

Was 1848 different in the Iberian Peninsula?

¿Fue 1848 distinto en la Península Ibérica?

Abstract: The revolutions of 1848 were a seminal moment in European history. They have long been regarded as a failure, but they were in fact a key turning point. They changed European politics, society and even the international order. In the case of the Iberian Peninsula, most historians have seen little link between events there and the revolutionary wave throughout the continent. In this article, I argue that striking parallelisms and connections existed. In Portugal, the Maria da Fonte revolution and the Patuleia civil war that followed it had key similarities with the European revolts. The same can be said about the 1848 failed revolts in Madrid and the guerrilla civil war that took place in Northern Spain that year. Though normally ignored by 1848 historians, Spain and Portugal were not isolated from the rest of Europe. They took part in the revolutions in their own way.

Key words: revolutions of 1848, transnational history, republicanism, liberalism, absolutism.

Resumen: Las revoluciones de 1848 fueron un momento clave en la historia de Europa. Durante mucho tiempo, han sido consideradas un fracaso, pero en realidad fueron un importante punto de inflexión. Cambiaron la política de Europa, la sociedad e incluso el orden internacional. En el caso de la Península Ibérica, los historiadores han visto poca conexión entre los acontecimientos allí y la ola revolucionaria continental. En este artículo, argumentaré que existió un gran paralelismo. En Portugal, la revolución de María da Fonte y la consiguiente guerra civil de Patuleia tuvieron grandes similitudes con las revueltas europeas. Lo mismo se puede decir de las fallidas rebeliones en Madrid en 1848 y de la guerra de guerrillas que tuvo lugar en el Norte de España. Aunque han sido frecuentemente ignorados por los historiadores, España y Portugal no estaban aisladas del resto de Europa. Tomaron parte en las revoluciones en su propia manera.

Palabras clave: revoluciones de 1848, historia transnacional, republicanismo, liberalismo, absolutismo.

The revolutions of 1848 are a seminal moment in European history. Long regarded as a failure, historians have recently underlined their importance in the building of modern Europe¹. There has been a lot of debate about these events. Something certain is that they were a truly transnational, Pan-European event, in which revolutionaries from every country were influenced by ideas and events that came from every corner of the continent. This is the case, for example, of the Romanian revolutions, heavily influenced by the Parisian 1848². Though this transnationality has long been an object of study, the Iberian Peninsula has largely remained absent from historians' analyses. It is quite revealing that Jonathan Sperber does not even mention this geographic area in his book on the revolutions³. In this essay, I will answer the question of whether 1848 was different on the periphery of Europe, specifically on the Iberian Peninsula.

Spain and Portugal were part the periphery of Europe at that time. This is not only because of their geographic position (located at the westernmost part of the continent and separated from the rest of it by the Pyrenees) but also due to their special recent history and economic situation. They had both been major powers in Europe and the Atlantic for centuries. However, by the mid-nineteenth

¹ Dowe, Dowe *et al.* (eds.), *Europe in 1848: Revolution and Reform*, Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2001, pp. 1-2.

² Jørgensen, Claus Møller, "Transurban interconnectivities: an essay on the interpretation of the revolutions of 1848", in *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 19, 2012, p. 205.

³ Sperber, Jonathan, *The European Revolutions 1848-1851*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

century both countries had lost their former status and most of their colonies. They had suffered French occupation and a power vacuum during the Peninsular War. Then, they fought several civil wars which had further slowed down their development⁴. By the 1840s, they were both consolidating fragile liberal regimes⁵. As a result of this instability, as D. R. Headrick explains, they were extremely underdeveloped in comparison to their northern neighbours, more so then than at any other moment in the century. Railways, one of the main technological advances of the 19th century that made economies grow more interconnected, did not exist in Spain until 1848 and in Portugal until 1856. Because of this, trade was very inefficient both internally and externally⁶. To understand the differences and similarities between revolutions in the Peninsula and in the rest of Europe it is important to underline the different situation of these countries, which were certainly part of a less developed periphery.

In any case, it is essential to underline that, even if there were common trends in 1848, each revolution that year had very specific characteristics in each country. While the German and Italian revolutions centred upon the question of building a nation-state from the multiple states that these two countries were divided into, the French one was heavily influenced by republicanism and even socialism. Of course, certain objectives were present in all of them: creating a more liberal and representative state, taking power away from the monarchs, writing a constitution that would enshrine the fundamental laws of the new state...⁷ In this essay, I will compare events in Spain

⁴ Birmingham, David and Martínez García, María Ángeles (trans.), *Historia de Portugal*, Madrid, Ediciones Akal, 2005; Raymond Carr, *Spain 1808-1975*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1982.

⁵ Birmingham, David and Martínez García, María Ángeles (trans.), *Historia de Portugal*, pp. 162-168; Santirso, Manuel, *España en la Europa liberal 1830-1870*, Barcelona, Ariel, 2012, pp. 17-37.

⁶ Headrick, David, "Spain and the Revolutions of 1848" in *European Studies Review*, 6 (1976), p. 207. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/026569147600600202>

⁷ Dowe, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-11.

and Portugal to the ones in other countries in Europe. I will take the position that, while the revolutions south of the Pyrenees certainly had specific local characteristics, they also had many similarities. Surely, they received influences from the rest of Europe, especially from France and Italy.

To better organize this essay, I have divided it into several sections. First, I will briefly describe the Iberian revolutions that could be considered parallel to 1848. After that, I will analyse several of their characteristics and their resemblances and differences with the situation in other countries.

The events related to 1848 in the Peninsula have frequently been downplayed by historians⁸. Two main urban revolts took place that year in Spain: in March and in May. They were both in Madrid, though they were later replicated in other cities⁹. However, they were easily put down by the military. Cabeza Sánchez-Albornoz underlines the importance of Gen Narváez's preparation (he was the PM at the time)¹⁰. Additionally, from 1846 to 1849, Carlist absolutist militias launched a guerrilla war in Catalonia, near the Pyrenees¹¹. Interestingly, they were joined by republicans after the failure of the spring urban uprisings¹². García de Paso has defended in recent articles the link between all these events and the wider revolutionary wave¹³. In Portugal, the chronology does not fit with the main events in the continent. The revolt of Maria da Fonte against the conservative

⁸ García de Paso García, Ignacio, "El 1848 español, ¿Una excepción europea?" in *Ayer, Revista de Historia contemporánea*, 206 (2017), p. 188.

⁹ Cabeza Sánchez-Albornoz, Sonsoles, *Los sucesos de 1848 en España*, Madrid, Fundación Universitaria Española, 1981, pp. 77-106.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 138-140.

¹¹ Canal, Jordi, *El carlismo: dos siglos de contrarrevolución en España*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 2000, pp. 128-135.

¹² Cabeza Sánchez-Albornoz, *Historia... op. cit.*, pp. 107-109.

¹³ García de Paso, "El 1848 español..." *op. cit.*, p. 197.

liberal government of Costa Cabral, which could be considered a precedent of 1848, took place in 1846. At the beginning, it was a rural conflict in the North over land fencing, land ownership and traditional burial regulations. Nevertheless, it was soon used by the *setembristas* (leftist liberals) in Porto and led to a brief civil war that would come to an end in 1847¹⁴. Historians have generally not made a connection between this rebellion and the European-wide ones the year after though some have even suggested Portugal was in fact the first step of 1848¹⁵.

To understand the revolutions, it is necessary to examine the status quo of Europe before they happened. Every country's recent history had specific characteristics that drove the revolutions in different directions. Though they all had suffered the Napoleonic wars and had received influences from the French revolution, this had distinct consequences in each state. Essentially, countries could be divided into two groups with regard to their political systems. On one hand, France, Belgium and Bavaria were some of the states which had already enacted a moderate liberal constitution. On the other hand, Austria-Hungary, Prussia, Russia, Tuscany or Naples remained authoritarian states, with no liberal political system¹⁶. By 1848, the Iberian states certainly belonged to the first group, with constitutions in force that provided for a (very limited) representative governance¹⁷. However, as Headrick brilliantly points out, while the rest of Europe had been largely in peace since 1830 and in some cases even before, in Spain (and in Portugal¹⁸),

¹⁴ Bonifácio, Maria Fátima, *História da Guerra Civil da Patuleia 1846-47*, Lisbon, Editorial Estampa, 1993; Brissos, José, *A insurreição miguelista nas resistências a Costa Cabral (1842-1847)*, Lisbon, Edições Colibri, 1997.

¹⁵ Santirso, *España en la... op. cit.*, p. 124.

¹⁶ Sperber, *The revolutions... op. cit.*, pp. 55-58.

¹⁷ Bonifácio, *Historia da Guerra... op. cit.*, pp. 13-23; Marcuello Benedicto, Juan Ignacio, "La Corona y la desnaturalización del parlamentarismo isabelino" in Burdiel, Isabel (ed.), *La política en el reinado de Isabel II*, Madrid, Marcial Pons, 1998, pp. 15-37.

¹⁸ Birmingham, *Historia... op. cit.*, pp. 149-159.

civil wars between liberals and absolutists had followed Napoleon's defeat. In addition, internal struggles between left and right liberals over the new liberal state led to several rebellions afterwards¹⁹. As shown here, though there were similarities between the political situation of Spain and Portugal and other states in the years preceding the revolution, there were also remarkable specificities.

However, more generally, past liberal experiments had an impact in many of the countries that revolted in that year. With all their differences, 1848 everywhere was deeply linked with the first decades of the century, including memories of Napoleon and the revolutions of 1820 and 1830. In France, nostalgia for 1789, and 1830 was present in the minds of the revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries within living memory. In the banquets that preceded the February rebellion in Paris, speakers would offer toasts in memory of the original French Revolution²⁰. In Italy, radicals had already promoted uprisings in 1820 and many of the fighters then also participated in the revolts of 1848²¹. Memories of the liberal constitution of 1812 also played a role in the Sicilian revolution. In Spain, this was certainly the case in 1848. The Cádiz Cortes and their constitution were the main reference point in the past for democrats (and even republicans) throughout the century²². Even the Carlists, in a move to gather progressive support, promised to re-enact the Cádiz Constitution²³. In Portugal, as mentioned before, the revolutions came about earlier but they were also fuelled by unresolved conflicts from previous decades. The Maria da Fonte revolt soon

¹⁹ Headrick, "Spain and..." *op. cit.*, pp. 215-216.

²⁰ Sperber, *The revolutions...* *op. cit.*, p. 108.

²¹ *Ibidem.*, p. 98.

²²A. Eiras Roel explains how even in 1841, republicans in Barcelona used the anniversary of the Cádiz Constitution to organize pro-democratic demonstrations. Eiras Roel, Antonio, *El Partido Demócrata Español (1849-1868)*, Madrid, Ediciones Rialp, 1961, pp. 96-98.

²³ Headrick, "Spain and the..." *op. cit.*, pp. 213-214.

became an outright civil war between the *setembristas* (in cooperation with the *Miguelistas*) and the *cartistas*. The first ones favoured the 1820 Constitution, a more representative and radical one than the 1826 Carta, supported by the *cartistas*. This Carta was granted by Dom Pedro IV in an attempt to restrain liberalism²⁴. In this aspect, Spanish and Portuguese revolutionaries placed as much high hopes in returning to the failed radical liberal experiments of previous decades as many of their counterparts in France or Italy did.

Another thing that unites the Iberian revolutions with the European ones is that they were the moment in which many ideologies and political groups defined and organized themselves more clearly. These groups would be part of the opposition in the years to come until they finally reached governments. Most of the revolutionaries in Madrid, such as Gándara, and Orense were members of the leftist faction of the Progressive Party²⁵. Even before 1848 some of them had been influenced by ideologies such as Fourierism²⁶ and Saint-Simonianism²⁷. But it is the effects of 1848 in Spain and elsewhere, that led them to create the Democratic Party as a split from the progressives²⁸. This party would later lead the revolution that expelled Queen Isabella in 1868. They favoured universal male suffrage and some of its members were close to socialism²⁹. In the years following the revolution, democratic newspapers flourished in Madrid and socialists such as Sixto Cámara became influential through them³⁰. The creation of political groups and the expansion of

²⁴ Bonifácio, *Historia da Guerra op. cit.*, pp. 13-23.

²⁵ Eiras Roel, *El Partido... op. cit.*, pp. 148-149.

²⁶ Maluquer de Motes, Jordi, *El socialismo en España 1833-1868*, Barcelona, Editorial Crítica, 1977, pp. 167-174

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 98-107.

²⁸ Eiras Roel, *El Partido...op. cit.*, pp. 157-170.

²⁹ García de Paso, “El 1848 español...” *op. cit.*, pp. 198-199.

³⁰ Eiras Roel, *El Partido... op. cit.*, p. 172.

opposition ideologies was something frequent across the continent that year. In France, the 1848 revolution also served as “apprenticeship for the republic”³¹. Though the republic was finally transformed into an empire by Napoleon III, the organization of political life in all of France would mark the country for decades to come³². Something similar happened in Rome with Mazzini and the nationalists. The Roman Republic was finally crushed but they laid the foundations for their future success³³. In Portugal, the *setembristas* managed to challenge the Queen’s power while promising to stay loyal to the monarchy. However, some of the *radicais* in Porto, such as José Passos, began to spread their republican ideas during the turbulent years³⁴. The *setembristas* would finally found the *Partido Histórico*, which would be one of the two main parties in Portugal during the *Restauração*³⁵. Their radical branch, the republicans, was influenced by the European 1848 and founded a Republican Triumvirate in Coimbra in May 1848³⁶. Again, the establishment of opposition parties and movements that would later have a great influence over their countries is a characteristic of the revolutions that Portugal’s revolts also share.

Apart from the political groups and ideologies that were present in 1848, it is important to analyse the economic and social aspects that led to them. In the case of Spain, as mentioned before, the economy was underdeveloped. The crisis of 1846-47, which hit other countries hard, also affected Spain. But, thanks to the underdevelopment of major industries outside Catalonia, few people were

³¹ Sperber, *The revolutions... op. cit.*, p. 256.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 256.

³³ *Ibidem*, pp. 251-255.

³⁴ Bonifácio, *Historia da Guerra op. cit.*, pp. 48-51.

³⁵ Birmingham, *Historia de... op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

³⁶ García de Paso, “El 1848 español...” *op. cit.*, p. 200.

affected by the stock market crash³⁷. In any case, 1847 did see hunger affect the population due to a poor harvest the preceding year. Government preventive actions, together with the better harvest of 1847, managed to improve the situation of the poor. This probably helped Spain avoid a major revolution³⁸. However, the peasant uprisings in Catalonia were linked to this food crisis, which affected mountainous areas much more than it did Madrid. In addition to the crisis, the concentration of land ownership in a few hands as a result of state confiscation and sale of church property to the bourgeoisie and aristocracy was one of the reasons for the formation of guerrillas³⁹. In Northern Portugal, a severe crisis related to the potato blight managed to agitate the rural population⁴⁰. The Cabral government decision to register land ownership and encourage property fencing provoked fears within the peasant community that they would lose rights over their lands (especially the communal ones)⁴¹. Sperber describes a similar situation in other countries regarding conflicts over ownership of the woods in Italy and France⁴². Summarizing, the creation of the new liberal state and its new land ownership distribution created opposition from the rural population. Continuing with this topic, the problems that existed in the countryside were not the same as the ones in the cities. Because of this, the revolts were different in each space. The revolts in Madrid were mainly undertaken by progressive military men, together with members of secret societies close to the radical liberals. They were part of the urban lower-middle class, the usual supporters

³⁷ Headrick, "Spain and the Revolutions..." *op. cit.*, pp. 207-209.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 208-212.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 213-215.

⁴⁰ Birmingham, *Historia de...* *op. cit.*, p. 168.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 168-170.

⁴² Sperber, *The revolutions...* *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.

of the Progressive Party, who were excluded from electoral participation⁴³. The rebellion in Porto was organized by the same kind of people⁴⁴. Therefore, interests in the country and in the city diverged even if the rebels had a common enemy. Sperber describes a similar phenomenon in Italy⁴⁵. As shown here, the Iberian revolutions did have major similarities with 1848 throughout Europe.

Apart from their local causes and repercussions, it is important to analyse the international dimension of the Iberian revolutions. As stated at the beginning of this essay, the transnationality of 1848 everywhere is evident. The same can be said about events in the Iberian Peninsula. In the first half of the century, Spain and Portugal had been regarded as pawns in the fights between France and Britain. They both tried to exert their influence over them. In Spain, by the 1840s Louis Philippe was favourable to the moderates, who were closer to his conservative liberal monarchy. The British, on their part, hoped for a progressive government, which would be closer to their free-market ideas. This would allow them to flood the Spanish market with their manufactured goods⁴⁶. Because of this, the British, led by long time Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, became entangled in the revolts in Spain. Gen Narváez's government did not trust Lord Bulwer's (the British ambassador) intentions from the beginning. In March, he gave refuge to some of the rebels in the embassy. After that, in April, he sent a letter to Queen Isabella II from Lord Palmerston, recommending her to dismiss Narváez and appoint a progressive government. In May, the government finally expelled him. He was a good friend of José Portal, one of the leaders of the

⁴³ Headrick, "Spain and the Revolutions... *op. cit.*, p. 201.

⁴⁴ Birmingham, *Historia de... op. cit.*, pp. 172-174.

⁴⁵ Sperber, *The revolutions of... op. cit.*, pp. 117-122.

⁴⁶ Cabeza Sánchez-Albornoz, *Los sucesos de... op. cit.*, pp. 15-17.

insurrection in Seville and moderates suspected he was behind all of it. Regardless of whether he was actually involved in the revolts, it is evident he supported them⁴⁷. Again, Palmerston's support for revolutionaries was not a unique feature of the revolution in Spain. His "liberal interventionist" policies were also applied in Italy, where he was a strong advocate of Italian unity against Austria⁴⁸.

For its part, France also played a key role in events in Spain. Their initial revolution was seen throughout Europe as another 1789 and governments feared another European war would follow. People on both sides of the barricades saw this parallelism. In part because of their lack of success, Spanish republicans hoped for support from their French counterparts. Many of them were exiled in Paris and participated in the revolution there. From the southern regions, they issued manifestos and organized militias⁴⁹. Enrique de Borbón's stay in Toulouse is a good example of this⁵⁰. Carlists used France as their base too, launching a new guerrilla war organized by the new pretender Carlos (VI for his supporters), the Count of Montemolín⁵¹. Though they both took advantage of their political allies north of the border to finance their undertakings, France clearly stated from the beginning of the revolution that it did not intend to bring about a continental war in the "Manifiesto to the Powers". This document, signed by Foreign Minister Lamartine, constituted a major setback for revolutionaries across the continent and more so where they were weaker⁵². The situation and decisions in Paris determined the outcome of the revolutions in many countries. Romanian and

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 101-107.

⁴⁸ Billy, George, *Palmerston's Foreign Policy: 1848*, New York, Peter Lang, 1993, pp. 86-109.

⁴⁹ García de Paso, "El 1848 español..." *op. cit.*, p. 195-196.

⁵⁰ Cabeza Sánchez-Albornoz, *Los sucesos de...* *op. cit.*, p. 108.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 108.

⁵² Headrick, "Spain and the Revolutions..." *op. cit.*, p. 204.

Italian nationalists had also hoped for a French intervention in their favour but finally did not get it. In this case, Spain was no exception. With regards to the use of France as an exile base for revolutionary activity at home, again, it was not exceptional to Spain. The Belgian radicals organized a Legion in Paris to try to overthrow their monarchy⁵³.

As proven here, an overlap existed between national and international politics in the mid-century revolutions. But this was true for the counter-revolutionaries too. Narváez was quick to send troops to recover the Holy See for the Pope in 1849. He did so not only to secure Spanish standing in Europe and improve the strained relations with Rome but also to embarrass the Carlists and rob them of their support. The defence of the Catholic religion was one of their most important banners, but they had been in cooperation with republicans in the Pyrenees. In the meantime, Gen Narváez's troops were fighting for the Pope in Italy. This was exactly the same strategy Louis Napoleon used: re-establishing papal sovereignty in Rome to secure Catholic support at home. Yet again, the Spanish revolutions (and their aftermath) did follow some clear patterns that existed at a continental level⁵⁴.

Nonetheless, Portugal followed a somewhat different pattern in the international dimensions of its revolt, in part because of the timing of its "1848". As mentioned above, their rebellion came to an end in 1847, when the Quadruple Alliance⁵⁵ forces, requested by Gen Saldanha, organized a joint intervention in Portugal. They finally defeated the *Miguelistas* and the *setembristas*. Costa Cabral and his cohort of conservative liberals were able to regain power⁵⁶. In any case, Portugal was not

⁵³ García de Paso, "El 1848 español..." *op. cit.*, p. 195-196.

⁵⁴ Headrick, "Spain and the Revolutions..." *op. cit.*, p. 202.

⁵⁵ The 1834 Quadruple Alliance had been formed by France, Spain, Portugal and the UK to combat the Iberian absolutist pretenders, Don Carlos and Dom Miguel.

⁵⁶ Bonifácio, *Historia da Guerra...* *op. cit.*, pp. 122-133.

the only place where revolution ended with an intervention. Russia, for example, intervened in Hungary by dismantling the revolution in a move requested by the Habsburg authorities, who finally recognized they were unable to restore order by themselves⁵⁷. However, considering that the Portuguese intervention was a multilateral one, it is probably more similar to the Roman case. In any case, circumstances were totally different in this Atlantic country. By 1846-47, France was at peace and could participate more actively in European events.

For now, it seems like the revolutions in Spain did have a lot in common with their European counterparts. But there is a factor that does seem to be very specific to the Peninsula: the fact that both ends of the political spectrum entered a contradictory alliance against conservative liberals. This is the case in the Maria da Fonte rebellion of Portugal in 1846 and the Patuleia Civil War that followed it. As mentioned before, government's attempts to register and fence the land were taken in the rural communities of Northern Portugal as a first step to confiscation. They especially dreaded a possible confiscation of communal lands. In addition, these traditional communities rejected the new government policy of banning burials in churches, which were regarded as unsanitary. The locals, probably encouraged by the local clergy, soon turned to Dom Miguel, the absolutist pretender who had been expelled from Portugal just a decade earlier. However, this was only a part of the revolutionary events: soon after these incidents, *setembristas* in the army in Porto rebelled against Costa's government, demanding participation in the government. At this point *Miguelistas* and leftist liberals were cooperating against a common enemy. The government collapsed because of this and Queen Maria II appointed a *setembrista* Prime Minister, the Duke of Palmela. Cooperation continued when the revolution evolved into the Patuleia Civil War⁵⁸.

⁵⁷ Sperber, *The Revolutions of...op. cit.*, pp. 228.

⁵⁸ Bonifácio, *Historia da Guerra... op. cit.*, pp. 39-47.

Something similar can be said about Spain. As I mentioned above, republican units and Carlist absolutists joined forces in the brief guerrilla war against the government in Catalonia. To win supporters, Carlos even leaned towards the left promising to re-establish the radical Constitution of Cádiz. This specifically Iberian contradictory anti-government coalition was not present in any other country. French legitimists certainly did not participate in the barricades in Paris and in fact tried to rule back against the Republic once it was established. Counter-revolutionaries in Prussia, Tuscany and Austria (and other countries) finally made concessions to curb revolutions but did not rally with the radical wing of the liberal party. The reason this odd alliance takes place in the Peninsula is probably due to the recent history of the two Iberian countries. The royal families were divided by the liberal transformations and the resulting civil wars had not completely solved the issue. Because of this, peasants looked for support in the symbols and people that they already knew⁵⁹.

A final element that I will analyse in this essay is the outcome and consequences of 1848 in the years immediately after them. After their brief success throughout the continent, there was a reactionary move. This is the case of France, which saw the election of Louis Napoleon as President. He proved not to be the revolutionary the barricades had expected. He soon abolished universal male suffrage, dissolved parliament, allowed pro-Catholic education laws to be passed and turned the country into an empire⁶⁰. In Austria, the Emperor also abolished the 1849 Constitution in this period. Spain does follow this authoritarian turn, but it does so even before its revolutions occur. After hearing about the February events in Paris, Narváez dissolved the Cortes and took extraordinary powers, acting as a dictator for a year. This certainly proved to be a

⁵⁹ García de Paso, "El 1848 español..." *op. cit.*, p. 196-197.

⁶⁰ Dowe, *Europe in...op. cit.*, pp. 101-118.

successful decision, since he managed to suppress the revolts easily. Reacting to the revolutions, Bravo Murillo, Gen Narváez's successor in the premiership, tried to continue this authoritarian move by proposing a constitutional reform that would have diminished the power of the Cortes, making them more irrelevant than they already were. The timing clearly followed Napoleon's coup and, though it encountered a lot of resistance and finally did not pass, parallel situations can be found in the rest of Europe⁶¹. It is the same in Portugal in 1847, with Saldanha's re-enactment of the conservative 1826 Carta, under pressure from Cabral and his supporters⁶².

In any case, in the Peninsula, the initial authoritarian tendencies were followed by an increased participation of the two liberal factions in government. In Spain the progressives came to power in 1854, thanks to a pronunciamiento and a revolution. With the cooperation of the centrist branch of the moderates, they ruled Spain for two years. This period has been regarded by some as a Spanish protracted 1848 since it is a short and unstable period of popular demonstrations, the flourishing of democratism, republicanism, socialism and the labour movement⁶³. The first modern strike took place precisely in 1855. Though it did not last, it was useful as the basis for the Unión Liberal, a broad coalition of liberals from both parties which would govern at the end of the decade. Alternation in power becomes more frequent after this. Something similar takes place in Portugal in 1851, when Marshall Saldanha established the *Regeneração*, a centrist regime based on the rotation of power between the two main factions. Both countries, by creating a centrist coalition, manage to isolate the extremes (Carlists/*Miguelistas* and radicals) who had been very active in the

⁶¹ Cánovas Sánchez, Francisco, *El Partido Moderado*, Madrid, Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1982, pp. 205-210.

⁶² Bonifácio, *Historia da Guerra... op. cit.*, pp. 157-164.

⁶³ Headrick gives the example of Vicens Vives, who characterized these years as the "Spanish appendix of 1848". Headrick, "Spain and the Revolutions... *op. cit.*", p. 216.

“Iberian 1848”. This spirit of compromise between different factions to create a wider centre was also present in Prussia, Piedmont and France, among other countries⁶⁴.

As proven throughout this essay, the 1848 revolutions in the Iberian Peninsula had some remarkable similarities with the ones in the rest of Europe, though with some specificities. The reference to past liberal experiences was present everywhere. Another important aspect of the revolutions, their international dimensions, followed the same lines as in other countries, especially in Spain. The main specificities were a result of the underdevelopment of the Iberian Peninsula and of the recent civil wars. Its social structure still lacked a big number of industrial workers in the cities, who could have been the real supporters of the revolutions. In the countryside, the local population tried to protest over their problems by turning to the absolutist pretenders, whose political platforms had not disappeared. Strikingly, both ends of the political spectrum joined to fight against the conservative liberals in government. This is probably the most unique aspect of 1848 in the Peninsula: the fact that opposition absolutists played a key role in the revolutions and that they forged an informal alliance with the radical left of the liberals.

⁶⁴ Clark, Christopher, “After 1848: The European Revolution in Government”, *Transactions of the RHS* 22 (2012), pp.175-178. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0080440112000114>