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“Moral Revenge of the Crowd” in the 1854 Revolution of Madrid*

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*Have the slaves broken their chains?
Spain and Liberty sounds everywhere!
Is it a dream or is it true?
Why does the vile cannon of the miserable slave
rumble with the loyal cry of the brave? [...]
“and the hallowed fruit of the Fatherland and Liberty
was thrown at the despot’s forehead covering him with terror”.
Look, look, in turn the generous people try out the fight,
will it be conquered?
It is not enslaved, nor treacherous, nor ambitious
and it feels hurt with endless insults:
the noble people dashing inspired by the Fatherland and Liberty,
rumbling inflamed with justified anger,
a tremendous bolt of lightening and by only rebelling,
rising to conquer.*

The 1854 Revolution Hymn.
Manuel FERNÁNDEZ GONZÁLEZ

Historiographical and Historical Context

The revolution of July 1854 in Spain is a relatively little studied subject, especially if we compare it with other revolutionary periods such as the Napoleonic episode of 1808, the Liberal Triennium, or the *Gloriosa* of

*This research may be found in the projects: Grupos profesionales (HUM 2007-62675/HIST. Director: Francisco Villacorta); and Elites Contemporáneas (BABECYL/GR110. Director: Pedro Carasa).

1868.¹ This may be due to two factors. In the first place, it was generally considered to be a great disappointment, i.e. as the disaster of the liberal revolution that did not prosper. Some contemporaries branded it a failure declaring that it was instrumentalised by the parties in power,² asserting that they had deceived the people with their promises of revolution.³ In second place it has equally been dismissed by subsequent studies,⁴ considering it as that social revolution that never materialised for the bourgeoisie.⁵ It is probable that these negative readings were determined by the fall of the Progressive Biennium that was born after that revolution, or because it was eclipsed by the so-called *Gloriosa* revolution of 1868 and also by the importance of the Spanish First Republic in 1873.

There was however a small number of historians who studied the 1854 Revolution. They did consider it not only to be relevant but even to be a key period of Spanish liberalism.⁶ In general they tended to seek in it either aspects in accordance with the Spanish historiography of the period, or themes unconnected to cultural history: the political process, the leaders, and political formations⁷; the role of the rural world in politics;⁸ the origins of the workers'

¹ It is perhaps this lack of Spanish attention to the subject that has meant that the British specialists in this archaic forms of protest have paid virtually no attention to the 1854 Revolution. Hobsbawm only mentions the period when he speaks about the social movements owing to famine in Andalusia and the abolishment of feudal rights: Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels. Studies in archaic forms of social movement in the 19th and 20th centuries* (Manchester: University Press, 1959), 79-80. Tilly alludes to the 1854 revolution as a part of a period for the advance of social liberal institutions with military seizures of power, after which insurrections abounded. Charles Tilly, *European Revolutions, 1492-1992* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), 86-87.

² Francisco Pi y Margall and Antoni Jutglar [critical editor of the first publication, 1856], *La reacción y la revolución: estudios políticos y sociales* (Madrid: Minuesa, 1982), 27-33.

³ Pedro Pascual Sama, *Disertación sobre las ventajas y beneficios que ha obtenido el pueblo español de la gloriosa revolución de julio de 1854* (Badajoz: D. G. Orduña, 1856).

⁴ Charles Esdaile and Javier Tusell, *Época Contemporánea* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2007), 111-112.

⁵ Raymond Carr, *España, 1808-1975* (Barcelona: Ariel, 2008), 244-250. That happened in the context of the studies that were searching for the revolutionary models of France or England, as Manfred Kossok explains: "Historia comparativa de las revoluciones de la época moderna. Problemas metodológicos y empíricos de la investigación", in: Manfred Kossok; Albert Soboul; Gerard Brendler; Jürgen Kübler et al., *Las revoluciones burguesas* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1983), 15, 9-98.

⁶ I. e.: J. Ramón Urquijo, "La revolución de 1854 en Zamora". *Hispania*, LII, 177 (1991), 245-286. V. G. Kiernan, *La revolución de 1854 en España* (Madrid: Consulta e Historia, 1970).

⁷ Marie-Claude Lecuyer, "Formación de Juntas en la Revolución de 1854", *Estudios de Historia Social* 22-23 (1982). José A. Ruiz, "La Revolución de 1854 en Lorca", *Anales de Historia Contemporánea. Cátedra de Historia Contemporánea* 6 (1982). Rafael Zurita, *Revolución y burguesía: Alicante (1854-1856)* (Valencia: Generalitat, 1990).

⁸ Juan A. Inarejos, *La Revolución de 1854 en la España rural. El bienio progresista en Ciudad Real (1854-1856)* (Ciudad Real: Instituto de Estudios Manchegos, 2011).

movement, the process of the historical configuration of a social class,⁹ the origin of working-class awareness,¹⁰ the social question in the industrialising process,¹¹ even in a wider sense, and the representation of the working-class world in Spanish historiography.¹² Because of their emphasis on these objectives, the mechanisms of popular protest in this revolution were not studied. In European historiography however (especially that of Britain), a number of new interpretations had been made of the popular protest, with a close analysis of its actual role without *a priori* configurations.¹³

In my opinion this neglect of the popular protest mechanisms of the 1854 revolution may be due to two reasons. Firstly, it is a result of the following of the recently mentioned historiographical tendencies prevailing in Spain from 1950 to 1980, which were conditioned both by the censorship of Franco's dictatorship and by the fight against it by liberal and Marxist currents. Secondly, it is because as early as the 19th century attempts had been made to *silence* such popular disturbances. Initially there was little talk of these riots because they made the bourgeoisie and more conservative groups uneasy and fearful of a revolution similar to that of 1848 in Europe,¹⁴ as was

⁹ Manuel Tuñón Lara, *El movimiento obrero en la Historia de España* (Barcelona: Laia, 1977). Clara E. Lida, *Anarquismo y revolución en la España del XIX* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1972). Benet Martí, *Barcelona a mitjan segle XIX. El moviment obrer durant el Bienni progressista (1854-1856)* (Valencia: Curial, 1978).

¹⁰ Leopoldo Porras Granero, *El pueblo en la novela española del siglo XIX* (Gran Canaria: La Laguna Universidad, 2005), 75-95. He situates the 1854 revolution in the previous moment to the working class consciousness.

¹¹ Jaime Carrera Pujal, *Historia Política de Cataluña en el Siglo XIX. T.IV. La segunda Guerra Carlista y las Revoluciones de 1848 y 1854* (Barcelona: Bosch, 1957), 233-250.

¹² I refer to the Spanish controversy created by Julián Casanova, *La Historia Social y los historiadores. ¿Cenicienta o princesa?* (Barcelona: Crítica, 1991); followed by: Carlos Forcadell "Sobre desiertos y secanos: los movimientos sociales en la historiografía española" *Historia Contemporánea* 7 (1992), 101-106. See also: Pere Gabriel, "A vueltas y revueltas con la Historia Social obrera en España" *Historia Social* 22 (1995), 43-53. About that situation and the classic and modern historiography, see the article of: Carlos Gil Andrés, "Protesta popular y movimientos sociales en la España de la restauración: los frutos de la ruptura" *Historia Social* 23 (1995), 121-135.

¹³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels*, op.cit. Eric Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1969). Edward P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968); specially "The moral economy of the English crowd in the 18th century" *Past & Present*, 50 (1971): 76-136. Also: George Rudé, *The Crowd in History* (USA: Interlink Pub Group, 1981), and the Spanish version revisited: *La multitud en la Historia: los disturbios populares en Francia e Inglaterra: 1730-1848* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2009).

¹⁴ As Nicomedes Pastor-Díaz was afraid of, "Los problemas del socialismo. Lecciones pronunciadas en el Ateneo de Madrid en el curso 1848-1849", *Obras de don Nicomedes Pastor Díaz, de la Real Academia Española* (Madrid: Manuel Tello, 1868), T. IV. About the possible meaning of this revolution in Spain, from a liberal perspective, see the political study of the poet: Ventura Ruiz Aguilera, *Europa Marcha* (Madrid: 1848).

pointed out by the French observer Turgot.¹⁵ Likewise, the popular revolutionary actions of 1854 were also hushed up because they were considered to constitute vandalism. This riotous behaviour was contrary to the civilising and progressive ideas that should in theory be in keeping with the democratic regime that the disturbances helped to implement. Those attacks were linked to forms of protest that had been denounced as primitive, when in fact they were precisely responsible for the advent of a progressive democratic system that was considered to regenerate the power of the people. This may perhaps explain why so little importance was attached to those popular revolutionary actions. An attempt was even made to justify and legitimate them, given that in the last analysis they were the basis of the new liberal power that was born of the 1854 Revolution, the origin of the Progressive Biennial (1854-1856). These themes will be treated in this study after we have made some comments on the historical context and the general situation.

The period before the revolution was quite critical. This could be the abstract of July 1854: drought, hunger, economic and governmental crisis. The conservative-liberal party, called Moderate, had been in power for ten years (the so-called Moderate Decade, 1843-1853). Its political administration and corruption in the world of business gave rise to real scandals. For this reason, some members of the armed forces originally belonging to their Moderate Party rose against them in the *Vicalvarada*. From there, the movement became the progressive liberal party. The people joined them, fighting against those politicians, in defence of “true liberalism.” To harm them, it attacked their home towns, the newspaper representing them and the club where they met. In these pages we study these symbolic attacks as from coeval sources, mainly literature, narrative, pamphlets and newspapers. We will consider the identification of moderate power with the places they attack, the mechanisms justifying such attacks and the apparent contradiction accompanying their cries for freedom.

Causes: Politics and Sociability in the *Sartorius* Ministry

The controversial ministry which would provoke the grave crisis lasted from September 19th 1853 to July 17th 1854.¹⁶ It was presided by Luis José Sartorius, who came from a humble family of Polish origin living in Seville. His eagerness allowed a meteoric rise in his ambitious career. The lawyer-politician, Juan Bravo Murillo had taken him to his lawyer’s practice to work. The journalist Andrés Borrego had initiated him in political journalism, taking him to the *column* of his newspaper, opening the doors of his home. But soon,

¹⁵ V. G. Kiernan, *op.cit.*, 60-61. He quotes the diplomatic correspondence between Turgot and Drouyn de Lhuys in *Espagne*.

¹⁶ Its composition in: Juan R. Urquijo, *Gobiernos y ministros españoles* (Madrid: CSIC, 2001), 53.

he would betray them. From Borrego he would seize the ownership of El Correo Nacional in critical moments, when the renowned journalist had emigrated due to the conservative coup d'état of October 1841. In the case of Bravo Murillo, he managed to *make him fall out with* some of the political elements supporting him.¹⁷ Then he founded and directed the moderate newspaper *El Heraldo*, an instrument of opposition against the progressive regency of Espartero. He leapt to Congress in 1843, where he obtained numerous profitable businesses, always managing to combine practicality with pleasantness.¹⁸ In 1847 Narváez appointed him Minister of the Presidency, on request of the Queen Mother, María Cristina. In 1848 he received two titles: Count of San Luis and Viscount of Priego. He occupied several ministries before leading this cabinet in 1853, called *Polish* due to his family origins. Since his appointment he was very criticised by the entire press, declared as his fanatical enemy.¹⁹

In his ministry, to be considered now, politics and sociability brought about a common union in a male club.²⁰ Its base of operations was the *Casino del Príncipe*, to which several of his representatives belonged. Founded in 1836 by the conservative political class, it facilitated the meeting and socialisation of the leading figures of the government. Like all private clubs for men, it was only possible to be admitted by being introduced by another member, by which, sponsorship of new members maintained and reproduced the power matrix. As said power was abusively imposed, its negative image eventually condensed in the Casino. It became the Madrid centre for representation of the politicians and businessmen made wealthy during the Moderate Decade (1843-1853), in the power symbol and speculative fortunes of the Isabelline monarchy. Moreover, it gathered all its external signs of luxury and pomp.²¹ For these reasons, it was the same as some of its members, the target of selective attacks from the people during the 1854 Revolution in Madrid.

¹⁷ Luciano Taxonera, *La Revolución del 54 (Sartorius y su gobierno)* (Madrid: Atlántico, 1931), 15-17.

¹⁸ Ramón Campoamor, *Historia crítica de las Cortes reformadoras* (Madrid: Uzal-Aguirre, 1845), 226-230; 227.

¹⁹ Modesto Lafuente (Collaborators: Valera; Pirala; Borrego). *Historia general de España (Barcelona: Montaner-Simón, 1890; T.XXIII)*, 175. Several years before the July revolution, in 1848, the international observer Ferdinand Lesseps criticized all the politicians who afterwards will form that Ministry, in: Antonio Moliner, *Lesseps y los políticos españoles (el informe de 1848)* (Alicante: Juan Gil Albert, 1993), 39, 40, 44, 51, 54, 68, 73.

²⁰ As the phenomenon detected in french sociability by: Maurice Agulhon, *Le Cercle dans la France Bourgeoise, étude d'une mutation de sociabilité* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1977).

²¹ Since 1868, it would change its name for *Casino de Madrid* due to the previous monarchic connotations. María Zozaya, *El Casino de Madrid, orígenes y primera andadura* (Madrid: Casino, 2002), 115-116.

Sartorius himself was a member probably since 1836, from the beginning (because -the same as other founder members-, his entry date was not published, although his introduction of the lawyer José Maceda Quirós was recorded in 1841). Regarding the remaining ministers, we will concentrate on those who were members. The Minister of State was entrusted to Ángel Calderón de la Barca. He became a club member in September 1853, just four days before joining the cabinet. He was sponsored by the Marquis of Casa Irujo, who established important connections in the Casino, introducing relevant moderate politicians, like Manuel Pérez Hernández or the Marquises of Remisa and Miraflores.²²

Agustín Esteban Collantes, Minister of Promotion, was a member since 1842. He was one of the most distinguished followers of the Count of San Luis, with whom he created the colour and meaning of the Polish ministry.²³ Its administration was full of irregularities and accusations. One of the most important issues of the latter was an abusive purchase of tons of stones for public works, from which he managed to come out untouched, in spite of occupying the interest of his journalistic critics for quite a long time.²⁴

The Minister of Justice was José Castro Orozco, Marquis of Gerona, possibly a member since its origin, who introduced in 1840 the recently elected Member of Parliament, Valentín Olano, lawyer of the royal councils. Furthermore, another founder of the circle was his brother Francisco de Paula Castro Orozco, also a politician who served as minister between 1837-1838, and as president of the Congress in 1845. The journalist Ramón Campoamor accused him, together with his political colleagues, of the vested approach to the royal institution, its adhesion to the puritan party, its palace and royalist tendencies more than constitutional ones.²⁵

Eduardo Fernández San Román, provisional Minister of War, was an active member of the Casino, where he sponsored several members. His brother Federico entered in 1852 introduced by the unenthusiastic progressive Luis Sagasti. Later Sagasti was civil governor of Madrid, from August 1854, when the social crisis worsened, followed by a grave cholera epidemic which would kill him in 1855.²⁶

²² Archives of the Casino de Madrid; Member Lists; Miguel Ángel Ramírez (hereinafter: ACM;LS;MAR): n° 11.128; n° 13252; n° 10.884; n° 10.837; n° 10835; n° 11.132.

²³ Modesto Lafuente (Collaborators: Valera; Pirala; Borrego), *op.cit.*, 175.

²⁴ J. Luis Sánchez, "Un retrato de Agustín Esteban Collantes", *Archivo Español de Arte* 292 (2000): 406-407.

²⁵ ACM;LS;MAR: n° 11.035; n° 10.779. Congress Archive; Electoral Documentation Series (hereinafter: ACD;SDE): 24 n° 41. Ramón Campoamor, *op.cit.*, 23-27.

²⁶ San Román introduced in the Club: Saturnino G.Parra (15-X-1852), Luciano Marín (31-X-1852), Ignacio Warza (1-IX-1853). The Minister of the Treasury Félix Domenech was not member of the Casino. ACM;LS;MAR: n° 11.701; n° 11.704; n° 11864; n° 11.694. Juan R. Urquijo, *La revolución de 1854 en Madrid* (Madrid: CSIC, 1984), 224, 229, 237, 394, 408, 442.

Finally, the Minister of The Navy was the great speaker, Mariano Roca Togores, Marquis of Molins. He was a cofounder of the Casino in 1836 but had left in January 1847, when they appointed him minister for the first time, an action repeated by others of his most conservative puritan group like Nicomedes Pastor Díaz.²⁷ Then, this *espace de sociabilité* was an informal centre for the conservative political power, which explains that afterwards, during the crisis, turned up to be one goal of the popular attacks.

The Excesses: The Forging of the Insurrection Against the Sartorius Ministry

By 1853, the government was facing a critical situation. Droughts, bad harvests and weakness of the Treasury caused economic losses.²⁸ As far as politics were concerned, the moderate liberals had been in power since 1843, a power already totally foreign to the progressive liberal groups. Corruption had almost taken over the government. Members of Parliament, Senators and entrepreneurs blended their interests with state grants. As would be stated afterwards:

“no railway line has been granted, something relevant, without having previously received an abundant subsidy; no file has been opened, without having taken some personal amount and even public posts have been sold shamelessly.”²⁹

One of the most scandalous businesses was that of railway contracts monopolised by power groups close to Isabel II and specially her mother María Cristina, who was considered the “soul of the moderate party” by the French diplomatic Ferdinand Lesseps.³⁰ María Cristina lived in *Las Rejas* Palace with her husband the Duke of Riánsares.³¹ Inspired in the press of the time, the writer Pérez Galdós revives this atmosphere of popular discontent:

“afterwards we have started to speak badly about the Government [...]. We repeat all the horrors for which they accused Sartorius and his shameless colleagues, and then, as a final touch, we go to *Las Rejas Street*, Cristina’s Palace, which according to the clandestine papers is *the den of iniquity, the filthy workshop of the dirty railway deals* and furthermore... it is a *seraglio*, a

²⁷ ACM;LS;MAR: nº. 10647.

²⁸ The social causes of the revolution are described in: Pascual Madoz, *Libertad y progreso en la monarquía isabelina* (Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 1982), 223-313.

²⁹ Dionisio Pérez, “La revolución de 1854”, *Por esos mundos* (1-VI-1905): 560-561.

³⁰ Antonio Moliner, *op.cit.*, 34.

³¹ Juan R. Urquijo, *La revolución de 1854*, *op.cit.*, 104. Pedro Díaz, *Después de la revolución* (Alicante: Juan Gil Albert, 1998), 349-363. Telesforo-Marcial Hernández, *Ferrocarriles y capitalismo en el País Valenciano* (Valencia: Town Hall, 1983), 107-121.

pandemonium where all the *Machiavellian plans* against freedom are forged.”³²

Multiple voices rose against such abuse from the government, considering it opposite to true liberalism. They called for insurrection. They incited from the press, skits and famous clandestine papers, like *El Murciélagos* (independent newspapers were pursued, including the *Times*).³³ Rafael Pérez Vento, José de Zaragoza, Joaquín de la Gándara, José de Salamanca Mayol or Fernando Fernández de Córdova were the targets of regular critique, like other similar casino members. Luciano Taxonera represented their style of conduct:

“trickery and border politics; politics without an honest spirit and idealism - Blaser, Doménech, Dulce, Calderón Collantes, Sartorius...-. Sartorius, clear intelligence, daring character, brave heart, from 1853 to 1854 he remained with scandals and fell enveloped in the scandal opening the door to the revolution.”³⁴

The Catalysts: Railways and Deportations.

Since November 1853, numerous moderate groups had met clandestinely. Meanwhile, Sartorius remained thanks to the support provided by Isabel II, although he was aware of the clearly hostile private meetings held, which the intention of overthrowing him –meetings not only between groups of different ideology, but even friends who had supported him in his sly borderline activities.

“the latter was followed by O'Donnell, the Concha brothers, Ros de Olano, Mesina, Serrano, and behind them –the structure of Spanish life so imposed it- were many civilians, with greater ideological strength than the armed forces, but with less luck or little daring. They were the Dukes of Sotomayor and Rivas, Mon y Pidal, who were reinforced by the progressives led by Infante, Madoz, Chacón, Zavala, Luján and San Miguel, to name but a few... [...] They were already conspiring openly and every day, every week, the conspiracy continued, not stopping its attacks on the royalty.”³⁵

In Christmas 1853, the contacts were established for a formal conspiracy. Domingo Dulce, Félix Messina, Rafael Echagüe and the

³² Benito Pérez-Galdós, *La Revolución de Julio* (Madrid: Tello, 1903), 84.

³³ Pi y Margall and Antoni Jutglar, *op.cit.*, 27-33. Benito Pérez-Galdós, *op.cit.* Cristino Martos, *La Revolución de Julio en 1854* (Madrid: Colegio de Sordomudos y Ciegos, 1854), 84. ACD;SDE: 32 nº 18. Ildefonso A. Bermejo, *Alzamiento popular de 1854, que comprende desde la cuestión de ferro-carriles hasta la entrada del duque de la Victoria en Madrid* (Madrid: Mellado, 1854), 2.

³⁴ Luciano Taxonera, *op.cit.*, 21-22.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 46-47.

quartermaster-general León integrated the Junta.³⁶ Several months afterwards, they became a powerful opposition, headed by Generals O'Donnell, Ros de Olano, as well as the brothers Manuel and José Gutiérrez de la Concha.

The basic catalyst was the new Railway Draft Bill. Its numerous opposed interests provoked a vigorous dispute between the Senate and the Parliament causing the closure of the latter.³⁷ After suspending the sessions, Sartorius commenced a persecution of the moderate military chiefs. He separated known dangerous generals from their military postings –especially from the Madrid political centres: Joaquín Armero, to León; O'Donnell, to Tenerife; Manuel Bermúdez de Castro and Manuel Gutiérrez de la Concha, to the Canary Islands; his younger brother Jose, to the Balearic Islands with Facundo Infante. O'Donnell did not obey the order, hiding in Madrid for five months full of incidents, among other places in the home of Marquis of Vega Armijo.³⁸

According to Pérez Galdós, such deportations stimulated *the fever of revolution within the blood of Spain*.³⁹ The news was also commented in moderate sociability venues and clubs “par excellence”. In it, the American diplomat, Essaias Warren –direct observer of the events – narrated the effect of the destitutions: On the 17th, Sartorius’ measure against the opposition was known: “There was great excitement in the Casino and in the Café del Suizo.”⁴⁰

The Forging of a Revolution: Insurrection, Persecutions and Conspiracy

José Gutiérrez de la Concha was deported to the Balearic Islands. He escaped to France and “en route” met Dulce and Hore, discussing the Saragossa uprising.⁴¹ On February 20th, Juan Jose Hore led such insurrection in Saragossa –that’s why is the first name and city to be mentioned in the 1854

³⁶ Joaquín Buxó, *Domingo Dulce, general Isabelino* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1962), 250.

³⁷ Ildefonso A. Bermejo, *op.cit.*, 1-2. Joaquín I. Mencos, *Memorias de don Joaquín Ignacio Mencos, conde de Guenduláin, 1799-1882* (Pamplona: Aramburu, 1952), 201-203.

³⁸ Luciano Taxonera, *op.cit.*, 89. Afterwards, O'Donnell hid in Angel Fernandez de los Ríos’ home, who would later be part of the Junta of Salvation, Army and Defence of Madrid, like Vega Armijo. Joaquín Buxó, *op.cit.*, 251. The destitutions: Juan R. Urquijo, *La revolución de 1854*, *op.cit.* 44; 54-55.

³⁹ Benito Pérez-Galdós, *op.cit.*, 51-52.

⁴⁰ Joaquín Buxó, *op.cit.*, 251; who cites John Essaias Warren. *Madrid hace cincuenta años a los ojos de un diplomático extranjero* (Madrid, 1904). In the “pliegos de cordel” [song sheet] and engravures appear the meetings held at the corner of *El Suizo café*. The engravures in: Dionisio Pérez, *op.cit.*, 561 (picture number 7).

⁴¹ Joaquín Buxó, *op.cit.*, 251. In Bourdeaux he also met the conservative politician Baron of Bigüezal, expressing his anger against the Queen. Joaquín I. Mencos, *op.cit.*, 205.

hymn--⁴² which was quickly repressed and for which the state of siege was declared throughout Spain.⁴³ On February 22nd, a severe raid was made against the political adversaries in Madrid, causing the closure of the Athenaeum Society (“Ateneo de Madrid”) and the arrest of many Members of Parliament and journalists.⁴⁴

We should mention that some of those pursued beforehand would play a special role some months later. Moreover, they belonged to the Casino del Principe, where people plotting against the established power could already be found. On the one hand, Manuel Bermúdez de Castro, member since 1847 was among those arrested. Luis González Bravo, ex-president of the Cabinet Meeting was a member since 1843. Manuel Rancés Villanueva, then director of the newspaper *El Español*, was admitted in the club in January 1853, sponsored by José Luis Albareda. Finally, in 1850 another editor of *Español* entered, the Member of Parliament Dionisio López Roberts. Between 1853 and 1856, he introduced several people in the circle, the same as his brother Mauricio López Roberts, also a Member of Parliament, proposed for the club by Luis Fernández de Córdova on January 1st 1853. Besides, there were other members of the Casino who did not fall into the hands of the *Polish police for strange reasons*: José Rúa Figueroa, director of the journal *La Nación*, member since 1853. Diego Coello Quesada, director of the *La Época*, sponsored in the club by Salvador Bermúdez de Castro (Manuel’s brother, another of those repressed). Juan Lorenzana, editor of *El Español*, who joined the Casino the same day as Mauricio López Roberts, mentioned already.⁴⁵ Finally, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo would be admitted after the events.

Domingo Dulce played a fundamental role in the insurrection. He joined the Casino in April 1854, when conspirators met at O’Donnell’s home and other places where the plot was maturing. On June 13th everything was prepared to commence the insurrection, where Dulce was essential in his post of Director General of the Cavalry.⁴⁶ To obtain this post he had to win the trust of the Minister of War, Anselmo Blaser. He provided him continuous evidence of not belonging to the conspirators. However, his participation in the political conspiracies was a fact. In the Casino that incoherence was openly commented:

⁴² Manuel Fernández y González, “A los tres días de julio, al pueblo de Madrid” hymn, in: Antonio Ribot, *La revolución de julio en Madrid* (Madrid: Gaspar Roig, 1854), appendix: verses XXIII and XXV.

⁴³ Jerónimo Boráo, *Historia del Levantamiento de Zaragoza en 1854* (Zaragoza: Impr. Calixto, 1855).

⁴⁴ Juan R. Urquijo, *La revolución de 1854*, op.cit., 65-67.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.ACM;LS;MAR: nº 11.286; nº 11.496; nº 11.786; nº 11.651; nº 11.871; nº 12.006; nº 12.059; nº 11.771; nº 11.983; nº 12.009; nº 11.770.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

“A few nights ago –Isaías Warren reported in March- I heard comments made in the Casino about Blaser’s blindness on entrusting Dulce with the General Directorate of Cavalry.”⁴⁷

The Casino seemed to have become a double-edged sword. Firstly, during the moderate decade, it had become a clique of corrupt ministers. The leaders of the Sartorius group met there, talking about the development of revolutionary events.⁴⁸ Secondly, from the start of the crisis, it was also a meeting place for moderate groups, which had separated themselves from that corrupt policy, conspiring to change the country’s destiny. Numerous conspirators frequented the club, participating in the later revolutionary events. The Gutiérrez de la Concha brothers, plus Joaquín Armero, Bermúdez de Castro and Vega Armijo, who had entered the circle hardly a year before, could be found there. Between 1853 and 1854 important figures became members, involved in the broad group of conspirators.

Then, the Casino was used as a discrete means of exchanging information and as a camouflage scenario in the final arrangements of the conspiracy. Especially when O’Donnell became impatient about the idea of the insurrection and Domingo Dulce asked for discretion, trying to show calmness actively participating in its social life. When all the manifestos were ready, (based on national discontent, abuse of power and the repressive politics of Sartorius’ government), General Dulce continued defending before the ministry that no plot existed. However, June 28th 1854 was the day chosen for the uprising, when Dulce supposedly would direct some cavalry exercises trying new saddles in Vicálvaro.⁴⁹ The previous day he wanted the Minister of War, Anselmo Blaser, to believe that the rebellion being spoken about had been quashed. He spent the first part of the night in the Casino with him, together with Castro, León and the Marquis of Perales. Domingo Dulce calmed Blaser down with the most emphatic protests of affection and loyalty.⁵⁰ To prove it, later they went together to Ángela Chacón’s house playing the card game called *tresillo* until very late, managing to dilute the Minister of War’s suspicions.⁵¹ But the day after, the insurrection started.

⁴⁷ J. Essaias Warren, *Madrid...* cited by Joaquín Buxó, *op.cit.*, 255. The plot appears in: Luciano Taxonera, *op.cit.*, 82-85.

⁴⁸ Florentino Hernández, *José de Salamanca. El Montecristo Español* (Madrid: Lira, 1992), 404; Then he mentions how *Salamanca, Estébanez, Gayangos, Albareda and Córdoba* met in the Casino talking about Sartorius’ political situation and the *Manifiesto de Manzanares*.

⁴⁹ Juan R. Urquijo, *La revolución de 1854*, *op.cit.*, 106.

⁵⁰ Marqués de Lema, *De la Revolución a la Restauración* (Madrid: Voluntad, 1927; T.I), 77. Anselmo Blaser could go to the Casino invited by them (and Essaias Warren due to his diplomat’s status).

⁵¹ Joaquín Buxó, *op.cit.*, 255. It is probable that she was a relative of Isabel Chacón, Sartorius’s wife. *Tresillo*: a Spanish card game related to bridge.

The Outbreak: Vicalvarada and Revolution

On June 28th, General Dulce's speeches to his regiments in the Guard Grounds of Vicálvaro started; O'Donnell left his hideaway to go there. He was joined by Ros de Olano, Félix Messina and another twenty-five superior officers. On the 30th they opposed the government in the later so-called *Vicalvarada*. Each side claimed for itself an uncertain victory. Until that moment, the insurrection had been military and rather conservative. But in Manzanares, the progressive General Serrano joined and gave a truly revolutionary manifesto signed by O'Donnell, theoretically drafted by Antonio Cánovas del Castillo.⁵² That same afternoon, the matter was commented with surprise in the Casino by his uncle, the journalist Estébanez Calderón and his brother-in-law, the well-known entrepreneur José de Salamanca.⁵³

With the *Manifiesto de Manzanares* the army movement took on a political form. It requested support from the people, listing its principles and declaring loyalty to the Monarchy:

“we want to preserve the throne, but without the lobby dishonouring it; we want a rigorous practice of the fundamental laws, improving them, especially the electoral and press laws; we want a reduction of taxes, based on a strict economy; we want the years of service and merit respected in military and civilian employment; we want to uproot the villages from the centralisation devouring them.”⁵⁴

The strong progressive concessions of the manifesto completely changed the political sense of the uprising. The military group which had initially intended a change of government without counting with the people would now be seen as totally supported by it. The people managed to give a democratic touch to the revolution by means of various disturbances.⁵⁵ They achieved this by force, which was their main power base at the time.⁵⁶ It would be precisely the people who would give a strong dramatic colour to the

⁵² Juan R. Urquijo, *La revolución de 1854*, op.cit., 113-114; 124-125; 129. José T. Villarroya, “El estado y la política en la gran etapa moderada”, *La era Isabelina y el sexenio democrático* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1981), 261.

⁵³ Florentino Hernández, op.cit., 404.

⁵⁴ Antonio Ribot, op.cit. (Madrid: G.Roig, 1854), 89-90. It was also known as the “We want Manifiesto”.

⁵⁵ Such was the interpretation of those who attempt to legitimise the behaviour of the people, like: Fernando Garrido, *Espartero y la Revolución* (Madrid: Tomás Núñez, 1854), 9-19. Also in modern studies: Leopoldo Porras, op.cit., 79.

⁵⁶ Eric J. Hobsbawm, “The Machine Breakers”, in *Labouring men. Studies in the History of Labour* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 7-26.

events and make the movement a revolution with national undertones.⁵⁷ The popular insurrection was seconded by Cuenca, Valladolid, Zamora, Guadalajara, Barcelona and Andalusia. There were revolutionary attitudes of the crowd all over Spain:⁵⁸ There were pressures upon owners by threatening damage to their properties. There were common popular protests trying to establish a collective negotiation threatening mutiny to demand a reduction on grain prices.⁵⁹ The speculation of grain provoked the protests in the Zamora insurrection of 1854. In Valencia they burnt the railway bridge over the Turia river. In Barcelona, the popular revolution was dominated by workers, who channelled their protests against exploitation and towards the burning of industrialised machines called self-actings and the attainment of the right of association.⁶⁰ All revolutionary acts in the cities were significative towards achieving the triumph of the liberal revolution.⁶¹

In Madrid, the popular mutiny broke out on July 17th, since the government had fallen, but the people requested a change of system.⁶² It started in the bullring crowded by bullfighting fans and politics lovers. Among cheers for the mutineers, they requested the musicians to play Riego's Hymn,* which reverberated at the doors of the square and gradually increasing in intensity, when the choir arrived at the Puerta del Sol; it was as if the whole of Madrid was singing⁶³ Music was necessary to exacerbate popular agitation.⁶⁴ There and in other places, the boos against the Queen Mother were mixed with cheers for O'Donnell and Espartero. The new government wanted to re-establish order and the shooting began.⁶⁵

⁵⁷ Karl Marx, "Revolution in Spain", *New York Daily Tribune* (9-IX-1854): 2; also published in: *Revolutionary Spain* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1939).

⁵⁸ V.G. Kiernan, *op.cit.*, 60-61. José A. Ruiz Segura, *op.cit.*, 9.

⁵⁹ As reported in England by: Hobsbawm, Eric J. "The Machine Breakers"... 10-11.

⁶⁰ Leopoldo Porras, *op.cit.*, 79-94. Juan R. Urquijo, "La revolución de 1854 en Zamora", *Hispania* 177 (LII-1991): 251-285. Also in Barcelona the workers burnt the self-acting's machines. Jaime Carrera Pujal, *op.cit.*, 239-245. The Junta of Alicante read their Manifiesto begging for the "Moralily in power and respect the law and institutions". Rafael Zurita, *op.cit.*, 37.

⁶¹ Sisinio Pérez Garzón, *Milicia nacional y revolución burguesa: el prototipo madrileño, 1808-1874* (Madrid: CSIC, 1978), 90.

⁶² Dionisio Pérez, *op.cit.*, 560-561.

⁶³ Benito Pérez-Galdós, *op.cit.*, 147. Miguel A. López-Rinconada. "1854, Madrid, revolución y toros", *Anales IEM*, T.XXX (1991): 397-421. * Riego's Hymn: The Spanish republican Hymn, composed in the Trienio Liberal (1820-1823).

⁶⁴ In several revolts the musicians were even forced to play music. This happened in July 1854 in Cadiz, when in a concert the multitude forced them to play Riego's Hymn; also in the Basque Country in november 1854, when the people was trying to create an urban movement. Both in: V. G. Kiernan, *op.cit.*, 84. Ruzafa, Rafael. *Artesanos (1854) y mineros (1890). Dos fases de la protesta obrera en el País Vasco* (País Vasco: Historia Social, 2006), 67.

⁶⁵ Dionisio Pérez, *op.cit.*, 560-561.

Together with July 19th it was one of the most violent days. All the disturbances were strongly repressed by the Government, entrusting this task to Generals Fernando Fernández de Córdoba, Joaquín de la Gándara and Juan de Lara, then Captain General of Madrid. The three were members of the Casino for at least a decade.⁶⁶ Some chronicles regarding the repression agreed with respect to its virulence symbolised by the volleys that silenced those popular voices shouting in the barricades long live the Fatherland.⁶⁷ Afterwards, they were called the Shrapnel Cabinet. This hardness was probably hiding the fear of a revolution like the one that had overthrown the French government to bring the Second Republic (1848-1852), when in the neighbouring country primitive echoes of the popular extremes of the French Revolution were still latent.⁶⁸

Later on, the three justified their actions alleging due obedience to their superior's orders or the need to contain the people to safeguard public order.⁶⁹ I consider that the posterior-assertions of Gándara, Lara, and Córdoba were prompted by the progressive liberal victory that was due to the intervention of the people. For this reason, having repressed the masses harshly, all of them would attempt to identify themselves with the people and their proclamations. To exonerate himself Gándara appealed to his humble origins and to his father's liberal tradition, to his continuous "defence of the people's cause" and his burning patriotism.⁷⁰ Fernández Córdoba emphasised the military tradition of his family and his loyalty to those furthering the public cause, which led him to defend the rule of law, legality, morals, and justice;⁷¹ these ideals were the same as those of the people that Córdoba himself had repressed. Lara pointed out that he had simply intended to defend the crown and law and order; at the same time he took pains to distinguish the innocent masses from the evil mob that attacked the buildings, stating that he had no wish to treat "thieves and fire-raisers in the same way as the unarmed people, peaceful spectators of those horrible scenes."⁷² Like the others, Lara declared himself in this way to be on the people's side in his statement, which was written months after the events.

⁶⁶ ACM;LS;MAR: n° 10.645; n° 11.143; n° 11.395.

⁶⁷ Un Hijo del Pueblo, *Las jornadas de julio* (Madrid: Santa-Coloma, 1855), 285-286.

⁶⁸ Maurice Agulhon, *1848 ou l'apprentissage de la république* (Paris: Seuil, 1973).

⁶⁹ Joaquín Gándara, *Manifiesto de Joaquín Gándara al pueblo español* (Madrid: L. García, 1854). Fernando Fernández de Córdoba, *Memoria del teniente general Fernando Fernández de Córdoba sobre los sucesos políticos ocurridos en Madrid en los días 17, 18 y 19 de julio de 1854* (Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1855). Juan de Lara, *Aclaraciones que hace el teniente general D. Juan de Lara* (Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1855).

⁷⁰ Joaquín Gándara, *op.cit.*, 3-4.

⁷¹ Fernando Fernández de Córdoba, *op.cit.*, 31-35.

⁷² Juan de Lara, *op.cit.*, 11. In this paper Lara tried to exonerate himself from what Fernández de Córdoba said against his military acts. Córdoba signed this writing in Bayone, 28th december 1854. Lara signed it in Valladolid on 10th March 1855.

Popular Justice: The Moral Revenge of the Crowd

In the July outbreak in Madrid, there were two main facts. The first one was the barricades that meant the real outbreak of the revolutionary situation.⁷³ They were erected with cobblestones, chairs, mattresses, barrels, etc. Those barricades were organized with modern techniques by the French refugees and Mining Engineers.⁷⁴ They made the *war in the streets*, as it was called from the beginning of the 1848 Revolution. The other main fact was the assault of property. They attacked the homes of the main ministers of Sartorius' government and peers: Collantes, Salamanca, Domenech, Quinto, Vistahermosa, María Cristina.⁷⁵ They also attacked the main office of *El Heraldo* and the Casino club.



Barricade in Montera Street, July 17th. Lithography by J. J. Martínez, edited by Antonio Santa Coloma in *Un hijo del Pueblo, Las jornadas de Julio...*, 288.

To explain the social feeling during the protest which transformed such objects and buildings into the enemy's symbol, we resort to the concept of the *moral revenge of the crowd*. In this way, we change the expression coined by Edward P. Thompson of *moral economy of the crowd*, to explain the insurrections due to the adulteration and price rise of bread in the England of the XVIII century. He refers to moral conventions that regulate the trade and

⁷³ Maria C. García Monerris and Sisinio Pérez Garzón, "Las barricadas de Julio de 1854, análisis socio político" *Anales del Instituto de Estudios Madrileños*, T. XII (1976): 1-25.

⁷⁴ V. G. Kiernan, *op.cit.*, 78; Ildefonso A. Bermejo, *op.cit.*

⁷⁵ Juan R. Urquijo, *La revolución de 1854*, *op.cit.*, 140, 160-161.

the daily life of the crowd, guided by normative ideas of reciprocity, obligation, responsibility and justice.⁷⁶ In the latter, the most remarkable fact was that the people attacked the millers, sold their bread at the price considered just and giving it to the miller afterwards.⁷⁷ Also, when the crowd felt that their moral law was transgressed, it attacked their proprieties in different forms of violence.⁷⁸ This behaviour can be interpreted as the “levelling instinct” of the multitude.⁷⁹ In the protest we are discussing, the people, claimed a government system ruled by morals and the Constitution, taking justice into their own hands and attacking the icons of corrupt power, symbolically overthrowing them with very singular mechanisms. Such logic of conduct is typical in the popular insurrections of original liberalism. They searched a justice ruled by equal moral systems, already fully shared by collective mentalities.⁸⁰ In this case in the capital of Spain, July 1854, they burnt or attacked symbols of power. In Madrid, that kind of popular justice that attacked the proprieties without hurting their owners could be found in 1808 with the rebellions against Godoy and its Ministers.⁸¹ These traditional forms of protest were still used in the middle XIXth century Europe.⁸²

In short, in an agreed way and in different places of Madrid, the people selectively attacked different buildings of the moderate group in power. They burnt the furniture of several palaces belonging to politicians and entrepreneurs, attacking institutional buildings to assault their members, burn their belongings or flatten their lodgings. They channelled their anger against the representative symbols of abuse against public wealth. Voices at the time claimed: “what would we say about so many corrupt civil servants who had put the public services on sale awarding them to the best wagger and trafficking with the national wealth?”.⁸³ Such outrages transformed the government into an enemy of authentic political liberalism. For this reason, attacking it, involved doing justice. This would be precisely the centre of the manifestos opening the revolution: to the shout of down with the thieves, were added

⁷⁶ Stefan Svallfors, *The moral economy of class: class and attitudes in comparative perspective* (California: Stanford, 2006), 1.

⁷⁷ Edward P. Thompson, “The moral economy reviewed”, *Customs in common* (London: Merlin Press, 1991), 230-298.

⁷⁸ George Rudé, *La multitud en la Historia...*

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 268-269.

⁸⁰ I consider that this popular Madrid revolution lacked a conservative character because it oozed egalitarian echoes beyond the frameworks of absolutism, originated by the dissemination of the liberal ideas of revolutionary France. I share some of Gareth STEDMAN’s theories. Gareth Stedman Jones, “La crisis de mediados de siglo y las revoluciones de 1848”, *Zona abierta* 36-38 (1985), 180-198.

⁸¹ José M^a Cardesín, *op.cit.*, 33-36.

⁸² Edward P. Thompson, *The making of the English wrking class*, *op.cit.* Also in some parts of England were considered an anachronism in 1850: George Rudé, *La multitud en la Historia*, *op.cit.*, 284, 287-288.

⁸³ “1854”, in *El Genio de la Libertad* (31-VII-1854): 1.

those of Long live the Queen! Long live the Constitution! Long live Freedom! Long live Morality!⁸⁴

In Madrid, several eye-witness accounts coincide with the version signed by *A son of the People*. The author, probably a well-known progressive, unburdens the popular responsibility for the attacks produced. He started to remove all blame on the citizens regarding the attempt to create disorder. He assured that in the beginning, *bandits and thieves* were the ones who attacked the houses who always appear to steal in cities when revolutions broke out and the people joined them, always as an innocent and passive assistant, on realising that the enemies were the same:

“in fact, they were attacks, but attacks in which the people took no part, but as a simple spectator, as a simple and well-meaning assistant of a certain class of people, who wanted there to be revolutions every day of the importance of that of July to [...] dedicate themselves to looting and disorder.”⁸⁵

Afterwards, he finished confirming the conscious will of the masses in the attack against *Las Rejas* Palace, recognising that only there the assault was deliberate. Then he granted a greater role to the dissatisfied people, saying that:

“the people had asked and asked for the heads of Cristina, Sartorius and his spokesmen, the punishment of the *Polish*, but it had not thought about anything else: however, when it saw the furniture of its enemies burned, it joined the fires, but as an assistant.”⁸⁶

This was a quite confusing situation. Almost in every European revolution this image of the bandits, sometimes as true thieves, appear,⁸⁷ but in other cases the revolutionary groups –*les classes dangereuses*– are identified with those that the men in power want to prosecute.⁸⁸ Actually, in the case we consider now, is very difficult to know who created those social

⁸⁴ These cries are from July 14th 1854 in Barcelona. Ildefonso A. Bermejo, *op.cit.*, 59. In several parts of *Ancient Régime* Europe the identification of the people with the monarchy was typical, but in the case we study the populace was against the Queen Mother, but not against the sovereign. Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive rebels*, *op.cit.*, 121.

⁸⁵ Un Hijo del Pueblo, *op.cit.*, 252. Lara, the Captain General of Madrid spoke in a similar way of the *pacífic multitude*, which he didn't want to attack, not as the other people who created the real disorders. Juan de Lara, *op.cit.*, 11.

⁸⁶ Un Hijo del Pueblo, *op.cit.*, 252.

⁸⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge: University Press, 2003), 120-127.

⁸⁸ George Rudé, *La multitud en la Historia...*, 234-236. Also Joaquín de la Gándara admitted that he killed people in Atocha Street even when he realised that were not individuals payed to represent a mutiny anymore, but Madrid's people who went up in arms for the revolution. In: Cristino Martos, *op.cit.*, 283.

disturbances. But, in any case -and according to the official version- those thieves began the attacks that the people followed. The crowd created great disorders in the city, the military forces killed many people and afterwards they were not blamed for starting that situation. In my opinion they branded the initiators of the disturbances as outlaws for two reasons. First, to hide the political nature of the revolution that the government feared to the point of trying to suppress it with laws against banditry. It was precisely at that time that it issued laws to this effect;⁸⁹ it was not by chance that it repressed the military upon glimpsing their sedition. The people were also strongly attacked as bandits and mercenaries.⁹⁰ Secondly, the word bandit was used later on to differentiate the *bad* masses from the *good* masses, thanks to the intervention of whom this *people's* revolution was won. After this happened, according to the contemporary socialist Fernando Garrido, “the throne was placed at the feet of the conquering people”, transforming the uprising of the military moderates into a democratic one.⁹¹ In my opinion, this role of the people in the victory generated versions such as those stated by “A Son of the People”, which would excuse their part in the riots. The description of the burnings that will be mentioned below falls along the same lines.

A Justified Attack: The Expiatory Pyre.

The *Son of the people* reported that the initial aim of popular violence was to capture the corrupt clique. Its members were very well known, *the band represented by the Count of San Luis*,⁹² as Marx said. Fearing the attacks, they fled. The Duke of Riansares himself, left several documents in different parts of his office in the Las Rejas Street, when suddenly he had to go due to the July revolution.⁹³ When the multitude of men and women headed, shouting, “To the houses of the ministers!” as their cry went up, while they were singing the popular song of “Death to Cristina!” to the tune of “La donna è mobile”, although she had already escaped through a side door of her mansion towards the Palace.⁹⁴ Then, the people found it necessary to modify their goals. A few individuals went to the Teatro del Príncipe, set a step-ladder to the façade “and armed with hammers and mattocks converted into a thousand pieces the inscription where the name of the Count of San Luis was written.”⁹⁵ The unforeseen circumstances of the uprising unleashed their

⁸⁹ These were laws against “criminals” which, in my opinion, were designed to fight the possible insurrection and were totally linked with it. Mentioned in: Jaime Carrera Pujal, *op.cit.*, 233.

⁹⁰ Leopoldo Porras Granero, *op.cit.*, 79, 83. Also admitted by: Joaquín Gándara, *op.cit.*

⁹¹ Fernando Garrido, *Espartaco y la Revolución*. Madrid: Tomás Nuñez, 1854, 10.

⁹² Karl Marx, *op.cit.* (9-IX-1854), 3.

⁹³ National Historic Archive [AHN], Spain: Miscellaneous-Titles-Families; 3546, Leg^o10, Exp. 51, Fol.1.

⁹⁴ V. G. Kiernan, *op.cit.*, 68.

⁹⁵ Ildefonso A. Bermejo, *op.cit.*, 66.

passion. The attack by established power against a supposedly well placed individual –which gave a greater air of impartiality to the assailant plebiscite- justified the reprisal of the ordinary people in their defence:

“when the people searched for Sartorius in his home of Calle del Prado, the servile and loathsome zeal of one of the policemen who still guarded the house, caused by the shooting of a young person of good appearance and decently dressed. [...] This inflamed the fury of the masses [,] crushing the policemen [,] disarming them and entering thirsty for revenge. Not finding Sartorius, who was well hidden, they partially vented their fury on the former minister’s furniture.”⁹⁶

Then, the fires began. They were pure collective ways of symbolic expiation of revenge, by burning emblems or portraits of the people’s enemies.⁹⁷ In the homes of Collantes and Salamanca, the furniture, the crockery, the trappings were thrown over the balconies to the street making a big bonfire with them and later on, a new “auto-da-fé” were made in Domenech’s home (the Minister of the Treasury).⁹⁸ Pérez Galdós also gathered part of this fury unleashed against said objects, whose revenge, he satirised, was too benevolent:

“the items of carpentry paid the bill, a too benign popular revenge... I thought that the destruction of luxury furniture is an act favourable to industrial progress and renovation of sumptuary styles [...]. The fire hardly harmed the Salamancas and Sartorius families and providentially benefited the manufacturers.”⁹⁹

The bonfire permitted *social justice* to be accomplished because it allowed the symbolic expiation of all the excesses. But the attack should be exclusively focussed on specific targets and only attack those to blame. A collaborator in the events reported this when he narrated what they threw away:

“curtains, mirrors, beds, books, papers, jewels [...] carriages, with which different bonfires were built in a row in front of each house. In that of the former minister of the Treasury, the fire spread to the building on igniting a blind of a room on the ground floor. However, the people themselves put it out immediately, assuring that no damage would occur in the other homes of the buildings, nor to their neighbours.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Un Hijo del Pueblo, *op.cit.*, 253-254.

⁹⁷ José M^a Cardesín, “Motín y magnicidio en la Guerra de la Independencia” *Historia Social* 62 (2008), 27-47.

⁹⁸ Dionisio Pérez, *op.cit.*, 560-561.

⁹⁹ Benito Pérez-Galdós, *op.cit.*, 159.

¹⁰⁰ Ildefonso A. Bermejo, *op.cit.*, 67.



“Burning the pieces of furniture of the Palaces of Sartorius and Collantes”. Lithography by J. J. Martínez, edited by Antonio Santa Coloma, in: *Un hijo del Pueblo, Las jornadas de Julio...*, 254.

Also their servants were respected, although they served corrupt people. They were only interested in their belongings. In front of *Las Rejas Palace* Palace, where María Cristina lived:

“they had made a bonfire, in which men and women of a dishevelled appearance threw away what they had removed from the palace: furniture, pictures and curtains. I don’t know what would have happened to the Queen Mother if they had been able to pick her up like a sofa. I heard that the servants were respected; I also heard that they would smash into smithereens everything that was too heavy to take to the bonfire.”¹⁰¹

Among the justification mechanisms of the assaults underlay the consideration that such acts were, in spite of being *barbarous*, *just*. They represented a lesson. The novelist Galdós noticed that Truly benign is the barbarism of a people who take their revenge on furniture, porcelain and inert objects.¹⁰² Kiernan stated that all this furniture suffered the sins of their owners.¹⁰³ With the burning of Luis Sartorius’ home, the *Son of the people*

¹⁰¹ Benito Pérez-Galdós, *op.cit.*, 153.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 153.

¹⁰³ V. G. Kiernan, *op.cit.*, 68.

debated the moral category of such bonfires, which he considered indicative of a *popular justice*. He explained:

“the people were not opposed to those bonfires and this is very natural; they should feel and felt great pleasure on seeing the apparatus of sumptuousness of those miserable people burn who had transformed the sweat of the poor and the tears of the underprivileged into pomp and luxury. The people surrounded those bonfires taking the furniture, the crockery, the paintings and throwing them into the flames.”¹⁰⁴

Benito Pérez Galdós also perceived this equanimity, as it was the only way the people had to impose a punishment against those breaches of all moral and Christian laws which –according to the author- are included in the normal government of societies. Then he explained that they had no other inspiration than their hate, a true reason of State for citizens that had never governed and then, with barbarous actions they governed in their own way, imposing something similar to justice, if not justice itself in all its splendour.¹⁰⁵ Those flames could also be justified because there was a feeling that the common moral laws that united the people to their representatives, the social pact, in fact had been broken. In a speech of the provisional Barcelona government the need was mentioned for the breaking up of the despicable gang that had destroyed the holy book of fundamental law and that had tried to divorce the throne from the people, which had put an end to the freedom and the morality of the country.¹⁰⁶

The *El Saladero* prison was also stormed and its prisoners, with the progressive Rivero among their number, were freed. The Town Hall, where a group was going to constitute a government, was also taken.¹⁰⁷ The huge building on the southwest side of the Puerta del Sol, which housed the Ministry of the Interior, was easily approached because the sentries did not fire; the rioters took it shortly after nine p.m.¹⁰⁸ The crowd also epitomised the struggle for power in another purely symbolic and indulgent assault. Galdós left his testimony once again, describing that the masses managed to enter in the “Old Post Office”, headquarters of the Government, reaching the rooms of the Home Office, but respecting the objects of value. The goal was not to steal or destroy them but to illuminate the rooms of a building symbolising repression and darkness. Then, every time lights approached the

¹⁰⁴ Un Hijo del Pueblo, *op.cit.*, 253.

¹⁰⁵ Benito Pérez-Galdós, *op.cit.*, 157.

¹⁰⁶ In: Jaime Carrera Pujal, *op.cit.*, 240.

¹⁰⁷ Fernando Fernández de Córdoba, *op.cit.*, 49. He also mentioned that the Ministry of the Interior was assaulted and invaded by the multitude, but made no reference to any symbolic attitude towards the chair of the governor.

¹⁰⁸ V. G. Kiernan, *La revolución de 1854 en España* (Madrid: Consulta e Historia, 1970), 66.

windows, the expectant crowd cheered. There was another very interesting manner of compensation:

“this manner of popular revenge was childish. The pleasure given by sitting in the easy chair that had been used by San Luis, was not less innocent. The compatriots discussed by blows who had the honour to sit in it, a claim that for many seemed enough. What more could the people wish than convert the tyrant’s chair into a national piece of furniture for the use of all Spaniards?”¹⁰⁹

Robbery: Unjust.

The burning and the popular uprising were considered to have been justified up to a point and even within an order. According to the British diplomats Otway and Hardman there were no serious excesses nor misconduct, outrage, or robbery. In their reports they emphasised the lack of looting and the principle of “the death penalty for the thief” with which the people were threatened.¹¹⁰ This implies that the attacks of the masses were considered to be legitimate insofar as they were fighting for what we can call a political objective, as their destruction only sought to punish the abuse of power and never to commit further outrages. The *justice* of protest included the condition of honest procedure. It was represented by the *coherent* attitude of the citizens, righteous but not thieves:

“in these fires, the most precious objects were thrown into the flames without any distinction and wherever the slightest intention of robbery was observed, the people themselves repressed them in a terrible way. The people carried the firewood on their shoulders with great rejoicing and cheering liberty.”¹¹¹

A scene from the fire in Jose Salamanca’s palace clarifies this sense of *social honesty*. It proved that the target was to teach the corrupt band a lesson: purge the enemy of freedom in the bonfire, but never rob him, which was impartially punished by the crowd itself:

“to show an example that the people’s goal on taking part in those fires was to partially punish their belongings [,] since they could not punish those perverting the course of justice themselves, and not the desire of benefiting from that wealth, it is sufficient to refer to a single fact. A black individual wearing a kind of woollen overcoat was moving away and as one of the many armed patriots saw that he carried something beneath his overcoat, he stopped him [,] searching him and finding a silver washbasin: the justice of the people

¹⁰⁹ Benito Pérez-Galdós, *op.cit.*, 151.

¹¹⁰ Information in the Blackwood papers and the correspondence between Otway and Clarendon, in: V. G. Kiernan, *op.cit.*, 77-78.

¹¹¹ Ildefonso A. Bermejo, *op.cit.*, 67.

immediately fell over the thief caning him to death and the washbasin melted in the bonfire.”¹¹²

This last sentence explains very well the concept of the *social justice* of the protest: the people considered it impartial to destroy the valuables of a palace but never to remove them. Destroying them, was equivalent to attacking its owner and his sumptuousness, originated by an unjust excess of power. Robbing implied being an enemy of liberalism and robbing was what the ministers had done. Part of the symbolic meaning of that popular revolution was underlying here, since the slogans reflected in the engravings of long live liberty or long live to the sovereign people were joined by that of death penalty to the thieves.¹¹³ For this reason, a proof of the people’s honesty was they had legitimated killing someone for stealing a valuable object for his personal benefit, no matter if he were rich or poor. The ultimate sense of the process was to make it disappear in a purifying pyre. In the Europe of the time such acts, far from deserving reprisals, were morally justified and were carried out as a kind of solemn public duty.¹¹⁴

In my view it is relevant that the example of a person put to death by the mob was a black-coloured person. Black people were few in number in the Spain of the time; sometimes they were slaves or servants of the wealthy and racist conceptions generally prevailed to their detriment. Their case probably served to define the *good* man from the *bad* man by exclusion, to separate the community from the intruder who did not share its ideals. The thief, here distinguished by the colour of his skin, was very different from the community that was fighting for interests that were considered to be legitimate, as a result of which there was precisely a belief in the right to punish him without being reprimanded. On killing him the justice of their uprising was allegedly more evident as it arose for legal and moral reasons. In the last analysis, this example of the Black put to death, like the bandits that began the burnings, serves to exonerate the people and justify their vandalism.

Compensation: The Attack of two Moderate Institutions.

The assault of those places may only be understood as the popular protest against individuals whose power is archetypically manifested in the material form of a building.¹¹⁵ A similar goal was pursued when they attacked the headquarters of the Casino or El Heraldo. Both of them were mutually

¹¹² Un Hijo del Pueblo, *op.cit.*, 253-255. Also reports some stealings in the cartist revolts that were not punished in this way: George Rudé, *La Multitud en la Historia...*, 224.

¹¹³ Benito Pérez-Galdós, *op.cit.* Juan R. Urquijo, *La revolución de 1854*, *op.cit.*; the slogans were written in the engravings from the Archives of *Historia 16*, after page 234.

¹¹⁴ George Rudé, *La Multitud en la Historia...*, 271.

¹¹⁵ Same situation as reported by: *Ibid*, 202, 288-289.

related and with the government itself, as well as others whose palaces they attacked, since Sartorius, Collantes and Salamanca were members of that club. El Heraldo was the organ disseminating monarchic “moderantismo” for years.¹¹⁶ It was interpreted as a ministerial newspaper, a faithful interpreter of Sartorius’ cabinet, the only newspaper not suffering censorship in 1854 because it clearly flattered its measures.¹¹⁷ Not only was it directed and written by many members of the club but it was its non-official organ of expression, since from there, the internal activities of the circle were conveyed.

For this reason, it suffered the same luck as the palaces. As the people approached cheering liberty with firewood to ignite –a participant reported–, the press of El Heraldo was also invaded and they burnt all its contents.¹¹⁸ The attacks against it represented another way of harassing these actors of corrupt power in the name of freedom. The action was also represented in the last institution concerning us, the Casino. Some of those involved, Gándara and Salamanca, could be found in its rooms, discussing the rhythm of the events, when a waiter entered informing them that Sartorius’ house had started to burn.¹¹⁹

In fact, the Casino del Principe was attacked on the 18th July. The rebels on the streets transformed this representative place of moderate social and political power into the target of their anger.¹²⁰ The member Prudencio Rovira reported in a tendentious manner:

“the Casino, which according to the progressive masses of the lowest social level was a reactionary centre, was about to suffer attacks from the mobs and had the same luck as the looted and fired houses of the Count of San Luis and Jose Salamanca.”¹²¹

It happened the same day as the murder of Francisco Chico, a secret police inspector of reactionary ideology who was very unpopular among the top brass of the poor neighbourhoods.¹²² The mass formed a macabre parade: As reflected in the engravings of the period, they carried his body laying in a bed, supported over a ladder, whilst his face was spread with the chocolate he had been eating for breakfast when they had surprised him. He was

¹¹⁶ Cristino Martos, *La Revolución...* And: Ramón Campoamor, *Historia crítica...*; T. I, 228.

¹¹⁷ Ildfonso A. Bermejo, *op.cit.*, 30, 24. It also reported news in favour of the conservative party, as related: V. G. Kiernan, *op.cit.*, 57, 64-65.

¹¹⁸ Ildfonso A. Bermejo, *op.cit.*, 67. Immediately afterwards they went to another institution symbolising progressive liberalism, entering in the offices of *El Clamor Público* and asking its director to represent the people.

¹¹⁹ Joaquín Gándara. *op.cit.* Florentino Hernández, *op.cit.*, 406.

¹²⁰ María Zozaya, *Del ocio al Negocio* (Madrid: Catarata, 2007).

¹²¹ Juan de la Corte [pen name of Prudencio Rovira Pita], *El Casino de Madrid, apuntes para su historia, 1836-1902* (Madrid: Aguado, 1902), 67-68.

¹²² *Ibid*, 67.

surrounded by an entourage of ten thousand citizens who were hurling filth, stones, and insults at him. They battered him before shooting him in La Plaza de la Cebada.¹²³ It would not be unreasonable to think that in the fires mentioned before, they had intended to spread this same justice to Sartorius and other ministers whose heads they had requested. If they had done so, they would possibly have dragged them through the city like Inspector Rico, since by venting their anger on the offender, exhibiting him in a walk, was a typical way of popular collective revenge.¹²⁴ This was summarised by one of the most efficient means of spreading oral culture, the popular song sheet: with the lad executed, the people are avenged.¹²⁵ However, that savage act was later repudiated by the liberal authorities, as San Miguel condemned it in a speech that brought tears to the eyes of several of his listeners.¹²⁶



“Chico is carried to La Cebada Square”. Engraving by Rico in: Ribot y Fonserré, *La revolución de Julio en Madrid...*, p. 120.

¹²³ The engraving in: Dionisio Pérez, *op.cit.*, 361.

¹²⁴ As described by Edward P. Thompson, “Rough music: le charivari anglais”, in *Customs in common*, *op.cit.*, 467-538. And in Spain 1808: José M^a Cardesín, *op.cit.*, 33-34-37.

¹²⁵ In Spanish: “siendo Chico fusilado, el pueblo queda vengado”, in: “Revolución de Madrid en Julio de 1854” (Madrid: Sucesores de Hernando, 1854).

¹²⁶ V. G. Kiernan, *op.cit.*, 77-78.

They intended doing something similar in the Casino with another enemy of the people, the Count of Cuba. He chaired the club, where his shady dealing colleagues were and where he had sponsored other friends.¹²⁷ A witness of the time criticised both him and all of them to justify this attack saying that:

“they belonged to the school and gang of Cordoba, Gándara, Salamanca, Sartorius, etc., etc., that is, he was a reckless spendthrift, a luxury lover, greedy for wealth to satisfy his need to fritter it away, a vane rake, an enemy of liberty due to his aristocratic airs, only wishing to give himself relevance and make a lot of noise.”¹²⁸

After the revenge upon Chico’s body, they headed for the centre of symbolic power, since as a trophy of victory they, the tumult, went towards the centre of Madrid. That crowd was looking for the members of the club, and:

“arrived at the Casino of Madrid to capture its President, the Count of Cuba, whose death was demanded by many voices. It was possible to know the plan of the rebels with sufficient time to create a small barricade in front of the Casino, defending it from any audacious attack. [...] Behind that defence, several members resisted the attack of the mob.”¹²⁹

The government forces themselves went to defend them. A column captained by Gandara headed towards the rebels:

“along the Carrera de San Jerónimo, where a company of civilians barricaded in the Casino, it replied to the attacks of the popular combatants. The Count of Cuba was to be found in the Casino, occupied in loading the soldier’s rifles to prevent them from bothering to load them.”¹³⁰

Again, similar mechanisms of social justice appear in this attack, when they helped the person attacked, allowing the possibility of him being saved: thanks to one of these traits of generosity and honesty, the rebels alongside other butchers made those days memorable, agreeing the transfer of the Count to hospital to be cured, hence finishing hostilities.¹³¹ Similar actions could be found in other European revolts, as a conciliation strategy.¹³²

¹²⁷ Between December 1851 and April 1854, he sponsored the admission of nine members, like the lawyer Gregorio Morales Pantoja, Tomás Raya, Manuel Ruiz Monsáñez or the Duke of Fera. ACM;LS;MAR: nº 11.670; nº 11.690; nº 11.907; nº 11.806; nº 11.782.

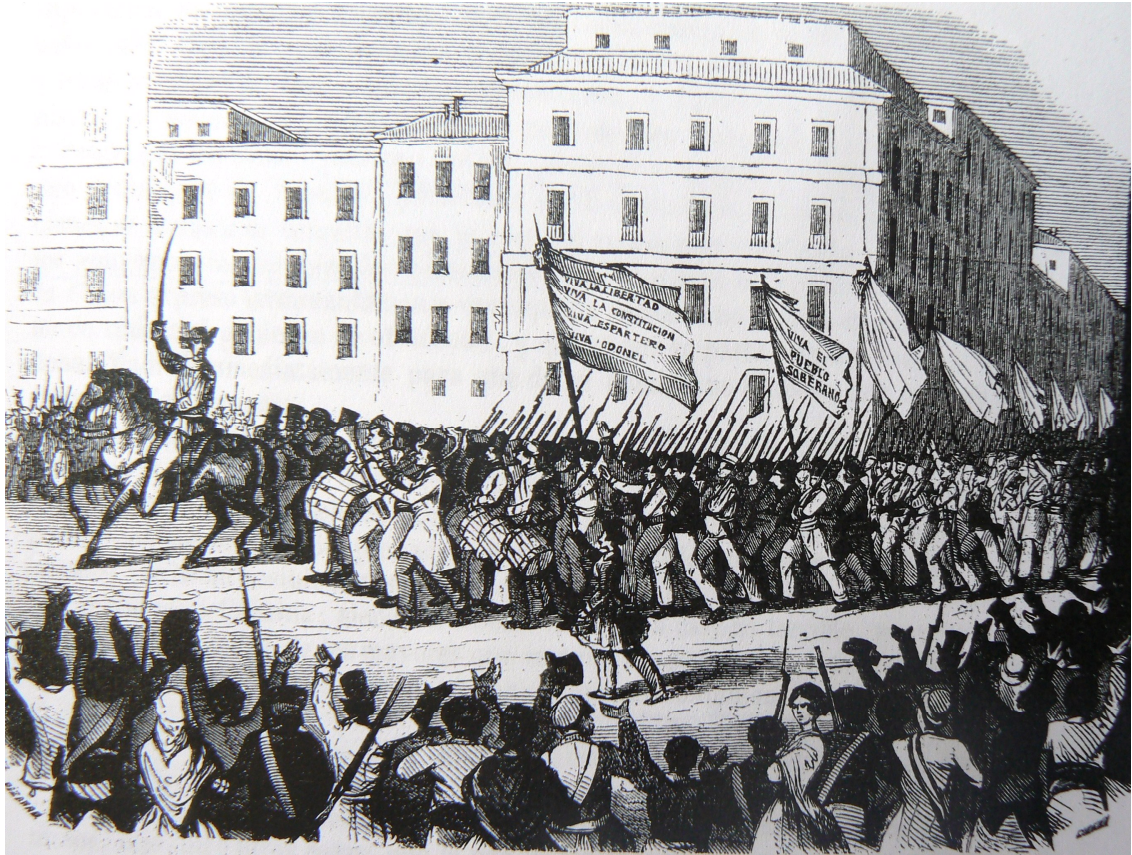
¹²⁸ Antonio Ribot, *op.cit.*, 108.

¹²⁹ Juan de la Corte, *op.cit.*, 68.

¹³⁰ Antonio Ribot, *op.cit.*, 108. Joaquín Gándara, *Manifiesto...*

¹³¹ Juan de la Corte, *El Casino...*, 68-69.

¹³² Eric Hobsbawm, *Trabajadores*, *op.cit.*, 347. Edward P. Thompson, “The moral economy reviewed”, *op.cit.*



“The defenders of the barricades”. Notice that is written in the flags: “Long life to Liberty” “Long life to the Constitution” “Long life to Espartero” “Long life to O’Donnell” “Long life to the sovereign people”. Engraving by Rico, in: Ribot y Fonserré, *La revolución de Julio en Madrid...*, 152.

Thanks to all those mechanisms of imposing justice, justification for the attacks and the resources of collective honesty, the people remained immune and at no time were they reproached for the attacks. The Revolution Hymn itself –with which this essay was started– showed how all these popular actions have only served to fight for liberty and the fatherland, and release itself from the slavery that oppressed the masses. In its words, the terms of decency, virtue, consciousness or generous, related to the people, were opposed by those of vile, cowardly, betrayal or weak and poor-spirited linked to the miscreant tycoons. The proclamations that extolled their victory acclaimed the “heroic”, “victorious”, and “sovereign people,”¹³³ at the feet of whom the throne had been placed. They were attributed the triumph of having converted a moderate military uprising into a democratic one. Because of this they had the legitimate right to be part of the entourage to receive the honours. As the song sheets said: the people, full of glory/ relish their victory; The

¹³³ Fernando Garrido, *op.cit.*, 10, 12, 14, 9.

people who have fought/ form a proud parade.¹³⁴ Such a decisive intervention in the change of government exonerated them from any blame for the disturbances.

Undoubtedly, this exoneration could be due to the resulting victory of the progressive governors that had been exalted, like Evaristo San Miguel, Leopoldo O'Donnell or Baldomero Espartero, whose portraits had been carried as revolutionary banners. Espartero was considered a hero of the masses, also called Son of the people.¹³⁵ Acclaimed at the time as the “man of the people” for his allegedly humble origins, he threw in his lot with the masses who now gave him power. Espartero himself repeated the slogan: “Let the national will be done.”¹³⁶

Conclusion

We have studied a revolution generated by the discontent of the people regarding political leaders who had forgotten, amidst widespread corruption, how to govern them. We have seen the attacks against very precise targets which for the people had become symbols of moderate power: tycoon's palaces where sumptuous objects were burned, the meeting place for moderate politicians or property of the press giving them a voice, all of them becoming expiatory centres for collective revenge. The latter was ruled by a popular moral attitude that identified the imposition of justice with the destruction of said symbols and even with the murder of someone to blame. However, at the same time, it was understood that this justice should be complete and could legitimise extinguishing the fire so as not to harm innocents, kill whoever tried to steal an object which should be burnt in the expiatory pyre, fight each other to sit in the chair of an ex-leader of the government or allow the President of the Casino himself who they had tried to kill, to be taken to hospital. On the other hand, these ways of fighting served to define the *good* community that died for and killed for principles that were considered just and moral so that the people might rule. Their banners were freedom, the Constitution, the monarchy and the leaders they considered honest. The people rose up against the rulers that transgressed these principles. At the outset the military returned the attacks with violence, accusing the people of being bandits and mercenaries. Later on a differentiation between the bandits and the people allowed for the former to be transformed into the enemy and accused of carrying out the initial attacks.

¹³⁴ [Song sheet, in spanish: *pliego de cordel*] “Revolución de Madrid en julio de 1854”. Madrid: despacho sucesores de Hernando, 1854

¹³⁵ Fernando Garrido, *op.cit.*, 9-19.

¹³⁶ This and other slogans in: Ildefonso A. Bermejo, *op.cit.*, 91-100.

Later sources discharged the people from all blame, justifying the moral goal of their attacks. The manifestos, the skits, the engravings, the hymn and the remaining literary or historic sources tended to excuse such collective attacks. Military personnel who repressed them with the governmental forces had to justify themselves for their violent attitude. They even tried to assimilate the people's ideals and proclamations after the event. All the latter was due to the victory of the progressive group the people had exalted. Obviously, this victory had to exalt the role of the people, exonerating them from any blame, whose triumph would lead to the period called "Liberal Biennium" (1854-1856), initially of a popular and progressive character. This *dénouement* was essential in order to establish in retrospect that it protected the people and completely justified the moral vengeance of the masses.