

# Valdivia and its region as a destination for German immigration: the utopian project of Carl Alexander Simon

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Reading Carl Alexander Simon's work *Auswanderung und deutsch-nationale Kolonisation von Süd-Amerika mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Freistaates Chile* (Emigration and German-national colonization of South-America with particular reference to the Republic of Chile) (Simon, 1850), I began to understand the impressions and emotions – above all the confusion and a certain disappointment – that I felt in the mid-1990s when I first encountered the landscapes of Chilean Araucania and the Argentine Andean region of the province of Río Negro and the extreme south of Neuquén province. When I had mentioned my wish to travel in those regions, to see places different from the semi-arid steppes of north Argentinian Patagonia where I had spent several months doing anthropological research, many of my interlocutors had spoken lyrically of the new landscapes – lakes, streams and lush vegetation – that awaited me: “everything is green there... nothing like the desert around here,” said a friend who lives in the city of Neuquén. I returned from my travels somewhat disappointed and could only sum up this feeling in a brief: “It's pretty, but rather like Switzerland!”

If the landscapes reminded me of Switzerland, the Black Forest, the Tyrol, or other places close to where I grew up, this feeling was intensified by the strong presence of the descendants of immigrants drawn there from those regions since the mid-19th century. In Bariloche (Province of Río Negro, Argentina), for example, where I have spent several months in recent years, sauerkraut, beer and wooden chalets constantly recall this heritage. Reading Simon's work, I better understood the link between the landscapes of “Argentine Switzerland” and the presence of populations of Germanic origin. For Simon, it was advisable to “plant” people accustomed to a certain climate and an environment in territories that, though thousands of miles away, offered them similar geographical, climatic and physical conditions, since “the German plant will not flourish where the palm grows” (1850: 15). Moreover, for Simon, it was precisely this “replanting” of a lively spirit imbued with ideals of freedom and democracy in a new soil that would contribute to the setting-up of a society or colonies governed by rules more just than those on which the counter-revolution of 1848 was based:

From North and South, the Germanic tribes will advance in political and intellectual education, colonies will spring forth from both sides, until they meet where wise Nature has wrapped a belt of grace around the hips of the earth. From the regions of change, tumult and agitation, humanity will enter regions of constancy, harmony and tranquility of the atmosphere, where man's spirit will itself become the image of Nature, peace, joy, truth and beauty. This flow of life between the two poles – which, like the magnetic poles, only differ in their realms of activity and not in their essence – has already begun; for in Chile too there is a kind of Nordic, forceful, speculative spirit, a life full of awareness, an impulse towards freedom and self-determination, while Europe grows old and decrepit, languishing on its sickbed of slavery (ibid: 44).

In this essay, I have adopted a descriptive approach in which I first present the biographical trajectory of Carl Alexander Simon, before turning to his migration project and the creation in Chile of German colonies inspired by the democratic ideals that the counter-revolution of 1848 had stifled. I dwell in particular on the choice of southern Chile as an ideal place, in Simon's view, to receive German *émigrés*, on the detailed description he gives of that country and its regions in his work *Auswanderung und deutsch-nationale Kolonisation von Süd-Amerika mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Freistaates Chile* (Simon 1850), and on the fact that he regards emigration as a moral, ethical, even political act – and even a duty.

[1] Ricarda Musser, personal communication April 2012.

[2] <http://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10253514.html> or [http://books.google.com.ar/books/about/Auswanderung\\_und\\_deutsch\\_nationale\\_Kolonisation?id=RGU6AAAACAAJ&redir\\_esc=y](http://books.google.com.ar/books/about/Auswanderung_und_deutsch_nationale_Kolonisation?id=RGU6AAAACAAJ&redir_esc=y) or <http://www.bsb-muenchen-digital.de/~web/web1025/bsb10253514/images/index.html> (all accessed 19.11.2012).

[3] [http://books.google.com.ar/books?id=RGU6AAAACAAJ&pg=PA2&hl=de&output=text&redir\\_esc=y](http://books.google.com.ar/books?id=RGU6AAAACAAJ&pg=PA2&hl=de&output=text&redir_esc=y) (page accessed 19.11.2012).

[4] Ricarda Musser, personal communication April 2012.

[5] <https://sites.google.com/site/scheelenchile/antecedentes> (accessed 30.06.2013)

[6] These land purchases were not without problems, since the acquisition of some plots in 1846 was challenged by the Mayor of Valdivia in 1848 (see <http://www.genealog.cl/Alemanes/F/Fiegelist/IntroduccionHistorica.html>, accessed 23.10.2012) and it was not until 1855 that the Supreme Court recognized Kindermann and Renous as owners of the lands bought from the Huilliche Indians (see <http://historiadevaldivia.blogspot.com.ar/2009/05/nuevos-tiempos-1840-1880.html>, accessed 23.10.2012).

Because Simon's writings are not readily accessible to those who do not read German, I have illustrated my text with numerous quotations from his main work (Simon 1850) and from his epistolary exchanges, edited by Schwarzenberg (1970-1973).

## The trajectory of a utopian socialist

Carl Alexander Simon was born in Frankfurt an der Oder on 4 November 1805 and died in conditions that remain unclear in the Puntas Arenas region of Chile in 1852. His artistic gifts were expressed not only in painting but also in prose, poetry and music, and his varied interest led him to involve himself in politics, economics, philosophy and other areas. He studied the fine arts first at the Royal Prussian Academy of Arts in Berlin, then in Munich, where he developed affinities with *Gedanken-Malerei* (Pereira Salas 1969: 7). After visits to Italy in 1829 and 1831, he married Charlotte Kindermann in 1832 and lived in Berlin until 1835, when he moved to Weimar and later Stuttgart, where he embarked on his political activities as a utopian socialist.

After the failed revolution of 1848, he was persecuted for his political opinions and took refuge in France, from where he envisaged leaving for Chile. Through his writings (Simon 1848 and 1850) – to which I shall return in detail – he sought to promote the project of establishing democratic German colonies in the south of the country so as to found a more just society there. Although he believed that support for the German migrants should come from the whole German nation, he knew that the various Germanic states would refuse to finance the settling of such colonies. He therefore turned to private capital and took part in the foundation in Stuttgart, in 1849, of the *Gesellschaft für nationale Auswanderung und Kolonisation* (Society for national emigration and colonization), which some leading figures of the region joined (Simon 1850: 55-60). His brother-in-law, Franz Kindermann, a rich businessman and landowner who had been established in the region of Valparaíso since 1836, was very active in it from a distance, being a strong advocate of emigration to Chile rather than other destinations, such as the United States, to which many European migrants headed at that time (Pereira Salas 1969: 11-12).

Burdened with debts, as can be seen from his correspondence with his wife (Schwarzenberg 1970-1973: 49-92), and persecuted for his ideas, Simon envisaged emigration because “the political situation compels me to leave Germany” (1850: 56). On 19 February 1850, after a four-month wait in the port of Hamburg, he set off with his eldest son to set up home in the region of Valdivia (Pereira Salas 1969: 14-16). He wanted to create a new utopian socialist community there, expecting his family to join him there later. As he wrote to his wife on 1 August 1850 from the colony of Bellavista in Chile: “Only when I can offer you everything that will brighten your days, sweeten your life, will I bring you here” (Schwarzenberg 1970-1973: 87). So his family had to wait in Germany, in very difficult conditions because he was unable to send them money, until everything was ready for them in Chile. Although his wife was not convinced of the wisdom of his migration project, she had nonetheless agreed to follow him on certain conditions: “I promised you that if after two years it pleases you as much as you expected and you will then take us there, then I will give myself over to my inevitable fate” (Schwarzenberg 1970-1973: 67, letter from Charlotte Kindermann to Carl Alexander Simon, 18 January 1850).

But when Simon arrived in his new homeland, he soon realised that he was not cut out for agricultural work and abandoned his idea of taking an active part in the creation of a farming colony. From then on he survived by selling his paintings (in particular, portraits) and tried to travel in the country to get to know it better and give an account of it in his writings. Hence he bequeathed to posterity various pictorial works depicting the nature and inhabitants of southern Chile. In 1852, he was commissioned by the Chilean government – through Bernhard Philippi, the Governor of Magellan – another German deeply involved in the projects to attract migrants to southern Chile, since he had been the agent of the Chilean government charged in Germany with promoting emigration – to accompany him and document their journey from Valdivia to Magellan (Heberlein 2008: xvi). The two men never returned from an expedition to the extreme south of the continent, where they intended to meet Indian leaders. Their bodies were never found. Simon was then aged 47 and had only spent two years on the Chilean soil in which he had placed so much hope and which he had seen as a promised land for democratic ideals.

## Chile as a land of immigration: “We have found a plot of earth that bears a history in its womb”

(Simon 1850: 40-41)

In 1848, Simon wrote a first, short work of 48 pages [1] to promote German emigration to Chile, entitled *Die Auswanderung der Demokraten und Proletarier und deutsch-nationale Kolonisation des südamerikanischen Freistaates Chile* (The emigration of democrats and proletarians and the German-national colonization of the South-American Republic of Chile) (Simon 1848). It was soon sold out but was republished two years later, in 1850, in a reworked and considerably expanded edition which now ran to 131 pages (Simon 1850). My essay is based on this second edition, which has the somewhat different title *Auswanderung und deutsch-nationale Kolonisation von Süd-Amerika mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Freistaates Chile*. Very few copies are available in libraries, but digitization projects have enabled the work (printed in Gothic characters) to be put on line, [2] as well as a transcription in modern characters, [3] so that the interested reader can easily consult the primary source. Appearing as part of a series of publications entitled *Gediegene Schriften für Auswanderer* (Solid writings for emigrants) and published by Buchner in Bayreuth, the second edition of this work consists of two parts; the first is attributed to Simon himself, whereas the second, entitled *Chile: Eine geographisch- statistisch- topographisch-naturhistorische Skizze* (Chile: a geographical, statistical, topographical and natural-historical outline), is attributed to Traugott Bromme. But, according to Pereira Salas (1969: 12, n. 12), Bromme – who was also a member of the *Gesellschaft für nationale Auswanderung und Kolonisation* – added his name to Simon’s only to avoid political problems for Simon, who was in reality the author of the whole work, in spite of the important differences between its two parts. Other specialists, however, are reluctant to attribute the whole work to Simon, [4] and the mention of a contribution by Bromme in a letter from Charlotte Kindermann to her husband, dated 21 January 1850, does not make it clear how much of the work is by Bromme. She tells her husband that the publisher has paid her a sum of money but “he would have paid such a fee if Herr Bromme had not delivered many pages and most unselfishly added his name to the title page” (Schwarzenberg 1970-1973: 69). As regards the differences between the two parts of the work, while the first sixty pages present a manifesto in favour of emigration to Chile in which Simon gives free rein to his utopian socialist project, vehemently and lyrically denouncing the counter-revolution of 1848, the second part presents a detailed and indeed very meticulous description of Chile, in which the different aspects (geography, production, mineral and agricultural resources, trade, etc.) are systematically examined in order to supply possible candidates for emigration with all the important information on their destination. It enumerates, for example, all the types of fabric on sale in Chile with indications as to those which most advantageously might be imported and the type of packaging that should be preferred for each.

Presenting southern Chile as a *terra incognita* (Simon 1850: vi) Simon (and Bromme?) thus offer(s) a description of it in 131 pages with the aim of providing all the necessary information for future colonists so that they can look forward calmly to their participation in the vast programme of colonization that is set out. Simon regards the south of Chile, and in particular the provinces of Valdivia and Chiloé as favourable to the establishment of German colonies (Simon 1850: 40ff), for two main reasons which seem to him fundamental to the success of his undertaking: the good climatic and political conditions. The political situation in Chile had indeed improved significantly after the early-19<sup>th</sup> century struggles for independence, which had been accompanied by democratic ideals stifled in Germany by the counter-revolution of 1848.

In the provinces of Valdivia, Osorno and Chiloé, German colonization was already under way, since pioneers such as Kindermann (Simon’s brother-in-law) and Renous (Kindermann’s father-in-law) had been active in opening the way for immigration on a larger scale (Simon 1850: 40 and 124). They had acquired land north of the modern city of Osorno, at Santo Tomás de Quilacahuín on the banks of the Río Bueno, in a place subsequently called “Bellavista” and which is situated at the mouth of the Río Rahue. [5] In addition, they negotiated the purchase of land from Indians and sold it on to the *Gesellschaft für nationale Auswanderung und Kolonisation* and the immigrants who arrived from 1850. [6] Other German companies had also bought land in the region to establish colonies on a private basis, while an official colonization project supported by the Chilean state and run by Bernhard Philippi, appointed for this purpose as *Agente de Colonización* (Agent for colonization) – with whom Simon died in 1852 – pursued the same objectives. Furthermore, under the

Law on Colonization (*Ley sobre Colonización*) of 18 November 1845, the immigrants were exempt from taxes for a period of twenty years and did not have to pay customs duties on the personal effects that they imported (ibid: 57).

Although he had never set foot in Chile, Simon gives a detailed and enchanting description of the country based on a compilation of the works of other authors – whom he sometimes quotes word for word – such as Alexander von Humboldt (1814-1825), Claude Gay (1844), Eduard Friedrich Poeppig (1835), Wilhelm Hermann Nopitsch (1849), Alcide d’Orbigny (1835-1847), etc., but also on first-hand information supplied directly from Chile by his brother-in-law Franz Kindermann. According to Simon, Chile offered many advantages for German colonization, since it was politically stable and open to democratic ideals but also because its landscape, its natural environment and its climate were comparable to those of his native Germany and the Andes regions could “provide the settler with a healthy Alpine [sic] climate” (Simon 1850: 15). For him it was essential that the new environment in which the settlers found themselves should remind them of their land of origin, since:

The German cannot readily adapt to a tropical climate.... the Teutonic farmer.... must start where he can breathe the same air as in his fatherland, where he may cultivate the food of his homeland, where similar foods and analogous meteorological conditions do not afflict his bodily and thus also his spiritual organism with illness and violently disturb them, where a similar landscape consoles the memory of the home he has left behind. This last consideration is always too little observed, although as many succumb to homesickness as to fevers (ibid: 11-12).

Indeed he thinks that, to preserve their health, the migrants should not undergo too many changes in their way of life. They are already uprooted and forced to adapt to new customs, new languages, etc., and one should at least take care to offer them natural surroundings and food similar to those of their country of origin, which their organisms will be better able to accept:

If.... a change in diet occurs, through which the digestive process is disturbed and the functions of the internal organs must be completely modified, then despair seizes the mind, whose morbid affection opens the gates of the body to suffering. We must therefore see to it not only that the colonist is transplanted into the same latitudes, which often offer completely opposite weather phenomena, but into truly similar atmospheric conditions, where he can grow the food of his home country, where external Nature, where law, customs and language give him the picture, or at least the illusion, of his motherland. (ibid: 41-42).

Simon’s conclusion is unequivocal: in Chile, “There is a lack of people, and this lack impedes even the mines and the farms” (ibid: 37) and, further on, “No other country in the world offers such a fortunate combination of natural and political conditions. Its products are inexhaustible, its location enviable” (ibid: 59). Its wealth of raw materials and its potentialities for cultivation and husbandry are still largely untapped:

Agriculture is still in its most rudimentary state, and rational management is not to be found even on the largest estates.... For lack of cleaning and proper handling, the rich harvests are often lost after harvesting and threshing (ibid: 38).

In the second part of the work (whether by Bromme or Simon), the description is even more beguiling:

Thus Chile lies before us with its treasures, a splendour of Nature, beautifully and sublimely formed, its body veined with rich mineral treasures, wrapped in vegetation rich in flowers and fruits, and everywhere abounding with creatures useful or delightful to humankind. When one considers too the wonderful climate, you have a land before you, as there are few on our globe, a land from which Nature has removed everything that elsewhere embitters the enjoyment of life; a land where humanity nothing is missing but people, where millions more will find a happy future, but which is yet no Paradise, no Utopia, in which every workshy can expect to acquire wealth, for here too only industry advances the labourer, and beads of sweat are the seed from which the prosperity of German immigrants will grow (ibid: 87-88).

Moreover, Simon regards this country as very safe, since:

Travellers enjoy the greatest security among the Chileans and can sleep peacefully under the heavens, although it is known that merchants do not commonly bear large sums and objects of high value with them in their baggage (ibid: 89).

From another standpoint, Chile wanted to welcome European immigrants, who were regarded as bearers of a culture superior to that of the Creoles and who could therefore participate actively in the economic, cultural and social development of the country. To this end, the state favoured the immigration of farmers and people trained in a craft with a view to populating and developing the south of the country. It should also be noted here that almost all the German immigrants could read and write, whereas more than half the Chilean population was still illiterate.

**Emigration as an ethical, moral and political act: “Thus, other peoples must take the sword from the hand of dying Europe”**

(Simon 1850: 4)

Deeply disappointed by the counter-revolution of 1848, Simon considered that “the struggle for democracy on European soil is a lost cause” (ibid: 1) since “a terrible thing has occurred” (ibid: 1). Still wishing to believe in democracy and the possibility of saving the ideals in which he firmly believed, he thus envisaged promoting them under other skies: “Even if nations go under, humanity will not, and the achievements of its culture will be the inheritance of another” (ibid: 2). His democratic and utopian ideals led him to envisage action at the level of humanity as a whole and, since the German nation that he invokes throughout his work has not understood the importance of democracy, other nations must pick up the torch:

Convinced that Germany, that the whole of Europe is a prison that we cannot break down, that it is our aim therefore, to flee a place where the laws of eternal reason are trampled, the rights of humanity are scorned, to abandon a country that sinks deeper by the day into barbarism and corruption, ruled by tyrants, peopled by slaves, that has again brought forth all the diseases, sins, follies and evils that the revolution sought to destroy, so that vice overcomes vice, tyranny overcomes tyranny, lies overcome lies, and execute the judgment for which virtue was too weak (ibid: 55).

Thus, for Simon, the reasons for emigration have changed profoundly since the events of 1848. If it might have been done before for reasons of economic necessity, it has now become a moral necessity as well as a political act in the name of the defence of democratic ideals: “Emigration as a political and moral phenomenon is a product of the revolution” (ibid: 5) and again: “And the friend of humanity rightly asks, is it not wiser to attain through emigration what has not been attained through the horrors of civil war?” (ibid: 31).

Despite everything, Simon thinks it is important to choose the right place to establish the colonies of German *émigrés*, which is why he proceeds in his work to make a detailed study of the various possibilities that the world offers for the establishment of Germanic colonies. Having ruled out both Asia and North America (a zone of great attraction at that time) for various reasons which would be too long to describe in the framework of this essay, he considers in detail the advantages and disadvantages of various Latin American countries. After a long comparative analysis (ibid: 12-27), only southern Chile seems, at that time, to combine the conditions necessary for the fulfilment of the German soul and German industry: access to the sea, which will allow export and import of goods, a geographical environment favourable to Germanic populations and a stable political situation:

For sixteen years Chile has lived in peace. Respected from without, internally it is on the path of peaceful reform and fruitful peace, whose blessing will be cultivated in the form of a not insignificant and, I think, highly developed culture through the mental capacity of the people in combination with German education, which it enthusiastically embraces (ibid: 40).

Chile was only the third-ranking destination for migrants to Latin America after Brazil and Argentina. While almost 5 million Germans left their original territory between 1840 and

1910 (Singer 1998: 4), the figures for Germanic migration to Chile set their number at between 10,000 and 37,000 (ibid.: 8) by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Despite this low number, Singer (1998: 4) considers that the particularity of this migratory movement lies in the fact that German institutions and cultural specificities were essentially maintained in Chile, as Simon hoped: “As among the Slavs, so among the Romance peoples, not individuals but communities will easily retain their folklore” (1850: 46). Thus, he proclaims, the Germanic soul and its qualities must be understood as the trustees of a particular identity, going far beyond the limits of the nation-state which has not chosen to follow the right path to ensure the freedom of its people. According to Simon, Chilean soil will henceforward offer the populations marked with Germanic qualities—who have to be seen as trustees of a higher morality—a place in which to develop and thrive undisturbed:

I believe that it is precisely the beauty, the wealth of Nature, the splendour of the phenomena, that mark out South America as the seat of a higher human organism. I have noticed how, through transplantation from Europe to Chile, animals and plants have gained in fertility and beauty; should not Nature work likewise on man? (ibid: 43-44)

**The organization of the colonies: “All great things have small beginnings.”**

(Simon 1850: 55)

Simon observes that attempts at establishing colonies have failed because of defective organization. He thinks it necessary therefore to draw up a detailed programme to facilitate the implantation of the colony he dreams of in southern Chile, a particularly promising site for Germanic migration, since:

Valdivia and Osorno, the two provinces especially suited for German settlement, offer rich, luxuriant estates, with vast forests, and advantages that only a few regions of South America can present. (ibid: 123).

Under point 9 “Organization of the emigration” of his work (ibid: 49-55), he sets out his detailed plan for colonization. Above all, he thinks it absolutely necessary that Germany should financially support the establishment of agricultural colonies. If the economic viability of these colonies can only be assured in the medium or long term, material questions must take second place: “The only profit will be the advancement of a world-historical idea and the honour of the German nation. The material advantages for the Motherland lie in a more distant future.” (ibid: 50) and moreover: “Germany must be ready to make sacrifices and set aside all petty wishes regarding the tutelage of her colonies. Moreover, in the Hispanic-American countries this is impossible” (ibid: 50). While he is aware that the mother country, Germany, will have no rights over its farming colonies, he nonetheless thinks that they will enable German ideals and culture to flourish while being integrated into a nation-state with its own prerogatives. So emigration should be supported not by one Germanic state or another but by Germany as a whole (in the broad sense), in a common effort as a nation. Thus Simon draws up accounts for the expenses entailed by the movement of populations:

I calculate that for the passage, purchase of land, initial furnishings, seed, food for nine months, acquisition of livestock and implements, each individual needs 600 florins, a family of five 1400 florins (ibid: 51-52).

He also draws up a colonization plan that will enable the Germanic populations to live together and lend each other armed assistance if trouble arises:

If we want to begin colonization in this manner, so that the colonies are able to protect themselves, then a number of considerations must be addressed at once.... Here I would suggest planting six tribes, the first on the Trumao River, the second where this river meets the Osorno or the Bocupio, the four others on the coast or nearby to the north and south, so that all six tribes are in reach of one another. Each tribe must consist of at least 1000 families and additionally 500 single men, hearty fighters (ibid.: 52).

As he thinks that the political situation will continue to improve on the other side of the Andes in Argentinian territory, he envisages extending the colonization westwards and subsequently implanting six more groups (*Stämme*) in southern Argentina, near the Río Negro and Río Colorado rivers, with some 10,000 armed men.

His whole project for the colonization in the Chile-Argentina region thus provides for the implantation of 12,000 families, some 60,000 persons, and he calculates it will cost around 20 million guilders. He proposes to raise this sum through a collective effort jointly supported by the different Germanic states according to the size of their population:

These I place in four categories:

- 1) Those with at least 10 million inhabitants: Austria and Prussia;
- 2) Those with at least 1 million inhabitants: Bavaria, Saxony, Hanover, Württemberg and Baden;
- 3) Those with at least 100,000 inhabitants: Kurhessen, the Grand Duchy of Hessen, Holstein and Lüneburg, Luxemburg, Braunschweig, G.-Weimar, S.-K.-Gotha, Meiningen, Altenburg, Oldenburg with Kniphausen, Lippe and Hamburg;
- 4) The remaining 16 small states. (ibid.: 52-53)

Each state will thus contribute to the migratory process by providing population and finance, i.e.:

Within the first category each individual state sends 1,580 families and 1,000 single men; the cost is 2,700,000 fl. (Guilders). Within the second (5 states), each sends 800 families and 400 men; the cost: 1,360,000 fl. Within the third (14 states) each sends 322 families in addition to 142 men, costing 636,000 fl. The fourth category sends 31 families at a cost of 43,400 fl. As we see, the sum of over 20 million can be distributed among the states, so that it does not exceed the capacity of each (ibid: 53).

He nonetheless leaves it to the financial officials to work out how to secure these sums, imagining they will have the courage to extract them from the richest. He argues that these sums should not be seen as lost to the German economy but that, on the contrary, they will benefit German citizens and eventually open up new markets, while at the same time emigration itself becomes a market:

All implements, effects, garments, weapons, tools, instruments of every kind, down to the smallest nail, must be conveyed from here to the colony, and will therefore be made in Germany; the crossing will be made on German ships; all provisions for the journey will be purchased in Germany.... Only the costs for land, livestock, seed corn and food should be regarded as really extracted from the German economy. I count 400 fl. for a family (land, livestock and food are very cheap in Valdivia) and 250 fl. for an individual, making 6,300,000 fl. that could be said to be taken from the Germany economy. But for this almost 14 million are in reality put into circulation, and while we save 12,000 families and 6,000 men (66,000 souls) from perdition, providing a happy future for them, in Germany too we have spread an abundant blessing (ibid: 53-54).

**From utopia to reality: “The conditions at Bellavista are so wretched and ridiculous and so sad”**

Simon, letter to his wife, 1 August 1850 (Schwarzenberg 1970-1973: 87)

Simon concludes the first part of his work by announcing his forthcoming departure for Chile:

The coming years and my own experience, for which I am preparing, will soon reveal any errors. I shall quietly and conscientiously investigate on the spot, and I hope that my dreams will not be disappointed; and my cabin by the calm ocean, where I shall remember my unfortunate brothers, will always be open in hospitality to lost travellers (ibid.: 60).

The new edition of his book of his book went to press as he waited in Hamburg for a ship bound for Chile. He thus set foot on Chilean only in June 1850 after a crossing lasting three months and finally discovered a country that he knew well through his reading and whose praises he had often sung as the “promised land” awaiting populations inspired by ideals of freedom and democracy. He describes his arrival thus in a letter to his wife, dated 5 June 1850.

On the last day of May we landed in the port of Valdivia. The sight of this country was

ravishingly beautiful, even just its external form. Its immeasurable forests and gentle valleys and terrains brought back memories of the Black Forest and the beautiful Swabia.... Yet the forests and the handsome dark-brown men, the hot sun that sometimes accompanied our steps, reminded me soon of a more favourable magnificent sky, of the days in Italy, of all its beauties (Schwarzenberg 1970-1973: 76).

But little by little this enchanting panorama deteriorated, in particular because of the cancellation of the land purchase made by Kindermann and Renous. This particularly affected Simon because, he and the son who had accompanied him to Chile were living at the expense of his brother-in-law Franz Kindermann, who also sometimes gave financial assistance to his sister (Simon's wife) and his nephews. Simon nonetheless tried to establish himself at Bellavista on the land that been assigned to him but soon realized that he was not cut out for farming, still less in view of the tension that had developed between him and his brother-in-law who was still trying to attract colonists onto land whose ownership was not assured. On 4 August 1850, Simon wrote him a letter in which he expresses his grievances:

I am persuaded that a higher humanistic idea cannot be carried through here. There lives nothing more in you than hypocrisy and common speculation. You [Kindermann and Renous] have neither the means nor the capacity to conduct an ordinary colonization. Everything is lacking here.... After the careful checks I have made, I cannot any longer remain a witness of such inadequacies, lies and deceptions as take place in these wretched conditions (Schwarzenberg 1970-1973: 88-89).

Thus he abandoned the colonization project that he had helped to shape from Germany. After his break with Franz Kindermann, only a letter to his brother-in-law Hermann Kindermann has been preserved (Schwarzenberg 1970-1973: 90-92). In it he complains of having no news of his family, because Franz has not forwarded his mail. He declares that he has given up all colony projects to devote himself to painting, and asks Hermann, who lives in England, to send him painting materials from Europe. At that time, 10 August 1852, he was on Chiloé Island, from where he set out, probably southwards, on a journey from which he did not return.

Translation from French: Richard Nice

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