



STOCKCERO TEACHING KIT (013)

Title: *The Emancipation of South America*

Author: Bartolomé Mitre (Translated and condensed by William Pilling)

Subject Areas: Latin American History, Military Strategy, 19th-Century Nation Building, Historiography.

I. Academic Justification & Context

Bartolomé Mitre's *History of San Martín* is not merely a biography; it is the foundational text of Argentine national historiography. Written by a former president and statesman—partially while imprisoned for leading a rebellion in 1874—the text seeks to codify the origins of the Argentine nation through a rigorous, document-based methodology. For the English-speaking academic world, William Pilling's 1893 translation and condensation, *The Emancipation of South America*, is an invaluable resource. With Mitre's blessing, Pilling stripped away the hyper-local political disputes that weary foreign readers, elevating the narrative to a continental scale. This text allows students to engage with the grand strategy of the Latin American independence movements, contrasting the methodical, institutional approach of José de San Martín in the South with the explosive, charismatic campaigns of Simón Bolívar in the North.

II. Core Thematic Axes for Lecture & Syllabus Integration

1. The Continental Strategy: Crossing the Andes

The text provides a masterclass in 19th-century military logistics and strategy. Mitre details San Martín's realization that the royalist stronghold in Lima could not be taken through the highlands of Upper Peru. Professors can focus on the chapters detailing the preparation in Cuyo, the spy networks, and the monumental *Passage of the Andes* as a turning point in military history, comparable to Hannibal or Napoleon crossing the Alps.

2. The Collision of Two Liberators: The Guayaquil Interview

Chapters 45 and 46 delve into one of the most mysterious and consequential encounters in Latin American history: the meeting between San Martín and Bolívar in Guayaquil. This axis allows for an exploration of differing political philosophies (monarchist/institutional tendencies vs. republican/dictatorial ambitions) and the personal sacrifices required for the culmination of the independence project, culminating in San Martín's abdication.

3. Historiography as Nation-Building

Mitre wrote history to forge a national identity. The text can be studied not just for *what* happened, but *how* it is told. Mitre relies on an archive of over 10,000 documents to lend scientific weight to his narrative. Pilling's translation highlights the "Action of America upon Europe" and the "Affiliation of the Revolution," positioning the South American struggle as a necessary evolution of Western Enlightenment rather than a chaotic rebellion.

III. Classroom Discussion Topics

1. **The Justification of Disobedience:** In Chapter XXIII, Mitre discusses "The Disobedience of San Martín" when he refused Buenos Aires' orders to return his



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army to fight in the civil wars, choosing instead to proceed to Peru. Discuss the ethical and historical implications of a military leader prioritizing a continental objective over the direct orders of his national government.

2. **The "Greatness" of San Martín vs. Bolívar:** Based on the "Epilogue," how does Mitre (through Pilling's translation) compare the nature of true greatness between the two liberators? How does Mitre's Argentine perspective influence his evaluation of Bolívar's later dictatorial tendencies?
3. **The Role of Foreign Auxiliaries:** Pilling's text emphasizes figures like Lord Cochrane, Miller, and the British naval and military influence in the Pacific campaigns. Discuss the international dimensions of the emancipation and how foreign intervention shaped the naval and land victories.

IV. Research Prompts & Essay Assignments

- **Strategic Military Analysis:** *"Trace the evolution of the Patriot strategy from the early disasters in Upper Peru to San Martín's successful execution of the Chilean-Peruvian campaign. How did geographical realities dictate the shift from a northern land invasion to a trans-Andean and subsequent naval offensive?"*
- **Historiographical Essay:** *"Analyze William Pilling's Translator's Preface alongside Mitre's Prologue. How does the conscious decision to condense the 'intricate questions' and local disputes of the Argentine revolution alter the English-speaking reader's understanding of the conflict? Discuss the balance between biography and continental history."*

V. RELATED STOCKCERO RESOURCES

Southern Cone Collection: 6-Book Bundle. (Includes *The Emancipation of South America* alongside *1804 - 1810 - Las Brevas Maduras*, *El Chacho - Último caudillo de la montonera*, *Rozas*, *Ensayo Histórico-psicológico*, *Una Excursión a los indios ranqueles*, and *Indios Guaraníes y Jesuitas Misiones de la Compañía de Jesús en el Paraguay*).

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