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William F. Sater: *Chile and the War of the Pacific* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986, £22.95. Pp. ix + 343. *Testimonios británicos de la ocupación chilena de Lima (enero de 1881)*. Translated by Celia Wu Brading. Introducción, recopilación e ilustraciones (Lima: Editorial Milla Batres, 1986 n.p.s). Pp. viii + 157.

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Journal of Latin American Studies / Volume 19 / Issue 02 / November 1987, pp 432 - 435
DOI: 10.1017/S0022216X00020241, Published online: 05 February 2009

Link to this article: http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0022216X00020241

How to cite this article:

Philip Somervell (1987). Journal of Latin American Studies, 19, pp 432-435
doi:10.1017/S0022216X00020241

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The war between Chile and the Peru-Bolivian alliance, of 1879–84, is a major landmark in South American history, on which a spate of writing occurred recently on the centenary, some under emotive titles. Professor Sater's book is another one-country study, in which the author seeks to knock down several myths surrounding the war in South American historiography. The war was significant for Chile in that its territory increased by one-third, and new internal and external relationships were established as a result of this prize of war, the nitrate fields of Tarapaca.

Professor Sater seeks to clarify the real experiences of the war for the reader, not only on the battle-field, but on the home front, and on the street in provincial towns; at the steps of Congress in the capital, and above all, as recorded in the columns of the Chilean press.

Essentially, Sater unravels a counter-argument to the thesis that Chile in 1879 was keen for war and was well prepared for it, both militarily and economically; that it was united politically and socially in its pursuance of victory. Built on very thorough research, Sater's book shows that Chile was ill-prepared, the President was indecisive and the Congress divisive, that Chile's inadequate military machine was propelled into the war only after harassment of the President by Congress and public opinion.

Once embroiled, in-fighting in the armed forces and political crises marred every decision taken regarding the war effort. Despite heavy losses, after the initial occupation of the Bolivian littoral at Antofagasta in April 1879, Chilean forces moved onward to take Tacna and Arica. Sater reveals intimate details, from personal correspondence, of the animosity felt between Chilean military chiefs and their political chiefs and advisers. After demurring at Arica (hence the very Chilean exhortation heard today – 'No solteis el morro, muchachos!') – the public cry 'On to Lima' was finally answered, in the face of one section of Chilean opinion that favoured suing for peace at Arica and abandoning punitive expeditions into the Peruvian heartland. By early 1881, the Peruvian capital was ruled by the most diplomatic of Chile's military leaders, recently promoted Rear-Admiral Patricio Lynch.

Following this account of combat operations, Sater's third and fourth chapters examine episodes of intra-institutional conflict in Chile's decision-making processes over 1879–81. Military incompetence, resulting partly from limited resources, gave rise to civilian interference in the direct command of operations at the front; it is pleasing to note the revival of the term *cucalón*, used to refer to certain outstanding civilian leaders (José Francisco Vergara, Rafael Sotomayor, *inter alia*) who directed the war from the front when military and ministry efforts had failed. (Antonio Cucalón, a hapless Peruvian journalist who witnessed the war on board the Peruvian ironclad turret-ship *Huascar*, drowned after falling over-board, and curiously gave rise to the name.) The *cucalón* nick-name reappeared in 1891, when

civilian staff officers played major roles in the leadership of the Congressionalist armed opposition to President Balmaceda.

The mechanisms of manning, supply and finance of the war effort from Santiago are then closely examined, highlighting the miserly attitude of politicians, loath to award pensions and prizes to war-weary soldiers, but also revealing a distinct civilian antipathy towards the military profession arising from open squabbling over promotions and postings. All the mechanisms of manning and supply, it should be noted, were created from scratch. There follows a lengthy, dense analysis of the economic consequences of the war, supported by some 40 statistical tables in an appendix which range from data on imports of alcoholic beverages to stock market prices in the ten-year period 1874–84, all of which underpin a central argument that, contrary to traditionally held opinion, the war's impact on the economy was limited. The war failed to boost significantly Chile's infant industrial sector, but with the loss of markets in Peru and Bolivia, agricultural production and prices were negatively affected. Chile's tax structure underwent important changes – Congress opted for abolishing import and property taxes, or those redistributive powers within its reach, in favour of relying for ordinary income on the taxing of nitrate exports. The war also saw the beginning of Chile's financial plague – the policy of printing money at will as a stimulus to the economy. The many tables of the appendix are of value to the economic historian, but each table perhaps deserves more than the scant mention it receives in the main text – although it could be argued that the subject is worthy of a full-length book in itself.

Affairs of the lower social orders in Chile are then studied – the *rotos* who served as cannon-fodder, and provided the backbone of Chile's army. Their families' situation on the home-front is described in detail, ranging from public health, food prices and social habits, as culled from local press accounts, providing an original and valuable view of 'how the other half lived'. The focus is then turned to internal politics, concentrating on the 1881 presidential succession which coincided with some of the more polemical debates in Congress on the handling of the war. The spectre of army and navy chiefs as presidential candidates for the conservatives, not seen for forty years, loomed briefly. Finally, the peacemaking process is studied, mainly in the international arena: Chile's problems of negotiating with a headless state, Peru, and also separately, with Bolivia, and of uniting Congress in Santiago behind the executive's decision; characteristically clumsy US diplomatic and naval intervention on Peru's side (the leasing of Chimbote as a coaling station, pre-empted by rapid Chilean response); fighting a guerrilla war to eliminate the last vestiges of resistance in the Peruvian highlands and propping up the most suitable and accommodating Peruvian leader, Iglesias, as far as the peace table at Ancón in October 1883.

The eventual prizes of victory, for a now war-weary Chilean nation, impatient for peace and a return to normality, – territorial expansion, the export-led nitrate boom that lasted just three decades – were fraught with problems for Chile's domestic and foreign policy, as is well known. Sater's brief conclusions are pessimistic: *salitre* 'warped Chile's economic development', 'aborted the movement towards economic self-sufficiency and corrupted the nation' (p. 227). Whether such self-sufficiency was achievable appears to Professor Sater as

self-evident, but is an eminently debatable thesis; nevertheless, the evident mis-management of the newly acquired wealth over the subsequent forty years, far from being a new revisionist claim, is now almost universally accepted as proven.

The author's bibliography covers contemporary sources thoroughly. The strongest suit under published sources in the primary category is undoubtedly that of contemporary Chilean newspapers (as distinct from journals). The declared indebtedness to the staff of the Santiago Biblioteca Nacional's newspaper section found in the author's acknowledgements, seems well founded: it is a remarkable feat of research that can list among 76 separate newspaper titles, only thirteen from the capital Santiago, the remainder being provincial papers. And the coverage is extravagantly reflected in the footnote material: a six-line paragraph (p. 20) contains a single footnote referring the reader to no fewer than 27 press items culled from 12 separate titles. The patience to follow up such references is nowadays a rare commodity, although the dedication to the task undoubtedly reveals a mass of information that can be used in a variety of subjects of topical research. On a separate note, the puzzled reader eager to find an explanation for the extraordinary quantity of misprints in the text, should observe that Professor Sater has been appallingly badly served by his publishers. In this interesting and original book, misprints are rife, *pace* the publisher's disclaimer on the verso of the title page, concerning the author's camera-ready copy used in the printing of the book. Nevertheless, this interesting and original work is an important contribution to our understanding of late nineteenth-century Chile.

Celi Wu Brading's translation of the reports of two British naval officers, Cdr W. A. Dyke Acland and Lt R. O. Carey Brenton, attached respectively to the Peruvian and Chilean land forces during the advance on Lima – a small but decisive episode in the war – complements previously published translations of American and French observers' accounts of the war (eg. M. Le León, *Recuerdos de una misión en el ejército chileno: batallas de Chorrillos y Miraflores*, Santiago and Buenos Aires, 1969). Although not as historically significant, from the tactical or technological point of view, as foreign observers' accounts of the Russo-Japanese war of 1904–5, these documents nevertheless provide details of operations and peace negotiations from an interesting historical perspective. The first fifty pages of the work are dedicated to a general editorial introduction, highlighting the peculiar British prejudices of the observers, and the circumstances of the British initiative to detach observers with both armies, partly motivated by an interest in maintaining a watchful eye on the treatment of foreigners and neutral property, which could not be achieved normally by a naval presence at sea (pp. 23–4). The plundering by Chilean soldiery at Chorrillos was a case in point, although Wu Brading's claim (pp. 38–9) that this war booty 'had been promised to Chilean troops in Chile [before departure], had been paraded in the Chilean press and constantly reiterated by Chilean chiefs during the campaign' is not supported by tangible evidence. The introduction is used by the editor to publish a variety of illustrations of nineteenth-century China, linked to the text most tenuously by a short account of Chinese coolies in Peru. The reports of Brenton and Acland regrettably contain no explanatory footnotes which might have served to balance some of the contentious or unusual descriptions of text, and assist the reader in

comparing observation of events from both sides. Appendices include covering letters to the main reports and brief biographical details on the British naval officers and diplomats. This book provides just one more angle on the War of the Pacific, the more valuable since it presents previously unpublished material, only available in English, in a Spanish language version.

London

PHILIP SOMERVELL

Enrique Reyes Navarro: *Salitre Chileno, Mercado Mundial y Propaganda (1889-1916)*. *Labor de Don Alejandro Bertrand* (Iquique, Chile: Cuadernos de Investigación Social no. 17. Centro de Investigación de la Realidad del Norte, 1986 n.p.s.) Pp. 58.

One of the more particular aspects of the system of production and sale of Chilean nitrate was the early use of advertising in order to increase consumption. For this purpose, a model organization was created whose activity continued up to the middle of this century by which time the Chilean fertilizer had lost its previous importance in the world markets.

The nucleus of the propaganda activity was originally the Permanent Nitrate Committee founded in London in 1889 at the time when John Thomas North lorded over the industry. The Committee was composed of representatives of the British nitrate companies until 1911 when representatives of Chilean and other foreign companies joined the board, and its name was changed to the Chilean Nitrate Committee.

The archives of the London Committee and of its successors in the mission of increasing the consumption of nitrate were held in the cellars of the Chile House building in Ropemaker Street where the author consulted them, and which have served as practically the sole basis for the preparation of this interesting monograph.¹

The work of the Committee in London, financed initially through voluntary contributions, gained fresh impetus when the *Asociación Salitrera de Propaganda*, which had been formed in Iquique in 1894, imposed a levy on its associates at the rate of 1/8 d. per quintal (46 lbs) of nitrate exported for advertising purposes. To these amounts were added the Government contributions authorized by the Chilean Congress for this purpose, prompted by the realization on the part of the authorities that the fiscal well-being of the State was directly related to the increase in the consumption of nitrate. The appointment of Alejandro Bertrand as Government inspector in Europe was a direct consequence of this awareness, and yet, the subtitle of this monography notwithstanding, very little information regarding his work in this post is given.

The Committee and the *Asociación* attempted to promote the consumption of nitrate by means of a decentralized system, appointing delegates in various

¹ The greater part of the documentation has since been transferred to the Archivo Nacional in Santiago prior to the termination of the lease on the building where they were preserved together with an excellent library of specialized works. It is to be hoped that these, also the more recent documents which remained behind, will be preserved for use by future researchers.