Thesis for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the University of Oxford

"LIBERAL-REPUBLICANISM AND POLITICS IN CHILE:
FROM BOURBON REFORMISM TO THE NATIONAL STATE"

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Oxford

Hilary 1992
ABSTRACT

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The subject of this thesis is the historical relation between tradition and modernity in Chile in its transition from the XVIIIth century to Independence and its immediate aftermath. In order to study this relation, the thesis begins by analysing the effects that Bourbon reformism — the first attempt to modernize the state institutionally — had in Chile. Special emphasis is placed on the attitude of the ruling elite vis-à-vis these reforms (Part I). Subsequently, the thesis centres its attention on the last thirty years of Spanish dominion and the repercussions brought about by the collapse of monarchy. Why a traditional society chose liberal-republicanism as a new legitimating order is the principal question analysed in Part II. The last section — Part III — is concerned with the immediate effects produced by this political option, in particular the emergence of a new consolidated government order and nationalist state during the 1820s. How liberal-republicanism reinforced a predisposition towards political change in addition to preparing the ground for further changes is also dealt with in this last part. Finally, the thesis contains an analysis of the main historiographical interpretations which have been put forward concerning Independence.

Overall, the dissertation attempts to demonstrate that Chilean Independence is part of a process of long duration of an emancipatory nature, starting in the XVIIIth century, and which entails a gradual change towards modernity. The thesis affirms that a conjunctural change such as Independence, involving basically a political-ideological transformation of the traditional legitimating order, was to be of crucial importance for the later evolution of the country towards a broader form of modernization, even if the latter was not always foreseen or necessarily wanted. The thesis, thus, challenges conventional conservative interpretations which view Independence as a merely epiphenomenal or frustrated revolution, while questioning also voluntarist explanations of a liberal sort which tend to exaggerate the omniscience of the process.
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For

INES LEETELIER SAAVEDRA

and

ALFREDO JOCelyn-HOLT PAUL

And to the Memory of

INES SAAVEDRA Balmaceda

and

JORGE CORREA MONTT
The subject of this dissertation is the relation between modernity and liberalism in the light of Chilean Independence. We have chosen it because for some time now—an increasingly adverse attitude towards what is involved in the phenomenon of modernity in Hispanic America and its leading protagonists has become prevalent amongst several authors.

Octavio Paz, for instance, when pronouncing on the XIXth century Latin American revolutions, simply decrees their supposed failure. According to Paz:

"The new countries... continued to be the old colonies: social conditions were not changed, reality was concealed with liberal and democratic rhetoric. Republican institutions, serving as façades, hid the same horrors and the same miseries. The groups which rose against Spanish power resorted to the revolutionary ideas of the period, but they could not nor would bring about the reform of society."

"Ideas played the role of masks; they thus turned into ideology, in other words, they became veils which intercept and distort reality. Ideology transforms ideas into masks: they hide the historical subject while, at the same time, they prevent him from seeing reality. They deceive the others and they deceive ourselves."

"Thus began the reign of the mask, the empire of deceit. Since then the corruption of language, the infection of semantics, became our endemic disease; deceit became constitutional, consubstantial."1

1 See O. PAZ, Tiempo Nublado (Barcelona 1983) p 168; and by the same author: Los Hijos del Limo (Barcelona 1987) pp 125-126.

The opposing classical XIXth century liberal position is expressed in M. L. AMUNATEGUI, Los Precursors de la Independencia de Chile (1870) I, pp v-vi. AMUNATEGUI writes: "The revolution of independence has brought about in Hispanic America the most radical of transformations. Half a century has been enough to substitute the old society, which seemed to repose on
To this implacable critique of the historical phenomenon of Independence must be added another recent current which questions any modernization in the American context, as has been understood from the XVIIIth century onwards. Pedro Morandé has been, in Chile, one of the authors most insistent on this point. He has argued that prior to Independence, Latin America became possessed by what he calls "criollismo", the pretension of the creoles to divest themselves of their mestizo origins, an artificial and "universalising" aim which made them overly rationalistic and functionalist, negators thus of their own history, supposedly imbued by an eminently syncretic, American, baroque, Christian and mestizo spirit.2

Lastly, Gabriel Salazar in his call to write a history "desde abajo y desde adentro" has postulated the imperative "necessity to climb down from the abstract vaults" which have presided our traditional historiography, and "submerge fully" into the "significant historicity" of the "people", in other words, the "alienated masses", "the part of the nation which possesses historical power".3 Salazar's proposition, in so far foundations made of granite, with a new version essentially different from the earlier one as to ideas, customs, enlightenment, industry, institutions. Present day Hispanic Americans would need to make efforts of imagination so as to guess what were their grandparents, perhaps also what were their fathers."


3 See G. SALAZAR, "Introducción" in Labradores, Peones y Proletarios (1985); the emphasis is ours.
as it privileges historical subjects different from the ones who led the phenomenon of Independence, discards all relevant discussion concerning a process which involved "other" historical actors: royal functionaries, creole bureaucrats, military officers and landowners, in sum: oligarchs.

It is striking how radical these three currents are in their critique of Hispanic American modernity, a radicalization not even found in past authors, more attuned to conservative stances, almost the only ones who have timidly attempted to question this landmark until now accepted by all. Also surprising is the fact that none of these new critics considers himself a traditionalist. Rather, this new criticism comes from authors linked to progressivist postures, but increasingly disenchanted with past orthodoxy, having embraced instead either a neo-conservatism (O. Paz), or a neo-Catholic "integrism" (P. Morandé), or a testimonial neo-romantic populism (G. Salazar).

That this critique unites authors of different tendencies should not prevent their association. We are dealing here with a revisionism of a populist and anti-liberal nature (liberal in a XIXth century continental sense). However, we know, thanks to Habermas, that alliances between neo-conservative post-modernists, anti-modernists and pre-modernists constitute a present-day tendency of cultural reflection.4

4 See J. HABERMAS, "La Modernidad, un Proyecto Incompleto" in H. FOSTER, J. HABERMAS, J. BRAUDILLARD et al, La Posmodernidad (Barcelona 1986) pp 32-36. Even though HABERMAS is referring to German neo-conservatives, we think that in our Hispanic American context this alliance is struck between
The aim of this thesis is to refute the three previous hypotheses. We think that Independence involved an effective, not merely cosmetic, change. The fact that it introduced a basically political or ideological change should not mean that it did not affect other broader dimensions, for instance the socio-economic dimension.

Secondly, it seems to us that the attempt to "modernize" America and Chile --from the XVIIIth century onwards-- has not been a denial of our own history. On the contrary, it has been a way of participating in the contemporary world and giving ourselves a modern history.

Lastly, we believe that the study of the period of Independence confirms the need to continue doing a history of the élite. We do not want to suggest with this that this type of history is the only one possible. On the contrary, a history centred on the élite should demonstrate --as we shall try to argue later on-- that there does not exist a total monopoly of historical power; no one fully possesses it.

In order to prove these counter-hypotheses we have attempted, in the first place, to situate Independence within a process of modernization of long duration which embraces it. This process, which continues until our own day, is characterised by its emancipatory nature; in the long run it has meant that society has ceased to be entirely traditional allowing considerable quotas of modernity to be accepted. We think that disenchanted "progressivists".
Independence is a conjunctural phenomenon within this macro-process which began with Bourbon reformism. To explain the effects of these reforms in Chile and how they were received by the local ruling elite constitutes, therefore, the main subject of the first part, "The Colonial Legacy".

The second part --"The Critical Conjuncture"-- deals with the period of Independence as such. This conjuncture started with the crisis which affected the imperial administrative system during the last thirty years of Spanish dominion, heightened by the surprising collapse of monarchy. In this context the liberal-republican regime would emerge as a legitimating option of the new de facto order which ensued. To explain why republicanism was chosen and what implications would result from this option is the main topic of this section.

Finally, we analyse, in the third part --"The Modern Projection"--, the medium and long-range effects of Chilean Independence, especially how a pre-eminently political-ideological option could reaffirm a prior tendency towards change propelling Chile towards a broader social modernization. The role subsequently assumed by historiographical reflection concerning Independence, in either one of its two principal versions --the liberal and conservative historical schools-- is also dealt with in order to explain to what degree historiography has impressed a mythical character to the phenomenon in question, transforming it into a key referential landmark of the entire national history.
In summary, we are interested in analysing why beginning in the XVIIIth century a traditional élite such as Chile's began to accept important quotas of modernity; how this favourable attitude towards change was intensified on account of the mutation of the political order of legitimacy produced by Independence; and finally what future implications this acceptance and mutation involved.

Deep down, this thesis pretends to define the relation which has existed historically in Chile between tradition and modernity. This relation has been extremely complex. It has involved, on the one hand, a predisposition and tolerance towards change, particularly of a political character, on the part of those whom one would at first not expect this attitude; in other words, it has meant an acute sensitivity on the part of the traditional ruling élite to recognise the flexibility of political discourse, permitting its use in terms of class interests. Nonetheless, political discourse has enjoyed a certain autonomy with respect to this same élite; the latter has pretended, and to a degree achieved, only a partial use of this discourse, allowing for control and uncontrol, gradual and revolutionary change, continuity and radicalization to go hand in hand.

Three assumptions have helped to outline this overall view. In the first place, we agree with those who emphasise the implicit ambiguity of XIXth century liberalism, its romantic and not very precise appearance, capable of sheltering dangerous
subversive potentials; "too much wolf underneath too little sheepskin" in the words of Malcolm Deas.5 In any case, we cannot fail to recognise what Furet thinks to be an inescapable maxim—"bourgeois as well as Marxist"—that men make history but do not necessarily know the history they are making.6 Finally, we should not forget that historical rhythms do not always agree. It has been shown—for the French provinces—how the impact of democracy could be greater and previous to the impact of modernity during the XIXth century; paraphrasing Agulhon, it is plausible also that liberalism, in certain cases and circumstances, might precede modernity. In sum, it is possible—_theoretically speaking—to conceive a revolutionary, although liberal, political potential which might escape the foresight of historical actors and emerge prior to full modernity. We will try to demonstrate how Independence made possible in Chile this phenomenon.

One last point: this work has been framed within an eminently interpretative and revisionist perspective. An exhaustive amount of archival research has already been done concerning this period. We tend to think, though, that with the exception of one or two very important overall interpretations—


-the XIXth century liberal and XXth century conservative theses--very little has been done lately to re-think the whole process. In doing this, as well as in manifesting ourselves critical at times with respect to what has already been written, we hope to have reaffirmed a long historiographical Chilean tradition, plural and open, which is known to have done precisely the same in the past.

*   *   *

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The elaboration and discussion of a number of the aspects treated in this text were also possible thanks to the lecture work I have been doing in the past few years in the Universidad de Santiago de Chile, Universidad de Talca, and Universidad Diego Portales. The interchange with students allowed me to elaborate and refine several hypotheses developed here.

I am especially grateful to Malcolm Deas of St.
Antony's College, the supervisor of this dissertation. I have learned much, although not as much as I should have perhaps, from his advice, comparative perspective and acute critical insight. Furthermore, his editorial assistance has been of incalculable value to me. I also thank Elvira Ryan of St. Antony's.

Any one who deals with the subjects of Chilean history treated here, particularly from an interpretative angle, possesses at this stage an extraordinary historiographical corpus. The works of the classics --especially Amunátegui, Barros Arana, Vicuña Mackenna and Edwards-- reinforced by the notable research done by Mario Gongora, Sergio Villalobos and Simon Collier permit one to advance in a discussion which they themselves have furthered. With respect to this last author, although I depart from some points of Ideas and Politics of Chilean Independence, 1808-1833 (Cambridge 1967), my intention has been to expand and complement whenever possible several aspects covered by this text. It goes without saying that Simon Collier's book continues to be exceptional twenty-three years after its first publication.

Finally, I would like to thank the help given to me by Pablo Ruiz-Tagle Vial, Julio Pinto Vallejos, Bárbara De Vos Eyzaguirre, Rafael Sagredo Baeza, Enrique Cantolla Bernal, Waldo Carrasco Segura, and Sofia Correa Sutil. They made numerable suggestions which have improved this thesis. Needless to say, the deficiencies are entirely mine.

With respect to Sofia, my debt is even greater. I am
afraid she has had to share the writing of this dissertation
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El Arrayán (Santiago de Chile), March 1992
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PART I

THE COLONIAL LEGACY

The projection of the Spanish colonial past into the political, social and cultural order of XIXth century republican Spanish America is a widely debated problem. This is not too surprising. A similar discussion has taken place in European historiography ever since de Tocqueville's insight that post-revolutionary France capitalised on the achievements of the Ancien Régime.1 In both instances what is at stake is the nature of historical change in the modern world, a subject in itself complex.

As far as Spanish America is concerned, the continuity of the past appears to undermine the strongly rooted perception of Independence as a crucial turning-point. It casts serious doubts on whether modernization was able to make headway after the collapse of Spanish domination. It suggests new forms of periodization,2 and invites a serious evaluation of the success of liberal and republican ideas in a Spanish American context.

The problem seems to arise from a number of associations which bear considerable historical truth but often


2 An attempt to create a new type of periodization which revalues the Spanish past can be found in M. GONGORA, Studies in the Colonial History of Spanish America, (Cambridge 1975a).
are accepted at face value. For instance, that Independence was a turning-point, may well be true but this does not preclude it from having benefited from earlier processes. That modernization could not be fully rooted in Spanish America may also be difficult to disprove, but it does not necessarily imply that the process of modernization was anathema to Spanish culture. Finally, that liberal-republicanism could become a formidable force, not just cosmetic veneer, in Spanish America during the XIXth century, does not foretell all the possibility that it could also co-exist with Spanish tradition. Consequently, the problem between continuity and change in Spanish America is not that the two proved to be mutually exclusive, but that these two factors, potentially compatible, did not always coincide.

The Chilean case is especially illuminating because its comparative success during the last century may well rest on this capacity to comprise both aspects. Chile's transition from colony to independent republic was one of the smoothest in the continent. The wars of Independence created fewer of the problems that were to abound elsewhere. Caudillismo, regionalism and political anarchy lasted a relatively short time. Moreover, 

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social unrest was negligible, and the country's national autonomy went unthreatened throughout the century. As early as the 1840s there was considerable consensus behind existing authority. The main institutions that governed the country during the XIXth century were already in working order. The same social circle which began mustering power in the second half of the XVIIIth century was very much at the helm, and economic prospects had never been better.

Whatever might be the definitive explanation behind this record, the fact that a happy equilibrium was reached between elements of continuity and elements of change must be taken into account. Certain fundamental ways of perceiving the state, which were already consolidated by the end of the XVIIIth century, continued well into the republican period. The creole élite, which had manned the colonial bureaucracy and had achieved unquestioned social and economic predominance in the XVIIIth century, assumed total power in 1810. Furthermore, the tendency shown by this élite to open-up to non-Spanish influences during the second half of the XVIIIth century persisted after Independence.

However much continuity and overlapping there was between the old and the new order, it is clear that change was welcomed and that it took place. Republicanism replaced monarchical rule; nationalism destroyed a whole network of overseas political dependence; liberal principles which may have favoured the same privileged few at first, would eventually
permit higher levels of pluralism and came to benefit growing numbers of citizens.

Given this degree of continuity in Chile, a continuity which allowed change, we shall deal in this first part with what we think are the three most crucial aspects of XVIIIth century Chile which were carried over to the republican period, namely a conception of the state, a consolidated élite and an enlightened cultural world-view.
CHAPTER I
PRE-BOURBON CHILE

The enlightened reformist background of Chilean Independence cannot be explained without a previous, brief description of the colony before the Bourbon impact. The transformations which occurred during the XVIIIth century were a reaction against and a consolidation of phenomena begun beforehand.

In the social realm, Chile before the XVIIIth century stands out as a territory of war. Indian resistance encumbered the process of conquest and seriously hampered subsequent attempts at settlement. The war imprinted a strong military character on society, and prevented a steady economic growth; consequently, it made of Chile a very costly colony for the Crown.

Towards the middle of the XVIIIth century, though, a number of measures and circumstances diminished the frequency and effects of war, allowing an easier agricultural expansion in the central region of the country. The military profile began to fade and gradually Chilean society underwent a process of ruralization. This process was due to economic changes which occurred towards the end of the XVIIth and beginning of the XVIIIth centuries. As a result of these transformations, a new and powerful social group with commercial and landowning interests appeared, while society became increasingly stratified
along \textit{st\ddot{a}nde}-like divisions.

In the political sphere, by the XVIIIth century, the main features of the Spanish American colonial state were already established. Nonetheless, a certain incapacity on the part of the Crown to consolidate her hold in some of her overseas territories—especially the more remote and unattended dominions—became more and more evident; such was the case with Chile. Consequently, the power vacuum which followed, benefited the ascendant local groups which were becoming stronger. The appearance of a rural-seigneurial order allowed in turn a new sphere of power to emerge, alternative to that of the state. Hence, during the XVIIIth century, the Crown would attempt to reverse this process.

\textbf{A Difficult Beginning}

The emergence of a local \textit{élite} in Chile with sufficient prestige and power has to be seen in the light of a number of profound changes which began to occur in the economy and society towards the second half of the XVIIth century. Before this period a number of factors made it extremely difficult for society to achieve a level of organisation and social stratification which in turn would call for a ruling group to emerge with a distinct profile. To a large degree, the
inconclusive character of conquest in Chilean territory postponed the transition of society from an embryonic to a more complex socially articulated stage.

Even though at first glance the process of exploration and conquest of the territory took a relatively short time—from 1536 to 1561—full settlement and pacification of the country could not be assured in this brief period. Periodic confrontations with Indians proved to be a formidable stumbling block which Spaniards had to contend with in Chile. Only towards the middle of the XVIIth century would the problem be somewhat alleviated.1

This initial situation was to imply an enormous human and financial cost. Moreover, it would not allow a steady economic growth to take place. War meant that a minimum degree of stability and confidence could not yet be attained and guaranteed. Military considerations were first priority. Large-scale agriculture could not evolve easily. And, on the whole, war was to take away resources from productive activities.2

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1 See S. VILLALOBOS, F. SILVA, O. SILVA and P. ESTELLE, Historia de Chile (1974) I, p 102; M. GONGORA, 'Urban Social Stratification in Colonial Chile', MAHR, 55, 3, August 1975b, p 429. Descriptions of the hostilities, especially those of 1598 and 1655, can be found in J. EYZAGUIRRE, Historia de Chile (1965), and V. CARVALLO y GÖYENECHE, Descripción Histórico-Geográfica del Reino de Chile (chronicle written towards the end of the XVIIIth century) edited in CHCH VIII, IX and X (1875-1876). For a recent analysis of this subject, see S. VILLALOBOS R. and J. PINTO R. editors, Araucanía: Temas de Historia Fronteriza (Temuco 1985).

2 Social and economic conditions were very precarious. Urban settlements were extremely vulnerable. Cities had to be fortified and self-sufficient. According to G. GUARDA,
If we were to add to this the continuous decrease of the indigenous labour force (3) and the exhaustion of the more accessible mines, it should be obvious that conditions needed for producing and accumulating wealth were far from auspicious towards the end of the XVIth century; economic indicators reveal that Chile, at the beginning of the XVIIth century, was approaching a critical situation.4

While the acute Indian problem persisted and the economy showed serious difficulties, the colony was to lack a coherent and stable system of social differentiation. In this early period there were no social distinctions other than the ones that followed racial lines or military rank. Society was

"Influencia Militar en las Ciudades del Reino de Chile" in El Proceso de Urbanización en América desde sus Orígenes hasta Nuestros Días, ed.by J. E. HARDY and R. P. SCHAEDEL (Buenos Aires 1969), half of the cities founded during the XVIth and XVIIth centuries were fortified. Cf. VILLALOBOS et al. (1974), II, p 174. These settlements could hardly expand outwards to surrounding areas, thus impeding the development of a large scale agriculture. The war effort demanded a very high expenditure. From 1603 to 1670 the Crown treasury spent 37 million pesos in campaigns in the Bio-Bio region. Moreover, approximately 42,000 Spaniards participated in these tasks. See D. AMUNATEGUI SOLAR, Historia Social de Chile (1932) p 94. Until the creation of a permanent army in 1601, citizens and ordinary settlers were under the obligation to provide military assistance of all sorts, which in turn meant that they periodically had to abandon productive activities and suffer the subsequent losses which this implied.

3 According to R. MELLAFFE, there was an abrupt population decline, amongst peaceful Indians, from 420,000 to 230,000 between 1590 and 1600; La Introducción de la Esclavitud Negra en Chile (1959), p 226.

divided into two major blocs, the Spanish and the natives. In turn, the Spaniards would be distinguished amongst themselves according to degrees of authority and merit, criteria more personal than social. Consequently, in this first period mobility was very fluid up and down the social ladder.

Another obstacle, common to the rest of the Empire, which blocked the emergence of an upper social stratum was the fear on the part of the Crown of a parallel local power of a feudal kind. Numerous measures reveal a strong bias against the establishment of an aristocracy in Spanish America. The policy which inspired the granting of encomiendas is a good example. This policy was further reinforced by the scant


8 The fact that they were not perpetual, limited to two lives; that encomienda Indians were to be considered freemen and subjects of the Crown, not vassals of the encomendero, ruled by a legislation which was meant to protect them from the white man; the distinction between encomienda and merced de tierra; and the urban, not rural, requisites stipulated ---encomenderos had to be citizens---; all of these aspects were intended to guard against any feudal deviation which might spring up. Cf M. GONGORA, Encomenderos y Estancieros (1971), pp 9, 42, 71, 117ff; VITALE (1969), II, p 24.
concession of titles of nobility and the repeatedly negative stance on the part of the Crown to recognise to Castillian nobility in the Indies the same privileges which were accorded to the peninsular nobility.9

On the whole, it was the concessionary character with which the Crown approached rewards that was the initial means used to limit social prestige. Whoever wanted to stand out socially or gain a significant patrimony necessarily depended on recognition by the monarch; the Crown was entirely free to grant, confirm or annul any previous concessions as was deemed convenient.

Notwithstanding the relative ease with which the Crown could assign rewards, it is obvious that grants were a result of the nature of the enterprise of conquest. Lacking enough resources to take on the conquest by itself, the Crown had to resort to private entities which had to be compensated afterwards.10 Nevertheless, as time went on, the Crown was able to make its presence felt more directly and thus required fewer and fewer intermediaries who were not of its own full confidence. Royal functionaries were named and a number of controlling institutions were founded, limiting even further social prestige in colonial Spanish America.

In effect, the creation of a local imperial bureaucracy


10 On the "private" character of the American Conquest, see A. JARA, Guerra y Sociedad en Chile (1981) pp 70-128.
an instrument at first absent—became a highly efficient control comparable to the initial contractual policy. The naming of salaried officers, and the introduction of royal audiencias—on a permanent basis in Chile only after 1609—meant the definitive removal of the original nucleus of conquerors and dealt a strong blow against the Cabildo, bastion of local power. The establishment of a local bureaucracy also helped to shape the social order. Obviously, the Spanish Crown had no intentions of accepting social mobility as a general and permanent rule. The Crown could tolerate a fluid and levelling social environment circumstantially, because it was to its advantage to do so, but it was not predisposed to create a permanent egalitarian society. With the advent of a more institutionalised state apparatus, the Crown was able to assert criteria dealing with social differentiation while securing the loyalty of the highest echelons of society.

This last aspect is extremely important because it shows how far the state in Spanish America and Chile emerged as a partial response to guard against and limit the power of the governed. The state made its appearance in order to restrict the growing influence exercised by Spanish subjects overseas. This in turn conditioned subsequent perceptions of the state and the evolution of local authority. The eventual structuring of society and the appearance of a local élite, more and more creole

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in its make-up, was to be achieved from angles marginal to the state, from civil society, in an atmosphere though characterised by a continuous struggle aimed at co-opting the state, the main source of legitimacy.

The Advent of a Local Elite

During the course of the XVIIth century the conditions which had prevented the ordering of society and made it difficult for a local group to achieve a clear definition with sufficient capacity to erect itself as a parallel power to the Crown, slowly changed. Profound economic transformations which began to take place during the XVIIth century allowed a commercial-landowning group to emerge which started competing and sharing with royal officials the government of the colony.

Although the Indian problem did not totally disappear, its effects tended to diminish during the XVIIth century. The establishment of a permanent army in 1601, the implementation of a policy calling for periodic negotiations with caciques, the mutual dependence and understanding which sprang up between Spaniards and Indians in frontier zones, and the end of Indian slavery in 1683, diminished the frequency of hostilities and
Towards the end of the century the Indian problem –apart from exceptional situations-- was localised in the frontier region of the south, becoming thus at most a relatively worrisome matter. In fact, once the Bio-Bio became a barrier of restraint –thanks to a policy which tended to diminish expansionist pretensions and strengthened commercial links-- it became possible to delimit the geographical milieu where the subsequent economic and social development of the new colony was to take place, basically the Central Valley, a zone that was to see the growth of a substantial rural economy. The spatial contours of the country which were to subsist far beyond 1810 were thus defined at this time.

Ultimately, what occurred during the XVIIth century was a general reorientation of society. The initial urban-military axis was replaced by a new centre of gravity predominantly rural. It is noteworthy that throughout the century not a single important city was founded, whereas during the XVIth century 16 urban centers had been created.

12 Militias were introduced in Chile in 1608. This same year, Indians began to be enslaved in order to secure labour for the central region. The policy of holding periodic parlamentos with Indian chiefs commenced in 1641. See GONGORA (1975b) p 428; VILLALOBOS et al (1983), II p 148; EYZAGUIRRE (1964) p 160; VILLALOBOS and PINTO (1985).

13 See VILLALOBOS and PINTO (1985) p 11.

14 AMUNATEGUI SOLAR (1932) p 85; GONGORA (1975a) pp 149 ff; GONGORA (1975b) p 430. See also, R. MELLAŒF, "Latifundio y Poder Rural en Chile de los Siglos XVII y XVIII" in Cuadernos de Historia, 1, December 1981.
The process of ruralization of society was the outcome of the economic turn-about which took place at the beginning of the century. The exhaustion of the gold and silver deposits, and the decrease of the Indian labour force, to which we have alluded already, required a drastic change in productive activity.

Agriculture, until then merely subsistence farming, confined to the outskirts of cities and villages, underwent a large scale expansion. The modest chacaras gave way to estancias and haciendas in order to accommodate the increasing livestock and cereal production. Land values rose, and great landed estates began to appear. Towards the middle of the XVIIth century, all the land between Santiago and La Serena suitable for agricultural exploitation had already been divided and apportioned.15

Additionally, these new economic structures required new forms of recruitment and organisation of the labour force.16 The encomienda Indians abandoned their pueblos, settled in the properties of their encomenderos and offered their services in other estates. Another source of labour which appeared at this time was peonage, wage-workers who contracted their work in seasonal activities. Landowners would also have recourse to españoles pobres, in reality a predominantly mestizo social


16 On this subject, see GONGORA (1971), (1974), (1975a); BAUER (1975); and G. SALAZAR, Labradores, Peones y Proletarios (1985).
stratum made up of former soldiers and officers returning from the Arauco War, who would settle on borrowed or rented land, in exchange for which they would work on the haciendas. Out of this later contractual link would emerge the inquilinaje which would be fully consolidated as a social institution during the XVIIth century.

Once the two main attributes of the hacienda were achieved —extensive land holding and high availability of working hands— these estates were able to undertake more ambitious productive tasks. The livestock and cereal orientated hacienda of the XVIth century responded with great success to the external demand of Perú and Potosí.17 However, this wholesale commercial character of the haciendas was not all. They assumed distributive retail functions (pulperías) and became local manufacturing centres (obrajes) which satisfied basic and immediate needs. In the course of the XVIIth century the economic and social profile of the hacienda as a unit of production and settlement was fully achieved, and it performed functions which until then were only to be found in cities and villages.

Beginning in the XVIIth century, the Chilean hacienda became an autonomous and self-sufficient microcosm. Landowners presided over a hierarchical and seigneurial order founded on strong personal and clientelistic bonds. Moreover, they took

charge of large populations over a considerable rural zone, relatively isolated from nearby cities and villages. Needless to say, these landowners enjoyed a large quota of de facto jurisdictional authority, while serving at the same time as the intermediaries between the rural and urban official worlds. If we also bear in mind the economic projection of the haciendas we can ascertain more or less the depth and reach of this socio-economic enterprise.

The social consequences derived from these phenomena are varied. To begin with, it is evident that society was achieving a greater structural order. For instance, the advent of the hacienda brought about a parallel and complex system of relationships which would help define the social location corresponding to its workers, both in and out of the rural estate. Different types of labour functions would in turn serve to specify diverse roles, conducts and degrees of dependence not only between the patrón and his employees, but also amongst the latter. If we are to add to this the numerous racial

18 BAUER (1975) pp 11-12; GONGORA (1971) pp 123-124. According to GONGORA (1975a) p 166, the ruralization of society meant the deterioration of the entire jurisdictional, administrative and ecclesiastical order established in the first period. See also M. GONGORA, "Vagabundaje y Sociedad Frongera en Chile (Siglos XVII a XIX)" in Cuadernos del Centro de Estudios Socio-Económicos, No. 2, Facultad de Ciencias Económicas de la Universidad de Chile, (1966).

19 The rich terminology which refers to different kinds of work and which appears during this century (mayordomos, potreros, vaqueros, arrieros, capataces, arrendatarios, inquilinos, peones, gañanes, jornaleros, ovejeros, cabreros, molineros, peones obligados, inquilinos de a caballo, inquilinos de a pie, forasteros, allegados, etc.) reveals a complex
distinctions resulting from mestizaje we can appreciate how a whole system of social categories very slowly started to emerge, reflecting an increasingly structured society.

This greater social structuring is a consequence of the fact that we are dealing with a society progressively settled, more and more stable and diversified. Nonetheless, the advent of the hacienda was not the only factor which helped to bring about this greater social complexity. The growing commercial traffic with Perú allowed the emergence of merchants who started to accumulate wealth and prestige. The increasing incidence of mestizaje and the appearance of numerous minor tasks servicing rural and urban areas allowed a slowly emerging middle sector of society, extremely difficult to define.20 Lastly, the increasing professionalization of the war permitted a clearer distinction between military and civic responsibilities.

What was entirely novel during the XVIth century was the emergence of a new leading social stratum which would preside over a society more and more stratified and whose membership would depend on new forms of definition. Once the war and mining became less prominent, social status ceased to be defined by military rank or possession of encomiendas. This last institution, throughout the century and all over Spanish adscriptive order not only of functions but also of hierarchies.

America, started to lose the importance it had enjoyed so far.21

Towards the middle of the XVIIth century it is possible to detect a ruling group of mixed origins. Research done by Mario Góngora has demonstrated that a large proportion (65%) of the élite of the time corresponds to "hombres nuevos" arising from families newly arrived during the XVIIth century or who have risen socially during this same century by way of encomienda grants. A lower but still significant percentage (36%) descends from either older encomenderos of the XVIIth century or royal officials. Both sectors enjoyed an equally prominent social status. And in both we can find the character of encomenderos, large landowners, owners of chacras, vineyards and estancias. They all possess a house in the city, trade in the products of their estates and entertain local political aspirations.22

Summing up, we can say that the possession of an encomienda during the XVIIth century by itself did not guarantee any one member of this high stratum the social power already acquired. Rather, it was a combination of factors, which henceforth conferred rank and social prestige. Social seniority or lineage continued to be relevant factors; however, they became less and less decisive. During this century social rank depended on a number of diverse means or mechanisms of


22 See GONGORA (1971) and (1975b).
ascendency, the most important ones being marriage links and
kinship connections with royal officials, and, most essentially,
accumulation of wealth in commercial and agricultural ventures.
Two earlier aspects, rank defined on the basis of encomienda and
the relative fluidity and social openness of a frontier and
military society, both tended to disappear.23 There was still a
great deal of social mobility. However, we are in the presence
of a more ordered system, far less arbitrary, less dependent on
imperial administrative decision making. Social rank depended
more and more on social and economic factors which escaped the
control of the Crown.

Notwithstanding this relative autonomy vis-à-vis the
Crown, the highest echelon of society saw in the political
sphere an efficient means of legitimising its social power.
Political aspects no longer gave birth to high status, but they
helped to ratify power previously acquired.

The penchant for public municipal posts was a
characteristic of this high social stratum during the XVIIth
century. The growing struggle for these positions was further
stimulated by the Crown’s need to auction off some of these
public appointments to raise revenue.24 The creole élite

23 GONGORA (1971) pp 103, 126; DE RAMON (1965); GONGORA

24 GONGORA (1975b), p 439; GONGORA (1971) pp 77ff;
VICENS VIVES (1982), III, pp 487-488; ALEMPARTE (1966), pp 53,
58ff.
participated enthusiastically in these public sales.25 Given these conditions it is appropriate to speak of a *cursus honorum*, and of a tendency to monopolise in cliques and family groups such appointments.26

The growing presence of creoles in political and honorary posts increased further the prestige acquired in the commercial sphere. The posts fell, moreover, into the hands of powerful landowners and *estancieros*, many of whom in addition to enjoying a wide margin of *de facto* authority within their estates were officially in charge of rural order. They were gaining thus substantial power. This is further demonstrated by their increased eagerness to make their power more visible. Litigation and conflicts over protocol, increasingly exhorbitant expenditure in conspicuous consumption, and towards the end of the century the establishment of entails, all of these reveal a more assertive and successful aristocratic zeal.27 The highest social echelon, once it had consolidated its seigneurial and commercial role, began to aspire to nobility.

25 N. MEZA in his book, *La Conciencia Política Chilena Durante la Monarquía* (1958) claims the opposite, that creoles were reticent about buying public posts. The author defines the elite in excessively restrictive terms. He does not take into consideration the new groups which are being incorporated to the ruling nucleus, basically merchants.

26 GONGORA (1971), pp 72, 94-98, 100; GONGORA (1975b), pp 432-433, 441.

All in all, the XVIIth century was an extraordinarily complex and important period for the subsequent evolution of the colony. During this time the process of expansion and conquest came to an end, and a strong change took place in the orientation of the economy from its earlier predominantly mining character to a definitely agricultural inclination. Both phenomena permitted a more stable rural settlement, and society assumed a more stratified outlook. As a result of this a higher social echelon appeared which depended less and less on the Crown for its power and configuration. Moreover, this higher social echelon lost its military profile; economic aspects, proto-capitalist and seigneurial, would start to define it from now on. For these same reasons, its power began to be derived from circumstances and conditions alien to the official order. Nevertheless, this same group became conscious that this order constituted an indispensable source of social recognition. Ultimately, the XVIIth century saw the emergence of the ambiguous relationship which the élite would have vis-à-vis the state during the XVIIIth century. On the one hand, the élite came to perceive that marginally to the state there existed a wide spectrum of maneuver; at the same time it became evident that only by way of co-optation of state power would it be possible to acquire legitimacy as a ruling group.
CHAPTER II

XVIIIth CENTURY REFORMISM

The evolution which had begun to occur in America during the XVIIth century was subject to a drastic critical analysis by the Bourbon dynasty once it took possession of the throne at the beginning of the XVIIIth century. The Bourbon state was alarmed by the progressive loss of power of the Crown in her overseas territories, by the dangerous military and economic advances made by foreign powers in America, and by the strengthening of a local parallel sphere of influence, alternative to that of the state. A global programme of reforms, whose aim was to reverse these phenomena in favour of the Crown, was put into effect. Throughout the XVIIIth century, the Spanish Crown implemented a series of administrative, economic and military measures, all of which --in the end-- increased state authority.

Chile was not alien to this reformist process. The colony experienced the same sort of measures executed elsewhere in America, all of which were to be especially favourable to this territory, until then remote and marginal. Chile during the XVIIIth century increased her commercial activity, achieved a greater autonomy from Perú, consolidated herself territorially and in terms of administration, and resolved her prolonged military problem.

These benefits, though, were to mean parallel costs,
amongst which stands out an increase of state administrative power with growing fiscal attributions, aimed at controlling the emerging power of the local élite. As is to be expected, these objectives motivated opposing reactions, even though a frontal clash between the élite and the state did not take place. The moderation which was employed in Chile in the implementation of these reforms and the flexible and accommodating attitude displayed by the ruling group helped avoid a more serious confrontation.

The Bourbon Reforms

While it is true that the fundamental aspects of the Spanish colonial state had already been devised and put into effect in the period between 1570 and 1700, two specific aspects, the institutional nature of the state and its expansive character, had yet to be fully experienced and appreciated by Spanish Americans. They would confront them during the XVIIIth century.

By 1700 the essential attributes of the colonial state had been successfully imprinted: a pyramidal structure with a monarch at the top, an imperial framework, the dynastic succession, a patrimonial claim to overseas territories, patronage rights over the Church, a distinction between
peninsular and local authorities, their organisation in collegiate bodies, a jurisdictional division between legislative and administrative functions, and the status of appendages assigned to the Indies. These foundational ideas would remain unchallenged for almost three hundred years until Independence when, with one or two exceptions, they were simply razed from the American subcontinent. Understandably enough, we nowadays date the origins of the modern Latin American states from this radical cleaning of the slate; nationalist and liberal conceptions still command unwavering historical loyalties. However, it is becoming more and more evident that previous to this remarkable revolution, the Spanish American dominions experienced an equally profound political transformation during the XVIIIth century.

That the colonies were to benefit from the wide range of reforms was an unintended consequence. Rather, they were to be carried out at the expense of the colonies. Reformist ministerial circles of the Spanish Crown felt that Spain had fallen into decadence during the XVIIth century. The War of Succession had further aggravated this, and a final humiliating price had been paid at Utrecht in 1713. Since then, Spain could only count herself amongst the secondary powers of Europe, and commercial competition from the British, French and Portuguese posed an unacceptable risk to colonial hegemony overseas. Hence, Spain --the thinking went-- should awaken from her slumber, and try to recover precious lost ground, by concentrating simultaneously on her weakest point and strongest asset: the
enormous resources of Spanish America without which no resurgence was possible and whose impressive potential appeared increasingly attractive to predatory foreign appetites.  

Consequently, the metropolitan rationale behind the sweeping reforms and restructurings was entirely self-serving. They were designed to intensify Spanish control. Several authors have even suggested that the intention was an out-and-out "reconquest" of America. Wealth had to be more effectively tapped. External threats had to be met, and the progressively affluent local interest groups, politically loyal but commercially promiscuous, brought under closer control. It was felt that by centralising more, building up Spain's military presence and efficiently managing tax collection, the tide of decadence could be reversed.

The administrative reforms pursued two fundamental objectives: to repartition territorially an ever more unwieldy empire and to centralise more firmly its administration. These objectives motivated the creation of two new viceroyalties, New Granada (1717, 1740) and La Plata (1776), both of which were


3 T. HALPERIN DONGHI, Reforma y Disolución de los Imperios Ibéricos 1750-1850 (Madrid 1985), pp 18, 21, 52.
meant to curtail real and potential military and commercial advances made by foreign powers in until then relatively peripheral territories. The introduction of intendants and sub-delegates was inspired by this same end. The intendant system also helped to unite in one hand military, financial, Church and judicial responsibilities, powers which had previously been assigned to a plethora of authorities, enjoying at times high degrees of autonomy. The fact that intendants were accountable directly to the Crown further accentuated this centralisation.

The other mechanism of centralisation which was employed was the vast imperial bureaucracy. A profound overhaul of the existing metropolitan institutions in charge of the Indies took place throughout the century. Philip V began it by creating the Secretaría de Marina e Indias (1714), a ministry which assumed almost all the responsibilities previously assigned to the Consejo de Indias and the Casa de Contratación. In 1717 the Casa de Contratación was transferred to Cádiz, suffering further curtailments. In these two cases, the feeling was that as institutions they had come to represent too much the vested interests of powerful creole merchants. A second ministry was created in 1787 to oversee judicial and patronage jurisdiction. Finally, three years later, American affairs were fully incorporated in the metropolitan bureaucracy, when the two

ministries in charge of the Indies were abolished and their functions redistributed amongst the Secretariats of Foreign Affairs, War, Marine, Justice and Finance, now in charge of Iberian as well as American jurisdiction. Hence, Spanish America ceased to be a colonial dominion with autonomous administration, which had been the hallmark of the Hapsburg state, and became a mere provincial extension of Spain.5

The consolidation of an imperial bureaucracy intent on concentrating power did not limit itself to the Peninsula. Throughout the XVIIth century, on the other side of the Atlantic we encounter a growing executive machinery. The number of Audiencias increased; commercial tribunals or Consulados were established all over the continent; treasuries, mints and customs offices cropped up even in the remotest parts; and universities were founded in the principal cities. But more important was the appearance of an entirely new breed of imperial administrator. The local bureaucracy began to be administered by salaried civil servants, preferably peninsular in origin, thus avoiding the kind of creole penetration which took place during the XVIth century through the massive sale of public offices.6


Military reform accentuated some of these same aspects. After the Seven Years War (1756-1763), which marks the beginnings of a new military policy subsequently reinforced during the 1780s with the establishment of the intendants, a number of improvements began to be made. Regular inspections were stepped up, local militias were reorganised, enrolment was increased, certain key strategic garrison points in America were strengthened, and regiments from overseas were periodically sent to trouble-spots to face not just external but also internal threats to peace.7

The intention behind these reforms was to professionalise military affairs. Regular barracks service replaced voluntary military duty and random recruitment. Increasingly, civilians had fewer military obligations, while the military became more functional and differentiated: cities lost their garrison-like appearance, the citizenry became less a people-in-arms, and the military contingent was set apart from the rest of the population by means of privileges, immunities and a life centred in special quarters.8 As far as the division between creoles and peninsulares was concerned, it mirrors similar phenomena taking place in the bureaucracy:


discrimination was particularly acute in the awarding of military ranks. 9

That these military reforms enhanced security is evident. From a defensive angle, they stopped the dramatic downward trend experienced during and immediately after the Seven Years War, which saw the capture of Havana, the presence of the British in the Falklands, the temporary loss of Florida, Colonia do Sacramento and Louisiana, and the perennial raids on coastal settlements. Offensively, Spain went so far as to regain some of her imperial claims. 10 With some notable exceptions — the Comunero revolt of New Granada and the rebellion of Tupac Amaru II in Perú — Spain maintained during the XVIIIth century a political and social peace which has never again been regained in Spanish America.

9 Whereas the troops were almost entirely native American, the officers were not. Creoles could seldom aspire any higher than the level of captain in the regular army, a fact which bore greater importance in XVIIIth century terms, given the intimate link between military and administrative hierarchies. The highest administrative echelons, viceroys and governors, were on the whole filled by career military men. Notwithstanding this, local militias provided some alternative compensation, granted it was only of a subordinate kind. Honours and titles in these less important local units were avidly sought. In exchange, the Crown obtained a highly visible and strong source of loyalty and at times, surprisingly enough, extraordinary military support, as Liniers’s defence of Buenos Aires in 1806–1807 makes clear. HALPERIN (1985) p 61; BRADING (1987) pp 123–124, 129–130; GONGORA (1975a) p 175.

10 The Portuguese were finally expelled from the east bank of the River Plate; Penzécola on Florida fell back into Spanish hands; British posts along the Mosquito coast disappeared for a while, and the occupation of the northern territories of New Spain was strengthened. BRADING (1987) pp 123–124; GONGORA (1975a) pp 170–172; VICENS VIVES (1982), IV, pp 412ff.
Economic reforms tried to tackle more or less the same problems that had inspired administrative and military revision, i.e. diffraction of metropolitan power, loss of efficiency, and waste of existing potential. Changes in fiscal policy confronted these problems head-on. Success was achieved by instituting tougher collection methods, ending tax farming, and establishing Crown monopolies in the production and trading of certain goods. The results derived from these steps were overwhelmingly favourable. Not since the early years of Conquest had the New World been so profitable. Tax returns rose so dramatically that it is safe to say that Spanish economic revival during the XVIIIth century was to a large degree propped up by huge revenues flowing-in from the American continent.

If fiscal policy tried to increase metropolitan wealth, trade reform on the other hand was aimed at tightening the grip on commercial relations with the colonies and at stimulating metropolitan industrial output. A number of aspects, it was felt, needed attention and remedy. Contraband had deflected too much creole trade in favour of British and French competition; illegal trade was frustrating the old routes (Veracruz-Cádiz, Cádiz-Portobelo-Lima); relatively peripheral commercial areas -- such as Venezuela and Chile -- lay unexploited and vulnerable; certain regions of Spain, unconnected to the Atlantic trade, lagged behind and missed out on profitable prospects; and America's growing market needs presented a unique opportunity to

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boost Spanish manufactured exports.

These problems and incentives led to various new commercial schemes. The authorities at first had little or no choice but to allow an increasing volume of illegal trade to go on. Concessions to allies, to neutrals and to victorious enemies had to be made. Passage through several routes, around Cape Horn for example, was slowly permitted. Given this pressure, the old flota system gradually fell into disuse. A parallel development was the creation of several companies, many of them with Basque and Catalan ties, intent on monopolising trade and eroding the Cádiz hegemony.12

Finally, by the late 1770s, the Crown opted for "liberalizing" trade between Spain and America. The intention here was not so much to innovate as to implement a uniform policy. The opening of more metropolitan ports to reciprocal trade with America continued, a measure already in practice for the Caribbean. The introduction of navios de registro or individual licensing of ships, blew away what little there was left of the old fleet system. The Cádiz monopoly over shipping authorisations was terminated. Customs duties were lowered and Spanish manufactures given preferential treatment. In this and only this way did the Reglamento de Libre Comercio of 1776 attempt to "liberalize" trade. The opening of colonial trade to foreign merchants was not contemplated; free trade was not meant

to be universal trade. The intention was precisely the opposite: to diminish existing contraband, boost Spanish production and maritime enterprise, and channel all foreign trade through Spanish intermediaries. Needless to say, not unlike the other general reforms, the economic policies undertaken reflected a clear-cut metropolitan bias in favour of increased peninsular power, control and wealth.

Bourbon Chile

The territories which were later to become republican Chile experienced during the XVIIIth century the same reforms implemented elsewhere in Spanish America. Overall, the balance of these reforms, in the Chilean case, was positive. Thanks to them, Chile began to lose some of her peripheral, frontier-like character. The colony achieved a considerable degree of political and economic autonomy, especially from the Vicerorality of Perú. She became more self sufficient. Her local administration adopted an institutional profile which had been lacking before, and began extending its reach to areas and activities which profited greatly from this process. Moreover, the moderation with which these reforms were applied and the

attenuated reaction on the part of the local elite, established the basis for a transactional conception of politics which was to prove very useful in the subsequent transition from colony to republican government.

Until the early XVIIIth century, Chile was indeed a distant, god-forsaken place, peripheral to Spanish interest. A number of factors explain this. To begin with, the country had very little economic appeal. The native population was proportionally lower and less docile than elsewhere in Spanish America. Chile possessed mineral resources, but its mining potential hardly compared with the extraordinary mineral bounty found in Perú, Alto Perú and New Spain. Furthermore, the Central Valley and Norte Chico, the regions most apt for agriculture, were geographically isolated, cut off by the Andes and the Atacama desert. There were no major sophisticated pre-columbian cultures which could entice the fancy of adventurers. Strategically, Chile may have been important for the defence of Perú, but it required less attention than other outposts. All in all, as a colony, Chile was unattractive, unproductive and costly. She was by no means forfeitable, but she could be


15 La Plata, on the other hand, flanked a huge hinterland and was seriously threatened by the British and Portuguese. Therefore, in the first half of the XVIIIth century, Spain was to congregate at least half of its regular troops assigned to the southern continent in Buenos Aires; J. R. SCOBIE, Argentina: a City and a Nation (Oxford 1964) p 60.
neglected; some attention had to be shown to her, but not much.

Obviously, the reforms and changes of the XVIIIth century did not completely alter this picture, but they brought about much needed improvement. By far the most auspicious transformation in long-term effects, as far as Chile was concerned, was the shift in the geopolitical and commercial balance in the subcontinent, which saw the opening of the trade route around Cape Horn, the increase of smuggling along the Pacific coast, the decline of Lima, and La Plata's rapid ascendancy as a new and vibrant, alternative commercial focus.

The realignment which took place in the subcontinent was gradual. It took the whole century, a process which can be charted step by step by the different commercial and administrative reforms of the Bourbons. The principal victim was the old viceregal seat of Lima, and the beneficiaries were those areas which in the two previous centuries had been under its jurisdiction. This was especially the case with Venezuela and Chile. But without a doubt, it was the rise of La Plata which left the biggest imprint, and it was Buenos Aires which was to reap the most from Lima's decline. Chile's benefit from this realignment has to be seen, therefore, in the light of this dual process involving both Lima's descent and Buenos Aires's parallel ascent.

From the very beginning La Plata undermined the power of Lima. A number of interior towns --Santiago del Estero, Córdoba, Tucumán, Salta and Jujuy-- sprang up during the late
XVIth century to supply Alto Perú with agricultural produce. Attempts to develop the coastal settlements and provide the sprawling interior colonisation with an Atlantic outlet were strongly resisted by the powerful Lima merchants. However, by the late XVIIth century illegal trade, the decline of silver production in Potosí, and the growing threat posed by the Portuguese at Colonia do Sacramento (1713 and 1763), made earlier efforts to control Buenos Aires no longer tenable. The asiento of slaves, a concession to Britain which was to last from 1713 to 1739, also proved menacing for Lima. Thereafter, Buenos Aires was given first priority by the metropolis, notwithstanding the harm it could inflict on Perú.16

Parallel to this Atlantic development, Lima had to face a number of changes in the Pacific, made possible by the increased use of the route around the southern tip of South America. The Cape Horn route was opened to French ships towards the beginning of the XVIIIth century as a consequence of the War of Succession and Spain's new alliance with France. It was only allowed unofficially at first, since the fleet which operated between Callao, Portobelo and Cádiz was still in effect; however, the contraband trade which resulted from this southern connection was to thrive. The boost it gave to Concepción and Valparaíso was significant, and it awoke bitter resentment from Callao. By

1740 the route had to be opened officially to Spanish vessels. By then contraband was glutting the Chilean market; Portobelo had been ransacked by the British (1739); the northern route and the isthmian trade monopolised by Lima was in a shambles; and the policy of registered ships --already in operation between Buenos Aires and Europe with an overland extension to Chile (1722)-- was urgently needed if the metropolis, not just Lima, was to continue to exercise some control and gain some profit from this commerce. In the late 1770s, Lima lost the last round in this two flank attack. A new viceroyalty was established in La Plata (1776) and all remaining restrictions put on Buenos Aires and Chile with respect to their intercolonial and metropolitan trade were done away with by decree in 1778.(17)

The problems posed to Perú by Chile on account of this realignment were serious indeed, more so given that since 1687 Chile had become Perú’s main supplier of wheat.18 This


18 Ecological imbalances caused by an earthquake which struck Lima in 1687 and which affected its plantations, compelled Perú to resort to Chile for wheat. This was to result in a significant increase in Chilean wheat production, noticeable already during the 1690s. In 1693 a sum total of 11,558 fanegas of wheat were exported; in 1734 the volume rose to 87,702 fanegas, this last item constituting 72% of the total of Chilean exports. The growing Peruvian dependence was to generate all kinds of conflicts amongst Chilean producers, consumers and Peruvian ship owners and the Santiago and Lima authorities. On the whole, Lima and Callao controlled the wheat trade, possessed the cargo fleet, managed the bureaucratic aspects and had on their side the support of the Viceroy. Chile, in turn, managed supply by recurring to subterfuges, for example, requiring that only "good" quality grain be exported, or that local demand be
comparative advantage of Chile was further compounded by the new pressures Valparaíso, Concepción and Santiago could exert. To begin with, they no longer had to rely, as far as maritime trade was concerned, on Lima's fleet system to stock themselves or to sell off their goods now that contraband and the navíos de registro had broken the Callao monopoly in the Pacific. Furthermore, these centres, which were easily glutted, could dump excess goods on Lima as soon as the local demand had been saturated, a nuisance which was repeatedly denounced by Lima. And finally, the same sort of pattern was repeated in the land trade between Lima and Buenos Aires, in which Santiago once again played a role as a relatively weak but potentially disrupting middleman.19

All in all, the effect Lima's decline and Buenos Aires's rise was to have on Chile was crucial. It widened the growing rift between Chile and Perú without breaking completely apart a mutually dependent relationship. It lessened Chile's peripheral status. It gave Chile an orientation towards the Atlantic mediated by Buenos Aires which was to have, from then on, a decisive commercial and cultural significance. And it satisfied first. On the wheat trade and its ensuing conflicts, see: I. WOLFF, "Algunas Consideraciones Sobre Causas Económicas de la Emancipación Chilena", Anuario de Estudios Americanos, XI, (Sevilla 1954); S. SEPULVEDA, El Trigo Chileno en el Mercado Mundial (1959); D. RAMOS, "Trigo Chileno, Navieros del Callao, y Hacendados Limeños entre la Crisis Agrícola del Siglo XVII y la Comercial de la Primera Mitad del Siglo XVIII", Revista de Indias 26, Nos. 105-106 (Julio-Diciembre 1966); by the same author, Trigo Chileno (Madrid 1967).

provided an alternative commercial and communication outlet at no political cost for Chile.

Chile's growing autonomy from Perú was not only a consequence of commercial realignment. Jurisdictional and administrative reordering were equally influential. As a result of these, Chile acquired a distinct territorial configuration, a closer connection with the metropolis and an institutional framework both more expansive and specialised.

Territorial consolidation was truly significant. By the end of the XVIIIth century what was to be the nucleus of Central Chile well beyond the mid-XIXth century was already clearly defined. The same can be said of the uniquely compact nature of her territory. Naturally, this would turn out to be a great advantage for the new republic. It meant that the newly-born nation did not have to start independent life crystallising itself geographically or, more importantly, it did not have to go through a preliminary stage in which different regions fought out rival pretensions to become the hegemonic centre, two problems which were to plague some other Spanish American nations. For slightly more than one hundred years (1776-1881) almost all attention and resources converged on a relatively small and highly manageable territory, one third of what Chile is today:

20 Even though three economic regions were to appear during the XVIIIth century --the Norte Chico (Coquimbo-La Serena), the Zona Central and Concepción-- Santiago was to have full control over commerce, in addition to subordinating the two other regions. See M. CARMAGNANI, Les Mécanismes de la Vie Economique Dans une Société Coloniale: Le Chili (1680-1830) (Paris 1973).
an area no more than 1130 kilometres lengthwise (27o S to 37o S) and approximately 160 kilometres wide at the broadest point.

A number of administrative measures undertaken by the Crown during the XVIIIth century were responsible for this nuclear character peculiar to Chile. The creation of the Viceroyalty of La Plata took away from Santiago the previous jurisdiction it had enjoyed over the transandean region of Cuyo. Earlier on, Valdivia --an important garrison situated to the south of Arauco-- was also segregated administratively and a special governor appointed. In 1768, Chiloé, further south, became subject to direct supervision by Perú. In most instances territorial contractions of this kind tend to be weakening, but in this case it proved to be precisely the opposite. These measures strengthened Chile by relieving the remaining heartland areas of potentially cumbersome responsibilities. Hence, whatever may have been lost in terms of territories, was gained instead in compactness, administrative control and cost-transference, the latter at the Viceroyalty of Perú's expense.

The other measure which loosened Chile's ties with Lima was the implementation, beginning in 1786, of the Ordenanza de Intendentes. We have already mentioned how the intendant system diminished the power of viceroys by heightening closer and more direct relations with the metropolis. This was the case in Chile.21 But the final blow to Lima in this regard was

inflicted in 1798 when Chile was granted the status of Captaincy-General. This meant the end of all formal subordination to the Viceroyalty, Lima being prohibited from intervening in Chilean affairs and in the periodic clashes that were still going on in Arauco, unless the situation there became very grave and the Viceroyalty's intromission was deemed necessary.

This increase in the commercial, administrative and territorial autonomy of Chile was not without its cost. Greater fiscal demands were an integral part of the reform programme throughout Spanish America. Chile was not going to be an exception to the rule whatever her poor record in self finance shown in the past. The Crown applied the same pressure she had exerted elsewhere in America.22 An estanco on tobacco distribution and sales was set up; quicksilver and gun powder, both crucial for mining, also fell under state monopoly. A special bureau, the Contaduría Mayor, was established in 1768 to carry out a more effective collection of taxes and to root out corruption, tasks previously assigned to viceregal agents. The sales tax or alcabala, until then auctioned off to private tax collectors, came under direct Crown supervision in 1776; the

Implantación, 1786-1787" in Revista Chilena de Historia del Derecho (1975); by the same author, "Notas para el Estudio de las Intendencias en el Chile Indígeno" in Revista de Estudios Histórico-Jurídicos, XI, 1986; and also by the same author, La División Político-Administrativa de Chile, 1541-1811 (Valparaíso 1989).

same was to occur with the almacén and pulpería excise. Finally, the traditional practice of imposing occasional loans or donations continued, as did the levying of tithes. Palliatives, on the other hand, were few. Understandably, local preoccupation soared as the Crown by then could count on a more professional and efficient machinery and could start applying, it was feared, new taxes at any given time.

Preoccupation soon turned to reaction. Throughout the 1750s and 1760s, and again in 1776, local opposition made itself felt. But it was a moderate sort of opposition. At no time was there resistance comparable to what occurred in New Granada and Perú. Yet, to a certain degree, it may even be argued that it was a successful opposition. The tobacco monopoly had to be reintroduced after its first failure at being implanted, and the Cabildo exacted some compromises from zealous tax authorities.24 The overall negative effects were thus adjusted and toned down.

In effect, fiscal reform in Chile produced mixed results for the Crown. The relatively moderate and gradual way it was applied precluded higher yields; even though Lima's heavy burden was reduced.25 Corruption subsided, but it was not fully eradicated. A large proportion of wealth, derived from

23 The only tax relief which did take place was the reduction in 1771 of the tax on wedged gold from 5 to 3%, a measure connected with the creation of a new mint in Santiago. EYZAGUIRRE (1965) p 267.

24 VILLALOBOS (1961) p 96. See also infra Chapter III.

contraband, went unrecorded and untaxed; and finally, a great deal of the increased revenue was spent in Chile, in administrative, military and public expenditures, leaving thus very little surplus to fill metropolitan coffers. Barbier's assessment that Chile became less of a financial loss during the XVIIIth century, but never an outright asset, underlines how limited was the success of the Bourbons in this field.26

Military reform was to be a source of far greater satisfaction for the Crown. This is not surprising given the fact that it was the single most important problem faced by Spain in Chile, on its way to being solved towards the end of the XVIIIth century. However, in the first half of the century the situation could not have been any worse. Troops were ill equipped and poorly disciplined.27 Although the war in Arauco had reached a sort of stalemate, it was impossible to conclude fully more than two centuries of conflict, all of which was demoralising and costly. Military expenditures amounted to almost half overall expenses, and they had to be paid by Lima.28 This in itself was a source of constant tension. Delays in the arrival of the supposedly annual situado were frequent, when it

28 For instance, in 1788 of the total fiscal expenses ($654,278), the amount spent in civil administration was: $376,340.- and in military costs: $277,938.- VILLALOBOS et al (1974), II, p 243. As a matter of comparison, it is interesting to note that in the decade of 1800, the tithe collection amounted to an annual $213,000.-
arrived at all. Therefore, the reforms of the 1750s and 1760s could not have come at a more appropriate time.

By the end of the century the military situation had substantially improved. By 1753 the size of the standing army had been drastically reduced by half, a desired move. A decade later it boasted better and more professional units. The tobacco estanco financed the military costs, thus lessening the dependence on Perú; and the combined policy of holding parlamentos with Indian chiefs at the same time that the military machine became more efficient, was paying good dividends for the first time. In fact, from 1683 onwards the conflict with the Araucanians was almost totally controlled. In addition to all this, the militias were reinforced, and orientated towards important new tasks, such as urban and rural vigilance. Chile thus, reached the end of the century, stronger than she had ever been and with far fewer military based financial strains, an impressive recovery if we bear in mind the sad state of affairs earlier on.


30 EYZAGUIRRE (1965) pp 245-246; BARBIER (1980), p 26. See also J. I. DOMINGUEZ, Insurreccifln o Leal tad;___La Desintegración del Imperio Español en América (México 1985). DOMINGUEZ estimates that Chile, towards 1810, possessed a regular army of 2358 men, whereas the militias amounted to a figure of about 26,639 men; in other words approximately 36 soldiers for each 1000 persons --the highest figure for all Spanish America, together with that of Cuba; pp 86-87.
An Embryonic State

The implementation of such wide ranging and crucial policies as the above military and fiscal measures indicates an even greater transformation taking place in XVIIIth century Chile. This involved the creation of new administrative organs, the appearance of embryonic institutions, and the emergence of a new bureaucratic elite with specialised functions and an entirely novel attitude towards the state and power.

Six major institutions were created during the XVIIIth century, namely: the Diputación de Comercio (1736), the Casa de Moneda (1743), the University of San Felipe (1758), the already mentioned Contaduría Mayor (1768), the Tribunal del Consulado (1795) and the Tribunal de Minería (1802). The benefits which these institutions brought to Chileans were considerable. They permitted the leading merchants to constitute themselves as a corporate body, and to examine commercial jurisdiction in Santiago without having to go to Lima. The important mining industry was also able to resort to local tribunals, undertake its principal transactions in Santiago without having to incur major costs or assume high transportation risks, as well as economise on certain duties which fell in the hands of Lima merchants. Proceeds from minting would remain in Chile. New cadres for the budding bureaucracy could be trained locally, and fiscal supervision could close-in more efficiently on its targets.
These institutions, though, were more powerful and played a more significant role than their ostensible functions would lead us to believe. They had broad deliberative faculties, while providing additional channels of communication with the Crown. They could, at times, serve as checks and balances on local officials. They were instrumental in devising informative reports on diverse matters pertaining to the region. And they turned out to be particularly influential on two additional counts: their corporate nature allowed them to be a prime source of employment and representation for Creoles, and they played a crucial role in extending amongst the elite the new ethos of progress.

This institutional build-up would have been less relevant if it had not been for the new illuminist conceptions on government which went hand in hand with it. It was the existence of a bureaucratic machine coupled with interventionist pretensions, resulting from enlightened views, which made this state so particularly powerful. More areas of social life, not just administration, fell under its supervision; and on these areas the state implanted its rational imprint. This is why we see a strong emphasis put on statutory regulation, and a constant effort to circumscribe the activities and movements of all wielders of power, which the state fears as potential competitors, within its own undisputed hegemony. The state was thus in a position to dictate the terms of political behaviour, and at times it could be the sole political actor.
This was of course absolutism at its best. There were to be no checks and balances, or at most they had to be built-in ones. Government differed very little from administration. All change had to be channelled within the system, and the founding principles of sovereign authority had to remain unquestioned and unchallenged at all times. By way of retribution, government was to generate and distribute social benefits. Public welfare became the overriding goal, but it was to be subservient to a government not only benevolent and paternalistic but also despotic in character.

Nowhere did the Bourbon state in Chile display better this tendency to intervene, rationalise and regulate than when carrying out its urban policy. The sheer scale of the urban effort was staggering. At least 24 new towns were founded during the XVIIIth century, and a few others had to be relocated or rebuilt on account of earthquake disasters. Transportation in between cities and with the outlying countryside improved greatly. Moreover, urban life in the principal centres was provided with increasingly better services. Hospitals, orphanages, hospices for the destitute, and jails were built. Streets were cobbled, rudimentary public lighting made its first appearance, and municipal night-watchmen provided better security. The mail service was regularised, and major public

buildings were constructed.

The intentions behind this extraordinary effort are clear enough. Overall population was increasing steadily; and a higher number of urban settlements could supervise better this growth, while reverting the process of ruralization begun in the previous century. Whereas in the past two centuries the aim was centrifugal, namely that towns and cities move outward and engulf the surrounding areas, Bourbon policy during the XVIIIth century pointed in the opposite direction. The overriding objective now was to bring the dispersed rural population and their activities under some form of official supervision. As was to be expected, the new policy stirred up strong resistance from

32 There is no general agreement as to the approximate figures for this growth. Estimates which do exist are based on official census (1778, 1791, 1813), all of them fragmentary. Based on the estimates forwarded by different authors one can reach the conclusion that towards 1700 the population amounted to approximately 100,000 to 150,000 inhabitants to the north of the Bío-Bío, excluding indigenous population not subdued by Spaniards. Moreover, based on estimated figures for 1810, one could say that population for that period amounted to 900,000 to 1,000,000 inhabitants, including Araucanian population to the south of the Bío-Bío. The Indian population for the zone of Arauco, for this latter date, varies according to different authors, between 95,000 to 200,000.


In the long run, though, the seigneurial rural structure weakened considerably the urban potential of Chile. Villages and middle sized cities did not develop their full capacity. Nevertheless, the state was able through these urban centres—however frail they were—to extend its authority geographically; make some headway into areas where the de facto power of local landowners was almighty; curb uncontrolled vagrancy and banditry, one of the most serious ills affecting rural areas; and provide alternative and wider notions of community other than the one offered by the strictly confined world of the hacienda.

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35 On the subject of vagabondage, see M. Gongora, "Vagabundaje y Sociedad Fronteriza en Chile (Siglos XVII a XIX)" (1966); Barros Arana (1886), VII, pp 506-511; Bauer (1975), pp 15-16.

36 The estimated population of Santiago in 1778 amounted to approximately 25,000 inhabitants. This figure increased to 30,000 - 40,000 towards 1810; see Eyzaguirre (1965) p 250; Villalobos et al (1974) II, p 253; Loveman (1979) pp 38, 104.

The population of Concepción for 1778 has been calculated around 4,600 inhabitants; towards 1790 it was to reach the figure of 6,000 subsequently reduced on account of epidemics. It is estimated that Concepción in 1810 had around 6,000 inhabitants; Kinsbruner (1973) p 23; Loveman (1979) p 38. It is possible that La Serena had, towards the end of colonial times, 5,000 inhabitants; Loveman (1979) p 89.

Notwithstanding the stimulus produced by urban policy, Chile continued to be rural throughout the XVIIIth century. The majority of the "villas" created during said century were no more than mere extensions of the surrounding rural world. Calculations for the end of the century arrive at the figure of only 10% urban population. Still in 1875 only 25% of the population is thought to have been urban.

That net urban growth continued to be low during the
All in all, though, it was in the larger cities, especially in Santiago, that the state could take full advantage of its new urban policy. The larger cities were to provide an ideal space for the state to make visible its new power. It was possible here to exhibit unimpeded and on a grand scale its proud philanthropic spirit. We know that the construction of the government house in the Plaza de Armas (1714), the imposing Moneda (1743-1805), the buildings of the Tribunal del Consulado and of the Real Aduana, the Puente de Cal y Canto (1765), the finished Cathedral, the erection of several parish churches, and the Tajamares (1804), produced a strong sense of civic pride. These public buildings, impressive by the standards of the age, were irrefutable proof of the progress and wealth recently achieved by the colony.

Intervention and rationalisation are also behind the constant zeal to impose statutory restrictions on all kinds of social affairs. The extraordinary volume of legislation dealing with public recreation and conspicuous consumption is a case in

XVIIIth century, does not mean --according to R. MORSE-- that the fundamental aims of Bourbon policy were frustrated. The purpose of this policy was basically to create "urban nuclei" and decentralise the power of established hierarchies in order to strengthen metropolitan control; see R. MORSE, "Urban Development" in CLAH (1987) pp 198-200.


37 Cf. the comment made by G. VANCOUVER, to the effect that the Mapocho Tajamares, even if initially criticised, later came to be seen as a monument to the "patriotism" of Governor A. O'Higgins and of his "foresight of future dangers"; A Voyage of Discovery (London 1798).
point. What happens is that the state adopts a role of paternal vigilance inspired by the overriding principle that government exists not only to execute and administer laws, secure peace, order and prosperity, but must also provide guidelines, civic values, and enforce a minimum ethical decorum proper to civilised people.

Economic regulation was the most frequent demonstration of state expansion. We have already mentioned fiscal reform, and have shown the keen concern there was in ordering commercial relations and in channelling them along authorised lines. But this was not all. Several activities which had previously been leased out to private concessionaries were to fall under Crown control; for example, in 1768 the mail service, which had been managed by the Carvajal family since the XVIth century, reverted to Crown administration. In most cases, though, it was not necessary to change the existing system. Administration had always been interventionist, and it was just a question of continuing in the same line.

Economic interventionism, though, was not merely prescriptive. Numerous governors and officials in Bourbon Chile

38 Ordinances were constantly being enacted to regulate activities such as the illumination of houses during religious processions, bell ringing, bull fighting events (1763), and numerous other popular diversions. Bowls were prohibited in 1777 because the public, it was feared, became too rowdy and violent during this game. From 1796 on kites could only be flown in certain specific areas of Santiago. Attempts were also made to prohibit card games and to regulate female dress, both of which failed.

felt that the state had to play an active role in stimulating and creating wealth. Ambrosio O'Higgins was responsible for introducing cotton and sugar in Copiapó, Huasco and La Serena, hemp in Quillota and rice in Aconcagua; similar efforts were behind the planting of flax and grapevines, the latter in the Maule and Bio-Bío valleys. In order to stimulate private initiative, authorities set up all kinds of incentives, tax subsidies and protective measures. Government support encouraged trade with the metropolis where mineral products, hides and wool were exported; and it is quite clear that huge enterprises such as the irrigation of a substantial portion of the Santiago valley, thanks to the construction of a canal connecting the Maipo and Mapocho rivers, would have been unthinkable without official stimulus.40

Earlier on we alluded to yet another aspect of the absolutist Bourbon state, namely its capacity to neutralise all possible competitors and thus constitute itself as the sole existing political power. This aspiration was behind the intent to break up the influence of local élites, but it also features prominently in the state's relation with the Church.41 The Church was, as far the state was concerned, a formidable potential contender. She possessed enormous wealth and prestige.


41 See V. PALACIO ATARD, Los Españoles de la Ilustración (Madrid 1964) p 35.
She had close connections with local creole society; she educated the élite; the majority of her high ranking local clerics belonged to the most prominent local families, and she played a key social role in controlling the bulk of the population. But her power did not just rest at a local level; after all, she could rely on the Papacy as well as on Catholic Christendom. The Church, first and foremost, exerted a moral and spiritual influence, and this of course could not be so easily overlooked.

It is obvious, therefore, that when the state decided to confront the Church head-on by attempting to curtail her enormous power, it assumed one of the most delicate tasks imaginable. It faced what until then had unquestionably been the principal defender of the Crown. Its attack was directed, moreover, at possibly the single most crucial institution responsible for devising and upholding the doctrinal foundations of political power as they had been conceived thus far. The Crown was thus daring to question her very own basis of legitimacy. By attacking such a pivotal element, authority had to start looking for new sources of legitimacy no longer founded on religious premises. Absolutism would have to compensate the loss of a strong ally, and tradition would have to make do perhaps with far weaker props as justifications.

The Crown imposed in Chile the same policy on Church affairs as in the rest of Spanish America. Regalist measures were

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42 See our discussion in Chapters IV and VII.
accentuated. Ecclesiastical matters were progressively incorporated within the administrative matrix of the state. There was even talk of conducting a thorough reform of the regular clergy. Furthermore, a dramatic shake up was carried out by expelling the Jesuits, altering thus substantial aspects of Chilean colonial life.

All in all, the patronato continued to be exercised and defended throughout the XVIIIth century. A number of its attributions were extended; for instance, the exequatur came to be required not only for administrative measures but also for documents dealing with dogmatic matters; furthermore, the state was allowed to retain for its own obligations in the patronato a higher percentage of the tithes.43

In addition to all this, new faculties were devised and entrusted to the state further curtailing the powers of Church authorities. Ecclesiastical asylum was regulated and Crown approval had to be sought previous to ad limina visits. Moreover, communications with Rome were to be more closely supervised by civil authorities. Crown visitas increased, and it became habitual for the metropolis to summon more often provincial councils in order to discuss ecclesiastical affairs on the basis of a set agenda drawn-up by its own officials.44 But perhaps what was more telling was the change which took place in

43 In 1804 the amount increased from two ninths of half the diezmo to three ninths. EYZAGUIRRE (1965) p 284.
44 Ibid., pp 283-285.
overall thinking behind the patronato during the XVIIIth century. Whereas before the tendency was to view it as a concession of the Papacy to the Crown, more and more it came to be perceived as an inherent quality of the sovereign power of the state.45

On the whole, though, by far the most important regalist measure undertaken by the Crown in Chile, or in the rest of America for that matter, was the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. In Chile it dealt a shattering blow to the Church. Approximately 360 Jesuits were expelled, certainly one of the highest numbers in Spanish America. The decree of expulsion affected the largest and most influential order in Chile.46 Its economic interests were extremely wide in scope, and solid. The order owned over fifty haciendas, the majority of which were subsequently auctioned off increasing thus even further the extraordinary power already accumulated by families of the élite.47 Its dealings in the wheat trade were second to none;


46 As a matter of fact, 2,617 Jesuits were expelled from Spanish America; this would tend to indicate that proportionally wise the number in Chile was quite high. See VICENS VIVES (1982), IV, p 405; W. HANISCH S.J., Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en Chile (1970). After the expulsion of the Jesuits, in the Santiago diocese only 567 priests remained. EYZAGUIRRE (1965) pp 283ff.

47 BARROS ARANA (1886), VI, pp 293-303; COLLIER (1967), pp 32-33. After the expropriation of the Jesuit lands, the Church ceased to be the principal landowner in Chile; see, BAUER
the order also led in the production of high quality wines, Indian textiles, domestic furniture and religious artefacts.

Its role and prestige in the cultural life of the Captaincy-General was equally impressive. Within its ranks could be found the most prominent historians, naturalists, craftsmen, theologians and educators of colonial Chile. The two most prestigious institutions of higher education were directed by them. In the diocese of Santiago alone, 14 schools had to be shut down after the expulsion, a measure which affected at least 1000 students. Religious seminaries simply disappeared, and missionary work, particularly in the south, took years to recover. The total loss was indeed great; it is continually mentioned by historians as a source of creole resentment and as an indirect cause of Independence. Unquestionably, it showed the Crown at its most vicious and arbitrary, revealing the length to which absolutism was willing to go.

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Bourbon reformism was to awaken resentment and hostility amongst Chileans as it was to do in other places in

(1975) p 199.

48 See COLLIER (1967), pp 32-33; R. DONOSO, "Bosquejo de una Historia de la Independencia de América Española", in El Movimiento Emancipador de Hispano-América (Caracas 1961), IV.
Spanish America. The inflexible manner which was sometimes used in its implementation upset local interests. At times, as in the case with the new tax demands, spirits became so incensed that there were bitter reactions; on at least four occasions the situation got out of hand. Nevertheless, at no time whatsoever did this resentment and anger set creole society and the government at irreconcilable odds with one another, nor can we speak —in the Chilean context— of creoles being alienated by these reforms.

There was little cause in Chile for the elite to feel antagonism towards their government. Administration had improved notably from the beginning of the century. On the whole, the leading authorities who governed in Santiago were throughout the XVIIIth century model civil servants. They brought Chile a

49 Creoles all over Spanish America reacted bitterly against the reformist measures. They opposed the tax increases, the establishment of monopolies and estancos, the discrimination which affected them, the loss of certain political autonomy which until then had resulted from negligence and abandonment, and arbitrary acts such as the expulsion of the Jesuits. See HALPERIN (1985), pp 52, 55, 61, 62, 72; BRADING (1987), pp 126, 129, 130, 132, 159; GONGORA (1975a), p 175.

According to some authors, Bourbon reformism destroyed the established political system which had governed in the name of the king but strengthened local interests. This in turn was to alienate the creoles, a phenomenon which was to pave the road to Independence. This thesis has been argued by D. A. BRADING, Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico 1763-1810 (New York 1970) in relation to Mexico, and by LYNCH, The Spanish American Revolutions (1973) in relation to all Spanish America.

50 See infra Chapter III.

51 This opinion was held even by figures who were to later support the break with Spain. See M. SALAS, "Motivos que Ocasionaron la Junta de Gobierno" in Escritos (1910-1914) III, p 93; F. A. PINTO, "Apuntes Autobiográficos" in BACHH (1941) 8,
peace and order she had never known before. Furthermore, the economy did exceedingly well during their time in office.

It is true that this development imposed higher demands on creoles, but in the long run these exigencies were compensated by a greater prosperity and order. Conditions surely had changed, but this did not mean that they could not be used for local benefit. If the intention was to continue to exercise influence, the ruling élite had to accommodate itself to the new political scheme.

Probably, the most lasting political consequence of Bourbon reformism was the progressive extension of the state. The state itself grew, as well as its reach. New imperial institutions were created, older ones were reinforced. All kinds of social activities fell under public scrutiny. And lastly, an imperial bureaucracy emerged in charge of the administrative apparatus, that was to dispute the enormous ascendancy which the local ruling groups had been acquiring. All in all, though, these new phenomena introduced a qualitative change not necessarily antagonistic to local interests. The Bourbon reforms embedded a new political conception, namely, that power—be it political, economic or social—derives from the state.

This new perception of power was rapidly admitted by the creole ruling groups. They realised that the new power of the state was indeed formidable, that whatever confrontation—however forceful—would be met with an even stronger reaction.
and that all that was novel was not always pernicious. The new state could be useful both to them as well as the Crown. The ruling system could be both paternalistic and benevolent, despotic and enlightened, strongly absolutist but also favourable to creole interests.
CHAPTER III
THE RULING ELITE

It is generally agreed that the main historical actor in the process of Chilean Independence was the ruling élite. It is also widely affirmed that the relatively peaceful nature and success of this process—if we compare it with other cases in Spanish America—was due to the protagonism of this group. This protagonism was to mean that the transition from a monarchy to a republic in Chile would be less disruptive. It allowed the persistence of a considerable amount of the Spanish past while at the same time permitting the reception and accommodation of those necessary changes that would project the country towards a new and more modern world.

Neither the period of Independence which interests us here, nor the period which follows—the consolidation of the liberal state (1830-1870)—can be explained without a careful analysis of the ruling group. In both periods, politics had a

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strong oligarchical character. If one examines Chilean political history from the middle of the XVIIIth and throughout the XIXth centuries, it is striking how often family names are repeated, how intricate are the links between economic and political power, and how time and time again personal or family connections of all sorts explain political alliances, shared interests and the resolution of conflicts. This concentration of power accounts in part for the stability and continuity which distinguishes Chile during these two periods.

The roots of this oligarchical character of power date back to the colonial period. This élite took some time to achieve the outlines and make-up which would distinguish it throughout the XIXth century, but it is safe to say that by 1810 it had accomplished this. By then it was sufficiently conscious of its political, social, and economic role to be able to respond in defence of its own interests when the imperial system went


3 An opposite view, highly influential in Chilean historiography, has been argued by EDWARDS (1927). According to this author, in Chilean history oligarchic governments have generally been anarchic and irresponsible; whereas governments which are authoritarian but respect the law have been stable and progressive.
into crisis. 4

Any study of Chilean politics during and after Independence must necessarily start, therefore, with a discussion of the origins and consolidation of a local elite under Spanish domination. It must examine the composition of this elite, its social and economic base during the XVIIIth century, its response to Bourbon reformism, and the most salient characteristics displayed on the eve of Independence.

The Creole Elite and the Bourbon Reforms

The XVIIth century saw the emergence of an elite. The XVIIIth century was to witness its consolidation. Neither phenomenon was foreseeable. We have already mentioned the different means employed by the Crown during the XVIth and XVIIth centuries in order to avoid the ascendancy of a ruling nucleus with which she might have to share power. We have seen how local circumstances frustrated this intention, while profound economic changes created the conditions necessary for this elite to emerge.

4 We mean by "elite" a group of individuals who act jointly, either consciously or unconsciously, in order to preserve political positions or social privileges. The term elite will be used as a synonym of ruling group. It should be understood that the political sense which we want to stress here is the oligarchical, i.e. the government of a few.
The progressive deterioration of Spanish power during the XVIIth and part of the XVIIIth centuries was also to conspire against the exclusivist pretensions of the Crown. Dutch, English and French rivals were able to establish colonies in American territories, gravely hindering commerce between Spain and her American dominions. Constant wars in Europe against France, the Turkish Empire, Dutch rebels, and protestantism in general impoverished the treasury. Military deterioration and the internal weakening of the Spanish Empire in Europe were to absorb energies and resources in the metropolis itself.5 The XVIIth century had meant for Spanish America in general and for Chile in particular a growing distance from a distracted Spain. This accentuated the tendency which we have already seen for Chile to evolve according to autonomous local parameters.

Once Spain decided to implement an overall policy aimed at reversing this decline, Spain would try, above all, to end this autonomous development in America. One of the principal goals of Bourbon reformism was to limit the sort of local political power which had been growing and widening throughout the XVIIth century. To "reconquer" Spanish America implied that the Crown had to recapture the initiative,6 and the creole élites were to see threatened their emerging power.

In some parts of Spanish America this aim was

achieved. Not so in Chile. To a large degree this was due to the fact that the measures here implemented were far more tenuous in character, and Chile was not a main target of Bourbon reformism. An added obstacle was the ability of the Chilean creole élite to adapt itself to these measures. In some cases, the élite adopted them as its own and profited from them. In the long run, this was to strengthen it and permit its consolidation. There is a major difference between the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries regarding the growing power of the ruling group: the rise of the élite occurred marginally to the state; whereas for its consolidation it would lean on the state.

Several measures were put into effect during the XVIIIth century to reduce the power of the Chilean élite. The most severe of these measures tried to diminish its influence in local administration. The sale of public posts and the incapacity of the Crown to sustain a permanent flow of royal administrators who could maintain themselves free from any association with local interests, had helped create a political system wherein corruption, venality, and nepotism figured prominently. These informal political expedients meant a certain autonomy for the local élite from central authority, while at the same time allowing the budding bureaucracy to become an

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7 The point with respect to Mexico' has been argued in BRADING (1970) pp 30, 34-35.
intermediary body representative of elite interests. Consequently, it would be precisely these practices which the centralising reforms would try to root out.

The first area which was to see an attempt to regain control was the fiscal sphere. The aim of the Crown was not only to increase tax collection, but also to put an end to tax farming. From a local point of view, this objective was both onerous and expropriatory. The policy was to affect wide sectors of society and produce strong opposition alliances. After each attempt to implement fiscal measures, bitter reactions, even potentially violent ones at times, would follow. It happened in 1766 after the establishment of an estanco or monopoly involving the cultivation and sale of tobacco. The same situation --on an even more serious scale-- would repeat itself ten years later when the collection of the alcabala came under royal administration, when new forms of evaluation were designed for the puipera tax, and the rates for both were increased. Amongst those affected by these measures would be the members of the Real Audiencia, mostly Chileans closely tied to the tax

8 J. A. BARBIER, "Elite and Cadres in Bourbon Chile" HAHR, 52, No. 3 (1972) p 416; BARBIER (1980) pp 3-4, 55; see also, M. SARFATTI, Spanish Bureaucratic-Patrimonialism in America (Berkeley 1966).

9 On this subject, see: BARBIER (1972) and (1980); MEZA (1958); VILLALOBOS (1961).

10 For example, tax farmers during the 1760s obtained profits amounting to $ 99,000 annually, whereas the Crown received only $ 80,000. BARBIER (1980) pp 87-88.
farmers;11 the Cabildo in its role as the representative of the community; the displaced tobacco merchants; the landowners who supplied the pulperias of the city; and finally, the consuming public.

This in turn explains why the reaction was so eloquent and radical. These two occasions saw public agitation, pasquinades, calls to subversion, and offers by the Cabildo to mediate in the conflict. In 1776 representatives were elected to argue the case before the royal authorities. The situation did not get totally out of hand as it would a few years later in New Granada and Peru, but it became evident that the élite was sufficiently prepared to stir up wide collective support in defence of its interests.

The counter-attack on the part of the metropolitan authorities was equally drastic. The Real Audiencia was purged, all of its members being transferred out of Chile and replaced almost entirely by officials newly arrived from the Peninsula. Proceedings were initiated against some of those involved; the elected deputations that were to represent local complaints before the Crown were not admitted, and the proposed measures

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11 Until 1776 the membership of the Santiago Audiencia was predominantly creole. In 1759 only two oidores came from Spain, the remaining six members including the fiscal were Spanish Americans, two of which were Chileans. In 1776 the Audiencia was 100% creole, and the majority were Chileans. The purchase of posts in the tribunal accounts for this composition favourable to local groups. BARBIER (1980) pp 51-52, 74; MEZA (1958) p 251. On the origins of the Audiencia members and of their wives during the XVIIIth century, see FELSTINER (1970), pp 45-46. On the links between the Audiencia and the tax farmers, see BARBIER (1980) pp 1-52, 81-94; MEZA (1958), pp 183ff.
were firmly maintained.

This reaction was soon mitigated though by concessions and subsequent repetitions of older practices. The rate of the pulpería tax was eventually reduced. A 1780 decree ordering that the houses of Santiago be numbered was not applied after it had awakened fear that new taxes were being planned. In 1781 an order requiring voluntary donations was suspended, and in 1805 and 1806 further tax demands were frustrated. As far as Madrid's desire to prevent local influence on administrative cadres, this simply did not prosper. Not a year had passed since their designations, when the two administrators responsible for the 1776 purge were already related by marriage with prominent families of Santiago and had to be transferred again. Two other revenue officers were to establish connections with political cliques accused of corruption. By 1788, twelve years after the severe blow of 1776, three out of the six oidores of the Audiencia were creoles. Chileans would figure again as members of the tribunal in 1794, and some of them would be related by kinship with some of the oidores purged twenty years earlier.12

The evolution of this affair reveals very well the relations during the XVIIIth century between the élite and reformist centralisation. In the face of an aggressive attempt on the part of the Crown to put local finances in order, the élite was able to muster considerable local support. Once the

complicity between local groups and royal officers became evident, the metropolis reacted by purging the local administration. However, resistance was so strong that it precluded new measures of the same sort, and in the meantime the local groups resorted once again to the old practice of co-opting royal officials. The final result was mixed. The Spanish Crown was able to carry out a programme of measures but not so thoroughly as to destroy the power of the local elite.

Something similar occurred with regard to the growth of the bureaucracy. The establishment of royal institutions, directed by salaried officers imbued with the new reformist and centralising spirit were meant to guarantee a degree of professionalism capable of resisting any informal interference exercised by local groups, interference which had been stimulated in the past as public posts were not paid. A closer examination of these new institutions and their performance demonstrates though, that this objective was not fully attained.

Jacques Barbier's detailed study of the bureaucratic development of Bourbon Chile and the impact of the Visita General (1778-1785) which aimed at reorganising the poor financial state of the kingdom, arrives at negative conclusions on this matter. Numerous fiscal institutions were created in the period 1772-1790. This produced an inmoderate increase of salaried posts.13 The majority of the new appointments fell

13 Concerning the increase in bureaucratic offices, see BARBIER (1980) pp 114, 117, 120, 121. According to BARBIER, between 1772 and 1790, to a large degree on account of the
either to Chileans or to *peninsulares* already settled in Chile with very little expectation of being transferred out of the kingdom. The total cost of the bureaucracy increased, a cost which was not compensated by a parallel increase in revenues derived from the colony. The immediate impact of the Visit was a marked fall in earnings; subsequently, they were to recover, but never so much as to make the Visit a financial success.\(^{14}\)

Actually, Barbier affirms that the disproportionate increase in administrative costs during the XVIIIth century meant that Chile was to continue to show a poor overall fiscal performance.

Hence, from the point of view of the Crown, the growth of the bureaucracy did not mean an improvement in the finances of the colony. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the élite, this growth resulted in a greater number of posts to be filled by its members, and a state apparatus more and more powerful, still open to being informally approached.\(^{15}\) Consequently, the potential for co-optation as far as the élite was concerned increased proportionally to the expansion experienced by the

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\(^{14}\) If we compare the periods 1772-1776 and 1778-1782 there was a decrease in income close to 20%. Subsequently, in the years 1786-1790 there was a rise but below 4%; the latter thanks to Concepción, since Santiago never recovered the levels it had achieved previous to the *Visita*. BARBIER (1980) pp 131ff.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., pp 115, 117, 191-192.
state. Far from restricting the local group, this greater institutionalisation was to increase significantly elite power.16

Another measure designed to limit the elite was the discrimination against creoles in administrative posts. This question has been a subject of debate ever since it was invoked as a complaint by separatists during the period of Independence.17 That there was a certain discrimination, especially in the highest levels of the administrative apparatus, cannot be questioned, but it is still worth reviewing.

In any event, discrimination was not totally arbitrary. It fell on creoles not so much because they were creoles, but because the intention behind this policy was to avoid the continuous exercise of undue influence on bureaucracy on the part of local power. The fact that there was discrimination meant that there was already strong creole interference in administrative matters.

16 It should be noted that the main institutions created during the XVIIIth century in Chile —namely the Diputación de Comercio, the Casa de Moneda, the Universidad de San Felipe, and the Tribunal del Consulado— responded to petitions previously formulated and repeatedly manifested by the Cabildo, in other words, by the local community. This was accompanied, moreover, by an active financial support on the part of the Cabildo and from some notables which made these institutional projects possible. It was the case, for instance, of the Garcia Huidobro mayorazgo which helped finance the construction of La Moneda.

17 See "Carta que un Chileno escribió al Excmo. Señor don José de Galvèz..." in RCHHG (1940); and J. EGANA, El Chileno Consulado en los Presidios (London 1826). Creole discrimination was to become later on a central thematic argument of XIXth century liberal historiography, especially in the works of D. BARROS ARANA and M. L. AMUNATEGUI. See also, VILLALOBOS (1961) pp 100-104.
Seen in this light, the alleged discrimination against creoles was not at all successful. Creole participation in the Cabildo was overwhelming throughout the XVIIIth century. A similar situation can be seen in the military: towards the end of the century half of the officers in the permanent army had been born in the country. The presence of creoles in high ecclesiastical posts was also overwhelming. The Real Audiencia shows, except for the period between 1776-1794, a significant participation of Chileans. In the financial institutions there was a considerable number of Chileans placed in the highest echelons, whereas the appointments in the lower ranks were totally assigned to natives and radicados. 18

18 Towards the end of the XVIIIth century, the permanent army's total rank-and-file and half of its officer corps was Chilean. The same can be said of the 16,000 to 26,000 men who made up the militias. The Chilean ecclesiastical hierarchy was dominated by creoles during this century; 7 out of 9 bishops of Santiago were creoles, as well as 6 out of 8 bishops of Concepción. From an incomplete list of priests of the diocese of Santiago, for the year 1777, we know that 26 out of a total of 35 priests were creoles; as well as 14 out of a total of 16 for Concepción. Moreover, we do not know of any Spanish priest who arrived in Chile in the period between 1754 and 1788. The system of 'alternativa' was only applied by the Jesuits; in the other religious orders there were not enough peninsulares. The post of corregidor in Santiago, during the period 1742-1810, was held 10 times by creoles, and only 4 by peninsulares. At least 12 members of the Consulado in the period 1795-1810, out of a total of 30 or so members, were creoles.

All the same, the highest administrative posts fell to peninsulares. Only 1 of the 25 Captains-General of Chile during the XVIIIth century was creole. Amongst the oidores the Spanish born predominated, even if there was a notable participation of creoles and Chileans in the Audiencia. Finally, one should bear in mind that the majority of the creoles who held posts were not Chileans.

How can we explain then the great resentment among creoles? We think that this has to do, in the first place, with the fact that there was indeed a policy—somewhat frustrated though—aimed at restricting local participation, and secondly, that this policy served as an obstacle against hegemonic pretensions on the part of the élite. Faced by a demand for participation, the Crown set up restrictions limiting it. The resulting impasse, whereby the Crown was incapable of fully eradicating local influence but successful in its desire to prevent any increase of this influence, was to injure the growing expectations of an élite more and more sure of itself.19

What is at play here are the interests of an élite, not the interests of creoles per se. The issue of creole discrimination is complex. The measures promoted by the Crown produced resistance or support both amongst creoles and peninsulares. As Barbier makes clear, pressure groups of the XVIIIth century were made-up of both creoles and Spaniards.20 The antagonism between the two was not always so strong. This seems even more likely if we take into consideration that the

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19 On the hegemonic pretensions of the élite, see: CARVALLO y GOYENECHE (1875-1876) XIX, p 19; MEZA (1958) pp 261-262; O. C. STOETZER, The Scholastic Roots of the Spanish American Revolutions (New York 1979) p 10; EYZAGUIRRE (1979) p 57. On the sense of superiority which the creoles had vis-à-vis the peninsulares, see GONGORA (1975a) p 183; LYNCH (1973) pp 1-2.

20 BARBIER (1980), p 75.
tendency among peninsulares was to "settle down" quickly, partly due to the local co-optational pressures put on them. It was not that the élite was creole and thus subject to discrimination; rather it tended to become creole and this obviously violated the aim of the Crown to stop undue local influence. Only if we bear this in mind shall we understand what was actually at play in the implementation of a discriminatory policy.

Discrimination against creoles is often exaggerated too in the discussion of the Cabildo. Most analysis tend to view the Crown at odds with the Cabildo, given that it was an eminently creole institution and typical of the prevalent local corruption. This supposedly would explain in turn why the Cabildo fell into decadence during the XVIIIth century.

This view of the Cabildo is only partially true. To begin with, there is no indication that there was a concerted policy against the Cabildo on the part of the Crown. We know that Bourbon reformism stimulated the founding of numerous towns and villages, and that in the principal cities cabildos were authorised. Moreover, we know that at different moments during the XVIIIth century the Crown was worried about the lack of concern shown by the community with respect to the Santiago Cabildo.21 Therefore it is not true that the Cabildo was in

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21 During the government of Amat (1755-1761) the prices required in the auctions for seats in the corporation were lowered; this measure allowed the entrance of members of families whose high social status was already assured, and also the entrance of members of ascending families interested in creating links with the more traditional group or else with royal officials. This incorporation of new members stimulated in
steady decline throughout the XVIIIth century; that this supposed decadence resulted from an antagonistic policy implemented by the Crown; that there were always tensions between this body and local authorities; and lastly, that these tensions caused the Cabildo to become a weak institution.

The Cabildo during the XVIIIth century operated within a political system which was both corporate and clientelistic, and this made the institution at different moments more or less effective. The basic unit of power was the clique. These cliques resulted from different types of connections or shared loyalties. Corporate membership was just one possible criterion. There could be others, such as similar economic interests, the same place of origin, or kinship and compadrazgo links. In any event, none of these links was predominant. Moreover, these cliques tended to associate, through a complex play of alliances, different authorities in different instances of power. Hence, an informal system of power started to evolve which transcended at times the corporate framework.

A similar situation was to happen towards the end of the century. The mutual support which the Cabildo and the reformist governors, Ambrosio O'Higgins and Luis Muñoz de Guzmán, gave each other meant that a considerable part of the improvements in public works at this time were due to a more dynamic and revitalised Cabildo. Cf. BARBIER (1980) pp 55-61, 149, 163, 173, 178-185; FELSTINER (1970) pp 25, 86; ALEMPARTE (1940, 1974) pp 202-234.


The effects which this corporative-clientelistic system had on the performance of the Cabildo were numerous. After all, the Cabildo almost always harboured different cliques. Moreover, it did not confront the other authorities -- the Governor and the
The fact that the political system was essentially clientelistic and that the standards of clientelism were multiple, prevented the Cabildo from becoming a defensive stronghold solely of creole interests. At times the alliances made were based on creole concerns. At times different creole groups could be at odds with one another. The Cabildo was always an instance of local power; however, it was not always a purely creole institution.24

The local élite exercised influence by resorting to all the administrative instances at its disposal. Both the Governor and the Audiencia were subject to these pressures. In turn, all administrative authorities required local support in order to

Audiencia--in a manner always coherent or uniform. The defence of its jurisdictional prerogatives depended on the different alliances which were being created conjuncturally, sometimes with the Audiencia, sometimes with the Governor. The play of conjunctural alliances explains why in certain cases it appears active and vigorous, and why at other times it was weak.

24 In certain moments, the Cabildo had the backing of the Governor--for instance during the administrations of Amat (1755-1761) and O'Higgins (1788-1796)--, at other times not--as in the government of Guill (1762-1768). In this last case, the preeminence of a figure such as that of the Corregidor Zahartu, basically a personalist official, was determinant. However, we know that behind the Corregidor there was support from some creole sectors. Moreover, at times a predominantly creole Audiencia--and we should bear in mind that in some periods the creole presence was greater in the Audiencia than in the Cabildo--tried to intervene on behalf of creoles in the Cabildo. Notwithstanding the latter, we also know of situations where the Audiencia opposed powerful creoles who were entrenched in the municipal institution. The only thing clear is that cliques are always operating, that these cliques at times transcend or surpass the dichotomy criollo-peninsular; that we do not always find a uniform corporative identity be it creole or Spaniard, and lastly, that the corporations are not always in conflict with one another. Cf. BARBIER (1980) pp 60, 63-76, 153, 173, 183, 193.
carry out their projects, including those which were meant to curtail local influence. The clientelistic character of politics and the constant need to recur to all kinds of alliances allowed this to happen. In the end, this system made periodic adjustments feasible but always within a flexible and accommodating framework. Attempts to introduce changes were constantly tried but always cautiously and in such a manner so as not to alienate the various groups involved. In other words, the implementation of Bourbon measures in Chile was above all reformist. A climate of moderation set the tone making it thus possible for the Crown to obtain a good deal of what she aspired to without local groups having to suffer reductions in their already acquired power. Consequently, what predominated was a system of transaction and adjustment, from which both local power as well the monarchy were to benefit.

The expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 is a good example of this transactional mode of operation. In one direct way the élite suffered greatly from this measure; according to Eyzaguirre, "there was almost no aristocratic household which did not endure the exile of one of its members".25 Furthermore, the Crown imposed the criterion that only the state could carry out progress. In this sense, the measure clearly damaged local power and affected what until then had been an unhindered development. Notwithstanding this, it is also clear that the measure was to

help local power. After all, the expulsion enabled the élite to buy up the country's best agricultural properties.26 The Crown, in turn, lost a powerful ally while arousing resentment against this sort of arbitrary measures. All in all, the élite and the Crown experienced gains as well as losses.

This occurred because by the time these reformist measures were enacted both forces, to a large degree, had already consolidated their power. The Spanish state of the XVIIIth century may have been a state which wanted to recover lost strength, but it was also a state which revived a long tradition: a centralist and authoritarian tendency which preceded XVIIIth century absolutism.27 As such Bourbon reformism only reaffirmed already existing inclinations. On the other hand, the Chilean élite had been obtaining parcels of power which it was unwilling to give up. Surviving a wave of animosity directed by a progressively powerful state was to strengthen it thus even more.

This relative strength vis-à-vis one another was well known. Neither of the two contending forces ignored it. As a matter of fact, both incorporated it when devising their


political strategies. Hence, the struggle which ensued during the XVIIIth century between the Crown and local power did not derive in a frontal clash between adversaries intent in destroying one another. Rather, what each force attempted to do was to recognise rival strength, use the opponent's sources of power and in the end try to co-opt it to its own advantage. This meant that concessions and transactions would prevail.

Wealth and Social Power

On a political level, the élite during the XVIIIth century to consolidate its power, had to cooperate with a state which was sometimes hostile. On an economic and social level, though, it sufficed to take advantage of new and favourable conditions.

Agricultural conditions during the XVIIIth century were very positive. We have already mentioned how a growing Peruvian demand for wheat, beginning in 1687, stimulated cereal production. We have also alluded to the significant demographic growth

28 The conflict between the Governor and prominent noblemen in 1738 concerning the payment of dues for holding posts in the army and militia is a case in point. The nobility defended its right to be exempted on the bases of justice, fueros and prerogative to have honours and benefits. The Governor perceiving the power the élite had, asked the king to dispense payment. In turn, he was able to build a working alliance with the élite in the cabildo; see MEZA (1958), pp 275-276.
throughout the century. Chilean landowners had at their disposal surplus land potentially fit for farming together with a cheap and submissive labour force. When towards the mid-century different factors slowed down demand — basically revitalised wheat production in Perú accompanied by a policy of fixed prices officially enforced by the Viceroy, and the maintenance of monopoly control by Peruvian ship owners — Chilean landowners were able to continue to expand by lowering costs and increasing the volume of production. A consolidated hacienda framework built around the system of inquilinaje, allowed them to bear a situation which otherwise would have carried more serious consequences.

Numerous indicators show that agriculture was a good business throughout the XVIIIth century. The value of land increased. And even if profits which could be obtained from land did not surpass average interest rates, in the end agricultural investment produced profits which were more stable than those which resulted from commerce where price falls or stagnations would often occur. Investment in land did not decline, the size of properties tended to increase; there was


30 Cf. FELSTINER (1970) pp 57-58; BAUER (1975), p 10; BARBIER (1980) pp 40, 114. BARBIER mentions the case of a property bought in 1736 for $ 18,000 which was resold for $ 201,400 in 1782.
very little subdivision and a high concentration. We also know that agricultural rents rose, and the price of livestock doubled in the course of the century. Moreover, livestock production during the XVIIIth century increased.

Commercial activity was also a source of wealth. As far as Chile is concerned, the XVIIIth century meant the opening of numerous alternative commercial routes. Cape Horn was opened to French ships during the War of Succession. Subsequently, commercial exemptions granted to the South Seas Company allowed commercial traffic with the British through Buenos Aires. Later on, during the 1740s, the navios de registro were introduced, thus ending the system of flotas, and lastly in 1778 free trade


According to CARMAGNANI, the concentration of lands must be interpreted as an effort to reduce costs. KINSBRUNER (1973) pp 14-16, dissents with respect to the concentration of land; he thinks that division was much higher.

32 Figures based on tithe records show that between 1680-1689 (for the Santiago region) the average annual collection amounted to $140,000 whereas for the period 1730-1739 an average annual total of $341,000 was reached. Annual increase was 1%. From the 1770s on, this growth decreased slightly, to 0.5%. Concepción was somewhat slow in increasing its agricultural output. La Serena's production was to depend on the progress of local mining. Towards the end of the decade of 1790, La Serena would reach its highest agricultural growth: 1.3%. Exports of tallow also went up during the XVIIIth century. In the Santiago region, the value of the annual export production rose from $280,000 for 1690-1699 to $1,350,000 for 1800-1809. See CARMAGNANI (1973); MÖRNER (1987) pp 307, 313.
with different Spanish ports was decreed. That this growing trade was to be in general beneficial to the ruling élite can be ascertained by the fact that the ascendancy of most families prominent at the end of the XVIIIth century coincides with the opening of this commerce in the period 1700-1746. In some cases, the commercial appeal stimulated the establishment of different business branches outside of Chile. And even though towards the end of the century a number of difficulties—basically oversupply of goods and currency outflow—began to be noticed, the level of prices throughout the century tended to be stable.

During the XVIIIth century, mining also experienced an extraordinary growth. In the last forty years figures for the average annual growth for the extraction of copper, silver and  

33 Between 1701-1724 at least 153 French ships visited the coasts of Perú and Chile; and between 1778-1809 it is estimated that close to 290 North-American ships visited Chilean waters. BRADING (1987) p 133; E. PEREIRA SALAS, Los Primeros Contactos entre Chile y los Estados Unidos, 1778-1809 (1971). See also VILLALOBOS (1961) p 22; and in general VILLALOBOS (1965) and (1968).
35 DOMINGUEZ (1985), p 71n; BARBIER (1980), p 161. R. ROMANO in Una Economía Colonial, Chile en el Siglo XVIII (Buenos Aires 1965), is of a different opinion; according to him, prices for Chilean products between 1765 and 1810 appear to show a tendency either towards stagnation or to a descent. On this discussion see also, H. RAMIREZ NECOCHEA, Antecedentes Económicos de la Independencia de Chile (1967) p 85 note 95; M. CARMAGNANI, El Salariado Minero en Chile Colonial. Su Desarrollo en una Sociedad Provincial: el Norte Chico, 1690-1800 (Santiago 1963); A. DE RAMON and J. M. LARRAIN, Orígenes de la Vida Económica Chilena, 1659-1808 (1982).
gold increased considerably. The new commercial conditions diversified the destination of this production. And in some cases, silver in particular, there are clear indications that a state development policy was behind this growth. The Crown's interest was that Chile obtain higher levels of production and that the colony participate in a wider commercial market, so long as this was to mean higher fiscal income.

Another source of wealth for the ruling group was the internal financial market. Tax-farming and money-lending were important activities for many members of the élite.

This broad development of the economy was to benefit the élite globally. One of the characteristics of the Chilean ruling group during the XVIIIth century was its economic diversification. It was not unusual for a merchant to be at the same time a landowner, money-lender and mine proprietor, government contractor and holder of a public post, or any other

36 The north of the country (the Norte Chico) experienced, during the period 1720-1750, a significant mineral growth. The total value of gold, silver and copper production increased from an average of $425,000 during the decade of 1770 to nearly $1,000,000 during the decade of 1790. Cf. HALPERIN (1985) p 49; CARMAGNANI (1963) and (1973); RAMIREZ NECOCHÉA (1967) pp 51-52; BARBIER (1980) pp 22-23, 114; L. M. MENDEZ, Instituciones y Problemas de la Minería en Chile, 1787-1826 (1979); DOMINGUEZ (1985) pp 72-73; BRADING (1987) p 147; P. BLAKEWELL, "Mining" in CLAH (1987) pp 240-241.

37 BARBIER (1980) p 114, mentions that the state furnished a greater quantity of mercury for the extraction of silver.


possible combination. Obviously, this was to permit a high level of stability within the ruling group; temporal losses in one activity could be compensated by profits in others. At the same time, this diversification helped to avoid economic conflicts of interest within the elite, as well as the emergence of specific sectors of the economy claiming predominance.

The ruling group was also to take advantage of a series of mechanisms during the XVIIIth century which were to help increase and make more noticeable its power and prestige within a society which was becoming increasingly homogenous from a racial point of view. The ruling group was also to manifest a strong tendency to monopolise social power once it was able to consolidate itself and to surround it with an exclusive.

40 A good example of this multiplicity of activities can be seen in the person of the Conde de la Conquista; see EYZAGUIRRE (1966).

41 There is a general agreement on the relative ethnic homogeneity of the Chilean population, north of the Bio-Bio, towards the end of the XVIIIth century. During the 1770s only 10% of the population of the central region was classified as Indian, and the negro and mulato population was estimated in 12%. The assertion made by COLLIER (1967) that "mestizos went to form well over half the total population of Chile in 1800" (p 4), seems perfectly reasonable. The 1813 Census --interesting not only for its data but also for the taxonomy it uses in order to visualise the racial composition of the country-- estimated in 74% and in 10% respectively the "español" and "mestizo" populations. It is estimated that the number of negroes and mulatoes, towards the end of the XVIIIth century, was between 25,000 and 32,000; the number of slaves only 6,000; only 4,000 slaves remained in 1823, the date of abolition. The estimated figures for the Indian population of Arauco, fluctuate between 95,000 to 200,000.

On this subject, see: CARMAGNANI (1967); BAUER (1975) p 14; G. FELIU CRUZ, La Abolición de la Esclavitud en Chile (1942); G. VIAL CORREA, El Africano en el Reino de Chile (1957); Censo de 1813 (1953).
aristocratic halo which had no precedents.

Two of the most frequent means used in this respect were the constitution of entails and the purchase of titles of nobility. In the period from 1684 to 1796 the Santiago élite established more than 18 mayorazgos and acquired 9 títulos de Castilla.42 It is noteworthy that the number and rhythm of these creations tended to accentuate during the second half of the XVIIIth century, and that the sectors which were generally favoured by these grants were relatively "new" to the élite, associated with commerce.43 Apparently, we are dealing here with a process of social legitimation on the part of a sector which obviously had benefited from the new economic conditions. This process of legitimation became more evident in so far as it tended to assume an aristocratic nature. The Chilean ruling group throughout the XVIIIth century accumulated wealth and resorted to social mechanisms which allowed it to perpetuate its

42 This subject is analysed in: BARBIER (1972) and (1980); FELSTINER (1970) pp 68-69, 72; EYZAGUIRRE (1965) pp 254-255; R. DONOSO, Las Ideas Políticas en Chile (1946, Buenos Aires 1975) pp 103-106; D. AMUNATEGUI SOLAR, La Sociedad Chilena del Siglo XVIII: Mayorazgos y Títulos de Castilla (1901, 1903, 1904).

43 BARBIER (1980) pp 41-48; FELSTINER (1970) pp 68-69. According to FELSTINER, of the 14 principal mayorazgos, at least 9 of them were founded by men who had made their wealth in trade, only one originated in an encomienda, many of their founders arrived in Chile during the XVIIIth century, and all of them except one were instituted after 1700. The same author, while referring to the titles of nobility, states: that all 12 of them were granted between 1684 and 1787, half of them were assigned to creoles, and the remaining were in the hands of creoles towards 1810. It should be noted also that the most prestigious titles were held by merchants; this was the case of the Conde de la Conquista, of the Marqués de Montepío, of the Marqués de Casa Real, and of the Marqués de Pica.
wealth and maintain it undivided.

During the XVIIIth century the elite at first tended to display a certain degree of social openness; subsequently it became more restricted. This occurred when social prestige was secured and an effort was made to make it appear aristocratic. This was the case with a number of families originally from the Basque provinces which, even though they arrived relatively late to Chile towards the end of the XVIIth and beginnings of the XVIIIth centuries, ascended rapidly to the highest social stratum. Between 1780 and 1810, 26 out of a sum total of 62 alcaldes of Santiago (42%) were of Basque origin, an extraordinary number if we bear in mind that the Chilean population of Basque origin scarcely reached 11% in 1810. (44) To acquire such status these families had to make use of all the mechanisms at their disposal: they acquired social connections through marriages with royal officials and with already established families; their members participated actively in political affairs; they went through each and every one of the different stages which made up the 'career of honours', and finally some of these families established entails in favour of their descendants or purchased titles of nobility.

Once they consolidate their economic and social power one can detect in these same families a tendency to "close" inwards. Marriages with public officials continued; they in

fact increased considerably. However, there was a noticeable
decline in the number of links with recently settled wealthy
commercial sectors. In addition to this there appeared a
certain tendency towards "clanishness" which manifested itself in
a number of ways. These families preferred to constitute
commercial enterprises solely with relatives. They established
compadrAzgo links only with members of their own family.
Endogamic marriages became more frequent; we often encounter
marriages with widowed sisters-in-law in order to avoid the
return of dowries. It was not unusual for different branches of
the same family to live in one communal house. And finally,
nepotist criteria in public appointments became frequent.
Obviously, these "clans" involved highly extended families, not
nuclear ones, hence this relative tendency to "close" inwards
which we have referred to has to be seen in the light of a
closing-up which embraced and occurred within the élite as a
whole. As a result of this concentration the élite became more
and more inter-related by blood and kinship links, and acquired
thus a growing social coherence which set it apart and
distinguished it from the rest of society.

45 R. COUYOUMDJIAN BERGAMALI, "Los Magnates Chilenos del
Siglo XVIII" in RCHLG (1968) p 136.
46 FELSTINER (1970) pp 28, 33-52, 86-87, 98, 100; BAUER
(1975) p 18.
47 According to FELSTINER (1970) p 103, towards 1810
probably every member of the creole nobility, or the wealthy
non-nobility, was distantly related by kinship. The Larrain
family, for instance, was linked by way of marriage with at least
seven of the thirteen main entailed families of Chile; Ibid., p
It is significant that this process whereby the élite assumed a more aristocratic character, based on an increasing social rigidity, coincided with what was occurring in the rest of society. During the XVIIIth century, both legally as well as in terms of racial prejudice, there was an attempt to introduce a number of differentiations which pretended to make social and racial groups "hermetic compartments" difficult to penetrate. In any case, we are far from the permeable, mobile and fluid society of early times. On the contrary, we are dealing with a society more and more stratified according to stande-like parameters. As far as the élite was concerned, this status defined profile which would identify and distinguish this ruling group, was made possible though by the evolution of a more aristocratic order.

Characterisation of the Elite

The nature of the élite which crystallised its power during the XVIIIth century has been subject to historical analysis and debate. According to some authors we are dealing 47

47. Two hundred families are calculated to have made-up the "vecindario noble" at the end of the XVIIIth century; BAUER (1975) p 17.

here with a feudal phenomenon; others perceive it as capitalist.49

Overall, the Chilean colonial élite manifests an ambiguity which makes it difficult to apply these typologies. The landowning basis of this élite, the self-sufficient character of the hacienda, the close links of dependence between patron and inquilino and the jurisdictional latitude wielded by landowners, especially during the XVIIth century, would seem to give strong arguments to those who define this élite as feudal. However, this view does not take into consideration a number of other aspects which seem to deny or at least dilute this qualification. We have seen how the Chilean hacienda from the beginning was closely associated with the export trade. Agricultural owners always participated in urban commercial activities. We have referred to a commercial-landowning group, and we have stressed the economic diversity of this élite. A permanent interest in participating in local politics by this group, has also been detected; élite members followed the established cursus honorum and manifested a constant eagerness to capture the state. Therefore, neither agriculture, nor the self-sufficiency of the rural world in and by themselves defined this élite, even during

the XVIIth century.

With respect to certain forms of domination which appear to be feudal, it is worth to recall some things we have already alluded to. The Crown, after all, established a number of mechanisms which tried to prevent neo-feudal recurrences in America. Encomiendas, notwithstanding their seigneurial nature, were one of these mechanisms. Actually, the possession of encomiendas did not originate authentic fiefdoms. A great margin of autonomy with respect to the state was enjoyed, but all in all the state apparatus continued to have an important role to play.

In as much as the encomiendas and the mercedes were at the beginning awards granted by local authorities, the power of the encomendero group depended ultimately on the administrative structure. Later on, the power of the élite would lose its original prebendary character, becoming instead a consequence of its capacity to adapt itself and co-opt state power.

With respect to inquilinaje— a system in the end far

50 According to VITALE (1969), the exploitation of encomienda hand labour points more to a slave than feudal system, which does not make it incompatible with a capitalist orientation; see II, pp 16-17.

51 In this regard we differ from GONGORA (1975b) p 431, who appears to think that the prebendary character persists. However, once the élite comes to participate in the state through co-optation, the concessionary character of these grants passes; they become instead profits resulting from the influence exercised within the state. Awards and donations become perks or utilities derived from political participation.
more important for the Chilean elite than the encomiendas—52 we know that it emerged within an economic order which showed some capitalist characteristics, one of which was the fact that the working force was subject to contract even if this contract was conditioned by monopolistic practices. We agree therefore with those authors who reject the feudal character of this elite while admitting its strong seigneurial features, in particular the clientelistic imprint which characterised traditional relations between the elite and the popular mass.53

But even if we were to admit this non-feudal character, it would still remain open to question whether or not we are dealing with an aristocracy or not. Once again we are faced with ambiguous aspects which make it difficult to be categorical in this respect.

Aristocratic features abound. In the beginning, the strongly militarised society was imbued with a warlike spirit of medieval origin, and there was a distinct overestimation of hidalguía, notwithstanding the fact that the origin of the first

52 The encomiendas were abolished in Chile in 1789, but their decline dates back to an earlier period. According to estimates for 1788, there were only 49 encomiendas. According to M. I. GONZALEZ POMES, "La Encomienda Indígena en Chile Durante el Siglo XVIII", Historia, 5 (1966) p 77, the Indian population still under encomiendas in 1791 did not reach beyond 100 Indians. See also MAC BRIDE (1793) pp 75, 77; GONGORA (1971) pp 67, 74, 103; GONGORA (1975b) pp 430-431. On the other hand, the system of inquilinaje which originates during the XVIIth century did not decline until agrarian reform during the 1960s. On inquilinaje, see GONGORA, Origen de los Inquilinos de Chile Central (1960); and SALAZAR (1985).

settlers and conquerors corresponded rather to villagers and commoners. Subsequently stände-like characteristics became more prominent. Moreover, other ascending groups aspired to achieve the values and style of living associated with "noble" sectors of society. Finally, during the XVIIIth century already achieved preeminence became even more solid thanks to the process of "aristocratization" which legitimated as well as restricted the highest social status.

Notwithstanding all we have been saying, parallel to these "aristocratic" features, there were also a number of "bourgeois" elements. The access to the highest levels of society was always relatively fluid and depended on multiple sources of power. From the very beginning, wealth was a prominent means of ascent. Commercial activities, moreover, did not carry a social stigma. In fact, it is possible to chart out a typical social progression during the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries which starts with the accumulation of wealth in trade, continues with the purchase of land, and ends invariably with


55 GONGORA (1975b) p 448.


public posts, titles and honours. All the families of the XVIIIth century which belonged to the so called "vecindario noble" had current or former commercial links. It is worth mentioning also that this archtypical progress was relatively fast during the XVIIIth century. It permitted the rise of numerous immigrant groups --amongst which stand out a significant number of merchants and royal officers of Basque origins-- to the highest echelons in barely one or two generations. In short, the supposed "aristocracy" of the end of the XVIIIth century was relatively new; it did not necessarily date back to an encomendero past or to a noble peninsular lineage.

More so, no one doubts that social status could be bought. This was particularly true with respect to entails but also valid for the purchase of titles of nobility. The élite of the end of the XVIIIth century was not made up solely of the titled and entailed families even if they were their most visible

58 The total number of immigrants who arrived in Chile between 1701 and 1810 has been estimated in approximately 24,000 persons; it is thought, also, that 45% came from Navarre and the Basque provinces. FELSTINER (1970) p21; BAUER (1975) p 16. On the importance of the Basques during the XVIIIth century, see also FELSTINER (1970) pp 4, 20-27.

59 FELSTINER (1970) pp 28, 69, 86; GONGORA (1975a) pp 104-106; BARBIER (1980) pp 39, 41ff. The incidence of a larger number of mayorazgos than of titles of nobility can be attributed to the fact that in order to establish the former it was not necessary to prove aristocratic lineage or to have served the Crown. It should be noted also that the obtention of mayorazgos did not concede powers of jurisdiction or tax exemptions, GONGORA (1975a) p 163.
and well known members. Lastly, a number of characteristics can be attributed to the highest ranks of the XVIIIth century -- namely an enterprising spirit, realism, parsimony, common sense, and narrow-mindedness -- which coincide in part with a certain ideal-type of the bourgeoisie.

In sum, it is not possible to define the ruling group in any one categorical manner. The Chilean colonial élite was neither an aristocracy nor a bourgeoisie proper. The economic structure which sustained this ruling group exhibited mixed features, at once pre-capitalist and proto-capitalist. A similar situation holds true for social and political aspects; there were traditional as well as modern features without any one of the two predominating. Probably this is due to the fact that we are faced with an American phenomenon difficult to frame within typologies originally designed for Europe. We should also bear in mind that we are dealing here with a process of long duration, not yet finished, thus preventing a more affirmative definition. Hence, we think that it is not appropriate to talk

60 BARBIER (1980) pp 42-43. In some cases, élite members would spend enormous sums in dowries when they very well could have destined similar amounts in order to purchase titles of nobility. FELSTINER (1970) mentions the case of Martín José de Larrain who invested approximately a quarter of his patrimony in dowries for his daughters, p 37.

61 According to EDWARDS (1976) p 17, the Chilean élite is mixed. EDWARDS states: "But in Chile, the bourgeois revolution had already come about in peace during colonial times; our upper class was at once aristocracy and bourgeoisie when the hour of Independence struck," p 25. According to GONGORA (1975a) p 164, this mentality is more typical of immigrants and not of a "bourgeois class".
of a traditional aristocracy or of a modern bourgeoisie, but rather of a tendency to adopt aristocratic or bourgeois features, in short of an élite both traditional and modernizing.

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The effects produced by Bourbon reformism were mixed. Through them, the Crown reassumed the initiative, and the state came to be perceived as the channel for political, economic and social processes. In order to achieve this, the state had to confront creole influence, which resisted the obstacles put up by the Crown. However, in Chile this confrontation did not alienate local groups. This was due to several factors: the transactional manner with which these reformist measures were implemented, the good use to which this élite put certain conditions which were favourable to it, and the enormous capacity which it showed in accommodating itself to the new limitations imposed by a renewed and revitalised state. Eventually, said adaptation or co-optation on the part of the local powerful frustrated the original pretensions against it which inspired these imperial reforms, and made possible even what they pretended to avoid: its strengthening as a ruling group.
In effect, the XVIIith century saw the consolidation of the ruling élite which would be protagonist of Independence, an élite difficult to characterise but in which one detects aspects both traditional and modern.
CHAPTER IV

THE ENLIGHTENMENT IN CHILE

In the previous two chapters we have seen how a series of administrative, economic and social changes promoted by the Crown during the XVIIIth century altered significantly the historical course which had been slowly evolving in Chile. A similar phenomenon was to occur in the cultural field. Important changes would be accompanied by accommodation and flexibility. The traditional world-view may have suffered severe strains, but in the end a moderate course was imposed which harmonised the new with the traditional.

Overall, the pre-Bourbon period stands out culturally for its predominantly Catholic world-view. Culture, moreover, sustained itself on a local base. It lacked a constant sustenance from European centres. And particularly noticeable is the weak role which the secularized world played within this sphere. However, as in the economic, social and political fields, the Bourbon administration during the XVIIIth century reversed this situation assuming a more protagonistic role, while exerting a greater control on cultural initiative than in the past.

Throughout this century one can perceive in Chile a growing presence of the state in cultural matters. The Enlightenment was introduced, through an official variant which did not question or lessen the loyalty felt towards the
established order, even though the foundations of political legitimacy suffered modifications. A greater awareness and openness towards non-Spanish influences can also be noticed. Finally, there began to emerge an ideological handling of politics, until then unknown. This indicates that a qualitative change towards a more modern way of looking at things was taking place.

Pre-Enlightenment Culture

In the beginning, the culture which emerged in Spanish America was a product of a complex process of transculturization which fused Hispanic and indigenous elements. The encounter of the conquistador with an alien physical world and with autochthonous cultures of which he had no previous knowledge, required of him the need to adapt culturally to new conditions. The Spaniard had to confront languages, religions, structures of domination and production in some cases extremely sophisticated and difficult to eradicate. He had to resort to this indigenous culture at times in order to maintain his presence and supremacy. Therefore, a variety of mixed cultural forms was to emerge.

Although a cultural syncretism was to result from this,

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and was to influence both poles in the relation, the final outcome would not be balanced. In this process of cultural adaptation, which ran parallel to racial mixing, the Western or Hispanic element outweighed the Indian component. This transculturalization was part of a wider process of conquest and submission. Once in America, the Spaniard was to discover, settle, racially mix and integrate himself with the unknown, but in turn would impose himself and dominate.2

This dominant world-view was above all Christian. Well into the XVIIIth century the principal cultural agent was the Church, especially the religious orders. Five congregations arrived in Chile during the XVIth century: Mercedarians (1549), Franciscans (1552), Dominicans (1557), Jesuits (1593) and Augustinians (1595). In addition to evangelising, these orders undertook several cultural tasks, amongst which stand out the construction of churches, the training of craftsmen, the administration of schools, the founding of universities and convents, the compiling of geographical information, the editing of vocabularies and grammars of native languages, and the defence of the dignity of the Indians.

The order that outshone the rest was the Jesuits.3

2 One of the more recent analyses on this subject can be found in T. TODOROV, La Conquista de América: La Cuestión del Otro (Mexico 1987).

3 On the Jesuits in Chile, see C. SILVA COTAPOS, Historia Eclesiástica de Chile (1925); HANISCH (1970); GODD (1984); VILLALOBOS (1986) III; F. ENRICH, Historia de la Compañía de Jesús de Chile (Barcelona 1891); D. BARROS ARANA, La Riqueza de los Antiguos Jesuítas de Chile (1973); G. VALDES BUNSTER, El
number of factors explain this cultural preeminence. Obviously, this was the richest and best organised religious order. Moreover, its interests covered all sorts of activities. The Jesuits incorporated a wide social spectrum; they were capable of working with blacks and Indians while at the same time educating the élite. Lastly, their presence was both urban and rural, and extended throughout the territory. In sum, their influence was varied and global.

A brief listing of the cultural production of the Jesuits in Chile is impressive both for its diversity and high quality. In their haciendas we find textile, ceramics, furniture and leather production; they planted vineyards, and manufactured religious artefacts. In the cities, they organised confraternities and stimulated popular devotions. In order to do this, they resorted to all sorts of means: festivities, processions, theatrical representations, musical expressions of all kinds, including songs in native dialects. Parallel to this, they built up an extraordinary educational network throughout Chile. They began with a philosophy course in Santiago in 1594, which was to be followed by numerous other institutions: the Colegio Máximo de San Miguel (1600), one of two papal universities in the country; the Convictorio de San Francisco Javier (1611); and the Convictorio de San José in Concepción (1613). Subsequently, they expanded their educational labour to Bucalemu, Valdivia, La Serena, Castro, Chillán, San Felipe, Poder Económico de los Jesuitas en Chile, 1593-1767 (1985).
Copiapó, Los Andes, Valparaiso, Quillota, San Fernando and Talca.4

In their institutions the most socially conspicuous creoles were educated. From its rank and file would emerge the leading writers, naturalists, theologians and chroniclers of the colony, amongst others: Alonso de Ovalle, Diego de Rosales, Luis de Valdivia, Juan Ignacio de Molina, Miguel de Olivares, Felipe Gómez de Vidaurre, Manuel de Lacunza. In addition, German Jesuits were to bring to Chile the first printing press, and introduce a variety of Bavarian baroque which was to distinguish XVIIIth century silver and goldsmithing, painting and sculpture.5 We also know of Jesuit chemists, cartographers, explorers and linguists. In brief, the Jesuits were to cover the whole range of cultural expressions known at this time.

Given this strong Jesuit imprint, the pre-Enlightenment culture of Chile has been characterised as baroque.6 This culture was permeated by an "integrist", organic, world-view, wherein each part went on to create a coherent whole. Art, science, religion and social organisation, all of them were made


6 The characterisation of this culture as baroque is generalised, cf. GODOY (1984); VILLALOBOS (1986) III; EYZAGUIRRE (1965) pp 143ff; MORANDE (1984); C. COUSINO, Razón y Ofrenda (1990).
to participate in an all-embracing global programme. This explains the multiplicity of interests which identify the cultural production of the Jesuits. Each activity was carried out independently but it was integrated into a more thorough plan or design whose end was the greater glory of God and the development of the human and natural potential. No sector of society was to be left out of this project. No cultural milieu was scorned or neglected. There was no implicit hierarchy which served to distinguish high or academic culture from more popular expressions.7 Profane activities such as the administration of an hacienda --and we should not forget that the Compañía was "the main economic enterprise existing in the country during the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries" 8-- the teaching of the élite, and or the propagation of the faith amongst the lower echelons of society, all of these were imbued by the same theological and sacred ethos. A sort of cultural compartmentalization took place, but each and every one of the sub-products or results converged eventually in a collective proposal, in an all-embracing summa.

Undoubtedly, we are dealing here with a baroque conception of culture. Not just because this was in fact the Spanish, Counter-Reformist, "official" position, but also because it coincided with prevailing necessities and conditions. The


baroque is known to have been an artistic phenomenon which permitted the spread of a homogenous world-view while accepting local diversities. Hence, it fitted perfectly well with the plural nature of the Spanish empire. It reconciled the inevitably spontaneous regional heterogeneity with the imperative need to unify politically. Moreover, on a purely aesthetic level, the baroque in as much as it did not follow strict stylistic models or self-contained formal rules, could easily adopt autochthonous cultural contributions—be they negro, Indian, mestizo and or creole—thus accentuating the cumulative transcultural process which we have referred to already. Lastly, it imprinted in the telluric and sensual Spanish American fabric a transcendent and militant sense of salvation, of Western and Christian origin.

Deep down, this baroque-Christian world-view was derived from late scholasticism, a tradition of thought which prevailed in the socio-political order. According to this originally Aristotelian and Thomist view—expressed by Vitoria, Suárez and Molina—society exists so that man may develop all of his human potential. He is to be an integral component of an objective and organic order wherein each thing and each individual has assigned a specific place and role. Human affairs form part of a natural world, in turn ruled by what is thought to be eternal. Hence, man has been given reason, a

quality which can only reach its full potential in faith and "in grace". Lastly, the ulterior social goal which must be attained is none other than the natural harmony amongst the different and constitutive parts of the whole, which on a political level is called the "common good", and on an imperial administrative level translate into an idiosyncratic group of nations and peoples adapting themselves to a universal moral order.10

The points of contact between this philosophical conception and the cultural world-view to which we referred above are indeed numerous. Both share a social-communitarian sense, a tendency to perceive things from an organic and natural structural angle, and a desire to attune the individual with the universal, all of which moreover are viewed in religious or trascendental terms.

Summing up, we can say that Chilean culture began with the adaptation to the natural environment and native milieu on the part of the predominant Spanish order. It acquired an eminently Christian physiognomy given the central importance which the Church had in this foundational society. One can perceive only a weak secular presence; the sole exceptions were the schools established by the cabildos to teach reading and writing, and the training in technical skills offered by the guilds, also dependent on the cabildos.11 One can detect, also, an obvious tendency towards localism in the thematic contents of

the embryonic literature of this period. Not surprisingly, war was the single most important subject treated in epic poetry and in the historical chronicles, genres which attained a high standard. All in all though, religion was the central element of this culture, and the scholastic-baroque-orientation the defining factor in this world-view. The hegemonic role played by the Jesuits in the artistic, artisan, literary, educational and theological production to a large degree determined this.

The Bourbon Enlightenment

The cultural order which had been slowly evolving from the Conquest onwards was also affected by the reformist tide of the new Bourbon dynasty. As in the political, economic and social spheres, the main impact came from the outstanding role which the state was to assume henceforth. Until then its attitude had been largely passive, leaving cultural direction to the Church. However, in the XVIIIth century we can observe a state cultural dirigisme which was to accentuate the inevitable clash between the previous baroque world-view and the new

12 The main poetic works are La Araucana by A. DE ERCILLA Y ZUNIGA, published in Madrid in three parts (1569, 1578, 1589); and Arauco Domado by P. de ONA (1596). The war of Arauco was a constant source of inspiration for numerous chronicles written by P. de VALDIVIA, A. de GONGORA Y MARMOLEJO, P. MARINO DE LOBERA, J. de VIVAR, A. GONZALEZ DE NAJERA, F. DE PINEDA Y BASCUNAN, and V. CARVALLO GOYENECHE.
enlightened conceptions which began to be imposed "from above".

Where this state *dirigisme* manifested itself most clearly was in education. In the course of the XVIIIth century, the state permitted and supported the creation of three institutions which changed the prevailing culture. The first of these was the Real Universidad de San Felipe, founded in 1738 as a result of previous petitions and financial backing from the Santiago Cabildo. The second institution was the Convictorio Carolino (1778), an establishment which was to replace the old Convictorio de San Francisco Javier of the Jesuits, and which was to serve as the main teaching establishment of higher education. Finally, in 1797, the Crown was to permit the founding of the Academia de San Luis, a technical institution, directed by Manuel de Salas, key figure of the Enlightenment in Chile.13

These three institutions reveal a notorious turn-about in the cultural sphere. All of them manifest a strong secular character in their constitution and management. They owed their existence to local and practical needs: the University was to train professionals who otherwise would have gone to Lima; the Academy was to impart courses in arithmetic, geometry and drawing --sciences which had no place in any of the other establishments--; the Convictorio was to fill the educational vacuum left after the expulsion of the Jesuits. These three

institutions also show an elitist conception of education; finally, they all have a distinct similarity with equivalent establishments elsewhere in Spanish America and Spain, which confirms once more their participation in the enlightened cultural paradigm promoted by a modernizing Crown.

This statist and enlightened dirigisme can also be detected in university and ecclesiastical curricula. The teaching of Suárez and of other Jesuit writers— for instance, Mariana's theory of tyrannicide— was prohibited because their doctrines were thought to be dangerous and contrary to the centralising and absolutist line followed by the Crown. The systematic study of national law, be it Spanish or Spanish American, was stimulated. Roman law ceased to be the main course of study in legal training, becoming instead a merely preparatory or didactic discipline. In canon law, Gallican doctrines were propagated; after all, this was the regalist current most favoured by the Bourbon Monarchy. Lastly, natural law conceptions began to be founded on reason, not on revelation, in accordance with the thinking of Pufendorf and other authors, which was to lead the way for the acceptance of a rationalist and voluntarist view of the state.15


These curricular changes not only introduced and reinforced absolutist currents, but also coincided with several other enlightened inclinations. The unquestioned predominance which philosophy and theology possessed in the XVIth and XVIIth century universities had to be shared from now on with other disciplines of a more professional kind, such as civil law, mathematics, and medicine. For the first time, Latin ceased to be the language of instruction. Aristotelianism and scholasticism, until then hegemonic, were displaced by philosophic eclecticism; and modern physics and the new cosmography were taught for the first time. Finally, the traditional humanist education, which stressed a global or integral knowledge, was to be substituted by an encyclopedic conception whose main object of study was the natural world.16

The support given by the state to enlightened initiatives can be appreciated in other matters, not just in the academic field. The numerous public works which were built during the XVIIIth century used a neoclassical language, which differed from the baroque, the style which predominated until then, for its emphasis on equilibrium, stability and intentional conscious clarity. With the help of the neoclassical Italian architect, Joaquín Toesca, Governor Ambrosio O'Higgins was to carry out an extensive urban remodelling of Santiago whose main

"Aspectos de la 'Ilustración Católica' en el Pensamiento y la Vida Eclesiástica Chilena (1770-1814)" reprinted in Estudios de Historia de las Ideas y de Historia Social (Valparaíso 1980).

characteristic would be an engineering aesthetic bias, that stressed simple, clear, rational and ordered forms, which were expressed in broad alamedas, bridges, inter-urban roads and functional constructions (for instance La Moneda, the government houses, and the Aduana building). This purist bias can also be observed on a religious level, in a certain liturgical, secularist and disciplined orientation preferred by the local clergy; in different attempts to eradicate popular devotional practices; and in general, in a growing hostility both official and ecclesiastical shown towards the monastic orders. Lastly, this highly formalized rationalism manifested itself in the bureaucratic communications and in legal statutes --one of the most successful channels of dissemination of the new enlightened world-view.

In light of what we have been saying so far, one can obviously speak of an Enlightenment influence in the Chilean context, but with some qualifications. To begin with, the enlightened current which predominated in Chile during the XVIIIth century was of a Spanish and official origin. We find the same tendency which prevailed amidst ministerial circles of the Crown --the so called "Catholic Enlightenment" associated with authors like Feijoo, Jovellanos and Campomanes-- a line of thinking which was religiously orthodox and absolutist in

political matters, keen on harmonising Spanish tradition with the new modern European outlook, a position which emphasised administrative and economic themes more than political ones, in short a reformist kind of Enlightenment.19

The enlightened thought which was spread in Spanish America and in Chile during this period was highly instrumental to the new Bourbon order. In philosophy, it was characterised by an eclecticism which distanced it from global systemic formulae. In politics, it expressed itself in mainly practical and absolutist terms. It preferred changes promoted institutionally "from above", reinforcing thus even more the hierarchical order. Its inspiration derived from statist currents, the most prominent being regalism in its different variations: the support of national law, the revaluation of the Visigothic past, and the propagation of Gallicanism. This last current was especially relevant in so far as it opposed papal curialism and monasticism, favoured the divine rights of kings, and pretended to subject the Church to the secular order. Finally, it conceived the state in worldly, not moral-religious, terms which facilitated its activity and increased its power.

Another aspect which we must bear in mind in order to evaluate the impact of the Enlightenment in Chile was the relative reach of the new thought. Not only did a more attenuated and less radical version of the Enlightenment

predominate, but it had to coexist with lines of thought and with practices which remained traditional. In the academic field for instance, notwithstanding the changes which took place, there was a great deal of continuity. The importance of theology persisted in University studies, most academics still came from ecclesiastical circles, scholastic teaching methods lingered, modern languages were left out of the curriculum, libraries did not change much, academic titles were sold, and for the most part the principal institutions of higher education languished during this period.20

To this we should add the adaptable character which the Enlightenment had in Spanish America and Chile. Its importance must be measured in terms of dissemination and vulgarisation, not in original production. It was a peripheral Enlightenment; it depended on external cultural stimuli coming from cultural centres in Spain, which in turn were influenced by the French.21 And last, we should mention the disassociation which existed between this thinking and the social reality in which it had to operate. In Spanish America, the Enlightenment was above all a vertical imposition; it was not the outcome of social transformations.22 Its utopian and "architectonic"


22 GONGORA (1979) pp 40-41.
character—in other words, its tendency to "construct" ideal future scenarios to which one must aspire—make this Enlightenment a precursor of all subsequent modern ideological movements in Spanish America.

All in all though, and notwithstanding these qualifications, in our opinion the influence of the Enlightenment constitutes a key element in the historical development of Chile. These characteristics, far from demonstrating its weakness, explain its impact. That it was official and reformist lessened its potential danger; in fact, this was to expedite state support, permit its spread and in the end make its influence possible. That it coexisted with other lines of thought which were more traditional, meant that its utopian and inconclusive character persisted, becoming an important aspect of its appeal. That it had to be appropriated and adapted—not original—facilitated its practical use; it was just a question of applying already formulated paradigms without having to design them. That it was imposed "from above", made it so much more effective, given that it had to operate within a political and social system which was in itself vertical; it reached those whom it had to reach, the circles of power. Finally, that its origins were predominantly Spanish, did not exclude other possible sources of inspiration, sources which, as time went on, won sufficient ground against the official version.

Enlightened ideas penetrated by various channels, not only via official conduits: the growing commercial traffic,
both legal and contraband; the constant flow of immigrants; the arrival in Chile of several scientific expeditions; and the more frequent voyages which some Chileans undertook to other places in Spanish America and Europe. All of these were to permit a greater contact with progress and world transformations at the end of the century.

Numerous indications show how this growing contact meant increasing familiarity with enlightened ideas, some of them quite advanced. Long stays in Europe, such as that of José Antonio de Rojas (1772-1778) and that of his brother-in-law Manuel de Salas (1779-1784) allowed a more intimate knowledge of European improvements. It is possible that Rojas had direct personal contact with William Robertson and Benjamin Franklin.23 We know that Salas met Campomanes during his stay in Spain, and it is probable that he had first-hand knowledge of academies and philanthropic societies which would be useful for him later on in his participation in the Tribunal del Consulado, and as models for initiatives such as the establishment of the Academia de San Luis.24 We know that Rojas sent to Chile a large shipment of books, many of them prohibited but duly authorised in this case.

23 On José Antonio de Rojas, see: M. L. AMUNATEGUI, La Crónica de 1810 (1876, 1911) II; VILLALOBOS (1961) pp 116-145; R. DONOSO, Un Letrado del Siglo XVIII, el Doctor José Perfecto de Salas (Buenos Aires 1962).

amongst which were the Encyclopédie, texts by Rousseau, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Helvetius, D'Holbach, Buffon, Raynal and Bayle, books which in Chile he was to circulate amongst his friends.

A similar enlightened and encyclopaedic range can be seen in Juan Egaña, a jurist of Peruvian descent who arrived in Chile in 1789. His intellectual interests covered a wide spectrum: geography, navigation, physics, natural history, medicine, rhetoric, political philosophy. Egaña in his writings quotes Galileo, Bacon, Newton, Leibniz, Malpighis, Lalande, D'Alembert, Lavoisier, Linneus, Buffon, Condillac, Filangieri, a similar case was Juan Martínez de Rozas; from his inaugural speech to the Congreso Nacional of 1811, one can see that he was acquainted with Grotius, Pufendorf, Locke, Hume, Montesquieu and Rousseau.

On the whole, conditions were favourable for a spread of the Enlightenment. We know that the book trade was a profitable activity towards the beginning of the XIXth century; that censorship tended to be lax; that after 1776,


26 See the "Discurso de don Juan Martínez de Rozas", 4 July 1811, in SCL, I, pp 38-41.

the number of North-American ships which visited Chilean waters increased considerably and that through this channel Chileans learnt about the revolutionary experience of the Thirteen Colonies. Lastly, one can perceive a growing French influence in Chilean culture towards the turn of the century; and even if the Revolution was to motivate a strong repudiation of its excesses, considerable interest was shown towards revolutionary thinking, overcoming all the obstacles that the Crown put to prevent its spread. 29

In summary, the Enlightenment which arrived in Chile did not limit itself solely to the official Spanish version, even if this current was undoubtedly the one that predominated amongst local enlightened circles during the XVIIIth century. In any event the origin of this Enlightenment is not so crucial. The question of origins would be far more important if these enlightened ideas had been more radical or revolutionary, and if the role which they performed in the critical conjuncture of the break with Spain had been more direct. The impact of the Enlightenment in Chile did not centre on a specific set of ideas: it was to be more global and indirect, and not because of

28 LANNING (1961) p 72; see also J. T. MEDINA, Historia del Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición en Chile, (1952).

29 See HUSSEY (1961); J. R. SPELL Rousseau in the Spanish World Before 1833 (Austin 1938); B. LEWIN, Rousseau y la Independencia Argentina y Americana (Buenos Aires 1967); C. GAZMURI, "Libros e Ideas Políticas Francesas en la Gestación de la Independencia de Chile", in R. KREBS and C. GAZMURI editors, La Revolución Francesa y Chile (1990) pp 151-177.
On the contrary, it introduced a novel world-view, more modern in outlook; it did not incite a break with the established order, even though it altered somewhat the bases of traditional political legitimacy; and even if it did not have revolutionary repercussions, it set the conditions for a radical change that was to occur eventually in the political sphere.

An Incipient Modernization

The Enlightenment cautiously introduced modernity in an otherwise traditional society; it began to modify some long-held conceptions concerning political power; and it laid unknowingly, some of the bases of the eventual republican political order.

At this stage, the relation between Bourbon reformism and modernity, at least political modernity, ought to be sufficiently clear. The reforms which were promoted by the Crown during the XVIIIth century were a serious and calculated effort to modify some aspects of Spanish American and thus Chilean society which had emerged during the XVIth and XVIIth centuries.

30 We argue the same point later on in Chapters VI and VII. On the impact of the Enlightenment and of the French Revolution, see also A. JOCELYN-HOLT L., "Liberalismo y Modernidad. Ideología y Simbolismo en el Chile Decimonónico: Un Marco Teórico", in KREBS and GAZMURI (1990).
This reformist programme was to put an end to the parallel and endogeneous socio-political order that had sprung up as a result of the neglect which the metropolis had shown towards its overseas colonies. The state increased its power and presence, and compelled the ruling local elite to accommodate itself to the new order of things. And even though, in the end, a transaction was to take place, this did not mean that the crucial element of the Bourbon programme would be disregarded; the idea that the state was the only possible source of power was to take root and persist.

During the XVIIIth century a qualitative change occurred. The political order came to be seen as a malleable order, susceptible to planning and rational design. The state, moreover, became the only subject of this new political order. To maximise its strength, the state became more and more institutional, imposed a unitary conception of power, eliminated all possible competitors, and rationalised its ends. Thus, the traditional way of conceiving political power was discarded.31

The insistence on an ethical finality to power, as proposed by medieval and late scholasticism, lost its preponderance; a new voluntarist view of power came to the fore. The traditional corporative and organic sense which above all pursued social harmony became blurred. The state justified itself now, in eminently utilitarian terms, in relation to a

31 On the traditional neo-scholastic conception of power, see infra Chapter VII.
greater material welfare that must be attained. Deep down what happened was that the objective and natural order of things, which in turn was thought to be part of a more transcendental and all embracing order, became relative.

Eventually, this change was to bring about a number of radical but unintended consequences. From the Bourbon programme one could apparently deduce that everything could change. This of course was to reinforce political power; it attributed to the established order an almost unlimited potential. But in turn, it made this order more vulnerable. According to the traditional conception of power, everything had its assigned place; power served mainly to reaffirm an objective social order.32 Once this traditional conception lost ground to a neutral notion of power, voluntarist and utilitarian, lacking in apparent ethical limitations, and definable tautologically — power according to this new view, is simply legitimated by power—, then the road was left open for any one who obtained power to impose change. In other words, once a powerful instrument of change was conceived, capable apparently of changing everything —the state— and placed in the services of those who were to hold power, nothing could prevent other eventual changes.

32 The objectivity of this order can be inferred, on a theoretical level, from the Thomist natural law conception assumed by this traditional view of power; see: STOETZER (1979) pp 17ff; MORSE (1982) pp 33-36, 49, 70-71, 75, 85. On a social level, the objectivity of this order is given by the implicit corporativist and stände-like elements which define this conception of power; see DOMINGUEZ (1985) pp 23-24, 47-48, 51, 56, 65, 88, 97, 102, 166.
emanating from this very state now dominated by other perhaps different subjects with important quotas of power.

The latter was, of course, unforeseeable as was also the collapse of the monarchy, but it explains why in spite of the downfall of the monarchy the enlightened conception of power remained in force. The neutral manner with which this new conception defined those who control power was eventually to allow other actors to assume protagonic roles in the political arena. We are dealing here with a modern idea of power perfectly congruent with republicanism and with the aspirations of the local ruling group. This idea would prevail well beyond 1810. Equally important, though, is the fact that its persistence was to permit in turn a transition from an old to a new order of things, a transition which was to become more fluid and less disruptive, yet another example of how elements of continuity went together with elements of change.

This change in political conceptions was to require also a more global change in world-view. The prevailing culture, "integrist" and Catholic, was surely an obstacle to this new conception of power. For this reason the Bourbon state backed the new enlightened thought and did not shrink from altering the relations which had existed thus far between the temporal power and the Church, subordinating the latter to the state. This cost the state a powerful ally, and what is perhaps even more crucial, prevented a fusion between modernity and tradition from taking place within a traditional paradigm.
Actually, the Jesuits had made several serious attempts at harmonising both aspects during the XVIth and XVIIth centuries without altering the traditional foundations of the established order. They had proposed an organic patrimonialist medieval scholastic ordering, while subscribing though to the modern idea of a national Spanish empire; they had set the foundations for a *ius gentium* which has been characterised as modern, even though they backed their views in this matter using natural law; they had reconciled communitarian systems of production with a highly efficient entrepreneurial focus which permitted them to participate in intercolonial trade; and lastly, they had shown themselves relatively open to the new enlightened thinking. Nevertheless, this attempt to modernise from a still traditional angle was abruptly aborted. After 1767 attempts at harmonising continuity and change would only occur within a modernising conceptual framework.33

33 There is a tangential allusion to the "modernity" of the Jesuits and of the baroque in MORANDE (1984) pp 122, 142, 160. MORANDE believes that the Jesuits were the "predecessors of the developmentalist mentality which we know from the XXth century on". According to this same author, the Jesuits stimulated what he calls *criollismo* --a creole attempt to get rid of his own *mestizo* past-- an "artificial" and universalizing pretension which was to make the creole accept the modern "primacy of formal rationality" which negates History. This is an odd thesis. Does MORANDE think that the creoles by accepting a modernizing and universalist vision ceased to be historical subjects? MORANDE's tendency to conceive the only possible history in the Spanish American context as a *mestizo* history, and to define in turn the *mestizo* as a non-creole seems, to say the least, exaggerated. See the critique made by M. GONGORA to the latter book: "Cultura y Modernización en América Latina: un Comentario" Opciones, 5, (Enero-Abril 1985) p 130. On the "modernity" of the Jesuits, see GONGORA (1975a) pp 181, 205, 228ff. The subject has once again been brought forward in
It is in this context that the so-called "Catholic Enlightenment" ought to be inserted; this was a new attempt to fuse the two elements at play but now from the modernizing pole. In this proposition we find authoritarian, religious-orthodox and hierarchical features side by side with rationalist, utilitarian and secularizing pretensions. A neutral conception of power was accepted without lessening the traditional respect and loyalty owed to the monarchy. A total break with the old world-view was prevented by resorting to an eclectic, pragmatic, aggregative and dirigiste strategy. In sum, an equilibrium between what was new and what was persistent was reached, but more and more framed within a modernizing paradigm which emphasised change, expressed in an enlightened language with utopian and rationalist intentions.

All things considered, we think that the contribution COUSINO (1990) in more or less the same line of argument as that of MORANDE. See also MORSE (1982) pp 102-103, who is critical in this respect.

34 GONGORA argues that the "Catholic Enlightenment" was a inconclusive transition, but in no case a simple mélangé. GONGORA seems to say that the modernizing axis predominated in this case, as it would also in all subsequent conservative or 'traditionalist' attempts, during the XIXth century, when there would be a constant tendency to resort to contemporary European political currents. See GONGORA (1975a) pp 177-205; and MORSE (1982) pp 100ff. However, if GONGORA's comment is correct, we do not see why he is so insistent that there must exist a "Catholic" variant of the Enlightenment. It is possible that there were sufficient Catholic, and thus traditional, traits in the Spanish American Enlightenment, and one could even admit that they were quite profound; but if we were to follow GONGORA's own arguments, these features would have been, at most, adjectival and not definitive characteristics. Finally, the term "rationalist" used here refers to the sense that Michael Oakeshott has given it in Rationalism in Politics (London 1962).
made by the Enlightenment during the XVIIIth century in Chile was more instrumental than of content. It was not the new ideas which were imposed, so much as the new types of relations which were to emerge between the main historical actors and the new ways these actors would begin to express themselves, which were novel. Much of the old traditional way of thinking was maintained, as witnessed by the use of scholastic legal formulae employed during the 1810 crisis, a subject which we shall deal with later on. Moreover, we know that the more radical Enlightenment currents, even though they began to be accepted and became progressively important, continued to exercise a merely subsidiary influence after the prevailing official version. Additionally, it is not possible to speak of new historical actors. The Enlightenment in Chile was not a reflection of infrastructural changes; rather, it was an adapted world-view which was imposed "from above".

Just the same, a substantial transformation took place. The old conflict between metropolitan and local power had to be framed within the state. The élite recognised that it was not advisable to oppose itself to an institutionalised power in open confrontation; it learnt to appreciate, and accommodate itself to the new political schemes which were being imposed. It assumed as its own the new order of things, thus obtaining considerable benefits from it, above all, an increased and growing power. The enlightened reformism of the Bourbons maintained the established order even though the relations, and
mechanisms used, between the powers at play were altered. This change, at first sight, does not seem radical enough because it did not produce a break --a general climate of moderation seems to have prevailed--, but it did prepare the ground for a more drastic and unpredictable change to occur thanks to a series of new mechanisms.

We have mentioned the neutral conception of power and the global reach of the state; we should point also to the appearance of ideology as a mobile force. The transformations which took place during the XVIIIth century would not have been possible if they had not obeyed a number of a priori, paradigmatic propositions which served as working models. Behind the Bourbon modernizing programme, we find theoretical and abstract implications, diagnoses of reality which were constructed starting from previous conceptual bases, and attempts to mould reality in accordance with a plan or rational design. One can also perceive a desire to translate or impose schemes which correspond originally to other historical experiences, and finally, one can observe a deliberate use of these a priori constructions for purposes of legitimacy. Evidently, the Bourbon project came very close to a modern ideological frame of mind.35

The ideological nature of this world-view can also be

35 Our own conception of what ideologies are, follows what is stated in: FURET (1981) pp 22-26; D. BELL, The End of Ideology (New York 1962) pp 393ff; J. LARRAIN, The Concept of Ideology (London 1979); C. GEERTZ, La Interpretación de las Culturas (México 1987), Chapter B; and P. RICOEUR, Ideología y Utopía (Barcelona 1989). See also discussion in infra Chapter VII.
detected in other aspects: in the configuration of a shared language amongst all those who handle the predominant discourse, leaving out the rest; in the attempt to make this language dominant amongst power élites; and in the appearance of individuals versed in the new enlightened thought -- either royal officials or simply cultured men who had a wide encyclopaedic knowledge -- some of whom we have already identified. All of this was to allow the emergence of a "sphere" or field "of dialogue" bounded by shared political paradigms and values. This shared discourse would be a first step towards more complex forms of political participation and interaction which eventually would be presented as "demands" -- not merely requests -- anticipating thus a more modern "political space". In other words, creoles had to have a common language with the Crown before attempting to pressure politically on behalf of their own interests. The Enlightenment permitted this.

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The Enlightenment in Chile was historically relevant. It introduced a modern world-view, especially in politics. It permitted a change in accordance with prevailing conditions.

36 The categories we are here using are based on several works, namely H. ARENDT, The Human Condition (Chicago 1958); J. G. A. POCOCK, "Verbalizing a Political Act: Toward a Politics of Speech" in M. SCHAPIRO, editor, Language and Politics (Oxford 1984); and S. S. WOLIN, Politics and Vision (Boston 1960).
promoted by the Crown and accepted by the local ruling elite. It expressed itself in moderate terms preventing any breaks in the established order. All the same, it altered the foundations of traditional legitimacy. It did not pretend to negate the past: on the contrary, it helped to harmonise the past with the present, but in a modernising way. It did not change the traditional historical actors, but it modified their relations. It moved towards the resolution of the traditional conflict between Crown and civil society by circumscribing it within the framework of the state. It promoted a neutral view of power. It formulated its propositions in ideological terms. And it created a sphere of dialogue or shared conceptions, seed of an eventual political modern space.

In the end, the Enlightenment inadvertently set the bases for a more radical and subsequent change. It set in motion some of the mechanisms which would be used later on by republicanism, and in this fashion and without foreseeing it, it extended a bridge between the old order and the new regime which emerged in 1810.
PART II

THE CRITICAL CONJUNCTURE

Historical phenomena can always be explained in relation to any one of the two historical times in which they occur, as persistent and unperceptible phenomena, or else as episodic and dramatic events which act as agents of change. The more complex historical phenomena often involve both dimensions. They are intelligible structurally and conjuncturally. They operate in the short and long durée. They are inserted within discreet and silent processes, notwithstanding the fact that at times they "suddenly acquire a frightening celerity", and they "cross before us as swift phantoms in months and weeks."

The Independence of Chile is one of these more complex cases. It is a part of a longer lasting process, of an emancipatory and modernizing nature, which extends from the XVIIIth century to our days, the change from a traditional to a modern society. At the same time, Independence is a precise and crucial break, to a large degree accidental and unpredictable, essentially a political rupture with Spain.

So far, the extensive bibliography dealing with Independence has not addressed itself to the subject in relation to these two times at once. On the whole, it concentrates on the shorter period, on the detailed and minute chronicle of events.

1 J. BURCKHARDT, Reflexiones sobre la Historia Universal (México 1961) p 221.
from 1808 to the consolidation of an autonomous government during
decades of the 1810s and the 1820s. (2) In turn, the more
ambitious works which depart from the classic scheme of the
chronicles, although they link Independence with a previous or
subsequent period, still tend to be modest and prudent in their
use of the long duration as a framework of analysis.3 They
emphasise one of the two temporal extremes of the phenomenon and
are silent about the other, the previous background or the
immediate aftermath of Independence; they follow strict
divisions; and though they acknowledge the modernizing sense of
Independence, they tend to limit its projection by restricting
themselves to an excessively rigorous periodification. This is
obviously caused by methodological and practical requirements.
However we think that what is behind this is the fact that the
short duration is still the analytical framework which continues
to predominate even in studies which are more extensive and
global. The conjuncture attracts far greater attention; whereas
the long duration at most helps to frame what is otherwise
thought to be central, appearing either as a mere introduction or

2 It is the case with D. BARROS ARANA, Historia General de
la Independencia de Chile (1863); M. L. AMUNATEGUI, La Crónica
de 1810 (1895); D. AMUNATEGUI SOLAR, La Democracia en Chile y
Teatro Político (1946); N. MEZA, La Actividad Política del Reino
de Chile entre 1806 y 1810 (1958); A. ORREGO LUCO, La Patria Vieja (1934).

3 We are referring to S. VILLALOBOS, Tradición y Reforma
en 1810 (1961); S. COLLIER, Ideas and Politics of Chilean
Independence, 1808-1833 (Cambridge 1967); and J. HEISE, Años de
as a purely sequential annex.

The importance of the short durée, though, cannot be underestimated. Quite the contrary, the conjuncture is of crucial importance when discussing Independence. However, its historical significance becomes more evident and central if we analyse it as such notwithstanding its simultaneous insertion in the long duration.

An analysis focussing on the speed and dynamism of this conjuncture, its content, the options chosen in this period, and the unpredictable character of these choices, is fundamental for understanding the overall process of modernization in which this period ought to be inserted.

The historical conjuncture, which in its maximum expression extends from the end of the XVIIIth century when the imperial system entered into crisis until the 1830s when a new liberal-republican regime became consolidated in Chile, has an essentially political and ideological character. It marks a break in the legitimating order, even if it still leaves untouched other fields such as the social and economic spheres. This break was unpredictable even if it capitalised on the achievements of the first Bourbon attempt at modernization. It was a result of a combination of factors: the emergence and consolidation of a local élite, a novel conception of the state and of power, and an enlightened world-view ---what we have called "the colonial legacy"---, to which must be added the progressively critical state of the imperial system towards its
latter days, the sudden and casual collapse of the monarchy, the ensuing power-vacuum, and the appearance of the republican paradigm as an optional recourse for resolving the crisis. These last four aspects emerged in a context in which events happened at a faster rate and were faced not so much with preconceived "projects" as with improvised, unprepared responses.

Hence, to the incipient process of modernization, which had been evolving ever since the XVIIIth century, would be added a dynamic temporal component which was to accelerate it. Independence was to reinforce this process of modernization and would confirm it in its previous orientation. In effect, an essentially political conjuncture which benefited from a legacy which was also political ended up imprinting a definite political and ideological slant on this process of modernization.

In the following section we will analyse this political conjuncture. We shall begin with a study of the general crisis of the Spanish imperial system, which was not necessarily a terminal crisis but which was aggravated in such a manner by the constitutional crisis of 1808 that it brought about the collapse of the system. Subsequently, we shall examine the consequences of this collapse, the resulting institutional and political vacuum, the break with traditional legitimacy and the war. Lastly, we will show how the choice of a liberal-republican order in Chile was to bring about a political transformation, which was to end up resolving the previous collapse.
CHAPTER V

CRISIS AND COLLAPSE OF THE SYSTEM

During the XVIIIth century, the Spanish imperial system reached a high degree of maturity, coherence and power. It possessed, at least in Chile, a solid backing from the local ruling group, which benefited from the reformist policies promoted by the Crown. There were no political breakdowns; the loyalty felt towards the monarch and the respect owed to the authorities remained unscathed. All in all though, the system notwithstanding its strength and acceptance began to show problems and deficiencies which became worse towards the end of the XVIIIth and beginning of the XIXth centuries.

These problems did not bring into question the system in itself so much as its administrative capacity to maintain a sustained rhythm of benefits which it had brought about until then. A conjunctural, not a terminal, crisis of expectations arose. The local ruling group began to acquire a greater consciousness of itself and of its interests, while at the same time the system grew stronger on account of the positive value which this same local élite attributed to it. More than a crisis of confidence, what occurred was a crisis of aspirations. There was a desire to continue in the reformist path, which for different reasons did not receive a favourable response from the metropolis. All in all, in the period we are referring to, the system was unable to control the potential for change it had
This situation was to reach an impasse which was to increase local frustration even though it did not alter the established order of things, which was maintained until the very end. It brought the system to a standstill but it did not put an end to it. This impasse, however, would be brought to an end in an unexpected way by the events which affected the Spanish Crown during the first decade of the XIXth century. The Napoleonic invasion and the constitutional crisis of the monarchy ended this lack of definition --even if at that time not everyone perceived it as such--, undermining even further the last legitimating traces of the system, and propelling Chile and all Spanish America towards an even greater state of ambiguity, which would be resolved only with the alteration of the political system.

Consciousness and Interests

The last thirty years of Spanish dominion in Chile can be characterised by their optimism and uncertainty. This seems to be a contradiction. However, it can be explained by the simultaneous presence of two converging phenomena: the consolidation of the reformed imperial system and the manifestation of several deficiencies. Just when the system was providing sufficient motives so as to focus hope in it, the very
same system showed signs of exhaustion.

Reasons for believing in the system abounded. The reforms promoted by the Crown had benefited local society. Peace and security had been achieved. Wealth, both private as well as public, had increased. The administration was efficient. Recently established institutions offered new channels of participation. Lastly, prevailing conditions allowed the local ruling group to consolidate its power.¹

Of all the factors which strengthened the system, the last one was the most convincing as far as the local creole élite was concerned: at the beginning this system had intended to limit local power; eventually it had achieved something approaching the opposite. The élite itself and its growing

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political and economic strength were palpable demonstrations that the established order worked well.

The positive evaluation of the system was built upon a progressively solid basis of self-consciousness on the part of the ruling group. The system came to be consolidated once the élite became aware that its fortunes depended on it. Therefore, it is in this self-consciousness that we find proof of the system's increasing support. An élite more and more sure of itself, keen on working within the rules of the game, and intent on continuing in the reformist path ratified the system at hand.

Much reveals this growing self-consciousness on the part of the élite. After an increase in tax demands, local society closed ranks and strongly opposed these measures. Undoubtedly, fiscal demands were hurting the economic interests of the local élite, interests which came to light and were defined once they became the objects of a greater scrutiny. But in order that these interests be defined it was not enough for them to be threatened. Bourbon reformism offered several institutional mechanisms which were duly taken advantage of by local society, organisations wherein local citizens could participate, express their concerns and necessities. Throughout the XVIIIth century, local society made constant use of petitions, requests, reports and counterclaims to make known its wishes and complaints, all of which helped to specify with greater precision what was thought to be convenient by the local ruling group. These interests emerged either by opposition or
else through participatory channels offered by the system.

The tendency of the élite to want to appear aristocratic also reveals an acute self-consciousness; the very fact that the dominant group would want to differentiate itself from other groups, demand its recognition as such from the authorities, and back a strict stände-like social hierarchy confirms once again the existence of a sustained attempt to solidify a progressive self-esteem. The kind of culture which came to be imposed influenced also. A culture which would distinguish more and more the élite from the populace, which highlighted social differences according to conspicuous consumption, and which required the services of an exclusive circle of initiates—an illuminated vanguard—linked to the established order, was to help bring about a collective sense of self-worth, a conscience "of" and "for" itself that was increasingly solid.

This growing consciousness did not express itself solely in terms of class. In fact, the way it generally manifested was more global. Already in the second half of the XVIIIth century, one can detect an increasing regional identity which attributes a source of identification to being "Chilean".2

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In the extensive literature which started to appear in this period we find numerous examples of this localist sentiment. In the writings of the exiled Jesuits, and in a series of official reports emanating from the Consulado, the idea that Chile was a unique entity, which possessed an enormous human and natural potential was frequent. This idea was strongly imbued with an enlightened and utopian spirit favouring the general well-being of the community. Chile appeared as a fertile territory, potentially prosperous if the development policies which these authors proposed were carried out, self-sufficient, different from the rest of the regions of Spanish America and hence capable of being singled-out as unique. Another aspect, constantly underlined by this early regionalist literature, was the idea that Chile was different because it was a "land of war". Strong emphasis was put on the initial clash between two warlike peoples—the Spaniards and the natives—and on the geopolitical role played by Chile as a defensive stronghold in

phenomenon is common to all Spanish America, see PARRY (1977) p 335.

3 See M. DE SALAS, Representación al Ministro de Hacienda Diego de Cardoqui, hecha por el Síndico del Real Consulado de Santiago, sobre el Estado de la Agricultura, Industria y Comercio del Reino de Chile (1796), in M. CRUCHAGA, Estudios sobre la Organización Económica y la Hacienda Pública de Chile (Madrid 1929). In VILLALOBOS, El Comercio y la Crisis Colonial: Un Mito de la Independencia (1968), 'Anexo Documental', can be found reprints of several of these reports, amongst which stands out A. DE LA CRUZ, Memoria sobre la Verdadera Balanza de Comercio que Conviene al Reino de Chile, leída por el Secretario del Consulado (12 January 1809) pp 358-365.
the Pacific against threats from other foreign powers.4

Towards the second half of the XVIIIth century a solid regional consciousness had already been achieved. Up to what point, though, this sentiment of being "Chilean" corresponded to a collective mentality is extremely difficult to ascertain. The evidence we have points instead towards a construction conceived by enlightened circles. The projected image was centred basically on economic interests belonging to the dominant group. We are also dealing here with an abstract formulation of these same interests. The regionalist consciousness was a recourse which the ruling group increasingly used to legitimate its class aspirations.

This became more evident in the utilisation of this regional identity as a mechanism of confrontation and differentiation vis-à-vis the Spanish born. It is true that there are numerous examples which attest to the rivalry between creoles and peninsulares from the XVIIth century onwards. However, creole complaints of discrimination tended on the whole to increase during the second half of the XVIIIth century.5

Before that period, the attitude which was to predominate amongst

4 COLLIER (1967) pp 27-28; GONGORA (1975a) p 184; GODOY (1981) pp 76-90, 127-133, 136-137. For example, we know that the influence which La Araucana by A. DE ERCILLA exerted on creoles during the XVIIth century was considerable; see AMUNATEGUI (1871), II, pp 489-502; PINTO (1941), p 77.

the élite was the reverse. We have already seen in one of the earlier chapters, how the élite tried to assimilate itself to the peninsular bureaucratic group. The fact that the creoles saw themselves as españoles-americanos, and made strong efforts to become linked through business and kinship with Crown officials, seems to indicate that there was an attempt, at least initially, to minimise all possible distances, to reduce the implicit anti-creole bias in the Bourbon reformist project, and to participate in the privileges awarded to the representatives of the state.

This attempt to assimilate came to be discarded towards the end of the XVIIIth century, producing an increasing distance between creoles and peninsulares. What was behind this change of attitude? One could think that we are dealing here with a reaction against the anti-creole prejudice of the Bourbon project. The difficulty with this argument is that it does not explain why this reaction was so late in coming, why there was a stage when local society tried to attenuate possible clashes between creoles and Spanish-born. We are of the opinion that in this case we have a change of strategy founded on a greater self-consciousness and a growing positive estimation of the system. The élite minimised the differences between creoles and Spaniards when it still tried to co-opt the state. Once it had attained this aim, and felt secure within the prevailing system, it was

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willing to face a problem which had been nagging for some time.

During the second half of the XVIIIth century the élite not only reacted against the discriminations it had been subject to, but also tended to accentuate differences relative to origins. In this period, the local élite increased the number of its petitions for greater participation, and at times demanded for itself a total monopoly.7 For instance, during the 1790s and once again in 1802 and 1803, attempts to impose the system of alternativas for ecclesiastical appointments, a system which guaranteed that Spanish-born priests, a mere minority in numbers, were not to be excluded from the administration of convents, were repeatedly rejected.8 Both in 1788 and in 1803, the Governor and the peninsular authorities complained that in the Cabildo there was bitter ill-feeling towards those born in Spain. And lastly, we know from Gómez de Vidaurre that the Chilean aristocracy of the end of the century preferred to marry its daughters to Chileans, refusing Spanish pretenders.9

We have here a qualitative change. The élite modified its initial attitude and assumed instead an agressive attitude:

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9 F. GÓMEZ DE VIDAURRE, Historia Geográfica, Natural y Civil del Reino de Chile (1889) XV, pp 285-286.
the élite intensified the problem. The peninsular-creole problem always existed in one way or another, but it was not always faced in the same manner. The élite recognised itself as creole when it grew confident vis-à-vis the system, when it felt capable of sustaining an anti-creole assault from a position of relative strength and in a terrain wherein it felt comfortable: the very same system we are referring to.

Regionalism and its corollary, creole sentiment, were accentuated when it became evident that it was possible to maneuver within the system notwithstanding being creole. Towards the end of the XVIIIth century the élite accepted the state as a sphere where it was possible to resolve problems of this nature. The local élite decided to confront head-on anti-creole prejudice when it felt confident that the conflict would be aired within a space --the state-- where in spite of the still existing imbalances, it assured an equal footing with the Crown. When this occurred one perceives a certain politicisation of the conflict. In these cases the local ruling group tended to reject any predominance which was not its own, and reaffirmed the regionalist sentiment as a weapon to proclaim to metropolitan authorities its growing power.

All in all, though, we do not want to exaggerate the point. The tendency to politicise regionalism was more of an exception than the rule. On the whole, during the XVIIIth century the type of regionalism which predominated was still non-political, lacking independent or secessionist pretensions. The
overall spirit which emanates from the bulk of the XVIIIth century literature and which testifies to this sentiment of being "Chilean" corresponds, at most, to an ambiguous intent which can be described as "protonationalist". We are not dealing here yet with a fully consolidated national consciousness. This protonationalism does not go beyond an emotional or affectionate sensitivity. It seems rather to be an introspective, almost psychological, phenomenon. It is motivated by an identification with what is one's own, with what is of local concern, and it is strongly imbued with an exaggerated pride.10

The writings of the exiled Jesuits are probably the best examples of this protonationalist regionalism. The main objective of these texts was to refute some of the mistaken comments made on the natural and civil reality of America, spread throughout Europe: the ideas of Buffon and Jan Cornelius De Pauw.11 These protonationalist works are basically descriptive. They show an extraordinary sensitivity towards what was authochthonous and original, but they were inspired by an essentially encyclopaedic intention. Actually, what interested authors such as Ovalle, Olivares, Molina and Gómez de Vidaurre was more than anything to widen the European conceptual sense of

10 Most analysis dealing with regional patriotism do not make this distinction between these two kinds of nationalisms. Cf. EYZAGUIRRE (1979); MEZA (1958); VILLALOBOS (1961); COLLIER (1967); GONGORA (1981); KREBS (1984); GODOY (1984).

unity; what they pretended was to locate the American and the Chilean historical and natural world within a more universal cosmos. The audience they had in mind when writing was European, not creole. The intention which guided them, therefore, was to insert what was American and Chilean within an enlightened and cosmopolitan conscience, more so than to affirm for a Hispanic-American public a self image of what they thought to be their own.

Notwithstanding what we have been saying so far, there are some cases, but less frequent, where this creole regionalism assumed a more political character: for example, when the discriminatory policy dealing with appointments to public posts was repudiated, when local society asserted a hegemonic stance and rejected the Spaniards, when complaints were voiced that Chile was being ignored, and when a more reciprocal relation was demanded from the Peninsula. But even in these cases one does not see from the evidence intentions of a rupturist kind. Creoles continued to operate within Spanish paradigms. The way these concerns were presented point to an implicit acceptance of the Spanish administrative framework. It is true, injustices and imbalances in the colonial pact were shown, but in no case did this presuppose a global change. They continued to work within a strategy of petitions and counterclaims; they were still conditioned by a respectful and conformist attitude; willing to

12 See for example SALAS (1796), and DE LA CRUZ (1809).
follow official channels. 13

In other words, whenever creole regionalism was invoked within a context which referred to local interests, it was often politicised, without this implying an attempt to break out of the system. In turn, whenever this regionalism was expressed in affectionate terms, without being contentious, then we are dealing with a merely social and spontaneous phenomenon, outgrowth of local maturity. The type of regionalism which predominated during the XVIIIth century corresponded to this second typology. However, what occurred is that this spontaneous and somewhat naive expression tended to coincide more and more with increasingly conscious pretensions. 14 And it is here when it achieved a more visible political potential. In sum, regionalism became more political in the historical conjuncture

13 A very interesting, and almost paradigmatic case of what we are saying, is that of J. A. de Rojas. Rojas spent several years in Madrid during the 1770s. While there he became extremely disenchanted with the Spanish imperial system, and in private letters to his brother-in-law voiced strong criticisms and complaints, particularly related to the question of creole discrimination. Nonetheless, Rojas persevered, and on his return was able to show several triumphs: privileges for his father-in-law, authorisation for his own father to set up a mayorazgo, and the confirmation of a post for himself as regidor in the Santiago Cabildo. These may have been insignificant, but somehow his patience endured. See VILLALBOS (1957) and (1961) p 123.

14 What we are arguing here is that a distinction should be made between two types of discourses. It does not help to place all this regionalist literature into one overall context. A work such as SALAS's Representación al Ministro de Hacienda (1796), or the anonymous text, subscribed by "Los españoles americanos": "Carta que un chileno le escribió al Excmo. Señor don José de Galvez" are obviously of a slightly different nature than the works by GÓMEZ DE VIDAURRE, the Abate MOLINA, or CARVALLO y GOYENECE. Most analyses, though, tend to confuse and assimilate them.
of the end of the XVIIIth and beginning of the XIXth centuries.

The System in Crisis

In the thirty years before 1810, the imperial system in addition to consolidating itself exhibited a series of problems and deficiencies. These problems appeared as much in the economic as in the political and social spheres. And even if one cannot say that they caused the break which eventually took place, they increased creole self-consciousness and weakened society's confidence in the administrative order.

The more obvious deficiencies of the system occurred in the economy and in particular in commerce, though in this field we can find too signs of progress. Undoubtedly, the opening of new routes and the appearance of contraband trade stimulated Chilean commerce and brought benefits for the consumer. However, they made the local economy fragile. The commercial opening originated periodic crises of saturation, causing falls in prices and losses for merchants.15

This problem had started to occur towards the beginning of the XVIIIth century; it became worse towards the middle of the century. Different official measures contributed to this. To

begin with, the greater flux of shipping traffic via Cape Horn, the penetration of goods by land coming from Buenos Aires, the 1778 decree, the numerous concessions allowed to neutral ships during times of war, and the trade in Asian products. To this increasingly officially-widened commerce we must add a new outbreak of British smuggling towards the end of the 1780s. This contraband grew once it became known the potential which Chilean waters offered to whale hunting. It worsened after Spain resigned her hegemony in the Pacific with the signing of the San Lorenzo Treaty (1790), and after the alliance with Britain was agreed to at Aranjuez (1790). A similar effect would happen during this period with the alarming increase in North American whaling ships also involved in contraband.

The saturation of the Chilean market had grave consequences. It provoked numerous bankruptcies amongst Chilean merchants; in just three years between 1786 and 1788, at least 60 merchants had to close their businesses. It awakened a strong competition which ended up producing a loss in incentives for the incipient and primitive local manufacture. And lastly, it was seriously to affect local finances. In effect, the increase in imports surpassed the exporting potential of the

16 On these subjects see VILLALOBOS (1968) Chapters 3-5; VILLALOBOS (1961) and (1965).


country. Chile possessed very few products of commercial value; at most, the colony could offer wheat, hides, tallow and copper, products which did not yet enjoy great international demand, though there was an inter-colonial market, and they were costly to transport. Consequently, the opening of commerce created distortions in the balance of trade, all of which were covered by bullion deficits.19

This somewhat unrestricted commercial opening was not, however, the only economic problem which Chile had to face towards the end of the XVIIIth century. The main problems which traditionally had worried local society persisted: increased taxation, new taxes, and the continuing conflict with the Callao ship-owners. Even if to a certain degree local society was able to overcome both difficulties, these would not cease to be irritating.

The overall situation which affected the country towards the end of the XVIIIth and beginning of the XIXth centuries was indeed worrisome. These increasing commercial difficulties were signs of a more profound and structural crisis which afflicted the imperial system as a whole and which did not escape the attention of the better-informed creoles.

The commercial opening, against which the creoles in general reacted tenaciously, did not respond to a metropolitan desire to liberalize trade. Rather, it was an attempt on the

part of the Crown to repair the increasingly weak control of its colonies. During the second half of the XVIIIth century Spain had lost her maritime control and had to start competing with other menacing powers which penetrated the Spanish American market. Therefore, the toleration and acceptance of new commercial schemes was a recourse which the metropolis was to use in order to continue exercising some control over its colonies. On a non-official level, though, this commercial opening exposed the grievous situation which afflicted the metropolis, its incapacity to fulfill the growing demands emerging from the American dominions. The existence of smuggling not only demonstrated that control had been lost, but also that the metropolis had not reached a level of industrial growth so as to satisfy the growing needs of the Spanish American market. Actually, in these last decades it is evident that Spain played a merely intermediary role between the new industrial pole—Britain—and the Spanish American colonies. This in turn led to the recognition of a new economic order that linked more directly the Spanish-American market with "what (was) becoming more and more the new economic metropolis." This new order was to guarantee the Hispanic-Americans a wider and more expeditious access to overseas markets while improving conditions for buying.


and selling. We are dealing here with a first sketch of what was to be later-on the neo-colonial model predominant throughout the XIXth century.

Spain's periodical involvement in wars was also a source of worry for the creoles. Unlike the preceding period (1748-1778) which enjoyed almost thirty years of peace, the thirty-two years which were to follow were characterised by a constant state of war with Britain: between 1779 and 1783, again between 1796 and 1802, and finally between 1804 and 1808. The consequences which derived from these wars could be highly pernicious for Spanish-Americans. They meant commercial blockades, emergency financial contributions, and possible invasions. During this period Hispanic America was to see seriously threatened the climate of relative peace which so far had prevailed. The problem was to become even more evident in the last years, when England invaded Buenos Aires and Montevideo, being equally eloquent the repudiation which these invasions produced. The successful defence of Buenos Aires in 1806 against Popham showed by way of compensation that it was possible to face alone and without great help from the metropolis these sorts of situations.

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22 In words of F. A. PINTO (1941), "In these circumstances the unexpected news of the invasion of Buenos Aires, by a handful of English troops in the year 1806 under the command of General Beresford, left in Chile everyone petrified. No one could convince himself that the deed would be limited solely to the one city of Buenos Aires; rather, they thought, it was the first step of a vast plan to capture this part of Hispanic America" (pp 84-85).
During the last decades the political situation also got worse. The desire to continue in the already defined reformist path waned in ministerial circles. Important functionaries of Charles III --amongst them Floridablanca, Jovellanos and Revillagigedo-- were removed from their posts during the reign of Charles IV, and replaced by courtiers and favourites of lower stature. A similar phenomenon occurred in the colonial administration; career officers, whose only merit was to belong to a military caste, secured the highest appointments.23

Attempts at reconciling growing Spanish American demands with metropolitan interests were simply discarded. We know of at least two projects of this kind, both rejected. In 1768 Campomanes and Floridablanca suggested a series of measures intended to appease creole complaints. They recommended that Spanish-Americans be given posts of high responsibility in Spain, that they be incorporated into the army and admitted to peninsular institutions of learning, and also that deputations to represent the three viceroyalties in the Court be named.24 The principal objective which inspired this project was --in the words of its authors-- to create "a sole body of the Nation" and to prevent "the spirit of independence and aristocracy" which was starting to flourish. It was not implemented. The proposition

23 STOETZER (1979) p 119.

made by the Count of Aranda in 1783 calling for the creation of a
confederation of kingdoms under imperial tutelage, presided over
by Spanish infantes, was also discarded; it would be discussed
once again towards the end of Charles IV's reign, with the same
ill fate.25

The French Revolution also helped to paralyse the
spirit of reform. Henceforth the Crown assumed a far less
conciliatory posture. It became increasingly suspicious towards
any sort of innovation. It imposed a more restrictive censure in
the commerce of books.26 It rejected outright all reports or
requests advising further 'enlightened' measures, took away all
support for such projects, and went so far as to imprison several
prominent learned men who until then had enjoyed official
patronage. The cases of Juan Bautista Muñoz and of Alejandro
Malaspina are eloquent examples of the hostile spirit which had
taken hold of the Crown, now suspicious of any sort of reform in
America.27

25 CARR (1982) p 101; D. RAMOS, "Los Proyectos de
Independencia para América Preparados por el Rey Carlos IV",
Revista de Indias 111/112 (Madrid 1968).

26 See F-X GUERRA, "La Revolución Francesa y el Mundo
Ibérico" in KREBS and GAZMURI (1990) p 347; STOETZER (1979) p
74; on the Chilean case, see: AMUNATEGUI (1870) I, pp 248-254.

27 WHITAKER (1961) pp 17-19; LUIS MONGUIO, "'Las Luces'
and the Enlightenment in Spanish America" in ALDRIDGE (1971) pp
229-231.
The Creole Response

Evidently, the overall situation during the last decades showed alarming signs of decay. But the system, notwithstanding its deficiencies, continued to be prestigious. In part this was due to the innate inertia of a traditional society and partly due to the fact that there was a lack of distance which might help measure objectively the pros and cons of the system. Problems and virtues sprung up at the same time. Moreover, adjustments and corrections framed within the terms of the system were still thought possible. This is why the creole response to this crisis was to continue in the reformist line already tried. If the enlightened spirit had weakened in the Peninsula, the same did not occur in the Spanish-American dominions.

In the Chilean case, this was undoubtedly the chosen path. Both the highest official authorities, amongst them the Governor, the Cabildo, the members of the Consulado, and several distinguished figures in a merely personal capacity made every possible effort to inform Madrid of the state of affairs of the colony. They suggested to the Crown a series of measures which could be implemented to remedy existing problems. It should be noted that the diagnosis, as well as the complaints, petitions and solutions to these problems showed a clear disposition on their part to work within the accepted channels, in addition to demonstrating a thorough handling of the enlightened categories
which had predominated thus far amongst ministerial circles.

The diagnosis sent to the Crown was a faithful picture of what was lacking in Chile. It emphasised the difficulties brought about by an uncontrolled opening of trade, accentuated by a growing and pernicious contraband. It stressed the negative effect on local manufacturing through foreign products flooding the Chilean market, and it was especially critical of Chile's relation with Peru, which had worsened on account of the discriminatory support given by the Viceroy to Peruvian trade.

This diagnosis evolved out of the problems which were emerging and of the then fashionable paradigms and categories of the Enlightenment. On the whole, the authors pointed to the economic and human potential of Chile, and the possible utility which this colony, so far poor and costly, could offer the metropolis. According to them, though, this potential was blocked by a series of structural obstacles which had to be removed. Production and exports were weak. The moral backwardness and the ignorance of the bulk of the population were deplorable. Stimuli were lacking, while superstition and misery were rampant. Some of the more radical writings even criticised the negative effects of the predominant system of ownership: the conditions of exploitation, the existence of large landed

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28 The most representative texts which consign this diagnosis are the Memorias of M. DE SALAS (1796) and of A. DE LA CRUZ (1809), and the documents compiled in VILLALOBOS (1968). Discussion and analysis of this diagnosis can be found in RAMIREZ NECOCHEA (1967) pp 97-112; VILLALOBOS (1968) pp 158-200, 236-245; COLLIER (1967) pp 16ff, 26, 28-30.
estates, absentee landlordship, and lack of entrepreneurial spirit. 29

All of this though -- it was felt -- could be overcome. What was needed for progress was the implementation of concrete, rational, and useful measures. They suggested expanding markets, creating new work places, and offering a practical and generalised education. Several development projects were designed, and some of them were even implemented. They called for the creation of new companies with official support to sell Chilean wheat; they entertained the idea of founding a sociedad de amigos del pais; they even suggested the establishment of a bank. 30

As far as the troublesome commercial problem was concerned, they were more keen on trade regulation than on full liberalization. Judging from the documentary evidence compiled by Sergio Villalobos which serves as the basis for the central hypothesis of his book on the subject, Chile enjoyed de facto free trade. 31 The metropolis did not have a monopoly. There were no shortages of merchandise either. The spirit which prevailed in mercantile circles was one which aimed at providing


a "regulated and methodical liberty". There were no real motives for seeking a greater commercial liberty than that which existed already. There may have been calls or demands to that effect, but they were few and minor; they were voiced by government officials and members of the Consulado strongly entrenched in ideological positions.

We agree with Professor Villalobos on this last point. However, more than a mere discrepancy with reality—which is where his argument points to—we think that behind this tendency to conceive the economy in ideological terms there was a need to conciliate the discourse used with its own logic at a time when an ideological definition was being called for. What occurs here is similar to what we already mentioned when discussing regionalism. To some Chileans during this time, it was not enough to be conscious of themselves and their problems; they felt it was necessary to orientate this self-consciousness according to paradigms. This way they could address and make known to the Crown, in terms which it could understand, that local interests not necessarily coincided with metropolitan interests. And certainly, free trade was a subject which the


33 VILLALOBOS (1968) pp 10, 164, 262. The main difference between VILLALOBOS (1968) and RAMIREZ NECOCHEA (1967) lies in the different importance which the authors assign to the idea of free commerce as an antecedent of the Independence of Chile. RAMIREZ NECOCHEA is in favour of this interpretation, VILLALOBOS against. The polemic between both authors can be found in RAMIREZ NECOCHEA (1967) pp 124-125, and in VILLALOBOS (1968) pp 262, 264-273. See also, KINSBRUNER (1973) pp 36-43.
Crown was willing to deal with only reluctantly. We are dealing here with an attempt to politicise problems, expressed in increasingly radical postures, in order to distinguish and oppose local interests vis-à-vis the Crown once it became evident that the system was already in crisis. The tendency to express themselves ideologically and radically on economic matters was connected not so much with economic conditions per se, as with expectations of autonomy and with the tentative search for a new and more balanced order. The logic which inspired this radicalization did not emanate from the commercial situation but rather from the existence of an emerging political sphere in which political actors in order to participate had to express themselves in ideological terms.

All in all, though, and not unlike what happens with the subject of regionalism, the point should not be exaggerated. Overall, the attitude assumed by creoles with respect to the economic problems which affected them was to work within the system, requesting that the difficulties be rectified and reformism intensified. It is not strange, therefore, that in almost all the corrective proposals which were made, all of them agreed that a greater, not smaller, degree of intervention on the part of the Crown was needed. On the Crown depended the happiness of its subjects. And if the Crown was unable to supply the means, they would provide the necessary resources, resigning themselves to a mere authorisation or official permit allowing them to go through with their own plans. The creoles followed
this course of action when they helped establish the University, backed the Colegio Carolino, founded the Academia de San Luis, and when they started to build the Casa de Moneda.

The mentality which was to prevail in enlightened Chilean circles was above all administrative. Salas, Cos de Iriberri, de la Cruz and the others, were basically administrators who followed faithfully the parameters which the same Crown had defined during the XVIIIth century as adequate. Their demands appealed to rationality; their behaviour fit accepted channels. Only on a subsidiary level did they assume a more political or extra-administrative position, and this was to occur when peninsular weakness and obstinacy made it both advisable and reasonable to start thinking of a new order.

The Collapse of the System

The accumulation of problems and difficulties which undermined the imperial system during the last decades of Spanish rule weakened it, but did not end it. They diminished its legitimacy but did not produce a final collapse. At most, they brought about an impasse which was to be resolved only when the monarchy fell.
The Spanish imperial system throughout the XVIIIth century developed its own variant of legitimacy, which differed from the traditional legitimacy which had prevailed during the XVI and XVIIth centuries. We have seen how under Bourbon rule the state experienced a considerable bureaucratic growth. We have called attention to the neutral nature of power: how this power no longer obeyed ethical imperatives, but rather pursued rational aims. And we have alluded to the desire on the part of the Crown to subordinate the Church to the state. All these changes altered the bases of traditional legitimacy. The organic-patrimonial conception, until then prevalent, began to fade. Utilitarian and secular criteria became more prominent. And even though absolutism justified itself by virtue of a supposed divine origin of power, this justification did not reverse this secularization; this argument was above all a subterfuge which served to maximise power and to back it in terms of an apparent sacredness.

It is appropriate therefore to speak of a new legitimacy. This new legitimacy was founded on a tacit agreement in which the Crown's subjects agreed to bear sacrifices and costs as long as the system offered them parallel benefits. The advantages to be gained had to compensate the demands. This new legitimacy began to be consolidated case-by-case. As local expectations and demands were not satisfied, metropolitan requirements began to be perceived as arbitrary and unjust.

The weakening of the established legitimacy did not
imply, though, that the virtues of the reformist project would be subject to doubt. The opposite occurred. The creoles insisted on the modernizing path already planned. At most what was glimpsed was a possible new order which would continue with the latter but with several important modifications. This desire to create a new order in no case meant negating the central hardcore reformist aspect of the system, nor would it imply a break. The utilitarian base of the Bourbon system continued to be accepted. In its most radical expression what was attempted was the correction of defects, making a condition of due loyalty the continuous implementation of reforms, and just balance in the relations between the metropolis and its dominions. In order to achieve the latter, it did not suffice, though, to reconstruct the previous equilibrium. What was desired now was to obtain a more commutative, equitable, balance which would take into consideration the local autonomy and self-sufficiency which had evolved thanks to the deficiencies of the system, and to incorporate the achievements which had been gained outside of the system, for example the local capacity to trade freely. In other words, what was being asked for was that the system recognise local capacity to fill the power vacuum left by a decadent metropolis.

This attempt to create a new balance was expressed in some cases in political terms. We have seen already on which

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34 See the discussion concerning the ideas of M. DE SALAS in COLLIER (1967) pp 13-15, and the Memoria of 1809 by A. DE LA CRUZ.
occasions this tended to occur. In these cases, local demands made use of enlightened paradigms which made it possible to convey in abstract terms the interests at play and to confront regional concerns with those of the metropolis. Therefore, the conjunctural crisis which took place towards the end of the XVIIIth and beginning of the XIXth centuries generated also a novel way of relating with the Crown of a discoursive-political character, and this was to put an end to the previous strategy of co-option and complementation. This growing politicisation, though, did not weaken existing loyalty towards the system. We know of only two cases, isolated and anecdotal, of a purely police concern, wherein openly revolutionary ideas were expressed. To politicise the relation with the Crown in no way implied disloyal or rupturist intentions.

In any case, to have thought of a new order was

35 In 1780 an alleged conspiracy was discovered organised by two resident Frenchmen which supposedly aimed at establishing a republic in Chile. In 1795 the authorities were informed of commentaries favourable to the French Revolution made by a priest of La Serena, Clemente Morán. In both cases, the people involved were marginal, eccentric and inoffensive characters. The literature usually recalls these two curious events because in the first the name of José Antonio de Rojas, a prominent creole of progressive ideas, was unjustly mingled, and because in the second case the priest apparently divulged revolutionary ideas.

reasonable given existing conditions. The system after all had fallen into deep stagnation. It showed itself incapable of answering local demands. In turn, the Crown manifested itself increasingly suspicious with respect to any local initiative intent in continuing the reformist path which it had initiated and stimulated in the past. The potential for change which had been synonymous with the system suddenly appeared blocked. On account of this, its legitimacy was questioned and a possible new order, not yet defined although loyal, whose main characteristic was a more political relation with the Crown came to be glimpsed.

In spite of all this, the system did not seem to break. Why? To a large degree because the modernizing potential of the system subsisted in creole minds. The idea that the system, notwithstanding its deficiencies, had been on the whole beneficial continued to be latent. Moreover, the administrative conduits were never altogether rejected, even though it is true that the tendency to resort to a political discourse became more frequent. Furthermore, the Crown under certain circumstances could simply be surpassed. Lastly, we should point out an additional key motive: the loyalty which the monarch would command until the very end.

The monarch enjoyed from the beginning of the colonial period an unquestionable and profound respect. Spanish Americans felt towards the person of the king an almost religious devotion; royal majesty was an object of veneration and cult.36

36 AMUNATEGUI (1870) I, Chapters 1 and 3.
On various occasions the king's orders were rejected or their implementation was prevented, but in no case this was to mean a questioning of his power or imperium. Authorities duly appointed by the king might be deposed on account of abuses and arbitrariness, but this did not imply a rejection of the hierarchical order presided over by the monarch. The traditional exclamation ---"Viva el Rey, Abajo el Mal Gobierno" which was heard in Chile on various occasions--- demonstrates that amongst his subjects there existed a clear distinction between the king and his representatives.37

Neither the events of Bayonne nor the invasion of the Peninsula by Napoleon put an end to this symbolic legitimacy of the system. Both events took place through acts of violence, and were resisted both in Spain and in America. The image of the monarch subsisted thus in the equally symbolic figure of the "captive king", and with it persisted the possibility and hope that the state of things prior to 1808 could be reversed. This was to permit a final respite. As a matter of fact, creole functionaries, such as Anselmo de la Cruz, as late as January 1809 still went on talking of the empire and of the corrections that could still be done as if recent events in Spain had not

37 The most notable case in Chile in this respect dates from 1655 when the Cabildo of Concepción deposed the Governor Antonio de Acuña y Cabrera: see AMUNATEGUI (1871) II, Chapter 6. According to LYNCH, "The Origins of Spanish Independence" in CLAH (1985) III, p 40, this traditional justification loses force during the XVIIIth century; the policy of centralisation of the Bourbons blurred the distinction between monarch and government.
happened at all.7 The idea that the empire was in crisis persisted beyond its abrupt downfall. The possible return of Ferdinand seems to have prolonged an agony of a corpse which simply refused to die.

The collapse of the system never became fully evident because the psychological conditioning which we have seen among which the legitimating fiction of the monarchy was the last to disappear prevented the possibility of recognising that a conjunctural crisis had become imperceptibly a terminal crisis. The system in fact was finished; in the end it was to subsist in merely formal terms. Two and a half years transpired between the abdication of Charles IV in March 1808 and the establishment of a Junta de Gobierno in Chile in September 1810; the expressions of loyalty towards Ferdinand VII were repeated for an even longer period. The general impasse which was affecting the system ever since the XVIIIth century would be prolonged even more on account of the constitutional crisis, but it would only be an apparent prolongation. The constitutional crisis placed in local hands the sum total of political power, and it is precisely that which put an end to the imperial system.

7 See DE LA CRUZ, Memoria sobre la Verdadera Balanza de Comercio in VILLALOBOS (1968) pp 358-365. It should be noted that this speech given by A. De La CRUZ as Secretary of the Consulado, was not meant as a loyalist propaganda tract trying to silence recent events which were known by then. This speech might be read as an attempt to influence metropolitan authorities. However, if that was the intent it is expressed very obliquely. We rather think that it is on the whole non-contextual, basically because of its highly ideological nature, which is extraordinary given the gravity of the times. It is also a clear example that faith in the system prevailed notwithstanding its defects.
what had to be done afterwards was to create a new legitimacy which could justify this de facto power which had accidentally fallen into the hands of local society.

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The last thirty years of Spanish rule in Chile constitute a contradictory period marked by achievements and deficiencies in the imperial system. The system became consolidated at the same time that it entered into crisis. There continued to be a high level of loyalty and faith in the reformist mechanisms introduced by the Bourbon regime. However, parallel to an increase in expectations and local demands, it became more evident that the Crown was incapable of and unwilling to, satisfy these expectations. This produced frustration while motivating a slow-moving process in which a new and more reciprocal order between the metropolis and the Hispanic-American dominions was thought out. One can perceive in this a tendency for creoles to politicise their relation vis-à-vis the Crown, especially with respect to regional consciousness and the administrative relation prevalent still between the two sides of the Atlantic. But even in these cases there was no terminal breakdown. The system carried on, although in a highly deteriorated condition. In addition to this, powerful
psychological factors undermined the possibility of recognising that a real and effective rupture ---although imperceptible still--- had taken place. The symbolic survival of the monarchy prevented a full consciousness of the effects of the constitutional crisis and the Napoleonic invasion. In 1808 the system had ended and local power enjoyed an untested autonomous potential; but since there was no full conscience nor consensus in this respect, the system would live on a while in merely formal terms.
CHAPTER VI

TOWARDS A NEW ORDER

If the collapse of the imperial system was initially imperceptible, the emergence of a new order was equivocal. Both became entangled in a constitutional nebulosity which obscured the sense and extent of what was happening. The events in Spain produced confusion. In order to react to this state of affairs emergency measures and circumstantial solutions were tried. And thus, contingently, with a curious mixture of prudence and improvisation, it became possible to gain some awareness of the power vacuum left by an acephalous monarchy and of the resulting potential for autonomy which this implied to local society. The final downfall of the old legitimacy was accidental, its substitution was achieved tentatively.

The institutional crisis of the monarchy—which in the Chilean case was accompanied by the deposition of the acting Governor—would be followed by a period of legal and political autonomy expressed in the establishment of the first Junta de Gobierno and in the summons of the first National Congress. Once this autonomy had been consolidated, a balance of forces with opposing strategies emerged. The situation began to be resolved with the emergence of the caudillo personalism of José Miguel Carrera, which served as an accelerator of change. This personalism tried to legitimate itself in openly republican ideological terms, thus increasing the distance from the now
merely formal monarchy.

This growing rift deepened even further with the defeat suffered by the patriot army at the hands of invasions ordered by the Viceroy of Perú. The war accelerated the process of separation and became the final resolving mechanism. In sum, the force of events, contingencies, improvisation, and trial and error produced a new autonomous and independent order.

The Constitutional Crisis

The events which rapidly followed one another in the Peninsula had delayed effects in Chile. The reaction produced was initially prudent and strictly framed within the terms dictated by the new legitimist authorities which had emerged in Spain on account of the French invasion. Nevertheless, the situation became worse because of local events related to the death of Governor Luis Muñoz de Guzmán, and the subsequent repudiation which the administration of Francisco García Carrasco, his interim successor, was to produce, ending with the latter's removal from office. Lastly, events taking place elsewhere in America would also affect Chile.

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1 On the period 1808-1810, consult: MELCHOR MARTINEZ, Memoria sobre la Revolución de Chile (1815, 1964), I; M. A. TALAVERA, Revoluciones de Chile in CHDI (1937) XXIX, 651 pp.; AMUNATEGUI (1876, 1911); BARROS ARANA (1886) VIII; VILLALOBOS (1961).
News of the abdication of Charles IV, of Godoy's downfall and the ascent of Ferdinand VII (18 and 19 March 1808) reached Santiago only in August 1808. Knowledge of the events of Bayonne (5 May 1808) and of Spanish resistance arrived in September. These news produced both alarm and spontaneous expressions of support for the king. Ferdinand VII was proclaimed in a solemn session of all the corporations on 25 September. A month later the Junta de Sevilla was provisionally acknowledged to be the legitimate representative of Ferdinand, and the special emissary sent by this Junta was officially welcomed. Previous to this, defence plans were elaborated and emergency contributions were collected and sent to Spain. In December a procurator of the Cabildo was asked to express the loyalty of the Chileans to the government set up on behalf of the king. And lastly, in January 1809 the authority of the Junta Central was explicitly recognised.

Until this point the situation developed in strict accordance with what was being formulated by the peninsular authorities. It is true that immediately on receipt of the news of the abdications in Bayonne, the Governor was informed of rumours of disloyalty, but these were discarded. There were no motives—except hearsay and mere suspicions—which might give credence to these fears. At most there was preoccupation and

2 See I. TORRES, "Advertencias Precautorias..." (1808) in CHDI VIII, p 33; by the same author, "Presentación Dirigida al Presidente..." (19 September 1808) in CHDI VIII, p 44; MARTINEZ (1964) 1, pp 30-31; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 48-50.
surprise with respect to events so unusual. This situation would become more complex with the prolonged uncertainty in Spain which permitted other possible solutions to the constitutional crisis apart from those desired by legitimist peninsular authorities.

The appointment and subsequent performance of García Carrasco was an added element, which even if it did not bear direct relation to the constitutional crisis of the empire, complicated and imprinted on it a local dimension which eventually was to become crucial.

President Luis Muñoz de Guzmán died in February 1808. In strict accord with a royal order of 1806, the highest military officer had to succeed him. Nevertheless, due to the absence from Santiago of all the military officers who might have fallen within the stipulations of this decree, the Santiago Audiencia decided instead to name one of its own members, the regent Juan Rodriguez Balleseros, an appointment which was ratified by the Cabildo. The decision, though, lacked legal backing. This gave cause for a junta of military chiefs in Concepción to be organised questioning the validity of the Audiencia appointment. Finally, the tribunal had to retreat and accept the claims of Brigadier García Carrasco.

The manner in which this affair originated and the way it was handled was important, not only because of its repercussions but also because at least two political modalities, which would become relevant later on, were anticipated in this case. The use of military force to influence the course of
politics would be frequent. Moreover, the appearance of friction between Santiago and Concepción—a periodic occurrence during the next twenty years—had this case as its first antecedent.

But it would be on a more immediate level that Carrasco's appointment was to become more relevant. On account of this affair it became obvious that the Audiencia could be overruled. Moreover, the fact that this appointment was obtained through pressure weakened support for the new Governor. And, lastly, it served to promote to the forefront one of the key figures of Independence, Juan Martínez de Rozas. Rozas, former assistant of Ambrosio O'Higgins and one of the most prominent local citizens of Concepción, was the mastermind behind the appointment of the obscure brigadier. His successful handling allowed him to be named councillor to the Governor, a post of certain power. The subsequent protagonism of Rozas, which was to make him into one of the leaders of the more radical sector, has been viewed by some commentators as an indication that he conspired from his post in order to plot Carrasco's errors, thus causing the Governor's total discredit. This interpretation is plausible, as well as that which supposes that Carrasco would have been equally inept with or without a 'fifth column' in his cabinet.

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3 On the controversial personality and early protagonism of Martínez de Rozas, see: MARTINEZ (1964) I, pp 16-18, 26; A. IGLESIAS, José Miguel Carrera (1934), pp 72, 74-75; D. AMUNATEGUI SOLAR, Don Juan Martínez de Rozas (1925).
Carrasco’s fall was his own responsibility. It proved impossible to head an ambivalent, corrupt and arbitrary administration and not to pay the costs of bad management. He temporised throughout his rule (March 1808 -July 1810) with all the positions which started to emerge. He accepted the designation of twelve new town councillors for the Cabildo, some of them men of advanced views, a measure which caused discontent amongst sectors who feared any sort of change. Like other high-ranking officers of the Crown commissioned elsewhere in America, Carrasco was ambivalent towards the proposals coming from the government imposed by the French in Madrid. There were justified suspicions that he was partisan to the pretensions of Carlota Joaquina de Borbón, sister of Ferdinand VII, who carried an all out-and-out campaign on behalf of her rights to the Spanish throne. Finally, Carrasco ended up adopting a position contrary to the more prudent one assumed by the Cabildo; he refused to implement dispositions ordered by the Junta Central, and vetoed sending a Chilean representative to that organisation.

His government, moreover, was notoriously corrupt. His name, as well as that of Rozas, was entangled in a sensational scandal, the seizure of the English frigate Scorpion involved in contraband, a scandal which was to link him as accomplice in criminal acts associated with undue enrichment, fiscal fraud, homicide and abuse of power, in addition to compromising the then

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prevailing good relations with England.

All his abuses and ineptitudes were tolerated unwillingly, not so his growing arbitrariness. During the course of 1809, until July 1810, Carrasco's attitude became more extreme, siding with a strategy unwilling to innovate with respect to the critical events which were taking place in the Peninsula and which required a local response. In its stead, he executed a repressive policy aimed at stifling any sort of solution.

The eighteen months which transpired between the recognition of the Junta Central and the downfall of Carrasco was a period of reflection and growing awareness that the constitutional crisis was not going to have an immediate solution. The advances of the invading French army were sustained. News arriving from Spain dealt more and more with the legal-constitutional discussion resulting from the vacancy in the throne, discussion which from the very beginning contemplated a response from the Spanish-American dominions. The decree of 22 January 1809 calling for elections of the Junta Central, invited elections of American deputies on an equal basis to those of the Peninsula. This obeyed an express acknowledgement that the Spanish-American dominions were not colonies but rather integral...

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5 GUERRA (1990), p 350. One should also mention the famous declaration of 14 February by the Junta de Sevilla, and the "Proclama a los Españoles de América" dated 6 September 1810, written by M. J. Quintana in representation of the Consejo de Regencia, in A. DERÖZIER editor, Escritos Políticos Españoles, 1780-1854 (Madrid 1975), pp 140-146.
parts of the Spanish monarchy. In May a meeting of the Cortes was proposed. In this same year the efforts of Carlota to make her rights prevail were noticed in Santiago. And, in December, Napoleon, having admitted his failure to have his government in Madrid recognised, proclaimed the rights of the Spanish colonies to their own independence. Obviously, from different angles pressures were being mounted on the Spanish-Americans to put an end to the state of constitutional indefiniteness which affected the whole empire.

It is not strange, therefore, that during this period for the first time opposing positions, would appear, even though it is difficult to determine the exact contents of these positions, who were behind them and the degree of their support. There were rumours that some creoles were contemplating a junta, following the regionalist model generalised in the Peninsula, model which soon after was adopted in América. There were fears of partisans of a total independence, although there is greater proof of the existence of these fears than of the separatist sentiment alluded to. Above all, there prevailed an impassive feeling which wanted to continue the existing state of things. This last position was the one assumed by Carrasco, and from it would result the persecution of supposed subversives. Towards the end of 1809 two men were arrested in Concepción. In November, Carrasco dictated the expulsion of all foreigners. In December he decreed the punishment of any rumour against any

6 BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 44 n37.
authority which might be treasonable. Subsequently, on account of uncorroborated denunciations which affirmed the existence of individuals in Chile who wanted independence, the Governor arrested and ordered to Lima three prominent figures of Santiago, two of them elderly men, holders of mayorazgos, and the other an acting Procurator of the Cabildo (25 May 1810).

This last measure caused general commotion in Santiago (11 July), which expressed itself in the meeting of a cabildo abierto with three hundred townsmen. This body asked the Governor to revoke his earlier decision, and demanded his summons before the Audiencia. The recent removal of the Viceroy of Buenos Aires and the establishment of a provisional junta in that city also influenced the prevailing mood. Four days after the town meeting, and after Santiago residents posted themselves at night in armed guard, expecting a possible coup from Carrasco, it was decided to remove the Governor, propose that the Cabildo assume the administration for a five day period after which a provisional government would be named. Once this became known, the Audiencia asked Carrasco on 15 July to resign, avoiding thus the establishment of a junta. The highest military officer was named as his replacement. The appointment fell on the eighty-year old creole, Mateo Toro y Zambrano, Conde de la Conquista. The measure was applauded, although not unanimously.

The governorship of the Conde de la Conquista turned out to be brief and extremely tense due to the late arrival of news coming from the Peninsula, which referred to the
substitution of the Junta Central by a Consejo de Regencia, and
the replacement of Carrasco by Francisco Javier Elío, former
governor of Montevideo. These two events accelerated the process
of local definition motivating the appearance of two groups,
which aimed at winning the will of the Conde de la Conquista and
of the most prominent residents of Santiago. The first of these
groups was made up of the Real Audiencia, the Spanish-born and
ecclesiastical hierarchy; this faction called for the
recognition of the Consejo whose measures it was willing to
accept. The second faction was made up of the Cabildo and the
most prominent creoles, supporters of the idea that the Consejo
be recognised de facto without swearing allegiance to it; in
this group one could also find several sympathizers of a
provisional junta. The first group prevailed on 18 August, the
date on which the Consejo was publicly recognised.

The conflict between these two groups translated into a
systematic struggle to win over the limited public opinion of
Santiago. Henceforth rumours, proclamations,
counterproclamations, and passionate sermons would be aired
permitting thus a more precise definition of the many positions
at stake. Outstanding in this public debate was the anonymous
tract entitled Catecismo Político Cristiano, a clearly
doctrinaire text which proposed for the first time a republican
government, notwithstanding its strict delimitation within the
terms debated then: rejection of the Consejo de Regencia and
proposal of a government junta which would defend the rights of
The outcome of this struggle occurred towards the middle of September with the summons of a cabildo abierto for the 18th of that month. A few days earlier public agitation had reached levels difficult to bear, expressed in threats of armed violence. More than four hundred persons, only fourteen of them Spaniards, were invited to this public meeting. The cabildo abierto took place amidst a strong military presence under the control of creole supporters of a junta. In this meeting the Governor resigned his post and a Junta de Gobierno was named presided over by Toro y Zambrano, and accompanied by the Bishop of Santiago as Vice President, five other members and two secretaries. It was recognised publicly the day after by the Real Audiencia, and subsequently by the rest of the cities and military garrisons of the kingdom.

7 There has been a great deal of speculation concerning the identity of its author. See BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 177-185; R. DONOSO "El El Catecismo Político Cristiano" in RCHHG No. 102 (1943); EYZAGUIRRE (1979) p. 104 n84. The date it circulated is also a matter of discussion; see S. VILLALOBOS, "Tradición y Modernidad en la Emancipación Chilena" in KREBS and GAZMURI (1990) p 144 and n12, and W. HAIMISCH, El Catecismo Cristiano (1970).

Also interesting is the sermon pronounced by Fray J. M. ROMO in the church of La Merced on 29 August 1810, in which the "revolutionary spirit" as well as the attempt to establish a "new system" are both attacked. This sermon provoked a formal complaint from the Cabildo. See MARTINEZ (1964) I, pp 82-85.

8 On the establishment of the Junta de Gobierno of 1810, see: "Acta de la Instalación..." in ACS, pp 60-62; M. DE SALAS, "Motivos que Ocasionaron la Instalación de la Junta...", (n.d.) in CHDI, XVIII, p 151; J. G. ARGOMEDO, "Diario de los Sucesos Ocurridos..." (1810) in CHDI XIX, p 1; MARTINEZ (1964) I, pp 11ff; TALAVERA CHDI XXIX (1937); M. A. TOCORNAL, Memoria (1947) in AUCH IV, pp 223-346; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, Chapter
The Exercise of Autonomy

The fundamental aim of the Junta of 1810 was to strengthen and legitimate the political autonomy which had fallen into the hands of the Santiago community on account of the constitutional crisis of the monarchy. Within the restricted limits of its conduct, the Junta was prudent and successful. It achieved a fine equilibrium which even if it did not satisfy everyone, served as a transition before instituting a new order.

The establishment of the Junta was to mean the outright seizure of the political autonomy derived from the events of the Peninsula. The first step in this direction was the removal of Carrasco as acting Governor carried out by the Audiencia. The second was the voluntary resignation of the Conde de la Conquista appointed for this post by this same tribunal, body unwilling to accept the de facto autonomy we have been referring to. It became the responsibility of the Junta, therefore, to strengthen and legitimate an autonomy officially ignored by peninsular authorities, by the Viceroy of Perú, and by some sectors in Chile.

Different actions by the Junta reveal this. The creation of new regiments and the reorganisation of the militias, financed by new taxes, served as a deterrent against any armed


9 On the government of the first Junta, see: MARTINEZ (1964) I, pp 111-252; TALAVERA (1937); TOCORNAL (1847); BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, Chapter 6.
intervention such as the one successfully carried out by the Viceroy of Perú in Quito, or the one that was being planned to reconquer the provinces of La Plata. The exchange of emissaries with the Junta of Buenos Aires and the subsequent sending of troops to defend that city, helped obtain diplomatic support and reciprocal assistance in case a similar situation were to arise in Chile. The authorisation of free commerce not only assured important revenue from customs, but also became a clear declaration of economic sovereignty. The Junta's disregard of the appointments ordered by the Consejo de Regencia emphasised its independence with respect to peninsular authorities. The forceful quelling of a military coup headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Tomás de Figueroa, aimed at stopping the congressional elections called by the Junta, accentuated even further its character as the supreme authority of Chile (1 April 1811). A similar effect was achieved by dissolving the Audiencia, a body which appeared to side with the mutineers.

A number of other measures would be enacted by the Junta which in addition to assuring the acquired autonomy would show its concern to rethink the political system. This aim explains the Plan de Gobierno which Juan Egaña presented to the Junta. The project began by recognising the de facto

10 With respect to the so-called Motín de Figueroa, see TALAVERA (1937); MARTINEZ (1964) I, pp 221ff; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, Chapter 7; B. VICUNA MACKENNA, El Coronel Don Tomás de Figueroa (Santiago 1884).

11 This document, apparently written in August 1810, is reproduced in MARTINEZ (1964) I, pp 140-144.
independence, which had resulted --according to it-- not from a revolution against the metropolis but rather from the submission of Spain to the Napoleonic armies; moreover, it recommended a provisional congress, representative of all Spanish dominions so as to achieve the constitution of a global nation. Far more important was the initial agreement arrived at by the cabildo abierto of 1810 to elect "deputies from all the provinces of Chile, to organise what must rule in the future."12 This objective became more explicit in the act of the Junta of 15 December which called for a Congress in order to "discuss, examine and resolve calmly and peacefully what kind of government (was) adequate for the country under the present circumstances," (our emphasis), a Congress which had to be "sanctioned by the people."13 Significant here is not only the desire to design a political system both legitimate and responsive to the extraordinary moment, but also the recognition that this ought to be generated by all the provinces, not only by Santiago, as had been the case with the Junta. Once again, the desire to legitimate is paramount.

In effect, this aim to legitimate is crucial in order to understand the work of the Junta, as well as a series of polemical interpretations which have been formulated concerning the nature of this first exercise of autonomy, and of

12 "Acta de Instalación de la Excma Junta" (18 September 1810) in ACS p 61.

Independence in general.

There exist two opposing theses which explain the historical role of this first Junta de Gobierno. One of them visualises it as an institution whose origins were clearly Spanish, inspired by an old libertarian and non authoritarian ideal, which went back to ancient Basque and Castillian statutory traditions, and "populist" neo-scholastic doctrines. This thesis finds support in the speech of José Miguel Infante, Procurator of the Cabildo, in the meeting of 18 September. In this speech, Infante invokes the 3rd Law, Title 15, Second Partida which contemplates the restitution of power to the local community when the sovereign is captured and no regent for the kingdom has been named beforehand. This argument in addition to confirming the expressions of loyalty and the aim to preserve provisionally the dominions for an eventual return of Ferdinand VII, demonstrates --according to this position-- that in the establishment of a Junta de Gobierno what was achieved was "the triumph and renaissance of the traditional doctrine of the participation by the people in the genesis of power, contrary to the absolutist posture of French origin, which had prevailed during the earlier century; ...(and) the strengthening of the old patrimonial conception of the monarchy over the unitary and national ideal sustained by the Bourbons and which the Junta Central and the Consejo de Regencia tried to maintain".

According to this thesis, there was no separatist spirit at all.

14 EYZAGUIRRE in Ideario y Ruta de la Emancipación Chilena (1957, 1979) pp 93-119, is the best exponent of this thesis.

15 This speech is reproduced in CHDI XVIII, pp 220ff.

16 EYZAGUIRRE (1979), p 115.
behind the Junta of 1810.

The other line of argument affirms that the creole leaders of 1810 already had a reform programme and a theoretical corpus capable of justifying a revolution. According to this position, the Junta's main intention was obviously to assure autonomy. Other aspects, though, would point to a more radical aim; for instance: the call for equal rights for America vis-à-vis Spain, the decree of free commerce, and the circulation of proclamations which viewed Congress as a body which was to generate a new constitution restricting the powers of the king, approaching thus a constitutional monarchy. This thesis interprets the summons of a Congress as an attempt to strengthen the principles of popular sovereignty and of representation. It emphasises also the existence of anti-Spanish feeling present in some local leaders, hostility corroborated by testimonies favourable to Spanish defeat at the hands of the French, and by the presence of conspirators. The recourse to "populist" neo-scholastic arguments and the declarations of loyalty towards Ferdinand, according to this thesis, constitute a mere "mask" which was to hide a separatist sentiment entrenched in at least a small nucleus of notables in 1810.\(^{17}\)

Our position differs partially from the two previous interpretations. That in the period 1810-1811 there existed a separatist spirit with a revolutionary programme, seems to us doubtful. The problem which preoccupied the Junta and those who

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17 See COLLIER (1967) pp 64-72, 72-91.
wanted to exercise influence over it was not to introduce global political change, and consequently to achieve independence, as much as it was to justify an accidental phenomenon, the already achieved autonomy, in addition to wanting to preserve and legitimate it. That there were several creoles who conceived more radical plans cannot be discarded, although this seems difficult to prove. The overall feeling was different: on the whole prudent, expectant, at most equivocal, to a large degree because what was at play was a predominantly legal-constitutional problem. It was not time yet to create a new system: the problem at hand was to know what to do with the remains of the one that had just been extinguished, in addition to justifying instrumental instances which might permit the definition of a new future order.

The radicalism of the process lay rather in the events and in the new conditions outside Chile. These were to push the process to more and more extreme situations without there being a need for an a priori revolutionary programme conceived by a fully conscious vanguard. Far more crucial than the possibly "masked" disloyalty of some, was the fact that the return of Ferdinand was perceived more and more as implausible. Far more decisive than some minor conspiratorial outbreaks, was the legalist and autonomist attitude assumed by the Junta. The very fact that its legitimacy was recognised, expressly by the Consejo de Regencia and tacitly by the Viceroy of Perú, in and of itself confirms its
success. Additionally, its radical character would become better defined through the use of a republican discourse.

We agree with Collier as to the novelty and progressivism of this discourse. However, we do not think that behind this discourse there was a programmatic revolutionary spirit. The arguments used by the Junta lack sufficient coherence to suppose a concerted and clear aim in this respect. The neo-scholastic origin of some of the arguments employed reveal that something far more complex was involved.

The fundamental objective was to justify the circumstantial autonomy which had recently been achieved. For this purpose any legitimating argument was acceptable. Therefore, it is not strange that republican arguments—in the long run revolutionary arguments—were used together with scholastic principles. This kind of eclecticism was frequent both in the French revolutionary experience, as well as in the Spanish and American cases. A same issue was addressed with an equivocal language covering thus different ideological positions. What apparently was being aimed here was to achieve

18 See "Documentos Relativos a la Aprobación de la Junta de Gobierno...", Oficio from the Viceroy of Perú to the Junta de Gobierno (4 September 1811), and Oficio from the Consejo de Regencia de España to the Presidente of Chile (14 April 1811), in SCL I, pp 168-169.

19 Cf. GONGORA (1975a) p 198; M L. AMUNATEGUI, La Dictadura de O'Higgins (1982), p 172.

20 On the eclectic and ambiguous character of revolutionary ideological language, see: T. R. THOLFSEN, Ideology and Revolution in Modern Europe (New York 1984), p 55; K. BAKER, "French Political Thought at the Accession of Louis
an agreement -- in this case concerning autonomy -- in a context lacking ideological consensus, by resorting to different justifications. This prudent eclecticism can be found in almost all contemporary Chilean texts. A plural set of ideological options is maintained open at all times while awaiting a final resolution which was expected to take place outside Chile.21

The radicalism of the discourse is to be found, then, not so much in the intentionality of the users of this discourse, which was always flexible, as in the partial application of a line of argument which in itself was radical, implicitly radical, used to justify and legitimate de facto situations, not promoted in Chile but rather in the Peninsula. We insist, the revolutionary character resided in the events and in their justifications. The political actors were not themselves revolutionary; it was the scenario, the circumstances in which they had to act, and the language which at times out of convenience was employed which were revolutionary.

We think, though, that already in the period of the first Junta Chile was moving effectively towards separation, but this was still a result of a dynamic which exceeded any endogenous local control. The creoles themselves started to


21 See our analysis on the Catecismo Polftico Cristiano in Chapter VII.
acquire consciousness of the extreme nature of these events rather slowly. They reacted more than proposed, but they reacted in part with a line of argument which in itself was programmatic even if all the consequences of their argumentation were not yet known nor its radicalism fully shared. There did not exist yet an ideological consensus with respect to republicanism, notwithstanding its progressive usage. Instead, what was at play here was a legal a posteriori strategy intent in justifying previous events, more so than an a priori project. It was an accidental autonomy, without signs of being reversed, which by requiring justification ended up becoming more radical. The dividing line between autonomy and separatism is, therefore, far more tenuous than what the other two previous interpretations would like us to believe. They were not consecutive stages, nor antagonistic postures, but rather complementary and interrelated aspects which presupposed each another.

Clans, Regionalism and 'Caudillismo'

The period which extends from the establishment of the first National Congress (4 July 1811) to the arrival of the expeditionary forces ordered by the Viceroy of Peru (March 1813), a far more turbulent and confusing period, is characterised by

22 See infra Chapter VII.
the appearance of new political actors and diverse alliances which accelerated the process towards a greater independence, even if they did not allow the emergence of a stable and lasting government.23

Unlike the Junta, the Congress turned out to be initially weak and inefficient. This was due to divisions produced between two opposing congressional tendencies, on the one hand a moderate sector: larger, conciliatory and unwilling to innovate; and the other more radical sector led by Rozas. Both differed not only in their focus but also in their bases of support. The moderate faction had the backing of the Cabildo of Santiago and of the more reactionary faction associated until recently with the dissolved Audiencia and with the aborted Figueroa mutiny. In turn, the more radical faction had the support of the provinces, the emissaries from Buenos Aires, and the aid of some sectors of the Santiago élite, and of the militia forces.

Different motives explain this alignment. Certainly the ascendancy of Rozas — caudillo of the southern provinces—, the displacement of the Cabildo by the Junta, the Argentine influence, and the growing power of the military apparatus, awakened suspicions in the bulk of the Santiago élite. Hence, this explains the appearance of opposing forces which claimed
that the Santiago Cabildo ought to exert a greater tutorship over Congress while moderating the latter’s impact.

This objective was achieved by assuring, through legal artifice, a greater representation of deputies coming from Santiago and by creating an executive junta, which turned out to be inefficient and dependent on the moderate majority which came to control Congress. This was to spark the withdrawal of the minority delegates (9 August), and eventually the resort to armed force in order to compel Congress to assume a line more akin to the one defined by the Junta of 1810.

On 4 September a military coup took place in Santiago led by the Carrera brothers, with the support of the rocista faction and of the powerful Larraín Salas family, the so called Ochocientos. A similar coup occurred the day after in Concepción. Both movements manifested the wish to continue in the reformist path as well as to end the delaying tactics employed by the more cautious sector. Changes were made in the executive junta, the deputies belonging to the then larger faction were expelled, and there followed a series of persecutions which affected the groups more unwilling to

24 With respect to the resignations of the minority deputies see MARTÍNEZ (1964) I, pp 270ff; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 367-374; and the documents: "Exposición que...Dirigen a sus Electores Algunos Diputados...", and "Circular del Congreso..." in SCL, I, pp 52-57.

25 On the coups d'état of 4 and 5 September 1811, see: TALAVERA (1937); MARTÍNEZ (1964) I, pp 279ff; CARRERA (1815); BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, Chapter 9. On the Larraín Salas family, see FELSTINER (1970).
innovate. The family clan of the Ochocientos assumed in Santiago the totality of power in Congress, and Rozas was to do the same in Concepción.

The show of force which took place on 4 and 5 September helped step up the reformist activity of Congress. Different measures were decreed: the province of Coquimbo north of Santiago was created; the sale of public posts in the cabildos was prohibited, its seats having to be filled by elections; a constitutional commission was appointed; an obligatory military service was instituted; taxes were increased; parochial fees were abolished; only new cemeteries located outside of the perimeters of cities were allowed; the freedom of unborn slaves was declared; educational plans were designed; and the policy favourable to closer diplomatic contacts with Buenos Aires was reinstated.

Even though the impasse which had paralysed Congress had ended and a more radical line of action had been reassumed, the political situation was to remain unstable. There continued to be a certain reticence towards declaring an absolute independence. Authoritarian measures, such as the relegations of prominent figures, caused discontent. Lastly, the Carrera brothers, virtually in control of the military force, felt kept out of government notwithstanding their crucial protagonism in the recent events of September. In effect, the distrust and ambiguous attitude shown by these military caudillos made them easy prey to influences from sectors wishing to re-establish the
previous order of things.

A new coup, on 15 November, once again led by the Carreras confirmed the high degree of instability and confusion then prevalent. Unlike the earlier coup, this had an exclusively military character, and was justified by an even more radical and populist discourse. The aim may have been none other than to transform José Miguel Carrera into the unquestioned leader of the process; in any case, it is conspicuous in this pronunciamiento the resort to a clearly liberal and revolutionary legitimating language —a popular assembly was demanded with "all the neighbours without exception", in order thus to give course to the "general will of the people"— while at the same time support was obtained from the Spanish faction, which until then had been reactionary and interested in reversing the ongoing process.

Whatever may have been the ideological aim of this new military movement —if there was one to begin with— it brought forth the immediate repudiation from government forces in Santiago and Concepción. Subsequent attempts to smooth relations with Rozas and the Larrain Salas proved unsuccessful. In fact, the situation became even worse when Carrera decided to dissolve

26 See TALAVERA (1937); CARRERA (1815); MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 8ff; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, Chapter 10; "Documentos Relativos a la Revolución del 15 de Noviembre de 1811" in SCL I, pp 185-190, and "Manifiesto de la Junta de Gobierno", 20 November 1811 in SCL I, pp 190-192.
Congress on 2 December. On account of this last decision, troops from Concepción and Santiago were mobilised, and talks were initiated to negotiate a confederation of the three provinces, the latter measure being rejected by Carrera (January 1812). These talks did not bring about an immediate solution but they helped to avoid an imminent civil war while diminishing Rosas' support in Concepción. The lack of supplies coming from Santiago and the inability to reach an agreement, caused in turn a military coup to occur in Concepción (8 July) and the establishment of a military junta which was later deposed—in September—by military officers associated with Carrera who feared that Concepción might end-up aligning with the Viceroy.

Once the conflict with Concepción was resolved, Carrera had to confront internal problems within his own government, in addition to having to define his own so far ambiguous ideological position. Differences with his brother Juan José, which instilled fear that yet another armed confrontation might take place, were overcome. The faction interested in coming to an

27 Consult MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 35-84; CARRERA (1815); BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, Chapters 10-12; and "Documentos Relativos a la Disolución del Congreso" and "Manifiesto de don José Miguel Carrera..." in SCL I, pp 195-199.

28 With respect to the conflicts between the two brothers see: MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 76-77, 86-87; CARRERA (1815); BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 584-591.

The ambiguities of the Carreras are duly credited. It is a fact that the 15 November movement had the support of the sectors most inclined to the old régime. A premeditated campaign set up by the Carrera brothers intent in promoting their father, Ignacio de la Carrera, as chief of government stimulated insinuations to that effect from the reactionary faction, which were moreover confirmed by public expressions of support during
agreement with Abascal, the Viceroy of Perú, which counted on Juan José and a wide sector of the political spectrum which had supported the dictatorship to that date was driven out of government. This was to produce a worsening of relations with Abascal, who until then had maintained a cautious attitude towards the turbulent events taking place in Chile. However, once Carrera consolidated his power and his government decreed a series of measures tending towards a greater degree of independence than the one already achieved amongst which stands out the promulgation of a constitutional bylaw with evident republican overtones (October 1812) --, Abascal was to decide that only a military expedition could stop and reverse the independence process in Chile.

What are we to make of this last period which at first sight seems anarchic and lacking any sort of clear meaning? We are of the opinion that once the initial problem created by the constitutional crisis --that of legitimating and consolidating

the coup d’état itself; the public which met in the cabildo abierto and which was to make its petitions known was on the whole prone to that tendency. Subsequently, José Miguel Carrera was to help elect Manuel Manso, prominent figure of that faction, as member of the Junta. Moreover, the participants of the pronouncement which deposed Rozas in Concepción were also favourable to that position. The close ties between Juan José and the sector keen in reaching an understanding with Abascal is acknowledged in all the available chronicles, even in the Diario Militar of CARRERA.

On the ambiguous performance of the Carreras, see: MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 8-9, 12, 14, 54; CARRERA (1815); BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 452-490, 523ff, 545, 566ff, 570-574; B. MITRE. Historia de San Martín (Buenos Aires 1950) I, pp 197-198, 203-204; IGLESIAS (1934) p 115; M. REYNOLDS, José Miguel Carrera (1973) pp 77-82.
the *de facto* autonomy—was resolved, it became necessary to face an even greater problem: to conceive a new order. What made this other challenge so difficult was the fact that parallel to this, a power vacuum was produced by this autonomy which was to generate new political forces, which fought each other.

These forces did not spring up whilst the political scene continued to be ruled by traditional parameters. The first Junta, notwithstanding its novelty as a political mechanism, tended to be framed within an organic-corporatist conception of representation and maintained a close working relation with the Cabildo, the body to which it owed its birth.29 This explains why neither its creation nor its performance brought about major conflicts. But a Congress was an altogether different thing. To begin with it was an institution which had no previous precedent in America, for which there was no accumulated experience, and which introduced a political logic of a very different sort to the one which was known then. Congress was conceived as an instance of provincial and thus regional representation created in order to debate and design the system of government most convenient for Chile at that moment. Its planning pretensions and its non-corporate origin encouraged the emergence of two new

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29 In the Junta of 1810 participated the recently named interim Governor (Toro y Zambrano), the Bishop of Santiago (Martínez de Aldunate), a Spanish Counselor of Indies (Fernando Márquez de la Plata), a powerful citizen of Concepción (Martínez de Rozas), a prominent figure of Santiago (Ignacio de la Carrera), a distinguished Spanish military officer (Francisco Javier de Reyna), and a respected Chilean merchant (Juan Enrique Rosales). Hence, all leading corporations were represented.
political forces: regionalism and ideological groups. In the long run this explains the contentious attitude of Concepción, and the appearance of radical and moderate factions which we have mentioned already.

In addition to these two would be added a third force, no less important: that of military power. The military had had an important role from the very outset of the constitutional crisis. It had been ubiquitous in the appointment of Carrasco, in his overthrow, on the eve of the cabildo abierto of 1810, and in the subsequent consolidation of power by the first Junta. Not surprisingly it would continue to exercise influence. To a large degree it had assumed the role of arbiter of a process in which there were still sectors unwilling to innovate.

The appearance of these three new political forces did not mean that the more traditional mechanisms of participation and power were to disappear. We should not forget that the cabildo and the clientelistic and family cliques still made themselves felt with all their weight and prestige. Their continuous protagonism cannot be explained unless we mention the highly heterogenous context we are here analysing. As the system became more complex, the new mechanisms were at most added, they did not substitute already existing ones.

This was to encourage all kinds of conflicts between these different and potentially disruptive forces, none of which could predominate. There were attempts, though, to palliate these conflicts. The most recurrent one was the establishment of
political alliances, which produced some positive results. The coup of 4 September 1811 saw the concerted and successful effort of almost all the above-mentioned forces. These alliances, though, would reveal themselves to be weak and merely contingent. Since there was no consolidated and defined system—in effect there was at most a slow evolving system—there were no instances which might put an end to conflict. Hence, in the long run these would be resolved solely by imposition. Under these conditions, the military was obviously in a better position to come out with a solution to the pending problem posed by a weak collegiate executive authority. Moreover, military power served to deter any possible militarisation of the latent conflict with the Peruvian authorities. It is not surprising, then, that Carrera was to end up as the predominant figure.

Being itself the newest political force, the military had to construct its legitimacy on the most original and autonomous bases; it had to resort to the most novel justifications offered. This explains why there exists a far closer relationship between liberal-republicanism and military power than between this ideology and the other political forces: older forces could continue using more traditional lines of thinking. The family clans could opt for a preexisting seigneurial legitimacy and a corporate clientelistic system which had made of the clique the political-administrative actor par excellence. Regionalism, in turn, could be backed by statutory traditions, in addition to assimilating itself to local family
clientelism. Personalist caudillismo, however, was the force which had the least number of historical antecedents which might justify it. After all, Carrera was not a new version of the captain-generals of the Bourbon period; he was a military caudillo of a modern sort, not a military functionary in the services of a bureaucratic empire. His performance fits rather with the image of young French revolutionary officers who "domesticated" the Revolution, or simply with the image of the governing soldier-statesman, specifically Napoleon.30 Not unlike these two other cases, the ideological element provided a content for the military which otherwise would have appeared as a merely arbitrary or pragmatic force.

Moreover, military power had a greater need to legitimate itself. Military power was not only the force most lacking in political historical antecedents, the more neutral so to speak, potentially the most prone to innovate, but also it was the force which possessed the greatest amount of de facto power, notwithstanding being also the most unstable, vulnerable and fragile in terms of legitimacy.

It is precisely this which explains why during the coup which put Carrera in power (15 November 1811) so much emphasis was given to the question of ideological legitimacy. The demand for a popular assembly, the repeated insistence that the manifested general will had to be safeguarded, the tendency to

30 C. ROLLE, "Los Militares como Agentes de la Revolución" in KREBS and GAZMURI (1990), pp 277-301; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, p 453 n6.
view political power in terms of popular support or linked to the charisma of the Carreras approximate the process to an overt liberal-revolutionary line. The 15 November pronunciamento helped to incorporate these military caudillos into government, but in reality it aimed at something far more ambitious, none other than to measure the will of the people, or better still to use this ideological expedient in order to strengthen the de facto power already acquired. We are dealing here with an attempt to justify military pressure by involving the fictitious support of the people. The democratic fiction served the charismatic personalism of Carrera so that it might not appear as just that. We have finally reached a stage whereby there was a republican world-view in full operation, and not just the merely legalist legitimacy used in the first moments of the process.

That the aim of Carrera was to accentuate the break does not seem to coincide though with his actual performance. Carrera always played his cards in an extraordinarily vague manner. But this can also be explained. He needed all kinds of support wherever it might come from, even from who manifested themselves opposed to independence, the Spanish faction, the more conciliatory party. The ambiguity of this base of support suggests an ambiguity of aim independently of the explicit language used for merely legitimating purposes.

There was no political project as such behind Carrera, at least not while he was attempting to consolidate his power. Carrera’s use of liberal-republican language was a legitimating
expedient employed to justify a novel form of doing politics: personalist caudillismo. Not unlike what happened with the legal arguments invoked at the beginning of the crisis, this was an attempt to reach for any source of legitimacy available, which in turn would serve inadvertently though to speed up the process of break-up with the metropolis. We insist that this was unintentional; this language could cover all sorts of pretensions, even Spanish legitimist ones, just like a plural base of support could serve as a political expedient to reach power. Carrera was not a revolutionary; rather, he used revolutionary language. His political handling of the crisis was basically manipulative and flexible, not dogmatic; at no time, for instance, did he attempt to secure the complete independence of Chile, even if his government was the one that came closest to it. 31 Carrera at most was a military caudillo who took advantage

31 There is evidence that under Carrera, on at least two occasions, the possibility of formally declaring Independence was contemplated: in April 1812 and once again in April 1813. See MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 73-74; CARRERA (1815, 1973) p 51; AMUNATEGUI (1872) III, pp 553-554. The letter which José Miguel Carrera writes to his father, probably dated October 1811, seems to confirm also a clear intention in this regard; this letter is reproduced in MARTINEZ (1964) II, p 8. Nevertheless, it is equally true that the expressions, which are taxative, do not seem ratified by the ambivalent actions of Carrera in this same period.

As a matter of fact, we are not clear about the reasons why Independence was not declared prior to 1818. There is open talk of "Independence" in a context which refers increasingly to Spain --no longer in relation to Napoleon or other foreign powers as it occurs in the beginning-- during the course of 1812, especially during the celebrations of the second anniversary of the 18th September. See MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 87-92; AMUNATEGUI (1872) III, pp 542-543; see also infra, Chapter VII. It is possible that in this point a more cautious or ambiguous policy was chosen in order not to alienate more
of a conjunctural situation favourable to the sort of political personalism which he exercised. On an ideological level, though, Carrera helped to disseminate the new liberal-republican thinking; he popularised and democratized a process which until then had been merely elitist, even if he was to do this by recurring to a purely legitimating fiction. That this helped to bring about the final break-up with the metropolis or accentuated it seems to be an unintended consequence, or at least it does not appear to be the principal aim he pursued. In reality, a new and fully consolidated order did not emerge yet because behind Carrera there was no clear aim in mind and because his military government was built upon a base which excluded other powerful groups. In order to arrive at a full separation from Spain, the process had to become far more radical and find in the outbreak of open and violent conflict its final solution.

It is also possible that the aims were not clear at all, which is what we argue here and in the next chapter.
If the period from the establishment of Congress until the first dictatorship of Carrera centered around phenomena internal in origin, the advent of war once again brought to the process a dynamic promoted basically from outside. Internal conflicts would continue to influence, but to a lesser degree than the direct confrontation which was to ensue with the Viceroyalty, transforming thus a constitutional crisis whose reference was the Peninsula into a showdown with nearby Perú. The latter in the long run assured Independence.

In December 1812 a small expeditionary force of 50 men sent by Abascal arrived in Chiloé and Valdivia. Reinforced by local troops, this force marched on Concepción, which was captured in March. The subsequent invasion of Chillán increased the royalist army to 6000 soldiers, a serious threat to the capital. These events brought about the reorganisation of the government, the appointment of Carrera as commander-in-chief, and the rapid improvisation of an army of 4000 men, ill-equipped and lacking formal training, whose main military task was to defend

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32 On the course of the war, consult: MARTINEZ (1964) II; CARRERA (1815); D. J. BENAVENTE, Primeras Campañas de la Independencia de Chile (1856); BARROS ARANA (1888 and 1889) IX and X; B. MITRE, Historia de San Martín y de la Emancipación Sudamericana (1887-1888, Buenos Aires 1950) I; B. VICUNA MACKENNA, Vida del General don Juan Mackenna (1937); I. TELLEZ, Historia Militar de Chile (1931) I; C. PUEYRREDON ed., La Campaña de los Andes (Buenos Aires 1942); A. TORO DAVIDA, Síntesis Histórico Militar de Chile (1976), pp 49-133; DOMINGUEZ (1985), pp 221-231.
the Maule river zone (Talca).

An initial confrontation in Yerbas Buenas (April), surprisingly favourable to the patriot army, led to the retreat of the royalist army towards the south entrenching itself in Chillán (May). Instead of immediately attacking the bulk of royalist forces stationed in this city, Carrera decided to recapture Concepción, Talcahuano and Los Angeles, a move which was to permit the royalist army to organise its defence, and to prepare for a later offensive. The siege of Chillán, which lasted from the end of July until mid August failed. Royalist forces found help in the armed support of local groups, guerrillas led by Spaniards and loyalist hacendados, which caused all sorts of damage on the patriot army. The effectiveness of these bands meant the loss of Carrera’s prestige. Faced by defeat, the government Junta moved to Talca which was closer to the theatre of war. Once it learnt of the full magnitude of the failure of the southern campaign, the Junta decided to dismiss Carrera and replace him with Bernardo O’Higgins who had demonstrated so far greater tenacity and military acumen.

In the meantime, Peru sent another expeditionary force; this landed in Concepción in January 1814. At this stage, the situation could not have been more alarming for the patriot side. Desertions and casualties had reduced the army to only 2000 men. The Spanish guerrillas acted with full impunity between the Bio-Bio and the Maule rivers —one of them, even,
had been able to capture José Miguel and Luis Carrera. Meanwhile, a royalist division captured Talca while the forces headed by O'Higgins remained in the south, separated thus from Santiago by the Spanish forces. Faced by the imminent danger of an invasion, a cabildo abierto in Santiago put an end to the Junta and on 7 March appointed Francisco de la Lastra as Director Supremo with full dictatorial powers. An armed body was organised in order to recapture Talca.

Parallel to this, a massive movement of divisions—both royalist and patriot—was to take place from the south towards the north, so as to cross the Maule and race from then on towards Santiago. Following a defeat at Cancha Rayada (29 March), the patriots triumphed in Quechereguas (8 and 9 April), a victory which prevented the advance of the royalist army against Santiago. From a military standpoint the escalation of war had produced a mere balance of forces. However, news coming from Spain announced the defeat of the French at Vitoria and predicted the possible return of Ferdinand; in addition royalist forces had recently obtained important triumphs in La Plata, Mexico and Venezuela. All of this advised a more cautious position. Given these circumstances, and at the recommendation of an official of the British navy, Captain James Hillyar, the de la Lastra government manifested itself willing to negotiate; a similar position was assumed by Brigadier Gafnza, commander of the Spanish forces stationed in Talca, who needed further reinforcements to attempt an advance on Santiago. As a result
of these negotiations, Gainza and O'Higgins signed the Treaty of Lircay (3 May).

According to the terms of this Treaty, Chile would have to recognise once again the sovereignty of Ferdinand VII, accept the legitimacy of the Consejo de Regencia, and send deputies to Spain to ratify the Constitution of 1812. In exchange, the Santiago government would continue to exercise authority within the territory in the name of Spain, and could trade freely with neutrals and allies of the empire. The armies sent by the Viceroy were to leave the country, the established military authorities would be respected, prisoners would be exchanged, and all the symbolic innovations introduced so far would have to be abolished.

Neither side ratified the Treaty, which resulted thus in a mere stalemate. This permitted Gainza to withdraw back to the Chillán region where the royalists, as we have said, had considerable backing, and from where it was possible to stimulate growing dissensions on the patriot side. Subsequent events would justify this strategy. The escape of the Carrera brothers, in accordance with their royalist captors, allowed them to return to Santiago and execute another military coup (23 July), overthrowing de la Lastra and establishing another junta. Exiles and sackings of prominent figures ordered by Carrera produced resentment amongst military chiefs meeting in Talca, who entrusted O'Higgins with the mission to return to Santiago and

33 Reproduced in SCL I, pp 340-342.
topple the new government. On 26 August in the Maipo plain, outside of Santiago, a division of 500 men under the command of O'Higgins faced the whole Carrera army, nearly 2000 men. Sheer inferiority in numbers compelled O'Higgins to retreat once again towards the south. However, news of a recent landing in Talcahuano bringing new reinforcements from Perú, convinced O'Higgins that it was better to make peace and join forces with Carrera.

All in all though, the patriot leaders, worn out and demoralised, were unable to confront the more professional royalist forces led by General Osorio. Strategic mistakes and lack of coordination, caused by the mutual distrust between the two Chilean leaders, produced the defeat of Rancagua (2 October), and the subsequent flight through mountain passes of 3000 Chileans towards Mendoza. Osorio entered Santiago several days later.

The Spanish government which followed the Patria Vieja and governed Chile for close to two and a half years was notorious for its repression and absolutism. It revoked the principal measures dictated by previous governments, re-established the Audiencia and the Inquisition. Patriots unable to escape to Mendoza were persecuted and harassed. In Santiago alone nearly two hundred persons were jailed; another forty were

34 On the so-called Reconquista period, see: M. L. and G. V. AMUNATEGUI, "La Reconquista Española" in AUCH (1851) VIII, and (1852) IX; BARROS ARANA (1888) IX, Chapter 24; (1889) X; V. PEREZ ROSALES, Recuerdos del Pasado (1814-1860) (Buenos Aires 1946) Chapters 2 and 3.
sent to the island of Juan Fernández. Expropriations were ordered, forced donations were demanded, strong public vigilance and measures designed to instill terror in the population were exercised. Prisoners were assassinated; a Tribunal of Vigilance and Public Security was set up, proceeding in extreme summary fashion; spy nets were created, liberty of movement was strongly restricted, and all feasts and popular meetings were prohibited. All these measures aroused resentment.

In the meantime, on the other side of the Andes, in Mendoza, preparations were being carried out for an invasion of Chile under the command of José de San Martín, Governor of Mendoza, in close association with O'Higgins. The Carrera faction was previously neutralised. At this stage the war had changed completely from its original course. Instead, a continental strategy was designed by San Martín which aimed at restoring the patriot government in Chile, and from there proceed against Perú. The simultaneous penetration of the Central Valley through different mountain passes at the beginning of February 1817, backed by patriot montoneras which had made their appearance earlier on, divided and defeated the royalist forces. The battle of Chacabuco (12 February) opened up the gates of Santiago. However, this victory would not be consolidated until a year later, in Maipú (5 April 1818), when the Chileans and

35 See CARRERA (1815); MITRE (1950) I, Chapter 9; BARROS ARANA (1889) X, Chapters 3 and 4; AMUNATEGUI (1882) Chapter 5; B. VICUNA MACKENNA, El Ostracismo de los Carreras (1857); and by the same author, Ostracismo del General Bernardo O'Higgins (Valparaíso 1861); IGLESIAS (1934); REYNOLDS (1973).
Argentina defeated the Viceroyalty's army, recently reinforced by a fourth and final expedition organised by Perú. Several months earlier, in commemoration of the first anniversary of the battle of Chacabuco, the O'Higgins government proclaimed the Independence of Chile.36

Earlier on we alluded to the war as the mechanism which had finally resolved the conflicts which had prevented thus far the total consolidation of independence towards which Chile was moving for some time. The way the war developed in the course of the years 1813-1818 settled definitely the tensions which still subsisted and assured total autonomy, the keystone of the new political order which had begun to emerge. The war, to a large degree, reintroduced the external element which from the start had made possible the increasing distance from Spain. In the long run, it would be the errors committed by the Viceroyalty of Perú, rather than the successes of the patriots, which were to make Chile an independent country.

From the very beginning Abascal's strategy consisted in invading Chile in the least visible manner so as to produce a civil war. This strategy failed. The immediate reaction in Santiago to the two initial invasions was the unification of all pre-existing factions, even those sectors which had been recently displaced by Carrera. It is true that these first invasions had the backing of guerrillas led by Spaniards and loyalist Chilean

36 The "Proclamación de la Independencia" is published in CHDI XI, p 11.
hacendados of Concepción and Chillán. At first sight this would seem to confirm that the strategy produced the desired effect: however, it is not less true that this opposition to Santiago and its government had at most a weakening effect only on a military level. The invasions awakened in several minor regional foci a spontaneous reaction of loyalty towards the Viceroyalty which translated itself into military hostility towards the province of Santiago, but they did not produce nor were able to impose a political alternative to the new order which was evolving in the capital. The first invasions ended-up in an impasse which motivated, in both contenders, the search for a concerted political solution.

The Treaty of Lircay was thus a unique and exceptional opportunity which Abascal could have used to exploit the weakness of the Santiago government. That the creoles accepted and subsequently rejected the Treaty was reasonable. Either as a military or political deadlock, the Treaty was convenient given the circumstances in which the de la Lastra government found itself; moreover, it coincided with the ambiguous attitude repeatedly expressed by all political factions in Santiago. On the other hand, Abascal's repudiation of the Treaty was a major

37 On the whole the Lircay Treaty has received adverse interpretations; with some minor exceptions. Cf. MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 223-228; BARROS ARANA (1888) IX, pp 411-458; AMUNATEGUI and AMUNATEGUI (1851-1852): Archivo de don Bernardo O'Higgins (1946) II, pp 245-302; COLLIER (1967) pp 100, 111, 117-119; FELSTINER (1970), pp 159ff; DOMINGUEZ (1985) pp 228-229. It is noteworthy the contradictory attitudes which both O'Higgins as well as Carrera held towards this Treaty; see BARROS ARANA (1888) IX, pp 457-458 n51, 495-502; MITRE (1950) I, p 220.
mistake. The Treaty allowed Abascal to reinforce the more conciliatory factions, thus checking the kind of radicalization which had been taking place ever since Carrera entered the scene, in exchange for a mere autonomy for Chile which in the worst of cases postponed the greater problem of independence until the return of Ferdinand, the policy which had been tacitly accepted by Lima thus far.

The Treaty left several options open for Lima. The previously ambiguous attitude of Carrera--the most unpredictable figure on the Chilean political scene of the time--made his co-optation and alignment towards a more conciliatory posture plausible, so long as he would be assured the possibility of continuing to direct the process. This in itself was a risk, given the undisciplined character so far shown by the military, but a minor risk from an ideological point of view. We should not forget that Carrera's radicalism, was not due to a radical project proper but rather resulted from an effort to legitimate a growing military power. Moreover, Abascal had invaded Chile supposedly to implement the Cádiz Constitution; nothing prevented the new more liberal legitimacy timidly rehearsed in Chile during the previous months from adhering from then on to parameters dictated from liberal Spain. Finally, Abascal could have gained sufficient dividends by returning to a conciliatory situation, but now under the corroborated threat of eventual military confrontations if the Treaty's stipulations were not honoured. In short, the Treaty allowed Lima some tuition over
The agreement also left open the possibility that the internal conflicts between the different creole factions might continue to sharpen. The Treaty made no reference to the nature of the Santiago government, a matter which was left to local discretion, increasing thus the potential of civil war. Evidently, the Treaty favoured Lima.

Why then did Abascal reject it? The Viceroy repudiated it because he concluded that a purely military strategy sufficed. He seems to have thought that by intensifying the war Chile's internal decomposition would be accelerated. Furthermore, signs coming from Spain made a return to previous absolutism plausible. A political option intent on exploiting the prevailing ambiguity in Chile implied continuing to accept the equivocal state of affairs which merely suspended in the air this phantom empire, but this was not enough for Lima. Abascal's bet pointed to a solution dictated from the outside, instead of continuing to play with internal and external factors which until then, finely tuned, had preserved the imperial option in spite of it all. In the end, it was the Viceroyalty which unilaterally shelved the possibility of reconciling degrees of autonomy already achieved with a traditional imperial structure.

By intensifying the war the Viceroyalty did not avail itself of its existing political advantages, and most importantly it did not obtain its aims. What followed was a military collapse on the creole side, not a political crumbling.
No civil war broke out: the one that traditionally is said to have taken place between Carrera and O'Higgins was at most a faint hint of a potential civil war. What was involved in this case was a struggle to define who was to lead the military defence of Chile against the invading forces. What took place on the Maipó plain was a mere skirmish, not a political clash between opposing tendencies. The arrival of troops from Perú permitted once again the reunification of the two patriot factions. It is true that this internal conflict ended up with the defeat in Rancagua, but then again what was at play was basically a military problem. Strategic military errors put an end to the Patria Vieja, not substantial political disagreements.

To intensify the war meant, moreover, having to transform it more and more into a Peruvian affair. The Viceroyalty had to send an increasing number of Peruvian and Peninsular troops. It had to increase the non-Chilean component given that the local contingent had proved insufficient and no civil war had broken out. Obviously, Chileans fought against Chileans: there were even crossed affiliations amongst the Spanish born — Spaniards fought on the patriot side, and

38 On the conflict between Carrera and O'Higgins, see: MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 195ff; CARRERA (1815); BARROS ARANA (1888) IX, Chapters 18, 22 and 23; MITRE (1950) Chapter 8; J. ALEMPARTE, Carrera y Freire (1963).

Chileans on the royalist—however, this alone was not enough to spark a civil war. Once the strategy of balancing out political and military factors was discarded, no clear internal divisions with royalist leaders of equivalent standing as those already existing in the patriot side emerged. Guerrilla chiefs allied to Perú were on the whole minor figures subordinated to the military authorities sent by the Viceroy. To a large degree the war turned out to be an invasion with limited local backing, not a full-fledged civil confrontation with external support. A war which could have been an essentially Chilean affair ended up opposing Chile to Perú, Chile to the empire. The absence of a civil war is confirmed, also, by the fact that once Spanish power was restored in Santiago, the new government did not secure a local creole base. The Spanish administration which governed Chile during the so called Reconquista period (October 1814 – February 1817), in so far as it was absolutist and repressive, re-affirms its invasive character. Lastly, by transforming the conflict in Chile into a "Peruvian" affair, the Viceroyalty confirmed San Martín's strategy of "continentalizing"

40 The thesis which argues that the wars of Independence were civil wars is generalised. It is based on the irrefutable fact that the bulk of combatants were Chileans, notwithstanding the growing protagonism of more professional soldiers coming from Perú and the Peninsula. In our opinion, this criteria is not sufficient, amongst other reasons because of the constant fluctuations on the part of the Chilean contingent, either because of capture or through desertion. Moreover, we think that there are other criteria which further weaken this accepted thesis, which we shall examine immediately.

41 See F. CAMPOS HARRIET, "Los Defensores del Rey" (1958), pp 26-43.
the war. Henceforth, the war became a frontal clash between America and Spain, a conflagration which put into play nothing more and nothing less than the independence and birth of new national states.

It is difficult to ascertain to what degree the war created a national character. Nevertheless, there are some indications, especially in the last stage, which seem to confirm this hypothesis. The historiography of the period is unanimous in pointing out the cruelty and arbitrariness of the Spaniards during the Reconquista as a binding factor around which a national identity would emerge.42 The way the two restoration governments defined loyalty, conditioning it to either peninsular or creole origin, accentuated the distinction between the two sides. Consequently, the rejection of the Spaniard ceased to be limited solely to the highest ranks of society. The occupation forces, particularly the Talaveras Regiment, in charge of repression, awakened strong repudiation amongst popular sectors. In the guerrilla bands and amongst propagandists and agitators sent out by San Martin, the popular component was high. We are no longer dealing here with the initial phenomenon of contingents who follow their patrones and local caciques.

There began to appear figures such as Manuel Rodriguez, Miguel Neira, Friar Venegas and Justo Estay, mixture of montoneros and "patriot" bandits who rapidly kindled popular imagination, and gave rise to a long mythological tradition which was to persist well beyond the period we are dealing here. This popular involvement would be accompanied moreover by a complex and spontaneous symbolic imagery, whose roots were also popular. For instance, we can mention the figure of la Panchita, a creole figure analogous in many respects to Marianne, and the numerous denigratory nicknames, such as that of godos and maturrangos which helped identify members of the royalist cause. This spontaneous fervour could explain in turn the clear manifestations of popular support which the army of the Andes awakened in Chacabuco and Maipó, noticed by foreign witnesses.

So far we have explained how predominantly external factors imprinted on the war a non-civil character while helping

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43 In this respect, see: BARROS ARANA (1889) X, Chapter 9; FELIU CRUZ (1966); B. VICUNA MACKENNA, Vida del Capitán General Don Bernardo O'Higgins (1976) pp 288-289. S. HAIGH in Sketches of Buenos Ayres and Chile (London 1829), says that Manuel Rodriguez "was perhaps the most popular man in Chile" (p 66). The extraordinary importance which the period of Reconquista will subsequently have for nationalist purposes can be appreciated in several works of historical fiction which have become highly popular and well known, for instance: the serial feuilletons of L. BRIEBA subsequently compiled in Episodios Nacionales published during the 1870s, in A. BLEST GANA, Durante la Reconquista (Paris 1897), and more recently in J. INOSTROSA, Los Húsares Trágicos (1964-1965).


45 HAIGH (1829) pp 62ff.
to unify the patriot side behind a cause which progressively came to be perceived in national terms. It is worthwhile asking why endogenous factors capable of creating highly critical situations did not produce, though, a more acute internal break-up — why Independence increased the feeling of crisis but did not generate in Chile a complete social collapse.

Military caudillismo was one of these disruptive endogenous factors. We have seen how it accelerated change, and how on occasions caudillos clashed with more traditionalist oligarchic groups. However, this military caudillismo never succeeded in becoming the predominant political force. It is true that in moments of stagnation it sprang up with unusual strength, capable even of displacing other political actors; however at other times, it had to make alliances or else resign from power. The relationship between Carrera and the Ochocientos was always conflict-ridden. At times they worked together for the same cause; at other times they opposed each other.

The existence of conflict between the military and the family clans does not imply though that there was a conflict within the élite itself. The military caudillismo of the Carreras, notwithstanding being a new force, continued to be linked with the power of the élite. The carrerino group was neither a family clan proper, nor was it a force which would be defined purely in military terms.46 It had mixed traits, which

46 The view which sees the Carreras as a clan in conflict with the Larrain Salas probably dates from the famous description made by VICUNA MACKENNA, namely that both factions were the
made it at times functional to the élite and at times unmanageable. This was to diminish its full autonomy even if it still made it unpredictable. Carrera introduced a new sort of leadership and a force which was also new, but this did not preclude him from being a product of his social group. The Carreras were made and destroyed by the same political forces: the new evolving circumstances and the by-now traditional ruling class.

This is not the only reason which explains the relative weakness of military power in Chile. Another factor which was to be influential was the long military tradition in the country, a tradition which gave a considerable degree of knowledge of military matters to the civilian world. Chile seems to have been the most militarised country in Spanish America in this period, but this curiously enough did not make it more favourable to charismatic praetorianism. The very high participation of the creole élite in the militias and the absence of high-ranking military commanders of notoriously mixed racial stock, prevented the military sphere from becoming a means of


47 On the links between the élite and the armed forces during the XIXth century, see: FELSTINER (1970) pp 181-184.

political advancement for other social groups. The military factor troubled the elite, but it did not lessen its hegemony. At times it escaped its hands, but in the end the elite imposed its power. Circumstances also helped. The war, by achieving increasingly larger dimensions, made the military presence functional conferring on it a professional responsibility which distanced it from politics. One can speak in Chile of political leaders who became military figures, not so of military figures who became politicians. The fact that military leaders were to fail in the war helped in turn to accept Argentine leadership to resolve the conflicts which had sprung up between Carrera and O'Higgins. This conflict ended up being resolved in Mendoza once San Martin chose O'Higgins, and carried out an out-and-out persecution of the Carreras, subsequently extended in Chile to the rest of the carrerino faction. Later, during the O'Higgins dictatorship a version of caudillismo became institutionalised but this did not prevent the same elite from deposing caudillos on several occasions.

Regionalism was also a destabilising factor but incapable of creating a total break. On various occasions movements in the southern provinces questioned Santiago's supremacy. However, these rebellions did not have secessionist aims nor were they prolonged, and they tended to be neutralised.


50 DOMINGUEZ (1985) p 257.
by counter-rebellions favourable to Santiago. They were not regional risings with clear demands of a local sort: they were merely political movements linked to local élites or local military groups; and in so far as they were reactions they depended on the global political picture drawn up in Santiago. During the war regionalist sentiment was not to play a decisive role. Except for Chillán, Valdivia and Chiloé, which openly embraced the royalist cause, and Concepción, which oscillated, the rest of the country either identified itself with or else did not question, the patriot forces. We are of the opinion that regionalism, not unlike military caudillismo, wielded a significant but insufficient amount of power.

The same could be said of the Church as a disruptive factor. To begin with, the Church in Chile was not especially powerful, if we compare it with some other places in Spanish America. The expulsion of the Jesuits and the subsequent regalist control assumed by civil authority, had reduced considerably its wealth and political power. When the constitutional crisis took place, the established governments had little difficulty in imposing themselves and displacing from the ecclesiastical hierarchy the supporters of the opposing cause. Their main spokesmen were exiled and temporally replaced by authorities appointed by the juntas and Carrera. And even if the number of priests who backed the patriot side during the war was relatively low, amongst them would figure the more politicised and vocal.51 Notwithstanding the hierarchy's resistance to

51 Ibid. p 224.
accept the new order of things, the political control which was exercised over it lessened its protagonism during this conjuncture. 52

The reverse of this picture of weak political forces is the enormous power wielded by the ruling group. Internally, Independence was a political crisis which emerged, was managed and resolved within the élite itself. And this helped avoid a complete division.

We have dwelt extensively on the characteristics and power of this élite, therefore it is not necessary to insist on this subject. We ought to call attention, though, to the effect which the conjuncture had over it. According to some authors, Independence produced an internal rupture. The war apparently divided the élite. Supposedly, there was an equally high following within the ruling group for the royalist as for the patriot cause. Families experienced opposing loyalties; fathers and sons chose different sides. The supporters of this thesis think that there was a civil war. 53


Another line of argument affirms that Independence allowed the appearance of new forces, displacing from power the more conservative aristocratic sectors. This view pictures the more traditional and exclusive sectors of the élite, made up of the large landowners, the ennobled and entailed few, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, being replaced by a new group of different social extraction and with a different world-view, made up basically of military officers and intellectuals.54

Lastly, it has been said that Independence was favoured mainly by sectors of the élite whose economic and political status was not sufficiently assured: groups which depended on commerce and corporate membership, for instance the Cabildo. Commerce had suffered since the end of the XVIIIth century, and corporations had been weakened by the increasing discrimination carried out against creoles. This would explain why the titled nobility would have adhered unanimously to the royalist cause, whereas other groups --for example the Larrain Salas-- would have embraced so tenaciously the patriot side.55 As in the other two interpretations, Independence is thought to have made the élite lose its coherence.

We disagree with these three lines of argument. To begin with, there is no proof that during Independence the élite

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as such divided. There exists certain evidence which points to an equal proportion in the preferences for one or the other side. However, it is known that the support of the élite towards the royalist side tends to be measured under highly repressive circumstances, for instance during the period of the Reconquista. We know of several cases in which prominent figures were forced to show their support towards the king; actually many of these "royalists" rapidly changed their affiliation after Chacabuco. According to Eyzaguirre, it is most probable that the élite as a whole favoured Independence. As far as the supposed divisions within families are concerned, these certainly occurred. But the overall effect seems to have been the opposite; strong family links within the élite apparently helped to avoid fratricidal hatreds amongst opponents. Lastly, we should bear in mind what we have already said with respect to the civil war which supposedly took place in Chile: the predominantly invasive character of this war was so strong that in the long run this was to preclude a confrontation which could very well have resulted in a real civil war.

The image of an old élite being replaced by new forces is also not convincing. We have seen how time and time again traditional groups ended up imposing themselves on new political entities; the relationship between the family clans and the

58 Ibid. p 252.
military confirms this. It is also doubtful that intellectuals and military officers were of different social extraction, and were not fully accepted as part of the élite. There are not that many cases of unknowns climbing the social ladder in the especial circumstances of Independence to back this view, though from what we know, men previously lacking social connections tended to be rapidly incorporated into the established group. Deep down, the thesis which affirms a possible substitution of the élite suggests that Independence had produced important social transformations of a structural kind. This has not been proved nor does it seem confirmed by the evidence we now possess.

Finally, the argument which denies coherence to the élite, holding that different economic interests and different degrees of social prestige motivated opposing loyalties, is frankly distorting. To begin with, this argument is built upon a false premise: it is simply not true that the titled or entailed creoles were necessarily the most powerful in economic, political or even in social terms. It is equally mistaken to insinuate that the supposedly older and more exclusive group, landowners and entitled, did not have commercial interests. It is true that a majority of the merchants was royalist, but this can be explained basically by the fact that they were overwhelmingly peninsular in origin. Lastly, discrimination


60 J. RECTOR, "Transformaciones Comerciales Producidas por la Independencia de Chile", RCHHG No. 143 (1975) pp 114, 124.
against the creoles affected all sectors of the élite; hence this criteria can hardly be used to explain why some sectors continued to be loyal and others no.

In sum, nothing seems to indicate that there were internal divisions within the élite. There were at most different political options amongst factions, some of them more inclined towards a constitutional and political solution conducive to greater autonomy --autonomy which with time turned into frank separation-- and others unwilling to accept changes of this sort. The latter does not diminish the fact that the support behind the royalist faction was on the whole passive --it sufficed to put all trust in the arms of the Viceroy and in the weight of tradition, and if the circumstances changed, so would loyalties. This was clearly what happened as shown by the numerous supporters of the royalist cause who accepted the new order after the defeat of the Viceroy's armies.61

In the long run, the élite as such was never questioned, nor its essential characteristics inherited from the process of consolidation dating back to the XVIIIth century. Independence did not bring about socio-economic changes nor structural alterations in its definition. There were no clashes between productive and importing sectors, between an emerging

61 According to RECTOR (1975) pp 114-115, the majority of the royalist merchants fled in 1817 after Chacabuco. The patriot government expropriated their properties. All in all though, through various mechanisms --transfer of patrimony, family links, litigation, and applications for citizenry-- many of them were able to preserve or recover parts of their patrimony.
bourgeoisie versus a traditional aristocracy. The élite entered and left this period virtually unchanged. At most, from now on it had to accommodate itself to new ways of doing politics.

This phenomenon is in the end crucial. It explains why in Chile Independence was not accompanied by a social revolution. Certainly, other factors would also influence in this respect --racial homogeneity, a relatively controlled and territorially limited indigenous problem, a not so oppressive labour system, and low levels of violence caused by war--62, but it was basically the fact that the élite was not questioned or internally divided which prevented, in our opinion, the recourse to social revolution. No sector within the élite pretended to recur to it in order to impose itself and assure its possible hegemony. As such an additional factor comes to light which will be essential in the new order which henceforth will follow, namely the maintenance of the élite as a coherent factor. In other words, by surviving --as a coherent social factor-- the political breakdown brought about by Independence, a united élite projected itself as the sole possible artificer of the following challenge: the Republic.

62 DOMINGUEZ (1985) p 221; this author characterises the Chilean labour system as relatively oppressive in comparison to other cases in Hispanic-America. A different view can be found in SALAZAR (1985).
In summary, the surprising and accidental fall of the monarchy forced Chile into an unprecedented and disconcerting crisis of a political-institutional kind. This was further aggravated by the unfortunate administration of the then-acting Governor. The way the Santiago élite faced these mounting problems was initially prudent and ambivalent. It chose to defend and consolidate the achieved *de facto* autonomy. It also tried to establish the necessary mechanisms in order to resolve the key problem: the formulation of a new institutional order, be it transitory or permanent. This generated conflicts amongst new and traditional forces without weakening though élite coherence. All in all, a combination of factors, namely the rise of military caudillos, the increasing use of liberal-republicanism as a legitimating instrument of power, and the open military confrontation with Perú, which sealed national autonomy, set the bases for a new order that was to emerge and be fully consolidated in the decade of the 1820s.
CHAPTER VII

THE REPUBLICAN ORDER

We have seen in the preceding chapters how aspects of republicanism were slowly introduced in Chilean politics, which were to mould the new legitimating order imposed after Independence. It is worth while asking, therefore, concerning the reasons which explain this political transformation along republican lines, the motives --be they objective or subjective-- which induce the ruling elite as well as the Chilean governments to choose republicanism as a system of organisation.

It is important also to inquire in what sense republicanism became a break with the organic-patrimonial tradition of neo-scholastic roots prevalent until then. Historiographical analyses dealing with Spanish America and Chile in particular have questioned this more profound political transformation, limiting thus the extent to which Independence was a political breakdown.

Lastly, if we are to accept that Independence and republicanism were major and not merely cosmetic changes, we must point out their immediate as well as future consequences, their political and overall effects.
The Republican Option

One of the most outstanding aspects of the historical conjuncture which we have been examining is the increasingly assertive appearance of republican elements in ideological discourse, in political praxis, and in the imagery and symbolism of the period.

In texts framed in enlightened XVIIIth century terms, committed still to the imperial system, one can already detect several rudimentary aspects which were to figure prominently in the subsequent new order. The Representación al Ministerio de Hacienda (1796) is a good example. In this report what attracts one's attention are a number of arguments which in later years would serve to justify the break with the metropolis, amongst others the idea that there existed unsatisfied local interests, while at the same time proper resources capable of fulfilling them; and the insistence that intercolonial desequilibria—especially the power of Lima—obstructed potential autonomous development. To a large degree, Salas's argument is built upon the implicit notion that individual aims are instrumental for reaching the general good, an argument which even though it still centred around the idea of imperial complementarity hints at a possible implementation within an autonomous national context. One should bear in mind also that this principle is an essential postulate of any utilitarian and liberal order.

The Memoria sobre la Verdadera Balanza de Comercio que

1 This text has been published in CRUCHAGA (1929) III.
Conviene al Reino de Chile (January 1809), read by Anselmo de la Cruz, radicalizes even further this line of argument.2 What is striking here is not so much the free-market proposition--Chile in fact was already partially inserted in an international economy--as much as the fact that this idea is justified on doctrinaire principles which emphasise an irreconcilable conflict of interests: on the one hand, a merely mercantilist Spain, incapable of participating in a world of interchanges based on reciprocity, and on the other, a desire for local liberty to develop an existing autonomous potential. It is precisely this theoretical attitude present in this discourse, that announces a practice which subsequently crystallised with republicanism—the tendency to express political demands, not mere administrative petitions, supported by abstract doctrinaire postures—enabling politics to become increasingly ideological.

With the Catecismo Politico Cristiano, an anonymous text written apparently in August 1810, we encounter a frank and open defence of republicanism, without this being its immediate aim.3 The text's foremost aim was to support the initiative debated around that time, the establishment of a provisional governing junta. All in all, though, its thematic concerns are wider. It begins with a characterisation of the different types of government which enables "José Amor de la Patria", its author,

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2 This report can be found in CRUCHAGA (1929) III, pp 400-416, and in VILLALOBOS (1968).

3 The text is reproduced in CHDI XVIII, pp 113ff.
to express unequivocally its preferences.

The bias with which this pamphlet approaches the subject, gives away its anti-monarchist sympathies. The Catecismo opposes republicanism's moderation, representativeness and respect for the equality of all men, monarchy's presumption of superiority, its propensity towards arbitrariness and potential instability, all dependent on the very person of the king. To monarchy are attributed only "inconveniences", whereas republicanism is assigned only "advantages". Ways of controlling and supervising the monarchical system are discarded as historical failures. All monarchies are traced back to original acts of usurpation. Finally, any supposed divine derivation of power is simply rejected. Obviously, the chosen focus helps refute all the legitimating arguments of the monarchical system.

Notwithstanding this dogmatic clarity, the Catecismo does not discard outright a possible return of Ferdinand, an eventuality which is conditional on an "impenetrable constitution" made to avoid despotism and the arbitrary exercise of power while guaranteeing liberty, dignity, and the rights and happiness of his subjects. The text is more radical when it attempts, on a purely theoretical level, to reject the monarchical system. On the other hand, when it refers to other more contingent subjects --i.e., the repudiation of the Consejo de Regencia and the justification of the establishment of a local Junta-- the Catecismo tends to be more cautious. At this level it resorts to arguments of a more traditional scholastic kind,
such as the theory of devolution of power to the people, or simply it invokes the Spanish example as a legitimating antecedent. It is obvious, that when it refers to contingent conjunctural matters, this text circumscribes itself to traditional and externally given conditions. But that its aim was more ambitious becomes evident when it assigns to "time and circumstances" a prominent role in order to reach an eventual definition of the regime which ought to be imposed. Only time will permit one to "think as one wishes, and ...say what one thinks". In the long run, an order "convenient to the utility and benefit" of the people has to be imposed, so as to "give a form of government which best suits its prosperity". Clearly, by making this future order subject to local autonomous judgement and to a previous ideological socialisation ("Let us circulate proclamation on proclamation wherein we may instruct our brothers and make them understand what is convenient to do") the text approximates this proposal to republican principles, which inspire the introductory, dogmatic and non-contingent part of the pamphlet. In summary, the Catecismo is cautious, traditionalist and scholastic in its immediate scope; radical, novel and republican in its more profound and long range-aims.

With the establishment of a government Junta and later on when a Congress was summoned, political discussion began to revolve, increasingly, around republican notions. The necessity to set up a non-despotic "representative government", founded on
the principle of equality with Spain was emphasised. Talk began to be centred on "the creation of a new constitution which might serve as an unalterable norm to the new government". That a congress ought to be elected first and later a junta, an order which had to be inverted given the circumstances, was conceded to be correct from a strict constitutional standpoint; in other words, it was admitted that the constituent power came first, before the establishment of an Executive. The idea of electing representatives by secret ballot and by proportional population was accepted, discarding thus any principle of representation along functional-corporatist lines. Finally, it was acknowledged that the principal aim was to "create a new permanent government" for which purpose a "provisional" Junta was established. This term "provisional" was not extended to Congress, tacitly giving the latter a more stable status.

The arguments that came out of the doctrinal discussion were far more radical than the ones we find in official documents. The Proclama de Quirino Lemáchez, which circulated in Santiago during the first days of 1811, indirectly attacked Spain while criticising specifically the Spanish

4 See "Acta de la Instalación de la Primera Junta de Gobierno" (18 September 1810) in ACS p 60; J. M. INFANTE, "Discurso Pronunciado por el Procurador del Cabildo, el 18 de Septiembre de 1810" in CHDI XVIII.

5 "Representación del Procurador de la Ciudad de Santiago al Cabildo" (14 December 1810) in ACS pp 83-86.

6 "Convocación al Congreso Nacional de 1811 por la Junta de Gobierno" (15 December 1810) in SCL I, pp 9-11.
aristocracy, which supposedly had "usurped" sovereignty and "shamefully" sold the "desastrado monarca". It declared the end of the "ancient régime" while attributing the Peninsular ministerial governments what they had "desired for so many centuries: the dissolution of the monarchy". This pamphlet invokes also the natural autonomy of Chile, which in the future ought be ruled by "a free pact, spontaneously and voluntarily celebrated" with any "just, legitimate and reasonable authority" in order that one can say "some day: the Republic, the power of Chile, the majesty of the Chilean people".

With the establishment of Congress this line of argument was further reaffirmed. The idea of a new constitution became a central theme. It was conceived as a pact stipulating "reciprocal duties between the individuals of the Chilean state and those of its National Congress". In turn, the "nation" was defined in terms of self-government, in other words according to its capacity to exercise its own authority and be ruled by its own laws. To govern meant also to enlighten; it was

7 The language here is ambiguous. In Spanish the word desastrado can mean both unfortunate and disastrous.

8 The Proclama de Quirino Lemáchez written by CAMILO HENRIQUEZ can be found in: Escritos Políticos (1960) pp 45-49. See also "Proclama Revolucionaria del Padre Franciscano Fray Antonio Orihuela" (1811) in SCL I, pp 357-359, critique of the Santiago nobility and defence of the principle of equality.

9 See "Acta de Instalación del Congreso Nacional" (5 July 1811); HENRIQUEZ, "Sermón... el Día de la Apertura del Congreso" (4 July 1811); and J. MARTINEZ DE ROZAS, "Discurso en la Instalación del Congreso" (4 July 1811); the three documents in SCL I, pp 32-41.
thought necessary to "form the national character", a task which was said to depend on laws and thus ought to fall on legislators, who must previously prepare "the spirit of the people" for these laws. The legitimacy of the pact should be based on the "free consent of the people", for only the people were the "depository of sovereign authority". And if Ferdinand was to return, it was thought that he would have to ratify the autonomy which so far had been exercised and be reinstated in his dominion "under the fundamental pacts of our constitution".

Subsequent texts return time and time again to these same ideas with only minor differences. We must mention, though, several innovations which accentuate even further the republican character of this discourse. The Reglamento de la Autoridad Ejecutiva acordado por el Congreso (8 August 1811) declared Congress to be "representative of the kingdom of Chile" and "sole depository of the will of the kingdom". It also alluded to the classic division in three branches of government, even though it failed to specify this. The Manifiesto of 11 September 1811 introduced the terms "citizen" and "general will", in addition to rejecting the confusing association which continued to be made between "the sovereignty of the peoples with the monarchical system". The Diálogo de los Porteros (15 October 1811) argued in turn that "no people can resign their faculty to improve

10 Reproduced in SCL I, pp 49-50.
11 The Manifesto can be found in SCL I, pp 68-70.
their social pact." Lastly, we encounter documents emanating from official authorities which periodically qualified as "liberal" the principles and ideas they proclaimed.

With the advent of the Carreras to power, one perceives an even more radical language. References to the "general will" became more frequent. Allusions were made to "the healthy portion devoted to the present system of government", and to the "health of the fatherland". The September, November and December 1811 movements were assigned the character of "regeneration" and "revolution". These latter events were thought to have overthrown "aristocracy". For the first time the word "independence" was used in a context of "mutation of the

12 M. DE SALAS, Diálogo de los Porteros in CHDI XIX, pp 169-220.

13 See by way of example: "Manifiesto de la Junta de Gobierno" (15 October 1811) in SCL I, pp 138-139; J. P. FRETES, "Manifiesto" (18 October 1811) in SCL I, pp 145-146; and J. EGAMA, "Proyecto Declaración de los Derechos del Pueblo de Chile", written in 1811 or 1812 and published in 1813, according to COLLIER (1967) p 119, reproduced in SCL I, pp 209-211.

14 The term appears in a text previous to Carrera's ascent into power, see "Contestación del Congreso Nacional al Virrey del Perú" (6 November 1811) in SCL I, p 171; also in J. J. CARRERA, "Oficios Dirigidos al Congreso por..." (15 November 1811) in SCL I, p 186; J. J. CARRERA, "Oficio Dirigido al Congreso por el Comandante y Capitanes del Cuerpo de Granaderos" (16 November 1811) in SCL I, p 188; "Acta del Cabildo de Santiago en 16 de Noviembre de 1811", in SCL I, p 188.

system", and there were calls, moreover, to "uniform ideas".16

In addition to this, an anti-Spanish criticism became more acute and explicit. On the whole, this criticism was directed against Peninsular and Viceregal authorities. But in some cases it was further extended to the three earlier centuries of supposed "oppressive slavery", outgrowth of a "purely colonial and servile system".17

The first official text which came nearest to a strict and global formulation of a republican nature was the Reglamento Constitucional of October 1812. (18) It incorporated the principal innovations already expressed: popular sovereignty, generation of authorities by suffrage, representation, separation of powers, individual guarantees, and total autonomy with respect to Spanish and other American authorities (Article 5). Although the Reglamento of 1812 was still deficient from a constitutional-technical point of view, and still based on legal formulae of a

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16 See "Acta de los Acuerdos del Cabildo Abierto" (16 November 1811) in SCL I, pp 187; "Bando de la Junta de Gobierno" (2 December 1811) in SCL I, pp 195-196; J. M. Carrera, "Manifiesto... en el cual Justifica la Disolucion del Congreso" (4 December 1811) in SCL I, pp 197-199.

17 On the growing anti-Spanish feeling see Carrera, "Manifiesto" (4 December 1811) in SCL I; Salas (1811) in ChD I, p 200; Orihuela, "Proclama" (1811) SCL I, pp 357-359; B. Vera y Pintado, "Poema" for the first anniversary of the 18 September (1811), cit. in Martinez (1964) I, pp 285-286; M. Fernandez, poem in Aurora de Chile, No. 3, I (27 February 1812) cit in Amunategui (1872) III, pp 523-525. See also: Martinez (1964) II, pp 74-76, 87-91, wherein several patriotic hymns written on the occasion of the second anniversary of the 18 September are reproduced.

18 Reproduced in SCL I, pp 259-261.
traditionalist-scholastic character, though fewer in number, the
general tenor of its articles and propositions makes it a
milestone: it accepts a republican order for Chile.19 That this
provisional Reglamento in its Article 3 continues to consider
Ferdinand VII as king, in whose name a junta was to govern, does
not diminish its republican character. The same article states
that Ferdinand "shall accept our Constitution in the same manner
as that of the Peninsula". Obviously, we are faced here with
the idea of a constitutional monarchy, which neither in the
doctrinal literature nor in the political praxis appears to be
incompatible with the possible existence of a republic.20
Towards 1812-1813 the desire to make of Chile henceforth a

19 Article 6 is a good example of this continuing tendency
to resort to traditional arguments, i.e., the principle of the
devolution of power, while using a more modern language as it
becomes evident while referring to the "general will". Article
6 states: "If the rulers --which is not to be hoped for--
were to go against the general will as declared in the
Constitution, power will revert instantly to the hands of the
people, who shall condemn said act as a crime of les majesté,
and these rulers will be responsible of every act which they may
directly or indirectly expose the people." In reality, this
article by mixing theoretical frameworks incurs in imprecisions.
In strict rigour, the term "general will" cannot be applied in a
context of power devolution. The idea of devolution of sovereign
power (devolutio jure) is admissible within Suarez's conception
of the pactum translationis, not so in the Rousseauian theory of
the volonté general which does not admit its transfer or
representation. On Suarez and his view of the pactum
translationis, see STOETZER (1979), pp 24-27; F. COPPLESTON,

20 Cf. MONTESQUIEU, L'Esprit des Lois (1748), II, i and
ii; D. DIDEROT and J. Le ROND D'ALEMBERT, Artículos Políticos de
la "Enciclopedia" (Madrid 1986), pp 186ff; also the senate-
consultation of 28 Floreal of the year XII in which it is
stipulated that "The government of the Republic is entrusted to
an emperor" cit. in M. PERONNET, Vocabulario Básico de la
Revolución Francesa (Barcelona 1985), pp 249.
Republicanism did not appear solely in legal formulae and political rhetoric. It achieved an outstanding presence in the symbolism of the period. There exists some early evidence, although scant, dating back to the period of the first Junta. For instance, a witness notes in his *Diario* that "the march of the guillotine" was played in front of the house of the oidores. Subsequently, during the installation of the National Congress, republican symbolism assumed a protagonistic role. The congressional inauguration was scheduled for the 4th of July. In the ceremonial chamber several traditional symbols were removed: the dais, the royal arms, the portrait of the last sovereign and a life-size crucifix. The walls were whitewashed with lime and a special effort was made to impose a simplicity and sobriety alien to traditional colonial pomp and ritual. In

21 The *Proyecto de una Declaración de los Derechos del Pueblo de Chile* (published in 1813) by J. EGANA contemplates the situation whereby a continental Congress was to confer sovereignty to another "physical or moral person" other than Ferdinand VII. In turn, the *Proyecto de Constitución* (published in 1813) also by EGANA, declares Chile to be a republic, system for which it considers naturally predisposed; both texts reproduced in *SCL* I, pp 209-255.

The defence of republicanism had, during the period 1813-1814, in A. J. DE IRISARRI its main ideological leader. Irisarri was linked to the Larraín Salas family and was a distinguished political figure, a strong opponent of Carrera. On 7 August 1813 he began publishing *El Semanario Republicano*, which was to successfully spread the new thinking. On Irisarri and his *Semanario*, see: MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 195-196; AMUNATEGUI (1872) III, pp 544ff; BARROS ARANA (1888) IX, pp 247-249; FELSTINER (1970) pp 152, 154, 155ff; R. DONOSO, Antonio José de Irisarri (1966). The *Semanario Republicano* can be found reprinted in *CHDI* XXIV.

22 ARGOMEDO, *Diario* in *CHDI* XIX, p 43.
subsequent celebrations an effigy featured America breaking her chains.23

From then on this kind of iconography and imagery became more frequent. It achieved a distinct prominence in the decorations, inscriptions and lyric poetry created for the celebrations of the first anniversary of 18 September. It was further accentuated during the second commemoration of the same event, an anniversary conceived as "the grand day of (the) independence" of Chile. It would reappear in the festivities that followed the battle of Chacabuco.24

The governments headed by Carrera and the later juntas officially promoted the creation of patriotic symbols (e.g. tricolour flag, cockade and arms).25 Their use was prescribed,

23 BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 344-350.
25 In this respect, consult: MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 74-76, 87-89, 92; J. EGAMA, "Epocas y Hechos Memorables de Chile, 1810-1814" (w.d.) in CHDI XIX, p 75; AMUNATEGUI (1872) III, pp 546-552, 570, 573-580, 583, 584-591; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 331-332, 568-570; PEREZ ROSALES (1946) pp 44-45; J. ZAPIOLA, Recuerdos de Treinta Anos (1945), pp 89, 90, 109ff; O. SCHNEIDER, La Historia de la Bandera (1941); L. VALENCIA AVARIA, "Las Banderas de Chile" in BACHH, No. 63, (1960), p 14; and by the same author, Simbolos Patrios (1974).

In addition to creating these patriotic emblems and symbols, the governments of the period decreed measures which required the recognition of the established order; see for example the "Decreto Sobre la Ciudadanfa Chilena" of 2 July 1813 whereby it is agreed that "no European will be conferred the
producing rancour in circles not fond of innovations. These symbols were the subject of transaction in the negotiations of the Lircay Treaty. And after 1817 numerous regulatory decrees would be enacted assuring their diffusion and use.

The emblematic content of this symbolism fits the conventional French republican models of 1789 and after. The entire French allegorical revolutionary repertoire was used: solar myth, light metaphors, adamic cult, preference for geometric forms for heraldic and sculptural commemorative projects, including some attempts to date back the calendar to 1810, "first year of... liberty". The only local variation introduced was the imagery allusive to an Amerindian past which came to replace the European cult of reborn classical antiquity. There is clear evidence also which points to the existence of an iconoclastic intent behind this increasing use of a republican-symbolic idiom.


27 AMUNATEGUI (1872) III, pp 555-562.

28 By way of example see: MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 74-75; AMUNATEGUI (1872) III, p 551.
Why Republicanism?

How can we explain the increasing presence of republican elements? So far the historiographical literature has paid greater attention to evident and objective factors. Most authors think that the vacancy of the throne channeled political discussion along non-monarchical lines. Consequently, the tendency is to attribute to the Spanish, French and North American models a great preponderance. The main subjective motive mentioned is a supposed ideological "project" at play backed by a growing infiltration of subversive ideas entertained by an enlightened vanguard. This explanation leaves the impression that the collapse of the monarchy produced a political vacuum which was filled and taken advantage of by revolutionary republican propositions. If we were to accept this view, republicanism would have been an option chosen by a select group of enlightened minds in possession of a far-sighted, mimetic, quasi-conspiratorial programme. The mechanicism implicit in this sort of argument seems exaggerated and not sufficiently sensitive to what is in fact a far more complex and subtle phenomenon.

Our rejection of this conspiratorial interpretation does not mean that we negate outright all evidence on which this

explanation is based. Certainly, the collapse of the monarchy allowed the possibility to think and try political schemes of a collegiate, autonomous and non-patrimonial kind. 30 But to justify this provisional nature by virtue of a supposed "mask of Ferdinand" explains at most the motivations not of a minor but rather of an insignificant group. 31

It is obvious that the Spanish, French and North American examples were influential. The evident parallelism between the constitutional propositions emanating from the Peninsula, both "francophile" (Constitution of 1808) as well as legitimist, and their Chilean equivalents is undeniable. Once the constitutional crisis occurred, Chile not unlike the other colonies, became immersed in a discussion which originated in the Peninsula and which revolved around liberal-republican presuppositions. 32 However, it is equally true that creoles

30 Notwithstanding the advance of the new ideas numerous official texts continued to recognise Ferdinand VII, for instance: the "Proyecto Declaración de Derechos del Pueblo de Chile" (probably written in 1811 or 1812 and published in 1813); the Reglamento Constitucional (1812); and the Treaty of Lircay (3 May 1814). AMUNATEGUI (1872) III, in pp 583-584 mentions that even after February 1818 (Declaration of Independence) the practice of petitioning during mass "pro rege nostro Ferdinando" still continued, phrase which was to be finally replaced by decree of the Governor of the Bishopry of Santiago on 2 March 1818 by that of "pro status nostri potestatibus".

31 Contemporary testimonies from people who took active part in the events of the time, and in which they expressly admit to having adopted a strategy which masked their aims, do exist, but they are scant, and on occasion subsequent to the events. See COLLIER (1967) pp 87, 110, 118, 236.

entertained strong suspicions towards everything that came from Spain. If the Spanish liberals had doubts about Napoleonic progressivism, American creoles were cautious with respect to the advanced legitimist models emerging from the Peninsula.

The French example was also appropriated. Both the doctrinaire language as well as the iconographic repertoire were inspired by French revolutionary sources. Nevertheless, we know that the Revolution initially produced amongst creoles a generalised feeling of horror and disgust, even amongst persons who showed an avid interest in enlightened thinking. Moreover, this image was not to change substantially until after the 1848 Revolution. In the period we are interested in, we know no case where assimilated French republican positions, derived from original sources or else mediated by Spanish influence, implied --according to the principal actors of the time-- a Jacobin, revolutionary, disloyal stance. There was French revolutionary influence, but it was partial and reticent.33

Early Chilean republicanism has also been explained by North American influence.34 The presence of Joel Roberts


34 The subject is treated in MARTINEZ (1964) I, pp 13-14; II (1964), pp 60ff, 73, 104, 365-376; AMUNATEGUI (1872) III, pp 263ff; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 564ff; COLLIER (1967) pp 37-39, 97, 103; PEREIRA SALAS (1971); HEISE (1978), pp 33-42; and E. PEREIRA SALAS, La Influencia Norteamericana en las Primeras Constituciones de Chile (1943). An overall view for all Hispanic America, with respect to this matter, can be found in M. E. SIMMONS, U.S. Political Ideas in Spanish America Before 1830;
Poinsett, first Consul of the United States, and his presumed authorship of the \textit{Reglamento Constitucional} of 1812, seems to verify this influence. Nevertheless, the scope of this effect is too limited. It is restricted basically to the Carrera period, and we know how ambiguous were the aims of the latter with respect to Spain, the Viceroyalty of Perú and the declaration of independence. Not unlike the cases of alleged Spanish and French influences, the North American impact, however irrefutable it may have been, does not by itself explain the increasing republican character of the Chilean political discourse of the period.

The literature on Independence is perhaps too keen on identifying "influences" of specific European authors, generally French and Spaniards, influences which presumably started to have their impact on Chileans in the last decades of the XVIIIth century, and continued to influence them throughout the process we are here analysing. Some studies list the authors known to the best-informed creoles, many of them principal actors of the period. The channels which helped disseminate enlightened and revolutionary ideas have also been identified, amongst them

\textit{A Biographical Study} (Indiana 1977).

books, travel, correspondence, propaganda leaflets, associations such as Freemasonry, speeches, pictures and *bric-a-brac*.36

All in all though, we lack a general and clear picture which explain the penetration of these ideas. The methodology which has been used so far to approach this highly important subject, for the Chilean case, is slightly old-fashioned. It is based on studies of selective library inventories, on nominal citations of authors which supposedly were thoroughly read, and on speculative guesses made by commentators who, over-confident in their "connoisseurship", tend to see certain influences operating in one or another case. We still lack the kind of quantitative studies and content analysis which recently have been elaborated for the French and Argentine case.37 Furthermore, contextual analysis which might relate local discourse with original sources are missing, and for this purpose the merely exegetical method does not suffice; we also lack studies which might approach the problem of influences not solely from a genealogical point of view but also from a functionalist perspective, in order to detect the socio-historical conditionings which are operating, the discoursive strategies


37 See N. Goldman, *El Discurso como Objeto de la Historia* (Buenos Aires 1989) which includes a complete and up-to-date bibliography, especially of French studies, and in which can be found a panoramic view of the new methodologies employed in the history of ideas.
assumed, and the effective degree of the connections between Chilean and European texts ("intertextuality") at play. In sum, there is still a great need to incorporate to the study of enlightened and revolutionary European intellectual historical antecedents in Chile, semiological, functionalist and quantitative perspectives which distinguish nowadays the history of ideas as a renovated discipline.38

As long as the methodology used continues to disregard these new analytical angles, any attempt to explain Chilean republicanism in terms of intellectual influences will continue to be weak, tentative and partial. Obviously these influences existed but there is no sufficient proof of either their scope and magnitude, the manner they operated in a society which remained on the whole illiterate, nor the degree of acceptance which they could muster in the bulk of the ruling group, not just the conscious minority capable of understanding and handling this new thinking. It is not clear either how these new currents of thought relate to the traditional political world-view; and we still need to ascertain the degree of similitude and

adaptability existing between local republican discourse and its original sources of inspiration. In the end, only by figuring out the different levels of sophistication and complexity of the Chilean republican discourse we shall determine to what point it is appropriate or not to speak of a "project" as such.

In the first place, the increasing adoption of republican elements can be explained to a large degree by the especial circumstances produced on account of the constitutional crisis, to which must be added certain previous conditionings which made republicanism attractive and acceptable.

In previous chapters we have seen how the frustration caused by the deficiencies of the imperial system and the incapacity of the metropolis to maintain the rhythm of change had given course to the idea of a more commutative "new order". This new order was not conceived as a rupture. It was founded instead on the idea of autonomy. When the accidental fall of monarchy took place this autonomy simply became a de facto reality. It should not be a surprise then that just at this moment there would appear the first republican signs which we have seen. The need to find legitimating arguments which might justify a de facto situation in accordance moreover with a previous ambiguous desire encouraged the acceptance of republican arguments which were in fact available.

The trajectory of the local élite throughout the XVIIIth century was to also influence this process. This trajectory favourably predisposed the élite to change, even of a
global sort. Let us not forget that the modernising Bourbon project implied nothing less than the mutation of the earlier legitimating order, a transformation which was accepted by the élite. Furthermore, a new utilitarian conception of power had been accepted, conception which would be prolonged by republicanism. Lastly, in so far as the élite had been formed in the Enlightenment, it had learnt to see and relate itself with reality through rational constructions and a priori models. Consequently, the conceptual paradigmatic republican package, both formally as well as in many of its contents, was not at all strange to this élite.

Circumstances and previous predisposition are not, though, the only reasons which explain republicanism. Additional aspects proper to republican discourse made it especially attractive to the bulk of the Chilean élite. Deep down, the need to find new forms of legitimation required them to come up with a new order which might justify the aspirations of the élite as such. In other words, for the new order of legitimacy to become acceptable it had to meet two basic requirements: it had to promote the necessities proper to the élite and make them appear objective and universal. Only thus would political legitimacy be achieved in addition to protecting the social order already established. As we shall see, republicanism fulfilled both aims.

To understand these intentions we must bear in mind once again the élite's trajectory during the XVIIIth century.
The new desired order pretended to be a rectification and political correction of the order established by enlightened despotism. Creoles increasingly throughout the XVIIIth century complained that their own needs were not being satisfied so as to justify growing demands required by the Crown. Consequently, creoles asked that an equilibrium in the counterclaims be achieved. Their attention turned towards the creation of a system or new order which, first of all, could compensate the deficiency noted in the previous system and which had caused strong resentments: the failure to satisfy necessities and interests. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Chilean ruling group judged the republican system to be the most adequate and acceptable order. It is evident—as it was also evident to the creoles of the time—that the republican system revolves precisely around this function or basic political end.

On the whole, modern political discourse is centred on the subject of "interests". According to Albert O. Hirschman, who has traced the history of the concept, the idea of "interest" appears when the theoretical political attention begins to be focussed on human nature rather than on the nature of the state, problem which afterwards motivates political and moral reflection on how to control the "passions". Once the prescriptive and repressive power of religion and later on of reason is discarded, the value and utility of the so-called benign passions, the "interests", is finally recognised and accepted; this allows them to serve as counteracting forces, so long as they are
advanced in an ordered, methodical, prudent and calculated manner. Already in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries, corollaries which affirm that "interests do not lie" or that "interest governs the world" become commonplaces. With time the main idea acquires an economic sense, related to groups or classes, thus paving the way for the eventual acceptance of capitalism. Consequently, from Machiavelli to Montesquieu and Smith the idea of interest in European thinking became central, a concept which in turn came to replace more traditional notions such as the ascriptive concepts of "glory" and "honour".

If we analyse the basic principles of republicanism we can see that in fact they revolve around the idea of "interest". The origin of society, according to contractualist republicanism, is to be found in the need of men to associate in order to solve the conflicts which take place on account of there being opposite interests. The final justification of government and of the state is none other than the achievement of public happiness, in other words, the fulfillment of the interests of individuals.

Rights are conceived as interests legally and juridically acknowledged. Authority is derived from popular sovereignty because it is thought that only the community can know what is of its own convenience. Enlightenment and education are seen by republicanism as preferential tasks of the state, because they are thought to be the most adequate means in order to let the individual know what are his interests, in other words, his human potential, given that interests and necessities are intrinsic to man. Laws should be dictated by superior men, possessors of civic virtue which allows them to postpone their private interests in order to reach the final end which is the public interest. The state must try to obtain a certain uniformity of interests by means of public opinion. And lastly, not unlike religion, it must offer the individual or citizen an instance of sublimation of his passions allowing for a heteronomous entity, a space external to individual egoism, where to project his altruistic potential, and reach thus a superior and transcendent "interest". Needless to say, this conceptualisation, centred on the idea of interest, flourishes in the early Chilean republican literature, in the Catecismo Político Cristiano, in diverse official documents, in Camilo Henríquez and Juan Egaña amongst others.40

40 The use of, or allusion to, the concept is too frequent to quote every available instance and text in which we can find it. By way of example we present the following quotes: "Where man finds how to satisfy his desires with which he is born, subsists, have comfort and distinguish himself, there he multiplies" (SALAS, Representación 1796); "Kings see more to the interests of their families than those of the nation"; "In the
We should emphasise, moreover, the extraordinary capacity, implicit in republicanism, for this theory to be instrumentalised, yet another factor which explains its appeal. We have mentioned that republicanism is a legitimating order, and as such it necessarily presents itself in axiological and universal terms even if in reality it was meant to benefit only the aspirations of the ruling group. The underlying subjectivism behind the idea of interests did not have to reveal its limited utility, favourable only to the élite. Thanks to republics the people is the sovereign: the people is the king, and everything it does, it does it in its own benefit, utility and convenience; "Spain itself is full of Spanish traitors who have looked more to their own particular interests than to the good of the fatherland" (Catecismo Político Cristiano 1810); "To enlightened knowledge must be added patriotic virtues.... the generous disposition to sacrifice personal interest on behalf of the universal interest of the people. In the very moment a man becomes a legislator through the vote and the confidence of his fellow citizens, he ceases to exist for himself and has no more family than the great association of the State"; "If the peoples do not know their true interests, their rights and the wise considerations of their leaders, this is due to the lack of care shown in enlightening them, and because public opinion has not been formed by general instruction" (HENRIQUEZ, Escritos); "The day you proclaimed your sacred rights and assumed your own security, on that very date you rejected egoism, low and vile considerations, and the possibility of forming a circle of your own interests independent of public fortune" ("Manifiesto Junta de Gobierno" October 1811); "We have seen fit, by virtue of the extraordinary power which for this particular case the peoples have authorised us, to declare solemnly in their own name, in the presence of the Highest, in order to let know the great confederation of mankind that the continental territory of Chile and its adjacent islands conform in fact and by law a free, independent and sovereign State, and shall forever be separated from the monarchy of Spain, with plain aptitude to adopt the form of government which might best be convenient to its own interests" (Proclamación de la Independencia 1818); "Politics is that most noble of sciences, which teaches to know the true interests of the peoples," (IRISARRI, El Semanario Republicano 4 September 1813).
republicanism, the elite could cover up its own interests in a seemingly neutral and objective language. These interests would be legitimated by the programmatic and projectional character of republican discourse, universalist language which potentially contemplated all the other remaining interests within the community.41 Notwithstanding the latter, republican discourse was equivocal; hence, it could be graduated and controlled. Its apparently more broad, inclusive and participative nature could perfectly be given a limited interpretation, backed by mechanisms which restricted franchise, so as to avoid social changes. In sum, only the interests of the ruling group were to be acceptable, a result which did not appear so blatant thanks to the tenor of the discourse; consequently, the powerful would continue to govern, but thinly justified by the fact that they were the most apt, the most enlightened, the most conscious of their interests, interests which because of their gravitation in society became easily confused with public happiness. In other words, republicanism gave the possibility to a traditional group to appear as modern in a world progressively more modern, without this compromising the social and economic power built upon a traditional base.

That the ruling group predicted the possible utilisation of republicanism as a mechanism capable of maximising traditional power ---even if this were to imply concessions to

41 On the nature of legitimating discourse, see P. BERGER and T. LUCKMANN, La Construcción Social de la Realidad (Buenos Aires 1986), pp 92, 96, 122.
modernity in ideological and political matters—can be deduced from the subsequent history of Chilean liberalism throughout the XIXth century.42 However, already in this initial stage when republican language is for the first time adopted, we have seen how the political actors could perfectly attune republican formulae to their advantage. At times, we are faced with a strict repetition of French ideological doctrinaire thinking, however its application becomes accommodating, according to the context given by Chilean reality. It might be true that the Carreras in their manifestoes and proclamations resorted to a radical vocabulary, which echoes the language used in 1793, in order to legitimate military force; nevertheless, there are no indications that there was an attempt to impose an egalitarianism, a revolutionary dynamic and a rationalism equivalent to that of the Jacobin model. Consequently, we think that from the very beginning the Chilean ruling group appreciated the manipulative potential of liberal-republicanism without having to accept all its possible consequences.

Not only the content of republican discourse was perceived to be manipulative; there was enough conscience that the dissemination of new ideas could be controlled by instrumentalising 'public opinion'. The success of republicanism is virtually unexplainable without a passing reference to this

new political dimension.

Public opinion appeared when it became necessary locally to assume an official definition with respect to the constitutional crisis of the Peninsula. It was precisely at this moment when "factions", bandos, and currents of opinion, vague and difficult to identify, appeared for the first time. The wave of rumours and counter-rumours, unleashed for the first time in the period immediately prior to the constitution of the Junta de Gobierno of 1810, demonstrates that there already existed a larger public interested in public matters. 43 Public discussion did not have to be circumscribed solely to official institutional channels.

After this initial stage there followed an attempt to win over opinion through a didactic strategy intent in socializing the different positions at play. To this stage corresponds the circulation of texts such as the Catecismo Político Cristiano of "José Amor de la Patria", the Proclama de Quirino Lemachez and the Diálogo de los Porteros. The use which in these cases was made of anagrams and pseudonyms aimed not so much to cloak the identity of the authors so much as their desire to "represent" this generalised public opinion already known to exist. A third step took place with the Carreras, when on account of the movements which occurred towards the end of 1811

43 See MARTINEZ (1964) I, pp 30ff, 35ff, 60; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 45ff, 99ff, 106, 198; G. FELIU CRUZ, "Los Pasquines de la Revolución de la Independencia" BACHH (1944), No. 31, pp 47ff; R. SILVA CASTRO, Los Pasquines de la Patria Vieja y "La Linterna Mágica" (1950).
they simply invoked and appropriated for themselves the "general will" as a means of political pressure. This last manoeuvre pretended to institutionalise and officially sanction the newly recognised force. In this manner public opinion became consolidated as a powerful legitimating recourse of the acting governments, while its possible use by other political forces was neutralized. Obviously, republicanism was an easy world-view to divulge. It offered a whole scheme of antinomies and differentiations, an iconoclastic binary system capable of breaking with the old order and creating a new one. But it was essential to control all available means of socialisation.

That public opinion was perceived as an object of control explains a number of means utilised with doubtless efficiency. From the very beginning, the autonomous governments made a special effort to publicise their acts. They censured dissident opinions and regulated the right of free speech.44 They resorted to priests to divulge and justify their decisions.45 They mounted public festivities to celebrate the new political order. They introduced a new symbolism of a republican character. And last, they made a thorough use and monopolised the new means of communication at their disposal: the


Another channel which was to help divulge the new thinking was the massive recruitment for the army and for the war, the first contact many had with the republican world-view. Specially noteworthy was the official character of these symbols and festivities as well as the use of the printing press, particularly during the Carrera governments. Obviously, the intention was the control of public opinion by the state for political and legitimating purposes.

In the light of what we have seen so far, can the existence of a "project" be affirmed? Partly yes and partly no. If we are to understand by a project a conscious attempt to fill the vacuum of legitimacy created by the constitutional crisis, there are clear indications that the introduction of republican elements was truly inspired by an intentional aim. There already

46 See MARTINEZ (1964) II, pp 34, 63-64, 89, 167-169, 195; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, pp 415, 535-536, 555ff, 595; IX (1888) p 197. See also R. SILVA CASTRO, Prensa y Periodismo en Chile, 1812-1956 (1958); A. VALDEBENITO, Historia del Periodismo Chileno, 1812-1955 (1956); J. PELAEZ Y TAPIA, Un Siglo de Periodismo Chileno: Historia de "El Mercurio" (1927); M. L. AMUNATEGUI, Camilo Henríquez (1988); DONOSO (1966); I. M. LANDE, "War by the Pen: Some Intellectual and Propagandistic Aspects of the Chilean Struggle for Independence, 1808-1820", unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University (1955); J. T. MEDINA, Bibliografía de la Imprenta en Santiago de Chile...

47 One should bear in mind that mandatory military service was established by decree of 29 October 1811; see R. ANGUITA, Leyes Promulgadas en Chile (1912) I, p 30. The decree of 16 July 1812 which ordered the use of the tricolour cockade declared in turn that "in the system of civil liberty everyman is ... a soldier of his country"; finally, another decree (14 January 1814) established new forms of mobilisation and pointed that "every inhabitant of Santiago is a military soldier". See ANGUITA (1912) p 41; BARROS ARANA (1887) VIII, p 570; ROLLE (1990) p 297.
existed a vague desire to establish a new order, accentuated when the throne suddenly lost its titular head. The likelihood of a project also seems to be confirmed by the high level of instrumentalisation, both thematical as well as formal, which surrounds the use of republicanism.

Likewise though, there are equally strong reasons which incline one to think that there was no *ex professo* project. The fact that republican arguments co-existed with more traditionalist scholastic postures, makes one doubt the coherence of this possible project; the counter-argument which asserts that we have here an attempt to conceal intentions seems to us both weak and difficult to prove. The process seen from an *ex post facto* point of view, once republicanism had been imposed, makes one deduce far clearer aims than probably existed. There was too high a quota of trial and hesitation for us to be sure of the intentions of the historical actors involved. They never showed an uncompromising attitude which might suppose an unequivocal stance; political achievements were always

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48 If the final result had been different, how should we interpret the traditionalist arguments and the expressed loyalty? If they were authentic, there would be no major problems from a logical point of view; but if not, would it be admissible to say that they were proofs that the "mask" did not work? In other words, the argument is insubstantial; it only appears plausible in light of subsequent events.

49 Cf. AMUNATEGUI (1872) III, pp 540-542, 562ff. See also the text by C. HENRIQUEZ, "Ensayo Acerca de las Causas de los Sucesos Desastrosos de Chile", written after the patriotic defeat in Rancagua (1814) in which the until-then champion of the republican cause abnegates his original position. The text is reproduced in HENRIQUEZ (1960) pp 183-191.
negotiable, at least until the Treaty of Lircay. The ambiguous and eclectic attitude of the elite was not a mere strategy; it was a natural consequence of their being amidst surprising events which caused perplexity and called for improvisation.

Republicanism was above all an option which the events themselves and the need to legitimate them a posteriori made possible and necessary. There is at most a formal rather than a substantial identity between Chilean republicanism and its French and North American models. Consequently not because there may have been a revolutionary project behind the republican models applied in Chile, this means that the conscious "reading" made in Chile of republicanism was equally revolutionary and programmatic.

All in all, we think that it was the events which took place outside of Chile and which put an irreversible end to the monarchy in America, which in the long run were to radicalize the process. To this radicalization would contribute also the non-conscious project implicit in the ideological republican package, what we shall hereby denominate its "utopian" dimension. It would be the unpredictable and unconscious factors more than the intentional aims that would create revolutionary effects. Paraphrasing Carnot, the Chilean process was not revolutionary in itself, it "became" so. 50

50 Quoted in PERONNET (1985) p 75.
The Ideological Break with Tradition

Even if there was no revolutionary aim at first, in the end the process was to produce radical effects. The slow introduction of republican elements added to the numerous events which eventually culminated in a de facto independence — both phenomena already discussed — resulted in a transcendental political change: the substitution of the neo-scholastic order of legitimacy by the republican. Hence Independence became a true break. In order to understand this we must explain in general terms this previous traditional order and to what extent republicanism was different from it.

A long list of publications dealing with intellectual history has insisted on the political singularity of Spanish America. According to this literature, Spain transmitted to America an organic-patrimonialist conception of power dating back to a Visigothic past and a statutory medieval tradition, compiled later on by the Código de las Partidas and finally systematised by the late scholasticism of Suárez and Molina.51

51 The historiographical literature which points to a special political-philosophical tradition for Spanish America, which supposedly was to have subsequent effects which were to resound in the weak development of liberalism and of democracy in Latin America during the XIX and XXth centuries, is abundant. Amongst the principal texts which refer to this tradition and its eventual repercussions, consult: R. MORSE, "Toward a Theory of Spanish American Government" in JHI, 15, I (1954) pp 71-93; R. MORSE, "The Heritage of Latin America" in L. HARTZ, The Founding of New Societies (New York 1964) pp 123-177; M. SARFATTI, Spanish Bureaucratic-Patrimonialism (Berkeley 1966); F. J. MORENO, "The Spanish Colonial System: A Functional Approach" in Western Political Quarterly XX (June 1967) pp 308-320; G. C.
This political conception supposedly remained in force during the entire colonial period, surviving even the absolutist attack mounted against it by the Bourbons. Some authors think that this conception was revitalised by the Spanish American juntista movements which sprang-up on account of the constitutional crisis of 1808, conferring on these movements a traditionalist character alien to any modernising intent. Finally, it has been argued that this conception of power and of society has remained in force to a large degree up to our own days, not


As far as the Chilean case is concerned, the following texts put special emphasis on this tradition: EYZAGUIRRE (1957, 1979); MEZA (1958); MORENO (1969).

On the Spanish thinking, basis of this tradition, see: L. SANCHEZ AGESTA, El Concepto del Estado en el Pensamiento Español del Siglo XVI (Madrid 1959); B. HAMILTON, Political Thought in Sixteenth Century Spain (Oxford 1963).

52 See especially M. GIMENEZ FERNANDEZ, "Las Doctrinas Populist as en la Independencia de Hispanoamerica", Anuario de Estudios Americanos (Sevilla 1946) III; EYZAGUIRRE (1957); STOETZER (1979). GONGORA (1975a) on p 198 dissents from this view. COLLIER (1967) pp 71-72, is also critical. From what Collier and Richard Herr—the author on whom Collier in part bases his argument—say, it appears to be that we are not faced here by a revival of pre-Bourbon thinking, but rather what is at play here is rather a "liberal" revitalisation of Jovellanos’s and other XVIIIth century authors’ thinking which had revalued the old municipal liberties. See R. HERR, The Eighteenth Century Revolution in Spain (Princeton 1958), pp 337-347.
allowing to take root in the Spanish American world political conceptions associated with the main current of modern thought which goes from Machiavelli to Rousseau passing through Hobbes, Locke and Montesquieu amongst others, in other words: republicanism, liberalism and constitutional democracy.

There are three fundamental traits in this Hispanic political tradition: the patrimonial character attributed to Spanish monarchy, the ethical finality of power, and the organicist conception which it imprints on society.

The patrimonial character of monarchy derives from the legal-juridical modality which allowed at first the incorporation of the Indies to the Crown. The fact that a Papal concession granted the American territories to the Castillian monarchs on a personal basis, was to assimilate the Indies to Castille with respect to statutory rights, especially the faculty to be ruled by autonomous institutional bodies. The only link, therefore, which united Spanish Americans with Spain and the Spaniards—according to this view—was the quality of being subjects of the same monarch. An additional aspect of this patrimonialist conception is the perception of this monarch as a "natural lord" capable of transmitting indivisibly his patrimony through dynastic succession.53

The ethical sense which this conception imprints on power derives from the importance assigned to the natural

53 GONGORA (1975a) Chapter 3; SANCHEZ AGESTA (1959).
order. The exercise of the authority of the king is conditional to his effective implementation of the law, for which he must be guided by a ruling virtue, namely to do justice. Consequently, to govern means to bring about and permit the good life according to divine and natural precepts. Justice, being the main function of the state, is conceived as a metaphysical intermediary between human and divine things. As such the monarch is thought to be the vicar of God on earth for mundane purposes, exalting thus his royal dignity and imperium. Notwithstanding the latter, the king did not enjoy an absolute and unlimited power. He had to abide by divine and natural law, a limitation which prevented him from becoming a tyrant. Moreover, the power of the monarch was conditioned by the principal end of all government which was thought to be the "common weal". In other words, his authority in the long run would be restricted by ethical principles which had to coincide with the established religious world-view, and would translate into obligations with respect to the community. In this conception of power, politics in the end became confused with morality.

Royal power, just like any other power to be exercised in the community, was conceived as an officium which materialises the original power possessed by the community in order to achieve its ends. Hence, power is rooted in the community itself, notwithstanding the latter's possible

54 In this discussion we follow GONGORA (1975a) and SANCHEZ AGESTA (1959).
delegation on authority. This delegation produces no effects in certain extreme cases, for instance, when the king falls captive and no representative has been chosen previously, or else when the king violates the law or the common good; in these cases, power is said to return to the community.

The state is an ethical, teleological entity which finds its reason for being in its end: the common weal. This common weal is the end which must be pursued by every good government, the good of the community understood as an objective and natural good, not subject to question or to subjective judgement. It is a good which springs from the order of things, and which can be ascertained through reason. It is not synonymous to the personal desires to be found in the community. It is not equivalent to the sum total of individual goods; it cannot be defined by its representation or ratification by majority rule. It obeys an objective order. Hence, in this political conception the individual as such is thought to be inserted in a social order which in turn participates of an objective, divine, global and comprehensive design. Deep down, we are dealing here with a monist, non-pluralist conception of power.55

The organicist conception of society is the other distinctive trait of this political tradition. The state is perceived as an organic whole, a harmonious unity of interlinked parts in an hierarchical order not unlike that of a natural

55 On this distinction, see: DEALY (1974) and (1977).
organism. It is visualised as a "mystic body" founded not only in the hierarchy of power, but also in a certain unity of purpose and moral cooperation towards the realisation of an end which is the raison d'être of the political community.56 Government is understood to be the mandate ordered by God in order that men may reach the necessary social harmony which must always predominate. The individual is subordinated to a corporate scheme and to the ultimate end which is being pursued. Individuals have rights as members of groups and organs of this overall body; hence the importance given in this system to corporate entities such as the Church, municipal administrations, guilds, ständes, militias, the army and universities.57 Any individual who does not belong to any corporation is to be excluded for lack of representation. Every corporate entity, as well as every stände, has its own responsibilities, status, statutory rights, jurisdictions and privileges. It is thus necessary that every one accept his place in society to which they are naturally assigned. Representation is always functional, dependent on the intermediary group to which one belongs. It is not strange therefore in this system for the monarchy and the imperial bureaucracy to assume the role of moderator amongst groups. They integrate and conciliate the sectorial interests at play, group not individual interests.

56 SANCHEZ AGESTA (1959) pp 24-25.

57 In this respect see: SARFATTI (1966); NEWTON (1970); WIARDA (1973).
They resolve conflicts as arbiters. Hence, their power is often conceived in authoritarian although not arbitrary terms. Finally, access to authority has to be channelled through two recourses: that of petition and of reconsideration, which accentuate even further the character of dispenser of justice assigned to the monarch. In this system there are no "demands" as such; there are no subjective "interests", only rights previously contemplated in natural law and in statute law which must be recognised and respected.

As can be easily appreciated, the practical consequences that derived from this organic-patrimonialist conception were multiple, and characterised the Spanish colonial regime in America. The patrimonialist sense of power conferred great authority and dignity on the person of the monarch. Both he and his representatives became dispensers of favours, concessions and grants. This forced the élites to relate to power through clientelistic mechanisms and co-optation. In turn, the organic-corporatist conception stimulated the emergence of cliques and their penetration of the state bureaucracy. The final aim which inspired the political-corporatist praxis of these groups consisted in increasing their sector's advantages through the access to the administrative apparatus. Hence, in this corporatist context it is not possible to speak of politics in the modern sense of demands and interests formulated in abstract, doctrinal and conflict-laden terms. In this world-view there predominated an administrative conception of politics,
which was accommodating, flexible, respectful of established rules. Obviously, this conception of power and of the state generated a system which favoured a certain vertical authoritarianism; in it the legitimacy of the status quo was stressed; interests which had been already consolidated tended to persist; segregation and discrimination easily occurred; and a great deal of premium was put on conformism. Nevertheless, this conception of power and of the state allowed a system which was characterised for its high stability, a stability achieved through the equilibrium of competing forces; a system which minimised conflicts; permitted changes, although on a gradual basis; and lastly, achieved high levels of unity and coherence.

Needless to say, the new republican discourse constituted a break with this Spanish scholastic conceptualisation. What was at play behind the republican option was not only a change in the regime of government, but something far more profound. Republicanism implied a new political worldview —ways of conceiving power and society radically different from the traditional ones— in addition to new bases of legitimacy for the political order.

Given its close links with the Enlightenment, republicanism assimilated and deepened the utilitarian, voluntarist and neutral conception of power which had begun to emerge during the XVIIIth century. In this sense republicanism was by no means a novelty, even if it was from the point of view of scholastic tradition. Unlike the latter, republicanism
resorted to an eudemonic materialist language so as to define its final aim of progress, distancing itself from the teleological, ethically transcendental, Catholic-Christian view of power. It differed also from Suarez's conception to the degree that it centred its theoretical attention preferably on the state. For the scholastic tradition the relation between state and community was continuous, whereas for republicanism it was at most foundational; according to republicanism, once the pre-contractual natural stage is surpassed there does not seem to be any other political sphere than political society, in other words: the state. Moreover, the sole fact that the political order is conceived by republicanism in constructivist terms, as an order which can be moulded and be subject to planning and design through laws, implies that the kind of rationality which is associated with power ceases to be based on a supposed natural and objective order of things, becoming instead more instrumental and voluntarist; the latter notwithstanding republicanism's tendency to express itself in natural law terms, needless to say a natural law perspective no longer founded on revelation.58

The individual in the republican world-view was no

58 We differ from the opinion given by GONGORA who tends to assimilate the enlightened idea of "happiness" of the people with the more traditional notion of "common good". These are very different ideas altogether; one obeys a utilitarian-political conception, the other a finalist-ethical order. Theoretically speaking, the "common good" must be evident in itself independently of who might sustain it, whereas the "public happiness" can supposedly be inferred from the "popular will" through suffrage or through its representation which the authorities often assume for themselves. See GONGORA (1981) p 12.
longer seen as part of a social order which in turn participated in an objective and divine design more global and omnicomprehensive. On the contrary, the political subject was perceived in more mundane and subjectivist terms. This individual was viewed as a generator of interests and passions. Hence, he was to be subordinated to a complex system of artifices, inventions and entirely human constructions: institutions.59 These institutions were to be understood as organisations created to satisfy necessities, in other words rational means to channel interests. They were conceived as artefacts, products of calculation and of human, not natural, design, directed towards concrete and utilitarian ends. From a socio-political point of view, the most important end which is to be pursued through them is to provide norms or orientation. Institutions repress and tame the passions and the anti-social spirit, while channeling "the interests, passions and enthusiasms of man" towards what is ideal.60

Republicanism conceives institutions as social agents, but this does not mean that it has an organicist view of


60 The classical notion which sees the passions as forces which must be controlled is recurrent in a thinker such as J. EGANA. See for example his "Conversaciones Filosóficas" in Antología edited by R. SILVA CASTRO (1969), p 81; "Proyecto de Constitución" in SCL I, pp 243, 245, 247; see also, GONGORA, "El Rasgo Utópico..." (1980) p 213. The relation between the "passions" and the "interests" is analysed in HIRSCHMAN (1981).
society. For republicanism the social actor par excellence is the individual. It may well be that for republicanism the institutions are protagonists, however, in this system what takes precedence is an individualist conception, neither statutory nor corporatist, of rights and guarantees. Moreover, one becomes a member of a republican institution through association or voluntary acceptance, not by adscription. Actually, republicanism tends to level off individuals, at least at the level of language, and erases the static stände-like character of traditionalist societies which stress privileges. In addition to this, republicanism moves away from a certain holistic 'integrist' characteristic of Suarezian organicism. Republicanism contemplates the existence of a political space, sphere of dialogue and action wherein individual and institutional demands and interests may be expressed. This allows a higher degree of conflict within the political system; it is not so important to accommodate oneself or pursue concessions derived from the supreme authority, as much as to pressure and make prevail what one pretends to do. It is not surprising therefore that with republicanism the intrinsic paternalism of the old order regime was to be eventually replaced by a more dynamic and vertiginous experimentation, resulting from the emergence of multiple demands which in turn produce multiple conflicts. After all, the criteria of a sole truth is replaced by a subjectivist perspective which admits a spectrum of relative truths. Lastly, as a higher degree of conflict is to be
accepted, a greater spectrum of change is foreseen and tolerated.

That republicanism was more prone to accept change and generate more social conflict, can largely be explained by its doctrinaire and ideological character. This dimension of republicanism makes its début during the French Revolution. The French Revolution made ideology the principal historical agent or force of modern times. From then on ideas became valued as conscious motors of history and for the first time ideas were given the chance to radically change reality. It is true that before 1789 ideas existed and were valued, but on the whole there seems to have been a tendency to conceive them more as sources of knowledge or as mirror-images of reality than as entities which can generate change and produce total transformations. This last dimension was to be achieved by ideas during the Revolution. This is why discussion on the French Revolution does not deal so much with revolutionary thinking as with the instrumentality of the same. Ideological content is far less important in this case than the political function which from that moment on would be attributed to ideology. French revolutionary ideas were basically echoes of XVIIIth century Enlightenment thought. We know that the Revolution did not produce any great thinker, none at least of the stature of a

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Rousseau, Voltaire or a Montesquieu. The difference which exists between the philosophes and the revolutionaries does not lie in "what" they thought, so much as in the "how" and "why" of their thinking: what could actually be done through the use of ideas.63

In order for this to occur it was first necessary to consolidate a series of basic presuppositions which were to permit ideologies to become the historical agents with which we are all now familiar.64 To begin with, it was necessary to conceive the human condition as something which could be moulded, neither fixed nor unchangeable, subject to articulation and formulation. Experience had to be perceived as a result of conscious acts. Everything that happens in the world had to become attributable to forces which could be classified, rationalised, and capable of being formulated in abstract terms. This in turn was to make possible the notion that history is basically action, conscious action. It is no longer habitual, non-reflective, traditional experience, residue of a process of trial and error. History is not made by pre-established institutions but rather is the outcome of critical conscience and of a new institutional order. Equally crucial, is the

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64 In this we follow FURET (1981), BELL (1962) and LARRAIN (1979).
recognition that ideas can become sources which generate energy and passion, that behind them there is an extraordinary potential for movement; that once they become divulged and duly propagated they can awake massive popular backing, even if the intentionality behind them is ignored. All of this accounts for the voluntarism and unlimited 'possibilism' which inspires ideological thought and which we see operating in such a flagrant manner during the Revolution.

We also observe during the process of the Revolution something which is not uncommon in our highly ideologically-charged contemporary world: namely that the energy which we have already alluded to is usually backed by a potential for violence which it might unleash. The latter often happens either because the pent-up energy becomes difficult to manage and finally released or rather because the necessity to obtain support can only be achieved through a Manichean formulation of all or nothing, logic which denies any possibility of doubt, ambiguity or ideological vacuums. Ideologies either hold that there exists a sole answer to problems or else fall victim to other ideologies. It is also a characteristic of the French Revolution to view ideologies as substitutes for religion. In a world which becomes progressively devoid of religious explanations, it is not strange for a good number of teleological


aspirations to be channeled to the political arena. Parallel to this we observe during the French Revolution the implementation of the notion that every society must have a certain coherence and conceptual uniformity, for which purpose there must be a certain monopoly of political discourse, imposed either through the state or through a ruling group, an élite, even if this élite does not always participate directly in the exercise of power as is the case of the men of letters to which de Tocqueville refers.67

Another basic presupposition of all ideologies which is introduced during the French Revolution is that any human problem is essentially a political problem, requiring political solutions, subject to critique and debate, phenomenon which obviously ends-up inflating public space at the cost of private spaces.68 Finally, we hold to be a basic presumption of French ideological development, of which we are the heirs, the notion and conscience that all political discourse is necessarily "open": admits diverse readings; it can be translated; it works basically on a connotative level; it is construed in such a manner that it can be materialised in different terrains and spheres by different readers; and in the end, it tends to reveal more what it does not say than what it says; in sum, it is a

67 In this respect see DE TOCQUEVILLE (1982) Book III, Chapter 1: "How the Men of Letters Became the Main Politicians of the Country Towards the Middle of the Eighteenth Century, and the Effects which Derived from this" pp 155-163.

potential "mask" which can be used to communicate as well as cloak.69

Undoubtedly, republican ideology was an implicit break with tradition and consequently a potentially revolutionary force. All in all though, we hold that this potential was not foreseen fully by all those who promoted and accepted the reception and implementation of republican elements in Chile during the critical conjuncture which we have been studying. During this period, we insist, the aim behind republicanism was altogether different. The republican option had a far more limited reach; republicanism was chosen in order to gain support and legitimacy from new arguments and images and thus justify the autonomy accidentally produced by the constitutional crisis of 1808. However, in the light of post-Independence political and social development of Chile, we believe that what appears at first as a mere latent revolutionary potential was to achieve later on an autonomous strength evolving thus into a key conditional factor of modernity in Chile.

69 BELL (1962) p 396. On the "open" texture of every discourse, see U. ECO, Obra Abierta (Barcelona 1979); by the same author, Lector in Fabula (Barcelona 1981); y H. L. A. HART, The Concept of Law (Oxford 1961).
The Modern Utopian Projection

We have insisted in this chapter that the reception of republicanism did not have a revolutionary project behind it. Parallel to this, we have stated that republicanism, though, in itself, contained a radical potential which was to produce a transcendent break in Chile. How can we explain this apparent contradiction?

We think that this paradox can be resolved if we distinguish the merely "ideological" aim which motivates the acceptance of republicanism by the Chilean ruling elite, during what we have called the critical conjuncture, from the "utopian" effects which republicanism was to bring about. The fact that behind the republican option there existed an original non-revolutionary intention, which in turn was to jar with eventually more radical consequences, a phenomenon which has not been sufficiently underlined thus far, explains why part of the historiography dealing with Independence continues to confuse supposedly more extreme "causes" with what are at most radical "effects".

The ideological disposition which the reception of republicanism had in Chile can be vouched by any of the classical definitions we have of ideologies. Whatever view of ideology we choose: as a means of legitimacy which anyone who has power uses in order to justify the present system of authority; as a recourse to overcome tensions or conflicts within a community so
as to correct contingent socio-psychological imbalances; or as a
cultural instrument which helps to integrate and preserve a
social identity—what is certain is that all these definitions
and aims fit the motives which made possible the republican
option in Chile. To begin with, the ruling elite once it
accidentally gained the totality of power, it still had to
justify it, and republicanism fulfilled this aim. Moreover, we
have seen how a republican legitimating discourse presented in
axiological terms helped project on all society a general
consensus behind the idea of interest, even if in the long run
this was to serve only the interests of the ruling group.
Certainly, republicanism was an option made in a critical
situation, after the fall of the monarchy. We agree with Simon
Collier when he affirms that liberalism above all provided the
creoles with "a suitable theory to justify the most cataclysmic
political change in their history." Finally, it is clear that
republicanism served to unify a society which faced a
conjuncture which threatened it with potential desintegration.

That we are dealing here with an ideological option
seems to be confirmed also by the high degree of official
manipulation which accompanies republican consolidation. This is
further corroborated by the attempts made to attenuate the

70 We are refering here to the by-now classical views
which exist concerning ideologies, those of Marx, Weber, Geertz
and Mannheim. For a general analysis of these positions, see:
RICŒUR (1989) and M. REJAI, "Ideology" in Dictionary of the

71 COLLIER (1967) p 178.
revolutionary potential of republicanism and the desire to accommodate this discourse to the Chilean context.

It is not less true that by choosing republicanism a dynamic proper to all ideology was set into motion which was to free it from its original restraints. Several authors who have studied ideologies coincide that there exists a margin between the doctrinal pretensions which are expressed by them and the effective belief behind these pretensions. Ideological discourse, in order to legitimise authority, is built upon a rhetorical fiction which gives the appearance that doctrinal postulates are backed by a consensual credibility much higher than the one which really exists in society.72 Hence ideologies serve to conceal the true pretensions of the dominant group, which recurs to them for legitimating purposes.

Ideologies use a universalist axiological language which offers more than what is truly intended to be granted. In every ideology there is always an "utopian horizon", a series of trascendental values and ideals, which "is exhibited as non-utopian", in other words: as already achieved or existent.73 Consequently, however much this "utopian horizon" is to be shared by all those who fall within the discoursive field, its feasibility is different depending on the subjects in question. For the ruling groups the ultimate value-orientated pretensions


shall constitute a real or a mere legitimating recourse, whereas for the subordinate groups these will mean at most mere expectations if not illusory or vicarious fulfillments of their aspirations.74

It is evident, from what we have just said, that ideology is a conscious and controlled recourse; therefore, its effects tend to appear as entirely foreseeable. However, the ideological recourse involves a risk. The sole fact that there exists an "utopian horizon" allows for the possibility for it to be able to be materialised or at least for its benefits to be made general. As such, the rhetorical margin intent in masking is a double-edged weapon. It serves as an ideological instrument while acting as an utopian potential. Ricoeur says: "if... ideology is the surplus value added to the lack of belief in authority" (if ideology is the expedient which authority uses in order to legitimise its power by requiring a greater adhesion or belief than that which it is willing to concede) then, "utopia is what unmasks this surplus value".75 In the long run, every ideology carries implicitly a critical potential which helps reveal the "logical inconsequence between the utopian horizon and the real situations of exploitation."76 Therefore, to achieve the genuine necessities, values, desires and aspirations of society, it suffices to potentiate the legitimating discourse

74 Ibid., pp 61, 63, 64.
in as much as it is a possible utopia—and put an end to the merely rhetorical transcendence with which the discourse has been covered up in order to fulfill merely ideological pretensions.77

To more or less the same conclusion one can arrive from a linguistic perspective. According to linguistic theory every discursive utterance is an act of power or control at the same time that it is an uncontrollable act. This is due to the fact that every verbal action is mediated. In order to say something, one necessarily needs to recur to a language used by others and thus communicate with others. Moreover, every language is institutionalised and comes to serve more than one person, including those persons who might want to refute one with our own terms. All communication is built upon an ambiguous and uncontrollable base. One can use or force a language to say what one wants to mean and thus satisfy one's own needs of expression and power, but at the same time one gives one's opponents the same instruments to answer back. In words of J. G. A. Pocock "language gives me power, but power which I cannot fully control or prevent others from sharing. In performing a verbalized act of power, I enter upon a polity of shared power."78 Language is relatively uncontrollable and can never be monopolised. Moreover, since the contents and the verbal instruments one uses


are open, one brings and incorporates to them all our prejudices and interests modifying thus their intended meaning. This is why in the long run any discourse is able to escape the hands of anyone who jealously pretends to control it.79

To a certain degree, this is precisely what happened with liberal-republicanism in Chile. The creole aristocracy appropriated a radical language, moderated it and minimised its revolutionary effects but it could not prevent other groups from eventually using this same language, making it their own, and allowing to develop the revolutionary character implicit in this discourse.80 This is why all the main social and political transformations which have taken place in Chile after Independence, during the XIXth and XXth centuries --widening of franchise, secularization, syndicalism, rise and later hegemony of middle class sectors, and lastly attempts to implement global plans of revolutionary proportions-- have all been tried and justified thanks to the paradigms offered by a liberal state.

Deep down, we think that this hypothesis explains two phenomena which often tend to appear unconnected in traditional historiography: on the one hand, an Independence which is viewed


80 For an application of this idea to the subject of the University during the XIXth century in Chile, see "La Universidad de Chile como Institución Liberal" in JOCELYN-HOLT (1990b) pp 42-58; also JOCELYN-HOLT (1991).
as a mere political event without any effects in other spheres, and on the other, the increasing incorporation of new social forces beginning in the second half of the XIXth century resulting from infrastructural changes.81 It is not our aim on this occasion to refute this view; at most, we pretend to add a conditional component which until now has been omitted from the analysis. We think that the history of Chile is more coherent and interconnected than how it appears at first glance. And the very fact that the same discourse is used throughout the century points, in our opinion, to far closer historical links.

That republicanism and liberalism were favoured initially by "aristocrats" and later taken advantage of by new ascending social forces confirms once again the close relation which exists in Chile between tradition and modernity, relation which we have verified time and time again in this dissertation. It is somewhat ironical that this historical constant escaped the original foresight of the ruling group of 1810. By choosing republicanism as a legitimating ideology, the élite inadvertently set the bases for an eventual co-optation of the new order by other sectors not fully incorporated as active subjects. In the long run these newly emerging groups would profit from the system just like in its due moment the

81 This disassociation is frequent in the more economist analysis of the history of XIXth century Chile, see: J. C. JOBET, Ensayo Crítico del Desarrollo Económico Social de Chile (1955); A. PINTO, Chile, Un Caso de Desarrollo Frustrado (1958); H. RAMIREZ NECOHEA, Balmaceda y la Contrarrevolución de 1891 (1969); VITALE (1971).
traditional élite took advantage of the Bourbon project. In both cases, a modernising proposition in addition to allowing a potential for change was to permit the incorporation of new historical actors to the sphere of power.

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In sum, liberal-republicanism was basically a political option made by the Chilean ruling élite in order to legitimate its control of political power after the vacancy produced in the Spanish throne. Republicanism was chosen because it was a legitimating order which permitted that interests of a reduced group of society could become incorporated into the political system while presenting them as universal, even if in fact they were not. In other words, liberalism allowed a system which admitted a strong degree of subjectivity but conceived still in objective terms through a legal fiction. This is the conscious dimension of liberal-republicanism.

But liberal-republicanism had an additional dimension which was to a large degree unconscious. Liberal-republicanism was also a project not entirely intentional. This projectional character was due to the fact that republicanism in Chile was a partial and not a full break with the traditional world. Liberal-republicanism produced an eminently political break.
Traditional society persisted, not so the way this society continued to be legitimated. The option for a new republican and liberal order was made by aristocrats, persons to whom the pre-established system was highly beneficial but who were conscious that they could no longer continue to explain these benefits in the traditional way they had been doing it until then. This is why they chose a new order whose consequences, though, they could not entirely predict.

In other words, the break produced by liberal-republicanism was far more acute and radical than the possible intentions projected by the political subjects who chose it. From this political break onwards, from the reception of republicanism, one can speak of a new reality, even if it does not materialise fully. It is materialised fully solely at the level of discourse, at the level of ideology or of explanation of reality. But this, far from leaving things just the same as they were beforehand, sets the conditions for an eventual change to come about. Discourse, understood as false conscience, satisfies those who want continuity, but on an utopian level, makes possible in turn an eventual change. Republicanism allowed the possibility of a new world. This did not mean that the new world came about immediately. At most it became possible or reachable. The utopian liberal-republican project generated expectations and theoretical possibilities not always foreseeable. This prepared the ground for them to take place or better still so that they could take place.
By choosing republicanism and liberalism traditional society prevented the break from being more drastic. They opted for an evolution, for the overall maintenance of traditional social and political conditions even if a certain amount of political change was admitted, an essentially ideological and conceptual change. What took place was a change in the form and not in the content. But this was by no means insignificant. The 'formal' acceptance of a new order implied a rejection of the past. Tradition was negated even if it might continue to persist. In other words, liberal-republicanism may have permitted the continuation of tradition but it denied it legitimacy. And this was to weaken it considerably. In fact, after 1810 no one in Chile would pretend to build up a political system justified on a traditional basis, not even the ultramontane faction during the 1880s. Hence, by opting for liberal-republicanism, modernity was to be chosen as an order of explanation and legitimacy.

Modernity was chosen either to conceal tradition or else to depart from it gradually. With liberal-republicanism, a quota of modernity was accepted. Hence, in Chile modernity has been partial and not global, an unfinished and programmatic process. It became acceptable to modernise tentatively but in the process things actually moved towards a more complete modernisation. The past was discarded, the present was seen as a

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"transition" and the future as something plausible which could be constructed; as an order to be "produced", not merely "received".83

Modernity was accepted to a large degree because Chileans were partly immersed in it. If they wanted to open up to the world, if they wanted to become integrated and participate in the general concert of nations, they necessarily had to assume the "spirit of the times" even if this was done on a purely political, imaginary level, as a mere "image" capable of structuring reality. Consequently, as far as Chile is concerned modernity during the XIXth century did not originate in changes in the socio-economic structure. In so far as it was an after-effect of the option made of liberalism, it turned out to be above all a political option. And by being political or ideological it generated a degree or margin of autonomous non-infrastructural change. Infrastructural changes which were to emerge afterwards were channeled and became consolidated in a terrain already paved by a political and ideological foundational change.

Without the French Revolution all of this could not have been possible. From the French Revolution on, a paradigmatic and ideological model of modernity was inherited.84


This model responded to French needs, which were not necessarily those of Spanish America. All in all though, this model was potentially exportable and adaptable for the same reason that it was ideological and abstract. Chileans appropriated for themselves this model without having to transit through the different earlier stages which this model presupposed in its original European setting. Liberal-republicanism was achieved without a bourgeoisie and without capitalism. Hence, during the XIXth century, a certain modernity was to be achieved without the defining elements which this modernity meant in France and in the rest of Europe. This is why the Chilean "revolution" was different from the French. Here the revolution was brought about by the aristocracy. But it was made partially. It assimilated the political-ideological elements without having to assume all the rest. A desire to prevent a full-fledged revolution made possible a political revolution; a desire to prevent modernity at its most radical became possible by co-opting the legitimacy which this modernity provided. The ideological discourse's openness allowed this co-optation. What the aristocrats, the notables of 1810, did not foresee was that the openness of the discourse could be advantageous not solely to them but also to all those whom this discourse potentially supposed. The discourse did not have to bring about an immediate modernity, notwithstanding its eventuality. The discourse left things just as they were, but this order of things necessarily became exposed to the possibility of being changed so long as it was doctrinally
accepted that it could be changed. Change at first went half-way, but in projectional terms it was to turn-out far more radical. In as much as an utopia was being accepted, there was a real risk of being subjected to change. And in this manner, change and continuity, modernity and tradition were achieved.
PART III

THE MODERN PROJECTION

Juan Bautista Alberdi wrote in 1852 in Valparaíso:

"The problem of the possible government in an America until now Spanish has only one sensible solution: it consists in elevating our peoples to the form of government which necessity has imposed on us; in giving them the aptitude which they lack for them to be republican; in making them worthy of the republic which we have proclaimed, which we cannot practice nor abandon today, in improving the government by the improvement of the governed; in improving society in order to obtain the betterment of power, which is its expression and direct result."

Alberdi added that in Spanish America only Chile ---to that date--- had shown signs of realism in resolving this problem. How did it accomplish this? According to the Argentine thinker, by avoiding dynasties and military dictatorships and by establishing a political system which "tied the chain of modern life to the tradition of past life." 1

Alberdi points out several aspects which help to frame our discussion concerning the development of Chile after 1818. To begin with, his insistence that the principal challenge which had to be faced in Hispanic America once Independence had been won was not legitimacy but rather the problem of government. Notwithstanding the latter, Alberdi implies that the solution to this problem had to be structured within the already established republican legitimating order, initially a "necessity," but eventually a project, an all out-and-out project. Also striking

1 J. B. ALBERDI, Bases y Puntos de Partida (1852, Buenos Aires 1945) p. 570; the emphasis is Alberdi's.
is that Chile should be singled out as a successful example of this, precisely because it was able to conciliate tradition and modernity, a thesis we have argued throughout this dissertation.

Notwithstanding Alberdi's assertions, a number of questions require answers. From what date in Chile do Alberdi's comments hold true? Did Chile, after Independence, pass through an "anarchical interregnum" like other nascent Spanish American republics, as is affirmed by one important historiographical current? The resolution of the consequences brought about by Independence took place in Chile on account of a first successful experience with liberal government --decade of the 1820s-- or rather after a "retreat" post-1829 from radical experiments which supposedly had failed? Lastly, it is worth asking if Alberdi was right. The implicit argument of this text --that the political problem had to be resolved starting from the republican project, from a breakdown of tradition, has in fact

2 Conservative historians --whose principal exponents are A. Edwards, F. A. Encina, J. Eyzaguirre and M. Góngora-- have formulated this hypothesis. See specially EDWARDS (1927), Chapter 6; and J. EYZAGUIRRE, Fisonomía Histórica de Chile (1943), Chapter 7. For a critical analysis of this conservative historiographical line of thinking, see JOCELYN-HOLT (1990b). See infra Chapters VIII and X.

3 Conservatives tend to think that liberal governments during the 1820s failed and the country had to go back to a traditional authoritarian track of Spanish origin. According to this historiographical school, Portales after 1829 led this "restoration" and permitted the country to become progressive and modern. On this alleged "retreat" after Independence, see: GRIFFIN (1961) p 138; M. GONGORA, "El Pensamiento de Juan Egaha sobre la Reforma Eclesiástica..."; and by the same author, "El Rasgo Utópico... de Juan Egaha", both in GONGORA (1980), pp 183-231.
been questioned. Hence, it seems valid to question whether or not the premise is correct: Chile's post-Independence order was a result of the political changes brought about by Emancipation or rather due to its supposed negation after 1829?

Alberdi's text helps us to introduce two other aspects which we shall analyse in this third part. The Argentine author seems to suggest that the republican aim was broader, more social, and not merely political. In the long run, the challenge which had to be faced after Independence was, as he says, to "improve society". We tend to think that this was accomplished. The period which was to follow Independence, in our view, came to confirm and consolidate some broader changes which had been taking place ever since the XVIIIth century, for instance in education, commerce and religious affairs. Independence produced a political change, but this set the foundations for a more modern society. The political break was also a potentially profound rupture which facilitated a more dynamic and ambitious social transformation.

Lastly, Alberdi's text is interesting because it is a reflection of a mid-century liberal, living in Chile at the time, who looks back and reflects on what still had to be done. According to him, Independence had been achieved but it had not ended. This carries us to yet another dimension of the problem of Independence: the sense that Independence was an unfinished project which periodically had to be reflected upon and be re-thought. As time went by and the events of Independence receded
in the past, Chileans imprinted on these same events a foundational significance which would elevate the status of Independence in the historiography and in the subsequent Chilean world-view to even mythical proportions.

In sum, we will analyse next the political repercussions of Independence, the modernising effect it was to have during the following decade, and finally the historiographical and mythic significance with which it has later been vested its transcendental importance.
CHAPTER VIII
LIBERAL-REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENTS

Once Independence was achieved, it became necessary to confront its consequences. After overcoming the conjunctural crisis in which Chile found itself accidentally involved, it became indispensable to consolidate the new legitimating order which had emerged as a response to the fall of monarchy. Once the trascendence of the events of the ten years 1808-1818 was recognised, it was imperative to reflect on what remained to be done and resolve the pending political problem: to assure a solid and stable government.

The eleven years which followed the Declaration of Independence and which culminated in Lircay with the emergence of a liberal-pelucón government (1818-1829) comprise a period of reinforcement of republicanism, political experience and balancing of political forces. This period was not anarchical, as one historiographical current has tried to stigmatise it.1 It is characterised by high levels of idealism without this meaning an absence of realism; there are unmistakable signs of instability, but even these fit within a certain projectional

1 This characterisation of the period as anarchic is well established in XXth century Conservative historiography, but it is already timidly hinted at in Liberal XIXth century writings XIX: Cf. M. L. AMUNATEGUI, La Dictadura de O'Higgins (1883, 1882), p 16; F. ERRAZURIZ, Chile Bajo el Imperio de la Constitución de 1828 (1861, 1863) pp 530, 545; M. CONCHA y TORO, Chile Durante los Años de 1824 a 1828 (1862) p 93; I. ERRAZURIZ, Historia de la Administración Errázuriz (1877, 1935) pp 47, 119, 162.
coherence; trial and error predominated guided by a clarity of aim in essentials. During this period the field was prepared for an eventual institutional consolidation along liberal lines—not conservative, as often thought, though authoritarian—which would be forged after 1829 and which would make Chile an exception in Hispanic America.

In the decade after Independence three different but complementary strategies were tried in order to resolve the problem of government: a personalist authoritarianism, an effort to balance civilian and military power, and various constitutional experiments. Although in the end these three strategies failed to give Chile a permanent institutional solution, the extent of their failures was relative. Sufficient experience and institutional build-up were achieved, in addition to reinforcing republican legitimacy, all of which helped to consolidate the foundations of the order which was to emerge after 1829.

The Authoritarian Transition

The central problem of the Patria Vieja (1810-1814) was to procure a new legitimacy; that of the Patria Nueva (from 1817 on), was the establishment of a viable government. In both cases these problems were resolved by combining improvisation
with certainty. The new legitimacy was a result of the adoption of an unedited modern republican paradigm and its adjustment to the already crystallised interests of the traditional ruling group. The possibility of a viable government would start to emerge from trial and error and the recognition of a new force: military authority.2

It is not surprising that the first tentative solution to the fundamental problem of post-Independence was to be a version of personalist caudillismo. Independence came to be fully grasped during the war, in addition to being won on the field of battle. Consequently, military leadership acquired extraordinary prestige. The same occurred everywhere else in Spanish America. What perhaps makes the Chilean case an exception is the transitoriness of this phenomenon, notwithstanding its eventual integration within institutional matrixes.

Some days after Chacabuco, in an open cabildo meeting celebrated in Santiago, General San Martín was offered the government of Chile with "absolute powers" (15 February 1817). He declined this offer in favour of O'Higgins, as planned. O'Higgins's appointment as Director Supremo was an imposition of the Argentine-Chilean army of the Andes, ratified by the most conspicuous residents of Santiago.3

2 The assertion that this period was experimental can already been found in J. V. LASTARRIA, Historia Constitucional de Medio Siglo (1853); D. SANTA MARIA, Memoria Histórica (1858); CONCHA y TORO (1862).

Additional reasons justified the dictatorship which followed. To begin with, the war continued. The central region would not be free of royalist troops until the battle of Maipú (5 April 1818). Subsequently, the theatre of war moved south where a guerrilla war involving montoneras dragged on, the so called "guerra a muerte", limited but worrisome armed clashes which were prolonged until the fall of Chiloé on January 1826. The continental projection of the war made necessary also the organisation and strengthening of an army and navy which was to invade Perú. In the absence of Argentine support, Chile had to assume the bulk of the war costs, a factor which made a strong government indispensable in Chile. Finally, we must bear in mind that a possible Spanish retaliation and restoration did not fully disappear until the battle of Ayacucho (9 December 1824).

Behind the tolerance of the dictatorial personalism of O'Higgins one finds also the well-founded fear that other more

4 On O'Higgins's government, see: AMUNATEGUI (1882); VICUNA MACKENNA (1861, 1976); L. VALENCIA AVARIA, Bernardo O'Higgins (1980); E. ORREGO VICUNA, El Espíritu Constitucional de la Administración O'Higgins (1924); by the same author, O'Higgins, Vida y Tiempo (Buenos Aires 1957); J. EYZAGUIRRE, O'Higgins (1946). See also: Archivo de Don Bernardo O'Higgins (1946-1953); B. O'HIGGINS, Epistolar (Madrid 1920); J. ZAMUDIO Z., Fuentes Bibliográficas (1946).

5 See B. VICUNA MACKENNA, La Guerra a Muerte (1869, 1940); D. BARRIOS ARANA, Las Campañas de Chiloé (1820-1826) (1856) and (1884-1902), XI, XII, XIV, XVI; CAMPOS HARRIET (1958) pp 119-146; AMUNATEGUI (1882) pp 299ff, 401ff; CONCHA y TORO (1862).

6 See D. E. WORCESTER, Sea Power and Chilean Independence (Florida 1962); T. COCHRANE, Narrative of Services... (London 1859); G. BULNES, Historia de la Expedición Libertadora (1887); MITRE (1950) I.
charismatic and less malleable figures might prevail. The internal and external danger which Carrera posed until 1821 explains the rigour in the persecution and repression against his faction. 7

The effects of war account also for this tolerance of O’Higgins. 8 An abrupt fall in agricultural production, the loss of the Peruvian market and the necessity of reorganising deficit-burdened public finances called, according to contemporary thinking, for a rationalistic dirigisme backed by authoritarian rule. A personalist dictatorship with enlightened XVIIth century trimmings was imposed, but this in no way altered the continuing impact of liberal-republicanism.

In the economic field this enlightened official policy expressed itself in the adoption during the O’Higgins administration of numerous measures aimed at reordering the administrative apparatus, increasing revenue, and protecting local production. A marked interventionism was shown also by arbitrary expropriations. 9 Moreover, O’Higgins’s government in order to sustain large pending war costs, assumed a high public

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7 See AMUNATEGUI (1882), pp 247-280; VICUNA MACKENNA (1976), p 287; IGLESIAS (1934); ALEMPARTE (1963); REYNO (1973); E. ROJAS MERY, Los Tres Grandes de la Emancipación de Sudamérica Hispana (n.d.); by the same author, El General Carrera en el Exilio (1946); M. PETIT, El Patriot a Manuel Rodríguez (1950).

8 On these consequences, see VILLALOBOS et al (1974) III, pp 404-420.

9 In this respect, see R. SAGREDO BAEZA, "Pragmatismo Proteccionista en los Orígenes de la República", Historia, 24 (1989), pp 267-286.
debt with British banks. The continuous recourse to mercantilist measures, inherited from the past, does not seem to have denied though — according to those who were in charge of economic policy — the "liberal" aim to which they felt naturally inclined. On the whole, the administration preferred an eclectic and pragmatic course of action; specific protectionist measures were enacted within an overall context.

During the Freire government (August 1824), in order to palliate this debt, a monopoly or estanco of tobacco, playing cards, liquors and tea was granted for a ten year period to the firm Portales, Cea and Co.; the company was obliged to pay in London the annual service of the loan. In September 1825, and once again in March 1826, Portales, Cea and Co. proved incapable of fulfilling its obligations in the agreement. It was agreed that the monopoly was to be returned to the exchequer. The subsequent cancellation of the monopoly exempted the contractors from charges and assigned them a sum in compensation. Whatever may have been the responsibility of those who directed the estanco, the fact is that the settlement discredited the government and assumed his own defence in the press; he also grouped around himself a number of influential figures, some of them former functionaries of the administration, connected with the concession and settlement of the monopoly, the so called "estanqueros". On the evolution and political consequences of the estanco, see: BARROS ARANA (1884-1902) XV, pp 111, 299; I. ERRAZURIZ (1935) pp 52-54, 96-103; CONCHA y TORO (1862) pp 137-159; S. VILLALOBOS, Portales (1989), pp 47-64.

The arguments in SAGREDO BAEZA (1989) pp 283-285 are convincing. What was then understood to be "liberal" in economic matters was thought-out in pragmatic and utilitarian terms; it could refer both to the protection of industries and local enterprises as much as the liberation of economic impediments. In this respect, the statement made by J. Rodriguez Aldea, Finance Minister of O'Higgins, who sympathised with free trade, is enlightening: "I could not but confess that we are liberals in everything which might not ruin us," quoted in SAGREDO BAEZA (1989) p 284.
favourable to opening foreign trade. And even though the restrictive measures did not always succeed or were not always implemented, an essentially dirigiste conception of the state, predominant during this period, was never in doubt.

When one surveys the material and cultural oeuvre of the O'Higgins administration, it is striking how much was still inspired by an enlightened notion of progress. Urban growth can be accounted for by a resurgence of a planning policy with philanthropic aims which recalls analogous efforts dear to XVIIIth century governors. A similar situation occurs in the educational field, where we encounter the reappearance of the notion of the teaching state. And in religious matters, we observe a further attempt to enforce the by-now traditional regalist stance. Deep down, O'Higgins’s fascination with progress seems to have Oedipal resonances linked to a not so distant Bourbon colonial past.

12 Statistics compiled by Barros Arana concerning commercial opening, especially in Valparaiso, serve to exemplify the latter. According to this author, previous to 1810 only 18 to 20 ships arrived at this port, whereas in 1819 this number rose to 100 merchant vessels and 28 warships. BARROS ARANA (1884-1902) XII, p 328 n13. See also RECTOR (1976).

13 On the whole, O'Higgins' government was characterised by its conflicts with the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which had supported the royalist faction, on account of the continuing invocation of the Patronato Real. See SILVA COTAFOS (1925); DONOSO (1975) Chapter 7; S. VERGARA QUIROZ, "Iglesia y Estado en Chile, 1750-1850", Historia XX (1985) pp 319-362.

14 Obviously, B. O'Higgins offers the most complex and interesting case from a paradigmatic psychological point of view; he was after all the illegitimate son of Ambrosio O'Higgins, who had been former Governor of Chile and later Viceroy of Perú, a model officer of the Bourbon administration, renowned and admired
Given the persistence of these progressive features is it correct, then, to explain O'Higgins only in the light of prevailing enlightened despotism? We think this characterisation is inadequate. O'Higgins's power seems to have been founded, initially at least, on a personalism vaguely reminiscent of the Bonapartist model, frequent during this period, originating in the image of the soldier-hero; O'Higgins is the first of a long list of Chilean chief executives who traced back their legitimacy to their participation during the period of Independence. Influential too was of course the strong military support he enjoyed. Finally, both factors were further justified by compelling circumstances of a contingent sort. It is true that his government was imbued with a strong reformist spirit, and powerful ministers were characteristic of his administration, both aspects akin to Spanish ministerial absolutism. However, his adherence to republicanism -- notwithstanding his having been forced to temporise with monarchical factions --, his anti-aristocratic egalitarianism expressed in several decrees, and a recognition of the provisional nature of his mandate, contradict this sort of for his development plans and public works. However, O'Higgins is not the only case in this regard. According to Felstiner, almost half of the most prominent figures during the period of Independence had Spanish fathers; and nearly 60% of the fathers had served in the Spanish administration. From their union with creole women had emerged the political leadership of the period; FELSTINER (1970), pp 112ff.
O'Higgins was a transitional figure. His was a dictatoship on the classic mould. The two constitutions promulgated during his administration (in 1818 and 1822) gave him almost total power. All in all though, these legal texts circumscribed the faculties of the Director Supremo within a prescribed legality --very wide and discretionary surely-- but which O'Higgins on the whole respected. And there was, particularly in the second legal corpus, an attempt to define the transitoriness of his mandate by establishing an end to it; nonetheless, this last limitation was never tested on account of his resignation.

O'Higgins's government can only be characterised in the light of its transitional historical location. It was a legal dictatorship, anticipatory of a republican constitutional rule still to be perfected, notwithstanding its use of means which echoed authoritarian XVIIIth century progressivism. It resorted

15 There are some indications, although partial and contingent, which link O'Higgins with plans of a monarchical kind, apparently due to the influence which San Martin and his officers had during the first part of his administration. All in all, though, it seems unquestionable that O'Higgins's position was predominantly favourable to republicanism. In this regard, see: VICUNA MACKENNA (1976) pp 319-321, 323-339; ALEMPARTE (1963) pp 207-266; L. VALENCIA AVARIA, El Pensamiento de O'Higgins (1974) pp 105-120; COLLIER (1967) pp 251-256.

19 By virtue of the acceptance of the 1822 Constitution, O'Higgins was automatically elected for a period of 6 more years, with the possibility of being re-elected one other time for 4 more years. On the dictatorial nature of O'Higgins's government, see: AMUNATEGUI (1882) pp 283, 288-291, 433-454; COLLIER (1967) pp 240-246; HEISE (1978), pp 141-149.
to illuminist dirigiste means without discarding, in appearance at least, a justification based on popular consent. It accepted a republican legitimacy, maintaining in suspense though government mechanisms such as the principle of representation and that of division of powers.17

The transitoriness of this first authoritarian experiment in government, can be confirmed moreover by its failure. We agree with Amunátegui: O'Higgins failed in his attempt to make the dictatorship prevail as a system of government; his desire to consolidate a personalist authoritarianism at the cost of excluding other political forces, simply aborted.18

To begin with, the pressures put on the dictatorship— at times when the danger of internal and external war subsided— were successful in achieving their aim: to define the regime

17 O'Higgins resorted to the mechanism of plebiscites by subscription for the Proclamación de Independencia and for the 1818 Constitution. He had in mind the Constitution of 24 Frimaire Year VIII and the Consulate of Bonaparte on 18 May 1802. The 1822 Constitution was subject to a preparatory convention in which there was a strong official electoral intervention. As far as ideas were concerned, O'Higgins saw a full republican regime as something which still needed to be achieved; COLLIER (1967) pp 241-246.

18 Obviously we are here interpreting what is said in AMUNATEGUI (1882) pp 17-19. That there was an attempt to "found" a dictatorship in Chile --the terms are Amunátegui's-- does not contradict what we have just said with respect to there being in O'Higgins's aims also programmatic republican elements: at least, the desire to eventually establish institutions fully republican. The ambivalence can be found in O'Higgins, and his government in part failed because of it. O'Higgins apparently never become aware that post-Independence authoritarianism had partly lost its contingent legitimacy, as we shall try to prove below.
constitutionally. Both the Constitution of 1818 as well as the Charter of 1822, even if they were tailor-made to fit the established order, were concessions gained from the dictatorship. The few spaces which permitted a degree of supervision—such as the Senate contemplated in the 1818 text, designated by O'Higgins—were duly taken advantage of. The elite did not hide its opposition to the exclusivist pretensions of the Director Supremo. It resented measures such as the abolition of titles of nobility and the prohibition to display family escutcheons, succeeding only in frustrating the plan to abolish entails.\(^{19}\) It was especially suspicious towards the enormous power wielded at the beginning by the Argentines and the Logia Lautarina; it was to show a similar attitude towards the influential and autocratic cabinet ministers who took full possession of O'Higgins's docile personality.\(^{20}\) To these sort of complaints would be added others: the resentment which was to

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\(^{19}\) An example showing O'Higgins's attitude towards aristocracy can be found in a letter to Juan Florencio Terrada, dated 20 February 1812. O'Higgins confesses: "I detest, by nature, aristocracy and adored equality is my idol"; quoted in VALENCIA AVARIA (1974) p 83. On the egalitarian measures undertaken by O'Higgins, see: COLLIER (1967) pp 246-251; DONOSO (1975) pp 106-109.

periodically spring-up due to abuses of power, corruption and political assassination; high fiscal demands; internal divisions within the government; and the increasing discontent in the military file and rank, unpaid and lacking basic needs. The dictatorship's fortune would be sealed by the opposition awakened by the constitutional mechanism (Charter of 1822) which attempted to prolong O'Higgins's mandate by six to ten more years, as well as Concepción's and later Coquimbo's repudiation of the Constitution. Once it became known that General Ramón Freire had given military backing to these insurrections, the conspicuous circles of Santiago joined in and demanded O'Higgins' resignation (28 January 1823).

In 1823 the oligarchy recovered its hegemony and made effective its repudiation of extreme personalism. This personalism in its most authoritarian version failed because it tried to make do only with itself without recognising the need to add a wider social and political support. However, in 1823 a complete break with personalism did not occur; a lukewarm version survived. To a large degree, O'Higgins's forced resignation brought about only a middle-of-the-road solution. Military power emerged unscathed and a later recurrent practice was introduced: namely the resignation of the chief executive. Both of these factors were to help shape a fine balance between oligarchy and the military as well as the arbitral role to which authoritarian personalism was to be reduced later-on.
In 1823 a second stage in the search for a viable governmental solution commenced. A balanced modus vivendi was struck between civil and military power.

This equilibrium emerged when the élite as an oligarchy gained a greater participation in the political and administrative direction of the country. Several channels made possible this greater participation. On a regional basis, local interests made themselves heard through agreements negotiated between provinces, parliamentary deputations and provincial assemblies. In turn, on a national level, six different congresses, several of them constituent bodies, and numerous unipersonal and collegiate magistracies provisionally in charge of supreme authority, assumed not only legislative but

21 In Chile the term "oligarchy" tends to be reserved for the latter part of the XIXth century. In this case we shall maintain the classic political usage of the term, as we have proposed already (supra Chapter III). Specifically, we are referring here to the government of the few, the government by an élite, the latter understood in its civil dimension and increasingly organised in political pressure groups.

22 The provinces made their influence felt in the organisation of the country, for the first time, as a result of O'Higgins's resignation: this early influence can be noticed in the Acta de Unión de las Provincias which put an end to the crisis of 1823, reunified the country and appointed Freire to the post of Director Supremo. On the de facto activity of the provincial assemblies, see: I. ERRAZURIZ (1935) pp 57ff; HEISE (1978) pp 152-153, 169-172.
also executive tasks during the period 1823-1829. (23) Thanks to these mechanisms, civilian members representative of the élite expressed their positions, initiated wide constitutional reforms and in several specific cases undertook even the day-to-day management of the country. The fact that collegiate, often short-lived, channels were preferred enabled also a constant representation and a permanent rotation between the different political factions which began to emerge.

The counterpart to this growing participation of the élite was the military presence which continued to hold-on to the Executive branch; hence, the tendency at times for the Executive to assume a clearly dictatorial character. Freire on repeated occasions dissolved congresses by force when he failed to compel them to disband themselves, resorted to popular riots to press for the abolition of the existing constitutional order, and demanded and obtained special extraordinary faculties without any major opposition. (24) Nevertheless, these dictatorial recourses were on the whole transitory and contingent. It would not take too long before the situation was reversed and relations between civil and military power returned to their usual harmonious state; newly designed collegiate entities would then be summoned.

23 For a chronological table ordering the different governments, beginning in 1823, with due mention of the delegations of supreme authority, see: F. CAMPOS HARRELT, Historia Constitucional de Chile (1983) pp 139-140.

24 On Freire’s government, see: CONCHA y TORO (1862); I. ERRAZURIZ (1935) pp 25-117; WEATHERS (1983); M. REYNO, Freire: Libertador de Chiloé (1952).
once again. Freire's frequent and prolonged absences during his
government, on account of the southern campaigns, served also to
balance the two forces at play and neutralised the effects of a
dictatorship which made itself felt only at brief intervals.
Actually, during the four years he was in power, Freire presided
over the daily administration for only slightly more than 60% of
the time.25

This period might seem to be characterised solely by
dictatorial military predominance. All in all, though, a number
of factors tend to deny this: the indifference to power shown by
its highest leader; his eventual effective resignation in 1820;
his clear preference for strictly military tasks; his tendency
to become easy prey to influences; and lastly, his benevolent
and tolerant authoritarianism. As Collier puts it: "Freire...
was very much the sort of Supreme Director the liberals of the
1820's wanted."26 Another military officer, General F. A. Pinto,
was to replace him, displaying personal attributes even more
irresolute and ambiguous.

Deep down, the political-military command in the hands
of Freire and Pinto was exercised in a markedly arbitral manner.
It is reasonable, therefore, to speak of an oligarchic-military
condominium whereby the personalist factor and the authoritarian
expedient continued to figure prominently. Military prestige
originating in the heroic deeds of Independence remained very

25 CAMPOS HARRIET (1983) pp 139-140.
high; hence, it would be permanently appealed to in order to
resolve critical situations and thus preserve the unity of the
Republic. This personalism, though, never developed into more
classic forms of caudillismo; there was at most tolerance for a
personalism increasingly institutional and less and less
charismatic. Freire and Pinto share with O'Higgins a common
pronounced opaqueness; what differentiates them is the fact that
the former, did not rely on powerful autocrats as did O'Higgins.
In effect, after 1823, a transitional form of government was set­
up based on a mutual veto between the military and the oligarchic
élite.

During this period we are far from being in the midst
of a generalised state of anarchy. The political balance
achieved never degenerated into unruliness. At most it produced
instability, a certain degree of volatile doctrinal
permissiveness and administrative inefficiency, but it did not
result in civil war, in internal military divisions, in social
agitation, nor in ethnic rebellions. Popular caudillos did not

27 The following have affirmed the existence of anarchy:
AMUNATEGUI (1882); F. ERRAZURIZ (1861); CONCHA Y TORO (1862);
I. ERRAZURIZ (1935); EDWARDS (1927); EYZAGUIRRE (1948); COLLIER
(1967) pp 287ff; A. VALENZUELA, Political Brokers in Chile
(North Carolina 1977) pp 171-172; this last author goes so far
as to state that Chile was a "praetorian society".
A more balanced view of this subject can be found in
VILLALOBOS, "Sugerencias Para un Enfoque del Siglo XIX" in
Colección Estudios Cieplan No. 12, Marzo 1984, Estudio no. 79, pp
11-12; by the same author (1989) pp 65-71; G. M. YEAGER, Barros
Arana's Historia General de Chile: Politics, History, and
National Identity (Fort Worth 1981) ix-xiii; WEATHERS (1983) pp
9-12.
emerge; rural labourers—the mass of this eminently rural society—continued in their traditional and peaceful tranquility. There was a recrudescence of banditry, sequel to war and legacy of the immediate past, but this was a localised problem, linked to the war in the south. It in no way threatened national coexistence. In the economy, there continued to be fiscal and commercial difficulties—in the latter case partially derived from political instability and the financial burden carried over from Independence—but these difficulties did not extend to agriculture or mining. Moreover, there was no basic questioning of the legitimating order; republicanism, far from being doubted, was accentuated. Mutinies took place, but they were rapidly put down. A characteristic of this period is the extraordinary continuity within the military as well as the civilian leadership. In both cases, it is striking how close and dependent is this type of leadership to institutional prestige; this is a period in which jurists and military professionals became prominent, not adventurers or demagogues.

On the whole, the political order may have been fragile, but it was improved. The oligarchic-military condominium served as a safeguard against possible excesses from authoritarian caudillismo, notwithstanding the fact that it still left open the possibility of resorting to the prestige and force of the military as a means of arbitration of the political scenario in a period which continued to be highly critical. This

28 RECTOR (1976) p 111.
equilibrium also allowed a wide margin for civilian participation. It permitted political experimentation but with restraints. The military sometimes proved more cautious than the civilians themselves, as is confirmed by the eventual repudiation of the Constitution of 1823 and of the Federal Laws, to which we shall soon refer in greater detail. Freire and Pinto put a stop to the more radical and sometimes delirious constitutional solutions put forward, without abandoning altogether the reformist path. In sum, the balance between the oligarchy and the military helped to avoid the potential predominance of either one of the only two political forces at play during this period. This helped to moderate politics.

This oligarchic-military equilibrium also introduced several new parliamentary practices. After every government crisis the administration was restructured with more or less the same individuals from the ruling class. This in turn assured a great deal of respect for institutional legality. Both the dictatorial military rulers as well as the civil congressional members of the period admitted the need to find support in the existing legal-constitutional order.

Lastly, this equilibrium served to keep in check the authoritarian-personalist threat, what the oligarchy feared most. This in turn allowed civilians to start grouping themselves in political factions, a phenomenon which did not weaken civilian

strength vis-à-vis the military. It is too early to speak of structured political parties or of doctrinaire political tent. what emerged were vaguely defined currents. At most, we can identify a more traditional tendency, usually denominated pelucons, and another more progressive, nicknamed pipiola. They often revolved around personalisms (i.e. carrerainos and p'hiigginistas); at times they would group themselves in terms of contingent political issues (i.e. federalists and estanqueros).30

The most prominent characteristic of these new associations or factions was their lack of coherence; it is not surprising then that this subject when discussed tends often to be confusing. Nevertheless, the matter can be clarified. These currents or groups did not differentiate themselves according to strict doctrinal terms nor with respect to socio-economic factors; without exceptions, we are dealing here with factions within the ruling group.31 The support they mustered was usually

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30 On the emergence of these tendencies, see: I. ERRAZURIZ (1935) Chapter 5; DONOSO (1975) pp 64ff; COLLIER (1967) pp 292-298; HEISE (1978) pp 79-92; A. EDWARDS, Bosquejo Histórico de los Partidos Políticos Chilenos (1976); D. AMUNATEGUI SOLAR, Pipiilos y Pelucons (1939); G. URZUA VALENZUELA, Los Partidos Políticos Chilenos (1968); A. EDWARDS, La Organización Política de Chile (1943); and by the same author (1927).

Usually, the pelucons are identified with the more aristocratic landowning sector of the elite; supposedly they were by far the most attached to conservative values of society; it is often affirmed also that this group favoured a strong executive authority, protectionist policies and supported the Church. In turn, the stereotype image of the pipiilos conceives them as intransigent partisans of French liberalism and North-American federalism; they were supposedly anti-authoritarian, supporters of free-trade, and pro-secularisation. These images, as we shall see, do not correspond exactly with reality.

fluctuating, and they often superimposed one over the other. The way they came to be known was usually referential; the two main factions (pelucones and pipiolos) began to be identified by way of disqualifications or denigratory terms. Finally, it is difficult, if not impossible, to see in them the origins of subsequently more defined political parties. All in all, though, they were political actors. Their adherence to the existing republican regime was not a subject of dissent amongst them; during the period, all of them had ample political participation, be it in the opposition, be it in government. They allowed, moreover, a more gregarious form of political protagonism. And what they lacked in definition and coherence, they compensated for in flexibility, which was to be of extraordinary utility in the consensual recomposition of government produced after 1829.

Given all these previous achievements, why then did this experiment in oligarchic-military government eventually fail also? This question anticipates our discussion on the constitutional experiments and on the 1829 coup d'etat. However we can advance what in our opinion was the central failure of this governmental order. The critical weakness which in the long run was to destabilise this attempt, notwithstanding its otherwise extraordinary success in achieving a de facto political equilibrium, was the incapacity to translate this same equilibrium into an efficient constitutional proposition. In

32 See the discussion in HEISE (1978) pp 74-92.
other words, what really caused the failure was the inability to legalise and institutionalise a *modus operandi* which at the level of political praxis proved to be highly successful.

**Search for a Legal-Constitutional Solution**

Parallel to the above-described political solution runs the desire to find a legal-constitutional response to the problem of government. During the ten year period 1818-1828 diverse types of constitutional experiments followed each other. Although they improved as they went along and passed on a...

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33 Analysis centred in the constitutional experiments of this period can be found in: J. V. LASTARRIA, *Historia Constitucional del Medio Siglo* in Obras Completas (1853, Santiago 1906-1934) VII, pp 324-331, 433-481; CAMPOS HARRIET (1983); L. GALDAMES, *La Evolución Constitucional de Chile* (1925); R. BRISENO, Memoria Histórico-Crítica del Derecho Público Chileno (1849); J. BANADOS, Constituciones de Chile (1889); A. ROLDAN, Derecho Constitucional de Chile (1917); M. VERDUGO MARINKOVIC, "Los Principios del Constitucionalismo Clásico en los Ordenamientos Fundamentales de Chile", Revista de Derecho Público No. 19-20 (1976) pp 117-146; A. GUZMAN BRITO, "El Constitucionalismo Revolucionario Francés y las Cartas Fundamentales Chilenas del Siglo XIX" in KREBS and GAZMURI (1990), pp 225-246; COLLIER (1967) Part III; HEISE (1978) Part IV; I. ERRAZURIZ (1935); CONCHA y TORO (1862); F. ERRAZURIZ (1861). The texts of the constitutions and of the constitutional laws are reproduced in R. ANGUIA, Leyes Promulgadas en Chile (1912).
significant quota of experience which was useful after 1829, in the end they did not satisfy the principal aim: to give legal expression to what already existed in actual political practice. This goal was a natural outcome of republicanism; governments, according to this political system, require constitutional legitimacy. However, even though a republican legitimacy persisted and a praxis adequate to the existing circumstances and the presiding ideology were achieved, its legal materialisation with sufficient political support, simply failed.

A first attempt in this direction dates back to the constitutional authoritarianism of O'Higgins. Even though they were texts made to fit authoritarian personalism, the Constitutions of 1818 and 1822 did not awaken sufficient political support and thus were not authentic solutions to the problem; they were transitory regulations which faded away with the failure of dictatorship.

This initial constitutional authoritarianism was to be followed by an anti-authoritarian programmatic constitutionalism, idealist in its aspirations, "nominal" in its aims. The Constitution of 1823, designed by Juan Egaña, confirms this next step.

Actually, Egaña's Constitution, set-up a regime which pretended to be an antidote against any other possible attempt to impose a personalist authoritarianism similar to the one

34 The terminology we are hereby using follows the ontological classification of constitutions formulated in K. LOEWENSTEIN, Teoría de la Constitución (Madrid 1968) pp 216-222.
recently overthrown. An oligarchic spirit opposed to strong governments runs through almost all its precepts. The Executive was clearly restricted in its actions. Instead of reinforcing the Executive, the 1823 Constitution favoured collegiate and bureaucratic bodies: Senate, Câmara Nacional de Consultores, local Electoral Assemblies. Moreover, individuals were protected by a broad and precisely detailed catalogue of civic guarantees. Finally, a punctilious normative bias intent on regulating all kinds of matters including those which were subject to ordinary laws, reduced even further the margin admitted for discretionary official acts.

What distinguishes this constitutional text from later charters, in its attempt to counteract and moderate personalist authoritarianism, was its schematic or rationalist preconception of law. What has so often been called its moral righteousness, is none other than the enlightened desire of this Constitution to reform the rulers and present a philanthropic and pedagogical blueprint in order to improve society at large: the Republic. Hence this Constitution's constant attempt to draw-up institutions which were designed to guard public morality (Senate, Gran Registro del Mérito Cívico); the inclusion of a Moral Code which specified the "duties" of the citizens; the paramount importance it assigned to "civic virtue"; and lastly,

35 In the 1823 Constitution, the Executive lacked extraordinary faculties, its appointments required previous authorisation from the Senate, its decisions could even be suspended by the Legislative branch.
its zeal to promote a public ethic adorned and solemnised with civic-religious overtones. It is worth mentioning, since it is often omitted, that all of this was geared in terms of rewards rather than through repressive means.

Egaña's constitutional experiment has partly been misunderstood. Notwithstanding superficial appearances, it is not conservative as has been alleged. To begin with, Isidoro Errázuriz is right when he affirms that its strong anti-authoritarianism is clearly liberal. Moreover, one should not confuse the Egaña of the 1823 Constitution with the Egaña of the end of the decade; in this text one can scarcely glimpse the subsequent "retreat" which its disenchanted author was to make later on, largely because of the rejection of the 1823 Charter, and which was to lead him to a moderate conservative stance.

Egaña in this text is far from conservative. Both the Constitution as well as the Moral Code are conceived in constructivist and voluntarist terms, thus distancing him from what one usually understands to be a traditionalist or conservative world-view. Egaña does not defend a given order, a transmitted or empirically apprehensible body of past experience;


on the contrary, he attempts to mould, through laws, a new order. The basic aim which orientates his thinking is to "transform laws into customs and customs into civic and moral virtues." In other words, he proceeds from rationalist principles to facts, from systematic a priori designs to reality. Moreover, no classic republican principle is absent from his philosophy, including the idea of popular sovereignty. The Constitution is not monarchical; it might be strongly restrictive as to political participation, as well as aristocratic and elitist, but all this --as we have seen-- seldom jars with a liberal-republican stand proper to the period in question. The almost priggish moralism which distinguishes the Constitution and the Code, is consistent with the classical tradition of civic republicanism; it is linked to Montesquieu, Rousseau, the Jacobin, Napoleonic and Freemason legacy, and with analogous contemporary Bolivarian experiments. There is certainly a strong respect for religion, but this attitude of Egaña's is connected more with regalist than "integrist" currents. In sum.

39 Article 249 of the Constitution. See also J. EGAÑA, Escritos Políticos, Morales, Poéticos y Filosóficos, V, Código Moral (Burdeos 1836).

40 For instance, it is hardly conservative --given the Chilean context of the times-- Egaña's view of an ideal society conformed by small rural property owners. See his Ocio Filosóficos in (1836) IV, p 56.

there are no signs which might point to a bias in favour of a possible restoration.

The literature often insists on the supposedly utopian character of the Constitution, which on the whole is correct; nevertheless, this point needs to be qualified. One should not confuse, as Collier does, an utopian finality with an exaggerated legalist fastidiousness. The 1823 Constitution is utopian in its essentials. It aspires to transcend the given order of things --the colonial order-- which it aims to destroy at least partially, so as to move on to a new order: the republican. In this the 1823 Constitution is nothing but a re-editing of the liberal-republican project which is in itself utopian, as we have already argued in Chapter VII. It is also true that Egaha resorts in this text to an imaginative museum-like legal fetishism --the Greek, Roman and including Oriental allusions are constant--, and seems to be hallucinated by an excessive faith in laws, but these instrumental supports are not in themselves especially utopian as commonly thought; rather, they denounce a naïve and mechanistic legal idealism.

The ulterior aims pursued by this Constitution are neither anachronistic nor eccentric, whereas the instrumental apparatus tends to be both. And it is here where Egaha departs from the Chilean political praxis of his time. So far, it had


43 We hereby follow the definition given by K. MANNHEIM in Ideology and Utopia (London 1979) p 173.
been possible to conciliate pragmatic means with revolutionary ideological propositions. However, Egaña in 1823 was momentarily to distance himself and his Constitution from this strategy. He stubbornly insists on a rigid constitutional dirigisme to put an end to a personalist dirigisme which had already failed and had been discarded. He seems to have forgotten that the country possessed a traditional élite, not a bureaucratic mandarinate. He also fails to recognise the need for a more tempered military personalism whose function was to arbitrate, the most crucial political achievement which had emerged after O'Higgins's abdication.

The 1823 constitutional experiment failed, therefore, because it did not take into consideration the more recent political achievements and did not formulate a legal-constitutional proposal congruent with the political maturity and moderation already acquired. What failed were the operational dirigiste assumptions and implications of this constitutionalism and its aptitude to present itself in pragmatic terms, not its utopian finality.

The failure of the Constitution of 1823 and the increasing autonomous power of the provinces gave the chance to try out a new constitutional formula. To a large degree, this attempt would be the antithesis of the previous one, just as Egaña's Constitution had been a reaction to the kind of constitutionalism which had been tried during the O'Higgins administration. The type of relation which prevailed between
these constitutional experiments was dialectical. They emerged as corrections of the errors incurred in the preceding proposition without capitalising on the already obtained achievements.

In contrast to the Constitution of 1823, the new constitutional order tried between 1825 and 1827 was characterised, initially at least, by its casuistic origin and by its more realistic down-to-earth political pretensions. The increasing ascendancy of the provincial assemblies and the incapacity to establish a unitary governmental order fostered several partial laws, not a complete constitutional text, along federalist constitutional schemes.44

Federalism was not entirely novel in Chile. There were significant antecedents which partly justified it. During the Patria Vieja regional sentiment had been a gravitating political factor. Dissensions between Concepción and Santiago had already appeared in 1811; they had become worse during Carrera’s administrations; and they had not been altogether alien to the support shown to the Viceroy of Perú during the war. Later on, O’Higgins’s fall, owed in part to Concepción and

44 The 1826 Congress authorised the establishment of a federal system in the country, and appointed a commission in charge of writing out a new constitutional project; this project was never put into effect. Nevertheless, a series of anticipatory laws were approved which dealt with various matters: division of the country into 8 provinces endowed with provincial assemblies and an intendant designated by the municipalities; popular election of district or departmental governors; popular election of local cabildos; and popular election of parish priests. As far as this last election was concerned, it sufficed to know how to read and write. I. ERRAZURIZ (1935) p 87.
Coquimbo's opposition, was to demonstrate once again that regional sentiment was a latent factor, potentially powerful. Hence, it was a recurrent matter in doctrinal discussion; it had actually achieved constitutional acknowledgement in the Acta de Unión de las Provincias (March 1823). It is true that time and time again regionalism was surpassed; it was never sufficiently autonomous as a political force, appearing only in critical conjunctural situations. All in all though, regional sentiment had never been a negligible force, and far less so towards 1824 when it became a source of renewed interest and worry.

The federalism of the 1820s, though, was a phenomenon far more complex than the earlier regionalism. It was based on existing political reality, provincial assemblies which had started to govern the regions in 1825; and it counted on at least the tolerance if not the outright sympathy of Freire and his intendant-governors. Actually, Pinto—who was to subsequently put an end to the federalist experiment—supported it while he was Intendant of Coquimbo. Federalism was therefore not a mere exercise in constitutional speculation. Initially, it served pragmatic aims on the part of the Executive pretending thus to balance out the political equilibrium between the oligarchy of Santiago and military power. In turn, it was an attractive option for civilian sectors which saw in it the materialisation of liberal postulates contrary to any sort of strong government.

45 I. ERRAZURIZ (1935) p 121.
Federalism was not only a political expedient; it also had a legal-doctrinal dimension. It pretended to gather practices already in effect and give them constitutional form. In this sense the Federal Laws depart from the type of speculative rationalist constitutionalism which characterised the 1823 text. They differ also from the earlier experiment in so far as they do not pretend to be a global constitutional solution. In Chile there would be no more holistic propositions after Egaña's failed attempt.

The fragmentary character of the Federal Laws was to contribute though to their own eventual failure. On the whole, these laws referred only to one aspect, regional concerns, leaving aside other matters undoubtedly far more important, for example the role assigned to the Executive within the constitutional order. Federalism shared with all the liberal currents of the period, peluconismo included, a pronounced indecisiveness towards the Executive. In general, it showed itself opposed to strong Executive rule, but this did not prevent it from requiring backing from the latter whenever it tried to advance its own projects and ideas. Federalists took part in attempts, both constitutional as well as subversive, to end the existing arbitral regime; in the long run though they always ended up accommodating and submitting themselves to the political schemes dictated by Freire. Federalism's luck almost always

46 On the anti-Executive stance of the Federalists, see BARROS ARANA (1897) XV, p 146; I. ERRAZURIZ (1935) pp 41, 84-85, 111.
depended on the support it gathered from the prevailing arbitral order. This, in addition to making it fall into contradiction, brought about its demise. It lessened its autonomy, and did not free it from political contingency. It prevented it from moulding its project into an objective constitutional framework, reducing it finally into a mere political tent subservient to the contingent political equilibrium. Such was the case, that when Pinto assumed power and repealed the Federal Laws—in part because the situation called for a more centralised authority, and partly because the federalist enthusiasm had waned—the resulting federalist apostasy was devastating; a majority of its former supporters joined the centralising reaction and the orthodox faith lingered only amongst a few acolytes captained by J. M. Infante.

47 We have already mentioned the de facto support given to Federalism by the intendant-governors, such as Pinto in Coquimbo, previous acceptance by Freire. It is worth mentioning also that the first step towards the setting-up of a federal system—the decree that divided the country into 8 provinces—emanated from a Consejo Directorial to which Freire had delegated his authority. In effect, the power that Federalism was able to achieve was to a large degree contingent and political. The attempts of o'higginistas and pelucones to depose Freire and bring back from Perú the old dictator (the Sánchez Alfaro mutiny, October 1825; the Chiloé mutiny, May 1826) were rejected by the Federalist faction allowing it thus closer ties with Freire. Finally, we should mention that in the one occasion the Federalist faction came close to lead a coup d'état and take-over the government (the Campino mutiny, January 1827), the majority of its members rejected the possibility preferring to ally themselves with the legitimist current which called once again Freire to the first magistrature. See I. ERRAZURIZ (1935) pp 72-78, 84-85.

48 Concerning Infante, see: D. SANTA MARÍA, Vida de Don José Miguel Infante (Santiago 1902).
If initially federalism was a posture which reflected and was backed by political reality, it soon came to depend on the support given to it by the Executive, ending up entrenched in a rigid doctrinal formula without future consequences, which adhered to the winning side in 1829. In sum, after the programmatic totalising constitutionalism of 1823 followed a piecemeal constitutionalism, partial in its constitutional reach and in its political support. All in all, though, even if both propositions opposed each other, they both were to fail for purely political reasons. The same was to occur with the fourth constitutional attempt, the 1828 Constitution.

This last attempt was to imply a double failure. In the first place, because the Constitution of 1828 was unable to impose itself notwithstanding its greater technical perfection. And in the second place, because it left untouched the substantial errors which had helped abort the earlier experiments.

That the Constitution of 1828 was a legally perfected text in comparison to earlier charters is a judgement unanimously shared. It covered all the matters which traditionally belong to constitutions without falling into extreme regulatory minutiae. It defined and balanced better the scope assigned to each of the three branches of government. It expanded and refined the catalogue of constitutional rights. It corrected

49 See F. ERRAZURIZ (1861); I. ERRAZURIZ (1935) pp 125ff; VERDUGO MARINKOVIC (1976) pp 139-141; ROLDAN (1917) p 98; GALDAMES (1925) p 767; HEISE (1978) p 186.
previous excesses; it maintained a unitary but decentralized organisation, a compromise with the last federalist remains still in existence. It allowed for its own reform. Republicanism was fully accepted, and several aspects of this ideology were furthered. The Constitution expanded suffrage rights considerably, and abolished entails, a measure subject to debate ever since the O'Higgins administration. It was not a specially complicated constitution, except when it referred to elections, a mechanism perhaps contemplated all too frequently. In the whole, it corrected past constitutions while expressing itself in even more programmatic terms, a basic requirement for the constitutionalism of the period, which was not to be absent even in the 1833 Constitution. In sum, for the standards of the times it was an impeccable text, and it received general acceptance.

It failed though in what we have identified as the central problem which required solution: to express legally a relatively successful political praxis, wherein political arbitration fell on the executive-military power. In this, the

50 The expansion of suffrage was due basically to Article 7 of the Constitution which contemplated the right to vote through the enrollment in militias; this was to be a source of all kinds of official abuses.

51 There is wide consensus that the Constitution of 1833 was a reform of the 1828 Constitution. According to Heise, the former "admits 50% of the institutions regulated in the Fundamental Charter of 1828"; HEISE (1978) p 190. The programmatic character of the 1833 Constitution is argued by HEISE (1978) on pp 213-223, and by the same author in Historia de Chile, El Período Parlamentario: 1861-1925 (Santiago 1974) I, Chapters 1 and 2, pp 11-35.
1828 Constitution lacked sufficient pragmatism. It continued to fall back on mere legal voluntarism—blind faith in the power of laws to mould reality—thought to be enough to face extreme situations. It did not contemplate constitutional safeguards and protections capable of confronting contingencies which might put at peril the constitutional system itself. It strengthened the Executive solely in its legislative role, not in its function as political conductor.\(^52\) It did not grant it extraordinary faculties nor did it foresee states of exception. It placed itself only in the theoretical situation wherein everyone was to honour the permitted legal channels. In other words, it simply obviated the prevailing political system. It radicalised the anti-Executive bias, not providing the government with moderating legal instruments of an authoritarian but constitutional sort, as the Constitution of 1833 was to introduce.\(^53\) It insisted too strongly on principles, forgetting to reinforce the operational side of politics, as would become evident during the 1829 crisis.

In earlier circumstances this defect would not have

\(^{52}\) HEISE (1978) p 187.

\(^{53}\) Part of the reason which explains the enormous institutional stability which characterises the period of the 1830s to the 1870s lies in the fact that the Constitution of 1833 granted wide faculties to the President of the Republic. Between May 1833 when the Constitution came into force and September 1861, the state of siege was decreed in three opportunities—1840, 1846 and 1858—while the extraordinary faculties operated in 1833, 1836, 1837 and 1838, and from 1851 to 1853, and once again between 1859 and 1861. VILLALOBOS et al (1974) III, p 545.
been mortal. Previous liberal-oligarchic governments had always maintained ambivalent attitudes towards possible military interventions. But even if prevailing constitutional norms abstained from regulating the dictatorial expedient for critical situations, this never prevented the recourse to dictatorship as final solution when circumstances so advised it. The difference with earlier cases was that on the one occasion in which the 1828 Charter was put to test --the 1829 crisis-- not only did the Constitution not contemplate this by now traditional recourse, but also Pinto, who was after all the unquestioned military leader, simply inhibited himself from acting dictatorially. To the intrinsic insufficiency of the Constitution, would be added a paralysis of political will on the part of those who ought to have mediated once again. The Constitution failed for lack of foresight; the regime self-destructed on account of its leaders' negligence and inaction.
The crisis provoked by the election of Vice-President in 1829 put an end to the oligarchic-military regime begun in 1823 and opened-up a new chapter in the political history of Chile. It did not put an end to the liberal-republican order that emerged out of the crisis of legitimacy which affected the entire Spanish empire, but it did distance the country from the period of Independence. In 1829 the period of Independence came to a close, but it did not alter the process of political modernisation in which direction it was to continue to advance.

The events which produced the crisis followed each other vertiginously. The Constitution of 1828 was promulgated in August of that same year. In May 1829 elections of cabildos, provincial assemblies, electors for President and Vice President, deputies and senators took place. The faction linked to the incumbent administration predominated. The subsequent nomination and election of President did not produce discussion; Francisco Antonio Pinto, until then interim Vice President, was elected by absolute majority. The designation of the new Vice-President, though, provoked tension. According to the Constitution, this

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54 Concerning the 1829 crisis and its consequences, see: D. BARROS ARANA, XV (1897) and XVI (1902); F. ERRAZURIZ (1861); I. ERRAZURIZ (1935) Chapters 5 and 6; EDWARDS (1943) and EDWARDS (1927); COLLIER (1967) Chapter 10; HEISE (1978) pp 191 ff; CAMPOS HARRETT (1933) pp 146 ff; B. VICUNA MACKENNA, Don Diego Fortales (Valparaíso 1863); R. SOTOMAYOR VALDES, Historia de Chile Bajo el Gobierno del General Don Joaquín Prieto (1900) I; VILLALOBOS (1989).
office was to be filled from amongst the candidacies which obtained the immediately following majorities. The congressional chambers, where the adherents of the administration had the upper hand, freely interpreted the electoral constitutional norms and elected by internal vote the third relative plurality corresponding to Joaquín Vicuña, officialist candidate, passing over Francisco Ruiz-Tagle and José Joaquín Prieto, opposition candidates who had obtained considerably higher numbers of votes. The Vice-Presidential appointment was thought crucial because it was known that Pinto, initially unwilling to participate in the elections, would probably resign once chosen for the post.55

Given the adamant reaction produced by the Congressional designation --in which accusations of abuse in the May elections were directed at the government faction-- Pinto felt obliged to assume the post of President (19 October 1829).56) Previous to this, the provincial assemblies of Concepción and Maule had disowned the proclamations of President and Vice-President, an attitude which was to be supported moreover by the military chiefs stationed in the south led by J. J. Prieto. Pinto urged Congress to dissolve itself and to call for new elections. His request, though, was rejected causing his expected departure from the scene (2 November).


56 On the electoral abuses committed during the Pinto administration, see: ZAPIOLA (1945) pp 255-260; DONOSO (1975), pp 331, 332.
After Pinto's withdrawal both sides asked for help from Freire, then retired, so that he could mediate in the conflict. But his slightly ambivalent attempts at solution failed. Either because the veteran general showed an initial preference for the revolutionary side, or because he did not succeed in uniting under one command the southern army at the gates of Santiago and the government forces, the fact is that Freire was unable to impose himself and fulfill the role of arbiter which he had so successfully performed in the past. Last minute difficulties with the revolutionaries led him to join the official side. The conflict was settled on the field of battle in Lircay (17 April 1830), between Freire who commanded the "constitutionalist" army and Prieto in charge of the rebel forces. Prieto's victory left open the way to proceed to structure a new governmental order.

From the very beginning, the 1829 crisis differed from earlier contingent political adjustments. Three entirely new factors, which sprung up during the crisis, imprinted on it a unique profile: an accentuated political fragmentation, legitimist pretensions invoked by both sides, and a divided military force.

The 1829 crisis was, undoubtedly, the first political conflict which seriously threatened to divide the Chilean elite. Previous situations hardly compare in this sense, neither the break with Spain, which was a potentially divisive affair but in which the elite had been basically a spectator at most reflective, reactive and pragmatic; nor the conflicts produced
during the Patria Vieja —transitory and easily resolved by negotiations--; nor the overthrow of O'Higgins which had the unanimous approval of the ruling group; nor the periodic imposition of dictatorships which was the hallmark of Freire. In all these cases the danger of division was less than in 1829. This time there preceded a growing political factionalism resolved only by setting up a powerful élite alliance.

In 1829 two blocs opposed each other. On the one hand there was an officialist sector in possession of government, with majorities in Congress and in other representative bodies thanks to its electoral control, backed also by the highest army officers. It is inexact to denominate this bloc liberal or pipiolos: "liberals", in a strict and party-line sense of the word, and pipiolos figured prominently also in the opposition ranks. We are dealing here rather with a sector favourably disposed towards the Pinto administration, which bases its power more and more on the apparatus of government, especially on its electoral machinery. On the other hand, we find a wide and heterogenous opposition coalition, which during the evolution of the crisis became increasingly coherent. In this other bloc the so called pelucon group, the most traditional and aristocratic sector of the élite, was prominent; the o'higginistas, a small but powerful faction particularly strong among high-ranking military officers stationed in the south, and in influential civilian sectors of Concepción; the federalist faction, which had fallen out of government; numerous liberals unhappy with the
administration, amongst whom stood-out the estanquero nucleus, originally moderate liberals who on account of the abolition of the Estanco had joined the opposition. One should bear in mind that this coalition as it came together minimised the risk of an internal division within the élite. This cohesion was helped by a clear and decided leadership which the government lacked; the alliance was presided over by Rodriguez de Aldea, Portales and Prieto. The coalition also had in its favour considerable previous experience in polemical journalism and a refined talent for conspiracy.

Another crucial aspect of the crisis deals with the question of political legitimacy, not with that of the legitimating order per se, a problem already resolved, but rather with the competing legitimacy of the forces at play. This aspect had not been a factor in earlier conflicts; now it became a factor on which they had to build their support, as in recent years the principle of legality had come to the fore. In 1829

57 On the components and nature of the opposition alliance, see: J. NUNEZ RIUS, "Estado, Crisis de Hegemonia y Guerra en Chile (1830-1841) in Andes, IV, No. 6, (1987) pp 137-189.

this principle assumed a more ideological than legalistic role, with different consequences for each one of the two sides.

In 1829 neither side questioned the Constitution. Both spoke out in its favour. In other words, both sides adopted legitimist stances; both sides tried to present arguments on their own behalf to disqualify the other in this respect. As far as the oficialistas were concerned, their side personified constitutional government, in addition to having the support of most of the representative bodies. In turn, the opposing alliance invoked the systematic official abuses in the elections, in addition to pointing to its broad majority support from the different political currents.

The disparity between the two sides with respect to the principle of legitimacy did not reside, therefore, in the merits of their justifications, in the titularity of legitimacy, so much as in the use of legitimism as an ideological force. In the long run, legitimism was to be the only support the officialist side had on its behalf, together with the "constitutionalist" military force. From the very beginning of the crisis, the government showed itself obsessed by an excessive legalistic rigour in the absence of other arguments. There was in all this a certain naïveté, proper to voluntarist liberal legal thinking. At times one gets the impression that the authorities thought that constitutional legitimacy sufficed by itself in order to command respect, not unlike what at other times had been a constant feature, namely the idea that political conduct could be moulded
successfully by laws. This attitude was hinted at in Pinto’s paralysing neutrality when he rejected the role which experience dictated and advised --to be the political conductor and arbiter-- insisting instead in the efficacy of the prescribed constitutional mechanisms at hand. This same attitude seems to have inspired the officialist defence during the evolution of the crisis. The government to which Pinto delegated his authority may have had to flee from Santiago, find asylum in Valparaiso and end up in Coquimbo, however it insisted time and time again that it embodied the established constitutional order. Not unlike Pinto, this punctilious and self-righteous attitude did not gain it any real solid support.

In the meantime, on the opposing side legitimism acquired a greater balance. It was both a necessary and honest weapon to oppose abuses, but it was also a clever political ploy that cloaked its leadership’s strong desire to capture power. In the case of the oficialistas, legitimism operated as an 'illusion', which tried to make everyone believe in its strength when in fact it lacked solid support.

The other important element in the crisis was the collapse of military unity. Before 1829 the army had always acted as a cohesive body and the hierarchies of command were respected; political-military arbitration depended on this. While General Pinto remained in power nothing presaged a change. Not even the proclamation of two military candidacies in 1829 -- Pinto’s and Prieto’s -- foretold subsequent military division.
Prieto's candidacy permitted — in the light of the impending resignation of Pinto — to leave the commander-in-chief of the southern forces as the virtual chief capable of arbitrating a difficult conjuncture through the election. It was the decision of Pinto to resign without imposing himself on Congress — ratifying thus the official intention not to compromise on legal principle — which was to create a vacuum of power in the military structure and would motivate the intervention of Prieto in order to exercise the arbitral role via the only possible means still available: armed force. This led to the military breakdown. Prieto seemed to be looking for revenge after being defeated in the elections; this called for loyal forces which might enforce the constitutional order. Prieto in fact did not do anything else but exercise the role which the military command had always exerted, even if in this case it involved only a military faction which defended also an opposing political stance. In turn, the "constitutionalist" officers abstained

59 Until the very last moments of the 1829 election, the officialist sector backed Francisco Ruiz-Tagle as Vice-President. Ruiz-Tagle had served in the Pinto government as Finance Minister (July 1828); this official support waned only after government functionaries realised that he was more prone to the peñucón group. Prieto, in turn, had also been appointed by the Pinto administration in order to serve as chief of the southern forces (December 1828). Given the imminent resignation of Pinto, any one of these two figures or both combined — as President and Vice President — would have maintained the political alliances which had governed until then. Prieto was a key piece in order to keep the balance of forces which had prevailed until then, either by being elected Vice President or else by negotiating in case Ruiz-Tagle was elected. This possibility was discarded when the third relative plurality, that of Joaquín Vicuña, was chosen instead.
from fulfilling their traditional role shielding themselves in a position equally partisan: the officialist stance. Therefore, both were to be seen involved in the political game, but their disunity prevented them to moderate the final result.

When Freire came in to arbitrate matters it was too late. The two military blocs were too polarised. Freire at the beginning aligned with one of the two sides, later he pretended to represent a balance, and lastly he ended up joining the weakest bloc. He was much too ambiguous to impose a solution via military moderation.

What was then the nature of the 1829 crisis? Unfortunately, it is not easy to define it. It is a government crisis of a mixed kind, both civil and military. It does not seem to fit, though, with what one often thinks of civil war. It lacked the magnitude and the disruptive social character which these suppose; only politicians and soldiers were involved. It does not seem appropriate either to speak of a "revolution". It is true that the 1829 crisis was a break, but only on a governmental level, in the way the regime was to be structured, not in a more profound sense of how to legitimate power. Doctrine or ideology were not at issue. What changed in 1829 were the composition and weight of the different political forces, the relationships between them, and the constitutional mechanisms which henceforth would be used by the Executive to resolve political crises. In the absence of other possible categories, 1829 seems to be both a military pronunciamiento and
What brought about this crisis? Constitutional experiment in itself was not the problem, which in its essence was political not legal. The Constitution of 1828 did not generate the conflict; the government's decisions and omissions did so. The fact that the constitutional attempts of the decade of the 1820s had failed systematically had not prevented in the past a last resort to dictatorial intervention as a way out of the conflict. The latter failed in 1829, although several attempts were made during the crisis which pointed to this possible course of action. What is certain is than an excessive faith in laws made official circles forget a more politically pragmatic stance which in similar occasions in the past had been used to balance out the situation.

It is commonly asserted also, that the instability of the entire previous period --some authors even speak of anarchy-- culminated in the crisis of 1829. It is evident that there was disorder, particularly during Pinto's administration; military mutinies and cuartelazos increased. They would continue on for many years after Lircay. These mutinies were successfully put down; conspirators were punished, although with conciliatory indulgence; but at no time there was a total

60 See the general line of argument in F. ERRAZURIZ (1861).

61 Between 1831 and 1837 there were 16 attempts to overthrow the government. On the persistence of political and military instability 1829, see HEISE (1978) pp 207-213; NUMEZ Rius (1987) p 141; VILLALOBOS (1989).
collapse of authority. Disorder was at most partial. Those who pretend to see in this period a supposed "imitation of that order of things entirely South-American" exaggerate. 62

There was instability for sure, but there was also clarity as to overall aims. There were repeated expressions of moderation in the exercise of authority. On the whole, institutionalised dictatorships and low-keyed caudillimos got on well with each other. New schemes of things were tried, failed and tried again.

The factor which probably influenced most in the crisis of 1829 was the inability to incorporate in the constitutions the dictatorial recourse to meet moments of crisis. Far from wanting to fall in the same legal idealism which we have already criticised, we think that if there had not been such a stubborn anti-authoritarian bias, derived from the triumph against O'Higgins in 1823, and in the 1828 Constitution the Executive had not continued to be weakened, perhaps the political decision to intervene ex officio --the decision which failed to emerge in 1829-- would not have depended so much on the personal factor.

The 1828 Charter may have achieved a constitutionalism which was faultless on a formal level, but it continued to be conditioned by a praxis too deferential to personalist caudillos. In 1829, though, the caudillo failed, and the law was not enough.

At this stage it is a commonplace to say that 1829 was

caused by an aristocratic reaction. According to this hypothesis, during the decade of the 1820s, aristocracy lost much power; its conservatism and traditionalism distanced it from the new order which emerged after Independence. The democratising egalitarianism of O'Higgins, the growing laicism of Freire and Pinto, the abolition of its exclusive economic prerogative --enforced by the 1828 Constitution, and finally its displacement by military officers and ideologues, was to weaken it considerably. Faced by this accumulation of offences, peluconismo was to react bitterly in 1829.

The principal defect of this line of argument lies in its supposition that there existed an aristocratic nucleus separate from the rest of the ruling group. This was simply not true. From the beginning of the XVIIIth century to the period we are here examining, the élite was a unified whole. Moreover, it was always characterised by a tendency to open up socially: Chilean élite encompassed both a titled nobility and new aspiring sectors.

This overall picture did not change during the decade of the 1820s; consequently, there were no marked divisions within the ruling group. There were no contrasting courses of action.

between the different subgroups of this élite: neither in 1810, 1817, 1823 nor in the Federalist period, and less so in 1829 when a broad and heterogeneous coalition of the different political currents came into being. Furthermore, the so-called pelucones were never excluded from the exercise of power. It is true that specific policies and decisions—such as the abolition of titles and heraldic arms, the regalist outlook towards the Church, and the discussion and final abolition of entails—disturbed and produced resentment in the more traditionalist group, but it is no less true that these measures were applauded by members of the élite who ought to have felt equally offended.64 As far as these matters were concerned there was never full agreement within the élite, but this did not lessen the general coherence which characterized it. Finally, it seems slightly exaggerated and of little use to emphasize élite sectors more prone to traditionalism. At this stage, we hope to have demonstrated that a respect for tradition was consubstantial to this élite as a whole ever since the XVIIIth century, together with a certain predisposition towards what was new and modern. A balance between tradition and modernity characterized the Chilean ruling group, not its exclusive

64 The relevance which the abolition of entails supposedly had on the crisis of 1829 is often exaggerated. We know that the great entailed properties would have been maintained equally intact independently of the legal restrictions which affected them. Moreover, it is also known that during the 1820's the majority of the possessors of entails were willing to accept the end of entails; the remaining heirs, constantly threatened with testamentary suits. See BAUER (1975) pp 20-21, n63; FELSTINER (1970) pp 205-209.
adherence to one or the other of the two poles, before and after 1829.

Notwithstanding what we have just said, in 1829 there was an élite reaction, although in a narrower sense. During the 1829 crisis and by way of a broad coalition fully representative of a plural but coherent élite, the ruling group opposed a government and an exclusivist official stance. 1829 was not a conflict within the élite itself, nor was it a traditionalist, aristocratic reaction against a radical-progressive current: rather it was a rejection of a government which erected its power on electoral monopoly and which in the end threatened to exclude from politics the bulk of the ruling group as a social group, as a coherent actor defined not just politically but also socially. What was at play in 1829 was the "who" and "how" that defined élite government. Two alternatives were opposed: on the one hand the idea of an oligarchy conceived in strictly political-governmental terms, and on the other the traditional conception of an oligarchic élite conceived in broad social terms, amongst which politics was at most one of the factors. In 1829 the élite reacted, but it reacted to preserve its right to continue defining the state.

In our opinion, what produced the conflict of 1829 was a change in the structure of power --factionalism-- and the need to accommodate the mechanisms of political arbitration to this new panorama of contending forces, without altering the political and social coherence of the élite. Political division
was a threat to the ruling group, whose actions had been consensual thus far, threat which became greater in the midst of a government which entertained exclusivist pretensions. In turn, the arbitrating role of the military force --as became evident during 1829-- had ended in complete exhaustion. Furthermore, it seemed contradictory to continue affirming a legal anti-Executive and anti-authoritarian fundamentalism, while still potentially depending on personalist military caudillismo. In an atmosphere more and more divided, this ambivalence vis-à-vis military arbitration could be a source of possible abuse by one or other of the factions, threatening to destabilise the prevailing balanced oligarchic-military system. This system was founded on a consensual élite and on a pyramidal military command. If we were to add to all this the fact that the military leadership which had co-governed Chile since 1823 manifested growing doubts and lacked enough will to exercise its traditional role, shielding itself in partisan legalisms favourable only to the government in office, obviously it was about time to start re-thinking the existing governmental system.

It is precisely this which began to be done in 1829. In the first place, a wide political consensus was rebuilt as reflected in the victorious coalition that took over the government. Whatever may have been the fate of this coalition after 1829 --some authors believe that Portales and his close associates displaced from the administration the other members of this alliance--65 what is certain is that the bulk of the élite

continued backing, or at least tolerating, the type of authoritarian government which emerged after Lircay. It would take many years before an opposition was to appear attempting to soften authoritarianism. This began to occur only during the decade of the 1840s. This opposition originated right within the government and its existence was due to the conciliatory and reformist spirit instigated by this same government. The political stability consolidated during Prieto’s administration (1831-1841) gradually allowed a loyal opposition engendered from the administration’s rank and file, which threatened to destabilise the system only towards the end of Manuel Bulnes’s presidential tenure (1841-1851).66

In the second place, the regime born in Lircay not only attracted wide support within the élite, it also reduced considerably the military’s political power. Defeated "constitutionalist" officers were discharged and reprimanded, despite the fact that they had been the country’s most prestigious military leaders; to a large degree it was they who had brought about Independence and the subsequent political order. A powerful paramilitary force under local civilians, the Guardias Civicas, was created in order to dissuade any recurrence of militarism.67 Moreover, the military presence in government

66 See D. BARROS ARANA, Un Decenio de la Historia de Chile, 1841-1851 (1905-1906, Santiago 1913).

67 The Civic Guards came to have 25,000 men; SOTOMAYOR VALDES (1900) I,p 57. On this subject, see also R. HERNANDEZ FONCE, "La Guardia Nacional de Chile. Apuntes sobre su Origen y Organizaciones, 1808-1848", Historia XIX (1984), pp 53-115.
was subject to negotiation, and incorporated politically into the system. During the following two decades the administration was presided over by two generals, related by direct family ties, one of them linked by marriage with Pinto, and both originally from the southern zone of the country, neutralising thus traditional regional disaffection. All in all though, no trace of military hegemony within government was to be accepted; Portales first, then Rengifo, Montt and Varas --all four civilians-- were to be the true stewards of power until 1860.(68)

In the third place, after 1829 the main problem which had weakened the previous oligarchic-military equilibrium, made it extremely fragile and had sparked the crisis, was for the first time adequately faced. The top leadership presided over by Portales was fully determined to give priority to the problem of order, but channelled and administered institutionally, not de facto as had occurred until then. Government was reorientated to more pragmatic and not merely legalistic ends. Dictatorship was re-established but backed up by an authoritarian legal base --the 1833 Constitution-- which reinforced the Executive branch with extraordinarily efficient emergency attributions. The intention behind this was to avoid autocratic personalisms --

68 M. Rengifo (1793-1846): the main minister of Finance in the mid-century and the artificer of the conciliatory negotiations which were to bring M. Bulnes in 1841 to power. M. Montt (1809-1880): important minister during Bulnes's administration, and President (1851-1861). A. Varas (1817-1886): influential minister in the Montt administration; throughout his political career he was associated to the figure of Montt, pre-candidate to the presidency in 1861.
political taboo after 1823— as well as de facto personalisms, the latter having been shown to fail in 1829. Starting in 1829, the until then non-institutionalised oligarchic-military equilibrium was to be perfected, becoming from now on a legalised oligarchic-dictatorial equilibrium.69

These new supports would continue to be legitimated according to liberal-republican terms. Pseudo-monarchical attempts were rejected.70 Republican aspirations were maintained intact. The constitutional trajectory so far trodden was to experiment at most reforms; the programmatic character we have seen in the previous constitutions, persisted in the 1833 Charter. Liberal utopianism did not die out. 1829 did not bring about a restoration; it did not originate a "colonial reaction".71 What happened was that it put an end to a period of trial and error in search of a viable governmental formula, the process begun immediately after Independence. It brought about also a partial replacement of the Chilean political leadership.

69 See JOCELYN-HOLT (1989-1990). In this article we argue that Portales, until his death in 1837, was basically a dictator in the traditional and classic sense of the word, who adhered though to a liberal legitimating order. After 1837, and until 1861, there operated a system wherein the principle of a strong executive authority was of paramount importance. Notwithstanding the latter, at the same time there were signs —equally clear— which pretended to limit this political power. These two processes are not contradictory nor sequential, but rather complementary and parallel.

70 See the Voto Particular of M. Egaña for the constituent commission of the Constitution of 1833, in SCL XXI, p 70.

71 See JOCELYN-HOLT (1990 b), Chapter 1. See also infra Chapter X.
Prominent figures who had emerged during the critical conjuncture of Independence and who owed their prestige to their protagonism therein, were left behind. New figures with little or no connections with this process stormed in and took the lead.72

The end of the decade of the 1820s announced a new stage in liberal consolidation, linked to the earlier one but at the same time different. In this new stage Chile was to continue advancing in the path of modernity which had been first entered in the XVIIIth century and had been ratified during Independence. All in all though, it started to distance itself more and more from its independent "origins". It was to achieve a new regime of government, more institutionalised and solid, derived from previous experiments, perfected and less dependent on the protagonists of Independence. It was to maintain the same order of liberal-republican legitimacy, with the same degree of pragmatic realism which had permitted to choose this system in the first years after 1810. There would continue to co-exist libertarian aims and authoritarian means, utopianism and realism, reformism and tradition. Finally, and perhaps the single most important aspect, the country was to continue to be ruled by a

72 Figures such as Freire, Pinto, J. M. Infante and Rodriguez Aldea ceased to be important, while other politicians and public men achieved prominence, for instance: Portales, Rengifo, A. Bello, M. A. Tocornal, M. C. Vial, M. Montt, A. Varas, J. J. Pérez, all of whom had no previous protagonism during Independence. Other figures persist, for instance M. Egaña, J. M. de la Cruz, M. J. Gandarillas, D. J. Benavente, J. Tocornal, J. J. Prieto, M. Bulnes and J. F. Meneses.
traditional élite, a bridge between the old and the new, a stable and non-static axis, catalyst of continuity and change in XIXth century Chile.

* * *

The period 1817-1829 saw the consolidation of the new liberal-republican legitimating order, but it failed to solidify a viable governmental formula for the new republic. Three different strategies were tried in this last respect: personalist authoritarianism, a balance between civil and military power, and various constitutional experiments. Even though they assured a growing institutionalisation of politics, these strategies did not capitalise on a political praxis which had proven to be relatively successful involving the two most powerful forces of the period: the arbitral military leadership and the civilian ruling group. This became evident in 1829 when the government in power insisted on a merely legalistic solution to the crisis ignoring thus the earlier proven dictatorial recourse for resolving contingent conflicts. In the end, though, the 1829 crisis was overcome thanks to the continuous unity shown by the élite and by the incorporation of authoritarian measures into the constitutional order. Consequently, the political order which was to follow from 1829-1860 was to be a continuation and partial correction of the political trajectory of the preceding period.
CHAPTER IX

CHANGE TOWARDS MODERNITY

So far our attention has been centred preferably on the political transformations and consequences of Independence. These were admittedly the most visible and pronounced effects, but not the only ones. In reality, Independence became a part of a more profound process of change which preceded it and which was to continue far beyond the political emancipation from Spain. Independence strengthened an earlier inclination towards change which had begun to take root in Chile with Bourbon reformism. It gave this process a national orientation which it had lacked before, and in the long run allowed the basis to be laid for a more thoroughly modern society. However, Independence did not fully modernise the country, nor society as a whole, although this was accepted as a future possibility in part because of Independence. In so far as change was fundamentally political, managed by a modernising but also traditional élite, the results achieved were inconclusive, but no less revolutionary.

A Tradition of Change

Independence did not introduce change, rather, it reiterated and ratified it. Before 1810 there already existed in
Chile a favourable predisposition towards what was modern as a guiding political criterion, dating back to Bourbon reformism.

The last great period of Spanish domination, the XVIIIth century, hardly fits the image of an immobile, conservative and refractory power at the helm, an image created after Independence for purely legitimating purposes. As far as the Chilean case is concerned this image is considerably more distorting. Spain implemented initiatives which turned out to be highly beneficial to the country. As already seen, Bourbon reformism did not awaken reactions against the instruments introduced by the Crown. Notwithstanding direct attacks these inflicted on its interests, the élite opted for a strategy of transaction and co-optation. It ended up accepting the influences of the new modernising spirit. The élite profited from all this; thanks to reformism, the élite consolidated itself as a ruling group becoming wealthier and more powerful. From the end of the century and more so towards the last days of Spanish dominion, it requested the Crown time and time again to continue furthering the reforms. By that time, though, the government in Madrid had lost faith in its own project and could not satisfy the rising expectations and demands. The so-called Spanish recalcitrance in the face of change corresponded only to the last thirty years, not to the whole period.

The most transcendental consequence of the modernising project was the acceptance on the part of the élite of the central role which the state was to have from then on. The élite
not only accepted the defining elements of this state — its interventionist and dirigiste character — but it also became actively incorporated in its working, taking advantage of the various means at its disposal tolerated by the Bourbon administration. During the XVIIIth century, the ruling group ceased to restrict itself to civil society, the rural and extra-legal world which had become its natural habitat since the XVIIth century, and demonstrated its willingness to govern the country side by side with peninsular authorities. It recognised that there had been a change in the dynamic of society; that the state had become the new agent of power. Hence, if the ruling group began by tolerating the greatest political change of the century, in the long run it ended up using this change for its own increasingly hegemonic aims.

The change produced during the XVIIIth century was not merely superstructural or political. There are clear signs — already alluded to — which point to wider transformations. The demographic growth of the century prior to 1810 is noticeable; aside from this, the country had become increasingly homogeneous from a racial point of view. There had been an urban resurgence, even though society on the whole continued being rural. All the same the dynamic had ceased to be the agricultural world as it had been throughout the previous century. A substantial outward expansion in commerce together with a steady growth of agriculture and mining had taken place. Lastly, a slow evolving identification with the natural living
surroundings—a vague and predominantly affectionate sentiment which confirms the local roots on the creole world-view—had begun.

Significantly, the economic and social transformations which came to the fore during the XVIIIth century did not threaten the élite. This was due to a series of élite characteristics which had crystallised during this same period and which were to neutralise the potentially disquieting effects of these innovations. If the élite had not possessed the means which were to assure it a strong social control over the bulk of the population, which in fact it had thanks to inquilinaje; if there had been a greater racial plurality; if élite economic interests had been less varied; if the internal coherence of the ruling group, achieved through clannishness, had been weaker; if its links with the rural and urban world had not struck a balance; and finally, if regionalism within Chile had been formulated in more localist terms and had effectively disputed the hegemony of Santiago—then, the changes introduced during the XVIIIth century most probably would have reduced élite supremacy and inclined it to a more refractory position.

However, the very opposite occurred. The élite profited from these changes and reinforced its power. The supply of labour increased just in time when agriculture needed to expand. The predominantly rural structure of the economy was not greatly affected either by urbanisation or commercial expansion. Both phenomena went hand in hand with the maintenance of a
seigneurial rural order which did not hinder growth. The increasing homogeneity of the population did not upset the prevailing stratification: the élite was able to distinguish itself from the rest of the population by boasting an aristocratic exclusivity, which did not prevent the renovation of its ranks through the acceptance of new immigrant groups. And lastly, regional conscience was of enormous utility to the élite: thanks to it, the ruling group was able to resort to a more collective source of identity in order to legitimate its aspirations to leadership.

There was change during the XVIIIth century, and to a large measure it was autonomous. The élite would not have been so assertive in its acceptance and exploitation of these transformations, if it had not become previously convinced that these could be controlled. Parallel to this, Bourbon reformism was to provide the principal means of control to be used, this being none other than a conception of the state as a channel for directing social processes.

That the Bourbon state had this character, and thus was at first tolerated and later on accepted by the ruling group, even if it sometimes went against élite interests, should not be subject to doubt. It was a *dirigiste* and interventionist state, "architectonic" and rationalist in its aims, imbued with an *ethos* of progress which orientated its goals. It concentrated an extraordinary amount of power by requiring and compelling all institutionalised forces to act within its sphere and accept its
working parameters: all those forces which might reject the new order were, for the same reason, sidelined and discriminated against. This state provided also an enlightened conceptual framework capable of diagnosing and modelling reality. It conceived itself in functionalist and utilitarian terms—not ethical nor based in an immanentist-natural conception—allowing thus a greater flexibility and moral neutrality which could be taken advantage of politically by everyone who was willing to accept the world-view implicit in this new order of things. Lastly, this modernising state offered progress without revolution, a voluntarist reformism which did not pretend to alter the social order. Overall, Bourbon reformism introduced a variety of instruments destined to increase the influence of those who govern.

From the moment the élite made this conception of state its own and was willing to work within its limits, the central problem it was to face during the critical conjuncture, when the monarchy suddenly collapsed, was already mid way to being resolved. The monarchy fell, but the state remained, and the élite was part of it. At most what was to occur was a transfer of the exercise of total power: its accumulation and concentration were already facts. What remained to be done was to legitimate state power once again, but only partially. It sufficed to accommodate it to pre-existing enlightened parameters capable of filling the void left by monarchy. Republicanism was thus the adequate solution as far as this world-view was
concerned.

Just the same, the vacuum produced by the disappearance of monarchy was significant. There remained the problem of achieving a viable government. The monarchy fell accidentally and easily; its substitution, though, was more problematic. Admittedly, an enlightened conception of state still lingered; and it was easy to resort to republicanism so as to justify the legitimacy of those who held power; but none of these two components in the political equation, either separately or combined, necessarily assured respect for the option chosen after 1810. The maintenance of the modernising colonial legacy --the conception of state-- and the appropriation of the new modern legitimating order --the republican paradigm-- confirmed a political-ideological aim but did not guarantee governmental success.

What enabled Chile, then, to achieve a favourable way out of the conjuncture, thus resolving the political-governmental problem, and why elsewhere in Spanish America similar results did not take place? The historical problem alluded to in the second question requires an extensive discussion which obviously we cannot address here with the depth and detail it merits. However, an overall comparison highlights several aspects of the Chilean case. If we bear in mind the cases of Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela and Cuba --to mention only four examples-- we see that in these cases, in general, either there was an absence of certain elements which were present in Chile, or simply an
adequate combination of the different factors at play somehow did not crystallise.

In Chile the élite at no moment divided itself internally; only in 1829 did it run a serious risk in that sense, but that threat was overcome. The absence of divisive economic and regionalist motives made it relatively easy to arrive at an intra-élite unity in situations of crisis, while maintaining it afterwards. The notion of a strong and centralised state was to persist without major problems well beyond 1810. It was not necessary to resort to charismatic praetorianism as the sole alternative of political arbitration; hints of this kind of government existed but strongly counterweighed by élite coherence. Republicanism was fully accepted from very early on and at no time was it necessary to try out or seriously contemplate possible "restorations". There was no need to make concessions to ethnic groups nor was it imperative to incorporate them into the contingent political game, having to suffer later on debilitating consequences for this; in Chile the ethnic threat was never a danger during Independence.1 Lastly, there are no signs of conscious

1 During the period of Independence, Indians were on the whole ambivalent; they backed the royalists as much as the patriots. On the role played by the Indians in this period and their relations with pro-Independence forces, see: M. SEGALL, Las Luchas de Clases en las Primeras Décadas de la República de Chile (1962) pp 6-7; DOMINGUEZ (1985) pp 42-45, 182-185, 221-222; T. GUEVARA, "Los Araucanos en la Revolución de la Independencia", AUCH CXXVII (1910); AMUNATEGUI (1871) II, Chapter 9; COLLIER (1967) pp 212-217, 369-371; S. VILLALOBOS, "Guerra y Paz en la Araucanía: Periodificación" in VILLALOBOS and PINTO (1985) pp 24-25.
traditionalism amongst the Chilean ruling group. The élite became fully consolidated during and on account of a previous process of modernisation which inclined it towards change.

Of all these factors, the most crucial ones were the unity and coherence of the élite and its predisposition towards change. It is true that these same factors can be found in the Cuban case, however in this case Independence did not take place until well after. The Cuban case resembles most the Chilean experience with a major exception: the absence of an ethnic threat. This explains why in Chile the élite was neither anguished nor did it petrify in a strict colonialist stance, which emasculated it politically. The Chilean ruling group did not become possessed by an enclave mentality.2 In the Chilean case the lack of a potential ethnic-social problem prevented economic criteria from prevailing over political considerations.

The unity of the élite and its predisposition towards change, both achieved before 1810, were to have crucial consequences later on. When faced by the unexpected Spanish debacle, the élite was sufficiently prepared and cohesive so as

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2 It has been argued that Cuba failed to become independent, not because there were no similar reasons as in other places in America —antagonism towards the Spaniards, previous political participation on the part of the élite, autonomous conscience, need to deepen an early modernization, etc— but rather because the ethnic danger, together with the desire to continue with the established economic order, made preferable a loyalty towards a tuitional status quo which still brought benefits to the creoles. In the end, a predominantly economic option weakened in Cuba a political aim which elsewhere, for instance Chile, was far greater and more plausible. See DOMINGUEZ (1985) pp 176-182, 264-278.
to assume the totality of power which it had fallen into its hands de facto in 1810. A consolidated predisposition towards change, together with previous political experience, allowed it to confront a major upheaval, without a defined a priori project, but with sufficient caution and prudence which once again would counsel it to reject immobility.

The Strengthening of Change

The process of change towards modernity, initiated during the XVIIIth century, was to continue throughout the period of Independence (1810-1818) and beyond the following stage wherein Chile was able to consolidate a stable government (1817-1829). Independence prolonged the process of change under the tuition of a state and of an élite which preceded it, but moreover it reinforced this by giving it a national projectional sense which it had lacked before. The value attributed to change remained constant, as well as its two principal conditions, that it be managed by the state and by the élite; nevertheless, Independence was to not only deepen further these aspects, but also achieved something perhaps far more important: it strengthened the legitimacy of change.

On a commercial level Independence had a very positive
impact, fully manifested already in the decade of the 1830s. (3)
To a large degree this favourable balance, which did not take place that early in the majority of the other Hispanic American countries, occurred because Chilean governments promoted a series of reforms and administered with great pragmatism a number of chosen measures. The state reserved for itself an eminently orientational role which redounded in a dynamic economic growth with even more positive consequences after 1829.

The main reasons behind Chile's economic success lay in its opening to foreign trade and the advantages which were to ensue from this policy. Ever since the 1811 decree permitting free trade and with greater impetus after 1817, administrations were systematically to stimulate foreign trade by both foreigners and nationals. The former were encouraged to set up commercial houses and to nationalise their interests in addition to being offered protection. Parallel to this, Chilean merchants were favoured, at the beginning, by assigning them exclusive rights in cabotage and retail commerce, in addition to lowering the tariffs paid for goods transported in national ships. Another important measure intent on increasing foreign trade was the authorisation of duty-free warehouses in

Valparaiso, enabling this port to become an important centre of distribution for the Pacific region, as evidenced by the extraordinary growth experimented during the period of Independence.4

The overall benefits accrued from this policy were significant. Naval tonnage grew steadily.5 Prices for imported goods went down; more markets became available to Chilean goods, and prices for national products were bettered. During the 1820s the total value of commerce increased by 40%. The number of Chilean merchants also went up.6 And fiscal revenue collected from customs duties—the main public income—grew at a spectacular rate.7

Not only did commerce experience increase. Mining, centred in the northern region of the country—scarcely affected by war—, was clearly favoured by commercial opening.8

4 Valparaiso was to grow from 5,500 inhabitants in 1810 to 20,000 in 1830; LOVEMAN (1979) p 145. According to H. GODUY, Estructura Social de Chile (1971) p 120, the population of Valparaiso doubled between 1800 and 1822 reaching the figure of 22,000 inhabitants, 3,000 of whom were foreigners.

5 RECTOR (1985) p 315.


7 L. ORTEGA in his article, "Economic Policy and Growth in Chile from Independence to the War of the Pacific" in C. ADEL and C. M. LEWIS, editors, Latin America, Economic Imperialism and the State (London 1985) p 150, states that between 1818 and 1829 income derived from customs duties grew in 1,360%; in 1829 it accounted for 60% of total fiscal revenue. See also RECTOR (1985) p 309.

And agriculture was able to recover in spite of war, while profiting from the overall course taken by the economy: new markets, increase of demand, lowering of transport costs, and stability of rural property resulted in the growth of production and the rise in the value of land.\textsuperscript{9}

This positive overall picture was not exempt from problems. There were periodic crisis of saturation which occasioned bankruptcies. Contraband was never adequately resolved. The public treasury could not be financed solely by income from customs and was deficit-prone throughout the period, although there was a slight improvement towards 1826 when military expenditure diminished; incapacity to pay the loan contracted in London left Chile out of all possible new sources of external credit until the decade of the 1840s. Moreover, Chilean merchants were unable to compete with foreigners, even though an agreement was reached between the two which was to report mutual benefits.\textsuperscript{10} Lastly, political instability deprived the Chilean economy of confidence.

The overall balance was positive, considering that the country was still in the midst and at most coming out of a critical period. And if one compares the Chilean case with other Hispanic American experiences, it is clear that the general

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid., pp 306-308. According to data compiled by CARMAGNANI based on tithe collection, towards the decade of the 1770s the value of agricultural production amounted to $ 620,000; in the decade of the 1820s it went up to $ 824,000; see CARMAGNANI (1973), Chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{10} RECTOR (1985), pp 298-299.
results were indeed first rate. As far as the main challenge -- having to confront a change which could easily have surpassed internal capacity to respond-- undoubtedly, commercial expansion and economic growth were faced successfully and profitably by a state and an élite already predisposed to these type of tests. A nationalistic stance also characterised economic administration. However strong foreign interests may have been in Chilean commerce during this time, ever since the decree of 1811 economic sovereignty was exercised; opening up to the world at large was a working principle of this economic sovereignty.

Opening was not only commercial. It implied integrating Chile to the non-Hispanic world. The increasing inflow of foreigners meant significant contributions in legal, educational, medical, scientific, cultural and military matters. An important number of young Chileans took advantage of this increasing contact and travelled to Europe, some staying there for several years before returning.11 Diplomatic recognition of Chile was, as for the rest of the former Spanish American colonies, somewhat slow on a formal level, but immediate in practice.12 Links with other nascent Hispanic republics were


12 See R. MONTANER BELLO, Historia Diplomática de la Independencia de Chile (1961); M. BARROS VAN BUREN, Historia Diplomática de Chile, 1541-1938 (Barcelona 1970);
especially beneficial, and with Argentina in particular, 'providential'; it is hard to imagine Chilean Independence without transandean help.

Educational and cultural changes were orientated with analogous outlooks to those which had been employed during the XVIIIth century. In the different administrations of the period there predominated an interventionist conception of the state in educational matters. Governments decided to centralise and regulate existing institutions, stimulate higher education and control primary schooling, which continued to be in the hands of municipalities and convents. There were no major differences with the immediately previous period. A complete overhaul in the hierarchical organisation of education had to be postponed until the 1830s and 1840s. No substantial expenditure was made on education; lack of resources prevented this. Even though there was no quantitative change in this field and overall orientations in education persisted, a qualitative change did occur. Influenced by French educational policy, the principle that the citizen ought to be educated for the state was introduced, while at the same time the idea that education was a means of nation-building began to take root. Lastly, the founding of the Instituto Nacional helped promote an elitist model of higher learning which was to serve as antecedent and teaching

establishment for the subsequent University of Chile (1842).13

As far as culture in general was concerned, during the period 1810-1829 we observe the recurrence of numerous tendencies observed already in other spheres. Official stimulus was especially visible, for example, in the early years of government sponsored journalism; subsequently, political factionalism was to stimulate this activity even further.14 The state also fulfilled a crucial role by hiring foreigners to carry out studies and provide expert advise.15 Government support was behind initiatives such as the founding of the Biblioteca Nacional and the development of theatre. Urban planning became centred in turn on the creation of public spaces, the eradication of popular customs considered pernicious and the celebration of civic festivities. All in all, artistic creation and cultural advancements were mainly due to individual private initiative. Basically, the state reserved for itself the diffusion of a civic culture which was meant to back the new legitimating order; on


15 See HERNANDEZ PONCE (1986).
this point, though, the state and ideologically conscious individuals, who served the different governments as functionaries and political advisers, tended to coincide. Consequently, the most assertive cultural impulse was made in the socialisation of a new republican world-view: in this private and official initiative converged.

Religion was yet another sphere which underwent notable changes promoted by republican governments. From 1810 on the state decreed a number of measures which clearly reinforced its already traditional regalist stance. It assumed all the prerogatives of the Spanish monarch by virtue of the Patronato Real. Several controversial projects were discussed, promoted and approved, such as: the creation of out-of-town and dissident cemeteries, the prohibition to bury in the interior of churches, the shutting down of small convents, the stipulation of a minimum age to profess religious vows, the abolition of parochial rights, and the election of parish priests by popular vote. Moreover, convents were used to house troops during times of war. Freire's administration went so far as to sequester the property of the regular orders, and an attempt was made to replace tithes by salaries. On repeated occasions, convents were required to keep up primary schools. Relations with the local hierarchy and with Rome became aggravated by the negative position stubbornly held by the latter, unwilling to recognise the newly established civil authorities; attempts to improve this situation failed. This explains the tenacity with which
governments insisted on the above measures, their unwillingness
to give in over what they considered to be their rights, and the
persecution of the most bitterly opposed hierarchs.16

A complete break with the Church, though, did not take
place. The Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion was officially
recognised by all the legal and constitutional texts. Not many
advances were made as to the legal tolerance of other cults,
although the Constitutions of 1822 and 1828 contemplated precepts
which were obviously more humanitarian.17 On the whole, there
prevailed a regalist position, inspired by a strongly Gallican
tradition, which affirmed that the Church had to be an
instrument of the state. This stance pretended to maximise state
over clerical power. Consequently, it is somewhat exaggerated to
affirm that there predominated a balanced union between both
institutions, and that the influence of the Church continued to
be strong.

The latter, in fact, is highly questionable. To begin
with, the Chilean Church had begun losing power ever since the
expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767. From 1750 to 1845 the number
of priests per inhabitant had diminished 100%.18 After 1767,

16 On the relations between state and Church, see: SILVA
COTAPOS (1925) and (1911); GONGORA (1980); M. L. AMUNATEGUI
and D. BARROS ARANA, La Iglesia Frente a la Emancipación
Americana (1960); DONOSO (1975) Chapter 7; VERGARA QUIRÓZ

17 DONOSO (1975) pp 154, 162.

18 F. C. TURNER, Catholicism and Political Development in
Latin America (Chapel Hill 1971) pp 189-190. If in 1750 there
were 779 inhabitants for every priest, in 1845 the ratio was
the Church ceased to be an important landowner; its financial resources were reduced to tithes, censos, capellanías and other charitable religious foundations. Moreover, ever since the XVIIIth century, its influence in the rural world was notoriously smaller than in other Hispanic American regions. Its importance in the intellectual sphere had decayed notably. Finally, the role which fell on traditional Catholic thought in the structuring of the new order of legitimacy was if not nil, insignificant. As a matter of fact, on a conceptual political level, religious aspects simply faded away through omission. The absence of a profound religious debate, even more, the incapacity to mobilise people using religion during Independence—in contrast to Mexico for instance—reduced it into a marginal factor, relegated to a merely private dimension. In all this there operated a kind of enlightened deism which made unattractive, at least in the group which promoted public affairs, possible stands of a traditionalist, "integrist" or confessional kind. This is why there was no need to oppose a confrontational anti-clericalism. The Church was treated as an institutionalised public entity; private or collective religious feeling were on the whole left untouched.

Changes were to occur also on a social level. The

1,548 inhabitants per cleric.


20 L. BETHELL, "A Note on the Church and the Independence of Latin America", in CHLA, III (1985) p 231. See also supra Chapter VII.
abolition of slavery, the suppression of titles of nobility, and
the end of entails -- a measure reversed after 1829 --, consolidated the principle of equality before the law, and put an end to the more pronounced stande-like features. Attempts to incorporate the native population did not go beyond mere good intentions; but even so, references to the Araucanians in the formulation of a new ideological legitimacy were to revalue the Indian component, without this implying actual native political participation. We ought to mention also the opportunity which Independence meant for the replacement of generations. During this period, political and military leadership was held by a relatively young group of men. Faced by challenges of change, a younger nucleus within the elite came to the fore and confronted them.

Above all the previous aspects there is one in particular which is outstanding and definitively seals the historical transcendence of Independence. Independence introduced nationalism to Chile and this helped consolidate the process of change which we have seen, imparting to it a communal and political orientation which it had lacked so far.

23 On this aspect, see: FELSTINER (1970), p 118. According to Felstiner, the average age of the leaders who acted during Independence was close to 40 years. Some key figures in 1810 had ages far below the average: O'Higgins was 32, the Carrera brothers 28, 25 (José Miguel) and 18 respectively; J. M. Infante, 32; Irisarri, 24.
One cannot speak of nationalism as such before Independence. Previous to 1810, we are ---except a few signs to the contrary--- in the midst of a regionalist, creole proto-nationalism, unwilling to break with the empire and seldom ideological, the *sine qua non* to produce a phenomenon of this nature. Once the political break took place and liberal-republican ideology was accepted, it became conceivable, and even imperative, to assume the tasks of nationhood and nation-building as crucial political projects.

If one examines the ideological republican discourse in its initial phase of reception and early experimentation we see that the defining elements of this nationalism are interchangeable with liberal-republican thinking. In the first place, one sees that the concept of nation during this period is strongly associated to a notion or sense of genesis. People believed they were creating an entirely novel political entity, a "*Patrjia Nueva"*. There was a deep consciousness of living through a period of political and national infancy, a re-birth as much

24 We are obviously privileging here a political rather than a cultural perspective towards nationalism. It is possible, therefore, that in Chile during the XVIIIth century, there existed as we have stated in Chapter V, a vague cultural idea of nation, but it was necessary for the Jacobin-republican model to have influenced and for the political-independentist ideal to have spread for nationalism --modern and non-traditional kind of phenomenon-- to have become possible. The Chilean nation which we now know springs from this liberal nationalism and from its political uses implemented by the newly independent state. See A. D. SMITH, *Theories of Nationalism* (London 1971) pp 160-161, 176, 177, 191.
political as social.25 Given this awareness of being at the threshold of a new age, it is not surprising therefore that the political thinking of the Chilean intelligentsia during the 1820s became so utopian in character. The aim was to destroy the pre-established Spanish order and to create another, new and transcendent order, capable of being conceived and mapped out. today we would say "planned".

This utopian sense was behind a series of institutions created during this period: the Instituto Nacional founded in 1813, designed to educate the new citizen of the nascent republic; the Orden al Mérito de Chile of 1817, intended to replace the titles of nobility; and the patriotic festivities, 18 September and 12 February, national celebrations which were meant to accentuate the legitimacy of the new regime, to stimulate popular support and to promote the new republican discourse.

All these institutions point to a central idea: in order to permit the birth of a new nation and its novel

25 J. Egaha in his treatise on education submitted in 1811 to the new Congreso Nacional stated that what had to be done was "not so much to reform abuses and to correct (the latter word has been written over the deleted word "regenerate") a People inveterate in its habits, as to create, give existence, politics and opinions to a Nation which has never had them before." Hence, the colonial epoch comes to be perceived not only as that period ruled by monarchy, but also as that time "before there was a patria". Once again, we are quoting Egaña's words. J. EGANA, "Reflexiones Sobre el Mejor Sistema de Educación que Pueda Darse a la Juventud de Chile..." (1811), Archivo Nacional, F.V. vol. 796, piece 1; f. 4; and by the same author, "Pehalaín y 5 de Enero de 1825" (pamphlet) (1825), p 6; both texts quoted by COLLIER (1967) pp 207, 208 and 211.
institutions it was imperative to reject the Spanish colonial past. The creation of the Chilean nation presupposed a rupture with tradition, a primeval revolutionary change which was to give way to an entirely new order. Obviously, this view is far removed from the romantic idea of a "spirit of the people" (volkgeist), and comes nearer to a constructivist and voluntarist conception of French-Jacobin origins.

A liberal conception can be further confirmed by the role assigned in all this to liberty. Liberty was conceived as the agent which made possible the break with the past. Here the connection between nationalism and liberalism becomes self-evident. They are aspects of the same phenomenon. It is not any type of nation which is emerging but rather a liberal nation. The projection of a national personality goes hand in hand with the projection of republican ideals. Thus, a parallel process which is at once both political, liberal in fact, and community-reinforcing began to take place. No wonder, therefore, that the liberal-republican discourse became almost synonymous with national identity, a fact which doomed any potentially rival

26 This does not negate the fact that on a parallel level there continued to exist an ambivalent attitude towards the break with Spain. We insist on what we stated in Chapter VI: to what degree there was a conscious project is debatable; it depends on the level of political discussion. Obviously that in the case of nascent nationalism, the clarity of aim appears to be greater. This does not deny, though, what we have previously held. The "project" resulted more than anything from the political language used and the radical implications of the discourse, neither of which were fully recognised.
conservative-traditionalist ideology to failure.27 Yet another distinguishing element of the liberal idea of nation is its close affinity with the notion of modernity. Once the past had been repudiated, modernity was accepted and embraced as its alternative. The models for this modernity were increasingly European and North American. In as much as the past was Spain, modernity meant becoming related to other parts of the world and the rhythm they had reached, especially France. As time went on, to become modern was to mean for Chilean XIXth century liberalism to absorb what could be assimilated from European civilisation. During the 1840s and 1850s, this attitude came to be consecrated in a formula which contrasted American "barbarity" to the civilised potential of Europe; in Alberdi, for instance, being American was synonymous with being European transplanted to America.28 There was no contradiction about this. XIXth century liberal nationalism was from the very beginning extroverted; it looked outwards. Once again, during the decade of the 1840s, this apparent paradox was resolved by affirming that it was necessary to apply European "form" to the American "content". What at first might seem impossible was thus achieved: to conciliate a view directed outwards with an

27 In this respect, see: A. JOCELYN-HOLT L., "La Idea de Nación en el Pensamiento Liberal Chileno del Siglo XIX" Opciones (1986) Mayo-Septiembre, No. 9, p 73; and S. COLLIER, "Conservatismo Chileno, 1830-1860" in Nueva Historia, No. 7 (Londres 1983).

28 See ALBERDI (1852); JOCELYN-HOLT (1986) pp 83-85. We should not forget that Alberdi was writing this in Chile.
appreciation for what was one's own and autochthonous. In truth, what was sought with this idea was the integration—through the European legacy—of a nation into the mainstream of cosmopolitan civilisation.29

The nationalism which was to emerge from Independence accomplished also a number of functions. In general terms, it was used by the state in order to integrate and homogenise the nascent emerging society. Nationalism was to provide society an outlook, a holistic political conception which was to help unify broad sectors of society, including popular sectors, which otherwise would have continued to be left out of the public realm. In other words, nationalism made it possible to conceive a wide social corpus as a polity. It was to transform numerous passive subjects into citizens, and was to incorporate the bulk of the population to the foundational project which was being designed. This incorporation cannot be understood as factual or complete, but rather—like everything related to liberalism—as a programmatic incorporation. But this should not diminish its importance. Thanks to this integration the ruling group was to outline a typological universe of the governed, and far more importantly, it was to set the bases for a potential and future widening of those who might eventually come to govern. This integrating nationalism delimited the programmatic structure of

29 This idea is present throughout XIXth century liberal thinking: it can be found in A. Bello, J. V. Lastarria, D. F. Sarmiento, F. Bilbao, and J. Alberdi amongst others. See JOCELYN-HOLT (1986) pp 86ff; also JOCELYN-HOLT (1991) pp 46-55.
popular sovereignty, the fundamental need imposed by the acceptance of liberal-republicanism. Once again we see the intimate connection between this type of nationalism and ideological discourse.

Nationalism was to create a series of shared meanings. It was to assimilate sectors which otherwise had little if anything in common with each other. It was to give them a sense of belonging and of community which otherwise would not have existed. It was to permit Chile to define itself as an "imagined" political community, imagined in the sense that all its members even though they did not know each other personally or knew of their respective lives, would share mentally, each and every one of them, the image of their own joint shared communion. It was to permit them to conceive each other as linked by a sentiment of camaraderie operating horizontally. In so far as this "image" was projected from above --by the state-- this solidarity was in no way to deny the ruling character of the elite.

The nationalism which appeared with Independence was to provide meaning and ideological coherence to phenomena which had been maturing for a long time before. It was to politicise the preceding proto-nationalist sentiment and was to accentuate the

30 In this first period, nationalism's integrating reach consisted though in supplying compensatory mechanisms in the absence of more active participatory channels for the bulk of the population.

31 In this we follow B. ANDERSON, Imagined Communities (London 1983).
localist character which the latter feeling had begun to
evidence timidly vis-à-vis the cultural and political Spanish
context. Consequently, it was to intensify the break with the
Spanish past, with tradition, and was to prepare the new state to
accept and assume fully the desired modernity.

Lastly, nationalism was to help channel those
irrational forces which always exist in every society and
particularly those which were unleashed by the rupture with
Spain. It was to promote a civic and transcendental feeling,
attributing more and more to the "nation" and thus to the Chilean
state a sacred and superior character. Not unlike religion,
nationalism was to locate every man, every Chilean, within the
cosmos. It would imprint a transcendental significance to the
accidental fatality of having been born in "this" territory and
in "this" community. This was to permit in turn many Chileans-
from this period on-- to love and die, hate and kill in the
name of the new nation. We know that nationalism can awaken a
quasi-mystical feeling of immortal continuity produced every time
one comes to integrate a chain of reincarnations projected
through time. It goes without saying, but this quasi-mystical
feeling is already present in the wars of Independence and was to
be transmitted to the men who were to fight in the name of Chile
in various wars which took place during the XIXth century. If
the national sentiment imprinted from the very beginning had been
lower it is possible that the final results arrived at in these
enterprises would have been altogether different.
In synthesis, it seems clear that nationalism began to fulfill a creative and legitimating function within the context of a society on the road to consolidation and political projection.32 Which is nothing strange if we bear in mind the reality of the country at the beginning of the past century. To begin with, there did not exist an integrated community; the division in ständes prevented a social sentiment capable of being projected holistically and politically. There was also no precise self-identity which might serve the creoles to distinguish themselves culturally and politically from the Spaniards.33 Finally, there existed a real danger that as a consequence of institutional breakdown and distancing from Spain, the embryonic society would become atomised, transforming itself into a cluster of multiple regionalisms and particularisms. Nationalism would resolve these problems. It began to create a vertebral identity capable of relating and involving different groups. It artificially established objects of loyalty and differentiation which allowed clear-cut rapid distinctions between Chileans and Spaniards. And finally, it promoted the idea of a common national project discarding thus completely the disintegrating potential which was to threaten

32 We disagree with Góngora on this point. This author seems to deny the XIXth century Chilean state both legitimacy and sacredness. See his Ensayo Histórico (1981) pp 27, 44-45, 82-83. Góngora's ideas are summarised in infra Chapter X. In contrast to Góngora, we think that nationalism granted a high degree of transcendence, legitimacy and sacredness to the modern state. A similar thesis to Góngora's is argued in MORSE (1982).

33 In this respect, see SMITH (1971) p 175.
immediately after Independence. In sum, originally, nationalism in Chile was above all a political mechanism which served a pre-existing state and hence the ruling group in order to realise certain foundational tasks of first priority. It was not an "awakening" of an old, ancient force, latent or dormant—even though it may have presented itself as such—but rather, the consequence of a new form of social and political organisation.

The period we are here dealing with coincides with a first phase of Chilean nationalism beginning in 1810 and extended to approximately 1836. (34) This first period is characterised by a projectional nationalism; there does not exist yet a nation. The nation which is being aspired to is "only an embryo, a project, a "nation of intent"",35 parallel in turn with a liberal-republican state also in search of consolidation. Consequently, the nationalism of this epoch becomes on the whole confused with the prevalent liberal modernising ideological-

34 Traditionally the war against the Confederación Perú-boliviana (1836) has been singled out as major landmark of Chilean nationalism. See BARROS ARANA (1913) I, pp 88-94; GONGORA (1981) pp 10-11.

35 SMITH (1971) p 175. It is interesting to note that in 1817-1819 the word "Chile" still referred to Santiago. HAIGH (1829) p 23; also J. F. COFFIN, Diario de un Joven Norteamericano Detenido en Chile Durante el Período Revolucionario en 1817 a 1819 (1823) in MEDINA and FELIU CRUZ, (1962) II, p 35. There also existed confusion with respect to the word "Patria". According to MEZA and COLLIER during the Patria_Vigia the term "patria" referred to Chile and not necessarily to the Empire as a whole; MEZA (1958) pp 247-249, 259; COLLIER (1967) pp 27, 208. However, on 30 July 1824 it became necessary to dictate a decree which ordered to replace the cry "Viva la Patria" by that of "Viva Chile"; PEREZ ROSALES (1946) p 86. The text of this decree can be found in FELIU CRUZ (1966), p 161.
political project, and both projects share a way of thinking as well as a social common symbolic *imaginaire*. Also noteworthy is the war-like character and origins of this early nationalism. Its function is not, strictly speaking, political: nationalism produced the adherences and loyalties necessary to bring the war to a favourable end. This type of nationalism ran through the wars of Independence, culminating in the war against the Confederación Perú-boliviana, a war which was defined by the literature of the period as the "second independence of Chile".36

However modernising this nationalism may have been, proto-nationalist features persisted throughout this period. There are reasons to think that notwithstanding the evolution towards a more socially articulated outlook, family membership would remain the single most powerful source of identification during these early years. This is confirmed, moreover, by the fact that the ruling nucleus which acted between 1810-1817 and later continued exercising power, belonged to a large degree to a few interrelated families. It is by no means fortuitous that anti-royalist Chileans called themselves "patriots", in other words forming part of a traditional society, wherein the family grouping constituted still an alternative community to that of the state and the nation. With the advent of the Carreras to power we observe an important change in this sense. They defined

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the type of nationalism which from then on became imposed, a political and ideological nationalism consubstantial with the legitimating option which emerged in 1810. (37)

In conclusion, in the period we are hereby analysing not only was there a change promoted and orientated by a state, but also a nationalist ideological expedient came to be used increasingly in order to promote the idea that change involved the community as a whole.

An Inconclusive Change

The description and image we have presented so far admits nuances. It is true that an extraordinary change began to be felt in Chile during the XVIIIth century. Numerous transformations were tolerated, accepted and co-opted, and undoubtedly this sort of attitude was to favourably predispose the élite to admit further innovations. Independence, in turn, would help consolidate and project forward the process of modernisation which preceded it. However, the reverse of this

37 From the Carrera administrations dates the tricolour cockade, the first flag, some first attempts to decree commemorative feasts, and the famous article 5 of the Reglamento Constitucional of 1812. Subsequently, this tendency was reinforced by the prohibition to use escutcheons and insignia of nobility (1817), the Declaration of Independence (1818), the minting of coins with the first national coat of arms, and the decree of 1818 which ordered the substitution of the denomination of "Spaniard" by that of "Chilean".
predisposition to change is as crucial as its modernising obverse. Geographical, technical, economic and atavistic conditionings would maintain Chile tied to a still traditional order.

In spite of the growing contact with the outside world experienced during the period of Independence, Chile would continue to be geographically remote. A voyage by sea from Valparaiso to Rio de Janeiro would usually take somewhere between 45 to 55 days; to England, 135 days; and to New York, 122 days. The journey by sea between Valparaiso and Callao averaged between 15 days and one month. Steamships and fast clippers would not appear until the decade of the 1840s.

Land travel was also slow, and on horseback or by mule. Covered oxcarts carried merchandise, women and children. It was necessary to accompany provisions for overnight stops—boarding houses did not exist—; moreover, it was indispensable to travel with sufficient servants as guides and for protection. The risk of being assaulted was high; according to Pérez Rosales

38 We have taken this data from various sources: G. F. MATHISON, Narrative of a Visit to Brazil, Chile, Perú, and the Sandwich Islands, During the Years 1821 and 1822 (London 1825) reproduced in MEDINA and FELIU CRUZ (1962) II, pp 360ff; PEREZ ROSALES Recuerdos del Pasado (1882); HAIGH, Viaje a Chile, 1817 (1829), pp 13ff; J. B. JOHNSTON, Cartas Escritas Durante una Residencia de Tres Años en Chile (1816) in MEDINA and FELIU CRUZ (1962) I, pp 185ff; A. CALDCLLEUGH, Viaje a Chile en 1819, 20 y 21 (1825); and R. L. VOWELL, Memorias de un Oficial de Marina Inglés al Servicio de Chile Durante los Años de 1821-1829 (1831) in MEDINA and FELIU CRUZ (1962) II pp 113ff.

"no one travelled without his pair of pistols, his machete and often not without his naranjero, an old blunderbuss in whose mouth, which looked like a horn, one threw in, to load it, a whole handful of bullets.".40 Apparently, this was enough; according to Johnston thieves were too poor to carry firearms; they had to make do with lazos and knives. Proctor consoled himself thinking that bandits were selective; only "native travellers (were) daily robbed and murdered", never Englishmen.41 The trip from Santiago to Mendoza took around 4 to 8 days; from Santiago to Valparaiso, 1 to 4 days depending on the cargo; between the capital and Concepción sometimes up to 15 days. La Serena and Copiapó were 7 or 8 days away from Santiago; cargo transport by mules lasted 20 more days.42 In the words of Pérez Rosales, "So much time was spent then, so much life was lost in mere travel!"43

The principal cities scarcely fit the image of vigorous urban centres. The first impression Valparaiso offered the visitor was of a "brick-kiln" rather than a town, due to its uniform buildings, one-floor --on account of the frequent

40 PEREZ ROSALES (1946) p 16.


42 EYZAGUIRRE (1965) p 278; CALDICLEUGH (n. d.) p 131; W. S. W. RUSCHENBERG, Noticias de Chile (1831-1832) por un Oficial de Marina de los Estados Unidos de América (1834, 1956) p 120.

43 PEREZ ROSALES (1946) p 17.
Earthquakes—usually made of adobes with a red roof of undulating clay tiles. According to Mary Graham, notwithstanding its shipping and commercial importance, Valparaíso was "little more in appearance than an English fishing town." Situated in a thin strip of land between the hills and the sea, this port counted as its sole attractions two public squares, a small fort, a main church, two other neighbourhood chapels, two convents, a hospital and an insignificant arsenal.

Santiago was no less disappointing to foreigners. According to G. F. Mathison, it could easily be confused with "a provincial town (rather) than the capital of a large State." Lafond de Lurcy thought it was a monotonous city, sad and boring when he visited in 1822. Projected over a checker-board plan with "streets drawn-up in straight lines and cut in right-angles", and ubiquitous one-floor houses made of sun-dried bricks, which gave a sort of "Moorish" looking air to the place. Only a few landmarks were worth the attention: the main square where one could find the palace of the Director Supremo—unfinished still in the decade of the 1820s—, the prison house, the government offices, the Cathedral built of stone—also not finished—, a string of shops and "baratillos" roofed by portals which looked out on the plaza and a café; the Cal y


45 M. GRAHAM, Journal of a Residence in Chile During the Year 1822 (London 1824), Spanish tr. (1953) p 70.

46 MATHISON (1962) II p 384.
Canto bridge; the La Cañada public walk and the Tajamares; the Alameda towards the south; the mint (La Moneda); the building of the Consulado; the Santa Lucia hill, a fortress standing out in the middle of the valley; and a few churches and convents hardly impressive when compared to those of Lima and Mexico. By sunset, in the absence of public lighting --except a street-lamp with tallow candles here and there-- the colonial "peso de la noche", reigned supreme.

Both cities enjoyed a busy commercial life and served as regional emporiums. Merchandise was bought and sold not only in the city squares and markets, but also in the warehouses (bodegones) and grocer's shops (pulperías) --stalls which came out into the street, located at the sides and corners of the great family houses-- or they were simply offered by street pedlars who called out their products. However, there was a shortage of currency to carry out transactions and there was nothing equivalent to commodity exchanges or banking institutions. Commerce was on the whole informal; it was not divided into specific lines of business; rarely did it specialise. And, except for minor products of daily use, it did not offer locally manufactured goods.

This should be no surprise. Technical skills were


backward. Given the strong agricultural bent of the economy, it was striking to see such primitive versions of the plough being so pervasively used. Rakes and shovels were hardly known; the former were ordinarily substituted by "a bundle of fresh branches, which is dragged by a horse or ox, and if not heavy enough, stones, or the weight of a man or two, is added." Consequently, yields were low, also due to a lack of care, neatness and effort which could very well have been employed.

Technological deficiency also retarded the development of manufacture. The popular classes were clothed with crudely woven materials in whose manufacture native techniques were still visibly employed; and with the exception of shoes and hats, the other articles of clothing worn by the urban and rural populace were all home-made. Local craftsmanship provided coarse and ordinary utensils. Mrs. Graham, somewhat demanding in these


50 GRAHAM (1953) pp 26-27, 94.


52 LAFOND DE LURCY states: "... agriculture is still in its infancy; everything is abandoned to nature's care. They barely open up the soil with a kind of rake; trees are not grafted, vineyards are not pruned; grass grows wild in the bushes, serving as food for cattle. As to wheat, the precious wheat, no other means is employed to extract the grain than grinding the ears underneath the horses hooves. What magnificent results could be obtained in this country if there were hard-working and instructed labourers!" (1970), p 20; the testimony of GRAHAM (1953) p 38 coincides with the previous description.

matters, at most rescued "some jars from Melipilla and Fenco which in shape and workmanship might pass for Etruscan"; but apparently her overall impression of Chile was different: "everything, in short, is occasionally made of (hide)".54 If we add to this several other indicators such as the fact that bread did not last more than a day; that jewellers, saddlers, blacksmiths and tailors worked "without grace"; that butter had to be 'churned' by putting the cream in skins which were mounted on a donkey which afterwards was made to trot; and people had to suffer the creaking sound of carts made "without a single nail or piece of iron"—obviously, as far as technology was concerned, Chile was far from being modern.55

Comfort, as known then in Europe and North America, was an extravagant luxury. The urban dwelling house— even those of the well-off— still showed its rural colonial origins. It was made of two or more patios surrounded by colonnaded corridors on to which the private quarters opened. It possessed orchards, spinneys and storerooms, and through them would run streams for irrigation and drainage. Except the main portico entrance (zaguán), nothing was especially imposing. The different chambers and bedrooms were connected with one another, lessening the intimacy of all those who lived there. It housed

54 GRAHAM (1953) pp 39, 47.

full extended families, and served different purposes not just as mere living accommodations; storerooms contiguous to the entrance portico were rented out or used by their owners for commercial ends; it was not unusual either to find store-rooms next to the reception rooms. The principal comfort was the large staff of available servants; it was not unusual for every member of the seigneurial family, including the children, to have assigned to them one or two personal orderlies and attendants.56

Furnishings were scant and austere. In the cuadra, or drawing room, stood out the estrado or platform where the ladies sat on arm-chairs, and in front of which stood a large row of seats where the men smoked and talked. Tapestries, small tables, vargueros, Venetian mirrors, crystal lamps and silver candelabra adorned this characteristically sombre room. Exceptionally, rugs and curtains might give it a warmer touch. The absence of window panes was proverbial, as well as the lack of fireplaces; the rooms were heated with bronze pots with lighted charcoal (braceros), rarely with paraffin. Drinking water was brought to the house by mule by water-carriers. Once again, Mrs. Graham's implacable eye seldom forgave: according to her, there was "less comfort in a palace in Chile than in a labourer's hut in

Despite the traditional and archaic picture provided by the Chilean ruling group’s domestic household, several timid changes began to be perceived during the period which interests us, reflecting greater foreign contacts. Imported articles—ironmongery, crockery, glassware, fabrics, rugs, clocks—started to appear in the marketplace becoming more frequent in Chilean households. Slowly, open carriages (birlochos) and calesas, though pulled by donkeys, replaced the antediluvian oxcarts. The custom of drinking mate in some houses was substituted by "tea time". The estrados tended to disappear. Table manners and more sophisticated and universal hygienic customs shocked European visitors less. They were received with great attention. Occasionally this increasing assimilation of foreign habits struck an air of "affectation", but the effort spent in appearing more cosmopolitan became less awkward as time went by.58

Where this enthusiasm for being "in fashion" was most evident was in clothes. The phenomenon began at the beginning of the century. The neoclassical style of the Directory and Empire,


for women and men, which was to become predominant amongst the upper stratum, anticipated the ideological change produced after 1810. (59) The traditional female dress of Spanish origin with regional variations was relegated to the popular classes, even if it did not disappear totally as it continued to be used daily. On the other hand, masculine dress in the more affluent sectors, would distance even further the elegant young man from the rural and urban commoners. The introduction of new fashions, which in Europe tended to "democratise" the different social sectors, in Chile produced the inverse effect. 60 If we add to this a considerable reduction in the speed with which these new fashions were adopted— we are speaking of a delay of at most five to six years— the urban landscape revealed a clear-cut dynamism and assimilation of new things, thus accelerating the sense of change, at least on a superficial level.

It is risky, though, to exaggerate this point. The weight of tradition made itself felt side by side with these innovations. With respect to general culture, for example, we should bear in mind that in 1854 illiteracy was still as high as 87% of the total population; 61 and supposedly "well read" people— for instance Judas Tadeo Reyes, Secretary of the Presidency of the Real Audiencia— as late as 1815 tenaciously affirmed the


60 Ibid., p 207.

Ptolemaic theory. In the Colegio de San Carlos, attended by "noblemen", an ordinary day in 1811 began with "holy mass"; in other less exclusive primary schools, children were discriminated in the classroom according to their social status. The "guante" and the "palmeta" were not abolished until 1833; one of the first government juntas went so far only to reduce the number of floggings which could be given. Until its latter days (1842), the Universidad de San Felipe graduated on the whole philosophers, theologians and law students; still in 1842, there were only 18 medical doctors in the capital. The number of private libraries increased considerably after 1800; however, several witnesses complain that in the Santiago commerce "amidst hardware and cutlery" --because it was there where one had to browse-- it was impossible to find a copy of El Quijote or a good grammar book. It is true that President Pinto "awarded" the best student of the Instituto in 1828 with Voltaire’s complete works, but in the private library of Manuel de Salas 53% of the volumes were written in Latin. Next to the works by Buffon, Pufendorf, Rousseau and one or other title to the tenor

of Noches de la Helvecia, in the bookshelves of the cultivated one would find texts such as Delicias de la Religión, Fínezas de Jesús Ensanrentado, El Hombre Confundido Por Si Mismo, Conversión del Duque de Brunswick, Desenganado y Convertido, El Filósofo Sucio and El Filósofo Bien Hecho.66 In the 1820s harpsicords and their likes abounded; however "no music-master lived at St. Jago".67 Much more frequent than a neoclassical portrait by Gil de Castro must have been what Mrs. Graham saw, the description of which she later noted down in her Journal:

"On a table in a corner, under a glass case, I saw a little religious baby work, --a waxen Jesus an inch long, sprawls on a waxen Virgin's knee, surrounded by Joseph, the oxen and asses, all of the same goodly material, decorated with moss and sea shells."68

Actually, very little was known about art; "sculpture" was thought to consist "in carving the heads, hands, and feet of the saints to be dressed".69

The status assigned to women is yet another indication of how traditional this society continued to be. From the categorical differentiation between the sexes, one surmises a marked tendency to relegate women to mere domesticity. Proof of this is the fact that the first school for women was created only in 1812.(70) In addition to what later on would be called "los

68 GRAHAM (1953) p 25.
69 Ibid., p 83.
"deberes del sexo", Chilean patriarchal society reserved for women as their only inducement to develop themselves, the field of piety and faith, rarely associated with men. If we are to believe Coffin "the (Chilean) women have the reputation of being ardent, faithful, and devoted"; apparently, what more could anyone want? The only image of a woman of the world worth mentioning which can be found in contemporary descriptions is the exquisite portrait which Mrs Graham draws of Mercedes del Solar—mother of Vicente Perez Rosales—, but it appears there only as an exception. We can dare say that at the time of the visit of this Englishwoman, in Chile there was no woman comparable in culture and sensitivity as that of the author of the magnificent Journal.

When referring to the persistence of tradition we have alluded to religion, and this was undoubtedly its most salient and repeated expression. Still familiar were the morning mass, evening prayers, spiritual retreats, popular devotions such as the "angelito" and the cult of "Animas", the crosses erected on hill-tops, the carrying of the viaticum, the sound of bells, the exhibition of the rosary and of scapularies on women's dresses, novenas, processions and rogations, acts of public penance ("Some men, naked from the waist up," wrote R. L. Vowell in his account of the 1822 earthquake, "whipped and hit themselves with bundles

71 COFFIN (1962) II, p 55; see also GRAHAM (1953) pp 58, 65; RUSCHENBERG (1956) pp 102-103.
72 GRAHAM (1953) pp 116-117.
of thorns until from their lacerated backs would flow blood"),
the exhumation and abandonment of corpses belonging to heretics,
mendicancy, confessional rites, and the total stoppage of
activities during holydays.73

Despite all this, there were signs which announced a
new age. It was not strange for contemporary theatrical pieces
to mock clerics. Decrees emanating from the government were able
to extinguish some manifestations of the most extreme fanatical
kind, such as posting on the doors of churches long lists of
names of vecinos who did not fulfill their obligations to
confess and take communion during Easter time; some processions
were prohibited. In Valparaiso at least, the "Ave Purisima" of
the nightwatchmen was replaced by a "Viva Chile". Some
authorities dared to show disdain and disgust towards public
rites which might still require certain religious observances. In
sum, the baroque chiaroscuro would still cast its long shadows,
but here and there loomed up at times the "smile of reason".74

What revealed the greatest obstinacy was the rhythm of

73 On religious aspects and practices, see the following
    testimonies: GRAHAM (1953) pp 26, 31, 49, 51, 53-55, 65-66, 72-
    73, 75, 105, 114, 118-120, 125, 180-181, 191, 222-223, 230-231;
    HAIGH (n. d.) pp 18, 33-34, 65, 79, 100-101; CALDCLLEUGH (n. d.)
    (1956) pp 24-25, 82-83, 94-96, 118; PEREZ ROSALES (1946) pp 6-7,
    10, 63; JOHNSTON (1962) I, pp 288-290, 293; COFFIN (1962) II pp
    51-52, 71; VOWELL (1962) II, pp 156, 177, 179-182, 184, 190;

74 See DONOSO (1975) pp 154ff, 161-162; HAIGH (n. d.) pp
    (1962) II, p 190; GRAHAM (1953) p 54; RUSCHENBERG (1956) p 72;
life. Vicuña Mackenna described it metaphorically in the following passage:

"In a bed of woolen tufts, with a crude flannel shawl put on his head, which covered the temple and the eyes, his soul soaked in holy water and his lips humid with vaporous chocó wine, slept on Chile, young and giant, gentle and stout, semi-barbarous and sanctimonious huaso his colonial siesta, lying down in vineyards and watermelon fields, his belly full of wheat, so as not to feel the hunger for work, the cushion crammed with novenas and reliquaries so as not to fear the devil and the spirits in his gloomy night of rest. Throughout the land there was not a single sign of life; it was all abundance and laziness... People lived then as if in a Muslim paradise, with only inexpensive delights, without covetousness for what was not theirs, not even of heaven. The fields flowed with milk, flowers distilled honey, the trees rained down fruits in their season when their succulent trunks were shaken, and the broad irrigating streams had for plugs the odorous residue of the orange and lemon trees of the orchards, which threw away their scents of gold and their bunch of blossoms at the slight kiss of air... And as such, Chile was all one field, a furrow, a rustic task... Such was the country!"75

Chile in its daily routine continued being "colonial". Everyday life went on and on framed by a sequential cadence in which there was no lack of diversions and pastimes, but wherein the immemorial practices would never vary: masses and baptisms, tertulias, marriages and feasts, holydays and half-holydays, visits, siestas and promenades, gossips and whispers, processions and novenas, deaths and wakes, masses and tertulias... never ending thus.76 In all this there was a sort

of provincial monotony --occasionally interrupted by earthquakes and other calamities-- which instilled in the population a generalised kind of slackness and indolence, from whose enormous influence, according to Haigh, not even the English were to be free.77 Chile, sunk in its connatural habitat, continued being a mere frontier outpost, remote and backward, of Western civilisation. In reality, in Chile nature was almost all. "At the base the capital was perceived, but its towers and fanes sank into insignificance in presence of the stupendous mountain!", Ruschenberg tells us when glancing at the Santiago valley.78 This is why, History was so late also in its timid awakening.

This overall picture which we have made of the persistence of tradition does not detract from what we have been arguing throughout this dissertation. At most, this constancy and prolongation of tradition conditioned the change which on an especially political and ideological level was unquestionable in spite of it all. There was change and tradition, but the latter --notwithstanding its ubiquitousness-- lost something which was of its essence: its capacity to "hand over" or "transmit". Deep down, tradition became slowly transformed into mere "repose" faced by a change which instead "offered" and "projected" something entirely new; hence, tradition subsisted, but

S. VERGARA QUIROZ, "El Tiempo, la Vida y la Muerte en Chile Colonial" in M. GONGORA et al., Historia de las Mentalidades (Valparaíso 1986) pp 67-94.

77 HAIGH (n. d.) p 35.
78 RUSCHENBERG (1956) p 65.
vegetated; persisted but did not grow. In turn, change— even if it was no more than a mere aim, a potential not yet satisfied— acquired an embryonic viability which promised to blossom. This was a traditional, not a conservative society. It is true, Independence introduced a change which the context would often turn anachronistic, but only in light of a present which bit by bit appeared as a "past" still to be surpassed.

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From the XVIIIth century-on Chilean society had been experimenting with a series of commercial, demographic, urban and world-view changes. The élite did not feel threatened by these changes because it accepted to a large degree the political mechanism which Bourbon reformism had bequeathed it and which might be used to control them, namely a powerful, rationalistic state which could channel processes. This was to allow the élite to confront the power vacuum in 1810 and reinforce its already willingness towards possible new transformations.

Independence stimulated even further the dynamic course initiated during the XVIIIth century which was accepted or at least tolerated by the Chilean ruling group which subsequently assumed the totality of power. Transformations of an economic, social and cultural kind were moreover channelled within a
nationalist perspective which helped legitimate the changes and extend them programmatically to society at large. In spite of what we have just said, the type of change produced during the period post-1810 was not complete; it was accepted solely under several presupposed conditions proper to a society still traditional: that it be tutored by a state in the hands of an elite and that it did not harm the established order. Hence a considerable quota of tradition was to persist, hand in hand with a greater willingness for more change.
CHAPTER X

HISTORY AND MYTH

After this long analysis, there is one last matter we must deal with. We hold that Chilean Independence cannot be fully understood unless we situate it in relation to the interpretative perspectives assumed either by the very same historical actors or by those of us who address ourselves to the subject retrospectively. Only thus does Independence assume its maximum significance or cultural reality, as a transcendent event or referential landmark of Chilean history.

Three different angles permit us to approximate ourselves to this aspect. In the first place, Independence -- from the beginning -- was conceived by direct witnesses as a "rupture" with the Spanish "past". The meaning of this break, though, has not been agreed upon by all those who have subsequently tried to understand the phenomenon; as it became distant in time, Independence began to acquire interpretative realities both apologetic and revisionist, depending on the historiographical school involved, were it liberal or conservative. All in all, though, and despite the different focusses used, the two principal explanatory versions which are available to us agree on a series of points and on an essential feature: the mythical recourse used for validating their interpretative assumptions.

Unless we have a clear understanding of these three
levels—the perspective of the historical actors, that of the later historiographical schools and the mythification which often surrounds this subject—Independence will never be understood as an "imagined" or "constructed" phenomenon, in the long run probably its only real historical dimension. As Nietzsche says: "There are no facts, only interpretations".

Hence, the intention behind this last chapter is to specify the content of these three levels.

**The Break with the Past**

The notion that Independence involved a rupture with the Spanish colonial past is consubstantial with the phenomenon itself. We would not be speaking of an event of this nature unless from the very beginning the leading protagonists had not offered an image of the same in precisely these terms. Independence is at once the separation from Spain as well as the conceptual projection of those who were involved in it.

Throughout this dissertation we have pointed out several expressions of this idea in contemporary testimonies. This notion began to take shape as it became more evident that

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1 On the role played by invention and imagination in historical conscience, see: E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger editors, The Invention of Tradition (1983); Anderson (1983).

2 See supra Chapters VI-IX.
they were in the midst of a critical moment, and that it was impossible to rebuild the governmental order according to traditional legitimist parameters conceived still within an imperial framework. At this point, criticisms towards the colonial order became more frequent and adamant, distancing the Chilean leaders from initially ambiguous positions and strategies. Once the new republican legitimating order had been assumed, the criticism of the Spanish evolved into a rejection of the imperial-colonial past backed up by a political conception antithetic to the old order. From then on, attention turned towards the consolidation of the new mechanisms of legitimation—the same ones which were to turn anachronistic the traditional way of seeing things—and towards the projection of a new nation, programmatic aspiration to which later macro-political efforts were directed.

As such, it is worthwhile asking why and how a course of events originally building up to a mere de facto autonomy would eventually be transformed into a break conceived as a rejection of the past. We think that the answer lies precisely in the very nature of the events themselves and in the consequences which were to emerge from them. If there had not been a weakening of the legitimating order prior to the critical conjuncture which was to produce the downfall of the monarchical order, and if during this same conjuncture the essential bases of the traditional political order would not have come into question, the very meaning which is attributed to the events
which began to unfold dramatically after 1808, would surely have been potentially less radical. Only when it became imperative to confront a series of events promoted outside Chile, and when it became necessary moreover to justify *de facto* power in the hands of creoles in accordance with conceptual and doctrinal parameters alien to the traditional world-view, only then the interpretative repertoire used to explain the historical moment which was taking place, could be radicalised.

Consequently, the main function of the rupturist interpretation of Independence was to be of a legitimating sort. The image of a break was used to justify the beginning of a new order, but what is perhaps more important, emphasis was put on the idea of a break in order to drive home the point that historical actors fully possessed of their historical roles were involved in this phenomenon.

In effect, this break which was retroactive permitted the protagonists of the phenomenon to visualise themselves as historical actors. In the absence of a prior project of independence, the rupturist view served as an alternative compensatory mechanism with which the protagonists acquired or assumed retrospectively a degree of will and aim far greater than the one which had actually existed. Chilean leadership may have not foreseen or even desired Independence, but from the very moment the latter had become irreversible, this *a posteriori* fiction was to permit the leadership to simulate this effect while hiding the high degree of ambiguity which had initially
characterised its conduct.

By adopting this position at least two presumptions which henceforth were to become confused with the phenomenon itself, became unquestionable. To begin with, to reject the Spanish past meant to deny its capacity to condition later effects, some of which were to prove functional to the break, for instance XVIIIth centy reformism. To repudiate the past implied also a higher degree of volition than the one which in fact had existed, magnifying thus the farsightedness of the process. In sum, this view tended to reject any sort of continuing link with the immediate past and cloaked the intrinsic passivity of the independentist phenomenon, a phenomenon which had to be subsequently justified, rather than planned beforehand.

Also helpful in consolidating this view were the presumed similarities which the Chilean case had with all the other contemporary American or European paradigmatic models legitimated also by rupturist conceptions. Hence, Chilean Independence came to be seen very soon as an integral part of the general course of history.3 To break with the past meant to

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3 The idea is constantly repeated. El Mercurio de Chile (18 September 1822), p 323, proclaimed: "By our glorious revolution we entered into the great movement of social regeneration, in which the civilised world is presently at work". In El Censor de la Revolucion (20 April 1820), p 5, one reads: "...we are resolute in following the spirit of the century and nature's order, which call us to establish a liberal and just government". El Despertador Araucano (3 May 1823), pp 126-127, when referring to the main thrust of the periodical, states: "We shall mention matters quite curious for their novelty in this Country, but whose explanation is of utmost necessity given that it wants to begin to be, and it is just that it should be amongst the rest in the civilised world". See also: El Argos de Chile
assume the challenges of the present and of the future, in
addition to become inserted in the inevitable flux of modernity.

To assign a fundamental crucial importance to the
break with the past was not, though, exempt from difficulties.
Doubtless, the principal obstacle was to explain why in spite of
everything already achieved, the weight of tradition continued to
be so evident. This was broadly recognised. All in all, though,
spokesmen and pamphleteers insisted, by way of excuse and
defence, that the mutation of an order by another was not at all
easy, that it was necessary to overcome ancestral preoccupations
and "habitudes" still prevalent for which, though, they were not
yet fully prepared. A great deal still had to be done in order
to put an end to the process of regeneration. They had to open
up even further to the "ideas of the century", resolve internal
quarrels, experience the benefits of the new order, mature the
"new way of seeing and feeling". They were conscious that it was
not enough to proclaim themselves free; it was imperative to
overcome the nominality of words and make them effective. It was
paramount to deepen even further the practical exercise of the
new institutions and purge themselves of a past still present;
in sum, it was indispensable to accentuate even further the

(18 June 1818), pp 16, 75; El Sol de Chile (5 February 1819) p
287; Cartas Fehuences (1819) No. 10, p 42; El Avisador Chileno
(3 April 1824), p 59. The press of the period has been
reproduced in CAPCH edited by G. FELIU CRUZ.
With the passage of time, though, the persistence of a past which refused to disappear was such that excuses and a faith blind by its own optimism were not enough. It was urgent to reflect deeply on the meaning of Independence and its consequences, and determine its future historical projection.

4 El Duende de Santiago (22 June 1818), p 85, formulated the problem thus: "Ever since we began our glorious struggle against the Spaniards liberty has been the only aim of our efforts. This has been the sole end which we have undertaken as a result of our sacrifices, when we decided to take away the government of Chile from the hands of our oppressors. So far we can say, that we are free of that old tyranny; but we must examine if we enjoy the liberty to which we aspired to." El Mercurio de Chile (21 February 1823), p 438, returns to this same question: "No people in America excel the Chileans in the efforts and sacrifices on behalf of liberty; however, none other exist which for a span of twelve years has lived less satisfied, less free, less happy. The reason for this contrast lies at the root of the preoccupations and habitudes which it inherited from old Spain. It has wanted to build a new edifice with old and useless materials: it has wanted to achieve a great and unknown aim without providing the necessary means: it has called itself a republic without possessing republican institutions; and since it did nothing else but change names preserving the same things, everything has been nominal, nothing effective, nothing true... It is thus necessary that we not content ourselves with names, but that we should aspire to things". Despite the latter text, months afterwards El Amigo de la Verdad (13 May 1823), p 92, exclaimed: "... everything which occurs in the intelectual world happens later in the real world". El Despertador Araucano (3 May 1823), pp 125-126, summarised this same argument in a formula which was to be repeated over and over during the decade of the 1840s: "Apparently the illustrious day of the second revolution of America, or rather, of its second political existence is not too far away. By the first we appeared free men, we must still become happy by the second. For the first virtue sufficed; for the latter we need the effort of virtue united to that of the luces. The second is more difficult, as the triumph has to be obtained in spite of ourselves, in other words by overcoming our errors". See also: El Argos de Chile (19 November 1818) p 75; El Censor de la Revolución (30 April 1820) pp 8-9; Ibid (20 May 1820) pp 23-25; Ibid (10 July 1820) p 50. See CAPCH.
Influential in this qualitative and revisionist change would be the emergence of the new governmental order starting in 1827. How could one reconcile on the one hand the break with the past and the proclamation of a regime with liberal aspirations -- clearly the principal consequences of Independence -- and on the other the establishment of an authoritarian order subsequent to 1829? Were they not facing perhaps a failure of the process initiated by Independence?

The answer to this problem, elaborated during the decade of the 1840s, continued to be faithful to the interpretative parameters already seen. What was novel was the insistence that the inconclusiveness of Independence was due to the partiality of its aims.

The very nature of the change which had taken place in 1810 came to be questioned; it no longer seemed sufficient to have channelled the process in strictly political terms. Critics perceived the need to implement a more systematic and

5 J. V. LASTARRIA in his historical dissertation, *Investigaciones Sobre la Influencia Social de la Conquista y del Sistema Colonial de los Españoles en Chile* (1844) summarises Independence thus: "Whatever it might be, I am persuaded that this was slow and progressive, partial and not radical, the work of a few illustrious men and not national, precisely because of this influence. Society not being prepared yet to receive the regenerating impulse, was fatally destined to limit itself to fight only for its political liberty; if it had advanced towards an abrupt break with the past, proclaiming its complete regeneration -- even if it had lofty geniuses which might have directed it in this holy enterprise -- it would have met a thousand powerful resistances and would not have obtained its triumph, except by suffering its complete extermination and spilling proportionally more blood than what it had cost the revolution of France".
global plan in order to assume directly the challenge which had to be met. In the words of Lastarria, still remaining to be fought was "the war against the powerful spirit imprinted on our society by the colonial system". The revolution seemed to be truncated; it was imperative to carry out a complete and radical regeneration at the level of collective consciousness. It was the task of the generation of the decade of the forties to

"...organise a plan of attack against the social vices, so as to make ourselves worthy of the Independence bequeathed on us by the heroes of 1810, independence made possible at the expense of their blood; and reunite ourselves around that democracy which is so miraculously enthroned amidst us, but alas, on a throne whose base gnawed by ignorance may be shaken by the slightest blow of passions, and almost falls, bringing down to ruins our dearest hopes"

Only this way would it be possible to regain human "nature" trampled by that anti-natural enterprise which had been the Conquest --the origin of the three centuries of Spanish domination-- and thus achieve the identity to which the country had been historically destined. According to Lastarria, the solution lay in strengthening a culture authentically "national".

In turn, according to Francisco Bilbao, it was necessary to assume "our revolution or past with future" which had emerged already in the "New Age" of Europe and which had "burst out in France"; Chilean revolutionary thinking had to be "linked" to the revolutionary thinking of the French Revolution.

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6 See the Discurso de Incorporación a una Sociedad Literaria de Santiago pronounced by J. V. LASTARRIA on 3 May 1842, reproduced in his Recuerdos Literarios (1968). See also, SUBERCASEAUX (1981); and JOCelyn-HOLT (1986), pp 73-80.
It was imperative to put an end to the organisation and “past synthesis” of Spanish, Catholic and “feudal” origins and replace it with “the vague, but true synthesis” elaborated by modern philosophy. Even in the thought of Andrés Bello —probably one of the figures most prone to acknowledge the value of Hispanic tradition— we encounter the central argument of this revisionist formula. According to this caraqueño living in Chile, political Independence had to be distinguished from civil liberty:

"In our revolution liberty was a foreign ally which fought under the flag of Independence, and which even after its victory has had to do a great deal in order to consolidate itself and take root. The work of the warriors is consummated, that of the legislators will not be completed until there takes place a more intimate penetration of the imitated idea, of the upstart idea, in the tough and tenacious Iberian materials" 8

Consequently, Independence had not failed, but it could not be declared concluded. Thanks to an interpretative overturn founded once again in an a posteriori reflection, Independence assumed a projectual existence even more ambitious.

Even though this interpretation disclaimed the existence of a total failure, it is clear that in its formulation it recognised the insufficiency of the initial version. At most the rupture with the past had been partial. As a matter of fact, we are dealing here with the first draft of a revisionist version

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7 F. BILBAO, Sociabilidad Chilena (10 June 1844), in A. DONOSO, El Pensamiento Vivo de Francisco Bilbao (1911), pp 47-94.

which even if it does not distance itself from the original liberal explanatory parameters, it qualifies them. Even more, this new version forwards historical justifications tending to clarify why the rupture had not been so successful.

According to the view of the decade of the 1840s, a "colonial spirit" had recently emerged, taking possession of power. Subsequent to 1829 what supposedly had happened was a "colonial reaction" which had imposed itself, led by the retrograde sector of society: the sector most reactionary and conservative of the aristocracy, the peluçon faction, whose undisputed leader was Portales. Consequently, if initially liberal pensadores supposed that they were faced with a rupture with the past, they arrived eventually at the conclusion that the break had not been fully successful, given the persistence of traditional forces. 9

The Distance and Projection of Historiography

The liberal revisionist version formulated during the decade of the 1840s set the bases for the subsequent historiographical discussion concerning the general course of

9 The concept of "colonial reaction" is already implied by LASTARRIA and BILBAO op cit. The term becomes commonly used in the decade of the 1860s. See VICUNA MACKENNA (1863); J. V. LASTARRIA, Don Diego Portales, Juicio Histórico (1861).
XIXth century. In this reinterpretation we find all the elements which went to make up the content of the two most important historiographical views on three specific matters: Independence, its doctrinal legacy—liberalism—, and its main historical effect: modernity. Both views addressed themselves to the problem of break and dealt with the role of tradition in order to explain why the change subsequent to Independence had been insufficient. We are referring to the XIXth century liberal historical school and to XXth century conservative currents of thinking. While in agreement as to the contents of the arguments as well as to the central diagnosis, they would only differ in the valorisation attributed to this otherwise shared argument and diagnosis.10

On the whole, the liberal school—the current in which authors such as Amunategui, Barros Arana, Vicuña Mackenna, Isidoro Errázuriz, Amunategui Solar, Donoso, Feliú Cruz, Heise and Villalobos stand out—argues that Independence was a true break with the past. This was due to a liberal project, that is to say to the penetration of new ideas, as well as to the

10 We shall not deal with on this occasion with other interpretative lines of analysis, for instance the Marxist school: H. RAMIREZ NECOCHEA, J. C. JOBET, L. VITALE, M. SEGALL amongst others. We have already referred to this historiographical current in our article, "Liberalismo y Modernidad..." in KREBS and GAZMURI (1991a). To a large degree the arguments of these authors are not that distant from the basic ideas of the two more traditional historiographical schools; they insist that Independence was a relative break, and that liberalism was an epiphenomenon, not a phenomenon in itself, intrinsic and autonomous, but rather exogenous, parasitic and out of phase with time and place.
revolutionary nature of this thinking, in sum the complex set of beliefs and institutions linked to contractualism, constitutionalism, natural rights, division of powers, the teaching state, the notions of citizenship, popular sovereignty and nationhood. According to this historiographical view, this thinking would generate a constant and progressive radicalization, a continuous break with the traditional Hispanic background.

According to this interpretative current, this liberal doctrine did not succeed in becoming immediately consolidated. It had to face powerful traditional forces still rooted in the structure of society. But in the end, after an initial period of learning when it became socialised and strengthened it would turn out to be the basis of the definitive organisation of the state. Parallel to this, the liberal doctrine and the institutions created under its inspiration would orientate the country towards modernity. Chile would come out of the political, economic and cultural isolation imposed by Spanish domination and would participate fully in the advances and knowledge that the progressive world offered. The country "se desespanolizaria":

11 See for example: D. AMUNATEGUI SOLAR, La Democracia en Chile y Teatro Político (1810-1910) (1946); DONOSO, Ideas Políticas (1946); VILLALOBOS et al, Historia de Chile III (1974); HEISE, Anos de Formación y Aprendizaje (1978). Even the book by COLLIER, Ideas and Politics of Chilean Independence (1967) has close links with this by now classical line of argumentation.

its ruling class would become more cosmopolitan; its economy would open outwards; Chile would become part of a world increasingly dynamic and changing. Internally, liberalism would evolve as an agent of change and transformation, an anti-traditional force, and more importantly, liberalism would produce a revolution in aspirations, demands and expectations which would define the political agenda of the country throughout the last century and the better part of our own. Consequently, thanks to Independence liberalism was to have an unquestionable place in Chilean history; it would be the spinal column of republican Chile.

This view began to be questioned in the early part of this century. Historians of a conservative slant have acknowledged only partially the importance of Independence and the subsequent transcendence of the liberal doctrine. They have not denied their existence, but they have diminished their possible effects. Authors such as Edwards, Eyzaguirre and Gongora prefer to distinguish a doctrinaire from an instinctive version of liberalism. According to them, what is often thought of as doctrinaire liberalism proper has had very little importance. Its influence has been felt only after 1849, not 1810, and to a greater extent during the decade of the 1860s, when romanticism and liberal ideology both of French origin were

admitted with full force. 14 The libertarian impulse which had 
operated before these dates would have been a product of a 
traditional, anti-authoritarian spirit strongly embedded in the 
ruling group; supposedly, this libertarian version had a Spanish 
origin, traceable to Basque and Castillian statutory rights. 15 
Moreover, in the opinion of these authors, doctrinaire liberalism 
would have been introduced too late to have impressed its stamp 
on Chilean institutionality of mid century. At most it would 
have reinforced this prior traditional libertarian spirit. But 
in no way would it have constituted the structural basis of the 
XIXth century Chilean political system. Instead, the latter 
would have been the outcome of a "restoration" of a prior order, 
of an Hispanic and authoritarian kind. 16

According to this historical school, the restoration 
had occurred in the period 1830-1860. It is in this period when, 
according to the opinion of these writers, the Chilean state 
became consolidated and achieved its paradigmatic character. 
Conservative historians are agreed on its characterisation: a

14 See EDWARDS, La Fronda Aristocrática (1927, 1976), pp 
80, 84-85; M. GONGORA, Civilización de Masas y Esperanza y Otros 
Ensayos (1987), pp 17, 186; EYZAGUIRRE, Fisonomía Histórica de 
Chile (1958) p 110.


16 This thesis can be found in EDWARDS, La Fronda 
Aristocrática (1927); F. A. ENCINA, Historia de Chile desde la 
Prehistoria hasta 1891 (1942-1952); by the same author, 
Portales (1934); EYZAGUIRRE, Ideario y Ruta de la Emancipación 
Chilena (1957); by the same author, Fisonomía Histórica de Chile 
(1958); GONGORA, Ensayo Histórico Sobre la Noción de Estado en 
Chile (1981); B. BRAVO LIRA, De Portales a Pinochet (1985); and 
strong, centralised state, alien to militarism and caudillismo, on the whole authoritarian—even if authority was strong—bound by law—an effective, pragmatic state, guarantor of order and tranquillity, congruent with the hierarchical character of an eminently rural and traditional society. Lastly, it would involve a basically national state, jealous of any foreign intromission of a political or cultural nature, and concordant with Chilean reality and experience.

The conservative authors share moreover the opinion that this state was to a large degree the creation of the intuitive talent of Diego Portales. According to them the genius of Portales and of his oeuvre would lie in having understood that the three hundred years prior to Independence had not been in vain, that irredeemably during this long lapse of time a number of ingrained values had become intrinsic to the collective soul of the nation, namely a "desire for order", a complete and solid respect for legally constituted authority, an unequivocal tendency towards passive obedience, a rejection of caudillismo and militarism, and a certain immunity towards everything that might be exogenous, contrary or alien to this tradition.

17 Not all of these authors exaggerate the point as do BRAVO LIRA and ENCINA. Cf B. BRAVO LIRA, Historia de las Instituciones Políticas de Chile e Hispanoamérica (1986), p 134; and ENCINA, Portales (1934, 1964), I, p 110; and II, p 210.

18 For instance, for a dogmatic conservative such as BRAVO LIRA, the "Portalian" institutionality was nothing more than a reformulation of traditional elements recuperated and revitalised from the Indian-Spanish past, a thesis backed by VIAL
Conservatives are in agreement also as to the historical causes which supposedly were to motivate this restoration. The latter would come about as a reaction or rejection of the liberal-republican attempts to establish a new political order during the period between 1817 and 1829, a period supposedly chaotic and anarchic according to this historical school. It would be a turning back, a disenchanted "retreat"--in the words of Gongora--from constructivist, rationalist, utopian, imitative, hence unrealistic postures which had carried the country to a loss of direction in its historical being, from which it was fortunately rescued in Lircay.

Notwithstanding this restoration, conservative authors recognise a certain degree of modernity in Portalian institutionality. They do not deny its progressive features, especially in the legal and educational fields. They admit that there exists a clear link with late Bourbon Enlightenment, and that its political discourse is tainted with French and North-American illuminist language. Some of them, Eyzaguirre and CORREA in a prologue to one of the books of BRAVO LIRA. According to the latter, "the so called Portalian regime and Portalian state are, in the end, nothing else but a new version, up-dated, of the colonial regime and state". See BRAVO LIRA (1985) pp 22, 26-28; also G. VIAL CORREA, "Prólogo" to the previous work, Régimen de Gobierno y Democracia en Chile (1988). The same hypothesis had been argued previously by F. SILVA VARGAS in VILLALOBOS et al (1974) III, p 536.

19 Despite the fact that they acknowledge the presence of a modern language in the "Portalian" institutionality, the conservative school considers that this discourse is nothing but a mould, a formal nomenclature lacking any autonomous sense. According to SILVA VARGAS, it may be true that a liberal language is used, but its content continued to be traditional. It is a
Góngora specifically, accept the fact that there exist concrete differences between the colonial order and Portalian institutionality; the first has a religious-ethical foundation whereas the second is imbued with a strong legal-political positivism. In spite of what has been said already, it is necessary to clarify that some of these conservative authors—Góngora specially, in his last works—have rejected the characterisation of this institutionality as being conservative-traditionalist, preferring to view it rather as a kind of discourse void of meanings. It speaks of a President of the Republic but this connotes the idea of Monarch or Throne. It seems as if a laicist political view is being imposed, but there continues the immemorial respect towards religion: the Altar. In other words, liberalism becomes a channel for traditional values: it accommodates to the persistent structural order which is conservative, and in the process, it becomes empty of proper meanings. See SILVA VARGAS in VILLALOBOS et al (1974) III, p 536.

This idea dates back to EDWARDS (1927) in whose text liberalism is given the character of an epiphenomenon. According to EDWARDS, liberalism is not defined in positive terms. It is no more than the "negation" of something, the negation of tradition and of the past (p 13). It is not defined in itself but rather in opposition to something truly affirmative. Its content is no more than a negation of content. Consequently, it does not create anything, rather it destroys; it does not unite, it disintegrates; it does not consolidate, rather it degenerates whatever it affects.

The perception of liberalism as a superficial or merely formalistic ideology is not a monopoly of authors who are not sympathetic to liberalism. It can also be found in the treatment of the better part of liberal historiography. In the hands of many liberal historians—for example DONOSO and HEISE—liberalism frequently appears limited to a simple sequence of constitutional reforms, or better still, the progressive strengthening of a parlamentarian system of political parties, or simply the possession of power in the hands of groups or persons identified as liberals. This perspective, generally legalistic, unconsciously projects into the XIXth century a superstructural or façade-like character, and in the last analysis ends up diminishing its historical significance.
"cautious liberalism".20

The Portalian restoration, according to this school, reorientated Chile in its historical path and helped it from

20 See M. GONGORA, "Romanticismo y Tradicionalismo" in (1987), pp 65-66. VIAL CORREA has also recently adhered to this reformulation, see "Prólogo" pp cit.

A careful analysis of GONGORA's book, *Ensayo Histórico Sobre la Noción de Estado en Chile* (1981) reveals a curious nuance of the "restoration" thesis. Notwithstanding the fact that he defines the Portalian regime as a "restoration", Góngora qualifies this regime calling it modern, positivist and fragile. It lacks, according to him, the spiritual and transcendent sense of the Spanish monarchy (pp 12-16, 27, 44-45). Its solidity is based solely on the respect for the law and the submission to authority on the part of aristocracy. Góngora, distancing himself from Edwards on this point, is of the opinion that Portales did not restore "the transcendent legitimacy of monarchy" (pp 27 and 83), but rather the principle of authority. He affirms, therefore, that the Portalian regime was able to subsist while it was able to maintain a fine "equilibrium" between authority and submission. Once this equilibrium was broken, historical "contingencies" would make possible its disappearance (pp 27-28). The Portalian regime was weak in terms of legitimacy, but strong in terms of authority.

Góngora's hypothesis is interesting because it departs to a certain degree from Edwards's. It ascertains the existence of a partial, not total, restoration. All in all, though, this hypothesis merits two considerations. In the first place, Góngora's implicit argument --that modernity lacks a transcendent order and thus legitimacy-- is refutable. In Chapter IX of this thesis, we argue to the contrary, that during the XIXth century, there were attempts at legitimatio (i.e. nationalism) which proved to be highly successful and were to demonstrate the opposite: modernity admits secular forms of transcendence and legitimacy. In the second place, Góngora's hypothesis remains closely attached to a positive valorisation of restoration as a phenomenon. Portales's oeuvre, according to Góngora, is praiseworthy notwithstanding its limitations. Portales restored the principle of authority despite the fact that he could not fully restore the monarchy. For Góngora as well as for Edwards, the fact that a restoration was attempted allowed Chile to consolidate a stable institutionality during the XIXth century. Góngora might differ from Edwards as to the extent of this "restoration", but he does not question the value attributed to the phenomenon itself, crux of the matter which permits us to continue considering both authors as members of the same historiographical school.
falling prey to caudillismos, disorder and anarchy, the evils that plagued the rest of the post-Hispanic American world. But inevitably, fatally, modernity was to affect Chile pushing it into a decline. This decadence supposedly began towards mid-century when liberalism ended its "instinctive" phase and became a doctrine, a fanatic, unstoppable and intolerable faith, which enveloped all, even those forces which because of their nature should have been opposed to it, for instance ultramontane conservatism.21 Far from uniting the country, this all-embracing capacity of liberalism, according to G. Vial, who has been the most insistent on the point, was to end up destroying the unity and consensus of society. It would weaken the constitutive elements of Chilean society. It would make the élite laicist and agnostic, depriving it of its long-held principles. It would stimulate sectarianism, dispersing the ruling group into multiple political parties each of which would promote their own aspirations, not the aspirations of the country. It would transform the presidential regime, univocal and effective, into a parliamentary system, plural, corrupt and devoid of prestige. In sum, it would allow the ruling class to become frivolous, cosmopolitan, mimetic and lacking in nationalist spirit.22 Consequently, far from erecting a new order, liberalism -- according to this interpretative line -- was to end up ruining


the pre-established order, disarticulating the Portalian institutionality, which had made Chile solid and exceptional in the Hispanic American context. In addition to this, it was to de-rail the country from its traditional Spanish, authoritarian and Catholic track, making it lose its identity, wholeness, destiny and hope.23

At first sight, these two schools seem antagonistic. Under closer scrutiny, though, a number of coincidences come to light which go unnoticed because of the hermeneutic distance and difference of values between the two.

To begin with, both views centre their lines of argument around the rupture with the Spanish past. Better still, both admit that this break existed. They differ, though, as to the historical moment wherein the rupture had supposedly taken place. According to the liberal posture, this had started to operate ever since Independence, whereas conservative historians prefer tentatively to situate this break during the second half of the XIXth century. In either case, its location in time, as we shall see, is not fortuitous.

Basically, the divergence between the two versions has to do with certain interpretative and analytical presuppositions assumed by one or the other of the historical schools. The liberal school erects its arguments on the basis of a supposedly linear and optimistic view of history. According to this, once

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23 On the value of tradition, see J. EYZAGUIRRE, "Por la Fidelidad a la Esperanza" in Hispanoamérica del Dolor (1969).
the break takes place everything that follows is thought to be a further deepening of the initial rupture, notwithstanding the acknowledgement of a partial inconclusion of the process in its earlier stages. Hence, any incapacity to accomplish the initial aims is interpreted as a surpassable obstacle, explicable in turn as part of an itinerary of apprenticeship through which it is necessary to pass.

Given these assumptions, it is not strange that the liberal thesis finds itself in need of establishing a rupturist origin: Independence. It is not surprising either that the period immediately following separation (1817-1829) should be understood as experimental. That the following stage (1829-1860) should be conceived as a "colonial reaction", as an obstacle to overcome, fits also with this linear-optimistic view of things. In sum, behind the liberal reading of the process, supposedly initiated with Independence, we encounter not only a factual historical diagnosis, but also a historical philosophical proposition which pretends to explain the change produced and which ought to take place in Chilean society in its trajectory towards modernity.

In turn, the conservative school structures its argument according to a cyclical and pessimist view of history. As in the case of the liberal school, this conditions its interpretative view. To begin with, because of this cyclical sense, it does not become necessary to establish a taxative or precise origin from whence to commence; the emphasis is placed
on the reversal of the process of change and on the constant return to a remote, though not defined, origin, rather than on an irreversible directional advance. All in all, though, the conservative cyclical dynamic admits possible temporal distancings from the referential centre: tradition. According to this view, it is as fatal to move away as it is to approximate oneself to this original nucleus.

The break with the Spanish past, according to this vision, is fatal and inevitable, though reversible. At different stages of the historical course of Chile, this thesis argues, there has and will take place a deviation from the Spanish traditional patrimony, producing a number of effects: loss of identity, crisis and decadence. Notwithstanding the latter, throughout this process the gravitational force of tradition periodically restrains the inevitable outcome returning the country towards its natural path. Hence, the analytical effort of the historians of this current is to trace the syncopated course of this recurrent history, valorising and fostering hopes in possible restorations which might revert the process towards the traditional nucleus.

In the light of this historical-philosophical presumption, we can appreciate how the conservative historical school is able to overcome several interpretative obstacles and thus respond to the liberal version. In any case, this cyclical structure permits this current to accept Independence. We have already seen how the conservative school also takes possession of
Independence. It only needs to identify a given presence of tradition in the period --neo-scholastic expressions in the legitimist discourse, initial autonomy prior to separatist intentions, and continuity of the economic and social order-- so as to present this juncture as a merely casual event as well as one conditioned by Hispanic tradition. This way the conservative current makes this referential landmark its own without having to confirm the interpretative assumptions of the liberals. This also occurs when attempting to explain the "Portalian" period (1830-1860). This would be a restoration, not a reaction, of the authoritarian and traditional Spanish spirit. Deep down, in the Portalian regime the conservative historical school conceives the classical example of the type of reversal which is always to follow any attempt to take distance from the traditional gravitational pole, in this case the anarchy of the decade of the 1820s. Something similar --argues this historical school-- was to occur after liberal hegemony imposed itself and there began to flourish a widely held sense of "crisis" (1860-1891), and again when the country fell prey yet another time to governmental "anarchy" (1920-1927, 1964-1973).(24)

24 In this respect, see: EDWARDS (1927); GONGORA (1981); VIAL CORREA (1981); BRAVO LIRA (1985).

Critical analysis of these conservative views can be found in: M. I. ALAMOS, M. AYLWIN, S. CORREA, C. GAZMURI and J. C. GONZALEZ, Perspectivas de Alberto Edwards (1975); C. GAZMURI, M. AYLWIN and J. C. GONZALEZ, Perspectivas de Jaime Eyzaguirre (1977); B. SUBERCASEAUX, "Diego Portales y la Junta Militar Chilena: Singularidad Histórica e Interpretación Retórica" in Cuadernos Americanaos, (México), 1, 1978, pp 107-127, also in Araucaria, no. 2; C. GAZMURI, Testimonios de una Crisis: 1900-1925 (1979); C. RUIZ, "Tendencias Ideológicas de la
The history of Chile—as seen by the conservatives—is not therefore a dialectical and escalated historical course which moves towards a final end-point, which is how liberals present it, but rather a zigzagging journey with advances and retreats, beginnings and returns, succeeding each other in pendular fashion.

If the conceptual images which structure the two visions differ, the conservative version in the last analysis depends on its liberal counterpart. In effect, what the conservative historical school does is nothing else but to take the liberal version which precedes it and submits it to a different interpretative structure. In this sense, the conservative thesis is basically contestational. It deals with the same problems and alternatives previously identified by liberal historiography and at most offers contrasting arguments which feed upon the explanatory deficiencies of the latter. As far as the insufficiency of change is concerned—phenomenon already diagnosed by liberal revisionism of the 1840s—the

conservative historiography opposes a valorisation of tradition while offering a skeptical view of the relative success of the breakdown, an aspect which had also been previously detected by mid-XIXth century liberal revisionism. In reality, both historical schools in their essence belong to the same original revisionist trunk.

The two historical schools accept the revisionist historical diagnosis even though they differ in their interpretative ideological aims. The XIXth century liberal historical school continues to be loyal to the original idea of break and continues accepting the viability of the utopia which emerges out of the supposed independentist "project". In turn, the conservative theses do not reject in its entirety the nuclear notion of rupture but reject any possible feasibility of the liberal utopia. Whereas one historiographical current continues thinking that the break gives way to a project still to be concluded, the other puts all its hopes on an anti-utopia—even though expressed as a past utopia—in order to subvert the liberal ideological pretensions and affirm the eventual impossibility of a total break.
If one accepts the hypothesis just formulated—that the historiographical distancing vis-a-vis Independence has been preferably interpretative and value-orientated—it should be easier to accept a last proposition, namely that the presently existing approximations on the subject constitute ideological propositions, or better still, mythifications.

Both the liberal as well as the conservative historical schools resort to mythical structures to comprehend and explain the phenomenon of Independence and its immediately following period. In order to understand historical time both of them construct a primaeval and fabulous time, that of the "origins" which is to serve as an axiological referential antecedent of historiographical discourse. Additionally, they assign to this absolute beginning a sacred and exemplary meaning. According to liberals, Independence itself constitutes a germinal beginning; whereas for conservatives, it is a mere reactualisation, a "new beginning", not less absolute, of a starting-point far more remote in the past.

That in both currents this primaeval origin or its eventual repetitions are conceived as the outcome of the deeds of "supernatural beings" confirms even more this mythical background. In fact, both cases share a common feature, namely

25 For the notion of myth, we have relied on M. ELIADE, Mito y Realidad (1963, Barcelona 1973); and J. RIVAND, Los Mitos: Su Función en la Sociedad y la Cultura (1987).
the configuration of a divine or hagiographic pantheon responsible for this ontological genesis.

Equally mythical is the foundational power assigned to the word and to language. This is more evident amongst the followers of the liberal school, but it is not altogether absent from conservative theses. Amongst the former it is thought that the republican "word" has given life to the new national being. Conservatives in turn put special emphasis on the initial political language of the period of Independence, supposedly a reactualisation of a lost, forgotten language: classical Spanish political theory. And as far as the "Portalian" phenomenon is concerned, even though they recognise that its merit is essentially pragmatic --after all, the restoration was due to the Minister, that "horrible man of facts"-- they do not deny the presence of a formal doctrine. Conservative historiography by construing a supposedly abstract "Portalian regime", presents a "reading" centred on the significant "gestural" feat --the Minister revealing a supposed preexisting "text". Consequently, in both cases there is a strong valorisation of the linguistic-semiotic component as constitutive of the historical "being" of Chile.

A mythical substratum underlies also the functionalism

26 According to EDWARDS (1976), p 56, "The majestically simple idea which inspired don Diego Portales was possible as well as capable of organising a lasting power and 'in shape' (en forma), because it rested on an organic spiritual force which had survived the triumph of Independence: the sentiment and habit of obeying the legitimately established Government".
of these historiographical propositions. In both currents, to remember the past implies a social ritual whose main objective is to project Chileans outside of their own present historical moment so as to "reveal" to them their true meaning or underlying historical significance in addition to explain to them the moment they live in or to which it is necessary to revert in order not to lose their original identity. Hence, both historiographical

27 It is telling that the principal work of the conservative historical school —EDWARDS's La Fronda Aristocrática, the text which according to Góngora contains "the greatest and best interpretation of the history of the past century"— should appear in 1927-1928 and serve to legitimate the dictatorship of Carlos Ibáñez del Campo.

It is also significant that the conservative theses recovered an extraordinary impetus on account of the 1973 military coup, and that its adherents supported the subsequent government, which was qualified as being "Portalian". The presence of these theses can be found for example in: Bando No. 5 de la Honorable Junta de Gobierno de Chile, 11 September 1973; Declaración de Principios del Gobierno de Chile (11 March 1974); Cardinal R. SILVA HENRÍQUEZ, "El Alma de Chile" Homily pronounced in the Tedeum of 18 September 1974, reproduced in GODøy (1976), pp 494-504; Objetivo Nacional del Gobierno de Chile, 23 December 1975; Acta Constitucional No. 2, Bases Esenciales de la Institucionalidad Chilena (13 September 1976); Clase Magistral de S. E. el Presidente de la República, General de Ejército Don Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, con Motivo de la Inauguración del Año Académico de la Universidad de Chile, 6 April 1979; Exposición Hecha al País por el Presidente de la República General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, 10 August 1980; Informe del Consejo de Estado Recaído en la Consulta Formulada por S. E. el Presidente de la República acerca del Anteproyecto sobre Nueva Constitución Política del Estado, 1 July 1980. See also, E. CAMPOS MENENDEZ editor, Pensamiento Nacionalista (1974).

It is noteworthy, though, that the conservative theses also appear in the writings of spokesmen who originally favoured the military coup and subsequently became part of the opposition. In this respect, see: E. FREI MONTALVA, "Los Factores Económico-Sociales y la Nueva Institucionalidad" in Futura Institucionalidad de la Paz en Chile II (1977); and P. AYLWIN AZOCAR, "El Camino Hacia la Democracia" in Futura Institucionalidad de la Paz en Chile I (1977), pp 171-210; and lastly see the recent revalorisation made by Carlos Altamirano —former Secretary General of the Socialist Party— of Portales,
schools are not afraid to repeat time and time again the same theses, the same interpretations, the same "facts". What is important --paraphrasing Malinowski-- is not to satisfy a scientific curiosity with respect to the past but rather to respond to a primaeval "religious" need consisting in reviving original realities in conformity with an immemorial historical liturgy.28

This explains, in our opinion, why in Chile from the XIXth century on, up to our own day, the historiographical debate has been so sectarian and repetitive. Deep down, this debate revolves around canonical creeds and involves priestly castes which remit themselves to a series of "truths" which have been previously defined by value-orientated interpretative schools. Therefore, to pretend --as some have attempted-- that behind these views there are no ideological pretensions seems to us, to say the least, suspicious. To deny them the clearly doctrinal finality which motivates them, or to hide the fact that they implicitly offer programmes to face the present and future of Chile, in the long run impoverishes them.

which is inspired by ENCINA, in P. POLITZER, Altamirano (Buenos Aires 1989) p 180.

EDWARDS's conservative theses have been backed and repeated by the most diverse historians, commentarists and politicians of the last fifty years, not necessarily "conservative", for instance: E. Frei, R. Tomic, J. Prat, J. C. Jobet, A. Pinto, C. Almeyda, S. Onofre Jarpa, G. Marcella, A. Gunder Frank, F. J. Moreno, T. Halperín, B. Loveman etc. On this subject, see JOCELYN-HOLT (1990b) Chapter 1.

At an interpretative level --basically the level wherein these propositions operate-- it is difficult for historical visions to be neutral. This scarcely diminishes the enormous historiographical contribution made by these historical schools. That out of a series of problematic questions emanating from the subject of Independence, there would emerge answers to a large degree ideological and discriminating does not tell us anything except that this is how throughout the XIXth and XXth centuries the analytical and historiographical work in Chile with respect to political history has been understood and practised. In any case, though, this has not impeded us from knowing more about the history of the period. The theoretical presumptions, be they positivist or historicist, that are behind these two historical schools have not prevented us from compiling an extraordinary accumulation of factual material. Better still, it has provided us with significant and symbolic parameters which undoubtedly have enriched Chilean culture.

In reality, the problem does not lie in the possible ideological nature of both visions, something which is perhaps inevitable with any interpretative perspective, but rather in the vices and defects in which some --not all-- of their spokesmen and defenders sometimes fall, basically the orthodox and coarse vulgarisation of some extraordinarily lucid theses which are relentlessly repeated --those of Edwards for example--, the pretension of monopolic veracity --the idea that these theses are the only valid interpretations of Chilean history, and not just
additional hypotheses—, and finally the pious purism which tries to persuade us that here are no ideological presumptions at play, and that only "Science" reigns supreme.29

29 It is difficult for us to accept a comment such as the one found in R. KREBS WILCKENS, "Mario Gongora y la Historiografía Chilena", Reflexiones sobre Historia, Política y Religión (1988), p. 28, wherein its author asserts that "Mario Gongora... depoliticised and de-ideologised historiography. He saw in it, not an instrument of action, but rather a way of thinking. As any authentic science, history had as an end the knowledge and comprehension of reality. It was governed by an ethos of truth". Gongora, as a matter of fact, was a historian and an intellectual highly prone to politically and ideologically-charged positions during his long career. He was a member of the Communist Party in his youth. He was a member of Acción Católica, he belonged to the Juventud Conservadora and headed Lircay, the ideological organ of the Falange. Subsequently, he sympathised with the nationalist orientation assumed by the military government expressed in its Declaración de Principios. He became Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Humanities of the Universidad de Chile during the years 1976 and 1977. And, finally, towards the end of his life, he showed himself to be especially critical of economic neo-liberalism. He wrote extensively about problems of a conjunctural nature in journals and newspapers, publications which—according to his own words—were "perhaps the most dear part of my work": GONGORA (1980), p. 9.

His apparently more "objective" monographs—Evolución de la Propiedad Rural en el Valle del Puanque (1956) written with J. BORDE, and Origen de los Inquilinos de Chile Central (1960)—for instance—are moreover inexplicable without taking into account the background of ideological discussion which preoccupied the country at the time of publication. Gongora's contribution to that discussion is not exempt from direct political commitment. The book on the Valle del Puanque, pretended to refute extensively diffused hypotheses on latifundismo, amongst others those of the structuralist social studies school of ECLA. In sum, to deny this ideological background to the work of Gongora demands better and more convincing arguments.

To define science in terms of an "ethos of truth" is in itself an ethical and not an epistemological judgement; hence KREBS's comment confuses planes and does not clarify the problem. Today—post Kuhn, post Popper and others—science has to do with the formulation and refutation of hypotheses, not with a supposed "truth" in itself refutable. Consequently, one can be both ideological and scientific, as long as one presents hypotheses in tentative terms.
Historiography's tendency to pronounce itself in ideological terms towards unresolved questions inherited from Independence, evidences another crucial aspect: the lack of sufficient distance we still have from the type of challenges which Independence as an historical phenomenon proposes. The problem of the roles of tradition and change in a society on the road to modernisation continues to be strongly conditioned by the views and categories --both liberal as well as conservative-- generated by the very same process of Independence.

It is worthwhile, thus, to ask if it is advisable to continue confronting these issues --that of tradition and change-- according to these parameters. We intuit that it is not, unless one wants to prolong the impasse of explanation which currently sterilises debate. To insist time and time again that the insufficiency of modern change is due to "obstacles" which do not deny the viability of the modernising "project", or better still to reiterate that the insufficiency of change is inevitable given the inviability of utopias, simply paralyses discussion. Nevertheless, one cannot pretend to propose an overall reformulation on this subject matter totally outside the margins of these views. After all, these interpretations have allowed us to understand important aspects of the phenomenon. More so, they are consubstantial with the phenomenon itself, without this meaning that they are identical to the analysed object.

Regarding in this light the central subject which we faced in this dissertation --the relation between tradition and
modernity *vis-à-vis* the Independence of Chile, we proposed several objectives. In the first place, we had to acknowledge that any attempt to provide a fuller explanation of a landmark as "studied" and written about as this one, had to be framed within the categories and the interpretative framework already familiar to all. The weight of historiography is always an epistemological limitation in historical analysis, but a limitation which does not necessarily have to prevent possible innovations. Hence, in second place, we tried to preserve and combine the basic criterion of the two historiographical schools so as to maximise a certain residual interpretative potential which the mere dialectical contraposition between the two historical schools until now has prevented from being exploited. We have not pretended with this to achieve a hybrid "harmony" or a foreseeable "synthesis" predictable beforehand. At most, our intention has been to take advantage of some interpretative possibilities not yet developed which can be deduced from the factual and interpretative material presently at hand.

Any attempt to combine and reorder the two explanatory hypotheses already formulated implied, though, to minimise the implicit values which accentuated their antagonism. We tend to think that these value judgements do not have to make these theses absolutely self-sufficient nor mutually excluding of one another: after all these traditional visions --independently of their ideological differences-- have a common origin: mid-XIXth century liberal revisionism. Consequently by qualifying the
implied value judgements we thought that it was possible to rescue the better part of the contribution of both historiographical schools without having to pronounce ourselves unilaterally in favour or against one or the other. In sum, we have proposed ourselves to question this tendency to mythologise keeping a safe critical distance from both versions.30 We do not pretend with this to have been more "objective" or have come up with the "Truth"; we have offered at most "another" set of hypotheses which can well be refuted, hopefully with another global set of interrelated hypotheses, so as to continue advancing in the discussion.

* * *

As to the specific conclusions arrived at from our perspective, we can summarise them thus:

Independence is a conjunctural phenomenon within a process of much longer duration which embraces it, a process which can be viewed as emancipatory in as much as its effects imply setting aside tradition while accepting modernity.

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30 One of the problems which often occurs when criticising historiographical currents is that one tends to reinforce the opposite version without addressing oneself critically to the theses common to both. See our critique of S. VILLALOBOS, Portales, Una Falsificación Histórica (1990), "Un Libro Revisionista" in Dimensión Histórica de Chile 6/7 (1989-1990) pp 275-284.
Both Independence as well as the wider process in which it is inserted constitute a project, but this "project" as far as the Chilean ruling élite is concerned, was exogenous and a result of accident rather than of the farsighted and voluntarist conscience of this group. Hence, the XVIIIth century Bourbon modernising project had to be co-opted, and during the critical conjuncture of Independence the republican legitimating order had to be accepted in order to justify a posteriori events which had originated outside of Chile.

The political and ideological change starting in 1810 constituted a break of a legitimating nature; but this did not mean that tradition would totally disappear or that the consequences which the break was to eventually bring about were foreseen. We are dealing here with a traditional ruling group which appropriated for itself a modernising project inspired by a certainty that the core of its prerrogatives would be maintained or even increased as a result of this appropriation. Thus a large quota of tradition was to persist, at times provided with legitimacy, other times no, at the same time that an eventual and global dynamic of change with a high degree of autonomy from those who opted for this new order was set into motion and potentiated.

For similar reasons, even if they appear as superstructural phenomena, Bourbon modernisation and Independence, in the long run, were to make possible a future global change of an utopian and ideological nature; seen in this
light, neither the modernising impact of the XVIIIth century, nor its political republican reinforcement were epiphenomena.

Lastly, since a break in the order of legitimacy took place and nothing makes one presume that tradition --although surviving-- continued to be legitimated, it is highly doubtful that the thesis which affirms the existence of a possible "restoration" of the colonial order subsequent to 1829 is valid.

Independence was not a "pause" eventually frustrated; it was an insufficient and partial break admittedly, but not because of this any less transcendental or revolutionary, even if the latter --we insist one more time-- was to a large degree unconscious.

* * *

These conclusions distance and approximate us at the same time to traditional liberal and conservative views of Independence. But, just as is the case with these views, the object in question shall always in the long run elude us. The past is an instant in time which absents and escapes us and which we attempt to imprison with images; not with any image, but with the ones that precisely that same past transmits to us. However,
any attempt to reflect and read in images this absence, in the end turns us all into sorcerers. In reality, History is like the Cheshire Cat which appears and disappears, until at last it begins to fade away gradually, as in slow motion, beginning with the tip of the tail, next the feet and body, until the only thing remaining is the grin suspended in mid-air. It is the historian’s task to break the spell and conjure back the Cat, starting out from the one thing that remains, the grin.
* If not otherwise stated, the publication was published in Santiago de Chile. The first date corresponds to the first edition.

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