulnerable to pirates and the coasts unprotected against contrabandists. This also rendered the fortresses subject to extended enemy sieges, with little fear of naval retaliation or reinforcement by sea. A

62 "La Junta de..., February 17, 1805," Doc. No. 5584, JMDI, CCXVIII.
permanent naval squadron was the only means of changing the
defensive stance to an offensive capability. Such a task-force did not necessarily have to be large, as the most
frequent acts of belligerency were the raids of individual
pirate vessels. However, the squadron had to be free of all
duties extraneous to those of patrolling the sea.

As with the system of fortifications, the scarcity
of funds was the overriding obstacle to the creation of a
Pacific squadron. The Spanish navy possessed too few war­
ships of its own for the European and Mediterranean theaters
of action, and could not relinquish ships to the relatively
peaceful Pacific Ocean. Those royal warships which visited
Chilean and Peruvian ports from time to time came for a
specific purpose: to conduct situados, to deliver mail, or
to transport military supplies from Spain. There were
shipyards along the coast, notably in Guayaquil where most
of the ships along the Pacific coast were built.\textsuperscript{63} In
Chile, shipyards operated irregularly at Chiloé, Valdivia
and Concepción. One source found that between 1784 and 1811,
a total of seventeen ships were constructed in these ports.\textsuperscript{64}

In view of the availability of timber resources, it seems
that the major factor inhibiting the creation of a squadron
was the cost of construction and maintenance. According to
the computations of Viceroy Amat, a frigate of twenty-six

\textsuperscript{63}Juan and Ulloa, Noticias secretas, I, 78.

\textsuperscript{64}Vicuña Mackenna, Historia de Valparaiso, II,
136–37.
cannon and a crew of 267 men consumed 5,886 pesos each month, an amount which the Peruvian treasury could not afford.65

During the 1750's, the naval force was composed of two vessels, the Esperanza, of fifty cannon, and the San Permin, of forty cannon. Their armament came from two other ships and several galleys in the Guayaquil shipyard, which were found inserviceable and stripped of all useful materials. These ships proved grossly inadequate for their intended use. Thus, when English warships were at one point rumored to be in the Pacific, both vessels were promptly anchored in Callao harbor to augment the cannon fire from the forts, and were of no use in patrolling the coasts.66

The general tenor of naval defense remained roughly similar to this throughout the following decades. Possessing no war vessels of their own, Chileans were forced to accept the decisions of the viceroy regarding the movements of warships and their patrol routes. This proved to be a source of irritation to the presidents. In 1780, President Tomás Alvarez de Acevedo complained to Minister of the Indies José de Galvez, concerning the naval squadron then in Valparaíso. He protested that the squadron commander communicated his actions in Chilean waters either to the viceroy or to the crown; thus, he felt there was no

65Rodríguez and Pérez (eds.), Memoria del virrey Amat, 795.
66Memorias de los vireyes, IV, 262, 265.
coordination in the use of these forces or in protecting those areas considered important by Chileans.\(^7\) It was not that authorities in Lima viewed the coasts of southern Chile with anything but the highest esteem. However, with the limited naval forces on hand, it naturally seemed more important to assure the security of the Peruvian coasts in the event of military crisis.

In the 1790's, Viceroy Gil de Taboada y Lemus envisioned the formation of a true squadron of warships capable of dealing with any threat on the part of foreign powers. The plan centered around two existing war frigates, the Limeño and the Peruano (each with eighteen cannon), two additional vessels whose construction had been approved by the king, and an additional frigate or two from the royal navy. These would be reinforced by several armed merchant vessels, bringing the total force to fifteen.\(^8\) Obstructed by high costs and a scarcity of men and material, the project never reached fruition. Several years later, the sea force was again found to be reduced to two bergantines.\(^9\) These sufficed in times of peace and for routine police duty but were completely insufficient to deal with the influx

\(^{67}\) "El Presidente..., September 7, 1780," Doc. No. 4755, CLXLVII, 154-55.

\(^{68}\) Memorias de los vireyes, VI, 306-307.

\(^{69}\) Ricardo Donoso, El marqués de Osorno, don Ambrosio O'Higgins, 1721-1801 (Santiago: Imprenta Universitaria, 1941), 467-68.
of foreign whalers and contrabandists, which by that time had proliferated throughout the Pacific.

The saving grace of the colony was the fact that an invasion never came during the eighteenth century. The English and other enemies of Spain were enmeshed in European conflicts and were either disinterested or too preoccupied with other matters to undertake a Pacific venture of any magnitude. As the colonial era neared its conclusion, the major concern became not the possibility of invasion, but aggressive foreign entrepreneurs and smugglers intent on breaking down trade restrictions of the empire. Chile's principal defenses remained its geographic inaccessibility, its isolation, and general European apathy towards this remote colony.
Chapter 3

FOREIGN THREATS IN THE PACIFIC

On entering the eighteenth century, Spain left behind the guilded age of its European grandeur and the zenith of its world power. It had taken only a century from the union of Castile and Aragon until the annexation of Portugal (1479-1580) to achieve European supremacy and likewise, only another century (1598-1700) to descend to the status of a second-rate monarchy.\(^1\) The accession of the French Bourbons to the Spanish throne in 1700 heralded a new era of renewed political strength and a revitalized economic life, culminating in the enlightened reign of Charles III. However, the recovery was a slow and painful process. The first decades of the century were characterized by rebuilding, renovation, and the patient eradication of Hapsburg traditionalism.

Concurrent with the plight of the peninsula, Spanish America was also in the throes of severe crisis. The colonies found themselves challenged in their long-standing monopoly of Indies wealth by the English and other European

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adversaries. This challenge was manifested not only through military aggression but by subtle trading and smuggling, which drained the colonies of their coveted wealth and weakened the ties of royalism. The cracks in the superstructure of Spanish colonial power were not so much attributable to inherent weaknesses within the Indies, but to the diminishing power of the mother country and the concessions which it was forced to make to its victorious enemies. The implications of these political and territorial concessions were profound and destined to give Chile a new character in the scheme of colonial enterprise.

The War of Spanish Succession (1702-1713) was the initial testing of Spain's declining international prestige and set a precedent for repeated colonial concessions which it would be required to make to the victors of European struggles. As victors over the combined French and Spanish forces, the English were able to extract from the latter an invaluable agreement concerning trade and commercial privileges in America. This was the asiento, or the right of the English to be the sole suppliers of Negro slaves to Spanish America for a period of thirty years. The asiento trade was assigned to the South Sea Company, which through a network of agents in colonial ports became a front for

widespread contrabanding.\textsuperscript{3}

With the outbreak of war between Britain and Spain in 1739, the company was ejected from the colonies. However, the firm foothold which it had established opened the door to a proliferation of smuggling in less conspicuous American ports. During the ensuing decades, the popularity of these new commercial areas rose to the point where Spanish anxieties over the monopoly of the South American and Pacific trades equaled those felt earlier in the century for their possessions in the Caribbean and Central America.\textsuperscript{4}

Another cause of the increasing importance of the Pacific colonies was the decline of the commercial fleet system originated by the Hapsburgs and its replacement with a more vigorous, competitive system known as registry shipping. Moribund by 1700, the fleet system was briefly revived in 1720, but soon fell afoul of the largely illegal competition of the English and the maritime confrontations which resulted.\textsuperscript{5} The War of Jenkin's Ear, beginning in 1739, because of one such confrontation, brought an end to all efforts to revive the old system.\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{3}Vera Lee Brown, "Contraband Trade: A Factor in the Decline of Spain's Empire in America," \textit{HAHR}, VIII, No. 2 (May, 1928), 179-80.

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 189.

\textsuperscript{5}For a description of the fleet system routes see C. H. Haring, \textit{The Spanish Empire in America} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), 325-26.

\textsuperscript{6}Valentin Vásquez de Prada, "Las rutas comerciales entre España y América en el siglo XVIII," \textit{AEA}, XXV (1968), 208.
In 1740, all fleet traffic was suspended and replaced by a system of registered ships sailing from Cadiz to specific ports in America. While merchant monopolists were later successful in reinstituting the Veracruz fleet (which sailed intermittently from 1757 until its demise in 1789), in only a few short years, the dominance of registry shipping over its aging counterpart was an acknowledged fact. As the range of privileges was gradually extended to more Spanish American ports and as intercolonial trade became sanctioned, heretofore marginal regions of the Venezuelan coast, the Windward Islands and Buenos Aires experienced unprecedented commercial expansion.

One of the most preferential locales for registry shipping in South America was the La Plata area, but a considerable number of ships risked crossing Cape Horn to reach Chilean and Peruvian ports. From a military standpoint, the increased levels of commercial traffic in the Pacific intensified the threat of corsairs and enemy warships. Considering the traditional absence of a Spanish Pacific squadron, there was very little that could be done

7 Haring, op. cit., 336-37.


9 According to Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, between 1743 and 1748 no less than eighteen chartered vessels arrived at Callao, alone (Vicuña Mackenna, Historia de Valparaiso, II, 34).
to counteract the entry of Europeans in these waters. In the following decades, the Pacific was to experience a tremendous upsurge of foreign traffic among not only smugglers and traders but enemy vessels in search of registry ships and bases for raiding. This increased traffic changed Chile's military status within the empire.

Within the scope of Spain's New World possessions, Chile was traditionally not one of the more critical areas of defense, nor was it an important territorial pawn which changed hands frequently during the course of the colonial period. Isolated as it was from both the mother country and its foes, Chile occupied a modest niche in the overall scheme of colonial domain—that of a link in preserving the Pacific coast as Spanish territory.

The fundamental strategic role of the colony in the Spanish orb was its relationship with the viceroyalty; Chile served as the southern defense perimeter of Peru and the first line defense against enemies rounding Cape Horn.\(^\text{10}\) In analyzing the defense of his vast jurisdiction in 1796, Viceroy Gil de Taboada y Lemus isolated three potential threats. The first and most genuine threat came from foreign invasion and piratical incursions along the coast. The second came from insurrection on the part of the Peruvian Indians inhabiting the sierra, many of whom still harbored vengeance towards the Spanish for the subjugation

\(^{10}\text{Memorias de los vireyes, V, 161.}\)
of their race. (It is noteworthy that the viceroy held the foreign threat uppermost in his mind over that of Indian revolt, despite the recent Túpac Amaru rebellion.) The third area of concern was the weak Spanish grasp over the borderlands and the volatile nature of the Indian tribes living there. While he considered this as the least hazardous of the three, he treated it with equal precaution in the knowledge that Spain's enemies were ever-vigilant in exploiting Indian resentment to further their territorial acquisitions. He pointed out that the Portuguese had capitalized on this animosity in the Sacramento area (which he feared might eventually lead to a confrontation with Spain). 11

Gil's analysis reflected the general consensus among a succession of Peruvian viceroys that foreign incursions did indeed constitute the chief danger to their domains. Accordingly, coastal defense became the overriding military concern during their administrations. Chile occupied a position of prime importance in this overall strategy. 12 Viceroy Gil enumerated six critical points of coastal defense through the viceroyalty: Valdivia; Chiloé; Juan Fernández; Valparaiso; Panama; and Guayaquil. 13 It is

11 Ibid., VI, 304.
12 Rodríguez and Pérez (eds.), Memoria del virrey Amat, 650.
13 Memorias de los vireyes, VI, 305.
significant that four of these six areas were in Chile. Despite the financial drain occasioned by these fortresses, the cost was considered well spent if it prevented their being used as bases for foreign enemies.

Chile was a focal point of Peruvian interest in another manner: the rich valleys of central Chile provided Lima with the bulk of the wheat which it consumed. In this particular commercial relationship, the traditional role of dependency was reversed as Chile assumed a degree of economic hegemony over the Peruvian viceroys.

The volume of this trade was impressive—about 100,000 fanegas were imported annually through the port of Callao.\textsuperscript{14} Despite this quantity, importation never reached the level of internal demand due to opposition from Peruvian economic interests, especially the desires of domestic agrarianists for a government protectionist policy against imported wheat. As a result of crown rulings in 1775 and 1785, Chilean grains were freed from maritime duties. Importation increased to between 150,000 and 200,000 fanegas annually.\textsuperscript{15} For example, from September, 1788, until September, 1789, 199,337 fanegas of Chilean wheat entered Callao, carried by fifteen ships making a total of twenty-four trips.\textsuperscript{16}


\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, 179.

\textsuperscript{16}Vicuña Mackenna, \textit{Historia de Valparaiso}, II, 161.
Peru's grain dependency also had military ramifications. As long as Peruvians were dependent on imported grains, the severing of the trade routes by corsairs could have serious consequences. In the eventuality that a naval squadron besieged Callao, the city of Lima could be strangled by the capture of ships transporting the local food supply. For this reason, Viceroy Croix was vitally concerned with the security of Valdivia, not in a military sense per se but in terms of its value in securing the routes of Chilean wheat shipments.  

The emerging importance of Chile's defense was first revealed by events during the War of Jenkins's Ear, a struggle which as shown, accelerated that situation by changing the commercial pattern. The English promptly dispatched two naval expeditions to America. The first was the expedition of Admiral Edward Vernon, which sailed for the Caribbean and laid siege to the port of Cartagena in 1741. The second was led by Commander George Anson and was destined to be the first coordinated threat to the Pacific during the century. Anson's orders were to enter the Pacific, disrupt trade and communication lines, incite Indian rebellion, and to generally distract and damage the Spanish forces along the coast. A more specific aim was the capture of Valdivia, which would deprive the Spanish of their primary defense in

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17 Memorias de los vireyes, V, 161.
those latitudes and serve as a base of operations against shipping.  

On September 18, 1740, Anson's squadron departed from England. It was composed of six warships carrying a total of 236 cannon, two supply vessels, and a complement of 1,980 sailors and landing troops. News of the expedition made its way to Spain, where a similar squadron of five warships was prepared to pursue the English, led by General de Marina José Alfonso Pizarro.

In a race to the Pacific, both fleets arrived almost simultaneously at Cape Horn where one of Anson's ships was actually pursued for a short time by the Spanish. The English vessels were badly mauled and dispersed by storms in their late autumn passage of the Cape. Nearly one-half of the crews died due to disease and scurvy. After enduring terrible adversities, the flagship Centurion and three other vessels arrived safely in Pacific waters. The Spanish squadron suffered an equally disastrous fate. The Hermione sank with 500 men aboard, and the Guipúzcoa was abandoned along the coast after over half of its crew died.

18 Vicuña Mackenna, Historia de Valparaiso, II, 5.  
19 Barros Arana, Historia general, VI, 122.  
that to continue around the Cape would risk the loss of his entire squadron, Pizarro returned to Buenos Aires with the remaining ships and communicated his losses to the Peruvian viceroy.

With his remaining crews so shorthanded and weakened by the ordeal, Anson was forced to put in at Juan Fernández for an extended period of refitting. During this period, the English had few charts of the Chilean coast and only a rudimentary idea of the location of major landmarks, but the island of Juan Fernández was well known among mariners as a safe location for regrouping and making repairs:

... it is the only commodious place in those seas, where British cruisers can refresh and recover their men after their passage round Cape Horn, and where they may remain for some time without alarming the Spanish coast.

After assessing the strength of his reduced squadron, Anson concluded that an attack on Valdivia would be foolhardy, resolving instead to concentrate on the capture of Spanish shipping.

The marqués de Villa Garcia, Viceroy of Peru, received word from Pizarro that while there was a slim possibility of several of the English ships having passed into the Pacific, they must now be in such a weak condition as to be incapable of offensive action. The viceroy immediately outfitted four warships and instructed their

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22Ibid., 109-10. 
23Ibid., 115. 
24Wilcox, op. cit., 64.
captains to patrol off Juan Fernández and the Chilean coast. After none of Anson's squadron appeared, it was assumed that they had met the same or worse fate as that of Pizarro. Accordingly, the Spanish warships left Juan Fernández on June 6, missing the arrival of the Centurion by only three days.25

Ignorant of Anson's entry into the Pacific, Spanish shipping resumed its normal flow. Undetected, the small English taskforce was able to station itself along the trade routes near Valparaiso to intercept shipping from Lima. Among the vessels captured were the Nuestra Señora del Monte Carmelo, the Santa Teresa de Jesús, the Nuestra Señora de Carmin and the Arranzazu, a huge merchantman of 600 tons quite uncommon in those waters.26 From the crews of these vessels, it was learned that the authorities were still blissfully unaware of their presence, and as the chaplain of the Centurion wrote:

And thus we were certain of, from the information of our prisoners, that whatever our success might be as to the prizes we might light on, we had nothing to fear, weak as we were, from the Spanish force in this part of the world.27

As prizes became increasingly scarce over a period of months the English realized that their presence must by that time be known to the authorities. Concerned over the possibility of facing a Spanish taskforce, the English

25Ibid., 64. 26Ibid., 63-71.
abandoned Chilean waters. They sailed for the Peruvian coast where they sacked and burned the small port of Paita, escaping with over 30,000 pounds sterling in bullion and destroying many times that amount in property.28

All this time the English had met no resistance of any kind. With his eyes now set on the possibility of capturing the Philippines treasure galleon which sailed each year between Manila and Acapulco, Anson abandoned all but his flagship and sailed into Pacific waters, arriving there in 1743. Later that year, Anson achieved the pinnacle of the expedition's success by capturing the Manila galleon intact after an hour and a half battle. The cargo was valued at 1,313,843 pesos, in addition to 35,700 ounces of bullion.29 The lone Centurion reached England on June 15, 1744, after circumnavigating the globe in a voyage of four years.

The voyage of Anson was a classic adventure at sea and a re-creation of the privateering type of warfare so popular in the Elizabethan tradition of Drake and Hawkins. Besides the Spanish losses in shipping and the booty of Paita, the fear generated by the raid paralyzed sea commerce between Chile and Peru for months. Indeed, the psychological effects were even more profound than the material losses. This raid revealed with patent clarity the vulnerability of

28 Wilcox, op. cit., 82.  
29 Ibid., 150.
the Pacific coast and the inability of the Spanish to do more than sit idly by until an enemy tired of those waters and moved on to more profitable ones.

Anson's exploit was a strong argument for the expansion of British commerce and influence in the remote areas of Spanish rule in the Pacific. This influence was to take on renewed importance in the following decades as England expanded its grasp through the capture of Manila in 1762, articulation of trade with China, and the opening of the Pacific by Captain Cook and others who sought strategic bases and new commercial markets. The voyage of Anson was the precursor of these events and dramatically reawakened British interest in this part of the world. Events in Europe were now destined to play a major role in the future of the Pacific.

The pact between France and Spain which was to form a bulwark of their reciprocal military and political alliance during the eighteenth century was known as the Family Compact. First signed in 1733 and ratified again in 1743 and 1761, it was visualized by the Spanish as a way to improve their position of strength against European enemies and the ultimate weapon in their struggles with archrival Britain. Since the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), the Spanish had been forced to make debilitating trade concessions in America to

\[30\] Walter and Robins, op. cit., x, Introduction.

the London court. Now diplomatically intertwined with France, the Spanish actively pursued an aggressive military stance against the English in the hopes of extricating themselves from these treaties and once again recapturing their colonial trade. The culmination of this protracted struggle was the Seven Years War (1756-1763), in which Charles III rashly overestimated his own strength and joined France against England only two years after his accession to power.

Defeat, not victory, marked the efforts of Charles, as a result of which the Spanish lost Florida, were forced to recognize English logwood cutters in Honduras, and relinquished their pretensions to fishing rights on the Newfoundland Banks. More significantly, as a result of this war, the French withdrew from North America, leaving Spain as sole rival on the continent to a victorious Britain. Far from enhancing Spain's political status, the Family Compact became an entangling alliance by which new avenues of foreign expansion were opened in America.

32 Lynch, op. cit., 11.
33 Smith, op. cit., 248.
34 On their withdrawal from America, the French ceded Louisiana to the Spanish, which meant that there was no longer a friendly buffer territory to protect the northern provinces of Mexico. In addition, Spain now shared navigational rights of the Mississippi River with England and faced the presence of English troops in the gulf coast ports of Pensacola and Mobile (Vera Lee Brown, "Anglo-Spanish Relations in America in the closing Years of the Colonial Era," HAHR, V, No. 3 (August, 1922), 337.
With the outbreak of the American Revolution, Spain and France intervened on the side of the thirteen colonies in the hopes of avenging their 1763 territorial losses to Britain. In 1779, the two nations formally allied themselves against the English, and after this, Spain sent large quantities of money and arms to the American colonies.\textsuperscript{35}

In the Indies, there was fighting at Campeche, the Gulf of Honduras and along the Mosquito Coast. Mobile and Pensacola surrendered to Spanish forces under Bernardo Gálvez in 1780 and 1781. Spain experienced a relatively successful outcome of the war, and by the Treaty of Paris (1783) acquired Minorca and East and West Florida.\textsuperscript{36} Despite these gains, the mother country afterwards grew increasingly incapable of defending its American possessions. Additional wars during the succeeding two decades forced the Indies to subsist militarily on their own resources. And the United States now became a maritime menace to Spanish colonial interests, especially in the Pacific.

The friction between the Americans and Spaniards became noticeable after the Revolutionary War, centering around whaling and commercial markets. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the demand for whale oil reached tremendous proportions, stimulating a world-wide search for this precious commodity so essential to keeping the lamps of

\textsuperscript{35}Smith, \textit{op. cit.}, 251-52.

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., 252.
Europe burning. A rivalry quickly developed between the American whaling industry centered in Boston, Nantucket, and New Bedford, and the British whaling fleets of London and Dunkirk. Manned by staunch New Englanders, the American whalers pursued their quarry into most of the oceans of the world and especially the Pacific.

Many of these whaling captains carried small quantities of merchandise to sell clandestinely in Pacific ports, often with the intent of only covering the cost of their voyages. Others continued their fishing or commercial sojourns to Hawaii, the far Northwest, and even China, sometimes circumnavigating the globe in voyages of several years' duration. Other Americans came to hunt for seals on barren islands such as Juan Fernández and Mas Afuera, continuing on to Asiatic markets to sell the hides.

Throughout the course of Spain's enterprise in America, a constant unrest pervaded the spirits of royal officials in seeing the Caribbean and Pacific frequented by ships not flying the flag of Castile. Territorial

37Pereira Salas, Los primeros contactos entre Chile y los Estados Unidos, 1778-1809 (Santiago: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1971), Appendix, 315-46.

38Vicuña Mackenna, Juan Fernández, 343-44.

39In 1792, the Eliza, out of New York and captained by W. R. Steward, obtained 38,000 seal skins from Mas Afuera, which were sold in Canton, China, for $16,000. The Eliza was the first North American boat to procure hides on the Chilean islands and sell them in Asiatic markets (Pereira Salas, Los primeros contactos, p. 317).
sovereignty was the overriding principle of Spanish colonization, and this principle was applied with equal fervor to the seas which bathed the coasts of America. Just as the juridical concept espoused in the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 served as legal justification for the New World territorial claims, it was likewise extended to include the waters adjoining them.⁴⁰ Viceroy Teodoro de Croix epitomized the Spanish mistrust of foreigners by alluding to the fact that while Spain might be at peace with a particular foreign power, there was always a potential for corsairs or independent adventurers of that nation to violate these treaties. Foreigners, no matter what their mission, were to be treated with caution and suspicion.⁴¹ This closed sea doctrine became insupportable as foreign traders began to put in at likely-looking coastal towns, even more so as the colonials showed no hesitancy in entering in these activities.⁴²

The first American vessel to actually touch Chilean soil was the Columbia, which appeared off Juan Fernández on May 24, 1788. Out of the port of Boston and captained by John Kendrick, the ship was reportedly bound for the Russian settlements of the far Northwest when it had been damaged by


⁴¹Memorias de los vireyes, V, 247.

⁴²Juan and Ulloa, Noticias secretas, I, 222, 224 , 231.
storms and separated from its sister ship, the Lady Washington. Kendrick asked for permission to be admitted to port to take on badly needed provisions and repair damaged rigging. Governor Blas Gonzales possessed no specific instructions concerning the treatment to be afforded neutral vessels, but the ship's navigational papers were in order, including a recommendation from the French consul in America. There did not appear to be contraband on board. He therefore allowed the crew to carry out repairs and provisioning while anchored below the guns of the fort and allowed the ship's officers to come on shore. After several days, Captain Kendrick departed, thanking the Spanish governor for his hospitality.

The Columbia incident sent shock waves through the upper echelon of Spanish authorities both in America and in Spain. The Peruvian viceroy and president of Chile were stunned by such an audacious arrival of an American vessel in a Spanish port and even more appalled at Governor Blas Gonzales for allowing the Americans to set foot on shore. The issue merited close scrutiny as a precedent regarding the treatment accorded neutral vessels and the Spanish claim to sovereignty of the sea. Based upon the general tenor of previous cédulas, Viceroy Croix ruled that any foreign

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43 Pereira Salas, Los primeros contactos, 27.
44 Memorias de los vireyes, V, 255.
vessel "in these seas" without specific permission should be treated as an enemy, even though that nation were an ally of Spain. The fiscal of the Chilean audiencia remembered a cédula of 1777 which similarly prohibited foreign ships from the ports of Spanish America. Governor Blas Gonzales was summarily relieved of command for his actions, and coastal authorities were warned to detain any foreign vessels which might enter their jurisdictions.

The Columbia incident gave way to a rash of real and imaginary sightings as foreign traffic intensified and as Spanish authorities became increasingly wary of the intentions of these strangers. This included not only American vessels but those of England, Holland, and even France, the ally of Spain. Several months after this event, fishermen near Valparaíso reported sighting over a dozen English ships sailing near the coast. The local militia was mobilized before the story was discounted as a rumor. In March of the following year, 1790, a ship presumed to be English was seen entering the northern bay of Caldera, where the crew made depth soundings. A concerned President O'Higgins advised each provincial authority along the coast to post

46Ibid., 255-56.

47Donoso, El marqués de Osorno, 255.

48"Carta de..., January 24, 1789," Doc. No. 5134, JMDI, CCVI, 3-5.

49"Expediente de noticias..., 1790," ACG, DCXCV, 5.
sentinels, exercise extreme vigilance in noting the construction and function of these ships and their activities, and to prohibit their crews from landing. Should they do so they were to be imprisoned.  

Juan Fernández was also visited by a number of vessels, among them the Penelope, an American whaler which dropped anchor in the bay in April, 1791. Mindful of the mistakes of his predecessor, Governor Calvo de la Cantera imprisoned the pilot and part of the crew as they came ashore to ask for fruits to combat scurvy. Captain John Worth was baffled by this action and could not comprehend why his simple requests for fruits could be interpreted as such a monumental threat to the Spanish crown. He was a personal friend of the captain of the Columbia and was aware of the cordial welcome which he had received from Governor Blas Gonzales. In a letter which he floated to shore on a buoy, Worth penned a resolute if somewhat inarticulate letter referring to his pride in being a citizen of the great "You Nitted Stats of North Amarick" and demanding the release of his crew. The captain was subsequently deceived into coming ashore, where he was also captured. The entire crew was later sent to Valparaiso for a period of detention. This sequence of events was repeated many times.

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50 Ibid., 12.
51 "Expediente formado..., 1791," ACG, DCXCV, 1-7.
52 Ibid., 5.
53 Ibid.
in the ensuing years. It epitomized the nonchalance of foreign mariners in approaching the Pacific coast and the exaggerated reaction of the Spanish.

Not all foreign ships came for the purpose of contraband; many were innocent whalers or merchantmen which had floundered on uncharted coast lines or had anchored in bays to take on water and provisions. The crews of other ships had contracted scurvy in the long passage around Cape Horn and were forced to stop in order to obtain fruits or fresh foods. Nevertheless, the suspicion pervaded everywhere; there was an attempt to define every foreign landing as some kind of subversive plot. The xenophobia of the Spanish was not illogical, for the soundings, map-making and knowledge of the coast which these mariners obtained provided them with a steadily growing reservoir of information which could be of great strategic value in a future war with these nations. In the words of President O'Higgins:

Until now no more injury has been incurred than the shame and vexation of seeing foreign ships continually along our coasts. Under the pretext of fishing they advance their nautical knowledge of our condition, which will only encourage their hostile activities when we are enemies in the future.54

In 1789, England and Spain came into conflict once again, this time over a remote and seemingly unlikely location for confrontation. The dispute did not escalate to an outbreak of war, but the effects were to have notable

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54O'Higgins to Valdez, Santiago, September 19, 1792, ACG, DCCLXLIII, 217.
consequences on the Spanish colonies in the Pacific. In the late 1700's, the English began to push into the far Northwest and Alaska to take advantage of the booming fur trade, an expansion which led to conflict with Spain, whose Pacific domain extended at least in theory as far north as Alaska. One of the Spanish-claimed areas which they occupied was Nootka Sound on the island of Vancouver. It was occupied and renamed Friendly Cove by the British.55 This violation of Spanish jurisdiction, no matter how distant, disturbed the viceroy of New Spain, who sent a small taskforce to Nootka Bay under the command of Esteban José Martínez. He found two English vessels in the bay, captured their crews and took them to the Mexican port of San Blas.56

This precipitate act almost brought the two nations to war. The Spanish naval fleet was actually readied for action and an alliance was sought with the United States and France. After sober consideration, however, the decidedly inferior military status of the Spanish and an empty treasury persuaded the crown to discretely opt for a negotiated settlement concerning fishing and navigational rights in the Pacific. Signed in San Lorenzo on October 28, 1790, the Nootka Sound Convention was a de facto recognition of Spain's rapidly deteriorating European prestige and a


56Ibid., 193-96.
gesture of appeasement to the stronger English nation.  

Under the terms of this treaty, British subjects were granted the right to colonize and establish trading outposts on the northwest coast to the north of Spanish-occupied territory in North America. In terms of significance to Chile, Britain was granted free navigation and fishing rights in the Pacific, including both North and South America. In return, the English agreed not to use this privilege as a pretext for smuggling; to insure this, no British subject could approach within ten nautical leagues of those regions settled by the Spanish. This last provision was subject to varying interpretation, for the English were free to land on the deserted offshore islands and unpopulated stretches of coast line. In the following years, Chileans became alarmed as the English began to land on deserted Chilean coasts, areas claimed by the Spanish.

The Nootka Sound Convention presented the English with a legal foothold in the Pacific and an ideal subterfuge for trade with the forbidden coasts. Despite the regulation prohibiting English from setting foot on Spanish-occupied areas, there was no arbitration commission nor military force at the disposal of the Spanish to enforce such a ruling. By virtue of their inability to guard the entire coast line, the Spanish gave tacit assent to what was already a fact--British fishermen landing on offshore

\[5^7\text{Ibid., 247-48.} \quad 5^8\text{Ibid., 544-45.}\]
islands or deserted stretches to build temporary warehouses and huts.

On receiving news of the treaty, Chilean authorities reacted with consternation at being obligated to assist a rival who was so intent upon the destruction of their commercial system. There was also confusion as to the specific treatment to be afforded English crews which touched their shores. By this time foreign vessels were arriving with frightening regularity, either to ask for supplies or to trade. The pertinent question was not how to prevent their arrival but the manner of receiving them. Should English crews be preferentially treated and permitted to come ashore, while at the same time denying this right to the French allies? Or should another diplomatic crisis be risked by detaining or quarantining English crews when they asked for assistance? As the subdelegado of La Serena wrote to the president:

I await your instructing me how I should comport myself, if they [the English] must enjoy the right of hospitality and within what bounds, with respect of the fact that in the treaty between our crown and that of Britain nothing is elucidated concerning these details.\(^{59}\)

President O'Higgins himself was confused over the manner in which these intruders should be greeted. He was an openminded, enlightened servant of the crown who undoubtedly comprehended the commercial importance the

\(^{59}\)"Expediente formado..., 1790," ACG, DCCVII, 15.
Pacific seemed destined to attain. At the same time, he was a high colonial functionary and faithful executor of the royal will. While he was willing to grant a certain amount of leeway to foreigners who were innocent of breaking Spanish laws, he strictly upheld royal prohibitions against commercial transactions with foreigners. On January 2, 1792, he issued a ruling that any Spaniard apprehended in trade negotiations with foreigners would be liable to receive the death penalty, a measure which received full sanction by the court in Madrid.  

The most disturbing consequence of the treaty was that the ships of other nations now arrived in unprecedented numbers, all pretending to enjoy the same rights as those granted to the English. In just a few short years, the Pacific became crowded with the vessels of many nations, each professing a right to sail unmolested and to drop anchor along those deserted coast lines which even the Spanish had not colonized.

The concessions of San Lorenzo were followed by disastrous European wars. From 1793 to 1795, there was war with revolutionary France, and in 1796, another war with England, which was to continue with only a brief interval

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60 Donoso, El marqués de Osorno, 259.

61 "Expediente formado..., 1790," ACG, DCCVII, 28.
During this tumultuous period, the colonies were forced to exist largely independent of the mother country due to the disruption of communication routes and preoccupation with internal affairs. No longer able to maintain the normal level of shipping with Spanish American ports, the crown enacted provisions permitting the colonies to trade not only among themselves, but directly with allies and neutral nations.

Outbreak of war with England in 1796 forced the crown to throw open its colonial ports to neutral traffic with the unprecedented royal order of November 18, 1797. It was an act of desperation. Despite subsequent revocation and restrictions of this right in 1799, 1801 and 1804, an irreparable damage had been done. By 1800, colonials were accustomed to regulate many of their own trade transactions while foreign merchants were equally used to hawking their wares in American ports.

As the leading neutral maritime power, the United States was able to capitalize on Spanish misfortune by winning valuable trade concessions in Spanish America. In contrast to Anglo-American relations of the same period,

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commercial privileges were not the ultimate goal of American diplomacy with Spain, although the merchants of the eastern seaboard looked longingly at the closed ports in the Caribbean and in South America. The boundary dispute over the Louisiana territory and free navigation of the Mississippi River were the keystones of American diplomatic wranglings. These issues were settled conclusively by the Treaty of San Lorenzo on October 27, 1795.64

Under the terms of the treaty, the Spanish acceded to the territorial demarcation line in Louisiana and Florida claimed by the Americans and also granted them free navigation of the Mississippi River. There were also broad dispositions concerning navigational rights in the Pacific Ocean. Article VIII stipulated that should the vessels of either nation be forced by pirates, storms or similar emergencies to seek temporary shelter in ports of the other, the crews would be received kindly, and be permitted to repair damages or refresh themselves without molestation.65 This provision had a much broader application than the conventional rules for protection of vessels within the territorial waters of another nation. The presence of so many Americans in the Pacific inevitably led to smuggling and other activities forbidden by the Spanish, all under

65Ibid., 349-50.
the cover of this provision.

Effects of this treaty were quickly felt, the first test coming in August, 1796, when the whaler Rose out of Nantucket was detained and later taken to Callao for disposition by higher authorities. On being notified of the matter, the Madrid court dispatched the news of the recent treaty and ordered that the boat be released.\(^66\) In another incident, the Boston merchantman Belle Savage and her crew were released in 1800 in consideration of the San Lorenzo treaty after being detained for contraband activity. Its captain confidently resumed his clandestine trade and at the end of two years sailed for Canton with $81,000 in specie obtained from contrabanding along the Chilean coast.\(^67\) The risks which these vessels incurred could at times be severe, ending in detention of the crew and confiscation of the vessel and its cargo. Those who dealt in this trade trusted to luck, their own resourcefulness and the gullibility or venality of Spanish officials, but their efforts were aided by the breakdown of the Spanish administrative system under the stress of war.\(^68\)

The Chilean coast became the cornerstone of clandestine American trade in the Pacific, and deserted offshore islands were lucrative hunting grounds for seal and wolf

\(^66\)Pereira Salas, *Los primeros contactos*, 75.

\(^67\)Whitaker, *op. cit.*, 90-91.

\(^68\)Ibid., 90.
skins. Lying 65 miles to the west of Juan Fernández, the uninhabited island of Mas Afuera became a center for the seal industry and the object of concern to Spanish officials who suspected the hunters of "suspicious designs and negotiations." During the sealing season, droves of sailors came ashore with clubs to slaughter the docile herds of seals, whose skins were then taken to China where the hunters reaped handsome profits. One source estimated that between 1797 and 1804, over three million seal skins were taken from the island in this manner.

It is not known how many foreign ships sailed in Chilean waters or touched the coast during the late 1700's. Most did not advertise their presence because of the secret nature of their undertakings. The historian Eugenio Pereira Salas has compiled a documentation of only the American ships in the area between 1788 and 1809. In this twenty-two year period he found that there were at least 291 such vessels, or an average of over a dozen per year. This is a significant figure when one takes into consideration the much smaller scale of overall commercial activity of that time.


71 Pereira Salas, Los primeros contactos, Appendix, 315-46.
During the 1700's, then, it can be seen that the southern Pacific acquired a growing prominence within the realm of Spanish defense in America, with significant consequences for Chile. The shifting pattern of colonial trade from the Caribbean to the Pacific and other previously neglected areas, the proliferation of foreign smugglers, traders, and fishermen in those profitable waters aggravated Chilean defense and added a new dimension to the role of the military. The Chilean army was forced to deploy nearly half of its troops in coastal garrisons in order to defend against possible invasion or the foreign colonization of uninhabited lands in the far south. As a result of the combined threats of the Araucanians and foreigners, neither could be combated successfully. The deployment of troops on two fronts accentuated the instability of the south and the close relationship between the military and society.
Chapter 4

THE SITUADO—LIFELINE OF THE FRONTIER ARMY

During the colonial era, the constant preoccupation of Chilean officials was in striving for military superiority over the indigenous tribes; however, there was an equal concern with the staggering costs of continually supporting a standing army and the tremendous expenditures which this entailed. This fiscal burden was intensified because of Chile's economic impoverishment; the colony possessed no vast deposits of exploitable wealth, nor was it located at a geographic crossroads which would enable it to become a master cog in the colonial merchantile system. The Indian struggle seriously impaired the development of colonization and stable agricultural production. Because of these factors, military financing became a continual strain on the capabilities of Chilean fiscal administration.

The weighing influence of the military in society is illustrated by the fact that during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the military accounted for approximately forty percent of the total annual expenditures of the Chilean treasury.¹ A special inquiry into the state of the

¹Barros Arana, Historia general, VII, 338.
colony's finances revealed that of the 654,278 pesos spent by the real hacienda in 1788, 277,938 pesos were expended for the military and related defense costs. Even with these huge sums of money, Chilean presidents were never fully capable of adequately maintaining the military forces in a strong defense posture. During a three-year period from 1786 through 1788, the royal treasury of the Intendancy of Concepción incurred aggregate military expenses of 500,906 pesos, but was only able to pay out 395,725 pesos. As was customary, the deficit was partially covered by crediting the debit against other royal revenues, or through obtaining periodic emergency funds from Santiago. Despite such measures, Chile entered the nineteenth century still a virtual liability to the crown, and its remissions of money to the mother country were so diminished as to be only a symbolic gesture of fealty.

Within Spain's colonial possessions were a number of military outposts such as Chile, which were vital to the defense of the kingdom but were too poor to internally fund their extensive fortifications and troop garrisons. It was common practice for such garrisons to be provided with large sums of money called situados, or subsidies, from the vice-regal centers of New Spain or Peru. In America, the

\[2\] Ibid., 336.

\[3\] "Expediente formado..., 1790," ACG, CCCLXXXIX, 131.
situado originated in the 1560's and 1570's.\textsuperscript{4}

Chile was aided in its treasury dilemmas by Peruvian subsidization of its army, an annual assistance which became practically an institutionalized part of military life. The situado which Peru remitted to Chile was a crucially influential mechanism, for it constituted the major portion of Chilean defense expenditures and virtually sustained the strategic coastal fortresses. It established both an economic and a political dependency upon Peru, the effects of which became manifest during the gestation of the independence movement. Indeed, the subsidy existed for over two hundred years, representing a sort of umbilical cord by which Peru nurtured and fed the frontier forts with all of the vital elements of military sustenance.

The history of the Chilean subsidy was as old as that of the regular army. By the end of the sixteenth century, the diminutive colonial army was composed of no more than six hundred ill-equipped and ill-paid troops, who received some 60,000 pesos of silver annually from Peru for their sustenance.\textsuperscript{5} During the period from 1603 to 1607, a series of royal dispositions led to the creation of a full-

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\textsuperscript{5}Roberto Oñat and Carlos Roa, Regimen legal del ejército en el reino de Chile (Santiago: Universidad Católica de Chile, 1952), 66-67.
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time professional army of 2,000 soldiers, regularly paid by the Peruvian treasury and fully governed by Spanish military ordinances.\textsuperscript{6} This not only lent stability and permanence to the army but was greeted by the colonials as the beginning of a new era of tranquility and prosperity. Although they were mistaken in the assumption that the Indian wars would promptly be terminated, civilians were at least free from the onerous duty of military service.

The mainstay of this new army was the situado from Peru, for it was recognized as impossible for Chile to subsist militarily on its own resources. By royal order of December 6, 1606, the king fixed the level of this subsidy at 292,000 pesos, 3 reales, which was to be annually remitted by ship from Lima to Concepción.\textsuperscript{7}

The normal procedure for distributing the subsidy each year on its arrival in Concepción was for the important treasury officials, veedor general of the army, an oidor of the royal audiencia and the Bishop of Concepción to meet together in order to oversee the equitable distribution of the royal monies. Once the pay lists were drawn up for each soldier and the amount due him was ascertained, representatives from each of the frontier forts were sent to the city to collect their respective allotments. Meticulous

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid., 67-72.

\textsuperscript{7}"Carta de..., 1723," Doc. No. 3989, \textit{JMDI}, CLXXXI-CLXXXII, 177.
provisions were made concerning troop payment—such as
designating the specific hours of the day in which salaries
could be distributed, the presence of certified witnesses
and the designation of proxies for those soldiers unable to
receive their wages in person. After Valdivia was
refounded in 1645, it became the recipient of another
situado, separate from that of Concepción, initially con­
sisting of 110,221 pesos, 2 reales.

During the course of the 1600's, the subsidy remis­
sions underwent gradual improvement such as in 1690, when
Chilean presidents were instructed to prepare annual lists
of all active military personnel to be sent to Lima, so
that the following year's subsidy might be more accurately
gauged. The route of the situado vessel came to form a
regular pattern of travel from Peru to the various Pacific
fortresses, carrying not only the troop salaries but also
reinforcements, convict laborers, and all manner of military
supplies.

The system of situado remission almost immediately
became rife with administrative corruption and malfeasance.
Complaints were soon heard of shoddy, overpriced clothing
sent from Lima and of the pilfering of the soldiers' pay by

8Oñat and Roa, Regimen legal, 83-85.
10Oñat and Roa, Regimen legal, 86.
avaricious governors and treasury officials.\textsuperscript{11} The many opportunities for graft stemmed from the long, tortuous route of the shipment and the numerous middlemen involved in handling and transshipping. The mountainous paperwork in this operation and the creation of superfluous administrative posts certainly made the falsification of shipping records and bills of lading as profitable a means of stealing as outright theft of the merchandise. In addition, an attitude of bureaucratic detachment among Lima administrators left them rather unconcerned over the eventual fate of each shipment, so long as it was dispatched by their office with the due perfunctory routine.

Equally threatening the safe delivery of the subsidy were navigational hazards, storms and pirates, all of which took a mounting toll of vessels. So uncertain was the shipment by sea that as a result of the loss of the 1685 subsidy vessel, the Peruvian viceroy ruled that henceforth the subsidy should be transported overland from the treasury of Potosí, in Upper Peru.\textsuperscript{12} This new method was inaugurated in 1689, but the results were no more favorable than the original system. During the next twenty-nine years, only seven shipments were actually made from Potosí, so that in 1718, the crown again decided to revert to the previous

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\textsuperscript{11}\textit{"Carta de..., October 7, 1617,"} Doc. No. 7874, JMDI, CCLXXII, 48.

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción,} IX, 186.
method of shipment by sea from Lima.\textsuperscript{13}

For the Lima viceroys, the weighty responsibilities of administration encompassed the substantial military subsidies remitted to Panama and Chile. As Table 3 indicates, during the five-year period from 1790 to 1794, the Peruvian viceroyalty spent a total of 19,446,524 pesos in all administrative areas. Of this amount, 2,151,467 pesos were remitted as situados, or about 9.1 percent of the total treasury expenditures.

\textbf{Table 3}

\textit{Expenses of the Peruvian Royal Treasury, 1790-1794}\textsuperscript{14}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch of Government</th>
<th>Ordinary Expenses (pesos)</th>
<th>Extra-Ordinary Expenses</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Royal Treasury</td>
<td>6,580,384</td>
<td>802,806</td>
<td>7,383,191</td>
<td>37.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War</td>
<td>7,203,839</td>
<td>227,663</td>
<td>7,431,502</td>
<td>38.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>3,313,343</td>
<td>119,496</td>
<td>3,432,839</td>
<td>17.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecclesiastical</td>
<td>1,198,990</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,198,990</td>
<td>6.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,296,556</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,149,965</strong></td>
<td><strong>19,446,524</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.98</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another colonial estimate differing slightly from the first calculated the subsidies during a six-year period as the following amounts:

\textsuperscript{13}"Carta de..., 1723," Doc. No. 3989, JMDI, CLXXXI-CLXXXII, 178-79.

\textsuperscript{14}Memorias de los vireyes, VI, Appendix, 30. Totals rounded off to nearest whole peso.
### Table 4

Peruvian Subsidy Remissions, 1790-1795

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Valdivia Subsidy</th>
<th>Chiloé Subsidy</th>
<th>Panama Subsidy</th>
<th>Remitted to Chile</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>87,161</td>
<td>88,656</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>175,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791</td>
<td>77,009</td>
<td>54,069</td>
<td>585,818</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>716,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792</td>
<td>87,481</td>
<td>65,407</td>
<td>269,279</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>423,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>95,065</td>
<td>71,914</td>
<td>521,609</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>688,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>105,992</td>
<td>49,640</td>
<td>17,739</td>
<td>53,916</td>
<td>227,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795</td>
<td>101,186</td>
<td>87,790</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>188,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>553,897</td>
<td>418,480</td>
<td>1,394,446</td>
<td>53,916</td>
<td>2,420,740</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In her study, María Encarnación Rodríguez has concluded that contrary to the widespread belief that Spain lived off the royal monies remitted from the New World, the greater part of at least the Peruvian revenues were converted into paying for the large military expenditures of the viceroyalty, including the *situados*.\(^{16}\) Between 1651 and 1739, 49.4 percent of Peruvian revenues was consumed by normal operating costs of government. Only 20.6 percent found its way into the coffers of Spain, while a full 30.1 percent was funneled into military-related costs.\(^{17}\) It can

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\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*, Appendix, 36. Totals rounded off to nearest whole peso.


\(^{17}\) *Ibid.*, 16.
be seen from this brief analysis that military expenses consumed an excessive proportion of the viceregal budget, which aggravated deficit spending and was partially responsible for the dwindling amounts of money remitted to the Spanish treasury. The *situados* constituted a very considerable portion of these outlays.

Although a study of the economic effects of the subsidy is beyond the scope of this study, it is known that the decline of the *flota* commerce around mid-century prompted a great deal of concern among Lima administrators. A principal source of subsidy revenues was derived from the *almojarifazgo* (import tax) and the *alcabala* (sales tax), which were levied on goods entering Peru by way of the Caribbean and Panama. Viceroy José Manso de Velasco wrote in the 1750's that the virtual cessation of fleet commerce from Spain to the Indies had brought about a general slump in Peruvian tax receipts. Although the registry commerce of individually-chartered ships sailing around Cape Horn might be expected to take up some of the slack, the viceroy was obviously pessimistic concerning the sources of future revenues:

... if they [the registry ships] do not satisfy the established revenue sources, there will be a notable decline in the subsidies of Panama, Chile and Valdivia, and ... it will not be possible to maintain the fortresses. 18

This crucial phase reflects not only the increasingly rough

18 *Memorias de los vireyes*, IV, 233.
financial straits through which Peru was passing, but also the fact that the Chilean defenses would be the first to suffer from any economic belt-tightening.

The 1753 Chilean military ordinances, conceived by Viceroy Manso, were the most influential and far-reaching army reforms to that time, and were predicated upon the need for a sizeable reduction of forces in order to ease the financial burden on the crown. These reforms also reflected the thinking of Peruvian officials that the captaincy-general should assume more of an active financial role in its own defense. The original situado of 292,000 pesos had been gradually reduced over the years, and under these ordinances it was set at 90,764 pesos, distributed in the following manner: 72,212 pesos for Concepción and the frontier; 11,784 pesos for Chiloé; and 6,768 pesos for Juan Fernández. In addition, Valdivia retained its separate subsidy of 50,692 pesos. With the exception of the amount destined for Juan Fernández, the entire quantity was to be paid by the Peruvian treasury. However, it was not

19Reglamento para la guarnición de las Plazas y Fuertes de la frontera de la Concepción, Valparaíso y Chiloé del Reyno de Chile, y de las Islas de Juan Fernández (Lima: Francisco Sobrino, 1753), cited hereafter as Reglamento para Concepción, Valparaiso, y Chiloé, 1753. Copy in Sala Medina.


Including transportation expenses, the total cost of the Valdivia subsidy averaged between 60,000 and 70,000 pesos during this period.
stipulated that the Santiago treasury should assume future responsibility for the provisioning of Valdivia and Juan Fernández, and for this purpose should allot 10,000 pesos annually for the purchase and transportation (by sea) of foodstuffs to the garrison.\footnote{Reglamento para Valdivia, 1753, Ord. 1.}

In 1753, the crown monopoly on the sale of tobacco (estanco de tabaco) was established in Chile, a monopoly which rapidly became one of the most lucrative and stable revenues of the captaincy-general. One study computes its income for the colonial treasury in the late 1700's as almost equaling the other major revenue sources combined.\footnote{Agnes Stapff, "La renta del tabaco en el Chile de la época virreinal. Un ejemplo de la política económica mercantilista," AEA, XVIII (1961), 26.} Chile's tobacco bureaucracy fell under the larger estanco administration in Lima, which supplied it with all of the tobacco sold in the colony, without cost. The tobacco monopoly impinges on this study in that it became a means of paying for the military subsidies. During the next four decades, it was also a device by which Peruvian viceroyos hoped to

\footnote{Regrlamento para Valdivia, 1753, Ord. 1. The food subsidy for Valdivia and Juan Fernández was known as the situado de viveres, and was remitted each year from the port of Valparaiso. It consisted mainly of three staple items—flour, jerked beef and lard—and was complemented by lesser quantities of beans, peppers, tallow and salt. As with the Lima subsidy, the situado de viveres involved a network of powerful commercial interests, located in the vicinity of the capital. Subsidization from Valparaiso continued until the first years of the 1800's, when the Valdivia area became largely self-sufficient in agricultural production.}
shift the burden of these subsidies to the Chileans.

The first military subsidy to suffer from the austerity measures of Viceroy Manso was the situado of Concepción and the frontier. As a result of viceregal decrees of October 22, 1754, and September 16, 1755, it was ruled that the two provincial estancos of Santiago and Concepción must thereafter pay the prestamo of the frontier army; that is, the monthly advances given to each soldier in lieu of his full salary. This constituted an annual cost of 41,952 pesos. The remaining wages (37,478 pesos) continued to be remitted from Lima at the end of each year. In 1759, the remaining frontier subsidy from Peru was terminated, the corresponding amount of money to be provided by the tobacco revenues of Concepción. However, the provincial administrators found this an intolerable burden on their already strained treasury, especially in the light of escalating military costs. Beginning in the 1770's the Santiago bursars were forced to send 100,000 pesos a year to Concepción in order to pay two-thirds of the wages of the frontier army. Despite this assistance, in the three-year period from 1786 through 1788, the treasury of Concepción

23Fernando Silva Vargas, "Peru y Chile. Notas sobre sus vinculaciones administrativas y fiscales, 1785-1800," Historia, VII (1968), 163.


fell some 105,180 pesos in arrears in paying the troops.26

After 1755, Chilean tobacco revenues and treasury funds supported two food subsidies (Juan Fernández and Valdivia), the salaries of the frontier army, and those of the small detachments in Valparaiso and Juan Fernández. It was a responsibility which placed a severe strain on the colony's resources, for in spite of the tobacco revenues, Chile's treasury was in a state of permanent insolvency. Nonetheless, Peruvian officials continued to try to push an even greater part of the defense burden onto the Chilean treasury.

The logical mechanism for achieving this was through the estanco. Peruvian tobacco revenues were as profitable as those of Chile, but since 1754 the viceroys had sent all tobacco to Chile free of charge, assuming the costs themselves. It was the desire of Viceroy Francisco Gil de Taboada and others that the cost of the situado be offset by Chilean reimbursement for the tobacco which it purchased.27 This act carried with it the stipulation that Chile pay for all of the tobacco which it consumed.28 By royal cédulas of June 20, 1787, and July 22, 1788, the viceroy received orders to remit to Spain the revenues from tobacco and playing cards, which led him to demand the

26Ibid., 131.
27Silva Vargas, "Peru y Chile," 173.
28Stapff, "La renta del tabaco," 42.
immediate liquidation of the Chilean estanco debts. These severe demands on the colonial treasury were protested by President O'Higgins, but to no avail.

In spite of these fiscal skirmishes, Peru was still encumbered with the Valdivia subsidy. While it was realized that this responsibility could not be evaded, Viceroy Gil de Taboada sought to at least ameliorate the consequences to his own treasury. On July 7, 1790, President O'Higgins received correspondence from the viceroy advising him that henceforth the cost of the situado (which by this time had risen to 80,444 pesos) must be borne by Chileans from their tobacco revenues. As compensation for this, an equal amount of money would be sent to Spain from the Peruvian treasury to cancel part of the mountainous debt which Chile owed to the crown. Technically, Peru would still carry the hidden cost of the subsidy, but would be able to charge this amount against its own extended payments to Spain.30

The settlement was hardly satisfactory for the Chileans, for they would now be forced to pay from their reserves on hand, as opposed to the relative ease with which they could negotiate their long-term debt with Spain. In all of its subtle ramifications, the plan spelled another financial obligation for Chile. President O'Higgins promptly petitioned to Spain for the abrogation of this

29Memorias de los vireyes, V, 267.
ruling, or at least a temporary suspension until the colony's case could be presented.³¹ This delaying action permitted Chile to receive the subsidy as always for a number of years more. On November 22, 1804, the Spanish monarch finally granted the viceroy authority to decide the matter for himself.³² Two years later, in 1806, the Peruvian viceroy definitively ruled that Chilean revenues must pay for the entire cost of the Valdivia subsidy.³³

This ruling ended the longstanding contention between Lima and Santiago over the military subsidy. Now, the Chilean treasury was faced with additional military funding of major proportions, which coupled with other urgent expenses led to predictions of dire consequences in financial circles. Only one year later, in 1807, President Muñoz de Guzman was forced to lower the salaries of all government and military personnel by ten to twenty-five percent.³⁴ There were also pleas for voluntary donations and stringent efforts to raise new tax revenues.

The apprehension of Chileans over the subsidy's termination were perhaps justified, for it came at a moment

³¹Silva Vargas, "Peru y Chile," 186.
³²"Real orden..., November 22, 1804," ACM, XLIX, 1.
when invasion by European powers was an imminent possibility; 1806 was the year in which a British military force captured Buenos Aires and was rumored to be readying another expedition to enter Pacific waters. The colony's increased costs in constructing fortifications to meet this threat, as well as the mobilization of militia to guard coastal areas, became doubly burdensome with the almost simultaneous assumption of the Valdivia situado by Santiago.

An incident exemplifying this difficult situation took place on the eve of the independence movement in 1810. Governor Alejandro Eaga of Valdivia wrote to President Garcia Carrasco in July of that year that the garrison was in desperate straits because no money had been forthcoming from Santiago on the situado vessel. The situation was so critical that of the 13,000 pesos consumed by the treasury each month, only 3,760 pesos remained in July of that year—barely enough to pay the infantry battalion its current salaries. It was customary in times such as these for Valdivian treasury officials to utilize the practical but undependable recourse of borrowing funds from local merchants. During this particular year, however, no citizen had volunteered any assistance. The treasurers in Santiago protested to the governor that the capital was entering an

36"Expediente..., 1810," ACG, CCCLXLV, 225.
37Ibid., 226.
equally bleak fiscal crisis and finally persuaded Concepción officials to dispatch 12,000 pesos to Valdivia as an emergency relief. As the winter was too far progressed to send the money by ship, the mail courier for the two cities was contracted to carry the money overland, aided by his amiable relations with the Indians.  

Stopgap remedies such as this one were the typical responses of the financially strained Santiago treasury to the military needs of the south, depicting an almost complete incapability in shouldering the responsibilities of situado remission. Long-range solutions to the provisioning of Valdivia were not only beyond the range of the colony's resources, but were looked upon with relative disinterest by the Santiago decision-makers. They were at this time more preoccupied with defense of central Chile and the capital area, especially due to the possibilities of independence and the subsequent need to protect this vital core of the patriot movement.

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Because of its unique historical development and local circumstances, Valdivia offers an exemplary model of the actual implementation of the situado system, not only from the complexities of its operation, but also because the corrupting influence of garrison life presented the greatest

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38Ibid., 229.
impediment to its intended use.

The Valdivia situado was used for the salaries of military personnel, fortifications, public works and the maintenance of convict laborers. The amount of the subsidy varied from year to year, but roughly 80,000 pesos annually was sent from Lima—about 30,000 pesos worth of which arrived in the form of clothing or other commodities for the troops.\(^3^9\) It constituted the economic base of existence for the city and forts and became a kind of oil that lubricated the entire economic machinery of government.

The importance of the subsidy is illustrated by the fact that the most critical matters of deliberation between the governor and his staff were undertaken in a junta de hacienda, or finance council, rather than in a council of war, for on the maintenance of the tenuous supply and communication routes hinged the very survival of the colony. This finance council, composed of the governor, sergeant major, company captains and treasury officials, met each year to elect a situadista, or an agent charged with traveling to Lima to personally supervise the delivery of the subsidy.\(^4^0\) Until the 1750's, the selection of this important official had defaulted to the individual governors, who frequently chose a relative or crony in conspiracies to defraud the royal treasury. While a 1753

\(^3^9\)Guarda, La economia, 89.

\(^4^0\)Reglamento para Valdivia, 1753, Ord. 4.
ordinance provided that the *junta de hacienda* should elect the *situadista* from the ranks of the battalion captains, categorically excluding any relatives of the governor, it was not until late in the colonial period that these irregularities were somewhat diminished. This was due to the use of wealthy bondsmen who put up considerable sums of money to guarantee full delivery of the subsidy.41

There were other officials commissioned by the governor to coordinate the delivery of the *situado*. The *apoderado* (attorney) representing Valdivia maintained permanent residence in Lima and was charged with managing legal technicalities and insuring the financial solvency of individuals bonding the subsidy. Unlike many of the *situadistas*, these lawyers were evidently responsible officials. They were usually of great social prominence in Lima and enjoyed an annual salary of 1,200 pesos.42 After 1707, another position of legal agent was established in Santiago in order to manage the financial accounts of Valdivia and the food subsidy, which was sent each year from Valparaiso.43 These positions were of singular importance as the security of the *situado* against embezzlement was best insured by the use of bondsmen, whom the officials directly supervised.

41 *Ibid.*., Ord. 33.
42 *Guarda, Historia de Valdivia*, 164.
43 "Indice alfabetico...," [c 1792], *AV*, CCLXXXIII, Item 1, "Apoderado."
The Valdivia situado included not only troop salaries but also clothing, hardware, woolen cloth, gunpowder, arms, and particularly those specialties and luxury items such as sugar, hams and wines. Immediately prior to his departure for Lima, the situadista received from the junta de hacienda an inventory of the company pay lists, miscellaneous merchandise to be purchased (such as medicines and clothing) for the convicts, and the amount of pay which each soldier desired to receive in merchandise. On his arrival in Lima, this inventory list was presented to the treasury officials, who disbursed the stipulated amount while the situadista purchased the other necessary items. In order to place a check on the infamous collusion between situadistas and Peruvian merchants, it was stipulated that the buying of merchandise should conform to current price guidelines issued periodically by the Lima tribunal of commerce, the consulado. In actuality, both parties were sufficiently skilled at avoiding such regulations, often dealing in transactions far below the price guidelines with the difference going into their own pockets.

On returning to Valdivia with the cargo, the situadista was presented with another itemized list of the alterations in the pay scales of the troops which had occurred during his absence, due to desertion, discharge or

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44 "Expediente sobre..., 1802," ACG, CCCCXIV, 206.
45 Ibid., 213.
additional recruitment. He must rearrange the accounts accordingly and then distribute the particular merchandise to each company captain. Once this was concluded, a carta cuenta was drawn up relating the amounts given to each soldier and the resulting deductions from his pay. The position of the situadista could be precarious, for if he misjudged the amount of money due the troops or spent too much for merchandise in Lima, he was personally held liable for repaying the difference to the treasury. This was a circumstance which was not infrequent.

The root cause of graft in the subsidy lay not merely with the situadista but also with a multitude of royal officials, who realized that there were enormous gains to be made from this very large flow of money. Governors of Valdivia were frequently the most ardent practitioners of these illegalities. The seldom-practiced method of electing the situadista usually resulted in two competing groups of officials coalescing within the town, each attempting to gain the favor of the governor with promises of lucrative payments if their candidate was chosen. It appears that the situadista at times had to suffer the consequences of his prestigious cohorts.

46"Indice alfabetico...," [c 1792], AV, CCLXXXIII, Item 1, "Situadista."
47"Expediente sobre..., 1802," ACG, CCCCXIV, 206.
48Guarda, Historia de Valdivia, 165.
One particular agent, Captain Pedro Usauro Martínez, was exposed in 1762 for having defrauded the treasury of 10,013 pesos in his supervision of the subsidy.\(^4\) It is not known whether or not he had accomplices, but in this case Martínez was imprisoned, his personal property auctioned by the treasury, and his normal yearly salary deducted from the debt outstanding. This in itself is not unusual, but it is interesting to note that Martínez served for many years in prison, all the while on the active military roster and forfeiting his salary to repay the debt. In 1783, it was ruled that he should be granted one-third of his salary to provide for his family, but when he died in 1789, he still owed 2,169 pesos to the royal treasury.\(^5\)

The urgent need for the troops to receive the *situado* promptly each year, and intact, was aggravated by the practice of paying them their full salary once yearly, rather than on a monthly or trimester basis as was customary in the forts along the frontier. Soldiers were given a small monthly advance from the Valdivia treasury for subsistence and for purchasing a few necessities, then paid the remainder of their salary on arrival of the Lima boat.\(^5\) This monthly stipend was far from sufficient, as evidenced

\(^4\)"Testimonio de..., 1764," \textit{ACG}, DXXXV, 379.

\(^5\)\textit{Ibid.}, 400.

\(^5\)Letter of Oyarzábal, Santiago, May 9, 1808, \textit{ACG}, DCXXXVI.
by the widespread usury which developed. The governor himself lent out large sums of his own money to the soldiers at exorbitant rates of interest. In addition to this loan-sharking by prominent officials, the scarcity of clothing and food obliged the soldiers and their families to fall into debt peonage by purchasing necessities from the governor's own warehouse. Although this practice was forbidden by royal law, the need of the soldiers was so great that the *Ordenanzas políticas y económicas de Valdivia* (1741) not only relented to its use, but laid down specific instructions as to how such lending should be transacted and the maximum rates of interest which might be charged.52

If the subsidy proved a lucrative source of income for Lima merchants and high-ranking officers of Valdivia, the same did not necessarily hold true for shipowners who transported it. While the Peruvian treasurers paid 6,000 pesos for expenses to each shipowner making the journey, these men were hesitant to risk the tempestuous weather of the southern latitudes or to voluntarily exclude themselves from more profitable voyages.53 As there were seldom royal warships available to undertake this loathsome task,

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52The conditions of such loans were that they be voluntary on the part of the troops, that the amount of the loan should not exceed one-third of the soldier's salary, and that the interest rate must not be exhorbitant (*"Ordenanzas políticas y económicas de la Plaza de Valdivia,*" Concepción, November 17, 1741, Ords. 29 and 30. Hereafter cited as *"Ordenanzas de Valdivia,"* 1741. Copy in Sala Medina.

officials were constantly preoccupied with either persuading or intimidating a private owner to fit out his vessel on short notice and then making certain that he did not wriggle out of his obligation before completing the voyage. This system of private contracting left the subsidy vulnerable to costly delays, spoilage of perishables, and a fluctuating delivery schedule. The short sailing season made it imperative that the ship leave on time, or else an entire year's effort would be wasted. Coordination and planning were often an impossibility considering that reluctant shipowners could bottleneck the entire yearly operation by refusing to sail on the scheduled date, sometimes under the pretext of their vessel being unseaworthy.

Finally, in 1766, the viceroy decreed that all large ships of the Pacific coastal trade were obliged to take turns carrying the situado each year.\(^{54}\) This decision was predicated on the theory that such strategic shipments were not regarded as normal commerce presided over by the Lima tribunal del consulado, but fell under jurisdiction of the royal treasury.\(^{55}\) Under this turn system known as the sorteo, shipowners agreed to rotate the delivery, the first period extending from 1769 through 1779. If a particular owner could not fulfill his appointed turn, he might trade positions with another owner by mutual consent, but refusal to comply with one's obligation entailed a fine of 4,000

\(^{54}\)Ibid., 1. \(^{55}\)Ibid., 18-19.
pesos. This improved system was a first step in choosing a willing shipper, and was later renewed after the first ten-year period expired.

Apart from the flaws of the sorteo, the subsidy was continually threatened by either loss at sea or piratical incursions in the Pacific. The mere rumor of the latter was sometimes sufficient cause for the delay or suspension of the ship's departure. Once loaded in Callao, it was normal for the vessel to proceed directly to Valparaiso, where it also took on board the food situado before continuing to Valdivia, in this manner cutting transportation costs by a considerable margin. Governor Joaquin de Espinosa bitterly denounced this practice in 1766 on the grounds that a single large vessel lacked the capacity to carry both situados combined, which resulted in the garrison not having enough supplies to last an entire year.

In 1782, a more uniform delivery method was devised, which utilized a separate vessel for each subsidy and a rotation system as agreed upon under the sorteo. The first ship must be a large, heavy vessel which transported the provisions to Valdivia, departing from Valparaiso punctually each February 15. The second vessel should be smaller in size, leaving Callao during October, with the regular Peruvian subsidy. After unloading in Valdivia, this

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56 Ibid., 33.  
57 Ibid., 24.  
vessel was to return to Valparaiso to take on the supplies and relief troops destined for Juan Fernández, which had to arrive at the island by March at the very latest. Under this system, a total of 11,000 pesos was allotted for transportation costs: 6,000 for the larger ship and 5,000 for the smaller one.59

The situado was more than a means of supplying the soldiers of the Chilean army. In a broader context it represented the policy of Lima and Valparaiso commercial interests to preserve their own trade monopolies by preventing the growth of would-be competitors. As Father Gabriel Guarda points out, there was a conscious effort on the part of many governmental officials, both in Chile and Peru, to deny Valdivians trade licenses or access to outside commerce.60 The situado constituted a basic component of this monopolistic system because the bulk of its worth was remitted in merchandise rather than the currency which was needed to develop the local economy. A royal investigator lent credence to this with his statement that:

...there is no doubt that the method of carrying the subsidy in merchandise results that no one [speaking of merchants] thinks of sailing to Valdivia, as there is no purpose, its commerce being thus closed and restricted to a few established individuals that never vary.61

59Ibid., 14.
60Guarda, La economía, 66–67.
61Escobedo to Jáuregui, Lima, October 1, 1782, ACM, XLIX, 4.
Governor Juan Clarke remarked in 1795 that one of his overriding desires was that Valdivia should develop a class of merchants, but an even more important aspiration was that these merchants be residents of the city, for the region would never prosper as long as it depended on outside assistance for survival.  

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To the island colony of Chiloé, the situado represented even a more necessary component of life than in Valdivia, for the primitive agricultural existence and the absence of local commerce forced even the civilian populace to hang upon the arrival of the ship from Callao. The amount of the situado averaged around 70,000 pesos a year during the term of Peruvian Viceroy Gil de Taboada (1790's), much of this consisting of merchandise. The poverty of the island was heightened by its isolation, for the bellicose Indians impeded terrestrial contact between Chiloé and Valdivia, while the long eight-month winter closed off all sea traffic. The subsidy was thus justified in that it provided the essentials for the colony's survival. But through the years Peruvian policy-makers had continued to hold the island in economic servitude and had steadfastly refused to allow the inhabitants to gradually decrease their

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63 Olguín, Instituciones, 85.
dependence by the stimulation of local commerce. The subsidy arrived so infrequently at times that it caused extreme hardship among the inhabitants of the island. For example, the subsidy was not sent from 1733 through 1735. During that time, the soldiers contracted such large debts borrowing money on which to subsist that when the shipments finally resumed and their creditors demanded immediate payment of the loans, the troops were left as penniless as before.64

Practically all of Chiloé's ties were with Peru. Island residents traveling to Valparaiso or other Chilean ports had to take the roundabout itinerary of first journeying to Lima, then traveling southward to Chile on another ship. Commerce was restrictive because the islanders possessed no vessels capable of transporting their goods to Peru. Consequently, they were at the mercy of a handful of Peruvian shipowners who agreed to transport their commodities only at outrageous prices, at times up to one hundred percent of the product's worth.65 The engineer Lázaro Rivera wrote that the total value of Chiloé's exports to Peru in 1782 reached 95,700 pesos, while the worth of imports from Peru was only 13,326 pesos.66 Such an unfavorable balance of trade was compounded by the discrepancy in

65 "Discurso que hace..., 1782," Doc. No. 7492, JMDI, CCLIX, 216.
66 Ibid., 233-38.
price between identical products in Lima and in Chiloé, which resulted in the islanders paying prices several times higher than elsewhere.

Table 5

Price Discrepancies Between Products in Lima and Chiloé

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price in Lima</th>
<th>Price in Chiloé</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jug of liquor</td>
<td>11 pesos</td>
<td>25 pesos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar (one arroba)</td>
<td>4 pesos, 4 reales</td>
<td>10 pesos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soap (one arroba)</td>
<td>10 pesos</td>
<td>35 pesos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock salt</td>
<td>1 peso</td>
<td>4 pesos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rivera realized that the island's barter economy and poverty could only be transformed by the availability of capital, through which local business initiative could offset Peruvian monopolism. The situado, composing one of the two or three ships which annually visited the colony, actually impeded economic progress. As a royal inspector reported:

... the scarcity of money comes from the traditional practice of the island's agent [the situadista] being a merchant from Lima; he receives the subsidy in

\[\text{Ibid., 213-14. An arroba equals approximately twenty-five pounds.}\]
currency and sends it converted into merchandise. This results in money being so rare that two reales have been called and are still called a provincial peso.68

The Peruvian situado, then, was the heart of a master plan for the maintenance of the strategic fortress complexes throughout the viceroyalty, and a notable example of Spanish administrative genius. Considering the immense planning which went into its functioning, the coordination of shipping, and the dispatching of currency and merchandise, it served admirably well. It was the only means of sustaining these important areas, without which such vital positions as Panama and Valdivia might have become possessions of foreign powers. It also promoted the cohesiveness and loyalty to the crown of the residents of these areas, as the annual situado ship was sometimes their only communicative tie with the outside world. Not only did it provide them with essential elements of survival, but this direct link with the viceregal bureaucracy and a constant flow of royal military officers was a subtle but powerful means of cultivating loyalty to the crown. In an era when frontier arsenals represented the epitomy of isolation, Spain's centralism was reinforced to a remarkable degree.

68 "Fragmento de...," [c 1780], Doc. No. 4844, JMDI, CXCVIII, 320-21. A peso consisted of eight reales.
Chapter 5

THE DESTERRADOS

One of the worst maladies of eighteenth century Chilean society was the prevalence of crime, banditry, vagrancy and other forms of social degeneracy, especially among the mestizo-Indian castes and the semi-barbaric rural inhabitants. This heritage of lawlessness and violence was more than a persistent vestige of the period of conquest, to be gradually eradicated by the inroads of Spanish civilization; rather, it constituted part of the very fabric of society itself, and was a way of life for thousands of rural inhabitants.\(^1\) The disrespect for authority was a definite factor in weakening the Spanish grip over the southern lands and in their pushing back the frontier.

The expanses of underpopulated lands between the Maule and Bio Bio rivers served as principal sanctuaries for countless half-breeds and Spanish who had fled there either to escape from crimes which they had committed or because they had simply grown weary of the social conformity imposed by urban life. There, they reverted to an existence

\(^1\)Góngora, Vagabundaje, 29.
centering around cattle thievery, contrabanding, or highway robbery. They lived on the margins of Spanish society, and the most draconic rulings by presidents had no apparent effect on their actions. While he was an army officer along the frontier, Ambrosio O'Higgins wrote that the Spanish and mestizo criminals who preyed on the civilian population were almost as great a problem as the Indians, for the militia was so occupied in apprehending these derelicts that they were of little use in reinforcing the veteran troops.

Municipalities and cabildos were entirely inadequate in contending with the rampant crime, for local jails were either non-existent or so rudimentary that criminals could escape almost at will. The fiscal burden of maintaining prisoners was an equally acute problem. In 1762, the entire prison population of Santiago was at the point of starvation because there were no available revenues to procure food for the inmates, save for the scant alms of a concerned priest.

It was customary in Chile, as in other areas of the Spanish empire, for civil authorities to remand convicted criminals to military fortresses where they would be far removed from endangering or burdening the civilian populace. This was mutually beneficial, for the military was able to

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2 Ibid., 5-7.
3 O'Higgins to Jáuregui, April 21, 1776, ACM, LIV, 3.
4 José T. Medina, Cosas de la colonia: apuntes para la crónica del siglo XVIII en Chile (Santiago: Imprenta Universitaria, 1952), 297.
utilize convict labor to construct the extensive fortifications throughout the south. Thus, the Chilean army served somewhat of a dual role: not only did it provide for the defense of the colony, but it was also responsible for the detention and upkeep of criminals. While this diminished the pressure on the overburdened, civilian penal facilities, it left a rather profound stamp on the character of the military.

Convicts serving their sentences within the military outposts of Chile were known as desterrados, or exiles, and they were shipped there from such distant centers as Peru, New Granada, and even Spain. The policy of these administrative centers was almost uniform in the desire to rid their colonies of as many undesirable elements as possible. In Spain, both the civil and military tribunals were charged with dispatching military delinquents to America in order to serve out their sentences. In spite of this deliberate policy, until very late in the colonial period it was customary to send most convicts either to peninsular fortresses or to Africa. Because Chile fell under the direct jurisdiction of Lima, the colony was obliged to serve as a

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5 At times, convicts were also referred to as presidarios.

6 "Indice alfabetico..., July 4, 1777," ACG, DCCLXXIII.

7 Pedro Toledo Sánchez, Esquema del derecho penal militar indiano y su jurisprudencia chilena (Valparaiso: Editorial Jurídica de Chile, 1961), 130.
dumping ground for some of the viceroyalty's most incorrigible offenders, especially military deserters from the Peruvian army. A Peruvian military ordinance of 1753 specifically provided that apprehended deserters should be forced to serve for six years in Valdivia, with a re-incidence of desertion punishable by "perpetual exile" in either Valdivia or Juan Fernández.⁸

The majority of convicts came from the captaincy-general, itself. The wheels of justice turned with agonizing slowness in Chile, due to the almost epidemic proportions of criminality and the cumbersome nature of colonial jurisprudence. Magistrates found it impossible to process the accused quickly enough to avoid massive backlogs of pending cases, so that sheer practicality came to dictate that criminal cases frequently be expedited with penalties of forced labor. This was standard practice not only for common thieves and footpads, but also for capital offenders, for the hanging of murderers was an expensive and lengthy process.⁹

There was a similar urgency within administrative circles to remit enough convicts in order to fill the quotas of construction laborers, for the defense of the colony was

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⁸Reglamento para la Guarnición de la Plaza del Real Phelipe del Callao (Lima: Francisco Sobrino, 1753), Ord. 18.

⁹Vicuña Mackenna, Juan Fernández, 301. The customary sentence for vagrants was two years fortress labor and up to ten years' confinement for robbery.
felt to pivot upon a strong network of fixed fortifications. In order to comply with orders for new fortifications, President O'Higgins solicited the audiencia in 1788 to expedite criminal cases more quickly and to pass out more sentences of forced labor. When the royal court was uncooperative with his plea, the president issued a decree ordering the subdelegados to immediately ferret out up to four hundred vagrants and known criminals throughout their districts. If at least two witnesses could testify to the guilt or bad character of each accused, he was to be remitted to Valparaiso for shipment to Valdivia on the earliest possible boat. As the foregoing example depicts, expedi ence was the key to the remission of desterrados, either from the overburdened dockets of the audiencia or from the needs of military labor camps. There was little concern for the lack of prison facilities within these forts, nor the manpower limitations in providing for convict maintenance.

Valdivia, Juan Fernández, Talcahuano (the port of Concepción) and Valparaiso were the four Chilean fortresses used for the detention of criminals. A handful of convicts were occasionally sent to forts along the frontier, but the bulk of them were housed in the coastal fortresses because of the ease with which they could be transported there by sea. The collection and remission of the convicts were normally undertaken in conjunction with the situado, and

10Order of February 14, 1786, ACG, DCCLXXIII.
each year convicts from Peru were loaded aboard the military supply ship in Callao for the trip south. Upon their arrival at Valparaiso, additional convicts were put aboard from the Santiago jails and outlying areas of the intendancy. Before leaving port, those men destined to serve in Valdivia or Juan Fernández were given thorough medical examinations to ascertain their fitness for enduring the cold, southern latitudes and the arduous physical labor.

Separated from the mainland by 400 miles, Juan Fernández became Chile's maximum security prison. To the island were consigned the hard-core incorrigibles and especially those men with habitual escape records. Although the island was not far off the Lima-Valparaiso trade route, the extremely treacherous seas and craggy coastline enhanced its almost total isolation and discouraged all but one or two ships landing there each year. Ironically, the governor and troops stationed there considered themselves as much prisoners as any convict, for they were rotated only once a year from the despised garrison.


12 Certification of prisoner's health bound for Valdivia and Juan Fernández, Santiago, April 11, 1799, ARA, CCCLXXXV, 3-5.

13 "Correspondencia del Tribunal..., May 22, 1762," ACG, DCXLV, 126.

island was completely poverty-stricken, and the letters of its governors attested to the wretched state of the inhabitants, the undiscipline of the troops, and the absence of productive enterprises. Dependency was the overriding concept in its existence, for the very survival of the islanders hinged upon the prompt arrival of the annual situado from Valparaiso. This subsidy of food and supplies sustained not only the regular crown dependents (soldiers and convicts) but their families and the colonists, as well.¹⁵

Anywhere from several dozen to as many as one hundred prisoners a year were brought to the island, and they served as laborers and as auxiliary troops in time of war. In April, 1802, there were 165 convicts on the island, 44 of whom had come from Lima.¹⁶ Notwithstanding the island's reputation as a maximum security prison, prisoners did escape. This necessitated vigilance on the part of the troops there. One of the ordinances for Juan Fernández promulgated under President Jáuregui ordered that a corporal and two soldiers guard each ship arriving at port in order to prevent convicts from stowing away on board.¹⁷

¹⁵ "Relación que expresa..., July, 1795," ACM, CIII, 2.

¹⁶ "Relación que manifiesta..., January 2, 1799," ARA, CCCLXXXV, 1.

In 1787, a bizarre episode occurred which involved the Peruvian viceroy's signature being forged in order to secure the release of three convicts. The archival source does not mention who might have perpetrated the forgery but does relate that three men left the island on ships with supposedly valid documents confirming their release. One convict even managed to sign aboard the visiting situado ship as a sailor. The authorities in Santiago advised the Intendant of Concepción to search all incoming vessels for the escapees.\(^{18}\) This and similar occurrences convinced Chilean officials that prisoners could escape from an island, even one as far away as Juan Fernández.

In an effort to stimulate the growth of the island population, incentives for colonization were offered (such as land, tools and housing materials), and the families of soldiers stationed there were encouraged to settle on the island. These benefits were also extended to the convicts with the realization that they composed an integral portion of the population.\(^{19}\) However, the inhospitable environment of the island doomed these attempts to failure, and the proportion of independent colonists to crown dependents remained consistently low. In his visit to the island in 1793, the naturalist Thaddaeus Haenke estimated the total

\(^{18}\)"Expediente...sobre aprehensión de unos Reos, 1787," ACG, DCCCLXV, 1-4.

\(^{19}\)"Ordenanzas de Jáuregui," 1776, Ord. 61.
A commissary review dated two years later revealed that there were almost 200 crown dependents present, including 93 convicts. If we are to accept Haenke's census figure as a reasonable approximation, then it is evident that at least two-thirds of the population was reliant on government support in order to live and that one-third of the total were convicts. This attests to the island's poverty and the impossibility of creating a self-sufficient, industrious colony. The island never lost its reputation as a squalid army outpost and penal colony, and the association between soldiers and convicts constituted the dominant theme in its existence.

In 1645, the city of Valdivia was rebuilt with the status of plaza-fuerte, or town-fort, and under direct supervision and jurisdiction of Peru. From its refounding until the end of the colonial period, the authorities of Lima and Santiago made regular practice of sending shiploads of convicts to Valdivia in order to construct the formidable fortress complex which eventually encircled the entire bay. During its colonial prime, Valdivia possessed over two thousand residents, several hundreds of whom were convicts

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20 Haenke, Descripción, 75.

21 "Relación que expresa..., July, 1795," ACM, CIII, 1.

22 Guarda, Historia de Valdivia, 166.
living within the confines of the forts and the city. An untold number of others had become residents of the town after completing their sentences. With a penal population of at least ten to fifteen percent of the entire city, it was inevitable that these convicts would dramatically influence the character of Valdivia. This influence was even more pronounced considering that convicts did not remain segregated from the citizenry but actually lived and worked among them, employing their skills as artisans, laborers, and soldiers.

Spanish authorities were intensely concerned with providing for the maintenance and upkeep of large numbers of convicts and the security problems inherent in their proximity to military garrisons. At the same time, it was realized that convict labor was indispensable in the construction of the crucial defensive works. These two objectives were not always compatible, for convicts were usually remitted on the basis of construction timetables and not with regard for the capabilities of military prison facilities. Governors of Valdivia were usually hard-pressed simply to provide food and clothing for their own troops.

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23 "Viaje de...Tomás de O'Higgins, 1796-1797," AFA, XXXIII, 8.
The monthly reviews of the Valdivia prison population in 1796 show a fairly constant level of over 200 convicts: February, 248 prisoners; March, 236 prisoners; April, 242 prisoners ("Relación..., 1796," ACM, CX, 1-4).

24 "Expediente formado..., 1792," ACG, DCCCLXVIII, 6.
especially since survival was so dependent on the prompt arrival of a single shipload of supplies. Because of the absence of prison facilities and shortages of military personnel, there was a pronounced laxness in the vigilance and care of prisoners. As late as 1757 there was not a single jail within the entire Valdivia complex.25 As time progressed, the prisoners within the log palisade walls of the town were locked up each night in a long barracks, but in the forts they could be found laboring among the fortifications unguarded, without cells, even living among the soldiers.26 To an officer newly-arrived at Valdivia, the sight of such a motley garrison of soldiers and its apparent inability to control the movements of the prisoners must have been very disconcerting. One officer of longstanding frontier service lamented the fact that,

... the positions of employment in which the prisoners are engaged, as well as the cells where they are kept, are of no security and frankly facilitate their escape.27

The capabilities of the Valdivia garrison were undeniably strained with the encumbrance of maintaining a large prison population. Simply from an administrative point of view there was frequent uncertainty as to just how long prisoners were to be confined. This was due in part to the

25Medina, Cosas de la colonia, 453.
26"Viaje de...Tomás de O'Higgins, 1796-1797," AFA, XXXIII, 8.
27"Expediente formado..., 1792," ACG, DCCCLXVIII, 7.
variety of jurisdictions from which they were sent and the practice of remanding convicts to the fortresses without stipulating the length of their sentences. But it was more likely that the infrequent communication with the outside world, the continual need of laborers, and the wide prerogatives of the governors were most instrumental factors in determining the length of a prisoner's stay. It was not uncommon for men to complete their original sentences but be faced with additional years of hard labor for crimes committed while they were prisoners. The neglect of convicts and their welfare lent an air of permanence to the sentences of pena de presidio, for many of these men served for years past the time limit of their original sentences.

The great preoccupation of military governors was in stemming the criminality within Valdivia and preventing the escape of the convicts. It was impossible to maintain close supervision over the prison population without compromising the military preparedness of the garrison. Escape was a common occurrence which seemed to generate a great deal of fear among the townspeople and also in neighboring parts of the intendancy. The danger of these convicts lay not so much in their actual numbers, but in their criminal personalities and their propensity towards crime. Many were

28 According to Governor Espinosa, there were numerous convicts who had no definite time limit for their encarcera-
tion, only the general penalty of "presidio labor" (Espinosa to O'Higgins, April 8, 1774, ACG, DCCCLXVIII, 8).

29 Ibid.
repeated offenders from Peru or other areas who, having once escaped, found themselves in an unfamiliar, hostile territory where continued crime was the only alternative for their survival.

The high incidence of escape caused concern as far away as Santiago. In 1792, President O'Higgins chastised the governor of Valdivia for not giving him an account of escaped convicts which were known to be running loose in the vicinity. He let the governor know in no uncertain terms that he expected the apprehension of these men and an end to the crimes which they were committing. He ordered that in the future the intendants of both Santiago and Concepción be immediately notified of escapes. Lawlessness and instability were abiding features of Valdivian society, not so much from the hostile environment of the region as from factors within the town.

Townspeople also feared the criminal because one of the most common tactics of escape and certainly the most unique, was that of setting fires to the town dwellings in the hope of creating enough distraction to flee unnoticed. Fire was always a danger where wooden structures predominated, but in Valdivia it occurred so frequently as to become one of the worst threats to local residents. Three major fires ravaged the city during the first half of the eighteenth

30 O'Higgins to the governor of Valdivia, Santiago, May 15, 1792, ACG, DCCLXXXII, 511.
31 Ibid.
century (1734, 1742 and 1748), as a result of which few of the original colonial buildings were left intact.  

Arson was prevalent not only in the town but also among the forts, evidently to such a degree that a local attorney called it the major danger faced by the garrison of soldiers. It appears that the most common time of day for these fires was during the early afternoon when the inhabitants were resting and vigilance was relaxed. Prisoners threw torches onto the thatched roofs of the wooden houses and then escaped in the ensuing confusion. During much of the term of Governor Pedro Gregorio de Echenique, arson was so prevalent that it was necessary for special watchmen to be posted around the clock to detect the spread of fire. Special ordinances provided that administrative offices, powder magazines, and even the individual houses be roofed with tile. But the use of flammable building materials must have continued to predominate, for as late as 1794 the residents of Valdivia petitioned to the governor to construct a small factory for producing roofing tile. They pointed out that within the past December, alone, a total of eleven houses had been destroyed in two separate fires, and another house had been partially burned in January. They

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32 Guarda, Historia de Valdivia, 96.
33 "Causa criminal..., 1777," ACG, CCCX, 29.
34 Guarda, Historia de Valdivia, 167.
35 Reglamento para Valdivia, 1753, Ord. 43.
were quite specific in placing the responsibility for these fires on the "perverse mentality" of the prisoners.\textsuperscript{36}

The shortage of soldiers and the presence of large numbers of convicts resulted in the enlistment of many criminals in the army. It was the logical expedient to alleviate overcrowded penal facilities and to satisfy the manpower shortage in the army. This was perhaps the most pervasive and far-reaching effect of the desterrados, for the composition of the military was radically altered by their presence. Military archives of the period reflect the concern of governors in filling out the ranks of their commands rather than documenting the background of the recruits. However, it is known that a very large ratio of soldiers were former convicted criminals. In his visit to Valdivia in the early 1700's, the French engineer Amadeo Frezier estimated that the majority of the local troops were convicted men.\textsuperscript{37} Several decades later, President Amat similarly remarked that the greater part of the Valdivian troops were criminals, many of whom were serving their second prison term as soldiers.\textsuperscript{38}

Convict soldiers were not uncommon in the Chilean army but were especially prevalent in the infantry battalion of Valdivia. The military ordinances of Valdivia (1753)

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{36}"Los vecinos..., 1794," ACG, CMLXXVII, 1.
  \item \textsuperscript{37}Frezier, Relación del viaje, 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{38}"Carta de..., March 28, 1756," Doc. No. 4305, JMDI, CLXXXVIII, 165.
\end{itemize}
sanctioned the enlistment of desterrados as soldiers, and they were admitted according to their racial status in either the regular companies of Spanish or the caste company (compañía de pardos). Enlistment entailed an obligation of serving for the length of the sentence, plus an additional three years in the town militia after one's discharge. In spite of the strict racial guidelines, castes were frequently placed into the regular companies of Spanish, an infraction which for the class-conscious Spanish mind was worse than the unsavory character of these recruits. Only those prisoners who had committed the most grave offenses were barred from military service.

Convict soldiers were prohibited by law from receiving any salary or other remuneration for their services, and were furnished with only a daily ration and the necessary clothing. Likewise, they were forbidden from ascending to the rank of officer. If they were dismissed as unfit at some point during their duty, their accumulated length of service was deducted from their original prison sentences. After successful completion of their military service the criminal records of these soldiers were

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39 Reglamento para Valdivia, 1753, Ord. 15.
40 Ibid., Ord. 35. 41 Ibid., Ord. 14.
43 O'Higgins to the King, Santiago, October 11, 1794, AGN, DCCXCIII, 275.
considered clean. Those men who agreed to settle permanently in Valdivia were given status as regular citizens and furnished with homes for their families.\textsuperscript{44}

With such lucrative incentives offered them, it was only natural that a great many convicts would turn to the career of soldier, rather than face grueling labor as convicts. During an Indian revolt in 1792, the Valdivia garrison was so understrength that the convict population was picked over to find volunteers with a knowledge of firearms. Some forty-seven of them were chosen to take part in a punitive expedition against the Indians, with the promise of having their sentences reduced. They were also assigned a salary of four pesos monthly, about half that of the regular veteran troops.\textsuperscript{45} Enlistment was known to have been extended even to Indian half-breeds, who once discharged from the service made war against the very troops with whom they had served.\textsuperscript{46} All manner of dregs of colonial society were either enlisted or impressed into the army's ranks, where the most severe penalties failed to deter their desertion and undiscipline.\textsuperscript{47} Although a critical manpower

\textsuperscript{44}Reglamento para Valdivia, 1753, Ord. 19.

\textsuperscript{45}Lucas Molina to O'Higgins, Valdivia, October 15, 1792, \textit{AMV}, XXI, 318.

\textsuperscript{46}Medina, \textit{Cosas de la colonia}, 269.

\textsuperscript{47}In 1763, fifteen soldiers deserted en masse from the fort of Niebla, accompanied by several prisoners. All were apprehended and the instigator of the movement, Vicente
shortage was satisfied by such measures the calibre of the army was immeasurably lowered, for the very nature of these convicts was anathema to discipline and regimentation.

Considering the strategic importance of Valdivia and the other Chilean forts as a first line of defense against European incursions in the Pacific, it is indeed ironic that the Spanish chose to send there some of the worst human elements imaginable. The Bourbon commitment to building a strong defensive posture in America and the outlays of men and materiel which this entailed, was in a sense hobbled because of the presence of so many criminals alongside and in the regular army. There was a very real concern in some circles that should the colony be invaded by foreign powers, the unruly convict population would defect to the enemy, providing invaluable assistance and information. As Governor Clarke of Valdivia remarked:

The situation of Valdivia is unique; it is located one hundred leagues from Concepción (the most immediate fort); it shelters convicts and wicked people that would ally themselves with the enemy at their first arrival.48

Not only were the prisoners feared, but those convicts who had become soldiers were so devoid of fighting ability that

Acuña, was remanded to the fort at Yumbel. In a statement to the president concerning the incident, the governor recounted that Acuña was a notorious vagabond and robber of the frontier and had originally entered the army as a prisoner on Juan Fernández ("Sobre indulto concedido..., 1763," ACG, DCCXI, 1-3).

48Clarke to Guzman, Valdivia, April 29, 1805, ACG, DCCCXXXIV, 6.
officials virtually discounted their ability to repel an invasion. The foreign threat was perhaps more imagined than real, but security was definitely at stake; there could be no real safety for the inhabitants of the south as long as the military fortresses perpetuated instability and the criminal influence.

Although convicts were admittedly a security problem, a financial burden and contributed to the shoddy character of the army, they did fulfill the all-important function of constructing fortifications. Convict labor built practically all of Chile's coastal fortresses and was as vital an element of construction as quarry stone or mortar.\(^4^9\) Ordinary wage laborers and artisans were not only scarce, but their employment constituted the single most expensive item in construction costs.\(^5^0\) For this reason, convict labor was utilized almost exclusively, saving the royal treasury no small sums of money. This reliance on convict labor created a certain dependency and an incapability of completing construction without it.

In 1798, the Spanish king ruled that Chile must function independently of Peruvian military and financial assistance, an action which suddenly placed the heavy defense costs squarely on the shoulders of the Chilean treasury.\(^5^1\)

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\(^4^9\) "La verdad..., 1782," AFA, XXV, 2-3.

\(^5^0\) Ibid., 5.

\(^5^1\) Augusto Orrego Luco, La patria vieja (Santiago: Prensa de la Universidad de Chile, 1933), I, 12.
As an offshoot of this, in 1804, it was prohibited that any further convicts be sent to Valdivia and Juan Fernández unless the Peruvian viceroyalty agreed to assume costs of their transportation and upkeep in these garrisons.\(^5\) As Chile and Peru had always been jointly liable for these expenses in the past, the Lima administrators naturally felt it in their best interest to cease these convict remissions and avoid unnecessary costs.

Interestingly enough, the ministers of the royal treasury in Santiago did not view this development as an opportunity to rid the colony of burdensome criminals, but actually opposed the plan as it would prove detrimental to the completion of Chilean defenses.\(^6\) A statement of similar import by the influential tribunal de cuentas (fiscal auditing agency) in Santiago urged continuation of the traditional system of convict remissions, for even if Chile were forced to bear the costs of transportation and maintenance the total expenses would still be substantially less than the hiring of free laborers.\(^7\) After deliberation, the viceroy agreed in 1807 to reinstate the previous system; but for all practical purposes, the colony derived no further benefits from this. Shortly afterwards, the

\(^5\)"Real Orden..., November 22, 1804," ACM. XLIX, 1.

\(^6\)Ibid., 6. While the treasury ministers admitted that Valdivia's dependency on convict labor was high, they noted that Juan Fernández could well manage with smaller numbers of convicts.

\(^7\)Ibid., 7.
system of military supply (situado) was terminated, which finally ended convict remissions to Chile.

The intimate relationship between desterrados and the army was one of the most unique and interesting facets of the Chilean military. In one sense convicts were beneficial, for without their labor the coastal fortifications of the colony would have never reached fruition. In another sense they were an encumbrance, absorbing manpower and resources by the crimes they committed and the continual escapes which they perpetrated. Their most profound influence was that of their recruitment as soldiers, which substantially affected the calibre and morale of the army. For good or bad, the desterrados were an intrinsic and accepted feature of military life.
Chapter 6

RECRUITMENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON
THE MILITARY

For the residents of the peripheral, borderland areas of Spanish America, the presidio and its complement of soldiers often represented the only secure bulwark against the instability of rural life. The military was frequently the crown's principal agent in the extension of territorial sovereignty and colonization, but it was not necessarily a civilizing factor. On the contrary, the Chilean military seems to have displayed a marked predilection towards criminality and was intimately linked with the violence and lawlessness of frontier society. A great many of the rank and file soldiers were miscreants and rogues of the worst order, which often made the army appear as much a threat to society as the elements it sought to contain.

The military did possess many brilliant and accomplished soldiers. Among them were the royal engineers, who not only constructed some of the colony's grandest public buildings but contributed to the cartographic knowledge of Chile by their extensive mapping of the coasts and natural...
ports.\(^1\) And a host of governors and presidents exercised prudent judgment in balancing both the needs of civil administration and the exigencies of military preparedness. But two centuries of internecine Indian warfare and the poverty and isolation of the colony had combined to breed an army low in morale and woefully deficient in professionalism, rife with desertion and crime and stubbornly resistant to reform. As a commandant of the San Pedro fort wrote of the fourteen veteran troops under his command, only four knew how to fire a musket and the rest were incompetent, due to sickness or advanced age.\(^2\) Another commander was even less complimentary, referring to his troops as a ludicrous procession of delinquents, "all of them idiots in the art of warfare.\(^3\)

Deficiencies in the army were perpetuated not so much by an absence of professionalism and training as they were by recruitment practices, for the unpopularity of military service left little recourse but the drafting of convicts and vagrants. The Spanish army, which was the fountainhead of soldiers for Chile during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had virtually curtailed large-scale

\(^1\) Foremost among these army engineers was the architect Joaquín Toesca, who supervised many of the great public works projects of the late colonial period. Other military engineers of note were: Juan Garland, José Antonio Birt, Pedro Rico, and Leandro Badarán (Encina, Historia de Chile, V, 202-206).

\(^2\) "Expediente sobre..., 1770," ACG, DCCCLXI, 2.

\(^3\) Medina, Cosas de la colonia, 452.
remissions of troops by the beginning of the eighteenth century. As the colony became increasingly self-sufficient and as the Indian struggle showed a marked decline, Spanish monarchs reduced the flow of foot soldiers to very modest proportions. Chileans were forced to rely on a steady trickle of peninsular officers to provide the leadership backbone of the colonial army.

The burden of raising an army thus fell mainly upon the captaincy-general, a task which was intensified by the continual state of alert in which the army was kept, either from the threat of Indians or from foreign invasion. It was of critical importance to maintain troop levels at full strength and to keep on hand enough qualified specialists in certain fields, such as experienced artillerymen. The task of recruitment was infinitely compounded by the reluctance of the colonials. The normal six-year enlistment offered little compensation and little glory or adventure for the common soldier. It did offer a lonely tour of duty in some frontier outpost where boredom, impoverishment, and an oppressive isolation naturally created an atmosphere of mediocrity and slack discipline.

Enlistment bonuses were offered as an enticement to potential recruits, but the numbers of volunteers were seldom sufficient, leaving impressment as the ultimate means

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4 "Carta de..., 1762," AFA, LII, 1.
of filling out the ranks.\(^5\) While desterrados and other unsavory persons were usually allowed to join the army of their own volition, impressment was quite another matter. The Ordenanza general del ejército (1768) strictly specified that all recruitment, no matter under what circumstances, should be completely voluntary and without coercion.\(^6\) Yet, the custom in Chile, as well as in other colonial jurisdictions, was to use whatever means necessary to obtain the required soldiers, which frequently meant scouring the jails and city streets.\(^7\) Although impressment was an admittedly necessary and accepted means of recruitment, it had the effect of continually placing the dregs of society in the ranks of the army.

The inevitable outgrowth of the impressment of soldiers and the repugnant character of military service was widespread desertion. Indeed, it was probably the most

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5"Revista de..., 1793," ACM, CX, 13.
The Peruvian military faced similar adversities in filling the ranks of the numerous soldiers who had either died, deserted or been discharged. Viceroy Croix noted that the European soldiers who were sent to Peru soon left the army in search of more rewarding and more gentile professions (Memorias de los vireyes, V, 257).

6Toledo Sánchez, Esquema del derecho, 144.

7Upon creation of the Royal Regiment of Lima in 1787, it was ruled that in case there were not enough voluntary recruits, that a rigorous impressment be carried out in Lima and other Peruvian cities of all idlers, vagrants and sailors who had deserted off ships arriving from Spain. Some of these men eventually deserted, were captured and tried, and were sent to Chilean fortresses (Memorias de los vireyes, V, 250-51).
frequent crime within the ranks. Deserts created a plethora of security problems, not only for the military but for the civilian populace as well, for these men were often of a vile temperament and accustomed to live by illegal means. They roamed the countryside in bands, taking whatever they could find, and preyed upon residents of isolated settlements. When supply ships arrived each summer at the island of Chiloé, the local inhabitants were put on alert against the sudden influx of criminals and deserters who fled the ships, many posing as soldiers. In Valdivia, desertion was nearly as great a problem as the escape of convicts. Soldiers were not only offered bounty for the apprehension of deserters, but also a reduction in their own enlistments.

High rates of desertion were also attributable to inadequacies of supply and communication within the army. The infrequency with which soldiers were supplied and paid their wages left many of them with no alternative but to pursue farming, mining or other vocations in order to provide for their families. This was not due to any distaste

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8Toledo Sánchez, Esquema del derecho, 149. According to this author, desertion accounted for eighteen percent of all military crimes.

9"Bando de buen gobierno, June 20, 1797," AFA, XXXIII, 78.

10"Orden de..., February 6, 1787," ACG, DCCLXXIII, Vol. 26, No. 12.

"Real orden..., January 6, 1786," ACG, DCCXXXVI, Item 10637.
for the profession of soldiering, but from simple economic
necessity.\textsuperscript{11} During the early eighteenth century, the
situado was subject to delays of several years duration. It
was then that the distinction between soldier and civilian
took on a vague, undefined meaning. Soldiers left the ranks
seasonally to tend their crops or drifted about the country-
side in search of employment, eventually returning to their
units. On visiting Concepción in 1713, the engineer Amadeo
Frezier found that the troops had not been paid by the crown
in fourteen years. Most of them had left their companies to
find employment elsewhere. Only a few aged guards remained
to defend the Indian frontier.\textsuperscript{12} One of the military
ordinances passed by President Jáuregui (1776) forbade
troops from engaging in any other livelihood except the army,
a noble but illusory principle considering the sad lot of
the common foot soldier.\textsuperscript{13}

Spanish military law conceived of two basic types of
desertion, which were applicable in the mother country and
the colonies, as well. The first of these, deserción
calificada, or qualified desertion, pertained to flight in
time of war and bore penalties ranging from death for treason
to ten years of hard labor for desertion in actual battle or

\textsuperscript{11}Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, IX, 223.

\textsuperscript{12}Frezier, Relación del viaje, 15.

\textsuperscript{13}"Ordenanzas de Jáuregui," 1776, Ord. 21.
from strategic military fortresses.\textsuperscript{14} The second, \textit{deserción simple}, or ordinary desertion, was that which was committed in peacetime without mitigating circumstances. For first offenders, four months of imprisonment were prescribed, followed by eight more years of obligatory military service. Recurrences merited similarly lengthy sentences of forced labor in military arsenals or public works.\textsuperscript{15} In actual practice, the implementation of these penalties varied widely throughout the empire, due to amplification and amendment among the many colonial jurisdictions; but a common denominator throughout was that juridical policy was not at all adverse to returning deserters to active military service, especially in the Indies.\textsuperscript{16}

The dispensation of military justice in Chile followed neither the exacting procedural regimen as practiced in the peninsular tribunals, nor were the penalties applied with the severity implicit in the military ordinances.\textsuperscript{17} Within the realm of the judicial hierarchy there were lower tribunals (\textit{tribunales inferiores}) in America, which were of sole, first and second instance, while in Spain resided the superior tribunals (\textit{tribunales superiores}), of second instance and appellate nature. Although the peninsular

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{14}Toledo Sánchez, \textit{Esquema del derecho}, 140.
  \item \textsuperscript{15}Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{16}"Orden de..., March 2, 1787," ACG, DCCLXXIII, Vol. 26, No. 18.
  \item \textsuperscript{17}Carvallo y Goyeneche, \textit{Descripción}, IX, 172.
\end{itemize}
tribunals were by law designated as appellate courts for resolving difficult colonial legal matters, they were rarely used for this purpose because of the great distances involved, as well as the time and expense. As a result, the ultimate dispensation of military cases normally fell upon the viceroy or president, or in isolated areas, a military governor. Their decisions were usually tempered more by the reality of frontier life rather than the rigidity and severity of peninsular legal doctrine.

There was a pronounced tendency to moderate the penalties for crimes committed in America, with the possible exception of peninsular soldiers who were sent to reinforce the colonial armies. These penalties were especially diminished in Chile due to the shortage of able-bodied fighting men and the realization that there were few replacements for soldiers who were imprisoned or drummed out of the service. A royal order of 1794 stipulated that deserters from the Valdivia garrison who were apprehended should simply be reassigned to serve in the infantry battalion of Concepción. Another royal order of similar vein offered full pardon to deserters if they would voluntarily surrender themselves within a four-month period, agreeing to serve for

18Toledo Sánchez, Esquema del derecho, 120.
19Ibid., 127.
six more years in the army. The tenor of these rulings suggests a kind of dry rot among the rank and file troops, but one which was necessarily tolerated by the general staff.

The trial proceedings of one particular deserter, one José Cárcamo, is indicative of the laxity with which this crime was often punished. The first page of the relatively brief proceeding, taking place in Concepción in 1725, was signed by President Gabriel Cano. It stated that the soldier José Cárcamo, of the company of Captain Ambrosio Lovillo, over a period of time had repeatedly deserted from the ranks. After his initial desertion, he was apprehended in the partido of Maule and remitted to the fort of Puren, where he again deserted. This time he was sent to the fort of San Pedro, where he deserted for a third time and was taken to Concepción for trial. The opening statement was closed with the recommendation that proceedings be initiated against the soldier as an example to others.

Diego Orellana, also a member of Lovillo's company, testified that it had been almost a year since Cárcamo deserted and that he knew the accused had also fled after this from Puren and San Pedro. The next witness, a soldier named José Fernández, verified the authenticity of the preceding testimony, adding that the defendant was now

22"Auto contra José Cárcamo..., 1724," ACG, CCLXXXIII, Item 14.
23Ibid., 1.
confined in the guardhouse. The fiscal then ordered that the accused present his testimony before the asesor general de gobierno and the auditor de guerra. On March 2, Cárcamo declared under oath that it had been almost one year since he was given one month's leave to go to the partido of Maule, but that he exceeded his leave and was subsequently apprehended. He added that he had also deserted from Puren and San Pedro. When asked if he knew it was a grave offense to desert, even more so at a time when the Indians were in full revolt, Cárcamo answered that he was fully aware of the consequences of his actions.

Although a maximum of six days was declared for deliberation of a verdict, a decision was reached almost at once. Cárcamo was found guilty of deserting three times, compounded by having done so during time of war. The accused was sentenced to be taken to the city square to receive a public flogging. The sentence was dated March 3, 1724, and was signed by the president, the licenciado Rosales, and authorized by the escribiano Tomás de Valdés; duration of the entire proceeding was five days.

The trial of Cárcamo terminated with this sentence. Although the severity of the flogging is not known, it would appear to be only a token penalty for a crime of such gravity. However, the most disturbing factor is that there

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24Ibid., 2  
25Ibid., 3.  
26Ibid., 5.
was no mention of his being prohibited from further military service, nor in being forced to serve for several years of hard labor in prison. Instead, the sole penalty of a public flogging leads one to assume that Cárcamo was reinstated in good standing with his company. The Ordenanza general del ejército bluntly prescribed that all those soldiers who deserted during military engagements should be executed.27

Even when considering the prudent practice of ameliorating the sometimes extreme penalties recommended by military law, justice was too often applied with excessive leniency and a propensity to reemploy these offenders as soldiers. Rather than ejecting hardened criminals and repeated offenders, officers recycled them into the military service, with the result that these troops gave the army a bad reputation.

27The military ordinances of President Jáuregui stipulated that soldiers in the frontier forts not be allowed to leave their posts unless by permission of the commandant, and only then in urgent cases for a maximum of eight days (Ord. 23). Extended leaves of absence of up to one month could be obtained only by solicitude to the maestre de campo. For longer periods of time than this, it was necessary to obtain approval of the president (Ord. 24).
Chapter 7

OFFICER CORRUPTION—CHARACTERISTICS OF
A PREDATORY ARMY

As an institution, the military possessed a great deal of power and influence, both from its enormous budgetary demands and from the sheer proliferation of forts and troops throughout the colony. In the remote southern outposts this power was personified by the military commandant or governor. These officers not only commanded the troops at their disposal, but frequently exercised political and administrative powers over the civilian populace, as in the case of Valdivia. The potential for abuse of this power was great and especially tempting, considering the infrequency of being paid and the deprivations of army life.

It was a relatively easy matter for the more unprincipled officers to deal in contraband or stolen cattle, to pilfer royal monies through improper auditing, and to sell exorbitantly priced merchandise to their own troops.¹ Other officers headed extensive smuggling networks or retailed stolen goods, utilizing enlisted men and Indians as underlings.² The Indians, whose loyalties were easily

¹"Carta del..., November 28, 1721," Doc. No. 3963, JMDI, CLXXIX, 189.
swayed with liquor and gifts, were susceptible to the offers of military men. The chronicler Carvallo y Goyeneche commented on this predatory aspect of militarism which seemed to permeate frontier life:

... it is said that in America there is no enemy so powerful as a military man with money, and once unleashed there is no form of deceit they will not use in their dealings with the Indians, as well as their commercial negotiations on the frontier and other branches of political and military government.3

Valdivia was a natural breeding ground for corrupt officials and unscrupulous governors because of the unusually low discipline of its troops and the lucrative opportunities for self-gain. The situado, as the economic mainstay of the town, was especially vulnerable to the capriciousness of crown representatives. As was discussed in Chapter 4, there were an infinite number of ways in which the valuable cargo could be stolen or hoarded to be sold at a later date, usually with such finesse that detection was a minor risk.

The Ordenanzas económicas y políticas de la Plaza de Valdivia (1741) were implemented not only to clarify administrative and economic matters relating to the normal operation of the garrison, but in large part were an effort to discourage the rampant graft and pilfering by royal officials.4 For example, one ordinance permitted the local residents to engage in a supervised barter with the Indians but absolutely

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3Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, IX, 434.

forbade governors from any trade outside the few fresh meats and fruits necessary for the consumption of their own households.\textsuperscript{5} Another ordinance several years later ruled against the governor and other high functionaries drawing their full salaries in advance each year from the treasury, rather than waiting for the situado to arrive.\textsuperscript{6} Officials were guilty of monopolizing local commerce by refusing to license private businesses and instead, establishing their own bakeries and general merchandise stores.\textsuperscript{7} A small but flourishing importation of lumber was also handed down from successive governors involving the exchange of merchandise to the islanders of Chiloé in return for timber. To facilitate this, governors made use of the crown reconnaissance launch and manned it with crews of convicts, afterward reselling the lumber to the citizens.\textsuperscript{8} Not only were all of these activities prohibited by military ordinances, but colonial treasurers no doubt realized that the traffic in lumber and other commodities defrauded the crown of its just revenues under the system of commercial monopolies.

To a pragmatic and resourceful governor, the dangers of eventually facing a court trial for his actions were not so frightening when weighed against the profits to be made.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{5}\textit{Ibid.}, Ord. 15.
\item \textsuperscript{6}\textit{Reglamento para Valdivia}, 1753, Ord. 34.
\item \textsuperscript{7}\textit{Ibid.}, Ord. 13.
\item \textsuperscript{8}"Ordenanzas de Valdivia," 1741, Ord. 25.
\end{itemize}
One observer noted that with only a thousand peso annual salary and the additional strain of financing their own journey from Spain to Valdivia, governors were able to retire after only one five-year tour of duty with accumulations of up to seventy and eighty thousand pesos.\(^9\) If these officials did run the risk of exposure, it was unlikely to come from below; the troops and desterrados were many times forced to work as laborers for the governors, as well as furnishing personal services. At times, the day to day activities within the forts more closely resembled the relationship between lord and serf, than that between officer and soldier. President Manso angrily denounced these practices with a similar analogy in a letter to the king: "The soldiers that normally serve in that fortress are those who are remitted for committing crimes; they serve the governor more than Your Magesy with their salaries."\(^1\) Then there were instances of governors destroying the letters of complaining soldiers before dispatching mail pouches to Concepción. A particular ruling forbade these actions and ordered that notices be posted publicly prior to the sending of mail.\(^1\)

Valdivia was not a perpetual den of iniquity, but the power of its military leaders was not always conducive

\(^9\)"Carta del..., August 16, 1741," Doc. No. 8705, JMDI, CCXCI, 207.


\(^1\)"Ordenanzas de Valdivia," 1741, Ord. 28.
to the growth and prosperity of the city. Their monopoly of local industry inhibited economic development and discouraged the relocation of a merchant class to the city. President Manso made the rather pithy observation that within the Valdivia area the military-civilian elite had a considerable influence in determining the degree of "civilization," for their restriction of economic progress discouraged potential colonists and kept the area in stagnation.  

The incidence of corruption within the officer corps must have been fairly commonplace. Records of malfeasance are a useful tool in piecing together a picture of army life, but of equal interest is the functioning of military justice and the intricate relationships within the chain of command. The prescribed penalties for infractions of the military penal code did not always function in their pure form. As in the civil government, bribery or influential associates could be of great value to the accused in winning a light sentence or acquittal. Likewise, there were close fraternal bonds among officers. There were numerous ways for these men to supplement their income by illegal means, which necessitated the cooperation of other officers, either as direct business associates or through their acquiescence in not exposing their fellow officers. It is the feeling of this writer that the course of military justice in Chile was

heavily swayed by informal bonds of rank and prestige and frequently, mutual commercial interests.

The archival transcripts of criminal proceedings against an officer for *situado* fraud, let us say, would not necessarily reveal whether he acted as an individual or in league with accomplices. The accused might have been brought to trial because his actions had been exposed or because his superiors preferred charges when he did not pay them off for maintaining silence in the matter. Or, the unlucky officer might have been sacrificed in order to prevent a scandal from spreading to other officials. There was probably a tendency to condone a certain amount of corruption at the local level, provided that the excesses were not too conspicuous and as long as higher ranking officers were not implicated. Should the officer's actions become too noticeable, it would naturally become necessary to hold a trial; but for those who had personal influence or prestige a quick, perfunctory trial might result with a light sentence such as obligatory retirement. One can only surmise the extent to which money or prestige determined military justice, for gentlemen's agreements and the persuasive power of rank were not the kind of data which would be disclosed in court proceedings.

There are ample cases of military corruption but very few sources that do more than hint at the collusion among officers or allude to their close-knit cliques. Several Chilean chroniclers departed from the narrow
historical style of that period to give candid accounts of colonial leaders, their personalities and behind-the-scenes struggles for power. Still, their factual data was not always accurate, and they were often heavily biased.\textsuperscript{13} Documentary sources are of use but require careful reading between the lines. One archival source is analyzed here concerning an officer accused of a variety of crimes and the course of his hearing. It is presented as a case study of military power and its effects on colonial society.

In 1769, Lieutenant Laureano Bueno, commandant of the fort of Santa Barbara, was accused of moral improprieties with a local woman of the town and of maintaining extensive and unlawful commercial dealings with the neighboring Indians.\textsuperscript{14} As the civil and military governor of the fort and the nearby town of Santa Barbara, Bueno possessed the full measure of power, and his authority was intensified by the isolation of the town. His amorous escapades and sinister business dealings became so obvious after a time that public complaints were voiced, leading to an investigation by military officials and the Bishop of Concepción. A Doctor Domingo Villegas of Santa Barbara was commissioned by the government to initiate a hearing in the town and call

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Guillermo Feliú Cruz, Historiografía colonial de Chile, 1796-1886} (Santiago: Editorial Nascimento, 1958), 3-43.

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{"Criminales seguidos contra...Laureano Bueno, 1769," ACG, CCC, 124-64.}
forth witnesses to testify concerning the allegations. We do not know if Bueno played a role in the appointment of Villegas, although by a strange coincidence the doctor happened to be a close friend of the commandant. He intimidated a number of the witnesses in order to obtain declarations of Bueno's innocence. Consequently, the hearing and the procession of witnesses were moved to Concepción in January, 1769, where a second set of testimony by the same witnesses revealed the contradictions of their earlier statements. It is this second set of testimony, or sumario, which is abstracted here. This legal brief did not constitute a formal trial but was only a hearing to determine the validity of the charges brought against Bueno.

Throughout the hearings in Concepción, a steady stream of witnesses unanimously testified to the guilt of the commandant. Fructuoso López, a resident of Santa Barbara, testified that for some time Laureano Bueno had engaged in an open and illicit love affair with his mistress, doña Feliziana Zapata, and that the lady had given birth to twins by Bueno even before her infirm husband had died. After her husband's death, doña Feliziana moved into a house owned by the witness López, but the embarrassment from the affair led him to ask her to move to another house in the town. When doña Feliziana refused, the commandant brought her to live inside the fort itself, and for this purpose prepared living quarters for her in what had been a barracks
Despite the public indignation which this aroused, Bueno made repairs to the barracks, placed an iron grillwork around it, and even installed a kitchen for her convenience. Pursuant to Bueno's commercial dealings, López testified that the commandant frequently traded with the Indians, but that he always avoided direct involvement by hiring intermediaries for the actual transactions. Only a short while before, he stated, over one hundred mares were seen near the town church belonging to Basilio Fernández and the commandant, which were in turn sold to the Indians by Antonio Catalán, Xavier Fernández and two other peasants. López also knew that these were stolen animals which Bueno frequently purchased from known criminals and thieves.

Cristóbal del Castillo, the notary public of the town of Santa Barbara, related under oath the widespread knowledge of Bueno's love affair. The twins which were born of this illicit union had died, and Castillo stated that he had found the dead children on the doorstep of the church where they had been left by the couple. Castillo revealed that he had been commissioned to privately investigate the allegations against Bueno by the Bishop of Concepción. In this capacity, Castillo recalled that little more than a month before he had seen over one hundred fifty mares passing through the town. He was told by various persons that they were the property of Bueno and Basilio Fernández,  

Ibid., 136.
and were being taken to the Indian lands. The notary further stated that he had questioned one Justo Lagos, retailer of Bueno's stolen horses to the Indians, who confirmed the involvement of Bueno.16

Bueno knew of Castillo's commission, and at this stage was evidently fearful of exposure to authorities outside Santa Barbara. He not only denied the notary the assistance for which he had asked, but also made plans to blackmail him. Castillo was told by a close friend that Bueno had arranged for a town prostitute to seduce him in a predetermined location, at which point Bueno and several troops would burst out of concealment and arrest him. Angered by the knowledge of this plot, Castillo went to complain in person to the commandant. Bueno denied having masterminded such a scheme but admitted that he had suggested it to several other citizens who were also being investigated by Castillo, as a means of freeing themselves from his "persecutions."17

When called to testify, Francisco Catalán stated that the commandant had more than one mistress, for it was also well known that he was involved with a certain Narziza Zalassar. Catalán also knew that Bueno traded extensively with the Indians, selling them cattle, mares, wheat and wine in exchange for salt, ponchos, and Indian slaves.18 On one

16Ibid., 139. 17Ibid., 140. 18Ibid., 143.
occasion Bueno bought four Indian women for wine from a Peguenche Indian named Millau. One of the women became drunk and killed another Indian in the town. The commandant imprisoned the murderess for only two days before letting her go free.

Not until the testimony of Jacinto Molina does a contradiction in earlier testimony become apparent. Molina, an alferez in the local garrison, said that in his original statement in Santa Barbara he had testified falsely as to the innocence of Laureano Bueno. This statement had been forced from him by Doctor Domingo Villegas, who had originally been commissioned in the town to preside over the hearing. Molina was intimidated by Villegas, not only because he was indebted to him for twenty-one pesos but because the doctor was an intimate friend of Laureano Bueno.19 Now free to testify without fear of reprisal, Molina recounted that on the day in which Villegas first initiated the proceedings the doctor dispatched a message to Bueno in Puren, requesting his presence. The commandant traveled all night and arrived in Santa Barbara at four o'clock the next morning, whereupon he immediately went to confer with Villegas in his house and remained there for the rest of the morning. Around noon the witnesses were assembled and called before Villegas. All of them were fearful of giving detrimental testimony lest they be punished

19Ibid., 145.
by the commandant and the doctor.

Molina continued by stating that the commandant not only had as a mistress the said doña Feliziana, but also Manuela Bilchez, Phelipa Romero and Antonia Uzeda. The witness had been told by one Bernardo Rebollan that Antonia Uzeda became pregnant by the commandant and that Bueno found a young man whom she could conveniently marry, although the father of the young man was vehemently opposed to such a match. Molina said that he was the confidant who had warned the notary Castillo of Bueno's plot to blackmail him with a prostitute. Molina's knowledge of the commandant's business interests were particularly interesting, for he revealed that Bueno monopolized the local commerce in certain commodities, making certain that no one could buy them except through him. He provided the Indians with mares, cattle, wine and wheat in exchange for such items as ponchos and salt. He also posted guards along the entrances to the Indian lands to prevent the townspeople from dealing directly with them. He then sold these badly-needed commodities to the residents at exorbitant prices.

The last witness, Juan de Agunto, stated that the previous testimony which he gave before Villegas was false, but that he and other witnesses had acted thusly because of the well-known friendship between Bueno and the doctor and a

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20 On closing his testimony, Molina acknowledged that he was a nephew of Feliziana Zapata. Ibid.
fear of reprisals by them. He knew for a fact that before initiating the hearing, Villegas had first summoned Bueno from Puren, and on arriving in Santa Barbara the commandant went to Villegas' house. There, the two conferred privately until eleven that morning. Immediately afterwards, the witnesses were called upon to come make public statements and were intimidated and threatened by the two men. Agunto knew that Bueno's trade with the Indians was of large proportions, and that in addition to the previously-mentioned articles he sold them spurs, bridles, bits and axes. This occurred so frequently that Bueno kept a blacksmith in his employ at all times, solely for the manufacture of these articles. Before closing his testimony, Agunto also admitted knowledge of the commandant's posting guards in the passes to monopolize trade with the Indians. On February 24, 1769, the testimony closed.

The process was turned over to a new comisionado, Sergeant Major Pablo de la Cruz y Contreras, who was instructed by President Balmaceda to return to Santa Barbara with the witnesses and to solicit additional testimony and evidence. Cruz y Contreras was also ordered to take

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21 Trade was sanctioned between the Indians and the Spanish, but only under close supervision. Certain articles such as spurs, bridles, knives, or other iron implements were strictly forbidden as they could be forged into weapons. "Ordenanzas de Valdivia," 1741, Ords. 14 and 17.

22 In military trials for criminal offenses, the sergeant major or adjutant of each regiment was designated to oversee court proceedings. Oñat and Roa, Regimen legal, 216-19.
charge of the property and personal effects of Laureano Bueno, pending the outcome of the hearing. Bueno did not return to Santa Barbara as he had been ordered, but remained in Concepción with the excuse of serious illness. In a letter to Cruz y Contreras dated May 16, 1769, he stated that his physical deterioration was so extreme that he was unable to even mount a horse. Being under the care of both the army surgeon general and the surgeon of the frigate La Liebre, Bueno said that he had been advised by these doctors not to leave from their care. Not wanting to appear impertinent, he closed the letter with a humble supplication for further instructions in view of his being incapacitated.

From this point on, the process of events in the hearing, as well as Bueno's actions, appear somewhat vague and elusive. For some unexplained reason, President Balmaceda suddenly replaced Cruz y Contreras with two other officers, charging them with ascertaining the validity of the allegations and remitting their findings to him as quickly as possible for evaluation.

Less than one month after his letter to Cruz y Contreras, Bueno wrote to President Balmaceda asking permission to return to Santa Barbara as the peste de viruelas, or smallpox, was so epidemic throughout Concepción that he feared for his life. Not only was his continued presence

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23"Criminales seguidos contra...Laureano Bueno, 1769," ACG, CCC, 148.
24Ibid., 162.
in the city dangerous to his life, but he also argued that an officer of his standing should not be forced to undergo the indignation of being temporarily deprived of the rightful exercise of his duties as commandant. He absolved himself from any guilt and vowed to prove his innocence. He also asked to be allowed to prepare his own defense by using as witnesses not the residents of the town, but his superior officers, whom were best qualified to ascertain the guilt or innocence of their subalterns. On June 19, the president issued a disposition relative to Bueno's letter. In it he granted Bueno permission to return to Santa Barbara to prepare his defense and ruled that the written testimony of his superiors be admitted as evidence. Balmaceda ordered the new comisionados to complete the evidence as quickly as possible and remit the sealed summary to him.  

With this final statement, the hearing was closed. There was no mention in the expediente documents of a reason for its abrupt termination, nor was there a definite time set for its future resumption; the president simply decided that the particulars be assembled and sent to him for review. There is no evidence in other archives that Bueno was ever formally tried for the charges against him or that he was officially exonerated for his alleged misdeeds. We do know that he was relieved of his post as commandant of Santa 

\[25\text{Ibid.}, 163.\]
Barbara. Yet, there should have been no justification for this action if there was no formal trial which proved his guilt. Bueno was evidently not suspended from military service, for the following year (1770) he took an active part in the campaign to quell the major Indian revolt along the frontier. The inconclusiveness of the proceedings (especially in view of the unanimously damaging testimony) and other evidence leads one to assume that the case may have been purposely shelved in order to prevent an indictment of the commandant. It is quite possible that Bueno possessed enough powerful connections to evade prosecution, or again, the process may have been indefinitely postponed due to procrastination or red tape.

It is known that Bueno not only had influence in Santa Barbara, but he also had influence with the maestre de campo, or army field commander. The first comisionado, Doctor Villegas, was a friend of Bueno and was involved in the intimidation of witnesses to obtain his vindication; it is not so absurd to speculate that higher ranking officers exercised a more discreet influence to obtain his acquittal. Less than one month passed between Bueno's first letter to the comisionado Cruz y Contreras, in which he professed himself unable even to mount a horse, and his letter to

26Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, IX, 336.
27Ibid., 341, 345, 346.
28Ibid., 335.
President Balmaceda, in which he pled for immediate permission to travel to Santa Barbara (in the dead of winter) to attend to his family's needs. It was also during this period that Cruz y Contreras was replaced by two new comisionados, which may or may not have had a bearing on Bueno's actions. These circumstances may have been logically explainable, but the inconclusive manner in which the hearing terminated would lead one to suspect that justice was in some way subverted.

Whether or not Bueno used his rank or influence to avoid prosecution is a moot question; it is reasonably apparent that he was guilty of the charges against him. His licentious private life and retinue of mistresses are of minor importance to the theme of this chapter, for morality was not one of the stronger traits of frontier life. Rather, it was his illegal trade arrangements with the Indians, his dealings in stolen cattle and his association with criminals that shed light on the ease with which officers could take advantage of their considerable powers. That Bueno was a tyrant cannot be denied; he was practically omnipotent within Santa Barbara and exercised his authority like a petty baron over the residents. While his actions may not be an indictment of army officers in general, they illustrate how the military could be a predatory force in the development of the colony.
Chapter 8

CHILOÉ AND VALDIVIA--THE FAITHFUL PROVINCES

Chiloé and Valdivia were the southernmost centers of Chilean colonization, two areas whose existence was justified in large part only because of their military importance. They languished in their development, imposed financial strains on the viceroyalty, and were distinctly set apart from the mainstream of colonial society by their geographic seclusion and regional sentiments. And yet, they had one redeeming feature—the inhabitants of Chiloé and Valdivia were among the staunchest supporters of the crown and the most faithful adherents of royalism to be found anywhere. The ties of monarchism which these provinces held so dear took on a great deal of importance as the independence era approached and as the opposing political camps began to emerge.

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During the sixteenth century, the Indian wars prevented the Spanish from colonizing Chiloé in the same sequence as other early settlements of Chile. By 1566, a semblance of tranquility reigned over Araucania, presenting
President Rodrigo de Quiroga with the opportunity to prepare an expeditionary party to take possession of the island. The force was commanded by his son-in-law, Martín Ruíz de Gamboa, who crossed the Chacao Channel in January, 1567, and founded the first settlement of Castro later that year.\(^1\) The new province was formally named Nueva Galicia, but the more common name of Chilhué persisted and over a period of time became the present Chiloé.\(^2\)

Isolation and abandonment were the chief impediments to the island's growth, and when the first priests of the Company of Jesus arrived at Castro in 1608, they found only a dozen squalid huts and fifty colonists.\(^3\) Furthermore, its location so far to the south made it a favorite target of pirates and corsairs. In 1600, Castro was sacked by the Dutch corsair Baltasar Cordes, who formed an alliance with the Indians to drive the Spanish from the island. A group of survivors led by Captain Luis Pérez de Vargas organized resistance in the nearby forests until a column of reinforcements arrived from Osorno and defeated the invaders.\(^4\) In 1615, the Dutch corsair George Spilbergh sacked and burned the city once again.

The boundaries and jurisdictional limits of the province of Chiloé were never well-defined and varied

\(^1\)Barros Arana, *Historia general*, II, 368-69.
\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Ibid., 19.
according to the initiative of each governor or the shifting front of the Araucanian war. In its formative years, the province consisted of only Isla Grande, but later on the boundaries roughly became Osorno to the north, the Magellan Strait to the south, and the Andes to the east. The northern extremity was especially subject to fluctuation as it bordered on the neighboring jurisdiction of Valdivia. In the decades following the destruction of Osorno in 1599, the provincial limits stretched northward past the destroyed settlement, occasionally to the north of the Bio Bio River. With the refounding of Valdivia in 1645, the limits receded again to the area around Osorno. In the 1760's, Viceroy Amat defined the boundaries as: the "barbarian Indians" of the plains near Valdivia to the north; the archipelagos of Guaytecas and Chonos to the south; and the Andes mountains and "Patagonia lands" to the east. The province was thus quite extensive but almost uninhabited, and the only settlements of any note were located on Isla Grande.

Since its original colonization, the province had fallen under Chilean jurisdiction but for a variety of reasons was firmly within the sphere of Peruvian influence. The area between Chiloé and Valdivia was inhabited by a host

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5 Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, X, 316.

6 Tomás Thayer Ojeda, "Importancia que tenían para los españoles las regiones patagónicas," RCHG, XXXIII (1920), No. 37, 295.

7 Rodríguez and Pérez (eds.), Memoria del virrey Amat, 658.
of hostile Indian tribes, which made this a virtual no-man's land for Spanish travelers. All of the island's supplies and provisions arrived by way of the annual situado from Lima, as well as the salaries of all troops, royal officials and the governor. The islanders were deprived of access to the Chilean coast, for they possessed no large ships of their own. In nearly every facet of its existence, Chiloé was a satellite of Peru.

Viceroy Amat launched a campaign during the 1760's to acquire direct control of the province. His views mirrored those of his predecessors—there was little use in sustaining the islanders and assuming the responsibility for their welfare if the viceroys did not also have corresponding governmental authority. In pleading the Peruvian case to the crown, he argued that the military importance of the archipelago demanded a strong defense, something which Chileans were incapable of providing in light of their dismal failures in containing the Araucanians. His reasoning finally prevailed in Spain. In August, 1767, the king authorized Amat to take all the necessary measures to insure Chiloé's defense and to appoint a military governor for the island. Although President Jáuregui opposed this change and petitioned the crown for a review of the matter, on March 28, 1768, the viceroy took charge of the province

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8Ibid., 660.

and appointed Captain Carlos de Beranger as governor.10

From this date forward, Chiloé remained under Peruvian authority in the political as well as the literal sense.11 In this transferral of authority, the province experienced no great economic revival, but the armed forces were augmented considerably and existing fortifications were expanded. Prior to this, the upgrading of defenses was largely a local problem encompassing little more than an increase in patrols or the simple repair of batteries. Governor Beranger was the first in a line of military governors who presided over the province and was among several royal engineers who came to assess the defenses and make proposals for their strengthening. Several of these officers compiled detailed reports concerning the island, its population, administration and urgent problems which required action.12 Of special interest were their topographical maps, soundings of the bays and analyses of batteries and their fields of fire, which placed defense on a more professional basis. The militiamen received a more rigorous military instruction by visiting Peruvian officers

10Rodríguez and Pérez (eds.), Memoria del virrey Amat, 660.

11The only exception to this was in the religious realm, for the island continued to fall under ecclesiastical authority of the Concepción bishopric.

12"Relación que..., February 15, 1773," Doc. No. 7491, JMDI, CCLIX.
and were periodically rotated for active duty. All of these measures were designed to implant a sounder system of military defense by the islanders, themselves, and to enhance the degree of Peruvian administrative control.

Despite its long administrative adhesion to Chile then, Chiloé was bound by stronger ties with Peru. The situado, commerce, communication and the appointment of royal officials nearly always originated in Lima. Even before 1768, the military influence and the planning of defenses were predominately Peruvian. Chileans could ill-afford to aid the province in the light of their expenses in the campaigns against the Araucanians, and it was realized that such aid could only constitute an additional burden. Chiloé's geographic separation from the captaincy-general and an inhospitable frontier only accentuated its orientation towards Peru.

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Valdivia, that envied fortress which attracted the attention of Spaniards and foreigners alike, was established in February, 1552, when the conqueror Pedro de Valdivia founded the town in one of his campaigns of conquest in the south. Giving the settlement his own name indicated that he was determined it should serve as the nexus of Spanish

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13 "Discurso que hace..., 1782," Doc. No. 7492, JMDI, CCLIX, 254.

14 Barros Arana, Historia general, I, 404.
colonization in that part of the colony. From the beginning the town was plagued by adversities, in large measure due to its separation from other inhabited areas. During the Indian revolt of 1599, Valdivia was overrun by Indians who, in the space of several hours, massacred over one hundred residents and captured three hundred others. Only a handful of the Spaniards managed to escape by swimming to several merchant ships anchored in the river in front of the town.\(^\text{15}\)

In 1602, the town was refounded, this time as a military fortress. However, the new garrison of two hundred soldiers was soon decimated due to death and desertion, and was barely able to hold its own against unrelenting Indian attacks.\(^\text{16}\)

The declining fortunes of the town sank even lower in 1604, when President Alonso de Rivera obtained royal permission to withdraw all Spaniards to the north of the Bio Bio River, utilizing this natural barrier as a shield behind which they could live in relative safety.\(^\text{17}\) Consequently, a ship sailed for Valdivia, picked up the remaining forty-four residents and transported them to new homes in Chiloé. Several years later, after Rivera's experiment had been discredited by renewed violence, President Laso de la Vega again broached the subject of Valdivia's settlement to the king. In doing so, he played upon the ever-present royal fear that the Dutch would fortify the bay, especially in the

\(^{15}\text{Ibid.}, \text{III, 287.}\)

\(^{16}\text{Ibid.}, \text{423.}\)

\(^{17}\text{Ibid.}, \text{425.}\)
light of the recent Dutch colonization in northern Brazil. Philip IV became convinced of the project's worth and ruled on May 18, 1635, that Valdivia's resettlement should be executed, but that the costs should be borne by the Chilean or Peruvian treasuries. Without royal subsidization, the colonization project was somewhat less than appealing and was consequently abandoned as too costly.

Valdivia's neglect continued until it was threatened by a foreign nation. By the early 1640's, an influential Dutchman visualized Chile as a magnificent opportunity to establish the same type of overseas colony as his countryman Count Johan Maurits had done on the northern coast of Brazil. This man was Hendrick Brouwer, the former governor-general of the Dutch East India Company, who had obtained permission from the Dutch government to undertake an expedition to the west coast of America. The Dutch were ill-advised in their scanty knowledge of Chile, believing it to be a land of great natural wealth. Brouwer reasoned that the taking of Valdivia would provide the basis for later colonization and a commercial foothold in the Pacific.

The tiny squadron of three ships left Holland in November, 1642, and arrived at the Dutch colony in Brazil the following year. Brouwer was received enthusiastically by Governor Maurits and presented with two additional

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20 Guarda, *Historia de Valdivia*, 58.
vessels. After passing Cape Horn, he stopped briefly on Chiloé, captured and then destroyed the small forts of Carelmapu and Castro. The commander next set his sights on Valdivia, but before arriving there, he fell gravely ill and died at sea. His nephew, Elias Herckmans, succeeded him as leader of the expedition and arrived at the deserted bay of Valdivia in August, 1643.

The enthusiasm of the Dutch was dimmed when the vessel carrying most of the munitions sank, and morale and discipline deteriorated among the ship crews. The Dutch had placed great faith in their ability to make the nearby Indians their allies; however, they found them unreceptive to European dominance and adamant in their refusal to supply the Dutch with food. Faced with dwindling provisions and the possibility of eventual starvation, Herckmans decided to return to Brazil in November, 1643, thus ending Dutch attempts to settle along the Pacific coast of America.

The presence of the Dutch was a startling revelation to the Spanish, especially when they learned that Brouwer intended to create a permanent colony. President Francisco López Zúñiga was incapable of besieging Valdivia from the land side because the Araucanians blocked all transit below the Bio Bio River. He had to content himself with

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21 Amunátegui, Los precursors, II, 254.
22 Barros Arana, Historia general, IV, 383-84.
23 Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, I, 93.
bolstering the port defenses of Concepción. Although Peru possessed far more military resources than Chile, Viceroy Pedro de Toledo realized that months would pass before a naval squadron could be prepared to meet the Dutch challenge. By the time that serious consideration could be given to forming an expedition, the Dutch had left of their own accord. Nevertheless, Viceroy Toledo resolved to resettle the town, not only for strategic reasons but also with the knowledge that success in such an enterprise would bring prestige to himself and his family. Preparations were made for a massive expedition, for which it was necessary to solicit aid as far away as Quito. Antonio de Toledo, son of the viceroy, was placed in charge of the expedition, which departed from Callao for Valdivia on December 31, 1644.

This was the largest military force ever seen in the Pacific up to that time, being composed of twelve armed galleons mounting a total of 188 cannon (45 of which were to be placed in the defenses of Valdivia) and 1,800 troops and sailors. On arriving at the port, Toledo erected the new town on the island in the center of the bay, which was named Mancera after the viceroy's title—the Marqués of Mancera. As the intent of Toledo was to secure the port against any further foreign invasions, walled defenses and a large

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24 Barros Arana, Historia general, IV, 392.
25 Amunátegui, Los precursores, II, 264.
26 Ibid., 265.
garrison of troops took precedence over civilian colonization. Accordingly, nine hundred troops were left on the island when Toledo returned to Peru, a number which he thought would make the port safe from any future attack.  

Valdivia's resettlement was a purely Peruvian venture, an accomplishment of considerable importance and a source of great pride for succeeding viceroys. The initiative of Viceroy Toledo was interpreted as a precedent. His successors affectionately regarded Valdivia as their own special preserve, overseeing its operation and regularly providing the residents with supplies and arms. Although the city had originally been founded through the efforts of Chilean conquerors, it now became a de facto Peruvian possession and an extension of the viceregal domain. The ties of authority were blurred, however, and legal jurisdiction of Valdivia became a long-standing source of contention between Lima and Santiago. This controversy involved more than jurisdictional pride or the appropriation of funds; it embraced complex issues such as military authority, political patronage and fundamental concepts of defense.

An acknowledged source of this confusion was the absence of royal mandates governing Valdivia's fiscal appropriations and the method of filling royal positions. There were no regulations concerning the amounts of money which could be spent on defenses or the respective troop

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\[27\text{Ibid.}\]
salaries. Nor were there rules governing the minimum number of troops which must be maintained or the method of appointing officials and granting promotions. Because of this, the level of assistance varied widely from year to year, according to the generosity of each viceroy and the fluctuating status of the Lima treasury. Adding to this confusion was the intermittent assistance which came from Chile, either in the form of troops and convict laborers or the food subsidy sent each year from Valparaiso. This led to protracted litigation over who actually held legal possession of the city—Chile, by virtue of its proximity to the city, or Peru, by virtue of its heavy financing.

There were different motives in Peru and Chile for the resettlement of Valdivia. For Chileans, resettlement signified the abandonment of the defensive policy implemented by President Rivera. After 1645, Valdivia served as a base for renewed Spanish colonization of the south and a focal point of military campaigns against the Indians. It was no surprise that Chileans wanted the garrison to be manned by their own sons of the soil, who had lived in the colony and were trained in guerrilla-style Indian warfare. On the other hand, the viceroys were not directly affected by the devastation of the Indian wars. Their abiding concern was in using Valdivia as a defensive post against the Dutch or other European interlopers. Uppermost in their minds was

28Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, IX, 172.
the possibility of foreign invasion and the jeopardy in
which they would find themselves if Valdivia succumbed to
the troops of European powers. As a consequence, they
desired that officers and elected officials be appointed
from the ranks of peninsular Spaniards who were well-versed
in the accepted manner of European combat and methods of
siege.\textsuperscript{29} Especially desired were veterans of the war of
Flanders or similar theaters of action.

In the years following its refounding, the many
royal officials and military officers sent to Valdivia were
appointed directly by the viceroy, usually every two years,
from a list of three qualified candidates for each available
position.\textsuperscript{30} The right to oversee promotions, salary bonuses
and other rank advancements was also jealously guarded by
the viceroys. Valdivia was regarded as a combat zone. A
tour of duty there was considered meritorious, and troops were
granted remuneration "for living in a presidio so disfavored
by nature."\textsuperscript{31} Peruvians did not wish to see their own
appointees passed over for promotion or forced to compete
with Chileans. Leaving aside the normal jockeying for
position within the military chain of command, there were con-
siderations of political interest and special privileges
involved in the control of Valdivia. The chronicler
Carvallo y Goyeneche mentioned the "families" of the viceroys

\textsuperscript{29}Memorias de los vireyes, II, 399.
\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Ibid.}, II, 398.
\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}
and the necessity of assuring their livelihoods in some form of public or military service.\textsuperscript{32} In his memoirs, Viceroy Melchor de Navarra alluded to the family and the importance of relatives and friends receiving benefits from the vice-regal authority.\textsuperscript{33} This leads to the conclusion that military appointments and governorships of towns such as Valdivia were a source of nepotism, intense patronage and a traditional method of political appointment. Consequently, Chilean efforts to obtain jurisdictional control of the city were met with hardened opposition by the Peruvian bureaucracy.

In a royal cédula of April 9, 1662, Philip IV ordered that Valdivia be placed under jurisdiction of the captaincy-general, a measure which seemed entirely logical in view of its being located within Chilean territory.\textsuperscript{34} On receiving word of this action, Viceroy Benavides vehemently protested, arguing the traditional merits of Peruvian supply and financing, plus the fact that Peruvian officers would be much more adept in combating European invasion. The sovereign became convinced of the impropriety of such a move, suspending execution of the order and allowing Valdivia to remain under the power of the viceroys.\textsuperscript{35} During the following years, Chilean presidents made repeated attempts

\textsuperscript{32}Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, IX, 174.
\textsuperscript{33}Memorias de los vireyes, II, 403-405.
\textsuperscript{34}Ibid., 400. \textsuperscript{35}Ibid.
to win what they thought was their natural right to its jurisdiction. An example was President Diego Dávila y Pacheco, who reasoned that a splitting of the colony's jurisdiction seriously obstructed war efforts and hindered coordination among the various military units. Unable to adjudicate between the interests of both parties, the king finally resolved in March, 1676, that Valdivia was to fall under Chilean authority due to its proximity to Concepción. The monarch reserved to himself the privilege of appointing the governors and officers from recommendations of the president. The viceroys were left with virtually no authority, in spite of the obligation of sending the situado each year.

Acrimonious debate and petitions to the crown did not abate with this ruling but were only intensified on the part of the viceroys. They contended that garrison troops were discriminated against by Chilean authorities in everything from their promotions to pay bonuses. The Archbishop of Lima and the governor of Valdivia also joined in the debate. They presented similar pleas to the crown, which finally resulted in the proclamation of a cédula on December 19, 1680. By this edict Valdivia remained under Chilean authority, and the crown still reserved the right to

36Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, IX, 171-72.
37Memorias de los vireyes, II, 400.
38Ibid., 401.
appoint the governor and two treasury officials, the veedor and contador; but, all military vacancies must now be filled from the ranks of Peruvian officers.  This strained and unresolved situation was to continue into the 1700's, during which time Valdivia's administration lacked direction due to jurisdictional rivalries. Because of this bickering, the town remained largely independent of either Peru or Chile. It was an ideal environment for the despotism of governors and local corruption which became ingrained characteristics of the city.

During the 1730's, President Manso de Velasco recognized Valdivia as an impediment to the colonization of the south and a city which must fall under the direct authority of Chile if it was ever to progress. He presented his thinking to the king in a letter of February 28, 1739, relating the corrupt nature of Valdivia's administration and the commercial monopolies of its governors, which he said preserved the decadence of the city. The city could not be suitably defended while it leaned so heavily on distant Lima for assistance. After consideration, the king ruled in September, 1740, that Valdivia should henceforth be entirely subject to Chilean authority. President Manso accordingly

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39 Ibid.


41 Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, I, 93.
met in Concepción the following year with the Bishop of Concepción, an oidor and the contador of the treasury in order to compose a series of ordinances regulating the political and military government of Valdivia. The result of their labor was the *Reglamento para la Guarnición de Valdivia* (1741), which established the duties of the local officials, set down rules governing the actions of the governor, prohibited certain commercial activities and generally set the tone of local government.⁴²

Valdivia changed little after the transition to Chilean authority. Despite the changing jurisdictions and the comings and goings of troops the city retained its basic character— that of a military outpost on the edge of the Spanish frontier. Technically, its boundaries encompassed not only the town, but all the land between the Tolten and Bueno rivers, from the sea to the cordillera.⁴³ Because there were no contiguous areas of settlement, Valdivia became a self-contained society, set apart and developing its own unique identity.

The most influential factor in the development of the town was, of course, the military. From 1645 until 1665, the garrison consisted of 2,000 men, and nearly 1,000 men until the end of the 1600's.⁴⁴ As the troop level diminished

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⁴²Guarda, *Historia de Valdivia*, 98.
⁴³"La verdad..., 1782," *AFA*, XXV, 54.
further to a single infantry battalion the civilian population expanded, but even in the late 1700's a majority of the residents were either soldiers or related military personnel. Here, the career of army officer was in itself a respected profession, and the members of the Valdivia battalion selected their brides from among the most prestigious families of the town.\textsuperscript{45} Their choices were subject to approval, and to marry outside of an official army sanction was to risk harsh consequences. In the fairly rigid society of Valdivia, these marriages were subject to rigorous scrutiny. Among the requisites were the permission of the officer's father, proof of baptism, a dowry of at least 2,000 pesos, and occasionally, direct royal approval.\textsuperscript{46} Names such as Guarda, Carvallo, Pinuer and Molina were of longstanding prestige and belonged to long lines of respected officers.

According to Carvallo y Goyeneche, the native Valdivians possessed a distinct personality because the insecurity of the region had bred a line of descendants who were robust, courageous and impetuous to the point of arrogance. Their dominant career inclinations were towards the army, and even those young men who took up a trade or merchantile occupation more often than not left it in time to join the

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 180.

\textsuperscript{46} Guarda, \textit{Historia de Valdivia}, 180.
Youngsters grew up skillful in handling firearms. From the age of seven or eight, they took up hunting as a sport and were inclined to play pranks and do other mischief with gunpowder. The women were intelligent, mild mannered and dedicated to their homes and families. Because their husbands were so occupied in military matters, the women usually had to till the family gardens and handle other menial tasks around their homes. Even the local dialect was affected by army life. It was described as a polished Castilian reminiscent of that spoken in the military campaigns of Europe, but without the Chilean provincial slang and lilted manner of speech. Despite the backward nature of Valdivia, there was a strong heritage of military aristocracy and a dedication to the profession of soldiering.

Everyday military life was not confined to the forts in the bay, but exerted a dominance throughout the town and local government. Probably the ultimate military influence was the fact that the cabildo, the fundamental institution of Spanish civil government and usually the first creation of a new municipality, was not formed in Valdivia until 1808. There was a military counterpart of the cabildo consisting of alcaldes militares, appointive posts for the

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47 Carvallo y Goyeneche, Descripción, X, 180.
48 "La verdad..., 1782," AFA, XXV, 46.
49 Ibid., 48.  
50 Ibid., 47.
assumption of local administrative duties. Still, the military governor exercised complete authority over civilians and soldiers alike. He was normally a colonel or a brigadier, earning 3,500 pesos a year along with a daily food ration for six persons. Should he die or become incapacitated in office, the sergeant major was first designate to succeed him and after this, the ranking captain of the battalion.

The military establishment in Valdivia touched the lives of nearly everyone in one form or another. The most lasting impression made by the army, and certainly the most important after 1810, was that of preserving royalist sentiment and faithful devotion to the Spanish king. The discipline and self-denial of army life, coupled with a rigid hierarchy and social position of the officer corps, were not conducive to the growth of liberal political doctrine. The background of officers and staff were equally important factors. A great many officers came directly from Spain, the focal point of monarchism. Governors were invariably peninsular Spanish, and numerous captains, lieutenants and other officers were of the same origin.

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52 "Indice alfabetico..." [n.d.], AV, CCLXXXIII, "Gobernador de Valdivia.
By royal order of February 14, 1786, the governor's salary was raised to 4,000 pesos.

53 Reglamento para Valdivia, 1753, Ord. 46.

54 "La verdad..., 1782," AFA, XXV, 47.
Valdivia and Chiloé shared many similarities in their history. Both developed in environments set apart from the rest of the colony, which caused them to develop their own distinct character: Chiloé, a poverty-stricken island at the fringe of Spanish territory, and Valdivia, a tightly-knit provincial society with military overtones. The two areas underwent jurisdictional changes, but these shifts in authority were not nearly as influential as social, economic and military factors. Both were largely extensions of Peruvian influence and faithful islands of royalism in the south of Chile.
Chapter 9

MILITARY REORGANIZATION AND THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT OF 1810

One of the changes taking place in society during the last years of the colony was the assumption of a more influential role by the civilian militia. The militia had traditionally been portrayed as rustic provincials, whose principal duties consisted of participating in public ceremonies. Nevertheless, they were a potentially influential political force, especially in the capital area. They were far more numerous than the veteran troops, and the nobility and most prestigious colonial leaders were represented in the ranks.

During the last two decades of the 1700's, the militia acquired growing prominence, in large measure because of the reforms instituted by President Jáuregui. His reorganization of the Santiago militia in 1777 bred a new esprit de corps, encouraged by measures such as levying fines on those soldiers who failed to attend military or ceremonial functions where their presence was expected.¹

¹Vicuña Mackenna, Historia de Santiago, X, 53-55.
The increased dangers of attack by foreign powers provided an additional avenue for the militia to increase their prestige, for there were too few veteran troops to simultaneously guard the frontier and the coasts. In 1780 and again in 1797, Santiago militia companies were sent by ship to reinforce the Valdivia battalion against a possible English invasion.\(^2\) In another year, 1800, over 750 militia served on active duty throughout the colony, and their pay amounted to 62,000 pesos.\(^3\)

However, the real catalyst which placed the militia into the military arena was the English invasion of Buenos Aires in 1806, an event which convinced Chileans the next target of British imperialism would be their own colony.\(^4\) President Luis Muñoz de Guzman convoked a defense council in September of that year, requesting that each participant present a defense plan to combat the English. The recommendation which was finally accepted was that of Judas Tadeo Reyes, secretary of the colony, who proposed that militia be

\(^2\)In 1780, a total of 280 men (four companies) were transported from Santiago to reinforce Valdivia. During the time that they served on active duty, their total pay was 30,048 pesos ("Expediente formado..., 1780," ACM, DCCCLXIII, Cuaderno 10).

\(^3\)To obtain an idea of how this amount ranks with that of the entire veteran army, in 1800 a total of 277,455 pesos was paid to all troops and auxiliary personnel ("Razón de los Sueldos..., 1800," ACM, XLIX.

\(^4\)José Pérez García, Historia natural, militar, civil y sagrada del reino de Chile (Santiago: Imprenta Elzeviriana, 1900), CHDC, XXIII, 442.
mobilized to bear the brunt of the anticipated invasion. Reyes' plan was deficient in its assessment of civilian capabilities; he confidently extolled the skill of machete-wielding militia levies in holding crack English troops at bay. Under the circumstances, however, civilian volunteers were considered the only alternative for defending the capital, for there were no funds for creating new veteran battalions.

On March 18, 1807, President Muñoz directed that a training camp to instruct the militia be established just west of Santiago, at a place called Las Lomas. During the four months of its operation (September through December, 1807), over one thousand militiamen from the capital area took turns training, some firing a musket for the first time. After their instruction, they were evidently more adept (or at least more enthusiastic) in their duties, for one witness reported that the troops could be armed and assembled on ten minutes notice. After it was learned that the British expedition under General John Whitelock had suffered an ignoble defeat to the Argentines, the camp was disbanded and the militia returned to their homes.

The exercises at Las Lomas were a pleasant diversion

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5 "Documentos relativos..., 1806-1807," CHDI, XXV, 56-57.

6 Pérez García, Historia, XXIII, 442.

7 Ibid., 446.
for the civilians involved and a welcomed change in the routine of their occupations. More importantly, it gave these men a perception of their strength and a feeling of affinity with their victorious counterparts in Buenos Aires. The creole aristocrats who were militia officers felt a power they had not known before, which was easily translated into strong sentiments of institutional loyalty. As one of these soldiers later reflected:

We were so enthusiastic with the military service that we would have happily greeted the landing of any enemy expedition on our shores, and would have attempted to merit the glories that the heroic army of Buenos Aires achieved.8

This civilian involvement in military matters was destined to become a factor in undercutting the strength of the veteran army.

While the militia was undergoing a process of growing awareness, Chile was approaching the brink of a political abyss. The first manifestations of this became apparent on February 11, 1808, when the aged President Muñoz died in office. According to a royal order of October 23, 1806:

should a colonial administrative head die or become incapacitated in those jurisdictions where there was an audiencia, the interim leadership must fall to the senior military officer not below the rank of colonel.9 There were three

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8Sergio Villalobos, Tradición y reforma en 1810 (Santiago: Ediciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1961), 63.

officers who satisfied these qualifications: Colonel Luis de Alava, Intendant of Concepción; Brigadier Pedro de Quijada; and Brigadier Antonio García Carrasco, all of whom were away from the capital.  

Not wishing to risk the rule of some obscure army officer, the audiencia oidores met within hours to elect the regent of their corporation, Juan Rodríguez Ballesteros. This act precipitated a challenge by the officers in question, who convoked a council in Concepción and mutually agreed to uphold the right of García Carrasco to become interim president. Facing a possible confrontation, the audiencia deferred to the aging brigadier, allowing him to take the reins of government. Accompanying García Carrasco to Santiago was Juan Martínez de Rozas, the former asesor letrado of the Intendancy of Concepción, who was destined to have a guiding hand in the early independence movement. He became the new president's personal secretary and attempted to use his position to influence the passage of liberal measures.

García Carrasco acceded to the presidency at what proved to be the most difficult of times. In August, 1808, word arrived to Chile of the abdication of Charles IV, the downfall of the Spanish minister Manuel de Godoy, and disturbing rumors of Napoleon's true intentions toward the Spanish monarchy. The following September it was learned

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10 Barros Arana, Historia general, VIII, 11.

that Ferdinand VII had yielded the Spanish throne at Bayonne, allowing Joseph Bonaparte to rule in the name of his brother. Amid the proclamations of fealty to Ferdinand, there were murmurings in Chile that the monarchy was suffering an irreversibly fatal decline and that the Seville Junta lacked the authority to dictate colonial policy. Two opposing groups began to emerge in Santiago: the staunch royalists, personified by the audiencia, and the proponents of autonomy, represented by the cabildo.

García Carrasco was not the tactful, diplomatic president who was needed to soothe the tense political atmosphere. Accustomed to discipline and unquestioning obedience, he attempted to assert his authority by force. Years of army duty in isolated garrisons had developed an officer with little of the social polish which characterized successful career bureaucrats, as evidenced by his penchant for surrounding himself with lower-class cronies. Moreover, he committed a series of mistakes which undermined his position and fueled the fires of opposition.¹²

In October, 1808, an English vessel, the Scorpion, was captured by Chilean officials along the northern coasts. The Spanish in question had feigned a willingness to enter into contraband trade with the English but at the moment of finalizing agreements, brutally murdered the captain and

¹²Ibid., 60-61.
eight crewmen. The cargo was then divided after the conspirators declared it a fair prize. Chileans, who were usually tolerant of smuggling, were incensed at hearing of this atrocious act. Their ire was further aroused when it was learned that García Carrasco had been in communication with the conspirators throughout the incident. The populace soon believed that he had masterminded the plot and had become wealthy from the sale of the ship's cargo.

During this time the cabildo, led by Juan Martínez de Rozas, was attempting a course of administrative reform. It was blocked at every turn by the conservative stance of the president. Frustrated in his attempt to impose reform by gaining the ear of the president, Rozas resigned his position and left the capital for Concepción, confident that his influence would fall upon more fertile ground in the south.

Cognizant of the undercurrent of patriot resentment and determined to quell any symptoms of political discord, García Carrasco took matters into his own hands. Without

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14 "Representaciones que hacen..., October-December, 1808," CHDI, VIII, 117-64.

15 An additional cause for Rozas' departure was his alleged involvement in the Scorpion affair, from which he was supposed to have benefited financially (Domingo Amunátegui Solar, *Jesuitas, gobernantes, militares y escritores* [Santiago: Editorial Ercilla, 1934], 85-86).
prior consultation, he secretly ordered that 4,000 lances fabricated under the orders of President Muñoz in 1807, be shipped to Lima. After the act was later publicized, he justified it by claiming that the lances were needed by the Spanish army, when in fact he feared that the patriots might seize them.16

The act which turned public opinion against the president and ultimately brought his downfall was his imprisonment of three patriot sympathizers in May, 1810. The men, José Antonio Rojas, Juan Antonio de Ovalle, and Bernardo Vera, were accused by García Carrasco of anti-monarchial plots. Highly esteemed by patriots and royalists alike, they appear to have been victims of fabricated evidence.17 The cabildo formally condemned the arrests, and even the royal audiencia urged restraint on the president. After being presented with a petition by prominent citizens, García Carrasco agreed not to exile the men to Peru as he had planned, but to keep them detained in Valparaiso. However, in June, word arrived in Chile that the creoles of Buenos Aires had deposed Viceroy Baltasar Hidalgo de Cisneros and installed a junta. Apprehensive that a similar Chilean movement might already be in progress, García Carrasco quietly shipped Rojas and Ovalle to Lima, leaving

16"Oficio de respuesta..., May 9, 1810," CHDI, XVIII, 25-35.

17Galdames, A History of Chile, 148, 154.
Vera behind because of what appeared to be a grave illness. The revelation of this action brought about a popular demand for the president's resignation.\(^{18}\)

The audiencia, aware of the resignation which must soon come and desirous of naming a favorable successor, assembled on July 16 and persuaded the president to step down. In his place they appointed Mateo de Toro Zambrano, Conde de la Conquista, a feeble-minded octogenarian whom they were certain could be manipulated to their policies.\(^{19}\)

At first taken aback by the initiative of the audiencia, the cabildo recovered its political composure and began to press Toro Zambrano for an open cabildo. Hopelessly trapped between two opposing factions, the aging patriarch was alternately besieged by royalists and patriots. He reversed his directives almost daily, tending to agree with the last group with whom he had conferred. After endless rounds of vacillation, he finally assented on September 12 to patriot demands for an open cabildo, having been persuaded that failure to do so would lead to civil strife.\(^{20}\)

During the genesis of political unrest in Santiago, from 1808 to 1810, the veteran army was generally dis-associated from partisan conflicts. In its ranks were supporters of both political factions, but few officers could


\(^{19}\) "Bando en que..., July 17, 1810," CHDI, XXIX, 26.

\(^{20}\) Collier, Ideas and Politics, 47-48.
be counted among the intelligentsia or the aristocratic elite. For the most part, officers remained in their positions along the frontier or in coastal forts, too preoccupied with the Araucanian situation to contemplate any unified action. Those officers stationed in the capital either adhered to their duties in preserving public order or became instruments of wiser civilian leaders.

In 1810, the veteran troops in Santiago consisted of the following: the dragoon company of the Reina Luisa (50 men) led by Captain Manuel de Ugarte; an artillery company (70 men) commanded by Colonel Francisco Javier de Reina; and two companies of frontier dragoons (200 men) under Captain Juan Miguel Benavente, who had come to the capital in the entourage of Rozas. Sergeant Major Juan de Dios Vial, commander of the city's military forces, was an adherent of colonial autonomy, as were Ugarte and Benavente. However, their sworn responsibility was to insure public order, so they refrained from overt attempts to force García Carrasco to resign.

The militia took the initiative in supporting the drive for autonomy, partially as a result of the training which they had received during the preceding years. Within Santiago there were two militia cavalry regiments of four squadrons each, the Príncipe and Princesa, and two infantry battalions: the Regimiento del Rey and a battalion of

21Barros Arana, Historia general, VIII, 138.
pardos. In September, 1810, these units had been mobilized and were quartered throughout the city, receiving pay. They were augmented by other units from Melipilla and Rancagua. Altogether, the militia numbered 3,000 men who were nearly unanimous in their support of the cabildo. Even if the veteran forces present had all been unified and supportive of the audiencia, they would have been unable to overcome the combined civilian levies.

On September 18, 1810, an open cabildo was held in Santiago, attended by 340 military, civilian and governmental officials. The assembly elected a seven-man junta gubernativa presided over by the figurehead Conde de la Conquista, which was to serve until a representative congress could be convoked the following April. It was recognized as the legitimate executive body of the colony by every cabildo in Chile, including the royalist-tainted corporations in Concepción and Valdivia.

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22 Manuel Antonio Talavera, Revoluciones de Chile. Discurso histórico, diario imparcial, de los sucesos memorables acaecidos en Santiago de Chile por un vecino testigo ocular (Santiago: Imprenta Mejía, 1901), CHDI, XXIX, 119.


24 Governor Alejandro Eagar of Valdivia answered the communications of the Santiago cabildo with a formal recognition, although his terse reply belied a basic mistrust of the new government. In Concepción, news of the junta's creation alarmed Intendant Luis de Alava so badly that he fled to Lima by ship. An open cabildo was called which pledged allegiance to Santiago, and was supported by such ardent royalists as Tomás de Figueroa and Bishop Martín de Villodres.
One of the most pressing issues facing the new government was that of military security, for the declaration of similar juntas in Quito and Upper Peru had brought bloody reprisals by Viceroy José Fernando de Abascal. There were two opposing factions within the patriot camp, concerning the defensive measures which should be taken. A moderate group emphasized the economic burden of assuming an army buildup and contended that this would only serve to provoke viceregal retaliation. A more vocal faction (spearheaded by Rozas and the radicals) viewed Peruvian retaliation as a certainty and favored a military buildup to counteract the inevitable invasion. The latter faction predominated, which led to a three-man commission being appointed to draft a plan of defense for the colony. Juan Mackenna, an ardent patriot and military officer, directed the work of this commission, the results of which were presented to the junta on November 27, 1810.25

The defense plan of 1810 was intended as a justification for a thorough reorganization of Chile's military forces. Superficially, the stated aim of the plan was the protection of Chile from a possible French invasion; the occupation of Spain by Napoleon had bred an exaggerated fear of French conquests spreading to America.26 In reality, it


26Ibid., 114, 117.
was a strategy for defense against a royalist attack from Peru. It had the overall effect of relegating the existing veteran forces to a secondary status and elevating the civilian militia to a position of prominence. In terms of geographic emphasis, it was an effort to bolster the defenses of the capital area at the expense of the south and what was thought to be its traditional military importance. The Santiago government's disregard of the south's military potential and its failure to insure the loyalty of the army there, was a serious error in judgment on the part of the patriot leaders.

Mackenna rejected the longstanding axiom that the southernmost garrisons of Chiloé and Valdivia were integral to defense against an invasion around Cape Horn. To his thinking, both were so isolated and devoid of supplies that they could be of no use to any enemy, except for the artificial attraction of their forts. In addition, they were located too far to the south to be used as a base for raids on shipping. As an example, he pointed to the Dutch attempt in 1643 to colonize Valdivia, an effort which ended in utter failure. With regard to the expedition of Anson, Mackenna stated that the British crown was obviously as ignorant of Valdivia's uselessness as was the court of Madrid, which had infused many millions of pesos into the port in the delusion that it was vital. 27

27 Ibid., 119.
Mackenna's judgment they served as little more than a flimsy screen to protect endangered colonists, and their use in launching offensive operations was practically nil. The logic behind this downgrading of Valdivia and the frontier was probably an attempt to appropriate the costly situado to the Santiago area. 28

According to Mackenna, the only enticements of a coastal town to an invader were food, a target for pillage, or a base from which to raid shipping. The only three Chilean ports fulfilling these needs (and the only ones meriting a defense) were Valparaíso, Concepción and Coquimbo, perhaps along with Huasco and Copiapó. 29

The plan envisioned by Mackenna involved a complete reorganization of existing military forces. Because of the escalated dangers of attack by foreign nations, he maintained that there was a need for a much larger army; but the strained financial situation of the colony did not permit the paying of even the ordinary expenses, let alone the creation of additional troop battalions. The only recourse, he argued, was to reduce the veteran forces significantly, to a permanent level of slightly over one thousand men. 30

Considering the uselessness of Valdivia, it was

28 Guarda, La toma de Valdivia, 24.
29 "Plan de defensa..., November 27, 1810," CHDI, XIX, 136, 146.
30 Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, I, 479.
proposed that its garrison be reduced by one-half, leaving only three hundred men to guard the town and forts. Almost half of the frontier forts were to be abandoned, and all veteran troops would be transferred to coastal ports. Militia units would provide the necessary security for the remaining forts along the Bio Bio River. Concepción was one southern city which did merit a much stronger force than its usual one-hundred man garrison and would now be reinforced to four hundred twenty men, along with two hundred more troops in the port of Talcahuano. With the exception of the aforementioned troops in the south, all other military personnel would be transferred to Valparaiso, Coquimbo or Santiago.

The militia was meant to fill the vacuum left by the depletion of the veteran forces, and for this purpose would be increased to some 25,000 men. Mackenna's estimation of the militia was high, for he termed it "the true army of Chile." A minimum of one thousand of these men would be necessary to defend the capital, as well as numerous other companies in Valparaiso and adjacent ports. By forming new battalions, the loyalties of army personnel could be assured and molded to the will of the junta.

Mackenna's argument for the reapportionment of the

31 "Plan de defensa..., November 27, 1810," CHDI, XIX, 133-34.
32 Ibid., 153.
33 Ibid., 152.
armed forces was recognized as a thinly-veiled plot to shift troop deployment to areas of patriot sentiment, without arousing the suspicion of royalists. He and his associates were primarily concerned with protecting Santiago by placing numerous battalions in the city and along the adjacent coasts. Had the plan been undertaken in its entirety, the Santiago government would have had little to fear from organized resistance in other provinces. As it turned out, however, only half of the proposals were enacted. New army units were formed in the capital, but there was no effort to reduce the southern garrisons or transfer their troops to Santiago where they could be kept under a watchful eye. It was the veteran army in the south which was to later become the base of the royalist invasion from Peru.

Utilizing Mackenna's proposals as a framework for protecting the capital, the junta decreed on December 14, 1810, that new veteran military units be formed in Santiago. In the heady enthusiasm of the first months of the junta's existence, there was little reasoned thought for the security of areas other than the capital or in making use of the standing army which already existed in the south. Santiago residents of whatever political stripe eagerly enlisted in the army in order to indulge their sentiments of patriotism or vanity. Four new artillery companies were created with a combined strength of 280 men, 75 of whom were supposed to be
selected from current veteran companies. An infantry battalion was formed, the Grenadiers of Chile, with a total of nine companies and 693 men. And last, a cavalry squadron was drawn up, the Dragoons of Santiago (or Hussars, as they were known), of six companies totaling 650 troops. Although the full strength of these new corps could not be immediately filled, their strength on paper almost equaled the entire veteran army already in existence.

While some veteran officers were used in positions of leadership in these new units, most of the officer corps were derived from civilian militia or the nobility of Santiago. Political allegiance and social status were the principal criteria for receiving commissions, rather than records of distinguished army service. Juan Martínez de Rozas was one of the most avid proponents of employing regular veteran officers to lead these units, arguing that a rough geographical balance should be maintained with regard to representing the Valdivia and Concepción garrisons.

But his efforts were recognized as a scheme to buttress his personal power by surrounding himself with military cronies from the south, and were largely countered by the Santiago aristocracy. Sergeant Major Juan de

34 "Documento sobre..., December 16, 1810," CHDI, XXV, 334-35.
35 "Decreto que..., December 22, 1810," CHDI, XXV, 346-47.
36 "Memoria sobre...," CHDI, II, 34.
Dios Vial and Captain Juan Miguel Benavente, two veteran officers from Concepción with admirable records, were originally promised command of the hussars and grenadiers. They were later passed over in favor of other candidates. Bernardo O'Higgins, one of the most capable young officers on the frontier, was reduced to second in command of a militia regiment in the Laja district.

For the most part, it was the influential families of Santiago who managed to win military appointments, despite the fact that they were inexperienced and unfit to lead their new commands. The awarding of positions was favorably influenced by those wealthy aspirants who could afford to equip and clothe their own companies. For example, Ignacio Carrera, father of the influential Carrera family, was able to confirm his sons Juan José as sergeant major of the grenadier regiment and Luis as an artillery captain. The bonds of kinship extended even to the established army units. For example, the Conde de la Conquista was able to name his son as commandant of the frontier dragoon squadron. Manuel Antonio Talavera, a royalist witness to the intense rivalry for administrative and military appoint-

37 Ibid., 36.
38 Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna, El ostracismo del general don Bernardo O'Higgins (Valparaiso: Imprenta del Mercurio, 1860), 110.
39 "Memoria sobre...," CHDI, II, 35.
40 Vicuña Mackenna, El ostracismo, 110.
ment, observed that:

The multitude of aspirants to positions of new creation is incalculable. It is sufficient only to understand that the partisans that actively cooperated in the installation of the Junta, went with the hope of some reward and of improving their status. This personal interest, which is now called patriotism, . . . is the most frequent topic considered in the Junta.41

The recruitment of common soldiers did not follow the rigorous criteria of officer selection. In order to fill the ranks of the army, it was necessary to scour the jails and countrysides for volunteers. The pitifully small number of uniforms and armaments gave the new units the appearance of little more than an organized mob.42 In its most basic form, it was a rich man's army, and the luxuriant accouterments of the officers sharply contrasted with the threadbare appearance of the common soldiers.

The costs of the new Santiago units were insupportable. All three branches incurred annual expenditures of 210,252 pesos, simply for the salaries of officers and troops.43 No area of public finance was too sacred to escape the demands of military appropriation. Salaries of

41Talavera, Revoluciónes, CHDI, XXIX, 127-28.
42"Memoria sobre...," CHDI, II, 36.
43The breakdown for the individual units was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artillery</td>
<td>49,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infantry</td>
<td>105,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>54,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two legal counsels</td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>210,252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Talavera, Revoluciónes, 186).
all public employees were lowered (including those of the clergy), a measure designed to increase revenues by 50,000 pesos annually.\textsuperscript{44} Additional taxes were levied on tobacco and other monopoly items, and work was suspended on public edifices such as the cathedral of Santiago. One of the few economic measures to actually prove profitable was the proclamation of free trade on February 21, 1811. This act opened the ports of Valdivia, Concepción, Valparaíso and Coquimbo to foreign commerce with all allies of Spain and with neutral nations.\textsuperscript{45} In only six months, colonial customshouse receipts nearly doubled.\textsuperscript{46} Article XVI of this provision merits noting within the context of the military, for it permitted the duty-free entry of all pistols, swords, muskets, cannon, gunpowder and all such implements of war.\textsuperscript{47}

Despite the inexperience of the new troops, the government sought to provide them with as high a status or higher than that of the established units. A comparison of wage levels reveals that while the veteran artillery companies received nearly the same wages as those in Santiago, the new infantry units were generally higher paid than the established battalions.

\textsuperscript{44}Ibid., 188.

\textsuperscript{45}"Bando que declara..., February 21, 1811," CHDI, XXIX, 203. Excluded from this free trade provision were precious metals, liquors, and such items as tobacco, which fell under government monopoly.

\textsuperscript{46}Barros Arana, \textit{Historia general}, VIII, 274.

\textsuperscript{47}Talavera, \textit{Revoluciones}, CHDI, XXIX, 208.
### Table 6

**Annual Pay Scales, Infantry Battalions of Valdivia and Santiago**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Valdivia Battalion Pesos</th>
<th>Santiago Battalion Pesos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>504</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Lieutenant</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant First Class</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant Second Class</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drummer</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal First Class</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal Second Class</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldiers</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By early 1811, the patriot camp had reached a state of diplomatic limbo with the mother country and Peru, each side marking time until a definite advantage could be achieved. On receiving news of the Chilean junta's installation, the Spanish `consejo de regencia` was understandably suspicious, petitioning the Peruvian viceroy for his assessment of the matter. Nevertheless, the `consejo` announced that it would not oppose the junta as long as it dedicated itself to preserving public order and professing

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48Ibid., 185.  
"Liquidación que forma..., 1810," CHDI, VIII, 344-47.
loyalty to Ferdinand VII. Viceroy Abascal was less conciliatory towards the junta, acknowledging it in the most reserved manner. Abascal would have dispatched an expedition to quell the seditious creoles long before then had not his troops been spread so thinly in Quito and Upper Peru. In addition, a severing of ties with Chile would have deprived Lima of Chilean grain imports. The matter of the junta's legitimacy was brought to the forefront on February 26, 1811, when the Conde de la Conquista died. Although he had never been more than a puppet, he was the legally recognized leader of the colony. His passing only accentuated the crisis of the junta's recognition.

Despite the cool reception of the junta abroad, the internal situation in Chile was more critical than the danger of invasion. The royalist faction had endured the initial moves of the cabildo and junta with only minimal reaction, partially from an inability to make their voices heard and their belief in the patriot declarations of loyalty to the monarchy. As the radical posture of the Rozas clique began to gain momentum, monarchial sympathizers thought of regaining by force the power which they had lost. The individual whom they entrusted to carry out their plans was Colonel Tomás de Figueroa, a troop commander

49 Mariano Torrente, Historia de la revolución de Chile (Santiago: Imprenta Cervantes, 1900), III, 37.

50 Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, I, 492-93.
stationed in Santiago.

Figueroa was one of the most colorful figures of late colonial Chile, with a background that was as volatile as the frontier where he served. Born in Estepona, Spain, around 1746, he entered the military as a young man, being appointed to the palace guard of Charles IV. Notorious for his impetuous behavior and amorous escapades, he was discovered in the chamber of a court lady and forced to resign from the army. The incident led to a duel with a rival, whom Figueroa killed. The king commuted the normal death sentence and ordered Figueroa to serve in Valdivia, but the resourceful convict was able to escape after several years imprisonment, disguised as a priest. He returned to Spain, where he was finally pardoned and awarded an officer's commission. He returned to Valdivia as a captain, becoming a distinguished officer in the fortress where he had once been imprisoned.

Prior to the independence movement, Figueroa was stationed in Concepción, where he had gained a reputation as an influential frontier caudillo. He developed a close friendship with Rozas, and with the exception of this man, Figueroa may have been the most influential personality on

51 Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna, El Coronel don Tomás de Figueroa (Santiago: Rafael Jover, 1884), 43.

When Rozas journeyed to Santiago in 1810 to take a seat on the governing junta, he took Figueroa with him in the hope of making him a powerful ally. Within a short time, Figueroa broke away from his mentor and formed a liaison with prominent royalists.

In late March, 1811, delegates began to assemble in Santiago to attend the national congress, scheduled for April 1. Early on the morning of the assembly, Juan de Dios Vial, commander of the city's forces, instructed Captain Juan Miguel Benavente to lead a company of fifty frontier infantry to the plaza where the assembly was to take place, to guard against possible violence. After taking the infantry from San Pablo barracks, Benavente found them surly and insubordinate, saying they would follow the orders of no one except their commander, Tomás de Figueroa. Under the leadership of a corporal, the troops threatened to kill Benavente if he interfered with their plans and returned to the barracks to enlist others to their cause. Besides this company, in the barracks were housed almost the entire squadron of frontier dragoons and the new units of Santiago hussars, altogether totaling three or four hundred men. The majority of these soldiers were of royalist sympathies,

53 Vicuña Mackenna, El Coronel, 79.

54 "Proceso seguido..., April 1, 1811," CHDI, XIX, 241.

55 Vicuña Mackenna, El Coronel, 83.
although their primary loyalties were to Figueroa.

A messenger was then sent to bring Figueroa to the barracks. On arriving, he lost no time in breaking open the magazine, distributing cartridges to each soldier and leading a force of about two hundred fifty men to the plaza of the consulado to confront the assembled junta and cabildo. On finding the square still vacant, he conducted the mob to the main plaza. He arrived about nine o'clock and entered the palace of the audiencia. The oidores, having been forewarned of a plot to depose the junta, had been in session since seven o'clock that morning. Figueroa conferred privately with them, after which a note was sent to the junta, asking for its resignation.

In the meantime, Vial and Benavente had assembled over five hundred armed soldiers along one side of the main plaza, along with two cannon. On leaving the audiencia palace, Figueroa was startled by the sight of organized opposition but placed himself at the head of his troops and confronted the patriots. During a moment of confusion general firing broke out, followed by panic on the part of the royalists as they fled from the plaza. The number of dead was placed between two and ten men, mostly among the royalists, with up to twenty persons wounded.

When the gunfire had first begun, Figueroa fled from

56 Ibid., 95.  
57 Ibid., 106.  
58 "Proceso seguido..., April 1, 1811," CHDI, XIX, 240.
the plaza and sought refuge in a convent, hiding in a court­
yard. After the battle, a search was conducted for him led
by none other than Martínez de Rozas, who offered a reward
of five hundred pesos for the perpetrator of the conspiracy.
Figueroa was apprehended and tried for his actions the same
day, being found guilty of plotting to overthrow the junta.
At four o'clock on the morning of April 2, he was executed
in his cell by a firing squad, and his body later exhibited
in the plaza.59

Regardless of the royalist loyalties held by Figueroa,
it appears that personal ambition was the motivation behind
his assuming leadership of the militant troops. Neither was
he the sole organizer of the rebellion, for evidence tends
to point towards a deliberate attempt of the audiencia to
bring about the overthrow of the junta.60 In any case, his
execution was only a secondary consequence. The audiencia
was solidly implicated in the revolt, as well as a variety
of other crown officials. During the following months,
popular pressure forced the resignation of the now thoroughly
discredited oidores, as well as former president García
Carrasco.61 This dissolution of the highest colonial

59Ibid., 261.

60In his confession, Figueroa maintained that he had
not acted alone but on orders from higher authorities,
alluding to the audiencia. Ibid., 260.

61"Acuerdo para separar..., April 24, 1811," CHDI,
XIX, 348.
tribunal and the exile of its members temporarily broke the backbone of organized royalist opposition and paved the way for the brief ascendancy of the constituent congress.

From the revolt of April 1, the militia and new army units in Santiago gained renewed prestige and a sense of their own power. Promotions were liberally dispensed, and all those soldiers who had participated in the suppression of the revolt were presented with shoulder patches inscribed with "I saved the fatherland." In the following weeks, the junta stationed nearly two thousand troops in the central plaza and placed the militia on a mobilized status. These militia came from as far away as Aconcagua, Melipilla and Rancagua, forming security patrols that roved about the city each night. Militiamen were suddenly cognizant of their role in determining the course of political action, and civilian leaders were aware that these new units were now indispensable elements in obtaining their political ends.

Until this juncture, Chile had occupied the unique position of not having to overcome great barriers in its progress towards independence. The patriots had directed their movement with moderate firmness and had treated their most ardent adversaries with respect. Although there was a deep animosity between the opposing factions, no open

62 "Premios concedidos..., April 9, 1811," CHDI, XIX, 348-49.
violence had taken place. The revolt of Figueroa once and for all set the tone of the revolution and irreparably polarized both camps against each other. For the moment, the patriot movement was unified, with both the moderates and the radicals pitted against a common enemy.
Chapter 10

THE ASCENDANCY OF JOSÉ MIGUEL CARRERA AND THE PATRIOT JUNTAS OF CONCEPCIÓN AND VALDIVIA

The occurrences of April 1, 1811, no matter how evocative of the need for order, could not indefinitely quell the deep divisions within the patriot movement. Once order had been reestablished the old dissensions returned, now highlighted by a widespread dissatisfaction with Juan Martínez de Rozas and the radical stance which he represented. The moderates, led by the governing junta and cabildo of Santiago, naturally opposed Rozas' jacobin philosophy and were jealous of his ascendancy to power. They were joined by the clergy and other supporters of the old regime. And Rozas' own party, the radicals, were alienated by his one-man leadership and the violence which had resulted under his tutelage.¹

By mid-1811, Rozas was nearing the zenith of his political influence in the capital. His support was based on the rabid loyalty of a minority of the provincial electors to the rescheduled national congress, which was to

¹Barros Arana, Historia general, VIII, 334.
convoke in July. Earlier in the year, the Santiago cabildo had secured the right to send twelve delegates to congress, a number which seemed excessive to the provincial electors. This action reinforced their suspicions that the cabildo was attempting to insure the moderate composition of the congress. On April 30, a majority of Rozas' supporters assembled before the junta ejecutiva and demanded participation in executive decision-making. The junta acceded to their demands and a thirty-member executive directory was created, now predominately composed of provincial representatives loyal to Rozas.²

Alarmed at this power play on the part of the exaltados, combined with the exclusion of the capital from the new directory, the Santiago moderates immediately scheduled an election for congressional deputies. In the election of May 6, the moderates scored an outstanding victory by electing a majority of their members to the upcoming congress. From this point on, the radical faction was in a minority, shorn of its former power. Rozas' downfall in the capital was now almost inevitable.³

On July 4, 1811, the long-anticipated congress was finally convoked, and the junta which had served since September 18, 1810, was formally dissolved. This congress was the first real expression of representative government

²Martinez, Memoria histórica, 99.
³Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, I, 523-24.
in Chile, and while meriting a certain historical veneration, its accomplishments should not be exaggerated. It was composed chiefly of aristocrats with little comprehension of their representative obligations, for there was no parliamentary tradition on which to base their actions. Rather than acting as a machine of change, the congress was a faithful reflection of the structured social hierarchy of the period.

From its inception, the congress was fractured by political discord and philosophical differences, which impeded the course of reform and reduced the regular sessions to bouts of verbal abuse. Three distinct groups began to emerge from this chaotic assembly. There were the radicals, led by Rozas, who although possessing only twelve delegates, were resolute and dedicated to the democratic transformation of the colony. The moderates represented a more numerous faction and included many of the wealthy gentry and socially prominent colonial leaders. They were the advocates of an enlightened, reformed government, but without a sharp break with tradition. Finally, there were the royalists, comprising a definite minority but vehemently opposed to ideas of autonomy. 4

The congress and the directory were now fast becoming oriented towards the moderate, and even the royalist, viewpoint. As the moderates increasingly consolidated their

4Vicuña Mackenna, El ostracismo, 116.
power by electing their own adherents to governmental posts, the Rozas faction desperately attempted to regain lost political ground. Inflammatory literature attacking the moderates was circulated, and they were constantly provoked in public or accused of treachery against the cause of liberalism. Rumors of a revolt by the exaltados spread throughout the city. Colonel Reina, the royalist artillery officer and an instrument of the reactionaries, was ordered by the congress to redouble armed patrols throughout Santiago to counteract revolution.5

On July 25, an English warship, the Standart, arrived at Valparaiso from Cádiz to convey Chilean deputies to the Spanish cortés and to collect contributions for the war against the French. The congress refused to comply with either of these demands, which was a temporary political victory for the exaltados.6 Rozas, however, was aware of his fading prestige and determined to take radical measures to regain it. Through his confidants, he circulated a rumor that the captain of the Standart had landed troops in Valparaiso, capturing the port and local garrison. It was hoped that this ruse would frighten the congress, causing them to elect Rozas dictator in order to restore tranquility. The shallow plot was recognized, though, and Rozas' remaining prestige sank even lower.7

5Barros Arana, Historia general, VIII, 358-59.
7"Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 34-35.
The final demise of the exaltados came during congressional debate over the formation of a three-man junta ejecutiva, with one member representing Concepción and two representing Santiago (based on the 30 to 12 congressional ratio). This proposal was overwhelmingly approved, leaving the south in a nearly powerless legislative position. Realizing that they were no longer a viable political body in the capital, Rozas and the twelve radical deputies resigned their posts on August 9, and returned to Concepción. 8

The resignation of the exaltados was the ultimate triumph for the moderates, but marked a retrogression in the progress of the revolution. The reactionaries now became dominant, with public posts being presented not only to timid patriots but to outright royalists and enemies of the regime. Two appointments which particularly alarmed the liberals were those of the moribund Conde de la Marquina as commander of the frontier infantry battalion and Ramón Jiménez Navia as the battalion sergeant major. The latter officer had been implicated with Tomás de Figueroa in the abortive coup of April 1. 9

Believing that the potentially violent situation could be thwarted by a simulated change in government, the congress convoked a closed session on July 10, 1811, and

8"Exposición que..., August 12, 1811," ABO, I, 115-16.
9Barros Arana, Historia general, VIII, 381.
named a three-man governing junta. In reality, the new junta was almost powerless and subject to strict supervision by the legislative body which had elected it. On August 13, congress declared its power to decree laws, review military promotions and appointments and conduct foreign relations. Even so, government operations reached an impasse as the legislative sessions degenerated into petty debate and rivalries. In the meantime, Rozas had begun to build a movement of his own in Concepción, dedicated to the destruction of monarchism and his enemies in the capital. His actions were symptomatic of the congressional inability to determine its own destiny, let alone that of the rest of the colony. The political impasse was also propitious for the advent of a military caudillo in Santiago.

At this juncture, José Miguel Carrera entered upon the political stage and in only a short time became the dominant figure of the revolutionary movement. Born into one of the most prestigious families of Chile, Carrera was sent to Spain in 1806 by his father to serve as a merchantile apprentice. He instead entered the military, a fitting occupation for his violent personality, and served valiently in a militia regiment during the French invasion of the

10The three junta members were Martín Calvo Encalada, Juan José Aldunate and Francisco Javier de Solar.

11Several valuable documents relating to the distrust and animosity of towns in the south against the congress can be found in the SCL, I, 58-62.
peninsula. On receiving word of the upheaval in his homeland, he returned to Chile to take a place beside his brothers and father. He arrived on the Standart in July, 1811, the same vessel which had brought the orders for financial assistance from the Spanish cortés. At once, he placed himself in contact with radical leaders who advocated violent methods of obtaining power.\textsuperscript{12}

The exaltado supporters in Santiago were quick to court the support of Carrera and convinced him that the moderate congress, supported by Colonel Reina, intended to reinstate the old monarchist regime. Carrera refused to lend his support until he was assured that he and his two brothers would assume the command and execution of the revolt.\textsuperscript{13} At noon on September 4, Carrera carried out a revolt against the royalist artillery barracks and the congress, with the death of only one soldier. He was supported by almost all of the officers and troops of the grenadier and hussar battalions, in addition to part of the artillery corps, led by his brother Luis.\textsuperscript{14}

The movement of September 4 placed the radical element back in power. On the same day, a junta ejecutiva of five members was installed, one of whom was Juan Martínez

\textsuperscript{12} "Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 17.

\textsuperscript{13} In Carrera's own version, he implied that there was vacillation on the part of the radicals as to who would lead the revolt, and he offered his services to break the impasse ("Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 20).

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 20-23.
de Rozas. This body implemented a harsh reaction to the supporters of the former government, such as demanding the loyalty of all religious orders and their membership. On September 14, the junta absolved itself from future recriminations it might carry out against royalists by ordering that all political dissenters register with the government in thirty days. Those who did not do so would be subject to deportation, should they be judged as subversive. While the residents of Santiago were being distracted by struggles among these immature political factions, equally vigorous but unconnected movements were being organized in the South.

On his arrival in Concepción in late August, Rozas received an enthusiastic reception by the townspeople and manifested his plans of creating a local junta in opposition to Santiago. A gathering of patriots met in the home of a young lawyer, Manuel Vásquez de Novoa, and proclaimed their desires for an open cabildo. Colonel Pedro José Benavente, the provincial military governor, was himself partial to the cause of reform and gladly decreed the meeting for September 5. On that day, an assembly of over 180 delegates met for the stated purpose of electing new deputies to the capital, but went much further by forming a provincial junta of four

15 Other members of this junta were Juan Enrique Rosales, Martín Calvo Encalada, Juan Mackenna and José Gaspar Marín. Two secretaries were designated: Agustín Vial and José Gregorio Argomedo.

16 "Proclama sobre..., September 14, 1811," CHDI, XXIX, 439.
members, presided over by Colonel Benavente. One of these was Rozas, who now enjoyed the distinct privilege of occupying positions in the governments of both provinces. Only the most rabid opponents of the junta failed to give their affirmation of support.

The new junta made it quite clear that it submitted to the authority of the capital, but reserved for itself the right of all provincial appointments, both military and civilian. One of these was the replacement of the Conde de la Marquina by Lieutenant Colonel Francisco Calderón as commander of the frontier infantry battalion. Rozas and the principal architects of that movement were aware of the difficulties they might incur from the viceroy or from Santiago, and began to deliberately replace officers of doubtful loyalties with others devoted to their cause. The following letter, from Rozas to Bernardo O'Higgins (dated December 3, 1811), is illustrative of the extent to which political loyalties were beginning to distort the composition of the veteran officer corps. This in itself is not so extraordinary as the fact that civilians played the leading role in determining appointments and promotions, not regular army officers. The document is pertinent to an understanding of the political metamorphosis of the military chain of command.

17 "Noticias sobre..., September, 1811," CHDI, XXIX, 439.
18 "Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 33.
Dear Friend,

I have written to don Juan Mackenna concerning the necessity of reorganizing the artillery corps, in which everything is maligned and defective; time is of the essence. What is most urgent is the appointment of officers. I can say to you that we do not have any, and without officers there is no artillery train, nor is there artillery, nor is there defense. Don José Zapatero, who was retired for being incompetent, is the artillery captain and commander. He knows nothing nor is he capable of learning anything, nor of applying or upgrading himself. He is a European; moreover, he is a saracen [royalist] in his conduct, and besides, you must know that he is feeble, sick and without character. If the Limeños [Peruvians] or other enemies come, what will become of us with such a commander? We will be denounced and betrayed without recourse. You must quickly order that Zapatero return to his retirement with the pretext of saving money or with that of his infirm condition and not being fit for combat duty, and replace him as commander with don Juan Torres. And if he cannot serve, then with don Francisco Formas, but in any case, he must come voluntarily and he must be a dedicated and active patriot.  

Valdivia represents another course taken by the patriot movement. There, the isolation of the city, the dominant military spirit of the inhabitants and the self-contained, provincial society were seemingly anathema to the growth of political liberalism. Valdivia was the only district in Chile which had abstained from sending delegates to the national congress in Santiago, in spite of ample notification. Nonetheless, the seeds of liberalism had been planted under the guidance of a small group of devout patriots in 1811, but they were assisted by several
influential officers of the local garrison.

The first signs of this movement became apparent when Valdivia's first cabildo was formed.\(^\text{21}\) At a time when other cabildos were taking upon themselves the duties of governing entire colonies, their counterpart in Valdivia was still uncertain of the bounds of its legal authority, a graphic reflection of the predominance of the military government. From its inception, it was viewed by army leaders as seditious and revolutionary. The arch-opponent of the cabildo was Governor Alejandro Eagar, a Spanish officer of long and obedient service to the crown, who had governed the city since April, 1807.\(^\text{22}\)

In its first year of operation, the cabildo was attacked by Governor Eagar, who attempted to nullify the first election of its regidores. The corporation promptly petitioned President Garcia Carrasco for protection of its rights, which led to a reprimand of the governor and instructions not to impede cabildo deliberations.\(^\text{23}\)

By 1810, another confrontation had arisen, stemming from Governor Eagar's fear that the cabildo would emulate the actions of the open assemblies in Concepción and Santiago. In a legal brief which he drew up proposing the cabildo's abolition, the governor argued that the military

\(^{21}\)"El gobernador..., April 10, 1810," ACG, DCLVIII, 6-7.

\(^{22}\)Guarda, Historia de Valdivia, 214.

\(^{23}\)Guarda, "Un intendente," 218.
staff capably and efficiently resolved all aspects of city government, without the necessity of civilian interference. As evidence of this, he cited that while the cabildo had recently petitioned the right to jail common criminals in the city, there was not even a prison which could be used for this purpose. A more expeditious method was to simply remand lawbreakers to one of the forts in the bay, as had always been done. The harsh reaction of Eagar constituted more than a fear of alien political doctrine; in Valdivia, the tradition of military rule was the most deeply-ingrained precept of the town's existence, an almost sacred privilege which resisted all innovation.

This city under my command has the perrogative of being purely military but also has the nullification of a newly-created cabildo, contrary to all law and custom of a military presidio. . . .

After receiving news of the downfall of President García Carrasco and his replacement by a junta, Eagar became even more concerned with the effects on the Valdivia cabildo. Concerning the proclamation of the Santiago junta, he wrote: "This occurrence has raised the spirits of this cabildo so much that they are continually in private councils, playing capriciously with the established authority. . . ."

24 "El gobernador..., 1810," ACG, DCLVIII, 6-7.
25 Ibid., 8.
27 Ibid. 354.
Eagar regularly communicated with the royal audiencia and other governmental branches in the capital, his most intimate correspondence was with Viceroy Abascal, whom he regarded as his immediate superior. In a letter of October 7, 1810, Eagar wrote that the spirit of rebellion had spread to the regular troops because of "... the relations of kinship and affinity that exist among the officers of this battalion, the cabildo, and the citizenry." As a consequence, the only officers in whom he felt he could place his trust were: Miguel María Atero, the commandant of engineers; Lucas de Molina, sergeant major of the battalion; plus the treasury official, Francisco Marin O'Ryan.

The governor was all too aware of the unique dependence of the garrison on outside assistance and foresaw an eventual breaking of relations with the capital. On September 9, 1810, he petitioned to Viceroy Abascal for 200 to 300 additional troops and a small warship, letting the viceroy know that the very existence of the city might hang in the balance. He added that the fiscal condition of the army merited equal consideration, with only 7,446 pesos remaining in the treasury. Eagar proposed that the situado be remitted directly from Peru, which would assure the garrison's lifeline should relations with Santiago be severed.

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28Ibid., 355.  
29Ibid., 354.  
30Ibid., 355.  
31Ibid.
The patriot leaders in Valdivia did not represent the majority will, but due to the ambiguity of their goals they were able to win numerous followers. They received intellectual support from the analogous movement in Concepción. The philosophical leader of the movement was Father Camilo Henríquez, a native Valdivian and self-appointed delegate to the Santiago congress. Henríquez was one of the first fiery advocates of complete separation from Spain, and while not actually present on the day of the revolt, he indirectly influenced the actions of the participants.

Two more priests, Isidro Pineda and Pedro José Eleisegui, actually led the movement. Pineda, the vicar of the local church, used his pulpit to equate patriot dogma with righteousness and religious salvation. Eleisegui, chaplain of the royal hospital, was the guiding hand in arousing cabildo resentment against the military government. These clerics were able to convert a number of prominent officers to their cause, and with their support instigated a movement which was referred to as the "revolt

32"Lista de los diputados..., 1811," SCL, I, 30-31. Camilo Henríquez was born in Valdivia in 1769 and educated in Lima. He returned to Chile in 1810 and assumed the editorship of the colony's first newspaper, La Aurora de Chile, which he used to promote his revolutionary ideals. During the course of the revolution, he became the editor of ten different newspapers in Santiago, using the pen name of Quirino Lemáchez.

33Guarda, "Un intendente," 220.

34"Causa contra..., 1814," ACG, MXLVII, 4-13.
of the priests."35

The day of the revolt was a religious festival, November 1, 1811. On that date the town residents met at the parish church for a Mass, including Governor Eagar and the engineering officer, Miguel Maria Atero. During the Mass, the priest (either Pineda or Eleisegui, the account is not clear), produced a pair of pistols from beneath his robe and took Eagar and Atero prisoner. Eagar managed to send a soldier to the troop barracks to obtain assistance from Sergeant Major Lucas Molina, but on arriving the messenger found most of the battalion already called to arms in support of the rebellion.36

On that same day, the local citizens assembled in the presence of the cabildo and formally deposed the governor, replacing him with a provincial junta of five members under the authority of Concepción. Heading this junta was Colonel Ventura Carvallo, the ranking officer after Governor Eagar, who despite being a devout monarchist was awarded the post because of his popularity among the troops.37 Other junta members were Father Pineda, Chaplain Eleisegui, Vicente Gómez, Jaime de la Guarda, and a secretary, Diego Pérez de Arce. Command of the battalion was

35Orrego Luco, *La patria vieja*, II, 43.
36"Noticias tomadas..., 1811," AMV, LIV, 230.
37Carvallo came from a renown family of Valdivia and was the brother of the soldier-chronicler Vicente Carvallo y Goyeneche (Guarda, *Historia de Valdivia*, 223).
presented to Captain Gregorio Henríquez, a local patriot who had been politically converted by his nephew, the priest Camilo Henríquez.38

It was decided that Governor Eagar and Atero should be sent to Concepción under the guard of a twelve-man detachment. For this purpose the junta requisitioned a ship consigned to a Spanish merchant from Concepción. The merchant was Antonio Quintanilla, who later became a distinguished royalist officer and governor of Chiloé during the last years of the war of independence. Quintanilla prevailed upon the ship's captain to sail to Chiloé, rather than Concepción, which kept the prisoners from falling into the hands of the patriot junta.39 Eagar and Atero later served in the royalist army of Peru.

During the period of the revolts in Valdivia and Concepción, the Santiago junta was busily assembling new troop units or reassembling existing ones in the capital. The militia battalion of pardos, one of the few units which had not taken part in the revolt of September 4, was now accepted as a loyal arm of the government. Its command was presented to Colonel Juan de Dios Vial.40 The veteran

38Ibid., 219.


40"Sesion del congreso..., September 12, 1811," SCL, I, 71.
company of the Reina Luisa was dissolved and its troops placed in the asamblea de caballería, so that the increased force might better train the militia. A new militia unit of eight companies was created, called the patriotas voluntarios de Santiago, and the militia infantry regiment del rey was divided into three separate battalions, each strengthened considerably. The ancient batallón de comercio, composed principally of peninsular Spaniards, was disbanded and its infantrymen interspersed among other patriot units. On October 29, 1811, a decree was published in Santiago that all free men between 16 and 60 should present themselves within twenty days to the military units of their choice for enlistment or classification, should they be needed at a future date.

All of these measures were oriented towards the capital, with little concern for incorporating the southern command. The net effect of this mad dash for army appointments by the Santiago citizenry was to insulate the capital from the rest of the colony and to deny the importance of the regular forces in the south. The composition of these new battalions was regulated to insure personal obedience to

41 "Decreto aprobando..., October 17, 1811," CHDI, XXIX, 556.
42 Martínez, Memoria histórica, 377.
43 "Bando para..., October 29, 1811," CHDI, XXIX, 556.
the individual commander, not to the institution. Such sentiments paved the way for military praetorianism and the politics of coercion.

The news of two patriot juntas being proclaimed in the south brought popular acclaim in Santiago. Yet, the struggles for political power in the capital made the announcements more of a novelty than a significant political event. Carrera made only slight mention of the Concepción coup in his *Diario militar*, for the most part noting the regrettable fact that the junta was so adversely affected by the personal ambition of Martínez de Rozas.

Those influential persons in Santiago who might have shown concern for the future of revolutionary ideals were overshadowed by the figure of José Miguel Carrera. Although distrustful of the entire Carrera family, the congress awarded military promotions to its members in an effort to placate their hostile temperaments. But José Miguel felt snubbed by receiving no high appointment, despite his leading role in the revolt of September 4. Under the guise of preserving the patriot movement but with the real goal of

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44 Carrera, himself, ruefully noted that all of the positions in these military units were reserved for friends or relatives ("Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 36).


46 Ignacio Carrera, the father, was awarded the rank of brigadier. Juan José was made commander of the grenadier battalion and Luis received command of the artillery brigade (Orrego Luco, *La patria vieja*, II, 51).
attaining personal control, he secretly drafted plans for another coup. He realized that his success could not be attained only with support of the army; it was vital that the movement have the collaboration of civilians. Although disaffected with the controversial actions of the radicals, the moderates were unwilling to risk violence as an alternative. It was the saracen, or royalist element, which was the declared enemy of the government. Its members vividly recalled the September 14 decree ordering all dissidents of the government to leave the colony, and quickly lent their support to Carrera.

With the weight of the combined civilian and military support behind them, the Carreras acted on November 15, 1811. Juan José Carrera led the grenadier battalion against the government by surrounding congress with his troops. The only forces capable of opposing Carrera's were the newly reorganized militia under Colonel Juan de Dios Vial and the hussars led by Joaquín Guzman, both of whom deliberately abstained from opposition.47 The congress met with the Carreras in an attempt to win a return of power to the legally elected body, but José Miguel refused to negotiate. Instead, he called for a popular assembly to ratify his accession. On November 16, this public assembly was convoked, and its approval of Carrera led to the resignation of

47 "Documentos relativos..., November 15, 1811," SCL, I, 185-90.
the junta ejecutiva. A three-man executive triumvirate was selected to replace it, composed of one representative from each province—José Miguel Carrera (Santiago), José Gaspar Marín (Coquimbo), and Juan Martínez de Rozas (Concepción). Neither Marín nor Rozas were present at that time, and both later refused to serve in the farcical junta. Bernardo O'Higgins was designated to replace Rozas but likewise declined to take part.

The patriot composition of the new junta made the royalist supporters of the coup realize that they had been badly deceived. And members of the congress were similarly disappointed in Carrera's dictatorial mandates. For all his power, however, Carrera still chaffed under the presence of a congress and two other junta members. These could technically veto his mandates, and any decrees on his part would lack full legitimacy. For Carrera, the only alternative was the abolition of the junta and congress.

Within the army, there was considerable discontent with the caudillo image which Carrera was forging for himself. In November, 1811, a conspiracy was contrived by several army officers to depose the Carrera family. Two army captains, the brothers José Antonio and José Domingo Huici, were the leaders. They planned to capture Juan José Carrera, commander of the grenadier battalion, and use his troops as a

48"Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 42. The province of Coquimbo was created by the first national congress on September 23, 1811.
fulcrum to subvert other troop units.\textsuperscript{49} The Carreras were forewarned by one of the conspirators and arrested several plotters on the night of November 27, as they attempted to kidnap Juan José. Neither of the Huici brothers were apprehended, but José Miguel Carrera arrested a number of patriot leaders, based on the denunciations of a conspirator. Among these were the influential veteran officers Juan Mackenna and Juan de Dios Vial, who were proclaimed guilty in a hastily-called trial and imprisoned.\textsuperscript{50}

Carrera's rapid and harsh reaction was greeted with mass anger by the citizens of Santiago. Members of congress accused Carrera of having contrived the entire episode to further his suspected plans for a military dictatorship. There was ample justification for such a theory, for Mackenna and Vial were the only two military leaders capable of mobilizing troops against Carrera. Yet, no documented evidence was presented to prove their complicity.\textsuperscript{51} And the leaders of the revolt, the Huici brothers, somehow managed to escape to Concepción unharmed. The entire affair was viewed with suspicion by both patriots and royalists, who saw how beneficial the plot had been to the fortunes of the Carrera family.

\textsuperscript{49}"Proceso por la conspiración..., November 27, 1811," \textit{CHDI}, XX, 1-341.
\textsuperscript{50}"Diario militar...," \textit{CHDI}, I, 45, 51.
\textsuperscript{51}Orrego Luco, \textit{La patria vieja}, II, 80.
José Miguel was now absolute commander of all the troops in the capital, including those commanded by his brothers and the militia of Santiago, Rancagua and Melipilla. There were no troops at the disposal of the congress. Fortified with undisputed armed force, Carrera carried out the last phase of his dictatorial designs. On the morning of December 2, 1811, a troop review was called in front of the convened congress, and its deputies were forced to sign a document dissolving their corporation. Carrera excused his actions with the justification that Chile was as yet too politically immature to dally with democracy. He also made use of the Huici conspiracy by claiming that the congress was full of assassins and conspirators. A factor on which he counted for his supremacy was the political ignorance or apathy of the populace and the gullibility of many supporters. His power was complete, and throughout the province there was not a single local assembly which failed to pledge loyalty to him.

The coup of December 2 and the abolition of congress marked the third armed revolt by José Miguel Carrera in little more than ten weeks after he had arrived to his native land. When the congressional delegates began returning to their homes, Carrera detained the representatives from Concepción until he was convinced that no

52"Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 50.
53Ibid., 48.
retaliation would be attempted against him. He was mistaken in his thinking, for the abolition of congress crystallized hostility towards him in the south. The refusal of Marin, Rozas and O'Higgins to serve on the junta widened rather than narrowed the breach between Santiago and Concepción. These events destroyed the last vestiges of unity between the two provinces and revealed the fragility of their democratic institutions.
Chapter 11

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SANTIAGO AND CONCEPCIÓN

After the series of revolts by José Miguel Carrera which culminated in the December 2, 1811, coup and the abolition of congress, the two governments of Santiago and Concepción began to drift apart, each suspicious of the other's intentions. The dissimilarities between the two cities were historical, each developing as an opposite pole on either end of the colony.¹ But much of the political animosity between the provinces was heightened by the diplomatic blunders of Carrera and his quest for power. As the most forceful leader of the independence movement during this time, he alienated Concepción and completely disregarded the army in the South, especially in Valdivia. 1812 was the crucial year of the patria vieja, for during it, mass political aspirations were channeled by resolute leaders and loyalties were permanently cemented. During that year, the stage was set for Chile's division into a royalist south and a patriot north, each arming for open

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¹In terms of effective settlement, colonial Chile was only about 700 miles long. Because of this, the two provincial capitals were closer to the ends of the colony, rather than the center.
When word of events in Santiago since November reached the Concepción government there was justified concern and even fear, for until that time it had been in strict accord with the congress and ruling junta. The arrest of prominent patriots and members of congress alarmed the Concepción junta. Also, the avowed loyalty of the new junta ejecutiva to the patriot cause rang hollow when it was considered that two of its members refused to take their seats, leaving Carrera as de facto ruler. On December 5, 1811, the Concepción junta addressed a letter to the national congress, asking for details about the state of affairs and offering military assistance and troops, if needed. This letter and other correspondence with the junta revealed a determined opposition by leaders in the South to the Carrera family.

Carrera's apologists attribute his dictatorial actions to impatience in implanting reforms; however, his detractors present a more plausible interpretation, as evidenced by his deceit and chicanery with Concepción. In anticipation of conflict, Carrera had dispatched agents to the South to intercept dispatches of the provincial junta, and in this way learned of its offer of troops to the national congress. He persuaded Bernardo O'Higgins to return

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2 Encina, Historia de Chile, VI, 369.

to Concepción to manifest his peaceful intentions and work for the resolving of differences. O'Higgins was deceived by the false pretenses of Carrera and naively accepted the commission.⁴

After the abstention of Gaspar Marín and Martínez de Rozas from the ruling triumvirate, Carrera launched a quest for political legitimacy by obtaining substitute junta members. He desired two figureheads, respected and well-known but without any strength to oppose him. In a farcical election on December 16, 1811, by the cabildo and military commanders, Juan José Aldunate and José Nicolas de la Cerda were elected. They were two figures who aptly fulfilled the qualifications of weakness and impotence.⁵ Aldunate refused the post and was subsequently replaced by the customshouse administrator Manuel Manso on January 10, a known enemy of the patriots.⁶ The selection of these men, without any participation of the provinces they supposedly represented, was convincing evidence of the real intentions of Carrera.

Invoking the name of the junta in all his actions, Carrera began to mobilize troops along the provincial boundary to forestall a possible invasion by forces from Concepción. On December 14, the same day in which O'Higgins departed on

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⁴Junta to O'Higgins, Santiago, December 13, 1811, ABO, I, 160.

⁵Barros Arana, Historia general, VIII, 507.

⁶Ibid., 508.
his peacekeeping mission to the South, Carrera ordered the subdelegado of Talca to marshal the provincial militia along the Maule River and to impound all of the launches that were used to ferry passengers across the river. In Santiago, new recruits were added to the grenadier battalion, raising its strength to 1,200 men. The recently-formed artillery corps was dissolved and reorganized over a base of 500 dragoons called the husares de la gran guardia. Carrera could not risk another attempted coup by leading the troops southward himself, but appointed his father, Ignacio Carrera, to do so. The appointment of the old patriarch was a repudiation of the talents of regular military officers in Santiago, which led to his being ignominiously called the "New Ceasar." Ignacio Carrera left Santiago on December 24, with a force of 200 troops. During the following weeks, hundreds of additional soldiers marched southward to the boundary line between the provinces, increasing the chances for accidental war.

The Concepción government followed suit by calling all available troops to arms. These included the provincial militia units, the veteran artillery brigade and two frontier dragoon squadrons. Food, horses and donations of

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7Ibid.
8"Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 52.
9Encina, Historia de Chile, VI, 371.
10Vicuña Mackenna, El ostracismo, 159-60.
money were solicited from provincial inhabitants in the name of preserving the autonomy of the province. Before these troops could reach the Maule, Rozas received peace proposals from Carrera in Santiago. Bernardo O'Higgins was entrusted by Carrera to deliver these messages, which outwardly appeared to be genuine.

Rozas feared civil war above all else and eagerly grasped at this opportunity for conciliation with the capital. The provincial junta of Concepción assigned Manuel Fernando Vásquez de Novoa to work with O'Higgins in drafting a treaty acceptable to both provinces, which would serve as Chile's government until a permanent constitution could be drawn up. On January 13, 1812, the junta ratified the treaty of twenty-five articles, providing for the creation of a new national junta of three members (one from each province) to govern for three years.\textsuperscript{11} The principle of regional autonomy was upheld, each province confirming its own military and civil appointees. One of the articles sponsored by Rozas provided for the creation of a small, permanent senate to manage issues of national importance such as foreign treaties, the coinage of money, taxation and the declaration of war.\textsuperscript{12} It was believed by the drafters of this document that the Santiago government would quickly ratify it and put an end to the impending conflict.

\textsuperscript{11}"Convención entre..., January 12, 1812," \textit{ABO}, I, 181-86.

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, 183.
Carrera feigned an interest in signing the document, praising O'Higgins profusely for his ambassadorial efforts. In reality, he had no intentions of peaceful coexistence with Concepción but was stalling for time while military mobilization took its financial toll on the rival government. Concepción possessed its own provincial treasury but was traditionally dependent on the capital for the salaries of governmental functionaries and the situado for paying the frontier army. These funds were now cut off by Carrera, which dictated that sooner or later the province must succumb to the pressure of Santiago.

By this time, Concepción's leaders had amassed over 8,000 troops along the frontier, among them nearly 1,000 veterans. The forces of Santiago were considerably fewer in number but were numerous enough to present a formidable appearance. Neither side attempted to violate the territory of the other, but the stalemate along the Maule and the mutual suspicion between the bivouaced armies caused a virtual devastation of the regional economy. Inter-provincial commerce came to a halt as merchants and travelers were detained, searched and occasionally arrested. Those merchants who attempted to transport their goods past the blockaded river often found them requisitioned by the army.

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13 Encina, Historia de Chile, VI, 377.

Agricultural production came to a standstill, for the mobilized militia were deprived of tending their fields. Bands of undisciplined soldiers roamed at will throughout the countryside, stealing and looting from the populace.\(^{15}\)

Carrera's deliberate stall technique was all too effective, for with no funding from Santiago the army of the South almost reached the point of disbanding. On March 7, 1812, the junta of Concepción met for the purpose of electing its representative to the proposed triumvirate in Santiago. Instead, the assembly selected an agent, Luis de la Cruz, to confer with Carrera and ascertain his reasons for not signing the accord.\(^{16}\) Bernardo O'Higgins was elected to accompany Cruz to arrange for the resumption of the situado and government funding. On April 13, Rozas made a desperate plea to the Buenos Aires government for 100,000 pesos to be used to support the army during the remainder of the year.\(^{17}\) The refusal of that government to meet his request left Rozas with little hope for continued resistance. It also heightened his apprehensions that his regime might be overthrown by dissatisfied military elements within the province.

\(^{15}\) Noya to O'Higgins, Los Angeles, January 13, 1812, ABO, I, 194.

\(^{16}\) Vicuña Mackenna, El ostracismo, 506-507.

\(^{17}\) Amunátegui Solar, Jesuitas, 115.
Maule to defeat the carreristas, pointing to that army's greatly reduced strength of only 500 men. Rozas resisted this movement, fearing a bloody civil war would result. The sentiments of Pedro José Benavente, the ranking provincial army officer, bordered on cowardice. He also urged that O'Higgins avoid an outbreak of war by any possible means, even to arbitration with Bishop Martin Villodres of Concepción, a noted royalist.

In the meantime, Carrera had found the provincial disunion to be injurious to his rule. His unsteady coalition of royalist and patriot supporters was weary of the financial sacrifices imposed by an army in the South and the continued obstinacy of Concepción. Divided, the colony was even a likelier target for Peruvian reprisals. Finally, Carrera advised Rozas that he wished to reach some sort of conciliation, and in late April, the two met near Talca to hammer out an agreement. Their talks were cordial but unproductive in reaching a permanent accord. The only benefit derived from this was the withdrawal of both armies to their respective capitals.

While the governments of Concepción and Santiago were engaged in antagonistic saber-rattling along the

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19 Benavente to O'Higgins, Concepción, March 19, 1812, ABO, I, 198.
20 "Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 55-56.
frontier, the Valdivia patriot junta serenely went about its own affairs. The movement of November 1, 1811, was a genuine expression of patriot sentiment, but its success was due to the endeavor of a handful of fanatical liberals, not the majority of the local residents. By 1812, the city was ripe for another political change. Throughout the colony, the early phase of the patria vieja was characterized by ideologically-confused patriots and royalists alike who experienced mental anguish in choosing sides. It was a crucial phase in which time, circumstance and the influence of a few chosen leaders swayed the loyalties of the great mass of the population. In Valdivia, however, a long tradition of monarchism was the factor which was to ultimately determine the city's political course.

José Miguel Carrera's interests in Valdivia were purely mercenary. Although the city had declared its support of Santiago, it remained administratively subject to the province of Concepción. On encountering strong resistance from Martínez de Rozas and his followers, Carrera thought of instigating another revolt in Valdivia and replacing it with a junta loyal to himself. Such an act would help to isolate Concepción and further reduce the power of his rivals there.

In Santiago resided an officer of the Valdivia garrison named Pedro Asenjo Pinuer, who possessed a degree of influence by virtue of his family relations.²¹ In late

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²¹ Guarda, Historia de Valdivia, 226.
1811, Carrera persuaded Asenjo to return to the city to establish contact with military officers dissatisfied with the governing junta and to eventually supplant it with another.²² Pinuer seems to have been intellectually limited and a mere tool of Carrera, but he successfully completed the task assigned to him. Among the contacts which he made were Sergeant Major Lucas Molina, Captain Julian Pinuer and the artillery commander José Berganza, who would lead the planned revolt.

On March 15, the day before the uprising, post commander José Berganza took the precaution of reinforcing Valdivia's forts with trustworthy troops. At four o'clock in the morning of March 16, he fired three cannon shots, the signal for conspirators in the city to take action.²³ By eight o'clock the bloodless revolt was complete. According to the official account of the rebellious officers which was later sent to Santiago, the battalion troops and townspeople gathered in the plaza with shouts of "Long live King Ferdinand VII! Long live the Supreme Spanish Regency! Long live the president of the capital, don José Miguel Carrera, and death to the disloyal."²⁴

The previous government was declared defunct and

²²Ibid., 226.
²³"Manifiesto individual..., March, 1812," CHDI, XXIII, 51.
²⁴Ibid., 52-53.
replaced by a new consejo de guerra, temporarily presided over by Captain José Ulloa. This council elected to retain Colonel Ventura Carvallo as the junta president, in consideration of his being the ranking senior officer. The members of the former government were placed under house arrest but freed several days later, with the exception of Captain Gregorio Henríquez and Father Eleísegui. Henríquez, the battalion commander, was imprisoned in Niebla until the last days of the captaincy-general. Father Eleísegui was given six hours to leave Valdivia and departed for Concepción under escort the same day.

The position of the new council of war was precarious in that the troops depended for their survival on the situado, an allotment which was no longer forthcoming. The Lima authorities had placed this responsibility on the shoulders of Chileans during the first decade of the 1800's. Since 1810, however, preoccupation with the independence movement and the forming of new army units in Santiago had brought the discontinuance of the Valdivia subsidy. When the junta drafted a communiqué to Carrera concerning the events which had taken place, it was couched in terms of their urgent need for the subsidy.

25 Ibid., 51.
26 Guarda, Historia de Valdivia, 230.
27 "Manifiesto individual..., March, 1812," CHDI, XXIII, 51.
The junta's composition was thoroughly royalist, but the officers astutely refrained from revealing their true sentiments. Playing on the vanity of Carrera, their communiqué of March 22 was steeped in adoration and praise of the dictator, a measure intended to convince him of their loyalty.

By the act of this council of war and testimony that we include, you will be advised of the events in this plaza and the motives which inspired us. It has been a deed that we have believed absolutely necessary to vindicate our honor. Be calm, then, most excellent sir, and approve it, secure in what we have achieved. Since the province of Concepción had the audacity of arming itself against the capital, we regret that no orders from you have arrived, or at least correspondence that would advise us of your will. The government of Concepción wished to make you believe that we were your disloyal party. And although we only possess seven thousand pesos in this treasury, we have resolved to submit ourselves to the greatest efforts and self-denial rather than turn ourselves over to jurisdictions other than our capital of Santiago.

In consideration of this dedicated loyalty, the officers asked for a resumption of the situado, depicting in no uncertain terms the consequences of not doing so:

We conceive of ourselves as isolated and with communication cut with the rest of our army, that is under the orders of Your Excellency. In this situation, we wait for you to remit the subsidy to us, because if not, without doubt we will perish.

The junta sent the letter overland through the province of Concepción to Talca, where Carrera was encamped. He received the letter on May 5, the same day on which he

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28 "Oficio a..., March 22, 1812," CHDI, XXIII, 39-40.
29 Ibid., 40.
ordered his troops to retire from the Maule River. Carrera could only hear the acclamations of his name and the slander of Concepción, completely misreading the intentions of the officers. In his reply to the consejo de guerra, he feigned innocence of complicity in the revolt, referring to it as "this determined and brave group of officers" who worked to destroy tyranny and oppression. He also pledged his steadfast commitment to Valdivia and to provide it with the subsidy and any other assistance needed:

The [Valdivia] governing junta, to whom the documents have been remitted, protect this city and its worthy defenders under my jurisdiction, and extending their pleas, I will not deny them any manner of assistance. The noble Valdivians are valorous and persevering and we are all at their disposal. I received the previous correspondence from Valdivia. I remitted it to the capital in order that the subsidy be sent, for which purpose I allowed a boat to sail from Valparaiso. Yesterday I received word that it had left port.

The Santiago junta and knowledgeable counselors were not misled by the officers of Valdivia, clearly recognizing their subversive intentions. They chided the officers for their stated affirmation of support for the Spanish regency and the "president of Chile," José Miguel Carrera, pointing out that Chile had no president. Before any subsidy could

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30 Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, II, 141.
31 Ibid., 142.
32 "Oficio al..., May, 1812," CHDI, XXIII, 54.
33 Ibid., 55-56.
34 Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, II, 143.
be sent, the junta demanded a formal declaration of obedience, but by this time Carrera's will had prevailed.

The Nueva Limeña, owned by a Valparaiso merchant, was the vessel which Carrera selected to be loaded with foodstuffs and military supplies. As soon as it anchored at Valdivia and was unloaded, the consejo de guerra drew up a declaration expressing its true intentions. Dated June 26, 1812, this proclamation renounced the authority of Santiago, the officers stating they had been deceived in their belief that Carrera was a faithful supporter of the crown. ³⁵

... if this plaza has continued until now dependent on the capital of Chile, it was out of the belief that the new government erected by it was substantially devoted to the cause of our king, Ferdinand VII. . . . ³⁶

The officers now placed themselves under the authority of the viceroy and until further instructions from him would obey orders from the governor of Chiloé, Ignacio Justis. They returned this reply to Carrera on the same vessel which had brought the subsidy after first stripping it of all gun carriages, arms, and other materials which might later be used against them. ³⁷

The actions of the consejo de guerra placed the Valdivia military in the forefront of the monarchist movement in Chile. The port was to become the open door through which the invading Peruvian army entered, and would remain faithful

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³⁶Ibid., 78.
³⁷Ibid., 84.
until its conquest by Lord Thomas Cochrane in 1820. Nearly all of Valdivia's troops and officers fought in the name of the mother country, and many distinguished themselves in the early clashes of 1813 and 1814. Among the members of the consejo who rose to prominence were Lucas Ambrosio de Molina, who was promoted to colonel and commander of the royalist troops at Chillán (August 10, 1813), where he was killed. Julian Pinuer fought at Chillán, Rancagua, and was later made commandant of the Valdivia battalion. José de Berganza became general of the second division in the royalist army and served as Intendant of Concepción.

It is ironic that nearly all of the members of this consejo de guerra were not peninsulars, but creoles. Of the fourteen members, thirteen were army officers. Only one of these, José Berganza, was a peninsular Spaniard; the rest were native-born Chileans. The strong royalist feelings

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38Jaime de la Guarda, one of the exiled members of the patriot junta of 1811, returned to Valdivia in 1820 with the conquering expedition of Lord Cochrane. He found the city much the same as he had left it eight years earlier—loyal to the crown ("Carta a..., May 25, 1820," AVM, LXXXVII, 48).

39Included among these faithful troops were nearly all of the cadets of the battalion (Nicanor Molinare, Los colegios militares de Chile, 1814-1819 [Santiago: Imprenta Cervantes, 1911], 35).

40Guarda, Historia de Valdivia, 236.

41Ibid.

42The Chilean-born officers were: Colonel Ventura Carvallo; captains José Ulloa, Dionisio Martinez, Julian Pinuer; lieutenants Diego Adriasola, Teodoro Negron, Juan de
of these creoles supports the writer's contention that political loyalties in the army did not polarize along the traditionally-conceived lines of Spaniard and Chilean, but according to geographical and cultural factors. As previously discussed, the isolation of the port, a steady contact with either Peru or Spain, and the composition of the local aristocracy were more powerful determinants of military loyalty. This theory helps to explain Francisco Encina's contention that the war of independence was one of creole patriots against creole royalists.43

As virtual dictator of Santiago, José Miguel Carrera shares much of the responsibility for the loss of Valdivia to the royalist camp.44 From a military standpoint, Carrera was totally inept. His judgments were swayed by arrogance and the vainglorious notion that he could manipulate all of the colony's military forces at will. He ignored the city's patriot junta until he thought it could be manipulated in his feud with Rozas. Suspicious of its loyalty, he indirectly brought about its downfall, only to find it replaced with

Dios Brito, Juan Manuel Lorca; second lieutenants Juan de Dios Gonzáles, Antonio Adriasola, José Antonio Martínez, and Sergeant Major Lucas Ambrosio Molina ("hojas de servicio, ..., December, 1805," ACM, CLXV). The single civilian was the royal treasurer, Juan Gallardo.

43Francisco Encina, Resumen de la historia de Chile, Leopoldo Casteda (ed.) (Santiago: Zig Zag, 1953), I, 592.

44Encina, Historia de Chile, VI, 408.
another government of staunch monarchist sentiments.

Carrera was not the only figure guilty of misjudgment. Martinez de Rozas, Bernardo O'Higgins and other leaders of Concepción were so engrossed in the struggle with Santiago that they paid no attention to Valdivia. After the installation of the consejo de guerra, Rozas stated: "This is an incident of no concern, of no importance and results." The prophecy of Juan Mackenna came to haunt those leaders who had not heeded his plea for disbanding the garrison in 1810. Their failure to take advantage of those early opportunities had lasting consequences on the course of the war.

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The province of Concepción had managed to weather the confrontation at the Maule River without recognizing the one-man government in Santiago. Rozas hoped to maintain this position until the following summer, by that time forcing the capital to accept a national pact based on representative, constitutional government, similar to the one proposed the preceding year. Great financial difficulties prevented the realization of this goal. The junta and the expanded military forces were near the point of collapse because of Carrera's continued withholding of funds to pay their salaries. In desperation, Rozas called a meeting of deputies from the surrounding districts in June, 1812, to

45Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, I, 145.
solicit contributions for funding the public administration. Instead of volunteering assistance, the deputies complained of the financial hardships imposed on them during the preceding months of besiegement by Carrera's army and called for Bishop Villodres to effect a conciliation between the two provinces. Rozas realized the dangers of allowing a confirmed monarchist to speak in the name of the junta and offered himself to negotiate with Carrera.

Before these plans came to pass, a military revolt occurred in Concepción, on July 8. Led by the dragoon commandant Juan Miguel Benavente, Captain José Zapatero and Sergeant Major Ramón Jiménez Navia, the veteran troops of the city imprisoned the junta members (with the exception of its president, Pedro José Benavente) and its most active supporters. The following morning the former junta was officially dissolved and a military consejo de guerra formed, consisting of four officers and again presided over by Pedro José Benavente. Several of the officers were thought to be staunchly royalist in their sympathies, a suspicion which was borne out by their succeeding actions.

Rozas was the only member of the former regime who was not jailed or detained. Lieutenant José Manuel Zorrilla, a confidant and assistant of Rozas, was exiled to the fort of Arauco. Father Pedro José Eleísegui having already been

46 Barros Arana, Historia general, VII, 571.
47 "Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 57.
exiled once from Valdivia, found himself again under arrest on the pretext of subverting the troops. To the exaltados, these radical reactions were ample proof that the consejo would imitate the Valdivians by turning itself over to the viceroy.

Instead, the officers of Concepción addressed themselves directly to Santiago in an effort to obtain money with which to pay their military expenses. Whatever the political sympathies of these men, their immediate concern was in remedying the financial crisis of the treasury. While they did not specifically mention the subsidy, their letter quite clearly expressed their needs. As with the letter of the Valdivian officers, there was an effort to convince Carrera of their submission to his authority:

We are pleased that this junta, this noble capital and all of its cities, towns and countrysides receives with great pleasure the union and most intimate fraternity of the capital [Santiago] and fully submits itself to the central government, affirming its obedience until death. As recompense for its loyalty, vigilance and dangers incurred, the council of war asks that Your Excellency approve the necessary dispositions, communicating to us your judgment relative to our general welfare. . . .

The first reaction of the Santiago junta to news of the revolution was exuberance, for it at last seemed that Concepción was falling under the authority of the central

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48 Encina, Historia de Chile, VI, 378.
49 Feliú Cruz, Conversaciones, 20.
50 Barros Arana, Historia general, VIII, 573.
government. Many of the faint-hearted patriots now lent their active support, convinced of the ultimate victory of their cause. Carrera demurred from enthusiasm, fearful that while Rozas remained in the South there was a danger of his regaining power through another armed revolt. To prevent this, he ordered that Rozas and the rest of his jailed followers be escorted to Santiago for confinement, to which the consejo readily complied. 51 This brought the political career of Rozas to an end. After a period of house arrest in Santiago, he was exiled to his boyhood home in Mendoza, Argentina, where he died in May, 1813.

The imprisonment of Rozas did not allay Carrera's mistrust of the consejo de guerra, for the deceit of the Valdivian officers was still fresh in his memory. In August of 1812, he again resorted to treachery in order to assure his continued predominance. Juan Antonio Díaz Muñoz, sergeant major of the dragoon regiment and an enthusiastic supporter of the dictator, was sent to Concepción for the avowed purpose of arranging conciliation between the two protagonists. 52 In reality, he was entrusted with instigating another revolt which would place the province firmly in the orbit of the capital, for which purpose he was provided with a considerable amount of money.

51 According to testimony by Juan Miguel Benavente, Carrera sent forty to fifty thousand pesos to Concepción in return for Rozas and other prisoners (Feliú Cruz, Conversaciones, 20).

52 "Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 58.
On his arrival in Concepción, Díaz Muñoz capitalized on the discontent of the patriot faction there and persuaded its members of the ease with which they could gain control. At two o'clock in the morning of September 24, Colonel Pedro José Benavente and a number of officers armed part of the local garrison and placed the members of the consejo de guerra under house arrest. The versatile Benavente took command of the new government as governor-intendant of the province and declared allegiance to the Santiago junta.\(^5\)

The establishment of a government in the South pledging subservience to the capital did not in itself signify colonial unity. In Concepción province there was a deep undercurrent of monarchist sympathy which could not be erased by mere administrative changes. Moreover, the defenders of the king were active in propagating their beliefs among the inhabitants.

Perhaps the most indefatigable of these propagandists were the members of the provincial clergy, both regular and secular. They had ample justification for their hatred of liberal institutions, for since the first Santiago junta was formed, they had been harassed and mistreated. Convents such as the Colegio Carolino de Naturales, for example, found their allotments of food, clothing and other supplies cut off in an effort to bring their closure.\(^5\)

\(^5\) Encina, Historia de Chile, VI, 380.

\(^5\) "Relación de conducta..., April 1, 1816," CHDI, IV, 14.
of the priests were peninsulars, respected for their position. In all of their proselytizing activity, they invoked the venerated names of the king and the Catholic faith. With such a formidable doctrine, they were able to favorably influence most of the rural population, who did not grasp the import of revolutionary teachings.\textsuperscript{55}

Along the frontier there were more missions and reducciones than forts, each led by a small group of priests attending to the needs of the nearby Indians and Spanish settlers. After 1810, these fathers visited their Indian wards frequently, promising them continued financial aid and presenting the patriots as robbers who would steal the lands given them by the king.\textsuperscript{56} Several of the more militant priests of the frontier were Angel Gatica of Chillán, Luis José Branas of Yumbel, Juan Antonio Ferrebu of Rere, and Juan de Dios Bulnes of Arauco. Dios Bulnes was one of the more notable priests who served as agents in receiving secret correspondence from the viceroy.\textsuperscript{57}

The most powerful of these clerics, however, was the Bishop of Concepción, Navarro Martín de Villodres. A native of Granada, Spain, Villodres was appointed to the Concepción

\textsuperscript{55}Diego José Benavente, Memoria sobre las primeras campañas de la guerra de la independencia de Chile (Santiago: Imprenta de la Opinión, 1845), 36.

\textsuperscript{56}Tomás Guevara, Los araucanos en la revolución de la independencia (Commemorative Edition, AUC, 1910), 242.

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., 243.
diocese in 1807, after obtaining a doctor of theology degree at the University of Salamanca. He was an invincible opponent of representative government and was a major factor in preserving the frontier intact for the royalist cause. In 1812, he personally toured the frontier missions to assure the political loyalties of the Indian parishioners in what was officially designated as church business. When hostilities finally commenced in 1813, practically all of the Indian tribes from the coast to the cordillera avidly upheld the cause of the king.

The Araucanian population, arch enemy of the Spanish, was to be of considerable importance during the independence movement. By 1810, there were perhaps 180,000 Indians, and if their active military support could not be obtained it was imperative that at least their tacit friendship be secured.

The patriot forces had attempted to gain Indian allegiance, although in haphazard manner. On October 24, 1811, over 400 warriors attended a parliament in Concepción, sponsored by the ruling junta. After rounds of drinking and gift-giving the Indians departed, swearing loyalty to the

58 Galdames, A History of Chile, 154.

59 "Relación de conducta..., April 1, 1816," CHDI, IV, 23-24.

60 "Revista de la guerra...," CHDI, V, 312.
provincial cause. Other parliaments followed in 1812 and 1813, although they were too feeble and too late when compared to the organized royalist efforts.

During the preceding decades, the Araucanians had built up close relations with the capitánes de amigos, who lived with them and conducted their legal affairs. Many of these officials were loyal to the crown, and their influence naturally diffused to their native dependents. The work of these Spaniards, coupled with the evangelical grip of the reducción fathers, constituted a grassroots hold on the Indians which was to last through the independence wars.

After the liberation of Chile in 1817, Indian participation degenerated into plundering and looting, but it was nearly always done in the name of the king. The failure of the patriots to propagandize effectively in the South enabled the Peruvian expedition of 1813 to enter the colony unopposed, while the forces of Carrera and O'Higgins were distracted by mutual mistrust and fear of attack by the other.

61Benavente to O'Higgins, Concepción, October 24, 1811, ABO, I, 174.

62Guevara, Los araucanos, 241.

63Collier, Ideas and Politics, 216.
Chapter 12

THE EXPEDITION OF BRIGADIER ANTONIO PAREJA, 1813

The state of internal discord between the provinces and the antagonism among the various political factions which characterized Chile in 1812 was about to enter another phase. The Peruvian viceroyalty, which for so long had watched patiently from the sidelines, was now ready to enter the colony's affairs in the name of preserving monarchial integrity.

Viceroy Abascal was not desirous of coexistence with Chile, but the need of its grain exports and the engagement of his forces in other rebellious colonies had until that time prevented him from taking punitive measures. He also desisted from the fear that he might push the Chileans into an alliance with Buenos Aires. By late 1812, however, the viceroy could no longer ignore the situation in Chile, no matter how limited his military strength. The petition of the Valdivia consejo de guerra to be placed under Peruvian authority provided ample justification for initiating hostilities against the colony.¹

¹Fernando Díaz Venteo, Las campañas militares del virrey Abascal (Sevilla: Artes Gráficas, 1948), 377.
In late 1812, the Chilean *estanco de tabaco* purchased a shipload of tobacco in Havana, but the vessel carrying it to the colony was detained in Montevideo and its cargo seized by the Spanish governor.  This official then remitted the tobacco directly to Peru in order to cancel part of a debt which was owed to the viceroyalty. Abascal not only approved the action but gratefully accepted the tobacco as payment, which placed him in a position of belligerency towards Chile. In October, he began to issue letters of marque to Peruvian captains for the capture of foreign vessels trading in Chilean waters. These provocations were compounded by the knowledge that the viceroy had asked the Bishop of Concepción to incite royalist disobedience to the government.

The Chilean junta had wished to avoid an open schism with Peru. Its previous correspondence with the viceroy had been firm, but without the disrespect or enmity which would place it in the ranks of an unfaithful sister colony. However, these deliberate acts of aggression moved the junta (or properly, Carrera) to issue a vigorous protest. In a letter of August 29, 1812, the tobacco seizure was condemned, as well as the purported legitimacy of the Valdivians

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2 "Oficio al virrey..., August 29, 1812," CHDI, XXIII, 86.

in their secession from the colony. Concerning the corsairs which raided shipping in Chilean waters, the junta wrote:

To prohibit the introduction of European and even Spanish goods which are imported by this route, is an act rarely practiced between civilized nations, even when they are at war, . . .

In a reply of October 12, Abascal accused the junta of being power-hungry, ruffian malcontents who had defied the highest magistrates in America with their anarchist behavior. He refused to reimburse the Chileans for the tobacco and justified the corsairs in their scouring the coasts for "contrabandists." He warned the Chileans that by continuing in their present course they could expect an invasion as soon as royalist troops had liberated Upper Peru and defeated the Argentine insurgents. His remarks amounted to a definitive economic and political break with Chile, and a virtual declaration of war.

The publication of this letter in Santiago brought resounding public support for the junta from the majority of the populace and induced frenzied military preparations in anticipation of invasion. In a junta de corporaciones

4 "Oficio al virrey..., August 29, 1812," CHDI, XXIII, 85-91.
5 Ibid., 88.
6 "Oficio a la Junta..., October 12, 1812," CHDI, XXIII, 91-101.
7 Ibid., 100-101.
convoked in the capital on November 17, 1812, all those present agreed on war as the only alternative but prudently desisted from offensive actions. Many entrenched mercantile interests were opposed to a rupture which would close Chile's primary export market and bring severe internal disruption of the economy. In his Diario militar, Carrera recorded the mixed emotions of the assembly—the desires of redeeming wounded pride for the brazen viceregal threats versus the economic consequences of such a stance.

Everyone present agreed that these insults of the viceroy were tantamount to war, but it was wisely noted that our armament was not yet sufficient to begin a campaign. We held our efforts in abeyance until after we had subjugated Valdivia, all the time benefiting from the commerce with Lima. Now, the season and advanced state of all my efforts offered me the opportunity of securing southern Chile.

As this statement reveals, Valdivia was by that time a painful thorn in the side of the patriot movement and a source of concern to Carrera. Obviously, Carrera considered it indispensable to restore the city to his personal authority but was ignorant of the obstacles of such a venture. By then, the early opportunities for winning that garrison's loyalty had been frittered away, and the young dictator was increasingly beset by political enemies in Santiago. Before leading any army southward, he found it imperative to assure his continued dominance in the capital.

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8 Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, II, 208-209.

9 "Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 65.
This was a continual struggle, for the powerful Larrain branch of the aristocracy was thoroughly alienated by Carrera's self-proclaimed leadership and was eager to support any charismatic figure who could unseat him. And the adherents of the exiled Martínez de Rozas were also suspected of revolutionary designs against the Carrera family.

On January 28, 1813, José Toribio Torres revealed to Juan José Carrera a plot to assassinate the entire Carrera family by a certain Manuel Rodríguez and his brother, Ambrosio. The scheme involved falsifying the signature of José Miguel Carrera to release 200 troops from the national guard barracks and unite them with the artillery corps led by Ramón Picarte. The conspirators were arrested before enacting their plans and were either exiled to Argentina or sentenced to prison terms on Juan Fernández. This ill-fated conspiracy more closely resembled a comic-opera plot than a genuine threat, but it was a factor in convincing Carrera of the dangers in temporarily leaving his base of power.

As if the discontent and political opposition were not enough to discourage a Valdivia expedition, Carrera encountered general apathy among the populace of Santiago.

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10 In his diary, Carrera repeatedly accused members of the Larrain family of instigating the coups against him ("Diario militar...", CHDI, I, 65).

11 "Proceso por la conspiración..., January 28, 1813," CHDI, XXI and XXII.

12 "Diario militar...," CHDI, I, 67-69.
To have mobilized the militia and veteran units would have required them to forsake their agricultural pursuits and abandon their fields, an impossible task during the crucial spring and summer months. Large landholders were equally vocal in their opposition to a campaign. It was argued that such an expedition could be formed no sooner than March, after the harvesting of the crops.¹³

Viceroy Abascal possessed neither the funds nor the troops to undertake a Chilean venture. The aggressive bearing of his October 12 letter was fortified by an invasion plan proposed by Brigadier Antonio Pareja, a Spanish naval officer and veteran of Trafalgar. Pareja had come to Peru in 1810 after being appointed military governor of Concepción, but was unable to take his command because of opposition by the newly-created Santiago junta.¹⁴

His plan for subduing Chile centered around taking a small detachment of soldiers to the royalist strongholds of Chiloé and Valdivia, joining with the troop battalions there, then moving northward in a campaign to bring the capital of Santiago to its knees. Information had been supplied to the viceroy by Chilean agents concerning the divided sentiments of Concepción province and the disinterest or frank opposition of many officers to the independence movement. Abascal

¹³Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, II, 218.

¹⁴Vicente Rodríguez Casado and José Antonio Calderón Quijano (eds.), José Fernando de Abascal y Sousa, Memoria de Gobierno, II (Sevilla: Editorial Católica, 1944), 166.
believed that the mere presence of Pareja in the South would be sufficient to restore the traditional order and bring the capitulation of Santiago. In any case, it was thought that there would be little or no resistance from Concepción and other cities in the South. Pareja was given one ship, fifty infantrymen and the modest sum of 6,000 pesos for the support of his anticipated army, the rest of the money to be furnished by the treasuries of Valdivia and Chiloé. The small expedition left Callao on December 12, 1812, led by Pareja who carried with him a small group of officers.

On arriving in Chiloé on January 18, 1813, Pareja was cordially received by its governor, Ignacio Justis. Since the last years of the eighteenth century, the veteran battalion of the island had been increased to over 400 troops, with over twice that number of militia. These troops and the rest of the island population were practically untouched by the spirit of the revolution. Their isolation denied them intellectual stimulation and kept out subversives, which left them blindly loyal to the king. Juan Tomás Vergara, the island's royal treasurer, presented Pareja with the sum of 160,000 pesos to be used to further his campaign. And the civilian populace enthusiastically

15Barros Arana, Historia general, IX, 10.
16Díaz Venteo, Las campañas militares, 377.
17"Oficio al rey..., April 1, 1822," CHDI, X, 196.
18Orregoaluco,LPatriavieja,II,218.
enlisted as soldiers.

In three weeks Pareja reorganized and trained the militia of Castro, which was formed into a unit renamed the Volunteers of Castro. The treasurer Tomás Verára and Governor Justis were sent to Valdivia to prepare its troops to join the taskforce, which was accomplished without difficulty. In late March, Pareja departed for Valdivia, carrying with him an army of over 1,300 men. It was composed of the veteran battalion of San Carlos (450 men), the Volunteers of Castro (800 men), and an artillery brigade (120 men) with eight cannon.

On arriving in Valdivia the expedition was joined by that city's entire troop battalion, including many experienced officers. Numerous civilians also joined the army. Pareja remained there only three days in order to outfit a gunboat and merchant vessel to accompany the force. On March 23, the expedition left for Concepción with a total of nearly 2,500 men, a testimony to the royalist solidarity of southern Chile.

The Concepción junta had received prior notice of Pareja's arrival in the South from the crew of a merchant vessel from Valdivia. By this time an invasion should have

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19"Apuntes sobre la guerra..., 1843," CHDI, IV, 209.

20"Revista de la guerra...," CHDI, VI, 54.

21"Noticias de...," [n.d.], AMV, LIV, 233.
come as no surprise, although distressingly few defensive measures had been taken by the government. A total of 1,535 troops were garrisoned in the city: 870 veteran infantry under Ramón Jiménez de Navia; 180 additional veteran infantry in the port of Talcahuano, led by Captain Rafael de la Sota, and 485 militia under Captain Pedro Barnechea. These were only a portion of the total veteran and militia forces which at that moment were stationed within twenty-four hours travel from the city. For some inexplicable reason, they were not summoned.

A certain amount of this inactivity was due to the sharp division of political loyalties within the officer corps. Even more was attributable to the incompetency and lackluster performance of such men as Colonel Benavente. Although he was a firm advocate of the patriot cause, Benavente's lack of initiative was often mistaken for royalist sympathy.

Neither did the city fathers reveal any sense of urgency in their actions. In the weeks prior to the invasion, the cabildo enacted measures concerning such mundane matters as public hygiene, fixing the hours of duty of regidores, and providing for the food supply of the city.

On the afternoon of March 26, the invading squadron

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22"Relación hecha..., 1813," CHDI, I, 80.
23Feliú Cruz, Conversaciones, 226.
of two frigates and three transports arrived at the promontory of San Vicente, behind which was located the port of Talcahuano. Captain Rafael de la Sota, the port commander, placed his 150 man force on alert and advised Colonel Benavente in Concepción. The intendant immediately dispatched 80 men to reinforce Sota and began to organize the bulk of the city's forces under Jiménez Navia to relieve the garrison. On the following morning, the royalists attacked Sota's small force along the heights of San Vicente and crushed it, sending Sota and a handful of uncaptured soldiers in retreat to Concepción. After this initial victory, Pareja fortified the approaches to the city and asked for its capitulation.

The entire patriot defense was a fiasco. Amid the confusion of Pareja's arrival, Benavente and his staff had failed to attack the troops as they disembarked from their ships, and consequently found themselves foolishly surrounded by an army overlooking them from the bluffs around the city. Even worse, dissension had begun to spread among the troops. Jiménez Navia, who led most of the patriot relief column to San Vicente, declined entering the battle and ordered his troops to station themselves on a nearby hill, observing the rout of Sota. On returning to the city he presented excuses for his actions, but his prior record of pro-royalist

26 Ibid., 277.
27 Ibid., 278.
activities led to his being branded a turncoat.

The intendant of the royalist army, Juan Tomás Vergara, delivered an ultimatum demanding surrender of the city in twenty-four hours. An open cabildo was called to consider the proper course of action, in which it was resolved that the city should be abandoned. During the night the provincial treasurer and a military escort fled to Santiago, carrying with them the 36,000 pesos remaining in the treasury. The patriot forces were assembled in the main plaza to stage an orderly retreat, when the troops under Jiménez Navia revolted and declared themselves in support of the king. Sota and a few loyal soldiers were forced to flee the city, and Jiménez Navia took charge until the arrival of Pareja. Without this action by Jiménez Navia, the invaders would have entered a deserted city; as it was, they were able to add hundreds of troops to their growing force. Benavente and several leaders agreed to remain behind to devise a formal capitulation and provide a smoother transition for the new government. Pareja entered Concepción on March 24, and was greeted on the outskirts of the city by the friendly troops of Jiménez Navia.

The entire south of Chile was now in royalist hands,

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28One of those who helped to convey the treasury funds to Santiago was the radical priest, Pedro José Eleisegui. He and the members of the escort were presented with medals by the Santiago government for their actions (El Monitor Araucano, April 6, 1813).

29"Carta del gobernador..., 1813," CHDI, II, 281-82.
involving no more than a skirmish and the loss of a handful of men. In large measure, it was possible because of the lack of solidarity and breakdowns in the chain of command within the patriot army. After combining his forces with those of Jiménez Navia, Pareja found himself with a total force of 3,570 infantry, 300 artillerymen and 250 dragoons. The commander also found that he enjoyed the support of a majority of the provincial population, especially in the Laja district. From here he was soon reinforced by hundreds of militia and those veteran units remaining in the frontier forts. Pareja wisely retained Benavente and other patriot functionaries in their posts, which enabled him to exercise complete control over predominately patriot areas. He issued orders for troops, horses, and supplies to be sent to Concepción, each order bearing the signature of Benavente. In this way the royalist army was able to accrue invaluable reinforcements and supplies in a short time, while local authorities believed they were obeying the instructions of Intendant Benavente.

After refitting in Concepción, the royalist army pushed on to Chillán, picking up 2,000 additional militia-men along the way. The frightened government of Santiago

30Feliú Cruz, Conversaciones, 227.
31Diego José Benavente, Memoria sobre las primeras campañas, 30.
32Orrego Luco, La patria vieja, II, 227.
hurriedly invested José Miguel Carrera with supreme military authority and sent him south to Talca with the patriot army. This confrontation along the Maule River set the scene for the first round of the war of independence.

Both armies were composed mainly of creoles, a civil war of Chileans against Chileans. There was little to distinguish the opposing armies in their armament, uniforms or their fighting ability. The combating armies were encumbered by thousands of raw militia and green recruits who fled during battle or whenever they became discontented with army life. Many troops were loyal to the landowners or caudillos under whom they enlisted, not to the concepts of liberalism or conservatism. What followed was a winnowing process in which many troops deserted, fought for the opposing side, or were directed by mercenary or personal motivation. By the end of the first stage of fighting, the loyalties of the armies had been cemented, largely along the lines of hatred or retribution.

As in the three previous centuries of its unstable and often violent existence, the South played a leading role in this future struggle. Rather than serving as a base of action against the Araucanians, it now became the head-

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33 It was not until 1814 that the first peninsular troops arrived, the Regiment of Talavera, under General Osorio ("Apuntes sobre la guerra...," CHDI, IV). The only Spanish officers of Pareja's expedition were two infantry colonels and the merchants Quintanilla and Elorreaga.

34 Clissold, Bernardo O'Higgins, 101.
quarters of the royalist forces in Chile. It was of vital importance, if only for the alliance and military assistance of the Indian tribes. The ports of Valdivia, Chiloé and Talcahuano provided easy access points for Peruvian reinforcements and all manner of supplies and arms. The inhabitants of the frontier were practiced in the use of weapons and accustomed to the privations of military campaigns. Under the enthusiastic leadership of the clergy and military officers, an almost invincible public solidarity was formed.
CONCLUSION

The Chilean military performed a distinctive role for the Spanish monarchy during the late eighteenth century— it was engaged in an on-going frontier war against the Araucanian Indians, a conflict which over a period of nearly three centuries had diminished but not subsided. This was in sharp contrast to other areas of Spanish America, where the subjugation of the native race had been completed in a few short years after the conquest. While other colonies were approaching the zenith of their development, Chile was engaged in a costly and debilitating war of attrition along its southern frontier.

As a result of its continuous protection of Spanish society against the Indians, the military became one of the most influential institutions of the colony. This prominence was characterized by the constant presence of a mobilized army, a network of forts along the Araucanian frontier and a military budget which nearly equaled all other expenses of the colonial treasury combined. Officers occupied civil bureaucratic posts in conjunction with their military duties and governed many towns and districts. Throughout the south, all of these features combined to create a strong military tradition, personified by an
intimate association between the king's army and society and the ascendancy of the professional soldier.

An additional factor accentuating the army's importance was the threat of foreign attack along the coasts, either by corsairs or European invaders. Southern Chile was considered highly vulnerable to such encroachments because of its limited population and because it was the first Spanish territory an enemy would reach on rounding the tip of South America. In the second half of the 1700's, the decline of Spanish fleet commerce in the Caribbean and the initiation of registry shipping in Pacific waters attracted numerous foreign interlopers to the Chilean coast. However, piracy was not nearly so attractive to Europeans as the natural resources of the Pacific and the potential for opening up new commercial markets. Chile experienced an influx of smugglers, whalers, and foreign fishermen whom Chileans fearfully regarded as a threat to Spanish omnipotence in that part of America.

As a result of these dangers, Chileans were forced to divide their army, stationing nearly half of all the veteran troops in coastal fortresses. It was impossible for either the coast or the frontier to be adequately protected as long as half the army had its back to one enemy at all times.

Most of the army was stationed in the south, a factor which largely isolated it from contact with the capital of Santiago and the mainstream of colonial society.
However, there was also a great deal of status isolation, brought on by the army's predatory role and its reputation for crime and corruption. Lawlessness and violence within the army were closely linked to the rough frontier existence and were also factors which set the army apart culturally from the rest of the colony.

Military men possessed considerable powers along the frontier, either as Indian intermediaries, fort commanders or military governors. Through their position, numerous officers (utilizing enlisted men or Indians as underlings) became involved in extortion rings, illegal businesses and smuggling. The unpopularity of army life, the low pay, and a lack of able-bodied men forced army officials to accept substandard recruits or impress other men to keep the battalions at full strength. This led to high rates of crime, larceny, and desertion within the ranks as well as low levels of professionalism. Military penal codes were deliberately relaxed to comply with the reality of garrison life, and there was a tendency to reemploy deserters and other miscreants in the army.

Overcrowded civilian penal facilities led to the coastal fortresses being used as detention centers for criminals. These convicts admittedly performed a useful service by constructing fortifications, as in the case of Valdivia; however, their predilections for escape, criminality or arson distracted the troops, preventing them from carrying out their normal duties. The shortage of troops
dictated that these desterrados be inducted into the army, where they became a worse burden.

One of the most influential factors in the Chilean army's development was the dominant role played by Peru. The influence of the viceroys was solidified through the Lima situado, a mechanism for supplying the isolated garrisons in the far south. This, combined with Peruvian jurisdiction over Valdivia and Chiloé, partially drove a wedge between the army and the government in Santiago. A steady flow of Peruvian and Spanish officers, money and bureaucrats, instilled in the inhabitants of these districts the notion of the viceroys as their patrons and protectors.

The military was a vital component of life in the south, where it was the major force in combating Indian or foreign aggression. Culturally and geographically, it was segregated from the capital. Reinforcing factors were the disreputable nature of the army, the low morale and predatory militarism of the troops, which set the army apart from the rest of Chile. Army officers did rise to positions of prominence in the colony through hard work, but they were disassociated from the aristocracy and the more cosmopolitan atmosphere of the capital. For the most part, these officers were socially and politically unsophisticated, more at ease with the monotony and routine of garrison duty.

The army was destined to exert a strong influence during the patria vieja (1810-1814), the early phase of the independence movement. The political attitudes of the
officer corps during this period were attributable to its colonial heritage and its relations with Lima and Santiago.

After the creation of the first patriot junta in Santiago in 1810, the veteran forces in the south were, if possible, even more isolated from the capital and the course of the liberal movement. In Santiago the civilian militia began to emerge as the base of the new patriot army. Since the last years of the colony, militia had been periodically trained and called to active duty, which enhanced their institutional prestige and sense of importance. An entirely new standing army was created in the capital, composed principally of former militia and members of the aristocracy. While the veteran forces in the south should have logically served as a trained nucleus for this new army, they were completely disregarded. Juan Mackenna was one of the influential leaders who openly spoke against these measures, arguing the importance of veteran troops to the patriot cause and the danger of allowing them to remain unsubordinated in the south. He urged that the forces there be drastically reduced, and the remainder brought to the capital where they could be placed under close supervision. His recommendations were not followed, and the army vacancies in Santiago were filled through patronage and the appointive power of civilian, aristocratic elements.

After 1811, the divisions within the patriot movement overshadowed all other issues, in large part because of the personal ambition of a few leaders. The rift between
José Miguel Carrera and Juan Martínez de Rozas nearly resulted in civil war as the provincial armies of Santiago and Concepción confronted each other along the Maule River. In the capital, Carrera's major concern was to achieve complete power for himself through a succession of armed revolts. He showed little concern for the problems of the south or the potential power of its military. An example of this disregard was the deposing of Governor Eagar in Valdivia and the creation of a patriot junta in the city, which Carrera mistakenly interpreted as a threat to his power. He succeeded in bringing about its abolition, only to find it later supplanted by a military government of definite royalist sentiments.

The dissension and lack of foresight on the part of patriot leaders was definitely a factor in the south turning towards the royalist side. However, the features discussed previously were even stronger forces which impelled the army to take the course it did. The separation of the army from the capital, its close ties with Peru and dependency on the situado, and the deep-rooted loyalty to the king, were not conducive to sympathy for the patriot cause.

The political loyalties of the veteran army prior to 1814 were not significantly influenced by the traditionally-conceived division between creoles and peninsulars. For example, the entire membership of the Valdivia royalist consejo de guerra of 1812, with one exception, were all Chilean-born. In both the army and in colonial society, the
war of independence was one of creoles versus creoles.

The majority of Chilean troops and officers opted for the royalist cause, including the entire battalions of Chiloé, Valdivia, and most of the Concepción garrison. When Brigadier Antonio Pareja came from Peru in 1813 to invade Chile, he brought with him only one company of soldiers and a handful of officers to serve as instructors. By the time Pareja reached the Maule River, his force numbered several thousand soldiers, which comprised the bulk of Chile's veteran army.

Pareja's success in recruiting these troops directly hinged on the army's geographical and status isolation from central Chile and a long history of economic and administrative dependence on the Peruvian viceroys.
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Candidate: Duncan Stewart Young

Major Field: Latin American Studies (History)

Title of Thesis: The Eighteenth Century Background for the Chilean Army's Royalist Posture during the Patria Vieja (1810-1814)

Approved:

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Date of Examination:

March 31, 1976