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**“Unhealthy houses, incorrect
neighbors” : The housing
problem of the police force
and a pioneering social
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ABSTRACT

The Carabineros de Chile, a militarized police force that was created in 1927 and closely related to the Chilean army, became an important beneficiary of Chilean social housing legislation. In Latin America, housing had emerged as a new field of state intervention in the early twentieth century to address the manifold problems connected to the lack of affordable and hygienic living quarters. Placed at the intersection of policy fields such as health and old age provision, housing furthermore claimed special attention because of its importance for public order. The Republic of Chile became a pioneer in social housing when it passed its first groundbreaking law in 1906 to address issues of public health and to deal with the protests of workers. However, this piece of legislation did little to substantially improve the housing conditions of the workers and the urban poor it supposedly had been drafted for. In the years to come, additional housing laws were put into place but equally failed to solve the national housing crisis.

This contribution studies the development of social housing in Chile until the 1940s. It assesses the importance of the philanthropic beginnings of social housing in this country and examines the impact of European social housing ideas and forums of debate such as congresses on Chilean developments. The Carabineros de Chile serve as a case study of a group which not only made good use of social housing laws but also aspired to become an actor in the field of social policy in its own right. The meaningful and often overlooked connections between social policy and disciplining thus become visible.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Carabineros de Chile wurden im Jahre 1927 als eine militarisierte Polizeieinheit mit engen Verbindungen zur chilenischen Armee gegründet. Sie profitierte deutlich von der Gesetzgebung zum sozialen Wohnungsbau, auch wenn sie kaum in deren Mittelpunkt gestanden hatte. Der soziale Wohnungsbau kam in Lateinamerika zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts als Lösung für eine Vielzahl an Problemen auf, als deren Ursachen der Mangel an bezahlbarem und hygienischem Wohnraum galten. Auf dem Schnittpunkt von Sozialpolitikfeldern wie Gesundheit und Altersversorgung angesiedelt, genoss der soziale Wohnungsbau auch deshalb besondere Aufmerksamkeit, weil den Wohnverhältnissen auch eine herausragende Bedeutung für die öffentliche Ordnung zugeschrieben wurde. Die Republik Chile wurde 1906 zu einem Pionier des sozialen Wohnungsbaus, als es ein erstes wegweisendes Gesetz hierzu verabschiedete, um auf Belange der öffentlichen Gesundheit und auf Proteste von Arbeitern zu reagieren. Allerdings verbesserte das Gesetz kaum die Wohnsituation von städtischen Armen und Arbeitern, welche vorgeblich im Mittelpunkt dieser Gesetzgebung gestanden hatten. In den folgenden Jahren wurden weitere Gesetze verabschiedet, die allerdings die nationale Wohnungskrise nicht zu lösen vermochten.

Dieser Beitrag untersucht die Entwicklung des sozialen Wohnungsbaus in Chile bis zu den 1940er-Jahren. Er beschäftigt sich mit den philanthropischen Anfängen des sozialen Wohnungsbaus und betrachtet die Auswirkungen europäischer Ideen und Diskussionsforen wie Kongresse auf chilenische Entwicklungen. Die Carabineros de Chile dienen als Beispiel für eine Gruppe, welche die Gesetzgebung zum sozialen Wohnungsbau nicht nur zum eigenen Vorteil einzusetzen verstand, sondern auch selbst danach strebte ein sozialpolitischer Akteur zu werden. Auf diese Weise treten auch die bedeutsamen und häufig übersehenen Verbindungen zwischen Sozialpolitik und Disziplinierung hervor.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1928 the journal for the Carabineros de Chile, the newly created national police force, published an article whose title was very telling. In English it would read as “Tell me who you mingle with, and I will tell you who you are”, and the author of this piece presented, among other things, “unhealthy houses, incorrect neighbors” as particularly pressing problems the police was faced with (Ripoll León, 1928, p.73). Interestingly enough, the way unhealthy living quarters and neighbors of dubious reputation are mentioned in this article suggests an intrinsic connection between the two issues. Prompt and favorable solutions apparently were urgently needed, as both the housing and the people living there would undermine the standing and prestige of the police force in Chilean society. Furthermore, the article implied that better housing for the police would add to the greatness of the beloved fatherland the Carabineros worked for and represented.

Such assertions may sound hyperbolic, but the problems mentioned in the article worried the superiors of an institution seeking to improve its position within the Chilean state and society. At the same time, the article addressed one of the major social problems the Republic of Chile was facing at the time: affordable and decent housing. Both problems have persisted to this day, and they have featured in the protests, which started in October 2019. Back in 1928, the lack of adequate living quarters particularly affected workers with low incomes and large families, who had suffered from the lack of decent housing for a long time. The Chilean government had sought to solve this problem earlier on, so that housing laws were drafted and passed in Chile for the first time in 1906. These are at the center of this working paper, which examines the general awareness of the housing problem in Chile. It also traces the international initiatives and debates on social housing and their relevance to Chilean discussions on this topic and Chilean laws passed to address the lack of appropriate housing. In addition, this article assesses the effects of the early stages of a new national social policy legislation on what was to become a

vital new field of state action, pointing out the importance of this social policy field for the historical actor analyzed here.

The time frame under study runs from the late nineteenth century to the early 1940s. Within this time frame major political changes occurred in Chile, including a regime change in 1924 when on September 11, 1924 the military seized power in a coup. It brought an end to the parliamentary system, which had been in place since the end of the civil war in 1891, and rushed to implement a comprehensive reform-agenda in a country which was marked by profound social inequalities. The regime change was the result of the deep disappointment with the presidency of Arturo Alessandri Palma, a Liberal, who had come to power in December 1920 with the express will to start comprehensive social reforms, but who, from the point of view of the military, achieved nothing (Millar Carvacho, 1974, p. 36). At that point in history, the military propagated public spending, economic nationalism and a new role for itself in national politics (Bawden, 2016). Housing laws are but one example of how the state hoped to intervene in a highly controversial field and avoid social discord. The military junta ruled until March 12, 1925, passing a record number of important laws during these six months in an effort to push a reform agenda which had come to a stop. These reforms included law 4057 on trade unions and law 355, by which the new Ministry of Health and Hygiene (Ministerio de Higiene [sic!], Asistencia, Previsión Social y Trabajo) was established, which was also responsible for social welfare, pensions and labor. Furthermore, the military passed law 188, which created a pension fund for employees, the Cajas de Previsión de Empleados Particulares; law 4054, which stipulated health insurance, the Cajas de Seguro de Enfermedades; and the laws 261 and 308, which regulated rents and affordable housing, as will be discussed below (Ministerio de Higiene, 1925).

In the years to follow, the Chilean government hoped to fix more than one social problem through social housing. Also, this was occurring at a time when a growing circle of experts “debated the meaning of hygiene and public health as dimensions of what it meant to be modern” (Ibarra,

2016, p. 181). A modern police force required modern housing, and in this context, we will look at the Carabineros de Chile to analyze how the laws passed during the years under examination shaped the housing projects that this particular group pursued. Although it never was explicitly at the center of this new social policy, the new police benefitted significantly from the laws, which were passed to establish social housing in Chile. It is notable that, right after its establishment in 1927, the new police force used the Chilean social housing law, which was the first of its kind in Latin America, to improve the housing conditions of its members. As the result of the merger of the previous police forces, the new police body was able to build on institutional structures and funds to comply with the requirements of the social housing law; the Carabineros de Chile thus were at an advantage, while other sectors of the Chilean population lacked these resources. Therefore, this paper is also a contribution to the early, telling history of Chilean state intervention in housing and the development of the contested field of social policy. This policy was strongly based on European examples, and evolved over the years in reaction to popular demands and political turmoil. However, its main focus remained the same: to turn Chileans into the rightful owners of housing. According to recent research, the European social housing policy also tended to be characterized by continuity, though still was changing over time (Lévy-Vroelant et al., 2014).

In the context of social policy, this working paper furthermore seeks to shed new light on a field of activity of the Chilean military. It is widely known that the armed forces played an important role in Chilean politics and society in general (Nunn, 1983; Bawden, 2020). However, the military's relevance for the history of social policy still needs to be examined in more depth. This is particularly the case because the Chilean armed forces were a discrete and often overlooked actor in social policy, which took its inspiration from other nations and their military forces (González de Reufels, 2020; González de Reufels, 2021). Therefore, this paper proposes a twofold role played by the Carabineros de Chile: first, as a beneficiary of social policy, and second, as an active actor in the

field of social policy. Both roles reflect the close relationship and involvement of the new police force with the national army and its importance for the nation-building process in Chile.

The Chilean nation state required convincing role models and during the years under study here, policemen promised the nation to be the exemplary Chilean citizens it was looking for. Thus, it is hardly surprising that, over the years, the institutional discourse of the Carabineros highlights the potential of these men as a model citizen. In addition, the police were expected to engage in the protection of the “*raza chilena*”, the Chilean race (Dümmer Scheel, 2017). This concept was deeply rooted in contemporary Latin American eugenic thinking, which did not focus on ‘negative’ eugenic practices and hereditarianism, but pursued environmentally based racial hygiene and, for instance, education (Stepan, 1991; Walsh, 2019). Race became crucial for the Chilean national project and its representation at home and abroad, and it was especially important during the years in which the Carabineros de Chile were established and the dangers of so-called “racial degeneration” and unhealthy personal habits and living environments were discussed by the elites. The new Chilean police took part in these discussions and developed an interest in hygienic and healthy housing for its own members, as is shown by the manifold efforts the Carabineros undertook in this field. New housing was also expected to discipline the Carabineros, to strengthen their position in society, and to enable them to play an important part in disciplining and instructing the masses. Thus, this working paper also discusses how social policy reflects notions of discipline and order and, in turn, seeks to implement them.

The focus of this paper are the early years of the Carabineros and the early years of Chilean housing laws and regulations. This case study of the Carabineros will highlight the fact that the housing policies were characterized by differing grades of inclusiveness and generosity and that they privileged certain occupational groups even if these were not explicitly mentioned in the relevant laws. At a transnational and even global level of social policy, this case study points to the

importance of and interconnectedness with social housing debates in other countries. These served as examples and were studied by Chilean policy makers and, not coincidentally, members of the armed forces. The Chilean military had a track record in the observation of other armed forces, and in the years under study here also paid close attention to the respective societies and their progress in general. The Carabineros de Chile form part of these practices as a militarized police and important branch of the Chilean army, which they are connected with in more ways than has been admitted and explored in the literature so far. Using the Italian model, which the Carabineros had studied through its embassy in Rome in great detail (Naschold, 1927), the newly centralized and authoritarian Chilean state finally achieved a nationwide monopoly over the police force, which professed loyalty to the president, General Ibañez del Campo, who had followed after president Alessandri and remained in power until 1931 (Scott, 2009).

There has been a strong awareness of the global interconnectedness of social policy initiatives recently and it may seem needless to say that Chilean social policy in general and housing policy in particular have echoed developments that also occurred in other parts of the world. However, much of what was going on in the field of social housing was also deeply rooted in national intricacies. This working paper therefore reflects on the influences of national, transnational and global developments in Chilean social housing policy at different moments in history while also highlighting the specific national context. This also contends that international forces conveyed basic ideas, but national forces were decisive for the timing and the specifics of the adoption of international models (Hu & Manning, 2010). A specific approach to reconcile both levels, the national and the international, is used in the following that pays particular attention to the scale of historic analysis and allows for a combination of "global history and Latin American history, identifying the key periods and events (...) in order to fully integrate the history of Latin America into analyses of global processes, and vice versa" (Brown, 2015, p. 368).

Social policy is a particularly revealing field of global historical analysis in Latin American history, an assertion which is also valid for Chile. This text also draws on social history and underscores the importance of bringing global and microhistorical approaches together to "see the world like a microhistorian" (Ghobrial, 2019). In this way, this paper will contribute to a "global microhistory" which pays special attention to relation and scale (Epple, 2014). Furthermore, microhistory has been particularly fruitful for our understanding of Latin American history where the master narrative of a patriotic national history had to be put aside to open up new horizons (González, 1968), but its theory and practice have also been applied to different regions and time periods (Magnússon, 2013). The history of Chilean social policy development can contribute a lot to this endeavor because Chile and the other countries of the Southern Cone were not on the periphery of developments as recent research has pointed out (Huber & Stephens, 2012). As pioneers in social policy, these countries not only received impulses from other parts of the world, but impacted more nations in the Americas in the field of public health, for instance, than we are currently aware of (Caffarena, 2016). How the different levels, i.e. the national, the transnational and the global level, have interacted in social policy development depends on national contexts and national actors. This notion reinforces the importance of an actor-centered approach to social policy, which also holds true for an actor such as the Carabineros de Chile.

In 1906, Chile had become the first country to issue a law on social housing in Latin America. Yet in spite of this promising start, the country could not solve the manifold housing problems affecting a substantial portion of the population. Housing had assumed greater importance because, as the relevant national laws show, living quarters had come to be seen as crucial for public health. Therefore, when the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare was established in 1924 in the aftermath of the military coup (González de Reufels, 2021), a government agency was set up within the new ministry to monitor progress in hygienic housing and report on it regularly (Ministerio de Higiene, 1925, p. 25). At the same time, it was generally understood that

individuals who owned their living quarters better prepared to quit active service in the police force and enter retirement. Therefore, while this working paper considers housing to be an important field of state intervention in its own right, it also underscores that housing policy was established at an intersection between different social policy fields, thus connecting existing and emerging new social policy fields such as public health and old age pensions.

This paper is divided into four chapters: The first chapter will focus on a microhistorical analysis of the Carabineros de Chile as actor and the housing problems it faced, while the second chapter will put Chilean social housing policy in a global context. The third chapter will look at the Carabineros de Chile as beneficiaries of social housing laws and the factors that enabled the police to take advantage of the new legislation. A short detour in the fourth section will then highlight the roles the Carabineros hoped to assume in Chilean society after solving their housing problems.

The empirical basis for our analysis of the Carabineros de Chile is provided by two publications: the *Boletín Oficial de Carabineros de Chile*, which was first published on June 18, 1927, and the *Revista de Carabineros de Chile*, also launched in 1927. The latter changed its name to *Gaceta de los Carabineros de Chile* during the years from 1931 to 1946, only to return to its original name from 1946 onwards. Both publications still exist today, and they both provide important insights into the police force while also presenting different perspectives on the Carabineros: the *Boletín* was the official organ of communication, where all the decisions of the leading body, the *Dirección General de Carabineros*, or General Directorate of Carabineros, were published. Therefore, this publication allows us to trace the development of the institution and how its mission was officially conceived of and presented.

In the period under study, the *Boletín* was affiliated with the *Dirección de Orden y Seguridad*, a division of the Department of the Interior (*Ministerio del Interior de la República de Chile*), which was responsible for public order and safety; it provided the funding for the weekly *Boletín*. By contrast, the *Revista de Carabineros de Chile*

was published once a month, and unlike the *Boletín*, which circulated mainly amongst the higher ranks of the Carabineros, the *Revista* was more of a cultural, technical and educational publication explicitly addressing all the members of the police force. The latter journal offered a space for the dissemination of ideas and the new Chilean police culture, while it also functioned as a forum inviting units of the Carabineros de Chile from all over the country to contribute and showcase their activities and express their views. In this way, the *Revista* helped to build an esprit de corps, although it was occasionally read by an interested general public as well. It is important to remember that this was a time in Chilean history when an increasing number of institutional publications of the armed forces were becoming available (San Francisco & Soto, 2006). This reflected the aspirations of the military and related forces, such as the police, which had professionalized and enough funds to be able to copy European examples. The publications of the armed forces also attest to the standing they enjoyed in Chile in the twentieth century. Finally, this paper will also draw on national legislation and use relevant data regarding social policy, such as historical censuses and historical research on the topic.

2. A CLOSE LOOK AT THE HISTORICAL ACTOR AND HOUSING PROBLEMS: SOCIAL HOUSING FOR THE CARABINEROS DE CHILE

On April 27, 1927, the Chilean government passed ordinance no. 2.484, by which all the country's police forces were merged. The so-called "fiscal police" (*policía fiscal*) and "municipal police" (*policía municipal*) were merged with an army regiment which also functioned as a police force, to form one police force, under a single command. This new institution was meant to operate throughout the Chilean territory and was named *Carabineros de Chile*. They started out with a force of 13,841 men serving a country of about four million

inhabitants: the national census of 1920 counted 3 714 887 inhabitants, and in 1930 Chilean population had risen to a total of 4 287 445 (Correa Sutil, 2001, p. 547; Navarette, 2017, p. 23; Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2009).

This country was going through profound political changes. Congress had been closed and the existing government replaced by officers who had felt frustrated with regard to seemingly inept civilian politicians unable to accomplish the national regeneration they thought Chile needed (Bawden, 2016). The merger of the different police forces was part and parcel of this reform process. It was meant to serve two purposes: first, the merger was supposed to put an end to the use made of the police forces by Chilean politicians. Second, this merger was to pave the way for the creation of a modern police force and equally modern and disciplined policemen to represent Chile as a nation.

This was a novelty because, before 1927, none of the existing police forces had been coordinated by one authority, and they had not reported to a centralized institution and the president himself (Scott, 2009). Moreover, the fiscal and municipal police had been appointed and governed by local politicians, which explains why these police units had always been at the beck and call of local politics and their representatives. This had contributed to the bad reputation earned by the police units. The only remedy was a radical change, including a change in appearance: a Carabinero had to be “young, clean-shaven, serious, lively, cultured” to replace the common policeman of the past, condescendingly called «Paco»,¹ who was said to don “a moustache and a heavy and rusty yataghan sword, and [to be] an eternal persecutor of housewives and cooks”, which is why he was “repudiated by the tenement housewives and professional drunks” (Bañados, 1929, p. 83).

1 “Paco” is a pejorative term, which is colloquially used to refer to the police. It is currently used in Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and it has been used in Chile for over 100 years. Real Academia la lengua, 2001; See also: La Cuarta (2018): ¿Por qué les dicen pacos a los carabineros? Last modified June 19, 2018. <https://www.lacuarta.com/cronica/noticia/contamos-dicen-pacos-carabineros/267885/>. Last accessed on 12.03.2021.

Soon enough, problems beyond inappropriate looks and improper behavior had to be attended to by the superiors. In the very year of its foundation in 1927, the General Directorate of Carabineros considered the housing problem of its police officers so great as to await immediate action. The salaries of the policemen were so low, that they could hardly pay for housing which was “appropriate to their mission within society” (“Habitaciones para Carabineros, 1927”). This fact undermined the reputation of policemen and their profession, forcing them to live in “unhygienic and unhealthy houses, apartments, or even *conventillos*” so that these men were running the risk of ruining their health and reputation as well as that of their families (“Habitaciones para Carabineros”, 1927). This was thought to affect their performance and standing in society.

The *conventillo* was considered to be particularly unsuitable for policemen. It housed the urban poor and was associated with disorder and immoral behavior. It consisted of a set of rooms, aligned along a narrow aisle with a narrow courtyard that served as a common space used by all inhabitants. Generally, the rooms did not have any windows, only an entrance door, which inevitably led to poor ventilation and humidity (Torres Dujisin, 1986). A journal specializing in hygiene, for example, reported the suffocation of various inhabitants of a *conventillo* because of the lack of fresh air in 1901 (Torres Dujisin, 1986, p. 71). Fresh water was scarce, and the lack of heating added to the bad living conditions in the crammed *conventillos*. Yet, they housed a growing population in different urban centers of the country. At this time Chile was experiencing rapidly changing demographics: In 1907, the National Census on Population and Housing counted 3.2 million Chileans of which 44% were concentrated in cities (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2009; Ibarra, 2016). By 1920 the Chilean population had risen to 3.7 million, and in 1930 the census counted 4.3 million inhabitants. In 1940 there were five million people living on national territory, many of them in poor housing conditions (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2009): one fourth of the families in urban centers were living in *conventillos* with an average number of more than four people per room. San-

tiago's population had expanded, and the sprawl of the city had made *conventillos* more numerous. For instance, the statistical department of Santiago counted a total of 3000 *conventillos* which were home to 250,000 people in 1930 (Behm Rosas, 1939). While unhealthy housing was harmful to the physical health of men, women and children, according to contemporary views the bad living conditions also affected their characters and morals. High crime rates, for instance, were attributed to the living conditions: robbery, theft of food, sexual abuse, prostitution and procurement were common occurrences in the *conventillos*, posing a serious threat to public order (Chailloux Cardona, 2008, pp. 22–30). Therefore, the 'new policeman' also needed new living quarters; poor housing not only had a detrimental effect on the individual *carabini*ero, but undermined the prestige of the profession itself. Discipline and work efficiency were thought to be integrally linked to living quarters and the mind-set brought about by them.

However, contemporary publications reveal that in 1927 yet another important reason motivated the General Directorate of Carabineros to take action with respect to housing. An article in the *Boletín* highlights the efforts of the directorate to make the police an attractive career option through attractive housing. Recruited policemen were to be persuaded to stay, as an article in the *Boletín* pointed out, by giving them the opportunity to own "a house that would be a pleasant place to live in, a place where he could recover from his hard work, that would make life well for his wife and children. Certainly, by obtaining such a home this public servant will have a real stimulus to continue in his career." (*Habitaciones para carabineros*, 1927). But considering the housing situation in Chile at that time, providing enough good quality housing was not an easy task.

To solve the housing situation of the Carabineros, the leaders of the new police considered three options: First, a type of collective housing rented out by the head of each unit of Carabineros. Such large houses, also called *cité ouvrière*,² were in fact a group of houses with a continuous façade that faced a common, yet private space

(Van Praet, 2016, p. 249). They represented a new form of housing, which appeared at the middle of the nineteenth century, "housing 'model' workers in 'model' dwellings", and they allowed several families to live together under one roof, and still have individual living quarters (Van Praet, 2016, p. 249). In this way, the private and professional lives of the policemen would intermingle, particularly because individual Carabinero units would be housed together, further adding to the new police culture and identity. The superiors were to control the hygienic standards of the rental homes, which had to comply with article 41 of the Chilean regulation for the application of the new law 261 of February 19, 1925 on house rentals. Second, the General Directorate of Carabineros envisaged the option to purchase a house through the *Caja de Crédito Hipotecario*, the Chilean Mortgage Loan Fund (Maglione, 1927). This fund would give preference to members of cooperative societies uniting to acquire property, while it, at the same time, favored armed forces personnel, public employees and employees of state enterprises. In 1926, decree 177 was published to regulate the application of yet another law on housing: law 308 had been published on March 9, 1925, and its first article defined that the *Caja de Crédito Hipotecario* would lend cash at a 5% interest rate for a total of 30% of the value of the land and buildings to be built for the armed forces and the police. Clearly, this legislation was meant to turn the higher ranks of the military and the police into home owners. Third, the Directorate of Carabineros considered to use the *Caja de Previsión de los Carabineros de Chile*, the pension fund. This fund would be free to invest in real estate for the Carabineros on the basis of article 36 of decree 4.901, which was published on July 20, 1927. Enacted less than three months after the establishment of the Carabineros, this decree enabled the pension fund to buy real estate and rent it out to the Carabineros at reasonable prices ("*Habitaciones para carabineros*", 1927).

The first two options were part of the social housing policy that had been started in Chile as early as the late nineteenth century, predating the law of 1906. This housing policy was clearly influenced by the transatlantic diffusion of ideas con-

2 See illustration N. 1.

cerning the lack of affordable housing for workers, which was one of the great problems that industrialization and the manifold processes connected to it had created. By contrast, the third option considered by the General Directorate of the Carabineros meant setting out in a new direction for social housing: it drew on funds set aside for retirement. The three options thus represent different approaches to the provision of social housing which call for a close reading. Their historical contexts will be further explored below, after looking at the transnational and global level of each solution.

3. SOCIAL HOUSING POLICY IN CHILE: INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT FROM 1885 UNTIL 1925

During the nineteenth century, interior migration and population growth followed industrialization and made housing a special challenge in the Western hemisphere. Workers crowded in the emerging industrial and urban centers in order to be close to the new factories, and the demand for living quarters, as did the rents. European doctors from different countries began to report on the living conditions of workers in the 1840s and to regard low-grade and crowded houses as affecting public health (Van Praet, 2016). Consequently, nation states began to pass laws to regulate rents and to invest in housing for workers (Nickel-Gemmecke, 1990, p. 451). High mortality rates among industrial workers, the spread of diseases and short life spans of workers' families were alarming, while they also correlated with a rise in criminal offenses of all kinds (Chailloux Cardona, 2008, pp. 22–30; Van Praet, 2016). Inadequate housing was thought to affect public order and called for the intervention of experts, such as doctors, politicians, sociologists, social reformers and members of the clergy. They discussed the social housing challenge with a view to their own national experience, but soon enough, a transnational and even global forum for discussion emerged: nations

affected by these developments used international congresses and World Fairs to discuss the issue of social housing and exchange ideas on solutions.

The Great Exhibition in London in 1851 already showcased a model of a family house for workers (Shapiro, 1985, p. 163). In 1867, the World Fair in Paris offered another opportunity to discuss social housing, as had the first international congress on workers' housing that had assembled representatives of nations interested in the exchange of ideas (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2005, p. 47; Van Praet, 2016). France had become generally known as the pioneer of "cheap houses" (*habitations à bon marché*), it had developed the *cités* and made them an important feature of the city of Mulhouse (Quilliot, 1989; Shapiro, 1985). On the occasion of the international congress on workers' housing of 1889, the *Société Française des Habitations à Bon Marché* was established. It was a private organization founded by industrial entrepreneurs and experts, and the intention was to keep the state out of construction activities, or only marginally involved. Even though the *Société* advocated for "a marriage of public funds and voluntary endeavor", this was still a business (Rodgers, 1998, p. 190). To build cheap houses meant construction work in which, according to the *Société*, state intervention was appropriate only if it served to stimulate private investors to promote and invest in private construction (Castillo Romón, 2003, p. 7).

Clearly, the *Société* only approved of an indirect state intervention, although the discussions at the international housing congress already mentioned state intervention. It took yet another world fair and congress on social housing in Paris to shatter this liberal and private approach. At the Paris World Fair in 1900, the German delegation insisted that direct state intervention, regulations and public spending were the only ways to a housing reform. During the nineteenth century, social housing had been considered a philanthropy and the responsibility of factory owners (Van Praet, 2016). But twentieth century brought about an important change: the international congresses on social housing that took place in Europe until 1910 demanded state action and attracted the attention of European and US-American progressives and

reformers (Castrillo Romón, 2003, p. 20; Rogers, 1998, p. 192). They were also closely observed by the Chileans.

At the 1902 international congress on social housing, which took place in the German city of Düsseldorf, the advocates for state interventions took the lead. The debates highlighted the need for tenants to be protected against abuse by their landlords and pointed out that states should privilege the building of affordable housing. To this end, states were to create special government agencies and provide financial means wherever “personal efforts and philanthropic action were not enough” (Castrillo Romón, 2003, p. 20). Congress participants also called on national states to support savings banks to ensure that these would finance cheap housing and keep financial speculation with real estate at bay.

In spite of the early discussions that had taken place in France, it was Belgium which, following extensive surveys on the working conditions of workers, published the first European housing legislation in 1889 (Van Praet, 2016, p. 256). The Belgian law incorporated ideas that had been diffused from the 1850s onwards and resonated well beyond Europe; in fact, it provided Chile with an example to follow (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2000). Interestingly enough, this piece of Belgian legislation wanted to “turn the worker into the owner of his house”, which meant that it “only served to improve the situation of workers with greater financial means” (Castrillo Romón, 2003, p. 8). Accordingly, the international congress on housing that was held in the Belgian city of Liège in 1905 began to spell out how states should intervene in housing on behalf of workers for whom real estate was out of reach. If these workers’ only option was to rent, effective state intervention necessarily had to focus on making rents more affordable. And only then, the debates at the congress of 1905 underscored, would state policy truly impact the lives of poor workers. In this way, the new stance on social housing policy opened the door to the fiscal regulation of rent. In addition, the 1905 congress proposed the creation of a sanitary police or sanitary inspection which could work independently on a municipal level and would have the power to sanction and regulate the “establishment of plans

for new neighborhoods in the cities” (Castrillo Romón, 2003, p. 21).

Chilean lawmakers took all these ideas into consideration to solve the national housing crisis (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2005, p. 66). Clearly resonating with the early European experience, the Chilean state at first approached private actors to solve the national housing problem. This meant that the establishment of funds, of philanthropic action and cooperatives were promoted as a first but decisive step towards a distinct Chilean social housing policy. Its beginnings date back to 1885, when Ramón Barros Luco became minister of the interior and began to advocate for private initiatives that would result in new neighborhoods for workers. By 1889 he was head of the state agency which took care of public works, the *Dirección de Obras Públicas*. Barros Luco, who had distinguished himself during the Chilean civil war of 1891 and would later on become president of Chile, was well-connected and uniquely suited to draw the attention of the Chilean well-to-do to the national housing problem (Ovalle Castillo, 1916). The important empresario and philanthropist Arturo M. Edwards was one of these Chileans, who would build houses for workers. These were to be sold to this specific group through a certain amount of rent that would be paid over a specific span of time, until the worker eventually owned the house he lived in (Águila, 1904).

Men like Edwards had various reasons to engage in social housing. In the late nineteenth century, the papal encyclic *Rerum Novarum* had provided yet another important impulse to address the need of workers for decent housing as it inspired a larger Catholic movement in Chile (Walsh, 2019, p. 119). The encyclic, published by Pope Leo XIII in May 1891, warned against the dangers of the profound changes which societies were undergoing at the time. Although during the 1920s the Chilean clergy was reluctant to solve the so-called “social question” and to address the problems of workers and their families, the late nineteenth century had been different (Yaeger, 2007, p. 208). Back then *Rerum Novarum* had “galvanized Catholic social action” and motivated devout Catholics to solve social problems (Walsh, 2019, p. 120); it also had inspired them to build the neighbor-

hood “Población León XIII” in the years between 1891 and 1895. This was the project of another important and rich empresario, Melchor Concha y Toro, and the “Población” was then added to and expanded thanks to the donations of other famous Chilean philanthropists who made possible further construction work until 1909. In 1910, the project was completed, and this was the very year in which Chile celebrated its first hundred years of independence. Another result of the encyclical was that the Catholic Church in Chile decided to engage in social policy through foundations. *León XIII*, *Sofía Concha*, the *Unión Social de Orden y Trabajo*, and the *Sociedad San Vicente de Paul* were the most important foundations, and their purpose was to protect “good” Christian families and build housing for workers who were married and “pillars” of the Chilean society. The new houses could be rented by workers at the maximum value of 10% of the building costs and 10% of the price of the plots the units were built on. If the tenants paid their rents on time over the span of ten years, they were to become the owners of their living quarters. In this way, workers would improve their family’s housing conditions and their economic situation. During the 1890s alone, these foundations built a total of 589 apartments (Nash Morales & Tejos Canales, 2011, p. 17).

Another important private initiative was the brain-child of the Chilean architect Isaías Águila who had been working in the Chilean public works. He had also served the high command of the army, the *Estado Mayor del Ejército*, and he had been involved in the then expanding armed forces. In 1904, Águila made his position on social housing known through a study entitled “Construcción de habitaciones para obreros” which translates as “The Construction of Housing for Workers”. In his book Águila sought to prove that it was possible to form cooperatives of workers and of employees of the national railway company, the *Ferrocarriles del Estado*, to build housing which would be paid for by installments (Águila, 1904). Águila referenced US-American and English projects and asked for the support of the Chilean treasury to build seventy houses for workers and employees of the national railway. But although Águila used international experiences with such

projects to underscore the relevance and viability of his plans, his initiative did not receive much attention. This reminds us that not all private initiatives were successful in Chile. Private enterprises were an important precursor to direct state intervention in this social policy field, but they did not solve Chile’s housing problem.

When the Chilean state finally decided to act, it was because of violent unrest, and because of the economic and political pressure of workers’ strikes. (Nash Morales & Tejos Canales, 2011, p. 13). The government’s answer to these strikes was the publication of law 1.838 on “Housing for Workers”; it was also the official start of Chilean legislation on social housing (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2000). This law of 1906 is one of the first examples of social housing legislation in South America, and it precedes the housing legislation of the neighboring republic of Argentina, also a social policy pioneer, by nine years.

When Argentina published its housing law in 1915, its workers were in a situation very similar to that of their Chilean counterparts. The Argentinian tenants’ strike of 1907 had underscored that bad housing posed a danger to public health and public order when great numbers of workers in the cities of Buenos Aires, Rosario and, to a lesser degree, in Bahía Blanca had protested against their living conditions in the *conventillos*. They had refused to pay their rents and had demanded a substantial decrease in the cost of housing (Aguilar, 2014, pp. 124–126). Argentinian politicians decided to look to Europe for solutions: in 1907 it commissioned the lawyer, historian and publicist Ernesto Quesada to travel to Europe and to report on “private and public action on behalf of cheap houses” and comment on whether the European models would work at home (Aguilar, 2014, p. 125). This trip of Ernesto Quesada to Europe is just another example of how the early “philanthropic tourism” of the nineteenth century was replaced in the early twentieth century by state sponsored tours of reconnaissance of social policy, which sought to collect and evaluate information (Dupont-Bouchat, 2002). As a result of his tour of social housing observation in Europe, Quesada recommended that the Argentinian government implemented a

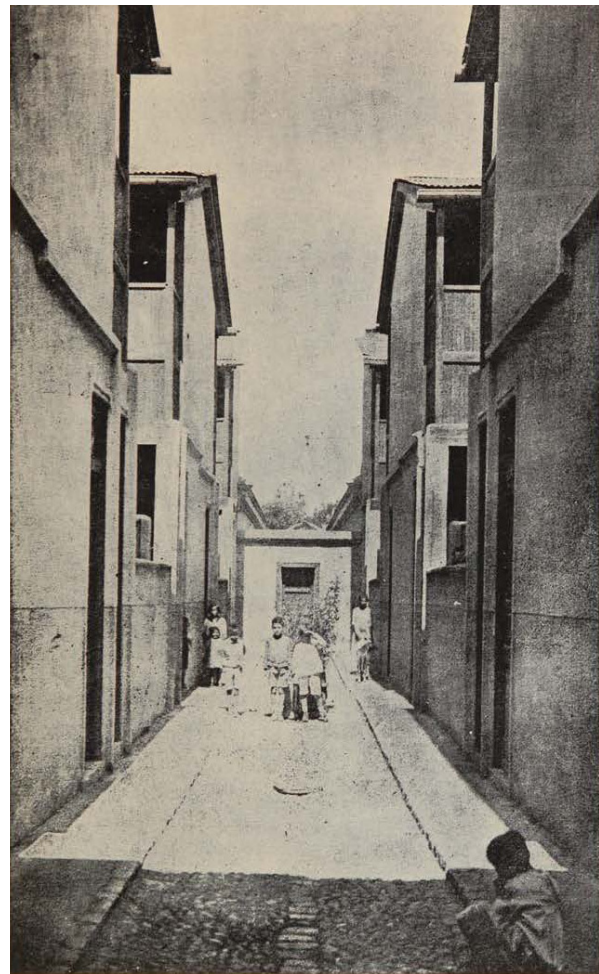
national commission which would work towards affordable housing until 1942 (Aguilar, 2014, pp. 125–126). Just across the Andes, Chile also had created a new government agency, which was inspired by European examples and national conditions.

The Chilean law on social housing of 1906 had created the *Consejo Superior de Habitaciones Obreras*, and local *Consejos de Habitaciones Obreras*. They implemented the measures the superior agency had devised and were a direct copy of the Belgian *Conseil supérieur du logement*. In another respect, Chilean politicians decided to follow the British example: to promote public health, the government decided to have unhygienic housing torn down. Landlords who had let their housing deteriorate had to watch as the demolitions teams destroyed the buildings for which they did not receive any compensation (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2005, pp. 62–64). Living quarters, which had been constructed with unhygienic material and in unhealthy places, also were demolished (Ibarra, 2016, p. 187).

In many ways, the destruction of unhealthy housing was the most visible outcome of the law on social housing. The various *Consejos de Habitaciones Obreras* oversaw the demolition of about 1626 *conventillos* with 16713 rooms and living quarters for 46794 individuals. Roughly 2216 apartments were declared to be uninhabitable while 1720 were classified as unhealthy and in need of renovation. But while these numbers seem to suggest that the law 1838 allowed for swift reforms, the reality was more complex. Far more could have been done with more personnel: the collection of data on the living conditions in the *conventillos* of Santiago, the visits to these places, and the logistics of the demolitions required more employees than the Chilean state was willing to hire (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2005, pp. 62–64).

But the law did not only allow for demolition, it also was used to build new housing: A total number of 193 French inspired Chilean *cités ouvrières* were built in the capital Santiago with 4128 units. As has been mentioned before, the *cité* was one of the most frequent types of “cheap housing” which were built in Chile at the time (see illustration number 1).

Illustration 1.



Source: Citée declared hygienic in session of November 23, 1920 by the Supreme Council of Housing in Calle Lord Cochrane No. 1425. Revista de La Habitación. Órgano del Consejo Superior y de los Consejos Departamentales de Habitaciones Obreras. Año I, Santiago, Diciembre de 1920, N. 3, 177. <http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-124175.html> (Accessed on 27.11.2020).

This was mainly the case not only because *cités ouvrières* were cheaper to build, but also because they had been heralded as the best solution to the housing crisis. Law 1838 had defined “cheap housing for workers” as “the kind of living quarter whose monthly rent does not exceed the amount of 50 pesos per month or is an individual house whose value is less than 15 000 pesos”. Chile thus had set a price on this type of housing and defined a standard, which did not change for the next 19 years. It was not until 1925, that the national government decided to redefine housing for workers and allow for higher prices.

In sum, law 1838 had mixed results. Overall, the negative effects of this law predominated: the

demolished apartments were not substituted by new living quarters, and the lack in housing, the cramped living conditions and the high cost of housing remained the same. Also, the demolition of buildings further added to the long-standing conflict and tensions between landlords and tenants (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2005, pp. 87–97). 90% of the new hygienic housing built in Santiago under law 1838 was rented out for about 48 pesos per month which equaled 8,40 US\$ of the time and clearly exceeded the amount poor workers could afford. The monthly budget of washing ladies, day laborers or swains for rent was roughly 20 pesos, approximately 3,50 US\$ of the time and much below the price of hygienic new dwellings (Muniz, 2005; Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2005, p. 100).³

In 1925, unhealthy and expensive living quarters triggered another major crisis, when all across the country the tenants of unhygienic dwellings urged the Chilean state to intervene. Drawing on the solution Argentina had found for its housing problem and taking into account European examples, the national government decided to publish a law that was to address a national emergency, a *Ley de Emergencia*, to solve the problem of the high rents (Ministerio de Higiene, 1925). Law 261 was passed in 1925 to ease the conflict between landlords and tenants; it was also the law which the *Dirección de Carabineros de Chile* cited in 1927 as its first option to provide suitable housing for the Carabineros. This law addressed the problem of the price of housing rents and the issue of healthy living quarters. It stated the obligations and the rights of the tenants and the landlords, and it elaborated on the possible sanctions. In addition, the new law established the conditions which housing had to meet to be considered hygienic. Furthermore, this law regulated the rents of unsuited housing that undermined the health of the inhabitants who in many instances could not move anywhere else. Finally, as the official journal of the Carabineros, the *Boletín Oficial*, pointed out, law 261 extended guarantees for properties deemed healthy (“Legislación social. Decreto Ley”, 1928).

This law was followed by yet another law in 1925 (Ministerio de Higiene, 1925). Law 308 was cited by the *Dirección de Carabineros de Chile* in 1927 as the second option to improve the housing of the police. As we shall see later on, the Carabineros turned out to be one of the main groups who benefitted from the law, which introduced a new system of cooperatives. These were entitled to buy and build housing that fit the ideas of social housing. Drawing on the existing concept of “housing for workers”, law 308, the ‘Ley de Habitaciones Baratas’, added a new term to the Chilean social housing legislation: “cheap housing”. The term “workers’ houses” used by the law of 1906 had set the monthly rent of such housing at a maximum of 150 Chilean pesos. Furthermore, the new law set the maximum value of a suitable house 15,000 Chilean pesos. while the new “cheap housing” concept allowed for higher rents and values. Law 308 defined in its articles 8 and 30 the concept of “cheap housing” for the cities of Santiago and Valparaíso as follows: their rent was not to exceed 300 Chilean pesos per month, about US\$ 35 of the time, and the value of an individual house categorized as “cheap housing” was not to exceed 30,000 Chilean pesos, roughly US\$ 508 (Ministerio de Higiene, 1925). These amounts took into account the devaluation of the national currency, when the rate was 8,55 Chilean pesos to one dollar, while they also acknowledged that the cost of living has risen all over in Chile and that it was considerably higher in the two urban centers. For all the other Chilean cities the prices “would be set by the President of the Republic following the indications of the National Council of Social Welfare” (Correa Sutil, 2001, p. 545).

The new law also highlighted the role which was assigned to the government, and it underscored the importance of the institutions which would be providing the necessary information on housing and revalue the amounts considered appropriate for cheap housing. These new maximum amounts again illustrate the devaluation of the Chilean currency and mirror the general increase in prices the country was experiencing. Again, the maximum amounts which had been set by the law of 1906 were far out of reach for the poor masses. Nevertheless, the new law sought to foster

3 It is important to note that the exchange rate for the US-Dollar varied significantly between 1906 and 1925 because of the devaluation of the Chilean peso.

the organization of cooperatives to buy and build housing. It stipulated in its article 18 that loans “solicited at the savings banks, the legally established societies of workers and employees to construct housing which would then be transferred to the members” were given preference (Ministerio de Higiene, 1925). The law also mentioned in article 18 that the following entities were eligible to apply for social housing: “cooperatives which have been formed by personnel of the armed forces, public employees and employees of the state” just as the “cooperative societies of construction, and finally private individuals who build for lease” (Ministerio de Higiene, 1925).

In sum, this law was not focused on workers but promoted the construction of cheap housing in different sectors of Chilean society, inviting all kinds of private actors to engage in social housing. This had far reaching consequences, which have been underscored in recent historic research: under this law of “cheap housing” about 145 million of Chilean pesos, about 17 million US\$ of the time, were authorized as loans. In Santiago alone 29 of the so called “poblaciones” were built, and another 14 in the rest of the country. A total of 6604 units with 20 775 rooms and 35000 beneficiaries resulted from this new law. Also, the houses built had an average value of 22000 pesos, about 2573 US\$, and was thus considerably higher than the earlier law on social housing had foreseen (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2005, p. 123). A list of main housing projects compiled by historian Hidalgo Dattwyler is very revealing: about 25% of the houses built in accordance to the social housing law of 1925 were for policemen, while 9% were for members of the Chilean army. In sum, 34% of the beneficiaries of this new piece of legislation were members of the Chilean armed forces; hardly the group that first comes to mind when “cheap housing for workers” is mentioned (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2005, p. 125).

The Chilean social housing law of 1925 was further complicated by the way it was financed, as cheap housing was mainly paid for by US-American loans. The national mortgage fund, the *Caja de Crédito Hipotecario*, was the institution that administrated and granted the loans to the different Chilean savings banks, known as the *Cajas de*

Ahorros, which then gave money to the cooperatives. But, when the national savings bank, the *Caja Nacional de Ahorro*, for example tried to cash in almost 20 million pesos it had given out as loans, it failed to get the money back. After five years, the savings bank had only recovered about four and a half million, which is one fourth of the original amount. This happened because many members of the cooperatives were unable pay their monthly installments. Whenever one member of the cooperative failed to pay, the other members of the cooperative were supposed to step. However, the members of the cooperatives usually decided that it was wiser not to pay either and thus the banks never recovered the loans, which were not legally enforceable.

In spite of these fundamental difficulties, the law remained in effect until the 1930s. This points to its political significance as well as to the reluctance of the Chilean state to end this practice and impose new legislation. In the following decades the Chilean governments continued to seek and to find a solution for the debts created under law 308 (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2005, pp. 128–133). Just as had been the case with the laws published in 1906 in 1925, this new law 308 never fulfilled its aims, and it certainly did not improve the housing situation of poor Chileans (Hidalgo Dattwyler, 2005, p. 127). Cooperatives and the “poblaciones”, which they built, were in fact for the middle class and the lower middle class. This is reenforced by the fact that, as has been pointed out before, about 34% of the beneficiaries of this law were members of the military. The nation state apparently not only catered to its middle classes, but it also took care of those groups which were close to it and on which it depended.

4. THE CARABINERO AS BENEFICIARY OF CHILEAN SOCIAL HOUSING POLICY

In 1927, right after the merger of the different police forces, the Directorate of the Carabineros had highlighted three options to solve its housing problems, and the first two have already been an-

alyzed here. The third option was to use the pension fund to build affordable housing. The *Caja de Previsión de los Carabineros de Chile* had been established by decree 3650 within a month after the merger of the existing police forces, and it combined the *Caja de Asistencia, Previsión y Bienestar del Cuerpo de Policía* and the *Sección de Carabineros de la Caja de Retiro del Ejército y Armada* to create a single pension fund ("*Caja de previsión de los Carabineros de Chile*", 1927). This also serves a reminder that the police and the members of the Chilean army and the navy were already highly privileged groups: they had pension funds as well funds for social insurance well before other groups had them. Now, it was the new *Caja de Previsión*, which took care of social insurance, paid for pensions, paid for work accidents, and health care for the Carabinero himself as well as for his family. The *Caja* also covered the costs of funerals of the policemen. Also, Carabineros could obtain mortgages, which the institution supported by buying real estate, and policemen could ask for loans to build or repair their homes ("*Caja de prevision de los Carabineros de Chile*", 1927).

Even before the merger in 1927, the *Caja de Asistencia, Previsión y Bienestar del Cuerpo de Policía* had embarked on an important social housing project for the policemen of Santiago that was called "Población Parque Centenario". Clearly, housing was not new on the agenda of the Chilean police, but after the creation of the Carabineros de Chile this issue drew more attention. The "Población Parque Centenario" is an important case in point: the "Población Parque Centenario" had begun in 1926, two years after the military coup of 1924. At this point, the military had decided to present itself as a driving force in social policy development of the 1920s, which also would affect the Carabineros. They not only owed their existence to the ideas of the military junta, but they also became an important beneficiary of the national social policy the junta propagated.

In the 1920s Chile was facing a severe economic crisis. The country continued to depend on its nitrate mines at a time, when prices were instable and production was rising worldwide (Monteón, 1982, pp. 127–152). To make matters worse, cop-

per, which eventually was to succeed nitrate as main export and source of national income, was a volatile product. The world market for copper was already highly concentrated, while agriculture began to fail and produced a shortage of food in the country. Hunger became widespread, and inflation was rampant (Carriola Sutter & Sunkel, 1982). Devaluation of the national currency further added to increasingly difficult situation of Chilean workers. When the military took power, it did so in open violation of article 226 the constitution of 1833, claiming to be forced to do so to save the country (Millar Carvacho, 1974, p. 35). The officers who were behind the coup represented the lower ranks of the army, who apart from their interest in social reform in general, they were also driven by the wish to improve their individual conditions.⁴ These officers had been frustrated with the limitations of their military careers, because there literally was little room at the top and promotions took exceptionally long: in 1924 some captains who should have risen to the next rank had been waiting for more than eight years to move up the hierarchy, while some army generals had been in service for 45 years (Millar Carvacho, 1974, p. 97). Also, these officers complained that army pay "was insufficient to satisfy the costs of the living conditions the profession imposed on them" (Millar Carvacho, 1974, p. 35). Between 1912 y 1920 the pay of the Chilean military remained the same, all the while the costs of living rose about 80% during these years (Millar Carvacho, 1974, pp. 35–42).

This was the context in which the *Caja de Asistencia, Previsión y Bienestar del Cuerpo de Policía*, one of the institutions which preceded de *Caja de Previsión de Carabineros de Chile*, had begun to support the construction of the "Población Parque Centenario" in Santiago de Chile in 1926 to build houses for the police (SEREMI, 2017, p. 20). According to an article in the *Revista de Carabineros* published in 1927, these houses were bought

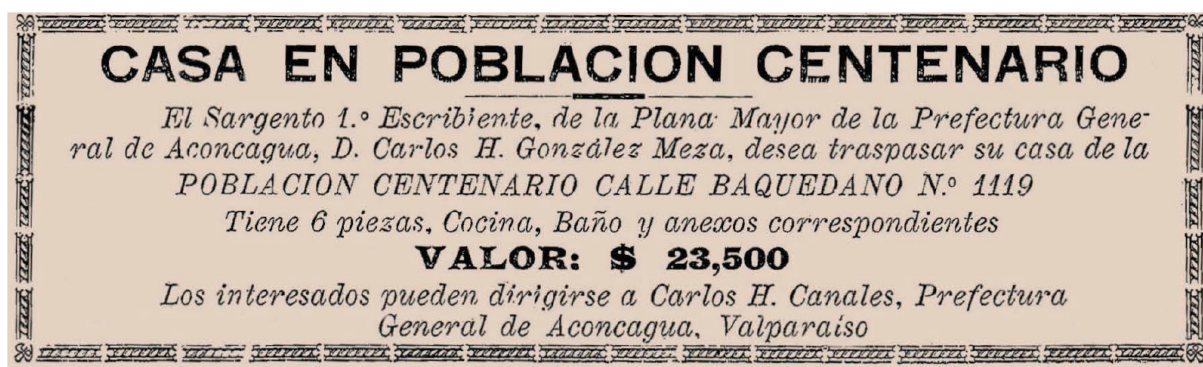
4 The military ranks of the officers at that time, starting from the top, were as follows: Major General, Brigadier General, Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Major, Captain, Lieutenant, Second Lieutenant. Low-ranking officers were Second Lieutenants and Lieutenant Colonels.

by policemen at “modest monthly rates”, housing more than a hundred families of Carabineros (“Iniciativas pro hogar del Carabinero”, 1927). The houses were assigned to the buyers according to their rank and seniority of the individual Carabinero, taking also into account the number of family members that would live in each building (SEREMI, 2017; p. 20). As a result, the Carabineros de Chile dominated this neighborhood for many years, and although present-day inhabitants still remember many aspects of the Carabineros, “with the passing of time, the families of the Carabineros grew and the space became insufficient, which is why many started either to sell or to rent out their houses” (SEREMI, 2017, p. 24).

Those who sold their house and moved on, would advertise their homes in the publication of the Carabineros. An ad, published in 1932 in the *Gaceta de los Carabineros de Chile* (see illustration number 2), provides information on the price of these houses. It also shows that the house was in line with the standards established by law 308 on cheap houses or “Habitaciones Baratas”. At a cost of 23.500 devaluated Chilean pesos, which at the time was equivalent to 650 US\$. The house in question cost less than the 30.000 pesos the law had set as the maximum price. And its owner, a First Sergeant, belonged to the group of lower officials and troops who were eligible for the loans granted by the pensions fund. It is therefore very likely that this First Sergeant had sought and received the financial support of the fund, which existed before the Caja de Previsión de Carabineros de Chile was established.

From 1927 onwards, the *Caja de Previsión de Carabineros* would loan money to buy apartments which cost 5.000 pesos and more, but did not exceed the price of 100.000 pesos. Those who solicited the loan to buy a house or an apartment had to have been serving with the Carabineros for a minimum of ten years, whereas loans for repairs required active service of a minimum of five years. In both instances, the property had a mortgage in the name of the *Caja de Carabineros* until the debts were paid. The cost which these services of the pension fund incurred varied according to rank: chiefs of groups and officers had to pay 400 pesos while lower ranks and troops paid only half the amount, that is 200 pesos (“Reglamento para el servicio de adquisición de propiedades raíces”, 1927). Two years later another two stipulations were added to further regulate the issue: first, every member of the Carabineros would only be granted one loan at a time, which makes it plausible that in the past some Carabineros had asked for more than one. And second, the price for handling the loan would no longer depend on the rank of the Carabinero, but would be determined by the value of the real estate, which he was going to buy. Thus, for property that cost less than 20.000 pesos, or 2424 US\$ of the time, there would be a fee of 250 pesos, roughly 30 US\$ of the time, while property that cost from 90.001 up to 100.000, or 10909 to roughly 12121 US\$, required a fee of 600 pesos, or 72 US\$, which still means that this financial service was still very affordable (“Departamento de Orden y Seguridad aprueba el reglamento”, 1929).

Illustration 2.



Source: Advertisement published in the *Gaceta de los Carabineros de Chile* in the issues numbers 9 (p.3), 10 (p.79), and 11 (p.14). Available at the Library of the Museo Histórico de Carabineros de Chile.

The *Caja de Previsión de los Carabineros de Chile* was funded through obligatory contributions, from the policemen on active service and the retirees. Initially the obligatory contribution was set at 5% of the pay, but after 1931 it rose to 8% (Uribe Lobos, 1932, pp. 9–10). The *Caja de Previsión de Carabineros* was entitled to the loans that law 308 on affordable housing offered through the *Caja de Crédito Hipotecario*. Furthermore, the pension fund of the Carabineros bought the real estate and then transferred it to the individual Carabinero, who thus did not have to pay an initial fee. The loans usually had to be paid back within ten years, and after the whole amount had been paid, the Carabinero received an official document, turning him into the rightful owner of the house. Also, the Directorate pointed out that “if the beneficiary would be late in paying the monthly amount in time during three months in a row, he would forfeit all right to the property and it would be understood that the sum in question and the damages incurred would be paid with the amount that the new buyer would pay to the former owner.” (“Departamento de Orden y Seguridad aprueba el reglamento para el servicio de adquisición de propiedades raíces”, 1929).

In addition to these benefits of the *Caja de Previsión*, there were two further options the policemen could resort to in order to solve their housing problems. The first option was established by the organic regulations of *Carabineros*. Article 12 granted a 15% bonus to all personnel, married or widowed with children, who had not received housing for their families from the government, the municipality or any particular company (“Sobre personal con derecho a gratificación de alojamiento”, 1928). Apparently, the Carabineros had made room in their regulations for some members of the personnel to enjoy the benefit of free public housing, which was called a ‘habitación gratuita fiscal’ (“Estado civil. Habitación gratuita fiscal”, 1928). The second option was the result of the *Mutualidad de Carabineros*, a mutual fund, which had been created in 1916. It preceded the merger of the national police by eleven years and was specific to the earlier Carabineros, because all its officers had to join it. This mutual fund remained in place after this police force became part of

the national institution, which also was called. A report of the *Mutualidad* stated in 1929: “Now, in the times we are living in, many of those who have joined the mutual fund are spending their leisure comfortably in their own house, and this is the case, because this good hand of the *Mutualidad* has been extended full of the money that is necessary to create proprietors” (Capitán Nitchewo, 1929, p. 73).

Most of the documents relating to the *Mutualidad de Carabineros* in 1929 shows that a total of 513.903 pesos were given as a loan to finance the project ‘Población de Providencia’, which was approximately about 16% of the total amount of loans that were given out, while 1.794.371 pesos were given in bonds or, to be more precise, as *Bonos de la Caja de Crédito Hipotecario*. This equaled 54% of the total amount of loans given out, which means that the mutual fund supported the Carabineros in their wish to own real estate. At least two years after the *Carabineros de Chile* had been created about 70% of the money available through the *Mutualidad* was spent on plans related to housing of the police (“*Mutualidad de Carabineros*”, 1929). This was the case even though this housing did not always qualify as social housing in the sense of ‘Habitaciones Baratas’, or cheap housing. The report of 1929 furthermore shows that funds for the construction of ‘cheap housing’ were also used to build housing, which because of its price was far from meeting the criteria of social housing. This was also the case in the neighborhood called ‘Los Castaños’, a residential area of Santiago consisting of 84 houses. The prices of these houses were ranged from 29,000 Chilean pesos, or US\$ 3515 of the time, to 45,000 Chilean pesos which were roughly US\$ 5,454 (“*Previsión social*”, 1929).

‘Los Castaños’ is also noteworthy because of the size of the houses, which were built. Although law 308 on ‘cheap housing’ did not determine the size of the houses that qualified as social housing, the houses at this neighborhood were from 54 to 270 square meters and were built on plots of 300 to 500 square meters (“*Previsión social*”, 1929). Building houses of 270 square meters hardly seems to comply with the idea of modest social housing, and it is fair to guess, that money from

the mutual fund of the *Carabineros* was not exclusively used for social housing. Thus, an important loop hole of law 308 becomes evident: the cooperatives, or a mutual fund such as the *Mutualidad de Carabineros*, could apply for government funds, but did not necessarily have to build all houses of their project in compliance with the stipulations of the social housing law. The only other requirement mentioned in article 9 of the law 308 was, that the projects had to build a minimum of 50 houses (Ministerio de Higiene, 1925). Thus, the resources for social housing probably facilitated the acquisition of large plots of land, which were used to build houses for high-ranking *Carabineros* and non-commissioned officers.

The quality of the new neighborhood also seems to imply, that this social housing project was far above the standard for “cheap housing”. ‘Los Castaños’ was planned by the prominent Chilean architect Luciano Kulcewsky who was in favor of high-quality social housing. He sought to build comfortable, beautiful and hygienic living quarters, which granted the worker and his family a certain quality of life. The architect claimed that this would bring “the vast majority of citizens back into our society”, suggesting that the housing problem had already alienated too many Chileans and excluded them from national society (Riquelme Sepúlveda, 1996). Kulcewsky’s vision was shared by many architects of the time, who believed that a beautiful house was also a way to ‘rebuild’ the working-class family. A comfortable house would help to promote a certain family model, and even solve other problems of the time such as alcoholism. The main idea of the Chilean architects of the time had been declared earlier by Águila who contended that “a good house keeps the worker away from the tavern” and thus would introduce the worker to new habits and a healthier life style (Águila, 1904, p. 6). This echoed the observation of international experts who in the nineteenth century had agreed that the *cit   ouvri  re* of Mulhouse encouraged workers to look after “the garden of their new house instead of going to the pub” (Van Praet, 2016, p. 251). At the same time, the very design of Kulcewsky’s houses established order, and a model of discipline, which would help to create the ideal, i.e. the modern citizen. Again, so-

cial housing is more than just a solution to housing problems: it becomes a vital part of the so-called process of ‘Chileanization’, which would turn all of the Chilean population into valuable members of society (D  mmer Scheel, 2017).

It is highly likely that these well-planned houses of high-quality were especially important as these public servants were looking to advance their social standing. In fact, Kulcewsky apparently not only designed houses that were passed as social housing for the *Carabineros*, but also designed houses for the higher echelons of the army. In addition to the 84 houses of ‘Los Casta  os’, which were built for *Carabineros*, there were another 113 houses built at ‘La Poblaci  n para Suboficiales de la Escuela de Aplicaci  n de Caballer  a’, the residential complex for non-commissioned officers of ‘The Practical School of the Cavalry’. These houses were built exclusively for the military, but they were constructed and financed under the law on ‘cheap housing’, which was passed in 1925. These houses were exceptionally well-planned and beautiful, and today both housing complexes are part of the architectural heritage of Santiago de Chile (Ministerio de Educaci  n, 1996). A project such as Kulcewsky’s would never be built again, which is why it holds a special place in the history of social housing in Chile. But then, this project hardly represents typical social housing of the time.

The issue of housing for the police, whether it was social housing or not, was closely connected to other aspects, such as to bring discipline to the ranks and to teach them to save money. This was an important issue for the *Carabineros* and even became an obligation. The circular letter number 90, which was published in April 1928 under the title ‘Imposition of Savings’, summarizes the position of the General Directorate on savings. In this letter the Directorate demands that all *Carabineros* saved a certain amount of money each month to build personal assets over time. Because it was an obligation, it was also strictly enforced and controlled: the monthly savings had to be documented and certified by saving banks. The *Caja Nacional de Ahorros*, the Chilean savings bank, had been founded in 1910, and by 1928 there were about 150 branches all over the country, which the *Revista de Carabineros* tirelessly recommended its

Illustration 3.



Source: Image of a house at Los Castaños <https://www.monumentos.gob.cl/monumentos/zonas-tipicas/poblacion-castanos> (Accessed on 31.03.2021).

readers in almost every issue. The commander of each unit had to verify the bank transactions of their subordinates, also they had to keep the so-called savings books. Commanders of the different units all over the country also had to review the personal savings books of their subalterns on a monthly basis and were instructed to keep a blackboard with updates of the amounts of savings for all to see to build peer pressure and foster competition. The letter of 1928 further added that monthly contributions were to be made within 48 hours after the policemen had received their pay ("Circular N. 90", 1928). Apparently, the General Directorate feared that otherwise the pay would be squandered. In addition, each commander of the unit had to report on the savings to the General Directory, and if the superiors did not comply, this would have a negative effect on their promotion ("Circular N. 103", 1928). Those who were seeking a smooth career path therefore were well advised to carefully watch over of the savings habits of the subalterns. Officers had to keep track of the

financial progress of the subalterns, who had to comply and show their documents whenever the officer demanded to see them ("Sobre fiscalización de ahorros", 1929). In this way, the *Carabineros de Chile* hoped to teach the policemen to value money, which could then be used to buy a house under the new social housing laws. This underscores the more holistic view of the police as an institution: it not only had been assigned the task of providing national security, but it also was to reform the country and improve its people.

It is not clear how many houses were built for the Carabineros under the legislation on social housing of 1925, and how much money was provided by the mutual fund. A report of the *Mutualidad de Carabineros* from 1939 mentions that in this year alone, 760 mortgage credits at a total value of 20 million Chilean pesos had been granted. However, it is impossible to know if all the mortgage credits mentioned in the report had been used for so-called social housing. In fact, it is highly plausible that this was not the case, par-

ticularly in light of the results of this paper for the neighborhood of 'Los Castaños' ("La Caja de Previsión", 1939). Nevertheless, it is certain that the new police profited extraordinarily from the social housing laws. It is also certain that it used these laws from 1927 until at least the second half of the twentieth century. Articles in the *Boletín Oficial de Carabineros* and the *Revista de los Carabineros de Chile* also suggest that the Carabineros never solved their housing problems, which echoes the national Chilean experience as well as the experience of Chilean workers, who initially had been at the center of these housing laws. These laws had little impact on a country which throughout the twentieth century lacked housing for its workers (Nickel-Gemmeke, 1990, p. 451). This lack of an adequate solution for the housing problems only served to increase the informal and illegal forms of housing. Until the 1940s legal forms of housing had been predominant and the Chilean social housing policy had been conceived with these conditions. However, after 1940 and at least until the 1970s, illegal squatting became more frequent as did the occupation of land, which in some instances was accompanied by violence (De Ramón, 1990, p. 13). By the mid-twentieth century, the existence of shanty towns, or *poblaciones callampa*, only reinforced the notion that new approaches to social housing and social policy in general were urgently needed: in 1952, for example, roughly 350,000 inhabitants of Santiago were living in *conventillos*, which is about 29.2% of the total population of the Chilean capital. 75,000 men, women and children were living in *callampas* and in improvised neighborhoods called *campamentos*. This equals 6.3% of the population of Santiago, while only 150,000 were living in regular neighborhoods. Only 12.6% of the population of Chile's largest city had regular housing and that practically half of the city population lived in precarious housing conditions. Of this half, approximately 35% of the population, lived in extreme poverty in *conventillos* and *callampas*. (Garcés Durán, 1998, p. 41). Nevertheless, Chilean social housing policy remained focused on renting and buying real estate. This turned out to be ideal for the Carabineros, because the General Directorate was avid of increasing the social standing of its officers through

access to housing. At the same time, good housing was meant to guarantee this group's loyalty to the government and to turn it into a promoter of social policy.

5. THE CARABINERO: AN ACTOR IN THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL POLICY IN CHILE AND THE NATIONAL PROJECT

It is important to note that the Carabineros not only benefitted from Chilean social policy, but also aspired to be an actor in this field. A short detour at the end of this paper will underscore the importance of the 'social agenda' of the Carabineros as promoters of social policy. The emergence of the Carabineros within the framework of a dictatorial military government had a lasting effect on the self-concept of the police force (Muñoz, 1931, p. 24). Its publications presented the new police force as "a vigorous and very useful armed conglomerate, whose ramifications reach the farthest ends of the Republic and make its incalculable benefits felt everywhere" ("Un año de labor", 1928). Also, an editorial in the *Revista de Carabineros de Chile* pointed out yet another aspect of the new patriotic duties of the police: "To the mission of public order and security, which has been exercised with true abnegation, a new activity has been added, and that is, perhaps, even more important and of greater transcendence for the immediate and future welfare of the Republic. This activity consists of making Carabineros the true guide and educator of the people" ("Lo que es la Institución", 1928).

To comply with this task, the General Directorate of Carabineros steered a considerable part of its work program towards this new purpose, focusing mainly on activities which embraced a broad number of different but related fields. Amongst them featured the creation of hostels for homeless young boys, the development of primary education courses for children and adults, as well as logistical support for children's attendance at schools. Also, the Carabineros began to offer lectures to workers' guilds on sanitary issues, public hygiene, social laws and civic duties. The police also were to control the fulfillment of the new provisions con-

cerning the eight-hour workday, and the protection of working mothers and children. Carabineros also intervened in a conciliatory manner in conflicts between employers and workers, promoted sports, and fostered the formation of Chilean Boys Scouts brigades “Lo que es la Institución”, 1928). In this way, the Carabineros’ institutional mission included what at the time was known as work on “the social question” and the promotion of social issues. This mission came with a clear gender bias as the first female police officers did not join the Carabineros until 1962. Interestingly enough, one of the main arguments used to justify women’s integration into the police force had to do with the social services provided by the Carabineros: the female police officers of the Carabineros de Chile would take care of “underprivileged children who represented the hope and redemption of Chile’s future”, and assume a maternal role, which was out of reach for male colleagues (“Inauguración del primer curso”, 1962).

Since the Carabineros were in close contact with different sectors of Chilean society and met workers, employees and employers, the police force was thought to be uniquely qualified to be an educator and agent of social transformation. Although Chile’s social laws did not include stipulations of law enforcement, the first article of the “Organic Law of Carabineros” stated that: “*Carabineros de Chile* is a military institution in charge of maintaining security and order, in addition to upholding and enforcing laws and other general regulations throughout the entire Republic. Consequently, and in accordance with the government’s spirit, (...), *Carabineros de Chile* is also responsible for enforcing all laws related to social issues” (Rojas Parada, 1932, p. 77).

This statement echoes the dominant official discourse of the government of General Ibañez del Campo, according to which Chile needed to reform its political system and national management in order to ‘reconstruct’ the republic, that is finally fulfill the vision of a modern and well-functioning nation state. This was a project in which each public employee was to engage. Under president Alessandri the state had already begun to expand its institutions, but with Ibañez del Campo’s government this was about improving the state’s

functioning to assure the strong and effective state the president had called for (Silva, 1984, p. 283). Also, during the 1930s, there was a belief among the Carabineros that there wasn’t any other public employee who could get as close to the Chilean people as the police which was to serve the nation and its inhabitants. According to this self-stylization, the Carabinero was able to approach the community with more knowledge about people’s needs and with more authority than anybody else. The institution claimed that selflessness and patriotism characterized the Carabinero who was, at least in the writings of the Directorate, going about his work with a spirit of order, and seeking to provide protection. And of course, the Directorate wrote, the policeman did not expect anything in return (Dümmer Scheel, 2017, pp. 40–54; “La acción social”, 1928). This heroic image had little to do with reality, but it would translate seamlessly into social services, which were not regulated by the state, but carried out to assure the reputation of the Carabineros de Chile and to claim an important part in the process of nation building.

In spite of all the pathos, the social agenda of Carabineros made sense at the time. This was particularly the case because this social mission also constituted an attempt to exert more systematic control over the population. During the so-called golden age of the “social question” in Chile and between 1890 and 1925, the national army had violently crushed all worker protests. Among them were the strikes of the nitrate workers in the North in the country in 1906 and 1907 that had been joined by other workers. The army also committed massacres and mass killings in the various attempts to repress labor unrest. In fact, any violence with revolutionary potential was crushed, while the army deliberately turned a blind eye on working class plight (DeShazo, 1983). After the creation of the Carabineros de Chile, which had units all over the country, the army could pass on the task of repressing social protest to the new police force. Called the “curse” of the Carabineros, this duty to repress and to intimidate workers was from its very beginnings part of the mission of the new police. (“La maldición”, 2021) The social program of the Carabineros represented just the other side of the coin.

To succeed in their new activities, the officers were given some general guidelines. Nevertheless, everything very much depended on the specific initiative and criteria of each unit commander as the superiors decided whether the Carabineros engaged in these services on a day-to-day basis. Unit commanders were believed to know the needs of their region better than anyone else, while they also were assumed to be very familiar with the strengths of each member of the unit. The General Directorate of Carabineros stated that the social service efforts would be taken into consideration at the time of officers' and commanders' evaluation of their performance which made the performance in social work important for promotion. Because the individual sacrifice of time and effort that officers were making was not considered excessive "for those who have committed their energies to be at the service of an institution that is familiar with sacrifice", officers hardly had an excuse not to take up social tasks ("Circular N 93", 1928).

The language used in this context speaks to a police force steeped in traditionally conservative Chilean values and religious concepts. At the same time, this service was considered to be a key piece in the task of the 'Chileanization' of the country (Dümmer Scheel, 2017). Unit leaders and the officers under their command were assessed according to their success in creating and establishing cultural centers and sports clubs for archery, soccer, boxing, cycling. The Carabineros were also expected to organize public social gatherings that focused on the working class. Other cultural endeavors included an active participation in the construction of public parks with playgrounds for children, the promotion of hygiene, health and physical development, as well as entertainment. Since the Carabineros hardly had any funds to cover the costs of these initiatives, officers had to look for donations such as wood by farm owners, also they were asked to be imaginative (Rojas Parada, 1932, p. 90). They probably not only had to be creative, but also intimidating.

In terms of health and hygiene services, the scope of activities was considerably broader. Initially the social problems addressed by the Carabineros included the so-called "diseases related

to social transcendence", that is, all venereal diseases or STDs. The General Directorate assumed that the police captains would be able to contact renowned doctors that worked for Carabineros and would carry out effective health campaigns. This would also have an effect on the ranks, as officers would publicly condemn brothels and keep records of moral behavior of the police in general. Furthermore, officers were called to take charge of health measures for prostitutes (Rojas Parada, 1931; Navarrete, 2018). However, the most important "evil that struck the Chilean people" was alcoholism. To avert this evil, the Carabineros were to use their regular visits to working class centers, union guild offices, workshops and factories to address this issue. Carabineros were also expected to explain to children in simple terms "the terrible evils that come with alcohol, which is a gateway to crime and the lowest depth one can reach" (Rojas Parada, 1931). In sum, whether they liked it or not, the Carabineros were to act as educators to the masses, which were in desperate need of role models.

Again, the housing problem was significant. In 1928, a Carabinero unit of Santiago stated that they would expect "owners of conventillos and citées to donate one month's rent to tenants to maintain their homes in the best condition possible" ("Lo que es la Institución", 1928, p. 7). This was in line with what had emerged as a broader concept of hygiene. Historian Sandra Caponi is convinced that the ideas of 'hygienizing' the housing of the working class, which had been circulating in industrialized cities since the end of the nineteenth century, gained new importance at the beginning of the twentieth century in South America due to the coalescence of three trains of thought: "(a) the emergence of microbiology and its (not necessarily opposed) relation to hygiene; (b) the generalization of statistics as an effective resource capable of disclosing the relationship between social inequalities and the differences in mortality rates of populations; (c) health and legal commitments to control and moralize behaviors seen in under-privileged areas of the population or, in other terms, the persistence of the perpetual relationship between physical conditions and moral conditions" (Caponi, 2002, p. 1669).

It is important to note that this coalescence of new concepts resonates with the work of the Carabineros, who were also expected to engage in education and to set a good example, but also were to collect data and thus contribute to national statistics. Hygiene and housing conditions quickly became a focus of the Carabineros's work because working families living up north and close to nitrates production facilities or in urban centers continued live in deplorable dwellings. In the 1930s the *conventillos* continued to be regarded as places "where hygiene was absolutely forgotten" and children were exposed to tuberculosis, to alcoholism and syphilis. This is why in the 1930s the Carabineros were in charge of paying visits to the *conventillos* and working-class housing to assess and fix the deficiencies in hygiene. This included the implementation of a rigorous cleaning program and instruction in hygiene. Also, circular order 082 published by the General Directorate under the title "Cooperation efforts for the enforcement of Mandatory Schooling" documents new aspirations of the institution. The General Directorate had decided to take on the patriotic role of implementing the law of Mandatory Primary Education and to turn the police force into a national "support for schooling" ("La obligación escolar", 1928)

This also explains why schools figured so prominently in the writings and activities of the Carabineros during these years. Whether the Carabineros were planning or holding conferences at working class centers and factories, schooling always played a pivotal role, also in more rural areas. The police force organized conferences at locations further removed from the capital, addressing and discussing alcoholism and its consequences, the benefits of savings, and parents' obligations regarding the education of their children. Carabineros were also called on to prevent child labor and ensure that children under the age of 14 did not work in the factories; however, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent such instruction was actually followed and implemented.

Another rather surprising task for members of the police was the request to assist with keeping record of unemployed workers in cities and rural areas and to pass this information to the National

Office of Statistics (Rojas Parada, 1932, p. 80, p. 85). Carabineros thus supported national bureaucracies collecting important data. It was also their duty to keep an eye on working class men which were to become "useful citizens to themselves, to their family, and to their Fatherland" ("Noticiosos", 1928, p. 36) While this reveals the lack of resources at the National Office of Statistics, it also speaks volumes about the conceptions that Carabineros and the political elite had of workers who allegedly shied away from work and therefore were not 'useful'. At the same time, the institution expected the Carabinero himself to fully meet the goals of the national project. An article published in the *Revista* mentions that policemen, supposedly "humble public servants" who were mandated to meet the requirements of military discipline, had to be exemplary citizens and "be a model of culture and hygiene" (Romero, 1928, pp. 51–53). In this sense, all Carabinero officers played a significant role as actors in the policy field of education and had to help with "addressing all needs pertaining to education, unhealthy houses, incorrect neighbors, clandestine businesses, etc.". This task was, according to the superiors, "carried out with high humanitarian spirit and touches on the beautiful ideals of patriotism" (Ripoll León, 1928, p. 73). At the same time the Carabineros were, at least rhetorically, to bring "happiness to many homes, enhancing the institution to which they belong, and adding one more grain of sand to the beautiful work that all the men in government perform, in favor of the enhancement of our dear Fatherland" (Ripoll León, 1928, p. 73). In this context, self-discipline was especially important. It was hoped that all the social services documented in the *Revista de Carabineros de Chile* would also have an effect on the policemen, improve their attitude and promote a spirit of service. To this was added the notion of the General Directorate of the Carabineros that the solution of social problems rested on the implementation of conservative values and morals. At least during the first decades after their foundation, the Carabineros combined social services with the promotion of what the institution believed to be patriotic, referencing the global discourse that combined social issues and health concerns with the need to control, disci-

pline and moralize the behavior of the less privileged sections of the population. Social housing thus enabled the Carabineros to play their part in national reform, as their superiors had envisioned from the moment of the creation of the new police force, because the living quarters set them apart from the working class.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The global connectedness of social housing policy and the debates it inspired at a national level are evident in the Chilean efforts to solve the seemingly endless housing crisis. How the problem of social housing was understood in the Chilean context and how it played out within the framework of the new police force has been at the center of this working paper. The European examples and the solutions debated and developed overseas in the context of World Fairs, international congresses on social housing and state sponsored tours of reconnaissance, all had an important impact on Chilean initiatives and legislation. Although national housing policies sought to solve a serious problem affecting the working population of Chile, the laws drafted in the first two decades of the twentieth century by and large promoted the ownership of housing and favored the lower middle class and the middle class. This middle class soon included a large number of members of the Carabineros de Chile.

As in the rest of the world, debates on the social housing problem in Chile were closely related to hygiene and public health issues, and they also were perceived in connection to a political and moral agenda. This was also true for the Carabineros de Chile who sought to increase the prestige of police careers and the social standing of the policeman. It was important to move the Carabineros to better living quarters to avoid contact between the respectable policeman and the 'degenerate poor'. This became even more important as the Chilean governments of the 1920s and 1930s were seeking to create a new role model and to promote the elusive exemplary Chilean citizen. The Carabineros played a significant role in

this project because they could not only be transformed into model citizens, but could help transform others, thus becoming agents in the complex process to transform the national citizenry. In sum, they were to engage in what contemporaries saw as an attempt to 'rescue the Chilean race'. This tied in closely with the formation of the Chilean nation-state, which was understood to be a process of rebuilding national institutions and bureaucracies. This process was also to be fostered by different social services provided by Carabineros de Chile: they were specifically positioned to carry this project out all over the national territory and were asked to address both social and health concerns, while also setting an example and providing moral education and clear guidelines to improve the masses.

This task called for a solution of the housing problem of the Carabineros, who quickly became one of the largest groups to benefit from social housing legislation. Approximately 660 houses were granted to Carabineros of different ranks, and it was hardly the members of the police who were most in need as the case of the 84 houses of the neighborhood of 'Los Castaños' has shown. Over the years, the houses built for the Carabineros equaled about 25% of the total number of houses built under law 308 published in 1925. This represents a high percentage of housing that was provided to a single state institution and nearly a quarter of available resources. Still, the housing problem of the Carabineros de Chile was never really solved.

In spite of all the advantages the Carabineros had over other groups, just as with other employees of the Chilean state the plight for better housing continued; a situation also experienced by other Chilean citizens. This lack of viable solutions to the national housing problem prompted the rise and growth of informal and illegal forms of housing and the violent seizing of land that was to become more acute in Chile from the 1940s onwards. Thus, over the years, social housing policy had to be transformed significantly, although financial issues limited the rooms for maneuver for the Chilean state. Early on during the Cold War, many of the funds granted by the United States of America to Chile were provided for this pur-

pose, but it was not until the 1960s that the social housing problem and the housing problem of the Carabineros de Chile was dealt with in depth and addressed much more efficiently. This is when a second stage in the development of Chilean social housing policies began. The measures studied here only served to aggravate social inequalities and tighten social problems. In the end only a few Carabineros had managed to own decent housing and become the 'correct neighbors' and citizens the superiors of the new police force had envisioned in 1927.

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