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THE TRIUMPH OF WHIG PRINCIPLES IN THE
PORTUGUESE WARS OF SUCCESSION

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Portugal is often called England's oldest ally. In certain times of stress it has been her only ally. The bonds between the two have been gradually forged from the ties created by the marriage of Catherine of Braganza to Charles II and by the Methuen Treaty of 1703. Not only has the direct influence of England always been felt in Portugal, but often the domestic political rivalries in England have had their repercussions in Portugal. This is especially evident in the determination of the Portuguese Wars of Succession. Their outcome hinged directly upon the great Whig victory in England of 1830.

1820 marked a reaction in Portugal against the key role played by the British whereby Marshall Beresford remained Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese Army and Sir Charles Stuart the diplomatic advisor long after the English Army of Occupation had withdrawn. A radical constitution was hastily promulgated whereby all legislative and administrative powers were given to one chamber, all foreign influence expelled and the King was only accorded a suspensive veto. It was to counteract this that England supported the return of John VI from Brasil in 1821 so that he could take up the responsibilities of his Portuguese throne and restore monarchistic principles. For five years John VI was destined to lead a miserable life. His unhappiness sprang in great part from the machinations of his wife, the former Infanta Carlota Joaquina of Spain, and the

singularly unfilial attitude of his son, Don Miguel. Often suspected of being illegitimate, Miguel was singularly close to his mother. Mother and son were both opposed to all Liberal policies and the party that was later to go under the name of Miguelite in the War of Succession was then named the Absolutist party. The Portuguese used to speak of Carlotta as the «occulta mão» — the hidden hand. There was no better description of the Queen than this. Never visibly at the head of any particular party, but always fermenting discontent, she had been equally troublesome in Brasil, where she thought her Spanish blood entitled her to take over the dominions of the impotent Ferdinand in the New World, as in Portugal. Her campaign against Buenos Aires had been unsuccessful, but in Portugal her actions seemed to have the support of the Evil One himself. It was even whispered that, after several vain attempts upon the life of John VI and his later imprisonment by Carlota and Miguel, his eventual death in 1826 was due to her poisoning.

John's death was the starting point for the succeeding years of discord and bloodshed in Portugal. While his son, Don Pedro, was theoretically now King of Portugal as well as Emperor of Brasil, which position he had occupied since the Decree of 1822, everyone expected Pedro to abdicate his Portuguese throne in favour of his younger brother, Don Miguel. But Pedro, the idealist and the impractical, had no intention of any such action. He gave the throne to his daughter, Dona Maria da Glória, and appointed his brother, Don Miguel, Regent instead of his sister Isabel Maria, who had been accorded the Regency during the pleasure of Pedro IV by the terms of John VI's will. In addition, Pedro said that Miguel was to become affianced to Dona Maria. In the same year Pedro promulgated a Charter of Constitution that was to be another point of dispute in the War of Succession. More mild than its radical forbear of 1820, it contained the two basic principles that laws were only to be passed by the Cortes and that the Camera should only be composed of clergy and nobility. Miguel refused to fulfill the necessary requirements and left for Vienna.

Metternich, his finger in every pie in Europe, persuaded Miguel to take the necessary oaths, with certain mental reservations as we later find, and to return to Portugal. There he found himself received very warmly by the people. As the Rever-

end George Edmundson says in the *Cambridge Modern History*, «To the last the Portuguese masses were Miguelite to the core.» In spite of the excesses which Miguel committed on first tasting Kingship, and of his flagrant disregard of the Constitution, there was comparatively little retribution on the part of other European powers. The French sent a few ships up the Tagus and the British landed some 5,000 troops to protect their interests and preserve law and order. These troops had been originally solicited by the Princess Regent, Isabel Maria, to protect the Portuguese from a Spanish invasion led by the Infante Dom Sebastião. Even they were withdrawn by the Tory Wellington ministry of 1828 and so was removed the last support of the Constitutional party. Europe benignly turned its head and winked at the Absolutist restoration in Portugal. England refused to concern itself with Portuguese affairs and, as the Portuguese historian, Martins, says, «The English Court received Maria II as Queen, and the Government received her troops as brigands.»

It was in the decade between the withdrawal of Beresford and Stuart in 1820 until the Whig victory of 1830 that the British had the least influence or interest in Portuguese affairs. Canning and the other Tories in power fully supported the Absolutist, autocratic ideas exemplified by the Miguelites. They therefore withdrew completely from Peninsular affairs, although England lost commercially, and rigidly followed a doctrine of non intervention. That arch Tory, Wellington, made himself so disagreeable in his attitude towards the little Maria da Glória, supposedly Queen of Portugal, that she had to go to France to be educated by her stepmother, born Amélia Beauharnais.

However, in 1830, there came the triumphant sweep of Liberalism over Europe. It was the turning point of Absolutist fortunes. Thereafter they were on the ebb. The accession to the French throne by Louis Philippe in the July Revolution and the death of Carlota Joaquina, 'the moving spirit of Absolutist reaction', were both important. But even more far-reaching was the advent, in the same year, of a Whig government in England with Palmerston in charge of foreign affairs. There was a general reaction in favour of the Constitutionalists and the Miguelites now found themselves despised. The abdication by Pedro of his Empire of Brasil to his son, Pedro Carlos, so

that he would be freer and more able to actively champion the cause of his daughter further strengthened their position. Lord Palmerston's speech of 1829 when he said :

«The civilized world rings with execrations upon Miguel ; this destroyer of constitutional freedom, this breaker of solemn oaths, this faithless usurper, this enslaver of this country» (1).

had marked the beginning of the change in British public opinion. Now, a year later he was in power and able to express himself with deeds as well as words. The British Government issued loans to the Constitutionalists through the Spanish financial wizard, Mendiabal. Many British volunteers went to join Dom Pedro's army. And King William IV of England publicly gave his best wishes to the enterprise.

Terceira, one of the Azores, had never acknowledged Miguel and now it was to prove the focal point for the gathering of the Constitutionalists. The arrival of Pedro, calling himself Duke of Braganza and Palmela, transformed it from a spot of rebellion into a definite seat of government. The Constitutionalists forced the Miguelites out of the Azores with the technical aid of a retired British naval captain, Sartorius, and prepared to descend upon Portugal. The success of their succeeding campaign in Portugal depended, in my opinion, on two particular individuals. Dom Pedro, who held Oporto for over a year against a vastly superior force because of his bravery, tenacity and inspiration, is one. The other is Sir Charles Napier, who, possessing more vim and dash than Sartorius, conquered the Miguelite navy (the second naval victory for a British commander off Cape St. Vincent), landed in the Algarve and proceeded north to capture Lisbon with a force of only 2,500 men. His advance through the Algarve and the Alentejo is not to be wondered at when we consider the flatness and lack of population of that region. But to get past Setúbal and Palmela, to cross the Tagus and capture Lisbon is only to be accounted for by his extreme audacity and the reaction in favor of the Pedroites.

(1) Bollaert, W., *The War of Succession*, page 13.

Though only in possession of Lisbon and Oporto, Pedro summoned the Côrtes and his assumption of victory had the effect of completing the expulsion of the Miguelites. What a moment it must have been when the once King, once Emperor, again entered the Ajuda Palace, the hereditary home of the Braganzas, which he had last seen when nine years old !

The Quadruple Alliance of 1834 was the final coup-de-grace to Dom Miguel and his followers. This treaty between England, France, Spain and Portugal promised aid towards peace and responsible government so as to end the combined dynastic and constitutional revolution that was tearing apart both Iberian States. More merciful than the Miguelites had been in 1828, the Constitutionalists granted a general political amnesty and even allowed the Miguelite officers to retain their posts upon swearing allegiance to Maria II. Later Dom Pedro died at the comparatively tender age of thirty-five. Worn out in body and spirit by his exertions in behalf of his daughter, he would have been destined to a secondary position when she attained her majority — a role that would never have satisfied the ever-active Pedro. Perhaps, in this light, it was best that he died. Miguel, with more scruples than we have before observed him, refused a pension of £ 1500 offered by the Convention of Évora and proceeded to join the ranks of those who, as Pretender to a throne, are destined to wander from one Court to another.

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