

**THE BRITISH
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF PORTUGAL**

TWENTY FIRST ANNUAL REPORT
AND REVIEW 1994

13, Rua da Arriaga
1200 LISBON
Tel: 397 86 03

Suplemento ao n.º 237 dos PONTOS NOS ii

Preço 50 réis



- Aqui tem tia Victoria, mais um bocado d' Africa. Custou-me a arrancar-o dos dentes do meu povo, mas o governo foi habil, preparando uma farça diplomatica que fludio o pobre diabo até ao fim. O resto na-de vir...

- Ah! King Charles! E's melhor fraldiqueiro do meu imperio. Desde João IV que a Inglaterra não faz senão sugar na tradição dos Braganças, o melhor das suas expansões colonias.

- Em troca, não me affaste a sua esquadra do Tejo. O povo grita, e eu posso ter urgencia d'embarcar.

- Tu chamares povo a essa lama portugueza que pizamos? Raça de Macacos!

- Todo o meu ideal seria ser rei de Portugal, em Paris.

- E nós ficavamos sem feitor que nos garantisse o fabrico dos vinhos em Portugal. Não sabes que tanto eu como os meus filhos, só com vinho do Porto nos emborrachamos!

From the front page of "Pontos nos ii", 16.1.1890.

BRITISH AND PORTUGUESE ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE BRITISH ULTIMATUM OF 1890

By Maria Teresa Pinto Coelho

This article attempts briefly to evaluate and compare British and Portuguese attitudes towards the British Ultimatum, as it came to be known in Portugal. But what is meant by the Ultimatum? It refers to a Memorandum sent to the Portuguese Government by Lord Salisbury on 11 January 1890. In that document Lord Salisbury demanded the withdrawal of the Portuguese troops from Mashonaland and the Shire-Nysa region where Portuguese and British interests in Africa collided. The text ran as follows:

What Her Majesty's Government require and insist upon is the following: that telegraphic instructions shall be sent to the governor of Mozambique at once to the effect that all and any Portuguese military forces which are actually on the Shire or in the Makololo or in the Mashona territory are to be withdrawn. Her Majesty's Government considers that without this the assurances given by the Portuguese Government are illusory.

Mr. Petre is compelled by his instruction to leave Lisbon at once with all the members of his legation unless a satisfactory answer to this foregoing intimation is received by him in the course of this evening, and Her Majesty's ship Enchantress is now at Vigo waiting for his orders.¹

The terms of the Ultimatum aroused violent anti-British feelings all over Portugal. Demonstrations were held, the British consulate stoned and economic sanctions against Britain demanded. In Oporto university students called on the

¹ Quoted in Marquês de Lavradio, *Portugal em África Depois de 1851: Subsídios para a História* (Lisboa 1936), pp. 169-170.

King to expel the British Consul, Oswald Crawford. Advocating Portugal's claims in Africa, the Portuguese press and literature echoed and stimulated the reaction against Britain. Journalists, poets, novelists, students and the public in general protested violently against what they saw as an outrage.

The Ultimatum also found some echo in the British press. However, as it will be pointed out, the Portuguese affair was seen in a very different way. British rights in Africa were reaffirmed, and Portugal was mostly seen as a weak and uncivilized nation unable to administer her African possessions.

The basic research for this study was carried out by reading some of the major British and Portuguese newspapers of different political persuasions published at the time of the Ultimatum² and some of the most representative Portuguese literary works which deal with the African question³.

However, in order to understand the different points of view on the Anglo-Portuguese dispute, one has to take into account its international context. At a time when several European nations were consolidating their position in the African Continent, the Ultimatum meant the official acknowledgement of British sovereignty over territories Portugal had been claiming for centuries. As a matter of fact, under the pressure of European expansion in Africa in the 1880s, mainly French, German and British, the Portuguese tried to extend their sovereignty over the Mashona and Gaza regions. The idea was to establish a large corridor linking the Portuguese possessions of Angola and Mozambique.

The Portuguese had long settled in Africa although in mid-nineteenth century they were only to be found in certain points along both coasts. Although some continental crossings had been attempted before, only in 1875, when the Geographical Society of Lisbon was founded (thirty years after the founding of the Royal Geographical Society of London), was there a real effort to explore and colonize Africa. By then Livingstone had already travelled in the hinterland of South-East Africa, and his works were widely known.

Capelo and Ivens, Serpa Pinto, Paiva de Andrade, Victor Cordon are just some of the best known explorers aiming at establishing the authority of the Portuguese Crown over the territories between Angola and Mozambique. However, the Portuguese efforts were hampered by the agreements reached at

² The analysis of the press is expanded in Maria Teresa Pinto Coelho's "'Pérfida Albion' and 'Little Portugal': the Role of the Press in British and Portuguese National Perceptions of the 1890 Ultimatum", *Portuguese Studies*, 6 (1990), 173-190.

³ See Maria Teresa Pinto Coelho, "Apocalipse e Regeneração: o Ultimatum e a mitologia da Pátria na literatura finissecular", doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 1994.

the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. Article 35 of chapter VI of the General Act established the following:

The signatory powers of the present Act recognize the obligation to insure the establishment of authority in the regions occupied by them on the coasts of the African Continent sufficient to protect existing rights: and, as the case may be, freedom of trade and transit under the conditions agreed upon.⁴

This article was important because it threw out historical claims based on priority of discovery and travel (the principle which had hitherto been used by the Portuguese to account for their rights in Africa) unless the claims rested on tangible occupation.

In spite of the outcome of the Berlin Conference the idea of a transafrican belt was not abandoned by the Portuguese and to ensure this Portugal signed treaties with France and Germany on 12 and 30 December 1886 respectively. By the German treaty Portugal laid claim to a belt of territory along the Zambezi valley linking Angola to Mozambique. Following the treaty Barros Gomes, the Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs, presented two maps representing the Portuguese claims in Africa in which a pink coloured stretch of land extended from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean. This was to be and still is known as the "Rose Coloured Map".

England protested against the German-Portuguese treaty on the grounds that there was lack of effective occupation. There were two main reasons why Britain objected to the Rose-Coloured Map. On the one hand Portuguese pretensions in Nyasaland were an obstacle to the activities of the Scottish missionaries who, in pursuit of Livingstone's aims, had settled in the area in 1875. On the other hand it threatened Cecil Rhodes' policy of expansion. Rhodes, indeed was an obstacle to Portuguese ambitions. Although he was not its mentor, he was responsible for the Cape-to-Cairo project, or rather, for the establishment of a British sphere of influence stretching from Cape Town to the Mediterranean, which consequently overlapped onto the long dreamt of Portuguese African belt. In order to achieve northward expansion from the Cape Britain had been following a policy of annexations: in 1885 Bechuanaland was made a British protectorate, two years later Zululand was proclaimed British

⁴ Edward Hertlet, *The Map of Africa by Treaty*, 2 Vols (London 1894) I, p. 43.

territory, and in 1888, with the conclusion of a treaty with the Metabele king Lobengula, the British acquired all his domains between the Limpopo and the Zambezi, that is Mashona and Matabeleland. Lobengula's former lands became the operating zone of the British South Africa Company in 1889.

The episode which ultimately led to an open conflict between Portugal and Britain was the battle between the Portuguese explorer Serpa Pinto and the Makololo which took place at Mupassa, in the Shire district, on 8 November 1889. Although Barros Gomes tried to emphasize the scientific purposes of Serpa Pinto's expedition and to justify the attack on the Makololo as an act of self defence, Britain accused Portugal of aggression and of having disregarded British sovereignty over the areas claimed by Portugal. Barros Gomes responded by reaffirming Portuguese authority over those areas basing his arguments on priority of discovery. Historical arguments were dismissed by Lord Salisbury who, under the pressure of the Church of Scotland and Rhodes' increasing influence in London, issued the Ultimatum. The Portuguese King, Dom Carlos, could not but comply with British demands. On 20 August 1890 a treaty was signed by which Mozambique's boundaries were laid down. It was the end of the Rose-Coloured Map dream.

Let us see how the Ultimatum was seen by the British. In some of the articles published in the British papers just before the Ultimatum it is possible to realise how unavoidable and justifiable the Ultimatum was to British eyes. In fact, the Ultimatum was seen by the press just as a logical conclusion of a long dispute which did not have a plausible *raison d'être* since Britain's rights were considered beyond question. All the papers were in agreement that the Portuguese had no right to establish a belt across Africa. Portuguese claims to Nyasa and Mashonaland should be rejected on the grounds that there was no "effective occupation", the principle established by the Berlin Conference. This opinion is published by three papers of different political tendency: the independent weekly *Spectator*, the *Saturday Review*, a conservative magazine, and the left wing magazine *Fortnightly Review*.

Under the title 'The Quarrel with Portugal' the *Spectator* wrote:

It is quite certain, and, indeed, on the face of things, that Portugal can neither colonise nor civilise such an expanse of territory, and it is the first claim recognised by the European Conference which distributed the territories on the Niger and Congo.⁵

⁵ 21 December 1889, p. 872. Page numbers will be given only when an article was not published on the front page. The year of publication is 1889 for the months of November and December and 1890 for January and February. Nineteenth century spelling is kept.

According to the *Saturday Review*:

Although all international law is contentious enough, there is perhaps, less contention about no point than about the proceedings necessary to give validity to the claim prior to that of other nations. It must be distinctly made, and it must be followed up by, at least, some attempt to make the possession real. In none of these respects can any sufficient evidence be produced in support of the Portuguese position.⁶

A few days before the Ultimatum the *Fortnightly Review* published a long article on the Portuguese expansion in Africa. Going back to the Discoveries, that article analysed the causes of the Anglo-Portuguese conflict concluding 'that no evidence exists of effective occupation by any power but Lobengula of the lands claimed by the British South Africa Company on one hand; nor of those in Nyssaland on other, before the planting of the British flag, much less before the actual British occupation of the past twenty-five years.'⁷

However, the press opposed the Rose-Coloured Map for other reasons. Almost every paper accused Portugal of maintaining and fostering the African slave trade. The *Spectator* wrote:

Portugal has done nothing to repress the trade in men; and the attempt to advance her colonial boundaries is, in effect an attempt to enlarge the surface whence compulsory labour can be withdrawn.⁸

The complaints about the Portuguese slave trade dated back to Livingstone's travel accounts. The impact of his writings was extremely important in creating an unfavorable image of Portugal in Africa. Not only did he strongly criticise the Portuguese for disregarding human rights, but he also publicized the image of Portuguese maladministration in Africa especially in his *Missionary Travels* (1857) and his *Narrative of an expedition to the Zambezi* (1864-65). This is also the image to be found in the British press at the same time of the Ultimatum. One of the most bitter articles published by *The Times* said:

The rule of Portugal in Eastern Africa is a curse to black and a shame and disgrace to white humanity. Murder, anarchy, plunder, and licentiousness are the normal conditions of the nations inhabiting the territory which it claims.⁹

⁶ 30 November, p. 601.

⁷ January, p. 143.

⁸ 16 November, p. 665.

⁹ 7 January, p. 7.

Therefore, allowing Portuguese expansion in Africa meant betraying Livingstone's most cherished dreams of converting and civilizing the natives. Unlike Britain, regarded by the press as a symbol of progress and as the champion for humanitarian ideals, Portugal could only spoil the work that had been done. This was written in the conservative *National Review* by Verney Lovett Cameron, who had been sent to Africa by the Royal Society in search of Livingstone:

Bul I fearlessly maintain that Portugal has neither right nor title to the ground now occupied by British pioneers of Christianity, civilization, and commerce, and to give it to her would be a great default on our part, and the effects would be disastrous to the future of the native who in these cases have the first aim in our consideration.¹⁰

These, then, were the main arguments presented by the British press against Barros Gomes' claims: no rights whatsoever over the territories between Angola and Mozambique due to lack of real occupation, feeble and inconsistent historical evidence to account for sovereignty over the area, incapacity to administer and civilize it, and inhumanity towards the natives.

As to the Ultimatum itself, the British press tried to convince its readers that it was inevitable and supported Lord Salisbury. The *Saturday Review*, a weekly paper close to Salisbury's policy, wrote: 'As even violent Gladstonians admitted, before it became possible both to accept the results and scold Lord Salisbury for attaining them, the Portuguese simply had not a leg to stand on'¹¹.

The *Spectator* went further, seeing events in terms of Scottish missionary and commercial involvement in Africa. Should Gladstone not support Lord Salisbury 'he would have against him the whole body of anti-slavery opinion and nearly the entire Scottish vote'¹².

After having justified the Ultimatum the press describes what happens in Portugal. Several articles comment on the dramatic events which take place in Lisbon and Oporto. One of the most interesting is a letter published by the

¹⁰ January, p. 588.

¹¹ 18 January, p. 166.

¹² 11 January, p. 41.

Graphic, a sensationalist paper. In this letter, entitled, 'Oporto After the Ultimatum' a British lady tells what happened to her when she arrived in Oporto. She says that there were plans to send the British women and children to England, that the British in Oporto did not dare to leave their homes for fear of being attacked, that there was chaos in the streets, etc. However, according to her nothing very violent seems to have happened:

The street boys, always obnoxious, had certainly now an extra inducement to make targets of us; but beyond this and a few complimentary epithets - such as 'beef', 'pirates' and 'ladrões' (thieves), we met with no ill-treatment; though the evil glances and insolent stares, accompanied by the disdainful remark 'Inglezes', which generally greeted our approach, showed how universal is the feeling of hatred and indignation. It is really wonderful to see with what intensity of conviction the Portuguese of all classes believe that we wronged them and defrauded them. Africa, they say, is theirs; they discovered it centuries ago, and have been spreading religion and civilization with self-sacrificing diligence; now England - grasping, thievish England - fixing greedy eyes on the land, which they alone have made worth possessing, presuming on her cannons, her ships, which they have taught her to use, and her riches, gained ever at their cost, would rob them of it by brutal force!¹³

The British press also tried to justify what was happening in Portugal. For instance the *Guardian* wrote:

No Englishman, however farsighted, probably foresaw the storm which this Lake Nyassa dispute has aroused in Portugal. It may perhaps be traced to three causes - to the excitable character of a Southern people; to the self-reproach felt by the Portuguese for their prolonged neglect of splendid colonial opportunities; and lastly... to Republican intrigues.¹⁴

In December 1889 the *Scots Observer* had already called the attention to the relationship between the progress of the Republican movement in Portugal, encouraged by the Brazilian revolution which took place in November 1889, and the African question:

¹³ 22 February, p. 219.

¹⁴ 19 February, p. 28.

The Brazilian revolution has made some stir in Portugal - some stir, we mean, in Republican circles; and though it may not be much of a commotion, it is too considerable to be neglected when a question of national pride has arisen to move the whole people.¹⁵

The Republican party had long been taking advantage of the African question to seek to undermine the monarchy. It had already benefited from the uproar caused by the Treaty of Lourenço Marques and also from its involvement in the Camões Tricentenary in 1880. The Ultimatum gave it the chance it had been looking for to strengthen its position and, as we shall see, the Republican press did not miss the opportunity to win the people over to the Republican side.

The British periodicals also refer to the role played by the press in Portugal. According to the *Scots Observer*: 'The Portuguese press is in full roar of defiance, and the whole aspect of affairs is darkened'¹⁶. Also the letter published by the British lady says: 'It is these newspapers which do most of the mischief, and fan the flame of popular indignation which, left alone, would soon probably die away'¹⁷.

In fact, the Portuguese press is largely to be blamed for civil unrest. After 11 January and roughly during the following two months, the Ultimatum became the key issue in the papers. Long and fiery articles were devoted to the Anglo-Portuguese dispute. They covered the front page of every newspaper; most of them under huge headlines, and conveyed similar messages of anger, shame, despair and revenge. 'A Traição', 'O Ultrage' and 'A Grande Afronta Nacional', or 'Infames', 'A Nossa Vingança' and 'As Armas!' were just some of the titles under which the Ultimatum was reported¹⁸.

The Republican press in particular played no small role in shaping public opinion. The Republican papers *O Século* and *Os Debates* were active in mounting an anti-monarchical campaign. The attack on the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance was one of the key issues of this campaign. Both papers accused the

¹⁵ 21 December. p. 116.

¹⁶ 11 January, p. 200.

¹⁷ 22 February, p. 219.

¹⁸ Respectively, *Os Debates*, 13 January; *A Província*, 22 and 29 January; *Os Debates*, 12 and 17 January.

British of having taken advantage of the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance to exploit the Portuguese. According to *Os Debates*, such exploitation dated back to the earliest contacts between Portugal and England, that is, the days when the first English crusaders went to Portugal:

Vem de longe a avidez bárbara e o espírito traiçoeiro dos filhos da soberba Albion. Vem do tempo das cruzadas, em que os ingleses cometeram toda a qualidade de vandalismo e opressão. A aliança inglesa representa para nós a exploração das nossas riquezas e o ludíbrio das convenções estipuladas.¹⁹

O Século also published several articles on the Alliance. It indignantly listed every treaty signed between the Braganzas and Britain as evidence that the Alliance had been damaging to the Portuguese and that the Braganza dynasty was to be blamed²⁰.

However, criticism on the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance was not to be found in the Republican press alone. The press was unanimous in condemning the Alliance as the symbol of Portugal's political and economic dependence on Britain. An economic boycott was one of the most popular measures proposed. The Progressist paper *Novidades* wrote: 'Não pode haver emancipação política perfeita quando a não haja comercial e industrial'²¹. *A Província* went further, advocating the development of Portuguese agriculture and industry in order not only to avoid the import of British goods but foreign products in general²².

The Alliance, then, became the symbol of Portugal's economic exploitation by her ally. Even British religious and humanitarian acts in Africa were nothing but pretexts for ambitious colonialist plans with commercial purposes, and, *O Dia* added: 'É em nome da civilização e da humanidade que os ingleses assaltam e espoliam em Africa os outros povos'²³.

The picture of Britain in the Portuguese press was uniformly that of a greedy, self-seeking, extortionate nation 'entretida na contagem das libras, absorvida pela pirataria que vinha exercendo no mundo, na Irlanda, no Egypto, na África, em toda a parte', as the *Debates*²⁴ put it. This image of Britain was to be taken up by the literary texts on the Ultimatum.

¹⁹ 22 January.

²⁰ See *O Século* from 20 to 24 January.

²¹ 14 January.

²² 21 and 24 January.

²³ 17 January.

²⁴ 17 January.

The press also echoed the cultural reaction to the Ultimatum. In the papers there are for instance some articles on the intrusion of English vocabulary into the Portuguese language, such as those published by *O Dia*²⁵. According to its author, Leite de Vasconcellos, the idea behind such articles was ‘para de algum modo repellir as agressões brutae e infames da pirataria inglesa, que de modo tão insólito e tão opposto às normas pelas quae se devem reger os países civilizados, se revelou ultimamente contra Portugal’²⁶. Leite de Vasconcellos listed English words together with their Portuguese equivalents. For instance:

bife	beef
bréquefesta	breakfast
lanche	lunch
piquenique	picnic
pudim	pudding
sanduíche	sandwich
queque	cake
xumeco	shoemaker

The papers also published articles by well known writers of the time. For instance *O Dia* published a letter of protest by the poet Guerra Junqueiro²⁷. For its part, the *Província* published an article entitled ‘Expição’ by the poet Antero de Quental. This article was published in the special number which the *Província* devoted to the Ultimatum, to which several other writers also contributed articles and poems. Poems on the Ultimatum were published by other newspapers, and even new literary magazines were founded. The most important one was *Anátoma* where we can find poems and articles by Camilo, Bulhão Pato, Eça, Antero and Gomes Leal, among others.

Among the poets Guerra Junqueiro was the one who wrote the best known poems on the Ultimatum. The most famous was *Pátria*, published in 1896. *Pátria* resumes some of the attacks against England which we have already found in the press of the time. The Braganza dynasty is also severely criticized, Dom Carlos in particular. The poem opens with the King surrounded by his

²⁵ See ‘Os Anglicismos no Português’ by Leite de Vasconcellos, published on 19 January, p. 2 and, by the same author, ‘Fora com a Marca Ingleza’ from issue of 9 February, p. 3.

²⁶ 19 January, p. 2.

²⁷ 10 February.

ministers at the time when he is about to sign the boundary treaty of August 1890 with Britain. The king’s indifference as to whether to sign the treaty or not is magnificently portrayed:

Leitura inútil!... Deixa lá... Seja o que for...
Seja o que for... adeus!... assinarei...

The careless attitude of the King, his carefree behaviour throughout the various crises, his almost treacherous acceptance of the country’s enemies is a recurrent topic throughout the poem. The King’s irresponsibility is stressed by a dramatic succession of his ancestors, who enter the stage as ghosts and urge him to sign the treaty. One by one every monarch of the House of Braganza is blamed by Junqueiro for having sold Portugal to the British.

This interpretation of the role played by the Braganzas in Anglo-Portuguese relations (which is echoed by the press) is also to be found in the works of the historian Oliveira Martins, namely in his *História de Portugal* published in 1879. For instance, Oliveira Martins wrote about the Restauração:

É verdade que a nossa independência restaura-se em 1640. Mas como? De que modo? Atrever-se-à alguém a dizer que é uma ressurreição?[...] Não vivemos desde 1641 sob o protectorado da Inglaterra? Não chegámos a ser positivamente uma feitoria britânica?²⁸

or:

Da longa campanha diplomática da Restauração através de todos os incidentes [...] resultava este facto que ficou pesando por dois séculos sobre o novo Portugal: o protectorado inglês. Protectorado, sempre se traduziu, na linguagem real da história, por exploração: é uma eufemismo diplomático.²⁹

Oliveira Martins is also materialized in Junqueiro’s *Pátria* in the character of Astrologus. Astrologus, the King’s chronicler, traces the History of Portugal. He compares Portugal’s former glory to late nineteenth century decadence and blames the Braganzas for having brought the country to ruin.

²⁸ Oliveira Martins, *História de Portugal* (Lisboa 1987), p. 23.

²⁹ *História de Portugal*, p. 327.

Also in his *História da Civilização Ibérica* Oliveira Martins wrote: 'Contundido, miserável, roto, faminto, Portugal fora tombando, de baldão em baldão, até o fundo de um abismo de loucura vertiginosa, de abjeção torpe, onde agora se debatia de corpo e alma'³⁰. Junqueiro adopts Oliveira Martins metaphor of sick, dying Portugal. In *Pátria* Portugal is represented by twin characters. One is an old madman which symbolizes the state Portugal has reached. He is another ghost, an enormous, bearded, cadaveric figure dressed in rags and holding *Os Lusíadas*, a book the King is unable to identify. The other character which portrays Portugal is Nuno Álvares Pereira, the madman's soul, who is also a ghost.

Despite its general pessimistic atmosphere the poem ends with a note of hope. When the madman is almost dying he is reunited to his soul (Nuno Álvares Pereira) and gives the latter's redeeming sword to a child, the symbol for the future of Portugal. But what kind of future is to be expected? The Appendix to the poem, in which Junqueiro analyses the State of Portugal, seems to provide an answer to this question. In this Appendix the poet asserts his conviction that it is in the people that the salvation of Portugal lies and concludes that the Republic is the only way out.

Although it is almost a Republican manifesto in which most of the arguments spread by the Republican papers are to be found, the poem is cleverly built and stands for the messianic expectation of a Saviour who will be able to rescue Portugal.

Pátria resumes some of the *leit-motives* of other works by Junqueiro, namely *Finis Patriae*, which was published just after the Ultimatum. Here again Junqueiro makes use of his poetry to describe late nineteenth century decadent Portugal and mainly to undermine the Monarchy. Junqueiro describes the crises in Portugal in moving lines. Lack of food, swarms of emigrants leaving the country, the poor condition of workers and fishermen, schools and hospitals in ruins are described through images of poverty, despair and death. There is a general atmosphere of disease and decay which swallows everything. This is to be seen as the state Portugal has reached after the Ultimatum.

Also related to the Ultimatum are Junqueiro's poems 'O Caçador Simão' and 'À Inglaterra'. The former is a picture of Dom Carlos, who in the same way as in *Pátria* is accused of lack of energy and blamed for his incapacity to rule

³⁰ Oliveira Martins, *História da Civilização Ibérica* (Lisboa 1984), p. 257.

the country. While Portugal agonizes he only thinks of going hunting up to the moment he becomes someone else's prey – England's naturally!

The poem 'A Inglaterra' is a picture of England which does not differ much from the one to be found in the press. In fact, the poem is built upon stereotyped images. England is viewed as a drunk, cynical, greedy nation which preaches the word of God in exchange for money:

Ó cínica Inglaterra, ó bébeda impudente,
Que tens levado, tu, ao negro e à escravidão?
Chitas e hipocrisia, evangelho e aguardente,
Repartindo por todo o escuro continente
A mortalha de Cristo em tangas d'algodão.

or

A tua bíblia! o teu Cristo!... A tua bíblia é uma agenda
Em que a virtude heróica a cifras se reduz.
E o teu Cristo londrino é um Deus de compra e venda.
Deus que ressucitou para abrir uma tenda
De cortiça, carvão, álcool e panos crus!

However, one should not think that Junqueiro's poetry on the Ultimatum is totally original. Long before the Ultimatum Gomes Leal and others had already written poetry on the Anglo-Portuguese dispute in Africa. The best known is Gomes Leal's *A Traição* which was published in 1881.

The poem followed the signature of the Treaty of Lourenço Marques. Anticipating Junqueiro's Dom Carlos created about fifteen years later, Gomes Leal accuses Dom Luís of selling Portugal to England and of submitting it 'aos risos, às afrontas, à vaia e aos pontapés do ébrio marinheiro, / do marujo saxão, do John Bull caixeiro'³¹.

At that time Angelina Vidal also wrote *O Ultraje*, a poem which also criticizes British imperialism and the Anglo-Portuguese Alliance:

Levaste-nos do Oriente a melhor filha,
Bombaim por quem inda a Patria chora;

³¹ Gomes Leal, *A Traição. Carta a El-Rei D. Luiz Sobre a Venda de Lourenço Marques* (Lisboa 1881), p. 14.

E o diadema que em tua fronte brilha
E pranto das nações! [.....]

[...]

Hoje que mais cobiças? E o Zaire?
Lourenço Marques? Goa? Que desaire
Ó raça dos heroes da media idade!³²

Later on another episode connected with the African question caused a similar reaction. The so called 'Quillinan episode' broke out when Jacob Bright, an MP, spoke against Portugal in the Parliament. Luís de Quillinan, the Portuguese military *attaché* in London, answered back and challenged him for a duel (which Bright did not accept). This caused a strong nationalist reaction in Portugal. In 1884 a book entitled *A Pátria: a Luiz de Quillinan* was published, which included hundreds of texts supporting and praising Quillinan. Among the poems included in the book there is a poem by Gomes Leal. Once again the poet took the chance to criticize England and wrote *A Infame Inglaterra* attacking British colonialism in Ireland, India, Egypt and South Africa:

Arranca, ó verde Erin! os olhos ao milhafre.
Apedreja este algoz do Indio e mais do Cafre.
Do Chinez, do Abexim e do Fellá sereno!
Apedreja este algoz do humilde e do pequeno.
Que sabe só vencer a libras esterlinas!
Derriba este senhor da Morte e das ruinas,
Carrasco do Irlandez, do Bóer, mais do Cafre,
Ó nobre Irlanda arranca os olhos ao milhafre!

Tira-lhe o coração e offerta-o á Justiça!
Ha muito que tu estas de pé, sempre na liça,
E de espada na mão á porta do teu lar!
Accommette sem dó o déspota do mar
E arranca sem piedade o coração da féra
Até não palpitar a entranha onde se gera

³² Angelina Vidal, *O Ultraje!* (Lisboa 1883), p. 12.

A rapina, a ambição, a crápula, a cobiça.
Tira-lhe o coração e offerta-o à Justiça!³³

Besides criticizing British colonialism Gomes Leal also portrays British degeneration through the image of a huge, immoral, decadent London:

Ó Londres immortal, Roma de nevoeiro,
Palmira do carvão, Thebas do cervejeiro,
Babylonia do *speen* á fina luz do gaz!
Só vós podeis fazer ao velho Satanaz
Eriçar o cabelo e enchel-o de asco e horror,
Narrando as bacchanaes do monstruoso amor
Da Venus meretriz, do Vício em seu lameiro.
Ó Londres immortal! Roma de nevoeiro! (p. 31)

This image of London is also to be found in other late-nineteenth century Portuguese writers. For instance, Eça de Queirós wrote in his *Cartas de Inglaterra* about London nights: 'Londres, numa noite de Inverno, exala violência e crime. E pode-se afirmar que em cada uma das tipóias que, aos milhafres e milhares, passam como flechas, com relampejar rubro de lanternas, vai um cidadão ou uma cidadã cometendo ou preparando-se para cometer, com excepção da preguiça, um dos sete pecados mortais'³⁴.

One can only understand these negative images of England if we have in mind British and Portuguese relations in Africa at the time. From 1880 to 1890 the climax of the Anglo-Portuguese rivalry in Africa was reached. The Ultimatum meant that the long dreamt of dream of an African corridor was shattered. Moreover, in terms of the national unconscious, it did not meet the expectations of power and glory raised by the nationalistic propaganda of the time. A *Portuguesa*, which would become the anthem of the Republic, is one of the texts which best expresses such feelings. Not only it evokes the Portuguese Discoveries (the 'heróis do mar'), but also calls on the Portuguese to fight against Britain. The original refrain was not 'Contra os canhões', but 'Contra os

³³ Gomes Leal, "a Infame Inglaterra", in *Palmadas na Pança de John Bull*, p. 33. Also published in *O Rebate*, 23 March 1890 p. 1.

³⁴ Eça de Queirós, *Cartas de Inglaterra e Crónicas de Londres* (Lisboa, n. d.). pp. 38-39.

bretões'. This was soon forgotten, but not Lord Salisbury's memorandum. While for Britain the Ultimatum was just a minor diplomatic episode, a step in the Scramble for Africa, for the Portuguese it was a national catastrophe or, as Eça put it, 'a maior crise enfrentada pela sua geração'³⁵.

—ooOoo—

Maria Teresa Pinto Coelho is a lecturer in the Department of Anglo-Portuguese Studies at the Universidad Nova de Lisboa. She gained her Doctorate at Oxford University in 1994 with a thesis entitled *Apocalipse e Regeneração: o Ultimatum e a mitologia da Pátria na Literatura Finissecular*.

³⁵ Eça de Queirós, "O Ultimatum", in *Cartas Inéditas de Fradique Mendes e Mais Páginas Esquecidas* (Porto 1965), pp. 233-235 (p. 238).