

THE LIBERAL REVOLUTION OF 1820: SCRIPT OF AN UNFINISHED REVOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

Beginning in Porto, Portugal, on August 24, 1820, the Liberal Revolution followed a set of programmatic guidelines defined by its main mentors and driving forces. It was based on a script that consisted of a remarkable set of proclamations manifestos, and official letters published between the first military declaration in Porto and entry into force of the Governmental Junta and the Preparatory Junta to convene the Cortes (October 1st, 1820). In the following period until the creation of the Constituent Cortes, and throughout the parliamentary preparatory work for the Constitution, the difficulty of bringing the collapse of the economic and social structures of the Old Regime to its final conclusion became evident. The political-constitutional advances achieved were not accompanied by equivalent change and reform of property and taxation structures. The revolution remained unfinished and would be abruptly interrupted. Could there have been another outcome? This paper discusses – based on printed sources that have yet to be sufficiently explored and are methodologically framed as a guide or script of the process that began in August 1820 – how the political conditions that made possible the success of the revolution at the constitutional level were also those that made its full completion impossible in other spheres throughout the period 1820 to 1823 (Vintism).

KEYWORDS

Cortes – Constitution – Proclamations – Revolution – Regeneration – Vintism.

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A REVOLUÇÃO LIBERAL DE 1820: GUIÃO DE UMA REVOLUÇÃO INACABADA

RESUMO

A Revolução Liberal, iniciada no Porto, em 24 de agosto de 1820, obedeceu a um conjunto de orientações programáticas definidas pelos seus principais mentores e impulsionadores. Teve por base um guião que se consubstanciou num notável conjunto documental de proclamações, manifestos e ofícios, publicados entre o primeiro pronunciamento militar no Porto e a entrada em funções da Junta governativa e da Junta preparatória da convocação de cortes (1 de outubro de 1820). No período que se seguiu até à instalação das Cortes Constituintes, e ao longo dos trabalhos parlamentares preparatórios da Constituição, ficou demonstrada a dificuldade de levar às últimas consequências a vontade de desmoronamento das estruturas econômicas e sociais do antigo regime. Os avanços alcançados no plano político-constitucional não foram acompanhados de equivalente mudança e reforma das estruturas de propriedade e fiscalidade. A revolução ficou inacabada e seria, afinal, bruscamente interrompida. Teria sido possível outro desfecho? Neste artigo procuro demonstrar – a partir de fontes impressas que não têm sido suficientemente exploradas e que são enquadradas na moldura metodológica de um guião ou roteiro do processo iniciado em agosto de 1820 – que as condições políticas que tornaram possível o sucesso da revolução no plano constitucional foram também as que inviabilizaram a sua plena conclusão noutras esferas de intervenção durante o triênio vintista.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Cortes – Constituição – Proclamações – Revolução – Regeneração – Vintismo.

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The good, loyal and heroic city of Porto was destined to the new glory of restoring the Portuguese's legitimate freedom: this second capital of the kingdom should perform a memorable act that would save the common homeland and the august throne, on which the very powerful king, D. João VI, is seated, may God keep him safe.³

1. *The revolution that began in Porto*

Everything began in Porto, on August 24th, 1820. The location could hardly be any other, as the opening news, published in the first issue of the *Diário Nacional*, expresses clearly. Far from the closer surveillance that the Regency government carried out in Lisbon, the city of Porto benefited from exceptional conditions to serve as the cradle of an announced revolution. It was the headquarters of an expressive merchant community, involving wine producers and traders from the Douro region. This stable core of business attracted multiple economic agents from other regions and areas of activity, displaying the cosmopolitanism typical of a bustling city. Porto was also an important place for the performance of a judge's functions and regulation of the Judiciary, bringing together scholars with university education, holders of legal and political culture dedicated to issuing critical judgments about the routines and vices installed in institutional public life. And Porto was also a region hosting different regiments of soldiers, who were receptive to changes that would allow an improvement of their corporate interests.

Traders, magistrates, and soldiers. It was in this triple alliance that complicities were forged between qualified representatives of these social categories, with the purpose of leading the country towards what they imagined could become a revolution. And what happened on August 24th, 1820 was indeed a revolution, even though the mentors and authors of its guide and plot were not fully aware of the history they were giving birth to.

3 *Diário Nacional*. Porto, No. 1, August 26th, 1820. Tipografia da Viúva Alvarez & Filhos.

The success of the military pronouncement was due to careful preparation by the judges and businessmen who made up the Sanhedrin (*Sinédrrio*), a political association created in January 1818. They took for themselves the name of the institution that, in the ancient Jewish tradition, designated the assembly of judges that ensured proper law enforcement. Manuel Fernandes Tomás, who then served as a respected magistrate at the *Tribunal da Relação do Porto* [Court of Appeal], was the main mentor of this revolutionary aggregating movement, whose founding nucleus included Judge José da Silva Carvalho, lawyer José Ferreira Borges, and trader João Ferreira Viana. In the months leading up to the 1820 Revolution D-Day, other traders and judges joined the Sanhedrin, as well as two military men (Colonel Sebastião Brito Cabreira and Colonel Bernardo Sepúlveda), with the responsibility of mobilizing the armed corps indispensable for regime change. Despite the Sanhedrin members' involvement, the pronouncement and the revolution it inaugurated cannot be seen as the work of a cohesive and organized party or faction. Everything resulted from the happy combination of wills that converged towards the same purpose.

The aspects are known and need no detailed presentation.⁴ Several military squads, police forces and militias that were in the city of Porto gathered in the vicinity of the artillery barracks at *Campo de Santo Ovídio* (today *Praça da República*). This force exhibition was accompanied by an outdoor mass and the inevitable 21-gun salute that marked the success of a peaceful military pronouncement, without resistance or bloodshed. A Military Council was promptly established, in which the main regiments participating in the festive parade were represented, which made the first proclamations public, clarifying its intentions: to replace the Regency (which governed in the name of D.

⁴The bicentennial of the 1820 Revolution led to publication of several books that present the sequence of events and do interpretive readings of its meaning based on sources of the time and on the existing historiographical legacy. Refer mainly to: CARDOSO, José Luís. *A Revolução Liberal de 1820*. Lisboa: CTT Correios de Portugal, 2019.; CORDEIRO, José Manuel Lopes. *1820. Revolução Liberal do Porto*. Porto: Câmara Municipal do Porto, 2020.; MOREIRA, Vital; DOMINGUES, José. *No Bicentenário da Revolução Liberal, Vol. I – Da Revolução à Constituição, 1820-1822 and Vol. II – Os 40 Dias que Mudaram Portugal*. Porto: Porto Editora, 2020.

João VI, who was in Brazil) by a provisional government to prepare the summons of *cortes* to give the nation a constitution. Without forgetting the noble plan of saving the country, the proclamations made it clear that this would be done in full respect for the throne and the Lord's Table.

Troops and militias were greeted by the people who joined on the streets in a triumphant walk to *Praça Nova* [New Square] (today *Praça da Liberdade* [Liberty Square]), for a formal meeting to take place at the *Casa da Câmara do Porto* [Chamber House]. There, several judges, council members and civil and religious authorities joined the military, and, together, proclaimed the success of the revolution and declared established a Provisional Board of the Supreme Government of the Kingdom of Portugal, which would govern in the name of D. João VI, thus calling into question the political legitimacy of the Lisbon-based Regency.⁵

The moment when the revolution took place was benefited from especially favorable conditions. Good winds came from Spain bringing news of restoration of the liberal Constitution of Cádiz of 1812. William Carr Beresford, supreme commander of the army and a key figure in conducting the Regency government, had left for Rio de Janeiro to ask D. João VI to strengthen his power and authority, leaving the military hierarchy unable to respond firmly to the possible uprisings. Delays in paying salaries to the military and public servants exasperated the harmed. The police hatred of anything that could suggest a Jacobin or Freemasonic revolt or conspiracy advised speed of action, guarded by a sense of opportunity.⁶

5 The Provisional Board was composed of 18 members. António da Silveira Pinto da Fonseca was the president, and Sebastião Drago Brito Cabreira the vice-president, figures chosen to guarantee military support for the regenerating cause. Among its members, eight had belonged to the Sanhedrin, extinguished at the time, and they ensured the process political direction (Manuel Fernandes Tomás, José Ferreira Borges, José da Silva Carvalho, João da Cunha Sotto Maior, José Maria Xavier de Araújo, José de Melo Castro e Abreu, Bernardo de Castro and Sepúlveda, and Francisco Gomes da Silva).

6 Some Sanhedrin members' connections with Freemasonry are known. However, there are no doubts that the pronouncement of August 24th cannot be considered a Freemasonic work. On

It was this peculiar conjuncture that made this historic day possible, breaking triumphantly on the morning of August 24th, 1820. Referring to the meaning of such a happy dawn, the young Almeida Garrett wrote in an emotional tone: "The last hour of tyranny has sounded: fanaticism, which occupied the face of the earth, has disappeared; the sun of liberty shone on our horizon, and the last darkness of despotism was, dissipated by its rays, buried in hell."⁷

2. *Chronicle of an announced revolution*

The events that followed that radiant day prove that it was not a fortuitous or spontaneous act, an involuntary disturbance or occasional disorder. And they show that the revolution that started in Porto was not limited to the local or regional scope, but, on the contrary, inscribed its purpose in a mission of a national character. It is precisely through the articulation of apparently routine operations, in the flow of the days that follow, that the deliberate and intentional sense of a national and collective political action can be sensed.⁸ In other words, of a revolution, in the modern sense that the expression acquires after the American (1776) and French (1789) revolutions. The protagonists are not subaltern actors in events triggered by factors beyond their control. The revolution results from a conscious will of human actors who express a desire for transformation – part of a new political culture that admits the possibility of changing the prevailing regime and

the subject, refer to COSTA, Fernando Marques da. *A Maçonaria 1807-1834: Entre a Força e o Cacete, entre o Mito e a Realidade*. Lisboa: Campo da Comunicação, 2018.

7 GARRETT, João Batista da Silva de Almeida. *O Dia Vinte e Quatro d'Agosto*. Lisboa: Tipografia Rollandiana, 1821. p. 9.

8 The contrast with the "conspiracy" of 1817 could not be greater. On the fragility of the movements orchestrated by Gomes Freire de Andrade (with the support from Freemasonry) and the absence of any underlying political agenda or program, refer to CARDOSO, José Luís. *A Conspiração de Gomes Freire: enquadramento político e económico*. In: PEREIRA, Miriam Halpern; ARAÚJO, Ana Cristina (org.). *Gomes Freire e as Vésperas da Revolução de 1820*. Lisboa: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal, 2018. p. 89-104.

social order—, and who frame their purposes in a movement extended to other global horizons.⁹

The changes announced and induced by revolutions presuppose a knowledge of the terrain and the context in which individual political agents move, a clear vision of what new they intend to build, the future projection of commitments established in the present, and a clear awareness of the meaning of responsibility associated with the role they play. Such agents know where they come from, what they want, and what means are available to fulfill their mission. Through them, the individual will acquires a collective nexus and the revolution gains legitimacy as an event that generates emancipation and progress.¹⁰

In this sense, the revolution follows a script, an agenda, which enables expectations to be controlled, adverse scenarios to be foreseen and adequate responses to the demands of each moment to be found.¹¹

9 The aim here is not to analyze the broader and global context in which the Portuguese liberal revolution unfolds. However, it is essential to emphasize that the Portuguese case is a sample, with its own specificities, of what happens in the world. There is a vast bibliography available for the understanding of this theme, whose primordial analysis was done by HOBBSAWM, Eric. *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1962. For an updated overview on the circumstances in which this long era of revolutions takes place, refer to ARMITAGE, David; SUBRAHMANYAM, Sanjay (eds.). *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760-1840*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.; BAYLY, C.A. *The Birth of the Modern World, 1790-1914. Global Connections and Comparisons*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.; OSTERHAMMEL, Jürgen. *The Transformation of the World. A Global History of the Nineteenth Century*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014.; PAQUETTE, Gabriel. *Imperial Portugal in the Age of Atlantic Revolutions. The Luso-Brazilian World, c. 1770-1850*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

10 On this perspective, refer to the always inspiring and suggestive essay by KOSELLECK, Reinhart. Historical criteria of the modern concept of revolution. In: KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1985, p. 39-54.

11 On this notion of script or roadmap associated with the outbreak of a revolution, refer to the several case studies and the excellent methodological introduction in BAKER, Keith Michael; EDELSTEIN, Dan (eds.). *Scripting Revolution. A Historical Approach to the Comparative Study of Revolutions*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015.

The set of proclamations, manifestos, official letters, ordinances, letters and other separate texts, issued by the political agents who participated in the first acts that gave shape to the 1820 Revolution, are pieces of enormous relevance to understand this intentional, pre-meditated, and controlled sense by which revolution is covered. The documents were, in general, short and intended for handover distribution and for being posted in places of public visibility. Many of them were published by newspapers created shortly after August 24th, integrating the informative news of the events that shook and reached the emerging public sphere.

The manifestos or proclamations of a greater programmatic nature were written by important protagonists and mentors of the Porto pronouncement, with emphasis on texts by Manuel Fernandes Tomás, José Ferreira Borges, Friar Francisco de São Luís, and Bernardo Sepúlveda. Many of them were previously discussed and approved by the formal or informal bodies responsible for managing the political moment, thus showing that the words to be transmitted were not left to chance. The total number of public announcements and event reports that were produced between August 24th and October 1st (that is, between the outbreak of the movement in Porto and the institutionalization of the Provisional Board in Lisbon) exceeded one hundred. Thus, the revolution was discussed and justified day after day, according as adhesions were manifested and the obstacles disappeared.

The succession of proclamations and manifestos also embodied a narrative intentionally conducted in order to guarantee the construction of the memory of events that were perceived as propellers of significant historical changes. The most vehement proof of this guide was given by the publication of two documentary collections, intended to establish the most remarkable events of the "Regeneration of Portugal," as inscribed in the titles: the first edited in Porto and including texts dated between August 24th and September 9th; and the second published in Lisbon with the addition of documents produ-

ced until October 2nd.¹² The noun “regeneration” was not an innocent choice, and aimed at ensuring that the message captured the greatest number of parties interested in some kind of change in the order of things.¹³

In addition to the relevance of the collection itself, the inclusion of Regency government proclamations and official letters is noteworthy. In other words, the purpose of these collections was not only to serve as a record or propaganda of the acts practiced by the regenerative movement, but also to serve as a historical repository of texts illustrating the positions in dispute, at a time when one imagined who the winners were, but in which the capacity of reaction of the presumed defeated could not yet be ignored.

Analyzed as a whole, this documentary series allows us to understand the reasons behind the historical actors involved and the way they supported their causes at their time. As a historical source, it gives us precious clues for the interpretative understanding of the implicit and explicit meanings of the 1820 Revolution.

On the side of the proclamations issued by the victorious side, especially those made public within the first 48 hours, there is a coherent identification of the reasons that made the Revolution unavoi-

12 PORTUGAL. *Coleção das Proclamações, e Outros Documentos que servem para a História da Regeneração de Portugal desde o dia 24 de Agosto de 1820, em que se instaurou nesta cidade do Porto a Junta Provisional do Governo Supremo do Reino*. Porto: Tipografia da Praça de S. Teresa, 1820a. PORTUGAL. *Coleção Geral e Curiosa de Todos os Documentos Oficiais e Históricos, publicados por ocasião da Regeneração de Portugal*. Lisboa: Tipografia Rollandiana, 1820b. Some of these texts would later be selected and included in the work of ARAÚJO, José Maria Xavier. *Revelações e Memórias para a História da Revolução de 24 de Agosto de 1820 e de 15 de Setembro do mesmo ano*. Lisboa: Tipografia Rollandiana, 1846. p. 85-228. Refer also to: SANTOS, Clemente José dos; SILVA, José Augusto da. (org.). *Documentos para História das Cortes Gerais da Nação Portuguesa*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1883, Tomo I, 1820-1825. p. 5-76.

13 The appropriation and use of the terms “revolution” and “regeneration” is a matter deserving specific attention, which goes beyond the scope of this article. For an introduction to the subject, refer to: FERREIRA, Fátima Sá e Melo. O conceito de revolução na História dos Conceitos: um percurso em Portugal, 1750-1870. In: PEREIRA, Miriam Halpern et. al. (org.), *Linguagens e Fronteiras do Poder*. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos de História Contemporânea, ISCTE-IUL, 2012. p. 79-96.

dable: the Portuguese's suffering;¹⁴ lack of people safety and goods security;¹⁵ poverty of soldiers;¹⁶ administration errors and vices and lack of State transparency;¹⁷ systematic violation of basic rights; tyranny and despotism;¹⁸ the ruined situation of agriculture, industry, trade and the navy;¹⁹ absence of the king;²⁰ loss of the old courts' good traditions of political supervision,²¹ and the good news from Spain.²² As it is typical of revolutions, one could not expect the unequivocal evidence of these diagnostic elements, whose mention refers to a sphere of rhetorical denunciation, in which one insists on identifying what has to be wrong in order to justify the goodness of the announced change.

As for the objectives and ends to be achieved, the proclaimed purposes configure a will for social and political regeneration in the following fundamental matters: freedom governed by law,²³ reforms driven by reason and justice,²⁴ salvation of the homeland, security and tranquility of the nation,²⁵ defense of individual property,²⁶ public happiness and improvement of the kingdom.²⁷ Everything always in an attitude of fidelity and in the name of the king's will²⁸ and guarante-

14 PORTUGAL, *Op. Cit.*, 1820^a. p. 3, 4, 5, 25.

15 *Ibidem*, p. 3.

16 *Ibidem*, p. 4.

17 *Ibidem*, p. 6 e 9.

18 *Ibidem*, p. 6, 8 and 36.

19 *Ibidem*, p. 6.

20 *Ibidem*, p. 6 and 25.

21 *Ibidem*, p. 6.

22 *Ibidem*, p. 25.

23 *Ibidem*, p. 3, 6, 8, 24.

24 *Ibidem*, p. 3.

25 *Ibidem*, p. 4, 22.

26 *Ibidem*, p. 6.

27 *Ibidem*, p. 15 and 36.

28 *Ibidem*, p. 3, 4, 5, 6, 24, 36.

ing defense and maintenance of the Catholic religion.²⁹ Obviously, these are generic claims that work as a programmatic road map for desired changes, regardless of the consideration of their feasibility. However, they reveal that the nature of the guide in question referred to the rejection of a script with a Jacobin motivation .

A greater consistency of arguments can be seen in the way in which one announces the political instruments that would make it possible to reverse the diagnosed problems and regenerate Portugal: replacement of the Regency by a provisional government legitimized by popular acclamation³⁰ that would act promptly, in order to curb the riots and smother any act of anarchy³¹ and which, above all, would summon the *cortes* designed to give the country a constitution.³² It was the insistence on this last double topic (*cortes* and constitution) that worked as a leitmotif of the vintist regenerative movement in its initial phase, establishing as strategic priority of the political agenda the improvement of governmental action and the establishment of a new constitutional order. Only in this way could the revolution be taken to its ultimate consequences; this was the central motto of the regenerative script.

The oath that the Provisional Board ordered to be taken by various entities and institutions (military, public servants, judges, chamber members, nobility and people representatives, clergy members) reveals the moderate purposes of a revolution that took great care to show fidelity to the king, the House of Braganza and the Catholic Church. The oath was as follows:

I swear to the Holy Gospels, obedience to the Provisional Board of the Supreme Government of the Kingdom, which has just been established, and that in the name of Our Lord King, D. João VI will govern until the establishment of the Cortes, which he shall convene to prepare the

29 Ibidem, p. 5 e 6.

30 Ibidem, p. 3, 4, 5, 9.

31 Ibidem, p. 3, 5, 36.

32 Ibidem, p. 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 25.

Portuguese Constitution; I swear obedience to these Cortes, and to the Constitution they prepare, where the Roman Catholic religion, and the dynasty of the most serene House of Braganza shall be maintained.³³

Despite the discomfort caused by the presence of English officers in the Portuguese army's command posts, under Beresford's leadership, the Portuguese military authorities, legitimized by the success of the Porto pronouncement, took the prudent and strategic attitude of not antagonizing the English comrades in arms. After all, their presence in Portuguese territory had been fundamental in the conjuncture of war against the invading French army, 10 years before, and this crucial support in human and financial terms had to be duly recognized. Therefore, it is not surprising that in one of the first proclamations printed after the Porto pronouncement, dated August 26th, the new military command, headed by Sebastião Brito Cabreira, addressed words of appeasement and sympathy to English officers on behalf of the Provisional Board of the Supreme Government of the Kingdom, as if justifying its natural withdrawal from the ongoing operations, while serving as a prevention of undesirable hostile involvement:

It [the Board] feels that one of the first of its duties, in the exercise of the authority entrusted to it, is to order that Your Excellency declare to all said officers, and to each one per se, that they retain all their honors, privileges, and distinctions competent to their posts; as well as the pay of their army ranks, which they will get punctually until establishment of the *Cortes*.³⁴

Concern about maintaining the troops' fidelity to the command hierarchy of operations to consolidate the success of the pronouncement was expressed in several proclamations, either directed express-

33 Ibidem, p. 15.

34 Ibidem, p. 22.

ly to soldiers from barracks in Porto,³⁵ Beiras,³⁶ Trás-os-Montes,³⁷ Alentejo and Algarve,³⁸ or addressed to the entire army.³⁹ The general tone of the message transmitted was of gratitude for the mission in which the soldiers were involved, recognition of the fundamental importance of their role, and appeal for them to avoid or prevent the riots that normally accompany the political change processes. In one of these messages, by Manuel Fernandes Tomás,⁴⁰ it became clear that “armies must not make use of the government, nor interfere in its affairs,” while admitting the legitimacy of the manifestation of military force that “now employed by us, was a legitimate measure; because they saved the monarchy by encouraging and defending the true patriots who prepared and carried out such a risky act.”⁴¹

It was also on behalf of the soldiers that many of the proclamations were written to spread the good news of Porto pronouncement throughout the country. In view of the unequivocal relevance of the involvement of the military in the country’s regeneration process, the promise of promoting sergeants and the announcement of pardon for all deserting soldiers were matters to which the Board gave prompt attention four days after August 24th.⁴² These were signs of the concern about taking care properly of the troops’ unity and cohesion.

In the manifesto they addressed to the nation on August 29th, Porto academics did not spare manifestations of magnificent jubilation: “The homeland, which we thought was lost, is conquered and saved; the letters, over which we cried, thinking they were extinct, are reborn and shine.” Theologians, canon lawyers, coroners, doctors, mathema-

35 *Ibidem*, p. 3, 4, 18, 26, 36 to 39.

36 *Ibidem*, p. 67.

37 *Ibidem*, p. 77.

38 *Ibidem*, p. 136.

39 *Ibidem*, p. 78, 81.

40 ARAÚJO, José Maria Xavier. *Op. Cit.*, p. 83-84.

41 PORTUGAL. *Op. Cit.*, p. 79.

42 *Ibidem*, p. 40-41.

ticians and philosophers express their joy at the moment experienced: "Oh children of Minerva, we are all blissful, because we are all free."⁴³

Porto's trade body also expressed its "consoling hopes" in the congratulatory manifesto addressed to the Provisional Board on September 1st, 1820 and, to demonstrate political confidence in the new institutional framework established, it made clear its unequivocal human and material support for the regeneration cause:

The trade body does not fail to know, just as no one is unaware anymore, how much the heroes, who dared to give the first cry of the fair freedom oppressed, deserve, and for this reason it comes before this Supreme Board to express its gratitude and respect, to rejoice with the country's virtuous people and offer without reservation its people, knowledge and capital for the completion of the great work, in which the lights and the virtues shine on the face of the universe.⁴⁴

Some of these proclamations aimed to contain the rumors that might exist about movements of resistance to the legitimacy that the Provisional Board claimed. There were cases that they were not mere rumors. Some points of dissent were readily known by the positions manifestly opposed to the movement started in Porto. The most vehement opposition was expressed by the Count of Amarante, Francisco da Silveira Pinto da Fonseca, governor of arms of the province of Trás-os-Montes, based in Chaves. In August 26th, he had a proclamation posted and sent letters to the Senate of the Vila Real Chamber and to the Regency Government, in Lisbon, in which he regretted the behavior of his brother António da Silveira, classified as a "mad man" who had been assigned as president of the Provisional Board, accusing the promoters of August 24th of crime of rebellion, betrayal of the king, stimulus to anarchy and desire to imitate the French revolutionaries, and attitudes driven only by excessive personal ambition and not by

43 Ibidem, p. 51.

44 Ibidem, p. 88.

love of the country.⁴⁵ Despite the mobilization efforts he undertook, the counter-rebellion was fleeting, and eventually surrendered to the infantry commander João António Teixeira de Sampaio and the commander of the Northern Army, Gaspar Teixeira de Magalhães e Lacerda, who recorded in writing, in multiple official letters and proclamations, the success of their military containment operations.⁴⁶

Another core of resistance to the regenerative movement was unleashed, in August 29th, by António Marcelino de Vitória, governor of arms of the Province of Beira.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, his disobedience would be effectively fought on the ground by one of the military chiefs of the Porto pronouncement, Bernardo Sepúlveda, who gave a detailed account of his incursions between Aveiro, Coimbra and Viseu and of how he neutralized, in the first days of September, the scarce resistance delineated.⁴⁸ Thus, on September 7th, 1820, two weeks after the Porto pronouncement, the opposition rehearsed in the provinces of Trás-os-Montes and Beira was under total control of the military, faithful to the Provisional Board.

The frustrated aspirations of the governors of arms Silveira and Vitória had been, in a way, nurtured and protected by the governors of the kingdom that constituted the Regency, which in Lisbon represented the authority of D. João VI in the Portuguese metropolitan territory.⁴⁹ As soon as they became aware of the military and popular movements that had started in Porto, the governors published successive proclamations between August 29th and September 4th, repudiating the “horrendous crime of rebellion, the subversion against the monarchy, the criminal insurrection” against the legitimate authori-

45 Ibidem, p. 27-35.

46 Ibidem, p. 77, 78, 89, 113-122, 132.

47 Ibidem, p. 50, 57-59.

48 Ibidem, p. 85, 91, 98-102, 109, 112, 126, 148-155.

49 The members who made up the Regency were: Cardinal-Patriarch (D. Carlos da Cunha e Menezes), Marquis of Borba (D. Fernando Maria de Sousa Coutinho), Count of Peniche (D. Caetano José de Noronha e Albuquerque), Count of Feira (D. Miguel Pereira Forjaz) and António Gomes Ribeiro, who held the post of Secretary for Kingdom and Treasury Affairs.

ty of D. João VI, carried out by “malicious, perverse individuals” who made the country take a step “into the abyss of revolutions.” They considered the purpose of gathering courts to be illegal and devoid of any legitimacy and reiterated their loyalty to the monarch and the institutions sanctioned by him. Considering that only the governors were legitimate depositaries of royal authority, they were willing to bring the *cortes* together in the traditional model of representation of the orders of the nobility, clergy and people, refusing the idea of preparing a constitution, and expressed the intention to forgive and amnesty all those who, because of bad information but in good faith, had been momentarily attracted by the revolutionary illusion.⁵⁰

The Provisional Board reacted promptly to the Regency’s first proclamation of enmity, on September 2nd, albeit in a more measured tone, avoiding verbal harassment and reiterating its confidence in the popular and military forces’ adherence to the movement started on August 24th.⁵¹ The following day, the moderation of words and the approach in a peaceful, but firm and determined tone, were the mark of the answer elaborated by Friar Francisco de S. Luís (September 3rd). Alerting to the dangers that threatened the Portuguese nation, victim of rivalry and the pretensions of foreign powers willing to dethrone the representatives of the House of Braganza, the Provisional Board regretted the terms used by the members of the Regency in their unfortunate declarations of disobedience, for “so inconsiderately daring to classify as rebellion the sacred enthusiasm of so many illustrious sons of the homeland who, stoking in their hearts the fire of patriotism that so many misfortunes had smothered but not extinguished, raised the first cry for honor, liberty, and national independence.”⁵² Despite the restraint in recriminatory judgments, the Provisional Board did not stop criticizing the Regency for the lack of initiative and manifest inability to do what the country demanded and which the Provisional Board would “definitely and irrevocably” carry out.

50 PORTUGAL. Op. Cit., p. 54, 84, 93, 96 and 111.

51 *Ibidem*, p. 95.

52 *Ibidem*, p. 105.

Regarding the project to summon the *cortes* in the old way, forgetting the purpose of giving the country a constitution, the Provisional Board published a long Proclamation to the Portuguese, on September 8th, 1820, explaining how the expectations placed by the Regency in the failed resistance of Trás-os-Montes and Beira to the regenerative movement had been frustrated.⁵³

The Regency soon realized that the fiery tone of its exhortations did not receive the desired support. This is revealed in the internal report it requested on the military mobilization capabilities of the political forces in the area. The preparatory meeting for this report, held on September 3rd, was attended by Pedro de Sousa Holstein, Count of Palmela - in transit from London to Rio de Janeiro -, who would be the messenger to D. João VI of the news about the political situation in the kingdom. News certainly not very encouraging for those who saw the kingdom from the perspective of the Regency, which realistically accounted for the military advances achieved by Porto's revolutionaries, as well as the failure of proclamations and attempts to mobilize support for maintaining the existing political regime. And then they concluded that nothing could prevent the triumph of the "intruder government": "The status, then, of this kingdom is indeed the most critical that can be supposed."⁵⁴

In the last proclamation they issued, on September 9th, the governors of the kingdom changed their tone, beginning to understand that the effects of the pronouncement of August 24th were unstoppable and that there was not possible to return to the old state of affairs. They expended a last effort to appropriate politically the ongoing regenerative movement, declaring that they "understood in their pure desires" the good intentions of the Board, and did not hesitate to address "words of conciliation" to it. They called for previous recriminations and accusations to be forget and expressed the wish that "a new era of harmony and mutual trust begin," eliminating ha-

53 *Ibidem*, p. 138.

54 SANTOS; SILVA. Op. Cit., p. 27.

ted, revenge, or punishment. They justified the animosity with which the governors initially reacted, since their authority as representatives of the royal power was being questioned, and they tried to prove their collaborative spirit by summoning the *cortes* for November 15th, in the old molds.⁵⁵ But it was too late to conciliate the conflicting instances of power that emanated from different sources of political legitimacy and that had different views on the political conduct of the regeneration process.

Part of the credit for this conciliation effort should be attributed to the Count of Palmela, relying on the testimony he left about his active participation in meetings with the Regency (“in such a serious juncture I did not refuse to take voluntarily a share in the responsibility that others less zealous or more cautious would have rejected”) and in the very elaboration of the manifestos that the Regency was publishing (“almost all proclamations published by the governors of the kingdom from Porto uprising to Lisbon uprising were written by me”).⁵⁶ Certainly he was responsible for the insistence on summoning the *cortes* as the three estates of the kingdom – nobility, clergy and commoners (peasants and bourgeoisie) –, reactivating a monarchical tradition interrupted at the end of the seventeenth century. His diplomatic skills were also exercised in the contacts he had with Friar Francisco de S. Luís, one more moderate member of the Provisional Board, with whom he discussed a possible compromise of royal granting of a constitution so that not to allow the people as a nation to impose the fundamental law on their consenting monarch. In that case, it was still too early for concession solutions assumed by the supporters of a liberal constitutional revolution that had barely taken its first steps.

Events had rushed in a way that the Regency had certainly not thought possible. On September 15th, in *Rossio* square, by popular acclamation promoted by the judge of the people and by the *Casa dos Vinte e Quatro* [House of the Twenty-four] (representing the craft-

55 PORTUGAL. Op. Cit., 1820a, p. 156.

56 BONIFÁCIO, Maria de Fátima. (ed.). *Memórias do Duque de Palmela*. Lisboa: Publicações Dom Quixote, 2010, p. 158-160.

smen) and supported by the capital's military forces, the authority of an interim government that put an end to the resistance attempts by the until then governors of the kingdom. There were new proclamations and manifestations of shared joy between the rebels who were marching from North to South and those in Lisbon awaiting a triumphal entry of Porto allies.⁵⁷ And the entrance seems to have been really spectacular:

The procession was innumerable, which waited for the *Supreme Government* in carriages, on horseback, and even on foot; because there was such a competition that there was no longer a chariot, nor a horse, that could be rented for more money than offered to have them: even many distinguished ladies left the capital to have the pleasure of entering with this brilliant entourage [...]. It is impossible to express the great enthusiasm which generally reigned, and still continues in this court. In the evening the Governor appeared at the Teatro dos Condes, and later at the Teatro de S. Carlos; but only the white scarves were seen, which floated everywhere, and cheers to the Supreme Government multiplied with inexplicable enthusiasm: it was a scene of glory: the Italian opera performance had to be interrupted for the excessive poetic praise to resound [...] which expressed the grateful sentiments of the entire Portuguese nation elevated in the spectacle of its glory.⁵⁸

Probably the Count of Palmela attended the opera in S. Carlos. But on that day he would have felt that staying in Lisbon was no longer worth. Seeing his attempt at conciliation to fail, he accelerated the preparations for leaving for Rio, in order to serve the court of D. João VI as Minister of Foreign Affairs and War as he had been assigned to, after leaving his mission as ambassador in London. The reports and messages that the Regency had asked him to transmit to the monarch had already lost any political opportunity. But Palmela would also be the bearer of an important message from the Provisional Board, written by Friar Francisco de S. Luís' wise pen, in which the former profes-

57 PORTUGAL. Op. Cit., 1820b, 18 proclamations published between September 15th and October 2nd 1820.

58 GÊNIO CONSTITUCIONAL. Porto, No. 4, October 5th, 1820.

sor at the University of Coimbra recounts the events in the kingdom, since August 24th, trying to witness simultaneous feelings of loyalty, admiration and gratitude towards the House of Braganza. This is an important document for understanding the guide of the Portuguese liberal revolution at a decisive moment of its triumph.

It is not possible, My Lord, that a great, enlightened, heroic people preserve, with invariable firmness, such sentiments, to the point of identifying them with their own existence and happiness, without being intimately convinced, not only of the sovereign virtues that adorn the heart of Your Majesty, and which are hereditary in your royal family, but also of that the prosperity, grandeur and glory of the monarchy are somehow inseparable from the conservation, stability and splendor of a throne, where the Portuguese always have respected and venerated more parents and friends, than kings and monarchs.⁵⁹

It is in this tone that the moderate and conciliatory arguments of the Provisional Board are developed, concerned with putting an end to the “public evils in which the nation was submerged,” illustrated by the usual discursive rhetoric about the state of decay of agriculture, industry and trade, extinction of the merchant and military navy, ruin of the public treasury, incompetence of state officials, and the vicious justice administration. To the diagnosis it adds an indirect and discreet reference to the English interests installed in the political and military administration: “Foreign nations, at last, looked upon us with indifference, and perhaps with contempt, and it may be that some of them speculated on our future fate and existence, as they had hitherto done on our resources and richness.”⁶⁰

For Friar Francisco de S. Luís, the movement started on August 24th was justified by the risks of anarchy resulting from an explosive social situation, highlighting the purpose of good men (“friends of the throne and of the nation”) to put an end to difficulties, acting under D. João VI’s interposed and assumed will, without harming the Catholic

59 SANTOS; SILVA. Op. Cit., p. 72.

60 Ibidem, p. 73.

religion. He made it clear that the main objective was “summoning cortes which, *organized in a manner convenient to the state of the nation and the lights of Europe*, will establish the fundamental laws of the monarchy”⁶¹ and, thus, August 24th was “a day of public joy and national celebration.”⁶²

He then reports the peaceful development with regard to the support that the Provisional Board was obtaining throughout the country, regretting, however, the initial reaction of the Regency that called rebels those who assumed to be, in the name of D. João VI, saviors of the homeland. He also summarizes the events that led to the creation of the interim government in Lisbon after the popular acclamation of September 15th, which in practice meant the deposition of the Regency government. The Friar reports on the prompt cooperation between the provisional governments of Porto and Lisbon, which established a merger pact in Alcobaça, on September 27th, and the events reported culminated with the triumphal entry in Lisbon, on October 1st, which marks the beginning of functions of a single Governing Board and a Board of preparation for summoning the cortes.

In a demonstration of the good faith of the new self-instituted powers, the letter ends with an appeal for the king to return to Lisbon:

May Your Majesty deign to hear and benignly respond to the cries of your people, to acquiesce to the ardent wishes they make for the longing presence of Your Majesty, or of any person of your august family, who in the real name of Your Majesty governs us and supplies your paternal care, and to approve the summons of the cortes, which the nation desires and which we judge of inevitable urgency not to delay any longer.⁶³

The letter from Friar Francisco de S. Luís, dated October 6th, 1820, closes the first cycle of events that marked the beginning of the Por-

61 Ibidem, p. 73, emphasis added.

62 Ibidem, p. 74.

63 Ibidem, p. 75.

tuguese liberal revolution. Through it, we scrutinize a programmed, intentional trajectory of peaceful and not abrupt change in the political system.⁶⁴ Seeking to mobilize the possible support for the regenerating cause and conquer the neutrality of inevitable opponents, the vintist regenerators started the revolution with well-defined strategic objectives: to paint the existing institutional framework in black to justify that something had to be done in the name of the king they wanted to respect, but who were told that, when returning, would have to accept a constitution to be prepared by elected *cortes*. That is, he would cease to be an absolute monarch to become a constitutional king.

Garrett made a good summary of the contained movement, without Jacobin deviations, nor offenses to the throne and the Lord's Table:

The nation behaved with that prudence, that generosity, that peace, which are the soul and pledge of public happiness, and which are the characteristic of a good revolution.⁶⁵

3. Difficult compromises and consensuses

The protagonists of the 1820 liberal Revolution were aware of the need for intermediate steps and moderate gestures that did not spoil everything. Indeed, for the mentors of the regenerative movement, the revolution in progress – that “good revolution” to which Garrett referred – could not give in to the radical temptation of subverting

64 The same concern about appeasing eventual opponents and prevention of erroneous interpretations of the regenerating movement meaning is also evident in another text by Friar Francisco de S. Luís, written in December 1820: the “*Manifesto da nação portuguesa aos soberanos e povos da Europa*” (In: SANTOS; SILVA. Op. Cit., p. 118-125). In this case, it was a matter of earning international sympathy and demonstrating to the powers of the Holy Alliance that the Portuguese revolution was not similar to Jacobin-style rebellions, thus avoiding external military intervention that would jeopardize the legitimacy of the ongoing regeneration.

65 GARRETT. Op. Cit, 48-49.

essential values that were considered perfectly compatible with the new constitutional creed. Tolerance was a sign of civic maturity.

Thus, it is understandable that the Provisional Board of the Supreme Government of the Kingdom had in its presidency and vice presidency, respectively, António da Silveira and Sebastião Drago Cabreira, two characters who were not in love with the revolutionary cause and who, a few months later, would come to reveal themselves to be declared opponents of the movement to which they gave body and consent. This was a skillful coup conceived by Manuel Fernandes Tomás, in a very revealing gesture of his political acumen. He, who had been the mentor of the Sanhedrin and who would prove to be the main political protagonist in the initial and decisive months of the Provisional Board's activities, knew that it was necessary that people keep on thinking that political figures who would receive support, or neutralize animosity, were involved in the essential causes of the liberal revolution.

In addition to the purpose – so often acclaimed and reiterated – of giving the country a constitution, it cannot be said that there was a rigorous plan of reforms to be carried out. The great background issues about the new regime to be built were subordinated to the urgent desire to overthrow the Old Regime of privileges, interests, and ways of exercising power. The most radical or most moderate voices were readily heard in a new environment of free expression of ideas and words. Freedom of the press and unrest in the public sphere were essential triggers for the explosion of ideas, programs of reform, plans for improvement, and proclamation of vital principles of constitutionalism in motion.

The regenerative process has known episodes typical of historical periods in which the urgency of the present moment causes an excessive appreciation of the ephemeral. The period was prodigal with threats of coups, counter-coups and riots, and the most famous occurred on Saint Martin's Day (November 11th, 1820), just over a month after the new government took office. *Martinhada* had as a pretext the rules to be established for the elections of the Constituent *Cortes*, targeting directly Manuel Fernandes Tomás, the member of the Pro-

visional Board in charge of the Kingdom and Finance Affairs, and he transformed with perspicacity the contestation he was targeted into a moment of consolidation of his power and strengthening of the alliance with the military more sympathetic to the regeneration (in particular Bernardo Sepúlveda); thus, Fernandes Tomás was able to dedicate to the preparation of an important *Relatório sobre o Estado do Reino* [Report on the Status of the Kingdom], which would later be presented and discussed in one of the first sessions of the Constituent *Cortes*, which began their work at the end of January 1821. In the absence of a government program or an action plan to be carried out, the Report by Fernandes Tomás pointed to strategic guidelines based on a timely diagnosis of the country's issues that had to be faced and overcome, so that the design of a "fortunate revolution" could be fulfilled.⁶⁶

Other authors published, in these initial months of the Portuguese liberal revolution, projects and overviews on political, economic and financial regeneration, contributing to the fulfillment of one of the main demands brought by August 24th: the free expression of ideas as the foundation of new practices of political citizenship.⁶⁷

Freedom of expression was exposed categorically in the proliferation of newspapers that informed or revealed divergent positions

66 TOMÁS, Manuel Fernandes. *Relatório Feito às Cortes Gerais e Extraordinárias de Portugal nas Sessões de 3 e 5 de Fevereiro de 1821 pelo Deputado ... sobre o Estado e Administração do Reino durante o Tempo da Junta Provisional do Supremo Governo*. Lisboa: Imprensa Régia, 1821 (new edition: CARDOSO, José Luís. (org.). *Manuel Fernandes Tomás*. Escritos Políticos e Discursos Parlamentares (1820-1822). Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2020. p. 117-136).

67 Some of them deserve to be highlighted: CARNEIRO, Manuel Borges. *Portugal Regenerado em 1820*. Lisboa: Tipografia Lacerdina, 1820. (New edition, ed. Zília Osório de Castro. Lisboa: Edições Húmus, 2017); DULAC, António M. *Vozes dos Leais Portugueses, ou Fiel Eco das suas Novas Aclamações à Religião, a El-Rei e às Cortes*. Lisboa: Imprensa Régia, 1820.; FRANCO, Francisco Soares. *Ensaio sobre os Melhoramentos de Portugal e do Brasil*. Lisboa: Imprensa Régia, 1820-1821.; NEVES, José Acúrsio. *Memória sobre os Meios de Melhorar a Indústria Portuguesa, Considerada nos seus Diferentes Ramos*. Lisboa: Oficina de Simão Tadeu Ferreira, 1820. (New edition, ed. Jorge Custódio, Lisboa: Quetzal, 1983).

on issues that required priority attention.⁶⁸ It is precisely through the debates held by the free press that we can understand the dilemmas of a revolution whose pace and speed did not depend on the mere will of the political agents who assumed governance responsibilities and that, after the *cortes* were installed, at the end of January 1821, also exercised legislative prerogatives. Let us look at one of the most paradigmatic examples of such debates.

One of the newspapers with the greatest impact in the early period of vintism was *Astro da Lusitânia*, edited by Joaquim Alves Sinval. In an article published on November 27th, 1820 (No. 13), its editor rebelled against the slowness of the initiatives of the government installed in Lisbon on October 1st, with a view to abolishing the property and taxation structures of the former manorial regime that the liberal revolution had promised to overthrow. The article called for faster and more radical solutions, while classifying the period of government that had already elapsed as “wasted time.” The main target of this journalistic piece was Manuel Fernandes Tomás, government responsible for the Ministry of the Kingdom and Finance. The ruler’s response was fast, cloaked in the anonymity of a supposed “friend from Belém”, who maintained a heated controversy with *Astro da Lusitânia* through the publication of several pamphlets, in response and counter-response to the articles that Alves Sinval continued to publish on the subject.⁶⁹

The debate turned to different topics, related to the articulation between private interests and the common good and to the role of opinion journalism in the construction of a new political citizenship. However, the essence of the issue under discussion can be summarized in the question of knowing the depth and urgency of the reforms

68 From the beginning of the revolution, on August 24th, 1820, until the counter-revolutionary coup of Vilafrancada, on May 27, 1823, 112 newspapers were created in Portugal and its domains. On this subject, refer to: TENGARRINHA, José Manuel. *Nova História da Imprensa Portuguesa. Das Origens a 1865*. Lisboa: Temas e Debates, 2013, p. 317-390.; ALVES, José Augusto dos Santos. *Glória, Memória e Mito: o periodismo vintista (1820-1823)*. Lisboa: Media XXI, 2013.

69 On this controversy, refer to: CARDOSO, José Luís. Manuel Fernandes Tomás e o movimento constitucional vintista. In: CARDOSO, José Luís. Op. Cit., p. 42-46.

to be carried out. Fernandes Tomás took refuge in an attitude of great prudence in relation to the elimination of privileges and benefits from the former regime social orders. The postponement of reforms did not reveal negligence or fear of the rulers under his leadership, but rather the careful consideration of the opportunity to carry them out. His words summarize well this sense of moderation:

I would make them see that our principles are to improve, not to destroy. That moderation, and softness, the glorious tone of a fair and enlightened government, will always accompany the measures employed in the economic operations of the reforms, which are necessary. And that finally our conduct can serve as an example and model for the peoples of the universe, who want to regenerate; because in our revolution we have not yet separated moral ideas from liberal ideas, nor justice from politics.⁷⁰

Fernandes Tomás, therefore, insisted on the cautious tone of a gradualist strategy of reforms adjusted to a country that would not be prepared for sudden ruptures. In the variety of opinions that were expressed in the political spectrum, his voice contrasted with the voice of conservatives or realists who defended the previous status quo (*corcundas* [hunchbacks], nickname that would stick at the time) and the voice of more exalted or radical liberals who wanted to accelerate the process of abolishing the ancient regime traditional structures. Fernandes Tomás intentionally bet on the establishment of bridges and balances between stability defenders and change supporters.⁷¹

70 *Carta segunda do Compadre de Belém ao redator do Astro da Lusitânia, dada à luz pelo Compadre de Lisboa*. Lisboa: Oficina de António Rodrigues Galhardo, 1821 (nova edição In: CARDOSO, José Luís. Op. Cit., p. 159).

71 J. Sebastião Silva Dias was pioneer in analyzing the political affinity families formed during the vintism, and he established a differentiation between "moderates, gradualists and radicals". Refer to DIAS, José Sebastião Silva. O vintismo: realidades e estrangulamentos políticos. *Análise Social*. Ann Arbor, v. XVI, n. 61-62, p. 273-278, 1980). Refer also to: HONÓRIO, Cecília, *Manuel Fernandes Tomás, 1771-1822*. Lisboa: Assembleia da República e Texto Editores, 2009. p. 48-50.; and CASTRO, Zília Osório. O arco-íris liberal. *Revista de História das Ideias*. Lisboa, v. 37, p. 33-53, 2019.

Was it over-caution? Was this gradualist and conciliatory attitude that prevented the purposes of the liberal revolution from not being more readily accomplished? It is not important to speculate on what the vintism outcome could have been if the participating political agents had taken another position.⁷² However, it is relevant to say that the political care placed in defining the contours of the constitutional system – a matter that Fernandes Tomás always considered to be of priority attention – led to an inevitable subordination of political battlefronts, more directly related to the removal of the Old Regime's economic and social order legal foundations.

O Independente newspaper, where Fernandes Tomás was the editor in close collaboration with José Joaquim Ferreira de Moura, exposed the issue of the particular time of a revolution that struggles with a ballast acquired from the past, and which fades according to consensus of public opinion are formed and make other more profound changes unfeasible:

In order for a country's institution to be stable, it is necessary that they move in accordance with the ideas commonly received or by all, or at least by the country's sensible people. Revolutions cease as soon as they are established, and this necessary agreement is signed. Here there is a political axiom. There may be partial obstacles; there may be individual interests offended, men supplanted by other men, some cornered parties, and others in the field; but the system in general subsists: and why? Because it is at the level of opinions and common feelings. This is exactly what is happening in Portugal.⁷³

72 The interpretation of the political culture of vintism in this sense of moderation and gradualism, personified in Manuel Fernandes Tomás' legacy, does not have consensual acceptance in the historiography related to that period. To cite the oldest and clearest example, Oliveira Martins was liberal when classified the vintism as revolutionary and Jacobin radicalism (MARTINS, Joaquim Pedro Oliveira. *Portugal Contemporâneo*. Lisboa: Livraria Bertrand, 1881). For Fátima Bonifácio, who most consistently supports this position, vintismo represents the matrix of radicalism present throughout the Portuguese constitutional monarchy (BONIFÁCIO, Maria de Fátima. *A Monarquia Constitucional, 1807-1910*. Lisboa: Texto Editores, 2010. p. 13-31).

73 "Quem perde e quem ganha com a Constituição?", *O Independente*, supplement to No. 15, December 11th, 1821. In: TOMÁS, Op. Cit., p. 230-231.

In other words, the scope or objective of a revolution sinks in relation to what was initially established, as the political agents involved in it realize the difficulty of maintaining stable commitments that transcend a common denominator. Thus, a successful revolution in the sphere of reached political consensuses (the constitution) can also be an unfinished revolution in the field of structural reforms that it proposed to be carried out (abolition of manorial rights and privileges and alteration of the Old Regime's property structure).

Some foreigners who were familiar with the experiences of liberal revolutions in Southern Europe and visited Portugal in the first two years after the pronouncement of August 24th, 1820 had a clear perception of this impasse experienced by the Portuguese revolution. This was the case of Count Giuseppe Pecchio, a cosmopolitan traveler and ardent supporter of liberal ideas. The brief notes he left in his letters from Lisbon on the progress and diffusion of liberal ideas in Europe served as a critical counterpoint to the slowness he observed in conducting political changes in Portugal. He rebelled against the privileges that the clergy and nobility continued to boast, regretting that the most active Portuguese liberal politicians were concerned almost exclusively with the preparation of the future constitution, seeming to forget that there was an old building that needed to be torn down.⁷⁴

Comparing the revolutionary nature of the constitutional text (in matters defining a new regime based on the nation sovereignty and the subordination of the king's power to the legislative power) or the modernity of the law on freedom of the press, with the timidity of legislative measures aimed at shaking the Old Regime's economic and social order, there is no doubt that the vintist regeneration fell far short of the announced goals.

The Constituent *Cortes* legislated on relevant matters, such as the decrees for the extinction of open pasture (February 12, 1821) and

74 Refer to. PECCHIO, José. *Cartas de Lisboa, 1822*. Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1990 (introduction and notes by Manuela Lobo da Costa Simões).

public stud farms (March 12th, 1821); abolition of banal rights and personal and legal privileges (March 20th, 1821); transformation of crown assets into national assets (May 5th, 1821), and reform of charters and the corresponding extinction of a significant part of the taxes assigned to them (June 3rd, 1822). These were measures with important implications for the modernization of agriculture, in a perspective that accentuates the concern with the expansion of the market and the overcoming of legal and fiscal obstacles to the full functioning of economic activities. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that many of these measures had been demanded since the end of the eighteenth century and, therefore, the originality of the vintist congressmen had credits to recognize, especially in relation to D. Rodrigo de Sousa Coutinho's enlightened policy and the Royal Academy of Sciences of Lisbon reflections on economic issues.

Measures to restrict exclusive advantages of a monopolistic nature were also tested, of which the most salient case was the limitation to the privileges enjoyed by the *Companhia dos Vinhos do Alto Douro* (decree dated March 18th, 1821). But the measures closest to the ideals of economic liberalism almost always faced the nationalist and protectionist stance of the majority of congressmen in the Constituent *Cortes*.⁷⁵ Liberal principles of political economy appeared at times as a rhetorical adornment for proposals to modernize economic sectors, but they were almost always supplanted by pragmatic appeals to defend national interests in the face of foreign competition and the inevitable loss of the Brazilian colonial market.⁷⁶

75 On the subject, refer to CARDOSO, José Luís. A legislação económica do vintismo: economia política e política económica nas Cortes Constituintes. *Análise Social*. Lisboa, v. 26, n. 112/113, p. 471-488, 1991. The topic had pioneering analysis by CARVALHO, Joaquim. A obra legislativa das Cortes. In: PERES, Damião (dir.). *História de Portugal*. v. VII. Barcelos: Portucalense Editora, 1935. p. 97-117. Refer also to CALASANS, José. *Os vintistas e a regeneração económica de Portugal*. Salvador: S. A. Artes Gráficas, 1959.

76 It is not my purpose to address this last issue here, concerning the end of the United Kingdom of Portugal and Brazil, which the 1820 revolution allowed accelerating. The lines of research explored by Portuguese and Brazilian historiography are numerous and varied. For an overall approach and bibliographic clues about the process of Brazilian independence in the context

The tenuous attempts to mitigate the Old Regime's legacy were in vain. In May 1823, the course of the revolution was interrupted by the absolutist coup of *Vilafrancada*, which annulled the 1822 Constitution and all the measures approved by the Constituent (1821-1822) and Ordinary (1822-23) *Cortes*, the only exception being the decree for creation of the Bank of Lisbon. The regime, whatever it might be, would not survive without the support from an institution with dedicated state funding competence.

The unfinished revolution thus became a suspended or postponed revolution. The hope of the Constitutional Charter in 1826 to be granted was again lost two years later, with the acclaim of D. Miguel as absolute king. Closing the process of dismantling the Old Regime's property and taxation structures was reserved for the Government of the Regency of D. Pedro on the *Terceira* Island, in the Azores archipelago, through the short but incisive action of the Minister of Finance José Xavier Mouzinho da Silveira. The legislative measures enacted by Mouzinho da Silveira in 1832 made him famous, called "a superior man, [...], a genius" by Alexandre Herculano.

Mouzinho was a verb, an idea that became flesh: he was the personification of a great social fact, of a revolution that came out of his head and that, disturbing Portuguese society from top to bottom, killed our past and created our future.⁷⁷

Mouzinho da Silveira was rightly praised for the way he sought to establish the institutional and legal foundations for the construction

of vintist regeneration, refer to ALEXANDRE, Valentim. *Os Sentidos do Império. Questão Nacional e Questão Colonial na Crise do Antigo Regime*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1993. Part V (mainly p. 609-711).; NEVES, Lúcia Bastos Pereira das. *Corcundas e Constitucionais. A Cultura Política da Independência (1820-1822)*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Revan, 2003.; JANCÓS, István (org.). *Independência: História e Historiografia*. São Paulo: Hucitec, 2005.; ROCHA, António Penhalves. *A Recolonização do Brasil pelas Cortes. História de uma Invenção Historiográfica*. São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2008.; PIMENTA, João Paulo. The Independence of Brazil: a review of the recent historiographic production. *e-journal of Portuguese History*. Lisboa, v. 7, No. 1, 2009.

77 HERCULANO, Alexandre. Mousinho da Silveira ou la révolution portugaise (1856). In: HERCULANO, Alexandre. *Opúsculos*, Tomo II. Lisboa: Bertrand, 1873. p. 172.

of the modern liberal state, anchored in a relentless defense of private property, in firm opposition to manorial and ecclesiastical property. Mouzinho's decrees included extinction of tithes and their replacement by the *décima* [tribute] paid to the State; release of the crown assets and abolition of manorial rights and *morgadio* (primogeniture transmission) and consequent extinction of charters related to the crown assets; reassessment of the main sources of revenue through sale of national assets (applied to debt amortization and payment of indemnities), and direct taxation reform (reduced taxes and fixing the *décima* on rural and urban buildings and on industry); maintenance of the most profitable indirect taxes (customs fees and contracts with the State, namely the tobacco contract); territory administrative and judicial reform, and State's financial structures modernization (Public Treasury, Board of Public Credit and Customs).⁷⁸ Concluding the revolution that remained unfinished in the vintist period was mainly Mouzinho's work.

4. Conclusion

The mentors and promoters of the liberal revolution that began in Porto, on August 24th, 1820, followed a script and a political agenda that privileged, as a fundamental strategic objective, the will to give the country a constitution. This objective was achieved within two years, and the revolution can therefore be considered, at first glance, successful. However, the path taken until this outcome was made up of compromises and the search for consensuses, steps back and steps forward, implied slow and gradual solutions that allowed conciliation and convergence of the multiple social, economic and political interests involved. This path was intentionally traced, as the main political

78 The matter is recurrently addressed and treated here in a necessarily abbreviated form. For an overview of the reformist scope of Mouzinho's legislative work, refer to PEREIRA, Miriam Halpern. *Revolução, Finanças, Dependência Externa (de 1820 à Convenção de Gramido)*. Lisboa: Sá da Costa Editora, 1979., which includes transcription of the most relevant decrees. Refer also to MONTEIRO, Nuno G. Mouzinho da Silveira and the political culture of Portuguese liberalism, 1820-1832. *History of European Ideas*, v. 41, n. 2, p. 185-193, 2015.

agents involved in the regenerative movement knew that the sense of moderation was essential for the revolution script to be implemented and for, at the same time, the continuity elements, essential to its popular acceptance, to be respected, namely respect for the Catholic religion and the House of Braganza. However, it was this programmatic and pragmatic compromise that also dictated the inevitably unfinished character of the revolution, since the representatives of a social and political order that was intended to be abolished kept intact the expectations of being able to turn the ride in their favor. The revolution became a victim of the dilemma it created.

The doctrinal principles that shaped the contours of the 1822 Constitution and the modern constitutional rule of law – freedom of expression and thought; equality of all before the law; sovereignty based on the nation that is represented through elected deputies; division and balance between powers (with emphasis on the supremacy of the legislative power, subalternity of the king's executive power, and independence of the judiciary) – did not have a lasting validity, even though they were coated with timeless validity. The absolutist counter-revolution, victorious in May 1823, suddenly interrupted the process of emergence of the liberal State's modern institutions, which would only gain new momentum when the 1826 Constitutional Charter was granted, and with the revolutionary legislation of Mouzinho da Silveira on the eve of the civil war of 1832-1834.

Let us deliberately forget the difficulties and vicissitudes that this process experienced between May 1823 and May 1834. And let us fix our attention on a very sure fact. When D. João VI disembarked in Lisbon, on July 4th, 1821, he found the city and the kingdom very different. By swearing the Bases of the Constitution that stripped him of absolute power, he knew that he was taking a decisive step in the construction of a constitutional monarchy integrated in a global world also different from the one he had seen when settling in Rio de Janeiro in 1808. These changes began to be designed in Porto on August 24th, 1820 and were partially implemented during the first three years

of the Portuguese liberal revolution, according to the script that this text sought to document.⁷⁹

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