

INDEPENDENCE, POLITICS, AND POWER IN CHILE AND ARGENTINA: ATTITUDES OF NAPOLEONIC OFFICERS IN THE LIBERATION ARMIES (1817–1830)

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Abstract

Apart from in the works of Jean Descola, Inès Murat, and Frédéric Masson, the presence and actions of many Napoleonic officers in South America have received little attention from French historians. However, Éric Saugera, Walter Bruyère-Ostells, Christophe Belaubre, Emilio Ocampo, Rafe Blaufarb, Fernando Berguño, and Felipe Angulo have recently relaunched the subject on an international level. Now that the military side of things has been usefully described, the most pressing issue today would seem to be a study of their social, cultural, and political influence. Recent prosopographical studies have revealed the precise levels of social integration of these figures, making it possible to understand their political ideals and the reasons why they went so far as to lose their lives for their cause. This article is an attempt to discuss the political roles of the 200 or so Napoleonic soldiers (officers and NCOs) in Chile and Argentina at the crucial juncture of the end of the colonial period and the creation of the modern state.

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During the period when Chile and Argentina were fighting for independence (1810–1830), many officers from the Napoleonic armies (French for the most part, but also Italian, Polish, German, etc.) participated in the wars against the Spanish colonial power. The vast majority distinguished themselves and reached the highest ranks in the independence armies, becoming close collaborators of the great military and political leaders of these struggles: O’Higgins, San Martín, Alvear, Sucre, Bolívar, Belgrano, and Balcarce. They played leading roles, and their impact was felt on the battlefields, in the creation of new corps (especially the cavalry and light artillery), and in the management of the first military schools (for instance, in Chile, all the teachers of the first military school created by O’Higgins in 1817 were former officers of the Grande Armée). They also spread their influence through the introduction of sciences (cartography, topography, staff) and modern strategies borrowed from the experience of the Napoleonic Wars, drawn from works by the likes of Guibert, Thiébault, Rogniat, and Jomini. In many cases, the officers (for example, Brayer, Beauchef, and Viel, among others) translated these works themselves with the intention of applying them in Latin America.

To reduce their participation solely to the military field, however, undermines its real importance and its meaning within the societies that were being built, hampering a genuine understanding of its legacy – a legacy that can justifiably be called political, as it sometimes extended far beyond the military aspect. Yet, for nearly two centuries, these topics have been shrouded in ignorance. The

reason for this is that the historians who wrote the history of Chile and Argentina did so in the nineteenth century, a time when these new countries were just starting out, beginning to build their identities, and they often considered themselves to be at the vanguard of this movement. These historians therefore took it upon themselves to create the symbols through which groups of people turned into nations: flags, anthems, and, naturally, national histories based on extraordinary facts and untouchable heroes, all imbued with the exemplarity required of them.

In this sense, Barros Arana and Vicuña Mackenna in Chile, Mitre in Argentina, played the same role as Thiers, Guizot, and Lamartine in France, or Mommsen and Niebur in Prussia. It should therefore come as no surprise that, in histories, Napoleonic officers appear only as military men, always mentioned as individuals, without context or reference to the overall movement constituted by their presence. It would indeed have been difficult to create a sense of national belonging based on models from outside the country, in a movement led by non-nationals.

Annie Crépin opened fresh perspectives on this subject with her reflection on the relationship between the army and society:

“... the period of the Revolution and the Empire inaugurated a new type of war, prefiguring contemporary mass-scale wars that would thrust entire nations onto the battlefield. Consequently, what emerged in France and then in the countries that followed in her footsteps was a new type of army and a new type of soldier, for whom the time spent serving their country was not – or was no longer – merely a matter of work. Inevitably, this translated into new relations between the army and society; new relations in ideological and symbolic terms, presenting [...] an alternative between an army that reflected a new society or an army that modelled the society it was to generate; an alternative between the militarization of society and the democratization of the army.”¹

¹ Annie Crépin, “Nouvelles tendances de l’historiographie militaire de la Révolution et de l’Empire,” in Annie Crépin, Jean-Pierre Jessenne and Hervé Leuwers, *Civils, Citoyens-soldats et militaires dans*

Most of these officers arrived on the South American continent armed with ideals inherited from the French Revolution. They believed that, here, they would be able to make these ideals a reality – something that was no longer possible in Europe and France.

The internal struggles of the Chilean and Argentinean independence made matters more complicated, presenting obstacles to their ambitions and forcing them to take sides for one of the two sides in the conflict.

This phenomenon clearly comes to light in four particular events: the disagreement between O'Higgins and Carrera on what path to follow to build an independent Chile (1814-1817); the opposition between San Martín and Carrera in Argentina (1817-1821); the power struggle between O'Higgins and Freire (1823-1826); and the opposition between Freire and Prieto (1829-1830), marking the end of Chile's independence process with the conservatives' victory over the liberals. To this list can be added the incessant internal struggles in Argentina between unitarists wishing to establish a central power in Buenos Aires and federalists distributed around the various provinces of Río de La Plata and La Pampa.

During each of these internal conflicts, Napoleonic officers tended to choose the side loyal to the government in place and/or defended the one that seemed to more closely represent their republican principles. This positioning considerably affected the progress of their military careers (rise in rank or dismissal) as well as the duration of their presence in these countries (temporary or permanent exiles), and even, in some cases, led to their death.

Political ideals of Napoleonic officers

The first question begging an answer is: what ideas were these officers arriving to Chile and Argentina with?

l'État-Nation (1789-1815), Société des Études Robespierriistes, Collection d'Études Révolutionnaires, 8, (Paris: 2006), 6-10.

These ideas can be found, first, by examining the officers' own memoirs, correspondence, and biographies. Beauchef: "I retired after serving the cause of a country's independence according to my liberal conscience, inimical to tyrannies"²; Brandsen: "I came voluntarily from France to seek adventure, but this adventure had as its goal the independence of this great region of the world"³; Persat: "I came to serve the cause of the independentists";⁴ Robert: "I left France to live in an independent and free country";⁵ Mercher: "I was enthusiastic about the independence of South America and I left France to serve the cause of freedom";⁶ Roul: "South Americans! When I arrived in your regions, it was with the same feelings as I had in the French armies. I dare to think that you have never doubted my feelings for your cause";⁷ Deslandes: "Seeing the homeland out of danger (Chile), I think I may be permitted to devote myself to my personal interests after having satisfied the common interests";⁸ Blaye: "The dangers hav[e] ceased for the homeland (Chile) as a result of the glorious result of the Battle of Maipú in which I participated";⁹ Bacler d'Albe: "... After the victory

2 Jorge Beauchef, *Memorias militares para servir a la historia de la independencia de Chile*, ed. Guillermo Feliú Cruz (Santiago: Editorial Andrés Bello, 1964), 271.

3 Federico Brandsen, *Diario de la campaña del sur de Chile o Bio Bio, desde el 5 de noviembre de 1818 al 1^{er} de marzo de 1819* (Buenos Aires: Federico Santa Colona Brandsen, 1910), 53.

4 Maurice Persat, *Mémoires de Persat (1806-1844)*, (Paris: Plon-Nourrit, 1910), 226.

5 José Rondeau, *Resumen documentado de la causa criminal seguida y sentenciada en el tribunal de la comisión militar de esta capital contra los reos Carlos Robert, Juan Lagresse, Agustín Dragumette, Narciso Parchappe y Marcos Mercher por el delito de conspiración contra las Supremas autoridades de las Provincias Unidas y de Chile en Sud América*, (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la Independencia, 1819), 10.

6 Rondeau, *Resumen*, 14.

7 Jacques Roul, Proclamation, Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, Sala de Microformatos Ms.BA 18, Buenos Aires, s.n., 181-?, p. 615-616.

8 Félix Deslandes, letter dated 04/19/1818, Archivo nacional de Chile, Ministry of War, vol. 59.

9 Lucien Blaye, letter dated 04/20/1818, Archivo nacional de Chile, Ministry of War, vol. 59.

of Maipú (Chile in April 1818), we are preparing the great coup that will bring freedom to South America: the conquest of Lima.”¹⁰

Fernando Campos Harriett described feelings and statements as follows - nor was Napoleon absent:

“All fought for South American emancipation and showed by their actions the influence of the great man [i.e., Napoleon] who had trained them”.¹¹ In the same way, Eustache Bruix,¹² gravely wounded near Nacimiento in Chile in 1819, spoke for all in the words reported by Beauchef, who was at his side when he died, namely: “his last words were for Napoleon and Chile’s independence”.¹³

Second, for the most part, these men were children at the time of the French Revolution of 1789, and they were educated according to its ideological principles. So, even though the First Empire did not by any means represent the ideal application of these principles, these officers followed the principles and instilled them in the soldiers under them. Even those on the side opposing indepen-

10 Patrick Puigmal, *Diablos, no pensaba en Chile hace tres años*, (PEDCH/ULA: 2006), 91-92. Born in Sallanches in 1789, Joseph Bacler d’Albe, son of Louis Bacler d’Albe, Napoleon’s brigadier general and personal topographer, became a second lieutenant in the 48th Line Regiment in 1809, was taken prisoner at Vliissingen, and was sent to England whence he was exchanged in 1811. ADC to General Ségur, then to Duroc, he served in Russia and Saxony (1812-1813) and in Spain and France as captain on Soult’s staff. He followed Soult during the Hundred Days to Waterloo (1815) and, soon afterwards, exiled himself to the US where he was recruited by Carrera.

11 Fernando Campos Harriett “Soldados de Napoléon en la independencia de Chile,” *Memorial del Ejército de Chile* 350 (1969).

12 Eustache and Alexis Bruix, the two sons of Admiral Bruix, participated in the final campaigns of the First Empire, with the former serving as a second lieutenant in the 12th Chasseurs à Cheval Regiment and the latter as a lieutenant in the same corps in 1814. Having rallied during the Hundred Days, they were condemned in 1816 for their Bonapartist stance. They went into exile with the assistance of the Argentinian minister Rivadavia and arrived in Buenos Aires in 1817. Serving in Chile, the former died in one of his first battles while the latter later distinguished himself in Peru, becoming a colonel. Service Historique de la Défense (SHD), Terre, 2YE 381 and 382.

13 Beauchef, *Memorias*, 122.

dence had a good understanding of these principles. One example is Ballesteros, a Spanish colonel who wrote in his memoirs:

“In the midst of these South Americans, valiant defenders of the freedom and independence of their homeland, were foreigners loyal to the cause, for which so many of their compatriots had perished. Among those who survived so many dangers and hardships were men who had fought on the Guadiana and the Rhine, who had witnessed the burning of Moscow and the surrender of Paris. Such were the men gathered here, united in a common cause: South Americans and Europeans, all driven by the unanimous desire to secure the political existence of this vast continent”.¹⁴

It is therefore clear that when these Napoleonic officers arrived in Argentina or Chile, they knew exactly what they wanted. In addition, they were used to seeing the military take power. They knew that these military men often considered themselves heroes of the emancipation and “owners” of power for having poured their efforts or blood into the fight for independence. The examples of Washington in the United States and Napoleon in France were there to encourage them in this. In fact, the officers often engaged in that kind of philosophy themselves.

It is therefore hardly surprising that they took part in the internal struggles between the various generals who were leading the fight for independence.

Choosing between O’Higgins, San Martín, and Carrera

The purpose of this article is not to offer a historical analysis of these conflicts, but to study the consequences of these conflicts on

14 José Rodríguez Ballesteros, *Historia de la revolución y guerra de la independencia del Perú desde 1818 hasta 1826*, Biblioteca nacional de Chile, Colección de Historiadores y Documentos relativos a la Independencia de Chile, T.XXXIV (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Cultura, 1949), 295–296.

Napoleonic officers. It also examines how these officers influenced the processes they became involved in.

O'Higgins and Carrera were two Chilean generals fighting for the independence of their country. The first held views akin to those of the educated yet conservative South American elite, while the second, an admirer of the Brumaire coup, had a more militaristic and nationalist – albeit more radical – vision for the country's future. They disagreed about how to lead Chile to independence. In 1817, after spending eight years in the Napoleonic armies, the Italian Rondizzoni¹⁵ arrived in Argentina on board one of the ships chartered in the US by Carrera, with whom he had developed a relationship based on friendship and political convergence. Despite Carrera's precarious situation (he was banned from both Argentina and Chile at the time), Rondizzoni remained loyal to Carrera and decided to join San Martín in the fight for Chile's liberation.¹⁶ However, it was not long before new events related to Carrera (a renewed ban on his entering Chile, the trial of his brothers and the assassination of Manuel Rodríguez, another Chilean fighter opposed to O'Higgins) forced him to request – and, on May 6, 1818, obtain – his absolute discharge from the army. On this subject, the author Ibañez wrote, "... These deplorable events wounded him to the quick, and in protest against such acts, he resolved to distance himself from the army..."¹⁷ He therefore withdrew to his estates until 1823, when

15 Giuseppe/José Rondizzoni, born in Mezzano Superiore near Parma in 1788. He entered the Imperial Guard in 1807, participated in the campaigns of Spain, Austria, Russia, Saxony, the siege of Magdeburg in 1814, and served in the Army of the Rhine during the Hundred Days. Knight of the Legion of Honour and captain at the end of the Empire, he then refused to serve the empress Marie Louise in Parma and decided to go into exile in the US. Together with Benjamín Viel, he became one of the two French Napoleonic generals in Chile. A. Ibañez and José Toribio Medina, *Hoja de servicios de don José Rondizzoni* (Santiago: Imprenta del Ferrocarril, 1865).

16 A. Ibañez, *Hoja*, 8: "The Minister of War in Buenos Aires proposed to Rondizzoni that he go to Chile under the command of San Martín, a proposition that he accepted after obtaining Carrera's full approval and acceptance."

17 A. Ibañez, *Hoja*, 10-11, "Rondizzoni could not remain indifferent to them either. His frank and loyal character made him indignantly reject any measure

O'Higgins asked him to return to service. Rondizzoni refused to do so, and it was only after O'Higgins was deposed by Freire that he returned to service, until 1830, as shall be discussed later.

In similar circumstances, other officers either renounced or were ousted from their posts. Blaye¹⁸ was granted an absolute discharge while retaining immunity and uniform; Deslandes¹⁹ received an absolute discharge; Roul²⁰ took a stance against Puyrredon (Supreme Director in Buenos Aires) and in favour of Carrera in Argentina, in consequence of which he was expelled; Cramer²¹ resigned following the assassination of Carrera's two brothers. It should also be noted that Cramer and Brayer (who will be discussed again later) were also developing a relationship with Manuel Rodríguez, something that, politically, did nothing to improve their situation.

that did not comply with the strict principles that constantly guided his conduct..."

18 Lucien Blaye, born in Cádiz in 1791. A staff officer during the last campaigns of the First Empire, he exiled himself to the US after the fall of the Empire and was recruited by José Miguel Carrera to fight in Chile in 1817. National Archives of Chile/Ministry of War, vol. 19, 29.

19 Félix Marie Deslandes, born in Nantes. Cavalry second lieutenant during the last campaigns of the First Empire, he then exiled himself to the US, where he was recruited by Argentinian Colonel Thompson to participate in the campaigns for independence. Ricardo Piccirelli and Leoncio Gianello, *Biografías navales: Cuarenta y cinco semblanzas de marinos*, (Buenos Aires: Secretaría de Estado de Marina. Departamento de Estudios Históricos Navales, 1963).

20 Jacques Roul, born in Villard-Saint-Pancrace in 1775. He served in the hussars from 1793, notably during the campaigns in Italy and Egypt (1796-1799). He transferred to the Chasseurs à Cheval of the Guard in 1800, then to the 2nd Chasseurs à Cheval in 1805. He participated in most of the Napoleonic campaigns, eventually becoming Napoleon's ADC and a colonel during the Hundred Days in 1815. Exiled in the United States, he then began to play an ambiguous role between the French and Spanish royal powers, the exiled Bonapartists, and the leaders of independence, particularly Carrera. He was expelled from Argentina in 1818. Danielle and Bernard Quintin, *Dictionnaire des colonels de Napoléon* (Paris: Éditions SPM, 1996), 757-758.

21 Ambroise Cramer, born in Paris in 1790. After graduating from the Saint-Cyr Military Academy in 1808, he entered the 5th Light Infantry as a second lieutenant, serving in Spain until 1813, in France in 1814, and in Belgium in 1815. He was one of the first Napoleonic officers to go into exile in the US and then in Argentina where, from 1816, he participated in the campaigns for independence. SHD, Terre, 2YE, 209 bis.

It is important to emphasize that the vast majority of officers arriving in Buenos Aires had been recruited in the US by Carrera or in France by Rivadavia (Argentinian minister in France). Most decided to follow San Martín through the Andes, towards Chile, with all the equipment (rifles, sabres, and cartridges) transported in Carrera's ships—equipment that was to be used during the Battle of Maipú (1818).²² Others, however, decided to stay in Argentina or soon returned there to continue the fight for the country's independence, but not under San Martín: Alejandro Danel,²³ Lucien Brayer,²⁴ and Dominique Trolé²⁵ with General Alvear, for example, during the war between Argentina and Brazil in 1827.²⁶

Two very specific cases highlight the level of violence that was reached in the context of the political divisions between San Martín and Carrera. The first culminated in the expulsion of General Michel Brayer,²⁷ who served as major-general of the armies of the Andes

22 Alfonso Cuadrado Merino, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas General José Miguel Carrera, "Recordando al general," accessed July 2003, www.jmcarrera.cl/articulos.

23 Alejandro Danel, born in Arras in 1791. He served in the 1st Chasseurs and then in the 11th Voltigeurs of the Imperial Guard between 1809 and 1814, in countries including Germany, Prussia, Poland, Austria, and Spain. He participated in the Belgian campaign as a second lieutenant (1815) and then went to Argentina at the invitation of Rivadavia, the Argentinian minister in France. M. Fernandez, documents provided by this descendant of Danel in Argentina, April 2004.

24 Lucien Brayer, born in France in 1793, son of General Michel Brayer. He served under his father in 1814 and 1815 and went into exile with him, first in the US, then in Argentina with Carrera, and finally in Chile. He ended his career as a cavalry colonel in the service of Uruguay. M. Pourrat, documents provided by this descendant of the Brayer family in Chile, December 2005.

25 Dominique Trolé participated in the Empire's last campaigns in the Grande Armée's engineering corps and, after participating in the Strasbourg Carbonari plot (1822), he went to fight in Spain in 1823 then reached Argentina in 1826, fighting in the war against Brazil. He became a colonel engineer in 1829. Jacinto Yaben, *Biografías argentinas y sudamericanas* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Metropolis, 1938): vol. IV, 913–915.

26 Emilio Ocampo, *Alvear en la guerra con el imperio de Brasil*, (Buenos Aires: Editoral Claridad, 2003).

27 Michel Brayer, born in Neuf-Brisach in 1769. A volunteer in 1792, he became major in the 9th Line Regiment in 1803 after distinguishing himself in numerous campaigns and battles during the Revolution. He made a name for himself at Austerlitz and became colonel in the 2nd Line Regiment in 1806,

and then of southern Chile. Recent research has revealed that while it is true that Brayer during his time in Latin America failed to live up to his reputation, the main reason for his departure was a falling out with San Martín. Their disagreement, political in nature, sprang from Brayer's relationship with Carrera and Manuel Rodríguez, which inspired hatred in San Martín.²⁸ Brayer also had a secret political project linked to Napoleon's situation on Saint Helena and the possibility of his re-settling in South America, something that may have provoked or fanned the flames of San Martín's hostility.²⁹ It is worth mentioning here that, at the time of Brayer's expulsion, 11 percent of the staff in the Army of the Andes was composed of imperial officers who all ended up either deposed, exiled, or imprisoned as a result of this conflict.

The second case culminated in the judgement pronounced in Buenos Aires against five French officers for conspiracy in 1818:

with which he served in Prussia, Poland, and Spain. Having risen to the rank of brigadier general and then divisional general, he fought in Saxony, France, and during the Hundred Days (1813-1815). In exile in the US, close to Joseph Bonaparte and Marshal Grouchy, he travelled with Carrera to Argentina and became chief of staff of the Chilean Army in 1817. Georges Six, *Dictionnaire biographique des généraux et amiraux français de la Révolution et de l'Empire, 1792-1814* (Paris: Éditions G. Saffroy, 1934): vol. I, 155-156.

28 Patrick Puigmal, *Dialogo de sordos entre José de San Martín y Michel Brayer: cartas, artículos y manifiestos argentinos, chilenos y franceses durante la independencia de Chile (1817-1818)*, Programa de Estudios y Documentación en Ciencias Humanas, (Osorno: Editorial Universidad de Los Lagos, 2003).

29 See the latest work by the Argentinian historian, Emilio Ocampo, *La última campaña del emperador: Napoleón y la independencia de América*, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Claridad, 2007)/ *The Emperor's Last campaign*, Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2009, which provides a comprehensive overview of this subject, based on a plethora of English, North and South American, Spanish, and French archival documents concerning Napoleon's potential projects in South America.

Robert de Connantre,³⁰ Lagresse,³¹ Dragumette,³² Parchappe,³³ and Mercher,³⁴ to which must be added Young,³⁵ killed during his arrest,

30 Charles Robert de Connantre, born in Brest. He served in the cavalry during the campaigns of the Revolution before embarking on an administrative career, becoming sub-prefect of the Nièvre department during the First Restoration. He went to Argentina with Rivadavia's help in 1817, and after founding Buenos Aires' first French-language newspaper, *L'Indépendant du sud*, he was involved in the French conspiracy and was executed in early 1819. Daniel Hammerluy Dupuy, "El naturalista Bonpland y la conspiración de José Miguel Carrera contra O'Higgins y San Martín," *Revista Historia* VI, no. 13 (1958).

31 Jean Lagresse or Lagreze, born in Libourne in 1781. Quartermaster (*fourrier*) to the 4th Reserve Legion in Spain (1808), he joined the Regiment of Voltigeurs of the Royal Guard for Joseph in 1809 and became a second lieutenant in the 114th line in 1813. He served in France and became a knight of the Legion of Honour. Co-founder of *L'Indépendant du sud* with Robert in Buenos Aires in 1817, Lagresse was involved in the French conspiracy and was executed in early 1819. SHD, Terre, 2YE.

32 Augustin Dragumette, born in Nantes. A naval and privateer ship officer during the Empire, he departed from Nantes to Buenos Aires in 1818 aboard the *Angélique*, was also part of the *L'Indépendant du sud* team, was involved in the French conspiracy, and was expelled from Argentina in early 1819. He then served as a privateer for Uruguay and participated in the siege of Montevideo in 1843. Lionel Dupont, *La légion française de Montevideo*, accessed January 2007, http://perso.club-internet.fr/lidupont/legionFR_fichiers/LF1.htm (link defunct in February 2024) see however <https://augrdsdesjours.blogspot.com/2013/06/la-legion-francaise-duruguay.html>).

33 Narcisse Parchappe, born in Épernay in 1795. A student at the École Polytechnique and later at the School of Applied Artillery and Engineering in Metz (1812–1814), he became a second lieutenant in the 5th Foot Artillery and served during the Hundred Days (1815). Under Rivadavia's recommendation, he went into exile in Buenos Aires aboard the *Angélique* and was involved in the French conspiracy. Expelled in early 1819, he continued to fight alongside Carrera and then became a surveying expert. He collaborated with French scientist Alcide d'Orbigny, followed him on various expeditions, and wrote several chapters of his book of travels and discoveries. SHD, Terre, 2YE, 2928.

34 Marc Antoine Mercher, born in Courdemanche in 1791. On leaving the Saint-Germain military school, he joined the 7th Cuirassiers as a lieutenant and served in Saxony and France (1813–1814). Having rallied to Napoleon during the Hundred Days, Mercher became chef d'escadron de cavalerie and ADC to Napoleon, accompanying him all the way to Torbay. However, as Mercher could not board for Saint Helena, he was interned in Malta, then went to Persia, then to the US, and finally to Argentina, where he joined Carrera. Involved in the French conspiracy, he was deported to Uruguay where he served first with Carrera and then with Artigas, the president of Uruguay. SHD, Terre, 2YE.

35 Georges Yung or Young, born in Sarralbe in 1780. An officer during the

and the Chilean Vigil,³⁶ former officer of Joseph Bonaparte in Spain, who were arrested for conspiracy to eliminate O'Higgins and San Martín. Despite the fact that the official judgement³⁷ provided no evidence proving any basis to the charges against them, the judges still sentenced two of them to death (Robert and Lagresse were executed) and exiled the others, except for Vigil, who was declared innocent. The reason behind the judgement is undoubtedly the close relationship between some of these men and Carrera during his exile in Montevideo, though there is no reliable and conclusive source backing this up in the available documentation.³⁸ To illustrate the quality of the arguments presented by the prosecution, it suffices to quote, for example, Rondeau, Supreme Director of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata, as he pronounced the judgement: "Well known is the story of the three brothers José Miguel, Juan José, and Luis Carrera. If only we could erase this story from that of our revolution! These corrupt and ambitious South Americans seized their homeland's government to sacrifice it to the Spaniards."³⁹ The Carrera brothers may be accused of many evils, such as excessive ambition, the systematic use of military force, and a love of total power, but to speak of "sacrificing the homeland to the Spaniards" is a baseless accusation whose sole purpose could only be to destroy the family's political image so as to justify the disappearance

First Empire's campaigns, he distinguished himself in the volunteer corps in Moselle under General Mériage, holding back the advance of the allies in July-August 1815. Exiled in Argentina with General Fressinet, among others, he was involved in the French conspiracy and killed during his arrest. See Hammerluy Dupuy, "El naturalista Bonpland."

36 Manuel Vigil came from an illustrious Chilean family opposed to the policy led by O'Higgins and close to the Carrera family. Sent to Europe, he served in Spain as ADC to General Gaultier in the army of Joseph Bonaparte. Back in Argentina in 1818, he was involved in the French conspiracy but was exonerated. He later went on to serve as Bolívar's ADC in Peru. See Hammerluy Dupuy, "El naturalista Bonpland."

37 See Rondeau, *Resumen*.

38 Rondeau, *Resumen*, 20-30. See the letters written by Robert, Lagresse, and Xaviera Carrera.

39 Rondeau, *Resumen*, 3.

of its members. Tellingly, the three brothers met the same fate, each of them executed by firing squad between 1818 and 1821. To make the brothers disappear without generating a fresh internal crisis, they first had to be eliminated from the political scene. The same went for the Napoleonic officers who supported them.

It is interesting to note here the specific role played by the city of Montevideo. It served as the main refuge for exiles and losers of the independence struggles, notably the Argentinian General Alvear and the Chilean Carrera. But the Napoleonic officers also ended up there, especially after their conflicts with San Martín: the two Brayers, Parchappe and Mercher, and a few officers who arrived in 1818, such as General Fressinet and officers Hamelin, Carole, Young, and Bulewski. It would appear that Fressinet, Hamelin, and Carole did not play any role in the context of independence (there is very little information about them in the archives of Argentina, Uruguay, and France), but Bulewski⁴⁰ immediately sided with Carrera and was expelled from the army and imprisoned before being reintegrated in 1823. From 1818 to 1821, Montevideo was a breeding ground for many plans, involving South Americans and Europeans alike, to reconquer Argentina and Chile-plans that met with a variety of outcomes.

Between conservatives and liberals

The stance taken up by Jorge Beauchef⁴¹ during the battle between O'Higgins and Freire illustrates the gravity of the debate between mili-

40 Jean Valérien Bulewski, born in Poland. As a second lieutenant in the 5th Polish Chasseurs à Cheval in 1806, he served in Prussia, Poland, Austria, Russia, and Saxony (1806-1813), eventually becoming a chef d'escadron in 1814. Having rallied during the Hundred Days, he served with Drouet d'Erlon in Waterloo and, in 1818, went into exile in Argentina, where he became a colonel after 1823. SHD, Terre, 2YE.

41 Georges/Jorge Beauchef, born in Lyon in 1787. Engaged with the 4th Hussars in 1805, he served in the Austrian, Prussian, and Polish campaigns before moving to Spain, where he was taken prisoner in 1808. He escaped in

tary loyalty to the government and liberal ideas over the period from 1823 to 1826. On several occasions, particularly during the attempt by O'Higgins' supporters to destabilize Freire in 1825, Beauchef started out by supporting O'Higgins, out of loyalty to the man who was his first leader in Chile; until, at the insistence of his highly liberal aide-de-camp, Tupper, Beauchef changed his mind and made his troops available to Freire, "as a result of which, the other battalions of Santiago also decided to side with Freire."⁴² In his memoirs, Beauchef adds, as if to emphasize the moral dilemma provoked within him by this debate or to justify himself, that after reading the communications of both O'Higgins and Freire, he had made an announcement to his subordinates in Valdivia: "I told them of the military duties that oblige us to passive obedience to the constituted government."⁴³

Other officers also suffered the consequences of their positions during the conflict between these two men. Blaye had to withdraw once again by decree of 7 September 1824, and Rondizzoni rejected O'Higgins' offer of reinstatement. Similarly, Viel⁴⁴ and Beauchef

1809 and returned to France after a journey of more than four years that took him through Malta, Turkey, Hungary, Austria, and Switzerland. Reincorporated into the army in 1813, he served in the 2nd Chasseurs à Cheval de la Garde during the Hundred Days (1815), then went into exile in the US where he was recruited by the Argentinian Thompson to participate in the wars of independence. He became a colonel in the Chilean army and particularly distinguished himself in this country. Georges Beauchef, *Mémoires pour servir à l'indépendance du Chili*, trans. Patrick Puigmal, (Paris: La Vouivre, 2001), 186 p.

42 Ferdinand Tupper, *Memorias del coronel Tupper* (Santiago: Editorial Francisco de Aguirre, 1972), 128. On this subject, it is also worthwhile to consult Beauchef's memoirs, *Memorias militares para servir a la historia de la independencia de Chile*, published in 1964 and edited by Guillermo Feliú Cruz.

43 Beauchef, *Mémoires*, 122. On this subject, see also Sergio Vergara Quiroz, *Historia Social del Ejército de Chile* (Santiago: Editorial Universidad de Chile, 1993): Vol I, 109-110.

44 Benjamin Viel, born in Paris in 1787. Hussar in 1801, he served on all the Empire's campaigns including Spain, Russia, Saxony, and France, becoming lieutenant of the 8th Hussars then of the 1st Scouts of the Guard. Having rallied during the Hundred Days, he was wounded in the 6th Chasseurs à Cheval at Waterloo (1815) and went into exile in 1817 with Rivadavia's help. He then distinguished himself in Chile where he became a general in 1851. SHD, Terre, 2YE, 209 Bis.

were temporarily suspended from their duties by Congress in 1825.⁴⁵ Choosing to side with O'Higgins in 1825, Viel was forced to go into exile in Peru for a while before returning to Chile to serve Freire, whose political ideals were much more aligned with his own.

On the sidelines of this conflict, another French officer, Charles Lambert⁴⁶ exerted his influence during these years of wars in a different way: rather than fighting in the independence army, he settled in Chile as a businessman in the mining industry of the Copiapó region (northern Chile). As a friend of the governor, General Pinto, he lent the government the money required to finance the expedition sent to take control of the island of Chiloé, Spain's last stronghold in Latin America. This loan should evidently not be viewed merely as evidence of his patriotic sentiments, springing from the liberal principles he was widely known to hold, but also as an excellent investment for his business. In any case, it was an important political action considering that the capture of Chiloé was the last step in Chile's unification.⁴⁷

The civil war that ended with the Battle of Lircay in 1830 was one of key moments in these internal struggles for Chilean independence. On this subject, Luis Vitale wrote:

45 Carlos Maldonado, *El ejército chileno en el siglo XIX: génesis histórica del "ideal heroico" (1810-1885)*, accessed April 2003, www.geocities.com/capitolhill/7109/eje1.htm (link defunct in February 2024) see however https://www.academia.edu/28374400/El_Ej%C3%A9rcito_Chileno_en_el_Siglo_XIX_G%C3%A9nesis_Hist%C3%B3rica_del_Ideal_Heroico_1810_1885_1990_?hb-sb-sw=36614664.

46 Charles Lambert, born in Lauterbourg in 1793. A student at the École Polytechnique and later at the École des Mines, he served during the Hundred Days on the staff of the Grande Armée, and later went into exile in England. Arriving in Chile in 1816, he became a mining industrialist in the north of the country. Charles Lambert, *Mining Chile's Norte Chico: Journal of Charles Lambert (1825-1830) (Dellplain Latin American Studies)*, ed. John Mayo and Simon Collier (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).

47 On this subject, see Claudio Veliz "Egaña, Lambert, and the Chilean Mining Association of 1825," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 55, no. 4 (1975): 637-663; Patrick Puigmal, "Memorias para servir a la historia de Chiloé: Jorge Beauchef, el toque francés en la toma del archipiélago," *Revista Cultura de y desde Chiloé* 18 (2004).

“from 1823 to 1828, some officers who had inherited the liberal ideas of French enlightenment, such as Ramon Freire, tried to instil a series of progressive measures concerning Church privileges and major landowners while at the same time attempting to avoid militaristic excess as a system of government. Others acted in favour of the oligarchy of owners and traders; one example is General Prieto, leader of the conservative conspiracy that sparked the Civil War of 1829–1830.”⁴⁸

All the French still present in Chile, along with the majority of foreigners, sided with the liberal Freire, whose ideals were much more aligned with their own. Of course, for many of these men, Freire's defeat at Lircay in 1830 meant the end of their Chilean service or, at the very least, their removal for several years. Indeed, among the 132 officers removed after this battle were Viel, Rondizzoni, Guticke (German officer in the Grande Armée),⁴⁹ Holley⁵⁰ (father and son),

48 Luis Vitale, *Intervenciones militares y poder fáctico en la política chilena (1830-2000)*, (Santiago:2000), accessed May 2003, www.mazinger.sisib.uchile (link defunct in 2024) - see however <https://www.scribd.com/document/243386877/Vitale-Intervenciones-militares-y-poder-factico-en-la-politica-chilena-pdf>.

49 Édouard Guticke, born in Berlin in 1793. He served in the Grande Armée during the First Empire's last campaigns, then, exiled to Chile, served in the army of independence, achieving the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1823. See Vergara Quiroz, *Historia social del ejército*.

50 Hyacinthe Holley le Blanc, born in Boulogne in 1805. Having rallied to Napoleon's side during the Hundred Days at a very young age, he is said to have fought at Waterloo, later arriving in Chile in 1817. He then participated in the campaign for Peru's liberation from 1825 and, returning to Chile, was expelled for "revolutionary behaviour" for the first time before being reinstated in 1829. His son would later become a general in the Chilean army. National Archives of Chile, Ministry of War, vol. 52, 17, and vol. 142.

Tortel,⁵¹ and Labbé. The case of Labbé (son of a French soldier)⁵² is special in that, after obtaining an absolute discharge with immunity and uniform in 1829, he was suspended in 1830, then rebelled in 1832, upon which he was arrested and deported to Peru.⁵³

From July to September 1830, the newspaper *El defensor de los militares denominados constitucionales* (“The defender of so-called constitutional soldiers”) was published in Santiago by Joaquín de Mora and Pedro Godoy.⁵⁴ It contained numerous references to Viel, Freire’s second-in-command during this conflict, and to the fact that “a soldier who engages in his own deliberation on subjects removed from his profession is considered rebellious and perjurious: there is no state in the world where this is legally permitted. If any state were to allow it, that would make it a de facto military government.”⁵⁵ The following sentence clearly bears Viel’s mark: “France, liberated in our time from monarchical power despite the formidable efforts of all Europe, has fallen back under the rule of military power.”⁵⁶ Portales and Ovalle (two of the leaders of the

51 Jean Joseph Tortel, born in La Seyne (France) in 1772. Pilot of the Spanish frigate “Unión,” he arrived in Chile in 1802 and settled in Valparaíso in 1804. He distinguished himself as a privateer captain, a lieutenant of the new navy in 1813, and went on to become captain of the port of Valparaíso and the first chief of the Chilean navy in 1818. He did not resume service after 1830. Juan Horacio Balmelli Urrutia, *Juan José Tortel: Nuestro primer Capitán de Puerto*, accessed November 2023, <https://revistamarina.cl/revistas/1999/2/jhbalmelliu.pdf> but corrected here <http://www.laseyneen1900.fr/2020/08/27/jean-joseph-tortel-772-1842/#:~:text=%E2%80%94Jean%20Joseph%20Tortel%20%3A,%20s'installe%20au%20Chili> (accessed in February 2024).

52 Juan (Beauchef wrote incorrectly José) Francisco Labbé was the descendant of Alonzo Labbé and Bayard de Villefranche, who arrived in Chile in 1725. Like his brother, Manuel, he became an officer in the Chilean army and served alongside many Napoleonic officers. National Archives of Chile, Ministry of War, vol. 19, 19, and vol. 59.

53 Maldonado, *El ejército chileno*.

54 The entire collection of this newspaper is at the Biblioteca nacional de Chile, Sala de periódicos/Newspaper Room.

55 *El defensor de los militares denominados constitucionales*, Biblioteca nacional de Chile, Sala de periódicos/Newspaper Room, no. 2, 17 July 1830, 1.

56 *El defensor*, no. 2, 2.

conservative movement) then wrote to Viel: "... General Freire and the soldiers who follow him are the most dangerous enemies of the homeland... This is why they must be excluded from the national army to which they cannot belong without dishonouring it by their names."⁵⁷ Figueroa nevertheless gives this assessment on Viel: "In this turbulent period of our national history, Viel distinguished himself as much for adopting the liberal cause as for his loyalty to the constituted government."⁵⁸ Rondizzoni and Viel remained out of the army for nearly ten years before both returning later to become Chilean generals. It is worth pointing out that, as Luis Vitale writes: "National historiography, with its conservative bent, undertook to create an image whereby Lircay would remain in history as the triumph of order over chaos. It was no coincidence that Santiago woke up with the word Lircay painted on its walls on the day of the 1973 military coup."⁵⁹ Ibañez adds an important element in this context: "The condition of being a foreigner was what most aroused the victor's animosity, and this was what led to the catastrophic death of the valiant Tupper; Rondizzoni would have suffered the same fate under the same circumstances, had he not kept his cool and his presence of mind."⁶⁰ As a defender of the constitutional government, Tupper himself asserted that the sole duty of a military officer was to support the legal government '...and not to decide matters of law through the use of force.'⁶¹ At the same time, the author, who cited Tupper's words, also lamented that it was a bad habit that had grown common in South America.

57 Archivo nacional de Chile, Ministry of War, vol. 191, letter dated April 17, 1830.

58 Pedro Pablo Figueroa, *Diccionario biográfico de extranjeros [sic] en Chile* (Santiago: Imprenta Moderna, 1900): "Viel (Benjamin)," 233-234.

59 Vitale, *Intervenciones militares y poder fáctico*, 337.

60 Ibañez, *Hoja*, 21. He owed his survival to the fact that the soldier who was going to assassinate him recognized him and Rondizzoni was able to impose his authority over him on the battlefield.

61 Diego Barros Arana, *Historia general de Chile* (Santiago: Rafael Jover Editor, 1886-1902), vol. XV, 42; Vergara Quiroz, *Historia Social del Ejército*, 110.

Another French officer attracted attention during this conflict, although his actions did not take place in the military field: Pierre (Pedro) Chapuis,⁶² formerly lieutenant in Napoleon's Chasseurs à Cheval, who arrived in Chile in 1827. Shortly thereafter, he published various issues of the newspaper *El verdadero liberal* (The true liberal), a mouthpiece for liberal ideas and staunch supporter of Freire, Benavente, Pinto, and Blanco, the Chilean officers who were the main exponents of this ideology. Chapuis' stance during the conflict, alongside Tupper, among others, was uncompromising, leaving no room for negotiation with the conservative party. In 1828, he was the main actor in bringing French scientist Claude (Claudio) Gay to Chile to participate in the new educational project of the young Republic of Chile, spearheading liberal politics. Claude Gay began publishing in 1844 a twenty-nine-volume *Atlas de la historia física y política de Chile* (Atlas of the Physical and Political History of Chile)⁶³, a work that remains an authority on the subject to this day as it constitutes one of the best 'databases' on Chile in the first half of the nineteenth century. Needless to say, like the active military staff, Pierre Chapuis suffered the consequences of the defeat at Lircay and had to abandon his journalistic activities after 1830.⁶⁴

62 Pierre Chapuis, born in Paris in 1795. He joined the 20th Chasseurs à Cheval in 1812, served in Russia and France (1812-1814) and then during the Hundred Days as a sub-lieutenant in the cavalry. A liberal and Freemason, he then went to fight in Spain where he published a newspaper whose principles revealed him to be deeply hostile to Restoration government in France. He then moved to Brazil and Chile where he founded a school and another newspaper, *El verdadero liberal*, until his expulsion in 1831. He then served under Bolívar in Colombia but soon turned against him and returned to France. SHD, Terre, 2YE. Editors note: See however, for more recent work on Chapuis, Gérard Dufour, "Periódicos publicados en francés en España durante el Trienio Liberal" in *El Argonauta Español*, 18/2021, "El Trienio liberal en la prensa contemporánea (1820-1823). Continuación" <https://doi.org/10.4000/argonauta.5003>.

63 Claudio Gay, *Atlas de la historia física y política de Chile*, Paris, Maulde et Renau, Chile, el Museo de Historia Natural de Santiago, 1844-1871.

64 Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris, Chile, vol. II, collection of printed issues of the *El verdadero liberal* and vol. I, letter from Adel Lecathon

The French state also played a role in this episode through the French consul, Adel Lacathon de la Forest, who arrived in Chile in 1826 as inspector general of French trade in Chile and was promoted to consul general of France in 1827. From 1826, in line with his role, he established commercial relations with Freire's government, which turned into a political compromise with the liberals. He considered that he could thereby better ensure profits for French trade;⁶⁵ this, of course, earned him the hatred of the conservatives. On 14 December 1829, the "common people of Santiago with the help of an armed force"⁶⁶ destroyed the Consulate of France during a general rampage that swept through the centre of Santiago. It is hard not to view this demonstration as directly related to France's support for liberals. Anything that could be associated with France was considered inimical and the rampage should be interpreted as a settling of accounts and a very clear signal to consul Lacathon de la Forest.⁶⁷

Freemasons, Carbonari, and liberals

Political commitment was therefore a constant for most of these officers. Aside from the explanations already provided about the situation, it must be pointed out that thirty-one officers were part

de la Forest, General Inspectorate of French Trade in Chile, Minister's Office, no. 16, January 20 (1827): 294-295.

65 Biblioteca nacional de Chile, Newspaper Room, *El Araucano* 67, December 24 (1831).

66 Archivo nacional de Chile, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, US Consulate, 1829-1830, vol. 27.

67 On this subject, it is worth consulting the voluminous exchange of letters between Lecathon de la Forest and the various Chilean and French governments at the Archivo nacional de Chile, Ministry of the Interior, 1653-1889, vol. 103, various documents (1831-1837); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1810-1900), vol. 7, *oficios recibidos* (1821-1836); General Consulate of France, vol. 27 and 28, foreign consulates in Chile (1829-1831), France; and in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France, Paris, *Mémoires et Documents, fonds divers*, America, Chile (1810-1831).

of the Masonic movement, twenty-two were associated with Italian Carbonarism, and 130 were aligned with “liberal philosophy.” In other words, many of these officers began to act politically long before arriving in South America. It is therefore only natural that they should come to support South Americans belonging to the same movements or professing the same ideals. Some had an established responsibility in these movements, either in France – for instance, General Brayer was head of “Les Amis Incorruptibles” (The Incorruptible Friends), a Masonic lodge of the Grand Orient de France, from 1808 to 1813 –, or in Chile – for instance, Renard⁶⁸ and Zegers⁶⁹ were two of the founding members of the nation’s first Masonic lodge, “Filantropía chilena” (Chilean philanthropy), established in Santiago in 1827. While it cannot be asserted that this movement resulted in concerted political action in South America, its members acted in accordance with its main philosophical tenets, and this, among other things, gave rise to the creation of teaching centres and political periodicals.

Many Italians arrived in Argentina after participating in the various liberal revolutions that occurred in Europe (Belgium, Piedmont, Naples, Poland, Spain, Greece, as well as revolutionary plots in France from 1815 to 1831). Most of them were members of the

68 Charles Renard, born in Rouen in 1793. Cavalry second lieutenant during the First Empire’s last campaigns, he then went into exile in the US where he was hired by the Argentinian Thompson and fought mainly on the staff of the Army of the Andes and then in Chile from 1817. He was later excluded from it owing to problems with San Martín. Archivo General de la Nación (General National Archives), Argentina, Sección Gobierno Nacional (National Government Section), X4-2-4, 316-317.

69 Jean François/Juan Francisco Zegers Duras, French born in Morocco in 1780 or 81. After serving in the Spanish army from 1794, he entered French service as a captain and ADC in 1808 participating in the campaigns in the Iberian Peninsula until 1813 and in northern France in 1814 under brigadier general de Donop. During the Restoration, he was detailed to the Etat-Major de Paris, working as an archivist. Moving to London sometime in 1821, he was recruited by the Chilean government in 1822 to work in Foreign Affairs until 1830. The bulk of his work in Chile was artistic and philosophical. Silvia Fernández de Naveillán, *La familia Zegers en Chile* (Santiago: Editorial Universitaria, 1981).

Carbonari. Like the Freemasons, they applied their principles in this country.

All, whether Freemasons or Carbonari, adhered to a “liberal philosophy” and, while aware of its internal differences and contradictions, they acted in such a way as to bring about the much hoped-for change: the end of the monarchy and the establishment of the republic. What they could not achieve in Europe, they tried to build in South America.

The last episode of Chilean and Argentinean internal independence struggles, the Chilean Civil War of 1830-1831, marked the end of direct political interventions by Napoleonic officers in these two countries. However, it is worth mentioning the case of Brandsen⁷⁰ and Raulet,⁷¹ who were expelled to Argentina by Bolívar for supporting Riva Agüero in Peru in 1825 (a court-martial even prohibited Brandsen from entering the public service of that country). The affair confirms that Napoleonic officers rarely stayed away from the political life of the countries for whose independence they fought. What applied in Chile and Argentina also applied in Peru, in the countries embraced by Bolívar’s movement, in Mexico, and

70 Frédéric de Brandsen born in Paris in 1785. Second lieutenant in the Army of Italy in 1811, lieutenant and ADC to General Martel in 1813, he served in Saxony and northern Italy (1813-1814), becoming ADC to generals Fontanelli and Zucchi and then staff officer to Eugène de Beauharnais. Having rallied during the Hundred Days, he served as captain in the Army of the Jura (1815). He went into exile with Rivadavia’s help and arrived in Argentina in 1817. After moving to Chile, he distinguished himself there, then in Peru, and then again in Argentina. Patrick Puigmal and Armando Cartet Montory, *De la Alsacia al Bío Bío. El oficial napoleónico Frédéric de Brandsen en las campañas de la Independencia de Chile (1815-1819)* (Osorno: Editorial Pencopolitana, 2008).

71 Pierre Raulet, born in Thionville in 1792. Second lieutenant of the 21st Chasseurs à Cheval in 1809, he served in Spain where he was taken prisoner and did not return to France until 1814. He served during the Hundred Days with the Chasseurs à Cheval and fought at Waterloo (1815), then went to the US from where he participated in Colonel Latapie’s expedition aboard the *Paragon* to first go to Pernambuco in Brazil and then go and free Napoleon from Saint Helena in 1817. Returning to South America, Chile, in 1818, he then participated in the campaign for the liberation of Peru until 1824. SHD, Terre, 2YE, 209 Bis.

in the Federal Republic of Central America, as well as in Brazil, although the process here was different. It is therefore admissible, as a conclusion of this study, to affirm that the internal political struggles of independence had a great impact on the careers and, in a few cases, the very lives of these officers; and that, at the same time, these officers played a decisive role in the progress of these struggles. The deaths of both Brandsen and Cramer were due to their participation in two eminently political campaigns: the former, at the Battle of Ituzaingó in 1827, under the orders of General Alvear, who was back in Argentina after many years of exile; and the latter, at Chascomús in 1839, fighting with the “Libres du Sud” (Free of the South) against the centralizing domination of General Rosas in Argentina.

These interventions, intimately linked to the officers’ European past, not only provoked the effects already described on political life but also had an impact on the rest of the population. This is demonstrated by such testimonies as that of the German doctor Aquinas Ried, who arrived in Chile in 1844:

“It is a reaction common to many Germans, faced with “the persistent Napoleonic fervour” of the French colony, fuelled by the galaxy of retired officers who went on to serve emancipation and who obtained their rise in the army through the infighting that undermined the state.”⁷²

This assessment, which does not correspond to the reality described in this work (particularly the expression “their rise through the infighting”) must surely be attributed either to a kind of jealousy between two foreign communities seeking to make a place for themselves in Chilean society at the time, or to a different vision of the country’s future. Since Germany and France were competing for military influence in Chile throughout the nineteenth century, this possibility is definitely worth considering. In 1886, their rivalry culminated with the Chilean government’s decision to

72 Jean Pierre Blancpain, *Les Allemands au Chile*, Köln, Böhlau Verlag, 1974, 105.

modernize the army with the assistance of Prussian specialists—and consequently, to abandon the French influence that had marked the Chilean army’s development from the outset of the wars of independence. But that is another story.

To resume the debate launched by Annie Crépin, what lies at the heart of the matter is indeed the alternative between the militarization of society and the democratization of the army. This was the cornerstone not only of the struggles for independence, as was the case under the Revolution and the Empire, but also of the positions chosen by the Napoleonic officers. However, rather than saying “democratization of the army” – a somewhat illusory term and concept after four hundred years of colonialism, slavery, and absolutism – we prefer the expression “social dynamics due to the army,” because, despite all the comings and goings caused by political upheavals, all or almost all the Napoleonic officers reached a much higher social rank than they could have done in Europe. Their political commitments enabled them to ally themselves through marriage with powerful families and thus gain significant political influence over these emerging societies.

Far from being mere soldiers, the Napoleonic officers in Argentina and Chile showed exemplary political constancy and loyalty to the revolutionary principles that had rocked their youth; and, in many cases, they suffered the consequences of their commitment to the leaders of South American emancipation.