

# Towards a characterization of colonial power on Rapa Nui (1917-1936)

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*This paper seeks to characterize the structure of colonial power on Rapa Nui from 1917 to 1936, the years of the so-called “Temperamento Provisorio” (“Provisional Code”). Based on the analysis of documents acquired from the archives of the Naval Ministry and the Administrative Division of Valparaíso, this study provides a reflection on the actions of the Chilean State and the “Compañía Explotadora de Isla de Pascua” during those years.*

*Este trabajo busca aportar con algunos elementos para una caracterización de la situación del poder colonial en Rapa Nui durante el periodo 1917-1936, los años del así llamado “Temperamento Provisorio”. Teniendo por base la revisión de documentos provenientes del Archivo del Ministerio de Marina y del Archivo de la Intendencia de Valparaíso, llevaremos a cabo una reflexión en torno a la acción del Estado chileno y la “Compañía Explotadora de Isla de Pascua” durante estos años.*

## Introduction

At the beginning of the twentieth century, one of the most important indigenous uprisings in the history of Rapa Nui occurred in reaction to the oppressive living conditions and colonial domination of the island imposed by the Company in charge of its exploitation, the Compañía Explotadora de Isla de Pascua, or CEDIP.<sup>1</sup> The rebellion, commonly referred to as the Angata Rebellion, occurred between May and July 1914 and was described by various sources from the era, including a report written by the Armada, Professor Vives Solar’s article based on the Rapanui eye-witness accounts, and the testimony of Katherine Routledge (Hotus et al. 1988; Routledge 1919; Vives Solar 1917). Although it was brought to an end, the rebellion’s aftermath included a series of significant changes in the political structures of the colonial presence on the island (Hotus et al. 1988).<sup>2</sup>

One product of the rebellion, responding to the need to create a new ‘colonial pact’ between the State, the Rapanui community, and the Company, was the Navy’s designation of a Maritime Subdelegate (Subdelegado Marítimo) that was independent of the CEDIP, or at least nominally so. Likewise, the signing of the “Temperamento Provisorio”, or “Provisional Code”, in 1917 established a new contract between the Company and the State, reconfiguring the framework of the social relations on Rapa Nui. The “Provisional Code”

had seven points in which the State imposed new rules and obligations for the Company in exchange for a *free* lease of the island. Only two of these seven points dealt with the islanders. The first declared that 2000 hectares of land were to be kept for the use of the Rapanui people and for public services. The second established the CEDIP’s obligation to grant the Rapanui – via the Subdelegate – access to the Company’s land for fishing practices and the collection of animal fuel. This new contract, provisional in theory, lasted effectively until February 1936.

The first independent Subdelegate, who became the official representative of the State on Rapa Nui, was José Ignacio Vives Solar (1914-1917). His successors during the “Provisional Code” were Exequiel Acuña (1917-1921), Luis Zepeda (1921-1922), Exequiel Acuña for a second time (1922-1926), Carlos Recabarren (1926-1928), Carlos Millán (1928), Carlos Recabarren for a second time (1928-1931), Alberto Cumplido (1931), Eduardo Ávalos (1931-1933), Hernán Cornejo (1933-1935), and finally, Manuel Olalquiaga (1935-1936).

This article aims to characterize the forms of colonial power on the island during this key period of 1917 to 1936, by reflecting on and analyzing the actions of both the Chilean State and the Company. We use archival sources from the Archive of the Maritime Ministry and the Archive of the Intendencia de Valparaíso as the foundation of our analysis.<sup>3</sup>

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## The State

In order to characterize the State presence on Rapa Nui, one must go beyond the most obvious answer: colonialism. The particular nature of this Chilean colonial state is extremely relevant to understanding the dynamics of its relationships with the Company and the indigenous Rapanui.

One of the first issues that surges to the fore when considering these questions is the semi-colonial and somewhat stunted character of the annexing colonial power: Chile.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to other colonial enterprises of the era, the Chilean presence in Polynesia stands out precisely for its precarious nature. During most of the period from 1917 to 1936, Rapa Nui was considered merely a legal territory (or *territorio fiscal*) of Chile that was turned over for exploitation to a private company owned by powerful foreign interests.<sup>5</sup> During this time, though defensive of its political sovereignty over the island, the Chilean government was incapable of certifying public properties on the island, just as they were unable to require that the CEDIP pay rental fees for the utilization of lands and livestock on Rapa Nui (Vergara 1939; see also Porteous 1981).

However, despite these limitations, the actions of the State apparatus had a tremendous impact on the island. The existence of permanent government institutions, charged with regulating of the lives of indigenous islanders, constituted a force that had a powerful impact on the social relations of the Rapanui population. The periodic arrival of military functionaries, civil staff and professionals, and the annual arrival of Navy ships, combined with the latent threats of deportation, gave the State power a strong presence that was difficult to ignore (Foerster 2010).

Overall, this State presence on Rapa Nui manifested itself in several different forms. One of the most important, according to sources from the era, was the annual arrival of naval missions. These missions informed the Maritime Ministry about the situation on the island, while also serving to ensure that local officials and the population obeyed the directives of the government. At the same time, they fulfilled the agreement between the State and the Company while carrying out other needed tasks. For instance, they helped to resolve conflicts that had arisen between the population and authorities by carrying out summary investigations and collecting information from all parties involved in the conflicts. And, generally speaking, the decisions of naval commanders, backed up by armed contingents, had a resolute and definitive character, and were respected nearly across the board.

While they were short visits, the arrival of these naval missions resulted in a substantial strengthening of State institutions and power on the island. For

several days, the commanders appeared to have the capacity to “resolve everything”, from questions of administrative order, to problems of a moral nature, such as the existence of “poorly constituted” Rapanui families. The following excerpt is from a visit of the *Baquedano*, under Captain Felipe Wiegand, in December 1921:<sup>6</sup>

“Tan pronto se hubo fondeado en Hanga Roa viene a bordo el Sub-Delegado de la Isla y representante de la Casa Williamson Balfour [...] Los Oficiales inician el cumplimiento de las comisiones recibidas que se distribuyen así: Capitan de Corbeta Sr. Fernández: Atención e investigación de los reclamos elevados por los nativos, tanto los escritos como aquellos verbales [...] Contador Io. Sr. Astorga: Revisación de inventarios de los efectos fiscales y de las dependencias confeccionadas el año 1917. Cirujano Io. Sr. Merino: Exámen sobre la propagación de la avariosis entre los nativos y el mismo sobre la lepra y si los leprosos reclusos en la leprosería son atendidos conforme al acuerdo vijente del año 17 por la Comisión consultiva de la isla. Capellán Sr. Fernandois: Fuera de la misión propia de su Ministerio, tuvo especial encargo de cerciorarse si se cumple con la obligación respecto a la alimentación de los nativos y averiguar los nombre de aquellos que no tenían lejitimamente constituida la familia [...] Finalmente, los reclamos recibieron solución con arreglo a la Ley el mismo día de nuestra salida en lo que respecta a familias no lejitimadas y los casos de amancebamiento.”

[As soon as we [the *Baquedano*] had docked in Hanga Roa, the Subdelegate of the Island and the representative of the Williamson Balfour Co. came aboard.... The officers began carrying out their assigned duties which were distributed as follows: Captain Fernandez, attention to the complaints of the natives, both written and verbal... First accountant Astorga, revision of the inventories of public property and the dependencies created in 1917... Surgeon Merino: Examination and study of disease among the natives, as well as specifically leprosy and the lepers confined to the leper colony in order to determine if they are being cared for in accordance with the 1917 agreement of the Commission for the island; Mr. Fernandois, aside from the requirements of his own ministry, was specially charged with verifying the nutrition of the population and to track those, by name, who did not have a legitimately constituted family... Finally, all issues regarding illegitimate families and children received resolutions in accordance with the law on the day of our departure] (AMM 1921a).

However, State power found itself in a very different situation once those naval missions abandoned the island. In fact, the duties of the Maritime Subdelegate, the principal representative of the Chilean government on Rapa Nui, appeared very similar to those of the commanders: periodically informing the Maritime Ministry of the situation on the island, ensuring the implementation of government directives, and ensuring that the agreements between the Company and State established in 1917 were respected. Among the various other responsibilities that figured in the duties of the Subdelegate was also the resolution of conflicts that arose between the population of the island, local authorities, and the livestock company, as well as the administration of the offices of the civil registry, the police, the school, leper policies, ensuring the functioning of roads, public spaces, cemeteries, etc.

As was the case with the commanders during their brief visits to the island, the Subdelegate was also charged with the primary objective of regulating all aspects of the public and private lives of the Rapanui people. Among the many tasks included in this objective were the carrying out of periodic censuses of the population and inventories of public holdings, as well as the enforcement of a series of ordinances aimed at ensuring the cleanliness and hygiene of the indigenous people and at strengthening “good and moral habits”.<sup>7</sup>

However, the actions of the Subdelegate were nearly always questioned, especially when no naval contingents were present on the island. Not only did the indigenous population resist his authority, but local authorities, including CEDIP administrators, also resisted his decisions and authority on occasion.<sup>8</sup> These tensions sometimes came to light at certain opportune moments, which then allowed these authorities to seek solutions from the visiting naval commanders – solutions which were sometimes unfavorable to the Subdelegates themselves.

In the mid-1930s, Maritime Subdelegate Manuel Arturo Olalquiaga described one of these instances. Upset by the attitudes of naval officers towards him, he complained about them in the following terms:

“Todo [esto] lo considero improcedente, y aún hasta si se quiere, es [indigno], porque [...] estos procederes rebajan la Autoridad, poniéndola en situación ridícula, haciéndole hacer un papel verdaderamente despreciable, y siento el decirlo que esto pasa solo en la Isla de Pascua, pues en el Continente en cualquier Reten de Carabineros, que es atendido solo por un simple Sargento, el capitán del cuerpo, al hacer su visita, no vá a interrogar a los habitantes de alrededor del Reten, para preguntar de la conducta, ni si tienen reclamos en su contra, y si encuentra alguna falta en el Sargento, lo cambia y le

aplica el castigo que merece, pero sin que nadie se dé cuenta de ello, esto se hace para no denigrar al Sargento, a la Autoridad [...]; pero aquí sucede lo contrario y es por eso que los nativos abusan y no se les quita la mala costumbre, porque los mismos marinos tienen la culpa. [...] habría sido preferible un puesto de portero de la Moneda, pues ese insignificante puesto, lo considero más digno que el de Subdelegado de ésta Isla, aunque de todo lo que me ha pasado no me debía extrañar, porque en una comida que me dio de despedida mi hijo, Mayor de Carabineros José Manuel Olalquiaga Ibarra, un Sr. Comandante que se encontraba presente, me dijo que el puesto de Subdelegado de la Isla de Pascua no era nada, porque un Sargento de su escuadrón tenía más atribuciones, de lo que yo me quise ofender, sin saber que me estaban diciendo toda la verdad.”

[All of this I consider out of line, and would go so far as to call it undignified... Because these procedures undercut the authorities, putting them in a ridiculous situation, forcing them to take on a truly despicable role... and it is worth stating that this only happens on Pascua, for at any police station on the continent, that is attended only by one simple sergeant, when his superior comes to make his rounds, he wouldn't interrogate the nearby inhabitants to ask about the conduct of the official and then fire him and punish him should he find any complaints about that sergeant, they wouldn't do this even if he had active complaints filed against him. This would be seen as a humiliation to the Sergeant, the Authority of the office. But here, this happens, and this is why the natives abuse the law, refuse to let go of their evil habits, because the navy themselves are guilty of this.... Being a doorman at the Moneda [the Palace of Government] would have been preferable, as even that insignificant post I consider more dignified than being Subdelegate of this island. It now doesn't seem that strange that at a farewell dinner hosted by my son, the Chief of Police José Manuel Olalquiaga Ibarra, a commander who was present at the event, told me that the position of Subdelegate of this island was nothing, because any sergeant of a squadron had more power. At the time I was offended, without realizing that what he was telling me was completely true] (AMM 1936b:24).

The weakness of the authority of the Maritime Subdelegate, and therefore the weakness of State structures on the island during this period, can be traced to various causes. On the one hand, it was due to the inexistence of an effective colonial policy from the State which translated into a near constant abandonment of the inhabitants of the island by the Chilean State. At the

level of local government institutions, this translated into a chronic lack of basic resources like medications, clothing, educational supplies, construction materials and agricultural implements. In fact, for the most part the only resources readily available to the Subdelegate were the public animals and lands (often in poor condition), and the resources that the CEDIP was required to provide according to the “Provisional Code”.<sup>9</sup>

For example, during the administration of the Maritime Subdelegate Carlos A. Recabarren, many of his petitions to authorities on the continent didn't even receive a response. In the case of the most urgent appeals, like those for medications or for seeds needed for planting, the Maritime Subdelegate himself ended up taking responsibility to acquire these goods during his sporadic journeys to Valparaíso. It was precisely Recabarren who mentioned the long delays, and perhaps the disinterest, of the government in responding to the various needs of the island:

“[...] Desde que me hice cargo de mis puestos, constantemente he pedido muchas cosas, a la Dirección del Territorio Marítimo de Valparaíso, para los habitantes de la Isla de Pascua, primeramente pedí un galpón para los leprosos que costó 4,000\$ [la leprosería había sido destruida por un incendio en 1926] y que lo conseguí siendo Jefe del Territorio Marítimo Don Santiago Lorca, Capitán de Navío, como también conseguí con él mismo [...] para la Policía y otras cosas más; nuevamente he escrito al Señor Ministro de Marina, al Señor, Don Luis Escobar Molina, Jefe del apostadero naval de Valparaíso, al Señor Visitador de Escuelas de Valparaíso, para dos galpones para escuelas, que son muy necesarios y muchas cosas útiles para la Isla, que poco a poco va llegando, y que mucho se me ha prometido para la Isla de Pascua”.

[Since taking charge of my responsibilities, I have constantly asked for many things from the Office of Maritime Territory in Valparaíso, things for the inhabitants of Easter Island. First, I asked for a shelter for the lepers that cost \$4,000 [the previous leprosarium was destroyed by fire in 1926], that I received thanks to the fact that the chief of that institution was Don Santiago Lorca. Just as I also received with his help... [goods] for the police and some more. I have now written again to the Maritime Minister, to Mr. Luis Escobar Molina, to the head of the port of Valparaíso, and to the Superintendent of Schools of Valparaíso for two shelters for the schools that are very necessary and many useful things for the Island, that little by little arrive, despite having been most promised for Easter Island] (AIV 1927: Folio 26-27(14)).

Another cause of the structural weakness of the Chilean State on Rapa Nui, from the point of view of State authorities, can be traced to the inexistence of a solid coercive apparatus. The lack of a police force or presence of a stable armed force and the absence of penal system that fit the needs of the local government were permanent complaints of Chilean functionaries.<sup>10</sup> During this era, the only force the Subdelegate had at his command to use to impose order and authority was a somewhat squalid police force comprised entirely of indigenous Rapanui. And even that force couldn't count on permanent funding by the Subdelegation and was dependent on the Company, which paid their salaries to prevent losses produced by cattle rustling, and on the charity of a few philanthropists dubbed the “Amigos de Pascua”:

“La actual Policía de la Isla de Pascua, es la misma de 1927. Se necesita ropa y otros elementos más, para que sea más respetada y al mismo tiempo tomen más interés y cumplir con los reglamentos de Policía, que existen en la Republica. He escrito sobre éste particular, al Señor Director del Territorio Marítimo y al jefe de Carabineros, Señor Don Carlos R. Director, pidiendo, ropa zapatos, monturas, y todas las demás cosas que son necesarias para éste ramo. La Policía, actualmente y antes las paga la Cia Explotadora Isla de Pascua. Sus sueldos son los mismos que del año 1925, 1926, 1927 y el actual 1928. El año 1926, mandó ropa para la Policía, el Señor Capitán de Navío, Don Santiago Lorca P”

[The Police force of the island is the same as it was in 1927. Clothing is needed as well as other things, so that they might be more respected and at the same time they may take more interest and can fulfill the requirements of the police that exist in the Republic. I have written about this issue to the Director of the Maritime Territory and the Chief of Police, as well as to Mr. Carlos R. Director, asking them for clothing, saddles, shoes, and all the other things necessary for this institution. The police, today as in the past, are paid by the Company. Their salaries are the same as they were in the years of 1925, 1926, 1927, and the current year of 1928. In 1926, the Navy Captain Santiago Lorca P. sent the clothing for the police] (AIV 1928a: Folio 31(16)-32).

At other times, when this police force was disbanded due to its inability to combat the theft of livestock from the Company, the Subdelegate simply lacked any way of ensuring that his orders were respected. Aware of this, Recabarren wrote a series of urgent petitions to the police force on the mainland during 1929:

“Dejo constancia en mi libro de apuntes diarios, los continuos robos de los habitantes de la Isla de Pascua; él poco respecto á la autoridad de la Isla, a la Cia Explotadora, etc. La Cia Explotadora me comunica seguido los robos que hay a diarios, sin poder pillar a los ladrones. Existia aquí una Policia pagada por la Cia Explotadora, se componía esta Policia, de 7 personas, que són, Juan Aracki, Juan Tepano y Matias Hotus que eran los jefes y de cuatro guardianes, sin pillar ningún ladrón; en vista que siempre continuaban los robos, la Cia Explotadora no pagó más á ésta Policia, desde el 31 de Enero de 1929. La población no tuvo guardianes, hasta el 1. de Abril que nombré uno para la vigilancia, etc, pagado por ésta Subdelegación Maritima, en la actualidad cuento con un solo guardia, siendo él censo último de 385 habitantes. En éstos momentos críticos para la Isla me hé apresurado escribir a mis jefes, Director Jeneral del Territorio Maritimo y otras personas más, pidiendo carabineros, para él órden público para evitar robos y castigar á los culpables, y que marche por él camino del bien, como tiene ordenado el Subdelegado Marítimo que suscribe.”

[My diary of daily events testifies to the continual thefts carried out by the inhabitants of Easter Island; the little respect for the authorities on the Island and the Company. The Company reports to me regularly that there are daily robberies, without any possibility of finding the thieves. There used to be a police force on this island, paid for by the Company, which consisted of 7 men and were equally unable to stop the robberies. Juan Aracki, Juan Tepano, and Matias Hotus were the leaders and four guardians. In light of this the Company stopped paying this police force on the 31st of January, 1929. The population had no protection until the 1st of April, when I created a single guard paid for by this office of the Maritime Subdelegation. Today that force is actually made up of one person, as the previous census showed only 385 inhabitants of the island. In these moments so critical for the island, I have pushed myself to write to my superiors, from the Director General of the Maritime Territory to others, asking for police, so that public order can be maintained, to stop these robberies, to punish those responsible, and so that the island can march forward in the right direction, responsibilities required by the Maritime Subdelegation] (AIV 1929:Folio 7538).

This problematic situation generated, in repeated instances, a power vacuum that allowed not only the inhabitants of the island to challenge the Subdelegate's authority, but also allowed State functionaries to ignore his orders, the very same functionaries who

should have carried them out. Conflicts like the bitter disputes between Recabarren and the Police Prefect Cupertino Martinez, who had arrived in 1930 to strengthen the police force on the island, are a good example of this dynamic.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, around the mid-1930s, a conflict along these lines occurred; one that is worth mentioning. This one occurred between Olalquiaga and his predecessor, Hernán Cornejo, who had dedicated himself to sowing the seeds of distrust among the islanders against Olalquiaga; corralled in by the continual attacks, Olalquiaga lamented this conflict in his memoirs:

“Como Uds. comprenderá, desde el primer momento mi antecesor se ensañó conmigo, hostilizándome en lo más mínimo que pudo, y no contento con todo esto, creó y posesionó a todos los nativos de una pésima atmósfera a mi persona, atmósfera que me ha orijinado un sinnúmero de contratiempos y transtornos, porque como les dijo a los nativos, que yo era un pobre diablo que venía a quitarles los plátanos y camotes, éstos no trepidaron en demostrar su desconfianza y desobediencia al suscrito.”

[As you will understand, from the first moment my predecessor drew me in, antagonizing as best he could, and not being content with this, he created and charged the native population with an acidic atmosphere towards me, which has created an uncountable number of conflicts and disorder for me, because he told the natives that I was simply a miserable little devil that had come to steal their sweet potatoes and plantains, they don't hesitate to demonstrate their distrust and disobedience of me] (AMM 1936a:3).

One of the formulas implemented by the Maritime Authority in an attempt to make State institutions more effective and legitimate was the inclusion of some islanders within the structures of those same institutions. In a short amount of time, these persons came to fulfill an important support role for the mechanisms of colonial power, without fully becoming functionaries of it. The relevance of these figures was underlined in 1921 in the report of the captain of the Baquedano about one of his visits to Rapa Nui:

“Al Sub-delegado [se refiere al Subdelegado Maritimo Exequiel Acuña] se le comunicó la órden cablegráfica que lo autorizaba a viajar en el buque para Valparaíso y en consecuencia determino nombrar Sub-Delegado Maritimo interino y Oficial del Registro Civil al Sr. Luis Zepeda [...] así mismo, nombró jefe de los nativos y Comandante de Policia al más respetado de ellos, llamado Juan Tepano (ex-

rey) que es querido y considerado por la mayoría de los pascuenses, para que actúe entre ellos y los dirija secundado por cuatro ayudantes de su propia elección [...]"

[To the Subdelegate [referring to Exequiel Acuña] the order was communicated by cable that authorized the trip to Valparaíso and as a result, I decided to name as interim Subdelegate and head of the Civil Registry Mr. Luis Zepeda... I also named as chief of the natives and commander of the police force, Juan Tepano, (former king) the most respected among them. He is loved and well-considered by the majority of the islanders. He is to act among them and will be supported by four helpers of his own choosing] (AMM 1921b).

Aside from Juan Tepano, who occupied several different positions as police officer and functionary of the CEDIP, various other Rapanui participated actively in the Chilean institutional framework on the island, giving active support to State organizations, the livestock company, and the church.<sup>12</sup> Some of these were: Juan Araki, Pedro Atán, as well as Mariana Atán and Andrés Chavez (teachers), among others.<sup>13</sup>

The authorities' need to incorporate indigenous inhabitants in Chilean institutional structures was also expressed in some of their efforts to create formal structures of indigenous representation. They sought to not only combat the indifference or resistance of the islanders to the State institutions (something very widespread), but also to generate spaces within which the Rapanui had a limited role of participation in local governance, even if only for appearances.<sup>14</sup>

In 1921, while attempting to uproot the embedded antipathy of the islanders, Subdelegate Exequiel Acuña took up a proposal to create a court, a "Juzgado de Paz", on the island comprised of islanders. The function of this court was limited to endorsing the decisions, punishments, and sanctions imposed by the Subdelegate, as well as ensuring the protection and development of "public morality". While the proposal was rejected on the mainland, because it did not fit within the established legal norms of Chilean legislation, the proposal can still be understood as another attempt by the authorities to increase their legitimacy among the indigenous islanders. This same motivation drove Subdelegate Olalquiaga, 15 years later, to designate Pedro Atán as the first Rapanui mayor (*alcalde*).<sup>15</sup>

"Para efectuar una labor eficaz, como también para introducir las normas de las ciudades y pueblos civilizados, resolví darles una conferencia sobre la Autoridad Comunal [...] Una vez convencido que se habían posesionado bien de mi explicación, procedí

ha hacer el nombramiento de Alcalde y llevar a cabo la elección de regidores [...] Si bien es verdad que la labor desarrollada por estos hombres ha sido casi nula, es menester tomar en cuenta que es la primera vez que se constituye una Municipalidad en la Isla, razón fundamental para comprender que ellos no han podido en 4 meses desplegar todas sus actividades en su cometido, tanto por no estar perfectamente al corriente de sus deberes, como también por no contar con los medios elementales para ello."

[To make for more efficient work and to introduce the norms of civilized cities and towns, I resolved to give a conference about Communal Authority... Once I was convinced that they had grasped my explanation, I proceeded to name a Mayor [Alcalde] and to plan elections for other positions of leadership... If it can be said that the labor of these men has been nearly entirely negligible, it must be taken into account that it is the first time that a Municipality has been formed on this island. This is a fundamental reason that they have not, in the course of 4 months, been able to carry out all the activities in their mission. They are neither fully up to date on their duties nor do they have the resources for them] (AMM 1936a:12).

However, neither the weakness of State institutions nor the creation of these forms of Rapanui representation within official institutions impeded authorities from abusing the indigenous population. Such was the case of Subdelegate Acuña in the 1920s, who faced an investigation for the claims filed against him by officers on the *Baquedano*.

"Vuestra señoría se sirve extractar las informaciones habidas por los Comandantes de la corbeta "Jeneral Baquedano" en contra del citado Sr. Acuña y termina en que es imposible su permanencia en este puesto. Aprovechando las circunstancias de encontrarse en ésta con permiso del inculpado, le he leído los cargos que existen en su contra, contestando lo siguiente; [...] 3. Respecto al número 2, de abusos de administración y judiciales, dice que efectivamente hace mucho tiempo hizo azotar á algunos indígenas confesos de robos, pero que no continuó con esa práctica cuando se le hizo saber que ello no era correcto. 4. Sobre el cargo de usufructúo de víveres alimenticios pertenecientes a los indígenas, dice que jamás ha recibido víveres para suministrarlos a los habitantes de la isla y que por lo tanto este cargo carece en absoluto de fundamento. 5. Niega que haya hecho azotar á mujeres y niños y manifiesta que esos cargos son emanados de los mismos castigados por estar confesos de robos [...]"

[Your Honor, I have reviewed the information provided by the Commanders of the “General Baquedano” in their charges against Mr. Acuña that ends by declaring the impossibility of his remaining in this position. Having taken advantage of the opportunity to be on the island with the permission of the accused, I have read to him the accusations and he has responded the following: ... 3. With regards to point two, of abuse of the administrative and judicial systems, he said that effectively, some time ago, he had some indigenous people who had confessed to robbery flogged, but that this practice did not continue when he was made aware of the fact that it was incorrect. 4. Regarding the charge that he usurped the food of the indigenous populations, he said that he has never received food to be given out to the inhabitants of the island and because of this the charge lacks any basis. 5. He denies completely that he had women and children flogged and claims that these charges come from those very same people who had confessed to robberies and were punished] (AMM 1922).

Because of these complaints, the Chilean Bishop and Military Vicar Rafael Edwards condemned Acuña as guilty of these charges. But far from immediately removing this abusive State functionary, this case would have ended with completely different consequences. Without addressing the problems of continued abuse of the indigenous population, the continental authorities decided to keep Acuña in his position of authority, basing their decision on his years of service, his gifts at managing the pharmacy, and, as if it wasn't too much to say, his wonderful weaving talents.

“En vista de la autorización verbal dada por US. de dejar este asunto a mi determinación, estimo que por lo anteriormente expuesto y de que el señor Acuña ha prestado mas de seis años de servicios en el Ejército como Sarjento Enfermero; que tiene autorización suprema para rejentar boticas; que ha pasado por un curso de telar con el objeto de instruir en tejidos de lana a los indígenas; que su esposa tiene nombramiento supremo de Directora de la Escuela que mantiene el Estado en la isla y él de Ayudante, circunstancias todas éstas que a juicio del infrascrito hacen del señor Acuña y esposa personas adecuadas á los propósitos que en este sentido persigue el Supremo Gobierno; y, finalmente, que no todos los Comandantes que han formulado cargos en su contra lo han llamado para que presente sus descargos, como era natural, considero que por esta vez se le puede permitir continuar en su puesto; pero por cualquier nueva queja en su contra será motivo para exonerarlo de su empleo [...]”

[In light of the verbal authorization you gave, to leave this issue to my discretion, I have decided that, because of the previously discussed reasons, and because Mr. Acuña has given more than six years of service in the army as a Nurse Sergeant, has the top authorization to manage pharmacies, has passed a weaving course with the object to instruct wool weaving to the islanders, and because his wife is named the Head Director of the School that was maintained by the State on the island while he is the assistant, all of which are purposes that are in agreement with the Supreme Government's aims, and because not all of the Commanders that formulated the charges against him have called him to present his case, as would be normal, I consider that for this time he should be allowed to retain his position, but should any further complaints arise, it would provide motive to remove him...] (AMM 1922).

What position did Bishop Edwards take on the issue? Similarly, while not referencing the issue of accusations of abuse of the indigenous population, he recommended, like the Chilean Government, that Acuña stay on the island. His reasoning was – that this functionary was the most fit for job – especially as he was recently married, something that was necessary in order to avoid any future scandals that could damage the external image of the republic.

“Mi querido almirante: Yo no creo a Acuña, el Subdelegado de Pascua, un tanto; pero, según mis informaciones ha sido de todos los empleados chilenos el menos deficiente en Pascua. Ahora él se ha casado con la señora que va de preceptora de modo que hay una garantía más de buena conducta futura. Mandar allá un soltero o un casado que se vaya solo será [para provocar] errores que pueden traernos denuevo amargas críticas del extranjero. Tengo cartas de dos sabios extranjeros [...] Bryan y Skoltheag que se espresan de Acuña con agradecidos elogios después de su permanencia en Pascua. Por eso, yo le ruego que amoneste a Acuña pero que no lo cambie porque quedaremos peor de lo que [estamos]. Suyo, respetuosamente, Rafael Edwards.”

[My dear Admiral, I do not believe Acuña, the Subdelegate for Pascua, even one bit. But, to my knowledge, of all the Chilean authorities that have been on the island, he has been the least deficient. He has now married a woman who will be the preceptor, which gives guarantees of future good conduct. Sending a single man there would only provoke errors and could bring us, again, bitter criticism from abroad. I have two letters from knowledgeable foreigners, Bryan [William

Allanson Bryan, economist of the CEDIP] and Skoltheag [sic, perhaps Carl Skottsberg?], who praise and thank Acuña after their stays on the island. Because of this, I ask that you warn Acuña, but do not remove him because we would then be worse off than we are now. Yours respectfully, Rafael Edwards] (AMM n.d.).

As the relationship between the State and the Company consolidated, despite the legal disputes over lands, and formed a new alliance of interests oriented towards the exploitation of the island, the attitude of State authorities towards the indigenous inhabitants reproduced a regimen of colonial relations that differed very little from those that existed during the beginning of the 20th century. Along these lines, one of the things that definitely characterizes the State presence on the island during this period was nothing less than the duty and obligation of government authorities to “educate and instruct” the indigenous population. From the point of view of the Chilean functionaries, the indigenous society was understood to be “passive”, a mere receptor of the actions of State institutions, who were the only bearers of “civilization.”

However, it is necessary to clarify that while the internal politics on Rapa Nui were one thing, the Chilean geopolitical vision during the nebulous situation that followed the crisis of 1929 was another altogether. These two currents never fell into line during this period, coming at times to openly contradict each other. A good example of this contradiction is seen in the report sent on November 17, 1930 by the US Naval attaché to Chile, I.H. Mayfield, to the Office of US Naval Intelligence, in which the interest of Chile in selling the island because of its urgent economic needs was expressed for the first time (Attaché’s Office of Naval Intelligence Report 1930). Similar reports appeared in communications to the US Navy from the US Embassy in Chile on June 8th, 1937, and signed by A.S. Merrill, in which he signals that the Commander of the Navy, Admiral Olegario Reyes del Rio proposed to the President of Chile, Arturo Alessandri Palma, and to the Minister of National Defense, Emilio Bello Codesido, “the sale or rental of the island” in order to obtain the financing needed to build two warships for the Chilean Navy. The island would be offered, according to the US documents, to the US, Germany, Great Britain and Japan (Attaché’s Office of Naval Intelligence Report 1937).

In a somewhat contradictory move that perhaps rejected these sale projects of others within the government, President Alessandri declared the island a National Park via decree 103 on January 16, 1935. On the 23rd of June of the same year, the island was declared a Historic Monument, via decree 4536,

and the extraction of archaeological remains from the island was prohibited. At the end of that year, a grand reforestation plan was announced, and Danish agricultural expert Georg Schlatzer was contracted by Minagri (the Ministry of Agriculture). On the 13th of February, 1936, the contract between the Company and Chile was renewed, establishing a new canon for the relationship finally ending the “Provisional Code”. Moreover, this established a new internal regimen of the regulation of life and work on the island. These are only a few examples of the incoherent geopolitical position of Chile in regards to the island towards the end of the 1917-1936 period.

### **The “Compañía Explotadora”**

In order to clarify the role of the Company during the years of the “Provisional Code”, one has to analyze the conditions under which the CEDIP operated and the relationships it established with the Chilean State and the Rapanui community.

Thanks to the signing of the “Temperamento Provisorio” in 1917, the Company was exempt from the payment of annual rent to the State during these decades, and was free to use, at no cost to them, the lands and livestock on the island. At the same time, the separation of the roles of CEDIP manager and the Maritime Subdelegate liberated the Company from an important part of the responsibilities and costs of the local government. All of this made possible, among other things, a coexistence between the Company and islanders that was much less conflictive than it had been previously, a relationship that came to be redefined as one based primarily on the establishment of labor contracts and a series of charity policies.<sup>16</sup> However, at the same time, a key element of the Company’s development during this era was its fundamental role of support and backup for State institutions. Those weak State institutions, supported by the Company, fulfilled the mission of guaranteeing (instead of regulating) the development and conditions of the livestock cycle on the island.

Untied from many of their previous responsibilities for the administration of the island’s governance, the CEDIP focused its energies on production, and in order to ensure this, on patronizing the Chilean authorities and institutions. By financing the activities of the Chilean authorities, many of whom were dependent on the Company’s monthly gifts of lamb and other goods, and by paying the salaries of the police force and periodically donating to the general populations, the Company consolidated its influence over State functionaries.<sup>17</sup> Olalquiaga described his excellent and cordial relationship with the administrator of the Company, Mr. Colin Morrison in 1936:

“Cumpliendo instrucciones superiores con respecto a las buenas relaciones que era necesario mantener con la Administración de la Cia. Explotadora de Isla de Pascua, debo decir a Uds. que desde mi llegada a la Isla hemos mantenido una cordial amistad y una mutua comprensión. [...] Es así como durante mi permanencia en ésta Isla, jamás ha habido una pequeña dificultad entre esa Administración y ésta Subdelegación, y para toda medida que he tenido que tomar relacionada con la Compañía, la he tomado en completo acuerdo con Mr. Morrison, de manera que no hubieran inconvenientes y ellas fueran motivos de tropiezos en nuestra amistad y estrechas relaciones.”

[In accordance with instructions regarding the good relations that were necessary to maintain the administration of the Cia. Explotadora de Isla de Pascua, I should report that since my arrival to the island we have maintained a warm friendship and mutual comprehension. This is how it has been during my time on this island, never has there been any small difficulty between the administration and this Subdelegation, and for each measure I have had to take with regards to the Company, it has been made with the complete agreement of Mr. Morrison, in this way that there were no inconveniences that could prove to be a challenge to our friendship and direct relationship] (AMM 1936b:20).

With this close alliance between the Company and the State at least within the island’s scenario during the years of the “Provisional Code”, the CEDIP started to focus on the Rapanui community. As mentioned previously, that relationship began to revolve around both the establishment of labor relations, commercial relations, including the facilitation of exchanges of corn and livestock with the indigenous population, and the Company’s charity programs that were aimed at the same population. Because of this shift in relations and this new margin of maneuverability, the Company was able to apply new methods of economic exploitation of the indigenous population, which at least appeared to be less oppressive, especially in comparison to those used in previous decades.

The management of salaries, prices of goods brought from the mainland, and a monopoly on the sale of those goods in the Company store (located in Mataverí), were some of the forms preferred by the CEDIP that allowed them to profit from their relationship with the Rapanui population.<sup>18</sup> These new methods of oppression and exploitation of the indigenous population might have appeared kinder at first glance than those unrolled under previous administrations, but they required the compliance of the (less kind) State institutions and functionaries as a precondition.

Freed from the responsibility of directly confronting the indigenous resistance, the Company could present itself as a ‘modern company’ that benefited the community by offering permanent or temporary employment to a great portion of the population, thereby constructing for itself the image of a ‘social institution’ greatly concerned about the well-being of islanders. The positive image that the CEDIP tried to project was reinforced by the important interchange of products and livestock (especially corn, horses and cows) that occurred between islanders and the Company, especially from the 1930s onwards.<sup>19</sup>

The Company not only took advantage of the signing of the “Temperamento” to use the land and livestock existent on the island without taking responsibility for them or paying for them for almost two decades, but they also failed to comply with sections of that very same agreement. In 1936, Chilean Deputy Carrasco spoke about this issue in the Congress while trying to intervene in the discussions about a new contract between the State and Williamson Balfour, and said the following:

“A pesar de que en esa ocasión [la firma del *Temperamento*] se le imponían a la Compañía Explotadora muy pocas obligaciones [entre otras, la construcción del ya mencionado lazareto] no les dio cumplimiento [...] Ese lazareto se instaló apenas a 1.000 metros escasos de las casas del pueblo y en terrenos de los nativos lo que constituye un peligro inminente de contagio. El artículo 70 obliga a la Compañía a llevar a la isla como administrador de sus intereses a “un chileno casado que se radique allí con su familia”, obligación que tampoco ha sido cumplida por la Compañía Explotadora. Esta concesión debió haber durado hasta el 19 de abril de 1929, fecha en que por decreto supremo número 946 del Ministerio de Marina se le puso término. Sin embargo, señor Presidente, esta poderosa firma extranjera que parece disponer de una mano oculta que paraliza en la sombra lo que dispone ese decreto, hasta el 12 de noviembre de 1933 y hasta hoy día [alienta] la prolongación de una concesión que es atentatoria para nuestra soberanía e intereses nacionales. [...] Si existieran razones morales que justificaran ciertas contemplaciones, estarían ellas de más compensadas con los 40 años de explotación de la isla que ha disfrutado esa Compañía con grandes utilidades pecuniaras, pero nunca se justificaría un nuevo arrendamiento; ya que si él se efectúa, se prolongarán por 20 años los abusos y explotaciones que esa firma extranjera ejerce sobre los nativos [...]”

[Despite the fact that on this occasion [the signing of the Code] the Company had very few obligations

[among them the mentioned clinic], they did not fulfill any... This leper clinic was built only 1000 meters from the houses of the town and on lands of the natives, a fact which presented an immediate risk of contagion. Article 70 obliged the Company to bring to the island for its administration a “married Chilean that would live there with their family”, an obligation which the Company has also failed to fulfill. Their lease should have ended in the 19th of April, 1929, according to the Supreme decree number 946 of the Maritime Minister. Despite this, Mr. President, this powerful foreign firm appears to have a hidden force which paralyzes this decree in the shadows, up to the 12th of November of 1933, and up to this day, prolonging this concession that threatens our sovereignty and national interests. If moral reasons existed that could justify certain second thoughts, they would still be more than compensated by the 40 years of exploitation of the island that have been enjoyed by this Company with great financial capacity. Nothing justifies a new agreement, though, since if that is allowed, it would prolong by 20 years the abuses and exploitations that this foreign enterprise carries out on the natives] (AMM 1936a: 2647-2648).

Once the terms of the “Provisional Code” expired in 1929, the CEDIP continued to benefit from the agreement. This permitted the Company to reap in fabulous profits, at the cost of public interests and the indigenous community. As a Maritime Ministry report from 1935 confirms:

“Es de considerar, también, que la Compañía Explotadora de la Isla de Pascua se ha aprovechado gratuitamente de los terrenos y animales fiscales, de todo el aumento obtenido por la reproducción de los animales año tras año, de la lana, leche y demás beneficios de éstos desde el 7 de Noviembre de 1916, fecha en que se puso término al arrendamiento otorgado por el Fisco al Sr. Enrique Merlet, o por lo menos desde el 5 de Mayo de 1917, fecha en que comenzó a regir el llamado temperamento provisorio [...].”

[It is worth considering as well, that the Company has taken advantage of the animals and public lands, of all the increases obtained through the reproduction of animals year after year, of the wool, milk and other benefits of the island free of charge since November 7, 1916, when the rental agreements authorized by the authorities to Enrique Merlet were terminated, or at least from the 5th of May 1917, the date when the Code went into effect] (AMM 1935).

In the case of the established relations between the Company and the Rapanui people, despite the “Code” and the new ‘social’ profile the Company tried to construct, multiple abuses of the indigenous people of the island continued (Comisión de Verdad Histórica y Nuevo Trato 2001). Continental functionaries typically took charge of denouncing these occurrences during and following their periodic trips to Rapa Nui. One example of this, included in a December 1921 report by an official on the *Baquadano*, mentioned the following:

“Señor Comandante: En cumplimiento de la comisión que Ud. tuvo a bien confiarme, de averiguar si había, entre los naturales de la Isla de Pascua, algunas quejas o cargos contra la Casa Williamson Balfour y Co, e informarle por escrito, comunico a Ud. que, notificada las averiguaciones que el tiempo permitió, no constató ningún cargo concreto contra de dicha Casa, aunque fue común y general la queja de que “los jornales están muy bajos y los precios de la tienda muy subidos”, pero sin dar pruebas claras de ninguna de las dos afirmaciones. En cuanto a la primera, creo que la Casa se ajusta al reglamento aprobado por el Supremo Gobierno; y en cuanto a la segunda, estimo necesario, para evitar probables alzas exageradas, que la autoridad convenga con la Casa una lista anual de precios, para todas las mercaderías que se venden a los naturales de la Isla, y que esta lista sea prontamente conocida por todos los interesados.”

[Dear Commander: In order to fulfill the mission that you so greatly entrusted to me, of seeing if there existed, among the natives of the island, complaints or charges against the Williamson Balfour and Co., and to inform you in writing of my findings, I write to you that, in the time permitted, I found no concrete charge or complaint against the Company, although the generalized complaint existed that “wages were very low and that prices in the store very elevated”, but without any clear evidence. In regards to this first complaint, I believe the Company adjusts the wages in accordance with the regulations approved by the Government and in regards to the second, I deem it necessary that the Authorities and the Company make an annual list of prices, for all the goods that are sold to the natives, and that this list be promptly known to all interested parties] (AMM 1921c).

Obviously, the complaints of the islanders were not taken seriously afterwards. Without knowing whether or not the list of prices mentioned were really established as such, the salaries of the indigenous population continued to be as low as they always had

been.<sup>20</sup> It would have to be the Rapanui themselves who would later demand salary increases.

However, despite the fact that tensions between the Company and the Rapanui had diminished considerably during this period, this relationship was not free of conflict. The constant complaints by administrators of the CEDIP regarding the theft of cattle by islanders, just like the periodic complaints by islanders regarding their working conditions and the high prices at the Company store, grew to develop into important social tensions.

This environment of latent conflict brought about the development of more serious conflicts between the Rapanui and the CEDIP. One of the most significant examples was the outbreak of a massive strike of workers in 1928, where the strikers were later joined by members of the police force. As Recabarren (AIV 1928b) relates, most of the strikers demands were focused on an improvement in salaries and food rations, along with the participation of the islanders in the profits of the Company.

[...] Los nombrados más arriba [se refiere a los líderes de la huelga] se presentaron á ésta Subdelegación a las 2 P.M. del día 5 de Agosto y espusieron los siguientes puntos. 1er Punto. Mejoramiento de sus jornales, hombres a razon de 4\$ diarios y su ración en café, almuerzo, y comida, horas de almuerzo 11 A.M. y comidas 5 P.M. 2 Punto. Mejoramiento de sus jornales para los niños y las mujeres 3\$ diarios y sus raciones y horas como los demás hombres. 3. No entrarán a trabajar ninguna persona, si él Señor Administrador nó acepta nuestra petición. 4 Punto. Para los trabajos de la esquila, que se efectúa en el mes de Octubre y Noviembre, del presente año, se pide por él ciento de ovejunos 10\$ ciento ó 100\$ él mil, con sus respectivas raciones. 5. Punto. Los que quieran trabajar voluntariamente, los trabajos de la administración y los del campo se opondrán, hásta el último hásta que la Cia arregle definitivamente. 6. Punto. Si la Cia acepta nuestras condiciones y la de todos los habitantes de ésta Isla, queda arreglado y todo el mundo se irá a trabajar tranquilos. 7. Punto. Quedan en ésta Subdelegación las firmas de los representantes de ésta guelga jeneral. Señor Administrador; agradeceré a ud contestar sobre éste particular. Sin otro particular tiene el agrado de saludar a ud su mui [...] y amigo. Carlos A. Recabarrén.”

[Those named above [referring to the leaders of the strike] presented themselves at the Subdelegation at 2 pm of the 5th of August and pronounced the following demands. First, improvement of their daily wages, to \$4 a day and their rations of coffee, lunch, and food at 11 am and another food break at 5

pm. Second, improvements of the wages of women and children to \$3 a day with rations at the same hours as the men. Third, no one would enter to work if the Administrator does not accept this request. Fourth, for the work of shearing that takes place in October and November they ask, for this year, \$10 every hundred sheep or \$100 every thousand along with their respective rations. Fifth, those that want to work voluntarily, either in administrative tasks or fieldwork will be resisted to the end, till the company makes definitive arrangements. Sixth, if the Company accepts our conditions and those of all the inhabitants of this island, everything will have been resolved and everyone will go back to work calmly. Seventh, the signatures of the strike representatives are left in this Subdelegation, we ask you to respond to this issue. With nothing else, I thank you ... [signed] Carlos Recabarren] (AIV 1928b:Folios 51(26)-52).

This was not the only way in which the Rapanui tried to confront the unjust conditions of their lives. Effectively, the development of a series of rebellious practices on the part of the indigenous population became a key aspect of the social and political context during this period. Although these other measures did not reach the intensity of the indigenous uprisings of the previous century, these practices of indigenous resistance – among which we should mention various acts of disobedience, theft, insubordinations, and strikes – came to constitute a true and constant challenge to the actions of colonial powers on the island, represented by State institutions and the Company.

## Conclusions

Due to the grave conflicts that had arisen between the Rapanui, the Company, and the Chilean State at the beginning of the twentieth century, both the CEDIP and the Chilean Government saw the creation of a series of important reforms on the island as necessary. In 1914, this impulse brought about the designation of a Maritime Subdelegate that was independent of the administrator of the CEDIP. Not long afterwards, they signed the “Provisional Code”, an agreement that laid the groundwork for a new form of political organization of the island.

From that moment onwards, the apparatus of State power took on two visible faces. On the one hand, the indolent political and administrative face was embodied by the institution of the Maritime Subdelegate, located in Hanga Roa, where State institutions like the Civil Registry and the Public School began to function. On the other hand, a second face emerged, one more economic in character and located in Mataverí, the

residence of the Company administrator and the site of the management of livestock production activities. While the duties of the Maritime Subdelegate included taking responsibility for the local government, thereby taking charge of the work of controlling the public and private lives of the islanders, the duties of the Company administrator were directed primarily at the productive realms of life, establishing relations with the indigenous population primarily through wage and commercial relations.

Even with this, the State presence on Rapa Nui continued to be precarious. The years between 1917 and 1936 were marked by the unveiling and implementation of a particular form of colonialism that lacked an effective colonial policy. The inexistence of a consistent State plan for populating and occupying the island, the extreme weakness of the State organizations and of the authority of the Maritime Subdelegate, graphically show us this point.

However, despite this precariousness, the actions of the Chilean State during these years had a significant and powerful impact on the island. Indeed, the permanent presence of institutions charged with implementing different policies aimed at the regulation of the lives of the indigenous population, in education, urbanization, and 'civilization', left a long-standing footprint in the indigenous community. Likewise, the constant application of successive policies of social control and the 'disciplining' of the Rapanui way of life had fierce repercussions on the entire indigenous population.

The Company, thanks to the signed agreement, the "Code", was exempt from the weight of rents they had previously been required to pay. This allowed them to freely use, without cost to them, the lands and livestock of Rapa Nui. On top of that, the separation of the duties of the Company administrator and those of the Maritime Subdelegate freed the Company from the responsibilities and costs of local governance. The Company was left then to develop a much less conflictive relationship with the islanders, and establish relationships with them that were primarily defined by work, wages and commercial relations, alongside a series of their own charity projects.

A key element in the development of the Company during this period was its role of support for State organizations, with their mission to guarantee the conditions necessary for a healthy economic cycle on the island. Because of this, the CEDIP took charge of becoming patrons of the Chilean authorities, financing their activities, subsidizing the salaries of the police force, and periodically making large donations.

With these dynamics as their foundation, the Company was able to unroll a series of social controls and forms of exploitation of the Rapanui, many of which may appear to have been somewhat friendlier in their

appearances than those used during the shameful and brutal administrations of Alberto Sánchez Manterola and Horacio Cooper. Control of salaries and prices for the goods brought from the mainland, as well as the Company store's monopoly on the sale of these goods, became the new preferred methods for taking maximum advantage of their co-existence with the islanders.

Some mention should be made of the role played by the groups of Rapanui islanders who collaborated with the Maritime Subdelegation and the Company. Although never coming to be functionaries at the service of the authorities, these groups exercised an important influence on the politics of the island, acting not just as agents of transmission of one or another pole of colonial power, but also many times playing an active role in the resolution of tensions between them and in changes in the balance of power on the island. The actions of these groups also tamed the stubborn colonial powers by diversifying the community's approaches towards them. Especially important in this process of "domestication" were the marriages between Rapanui women and State authorities or Company employees.

During these decades, a system of government developed, acquiring a certain level of institutional complexity. In contrast to the preceding period, which had been characterized by an apparatus of power centralized in one authority, this period produced a branching out of this power structure, into two main spheres: the economic and the political-administrative, with their respective authorities in the administration of the CEDIP and the Maritime Subdelegation.

We highlighted here the dynamic of constant feedback between these two spheres of colonial power, with the Subdelegation acting as an entity charged with the regulation of social relations and as a guarantor of the healthy development of the economic cycle, while the Company exercised patronage over State institutions and established a powerful influence over them. Moreover, while during previous decades the religious-institutional sphere had been an arena into which the interests of the indigenous community could easily permeate, during this period this sphere was substantially integrated into the framework of colonial power.<sup>21</sup> The actions taken by Bishop Edwards and the work carried out by Father Englert in the mid-1930s both provide good examples of this new dynamic.

In the case of the permanent abuses of the indigenous population during this period that were carried out equally by Chilean functionaries and the Company, we find another important example of concordance between the colonial agents. Both spheres of colonial power shared a denial of Rapanui sovereignty over the island, as well as perception of the indigenous population that reduced them,

paradoxically, to the condition of foreigners in their own territory. Virtually corralled into the settlement of Hanga Roa, forbidden to leave the island, and obliged to accept the living conditions imposed by the regimen of livestock exploitation, the Rapanui were imagined by the colonial agents as a people incapable of ensuring their own “progress”.

From the point of view of the Rapanui, the work of State institutions was a direct exercise of power, whether it appeared in the form of actions taken by the Subdelegation, the naval missions, or the rest of the State institutions. In contrast, the CEDIP, the true heart of the colonial apparatus, became the ‘power behind the power’, sheltered behind the actions of State functionaries that acted in agreement with the Company, and seeping through the wage and commercial relations established between the Company and the community.

This shift only made it more difficult for the Rapanui to identify the Company as one of the principal causes of the intense oppression that victimized them, because the Company morphed its social profile into a company offering work and commercial opportunities via exchange. This became a factor inhibiting the emergence of major uprising like the one that occurred in 1914, one that could have threatened the social and political structure on the island. Nonetheless, the precariousness of the island’s institutional structures and the continuation of important social tensions between the community and foreign agents made possible and fueled the development of diverse forms of indigenous resistance. In some cases, such as the general strike of 1928, these forms of resistance allowed the indigenous population to unite and confront both heads of colonial power that personified the coupling of State-Company, and thereby threatening one of the pillars of the colonial presence on Rapanui, the profits of the livestock operations.

## Notes

1. The “Compañía Explotadora de Isla de Pascua” will hereafter be referred to as either CEDIP or the Company.
2. While it is true that the alliance between the CEDIP and the State dealt an important blow to the indigenous movement led by Angata, it is necessary to mention that the rebellion achieved some strategic gains for the Rapanui, especially in the decrease of the power of the Company on the island.
3. For a synthesis of the antecedents of the European and Chilean colonization of Rapa Nui, see Cristino et al. 1984.
4. For a deeper development of this affirmation, see Ortega 1981 and Salazar 2003.
5. More than simply establishing a greater degree of territorial integration within the national framework during these moments, this situation is evidenced by the Government’s efforts to rent or sell the island (in response to the world crisis of 1929) to some world powers such as the United States, Great Britain, Germany, or Japan. The first contacts were made during the government of Ibañez (1930), and almost through to the second government of Alessandri Palma (1937), with the only nations showing interest being the United States and Japan. In this sense, the transformation of the island into a National Park and Historic Monument during the 1930s can be understood to be an attempt to valorize the island for its later sale (see McCall 1995).
6. One of the effects of the arrivals of these missions, and their threats of deportation and other punishments, was the generation of a climate of self-discipline (and self-repression) within the indigenous population.
7. For more information about this point, see AIV 1926, 1927, 1928a.
8. The self-discrediting of Subdelegates was partially due to their double-speak on morality. It is worth keeping in mind that they too had extramarital relations with indigenous women that resulted in numerous unrecognized children on the island.
9. The monthly contribution of 50 lambs, alongside the periodic donation of food, medicines and other goods by the Company were nearly the only stable resources disposable to State authorities.
10. During 1937, Subdelegate Olalquiaga revealed the precarious state of the prison and the inexistence of implements to prevent jailbreaks while describing his activities on Rapa Nui. He stated: “In light of the fact that the jail is in no way secure, I made sure it was reinforced and furthermore saw to it that an iron crossbar was installed along with the respective rings so that now the prisoners cannot escape. I also saw to it that a pair of handcuffs was made and 4 shackles” (AMM 1937).
11. According to the testimony of Recabarren, Martínez had been guilty of numerous abuses of the island population, the CEDIP, and the State authorities. For details of this see AIV 1928b.
12. Even when the State and the Catholic Church had been united, the latter couldn’t be reduced to merely a State institution. The actions of the Church during the period of catechist Nicolás Pakarati, which were always closer to the church in Tahiti, are a good example. However, the Catholic Church contributed much to the consolidation of the Chilean presence on Rapa Nui. Among other things, it collaborated in the fomenting of the sentiment for “national integration” among the indigenous population. The role played by the Church during these years by Bishop Edwards, and the work carried out by Father Englert from 1935 on, constitute good examples of this collaboration.
13. On a larger scale, we can also mention Rubén Hotus and Nicolás Pakomio as being within this group.
14. Nevertheless, it is true that certain personalities, like Juan Tepano, or at a later point Pedro Atán Pakomio, came to have a bit of influence within the structure of continental power established during these decades. On many occasions, this influence came to rival that of the two successive Maritime Subdelegates.
15. Atán was designated (not elected) as the Rapanui mayor by the Subdelegate Manuel Olalquiaga, almost certainly in December 1935.
16. Aside from those obligations established by the “Temperamento” (donations of 50 lambs a month to the Subdelegation, care of lepers, construction of a leper colony, and respecting the 2,000 hectares adjudicated to the indigenous population), the Company also made a

- series of “social donations” of food, wood and medicine. They emphasized the giving out of pills imported from abroad for the lepers among these “social donations”. For details, see AIV 1926:Folios 1, 11(6),12; AIV 1927:Folio23(12).
17. For more on this subject, see AIV 1926, 1927, 1928a.
  18. Regarding this, Fischer (2005) tells us that the indigenous Rapanui grew accustomed to paying exorbitant prices for processed foods and other products that they did not need, especially when considering the previous patterns of nutrition and consumption on the island: tubers, tea, plantains, fish, chicken, lobster, fruits, etc...
  19. As was the case with the groups of islanders that were close to the Chilean functionaries, there also existed a sector of Rapanui prone to have a better relationship with the CEDIP. Among this group we can mention the *mestizos* of the families Paoa Bornier, Tuki Kaituoe and later the children of the heads of the CEDIP, Percy Edmunds and Lachlan Mackinnon, with indigenous women (from the families Rapahango and Haoa).
  20. While the salary of a worker on the continent reached around 60 pesos a week, the wages of a Rapanui worker didn't surpass 100 pesos a year (see Hotus 2011).
  21. One example of this can be seen with the indigenous rebellion of 1914 and the role played by the church as a physical space that articulated the movement. For more information (see Castro 2006).
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