

When Honour Sets Sail. Southern European Constitutional Revolution and Guglielmo Pepe's Political Trips towards Iberian Peninsula during Liberal Triennium (1820-1823)

Abstract

This article aims to frame Neapolitan general Guglielmo Pepe's presence in Spain and Portugal after the deep revolutionary wave in southern Europe in 1820-1. It was a conjunction which was influenced by a positive perception towards soldiers and military elements, marked by the memory of Napoleonic Wars. Firstly, the national honourable soldier-citizen image which was forged since the 1790s will be analysed. After Waterloo, political trips by the members of the "Liberal International" were continuous before, during and after revolutions inspired by the Cadiz Constitution, which in the Spanish and Portuguese cases lasted until 1823. These Iberian countries acted as crucial refuges for political émigrés and their subsequent exiles. Pepe was the most important revolutionary reference which visited them, fleeing from Naples, and trying to defend and expand European liberal-constitutional systems. His activity founding secret societies will be another main focus of this article.

Keywords: Guglielmo Pepe, Revolutions of 1820, Kingdom of Two-Sicilies, Spanish Liberal Triennium, exile, Liberalism

Introduction

In the spring of 1823, Calabria-born political general Guglielmo Pepe was living a deep and tense situation that reached political limits. He was in Lisbon, where he had arrived from his exile in London with the aim of crossing the frontier with Spain facing the French invasion. Despite his best efforts, he was unable to reach Seville, or Madrid, to defend the constitutional system established in 1820. If that were not enough, the situation got worse when the 'Vilafrancada' broke out at the end of May. This was a movement sketched by absolutists led by Dom Miguel in order to destroy the liberal experiment in Portugal and which began shortly after Pepe's *pronunciamento* in Naples in 1820. Thus, absolutist threats stood at the both sides of the *Raia* (Spanish-Portuguese border), so, in order to protect his own physical integrity, Pepe decided to go back to London. It was not the first time, and it would not be the last one, that he had to cross a

European frontier sailing, or on a horseback, looking for shelter or trying to fight defending a liberal political regime.

Pepe, who had been born in Squillace (Kingdom of the Two-Sicilies) in 1783, was one of the most popular Italian liberal exiles of his time. He was called ‘the three-revolution man’, because he had taken part, as a teenager, in the Parthenopean Republic (1799), he had then led the liberal-constitutional movement in Naples in 1820, and lastly defended Venice in 1848. He is a key figure when it comes to thinking in celebrity and political events during the liberal revolutions which went across southern Europe from 1820 until 1823. His three temporary stays in the Iberian Peninsula, which many other thousands of émigrés from Naples and Piedmont experienced were a top-rated political occurrence in 1821 and 1822, and he went back to Portugal once again trying to reach Spain in 1823. His memoirs on 1820-21 events were translated into several languages, what points out the European impact of his career and the interest on his figure.

1. War experience and heroes (1789-1815): Napoleon’s reflections

War social experience, understood as the extension of how civil population lived through wars, linked national and revolutionary symbols to personal and political transcendence. That connection became a daily occurrence, and historian Mascilli Migliorini (1984, 55) labelled it as ‘domestic heroism’. It was developed in an unseen way because of wideness and deepness of 1789-1815 wars. Bonaparte was the main inspiration for warriors’ internationalism, which resulted in national and constitutionalist aspirations that survived for decades after Waterloo. Paradoxically, fighting against Napoleon created a generation of emulators of his figure. The French Revolution and its consequences made last sectors of the youth into a change vector of European political dynamic (Arisi Rota 2019, 143). Napoleon was a young man who was fast promoted, and his example mobilised generations progressively nearer to the adolescence, whose lives were accelerated compared to their ancestors’. What they had lived and learnt in the conflicts around Europe for twenty-five years accentuated a vital-transcendent sense which was reflected over a serious aim of being ‘part of History’ (Del Negro 1993, 283), and the experience encouraged many of them to actively engage in political life.

Those were the golden years of the citizen-soldiers who were conscripted in an unprecedented way through massive levies that changed European armies. The average number of combatants per battle tripled over those decades: meanwhile Seven Years War

(1756-1763) battles had had an average of 92.000 combatants, Napoleonic battles since 1805 until 1809 had an average of 162.000 soldiers; in 1812 and 1813 the number overwhelmed 309.000 men (Esdaile 2009, 11-12). With the very deep change in what Engberg-Pedersen (2015, 246) called 'state of war', universal conscription was extended, and the right of being an officer stopped being exclusive for the nobility. Shared military experiences created a 'fraternity of state armed citizens', linked by martial virtues and combat experience (Riall 2007, 255-6). These new public heroes were meant to possess values and behaviours grounded on exemplarity and respectability, and which were condensed in a polysemic concept: honour, the soldier's ultimate *raison d'être*. In addition, blood began to be less important than individual behaviour, particularly among the officer ranks, which had to defend the reputation they had acquired through their actions. A new militarism was being born with strong social and political bonds, having Napoleon as the brightest star (Bell 2016, 30 and 43). So bright, that he could establish a militarist regime in France. Notions of honour, fatherland, and good military conduct converged. This process was articulated in France through the *Légion d'Honneur*, which was also conceded to civilians, in a process which tried to fully integrate army into society (Boudon 2021b, 97; Hughes 2012, 62-3; Ortega del Cerro 2018, 601).

Wars and participation in them were pierced by ideas like the challenge of fight, sin and redemption, individual sacrifice for community, bloodletting, and even death, which led towards eternity (Santirso 2013, 178), as soldier's last sacrifice in pursuit of collective ideals. In that way, a new image of warrior soldier was erected, in a vision which individually condensed their community's ambitions. Providential men thus gave sense to the social group (Soriano Muñoz 2020, 18; Vovelle 2003, 19 and 24). Napoleon constituted the best example: his omnipresent image survived his exile and death in Saint Helen, as the unifier of Europe on the basis of political principles and revolutionary values (La Parra 2007, 243). Memory and experience towards heroes permeated community imaginaries as 'an emotional vehicle for political concepts' (González Manso 2015, 18). For a long time, remembering young generals coming from first years' combats offered a breeding ground for heroic examples to be imitated, such as Riego or Pepe, among others. For the Italian case, but also in other European contexts, the myth of the promoter of the country's 'awakening' was increased and deepened during Restoration. From 1815 to 1861, a great majority of Italian society was dazzled by individual heroes, who were seen from a 'martyrological and Christological' point of view. At the same time, nation

was thought as a ‘community of descendants’ (Banti 2011, 15 and 32), in a way which made social and political bonds easier.

As a result of the increased social experience of war, military outfits and displays acquired a shiny glamorous patina among the population: uniforms, order, parades... Soldier’s lifestyle projected a strong idea of service for the nation which invited to the mobilization and adhesion. That vision informed social imageries about different military models that embodied revolutionary energy (Alonso Baquer 2005, 152; Begiato 2020, 105 and 121; Mascilli Migliorini 1984, 46): soldiers who were fighting and sacrificing because of their submission and faith on a cause were the first reached the status of ‘celebrity’, as currently understood, because these individuals condensed a shared cosmovision.

In that way lay martyrs were born; they would become venerated liberal politicians later. ‘The ensuing rhetoric of martyrdom reinforced moralising positions, making the sacrifice for the fatherland the culmination of the political virtue’ (Delpu 2019, 103). In the Neapolitan Revolution of 1799 that figure was already evoked for those involved in military struggles, and its use further spread during the Italian *moti* of 1820-1. The adoption of Spanish Constitution of 1812, whose article 12 established the *nación católica*, facilitated the compatibility between the Christian traditional cult and the new political faith expressed in ‘chosen’ individuals who sacrificed themselves for the community (Delpu 2017, 10-2). Political creeds became an almost religious cult, as it was seen in Spain with the *Letanía Constitucional* rescued by Nagy (2016, 114-7), whose author had replaced Christian saints with prestigious politico-military figures such as Washington, Pepe, Lafayette or Quiroga. Moreover, this litany highlighted the presence in Spain of a ‘spiritual community’ spearheaded by the leaders of the Spanish *pronunciamento* of 1820, seen as a custody figure with a devotee tone: ‘Riego audi nos, Riego exaudi nos, Pater patriae. Miserere nobis’. That extreme sacralisation of the individual placed Riego at the social political altars.

Group identity, common beliefs, social imaginary, rhetorical appeals, and emotions built a frame of political action where metaphorical and real interactions between people and heroes developed. That heroism intertwined with a political sacrifice spirit which was spread by the generation of an emotional link between the military and the civilians, on the one hand, and from individuality to socio-national dimension, on the other, forging a new political culture on martyrs, heroes, and political symbols. These soldiers were

reference actors for the community; they provided an identity and linking to other people with similar military ambitions (Mascilli Migliorini 1984, 43): the exceptional *grands hommes* were able to act as top-rated political motors. The appeal to their memory led to an attempt of avenging them, if they had died, through actions that followed the same ideological line. In case of staying alive, news and rumours about possible returns were continuous, with planned expeditions that tried to reinstall the political regime that had been lost and missed, starting from Napoleon himself (Hazareesingh 2005, 70-1).

But this was not only a social phenomenon; soldiers' awareness of their historical role based on war legitimised their political actions in their own eyes. European powers wanted to put the political clock back in 1788, but these men had fought for modern freedoms, what allowed them to lead and guide mobilizations, becoming guardians. They did it using *pronunciamentos*, following the Spanish insurrectional model favouring constitutional texts which limited royal power and configured a minimum power division: they were liberal-constitutionalists who were developing political behaviours based on 'conspiracies, addresses, and mobilization', disobeying military orders, and trying to make other garrisons join the movement, in a way that crossed the Atlantic (Fowler 2010, xvi-xvii). Among armies ranks ambivalence between the individual and the social was strengthened. That process made many officers see themselves not only authorised, but also obliged to act defending freedom and fatherland which were threatened by interior enemies, as they had been the first ones in exposing their lives to save those achievements from foreign dangers (Cepeda Gómez 2009, 481; Mascilli Migliorini 1984, 51). They were those who were defending freedoms in force in many countries during the previous war cycle. Imitated Napoleonic model stayed configured: endangered liberties, external threats, and a popular providential soldier who had been promoted by his own merits (Cañas de Pablos 2015, 69-74).

In addition, an international element should be mentioned: although different national backgrounds were together, a Trans-European patriotic movement with capacity of reaching America too (Isabella 2013, 89) that united Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, French and Greek liberal-constitutionalists, Ibero American pro-independence soldiers, and Russian Decembrists into the same cause and which went beyond the strict military environments (Fowler 2009, 12). They were guided by the 'ecumenical ideology' (Fernández Sebastián 2015, 470) of fraternity that later was compartmentalised following national frontiers, which undermine its original universalistic and cosmopolitan appeal.

Many of the members of that diaspora shared the experience of the exile and the fight far from home, with London having a very special relevance as a refuge centre for people coming from every corner of Europe and America, including more than 20.000 Spaniards (Muñoz Sempere 2019, 33). But not only, during those years, British capital was a primary point of political activities (press, manifestos...) and conspiracies (Racine 2019, 15).

To sum up, local-native and transnational issues intertwined and created a double sense of liberal-constitutional and national belonging among these soldiers. It also reached large European areas. With many ups and downs, the political-military ideal became tangible specially in the early 1820s.

2. Pepe and the Neapolitan revolution

That auto-acknowledgement trend by soldiers resulted in a revolution and war process (Butrón Prida 2012, 74). Spain set an example amongst European liberal circles after the successful 1820 revolution. Events that fed that circumstance went through several phases: they began with their fight against Napoleon in 1808 and they continued with Rafael del Riego's pronunciamiento in 1820. At first, the Peninsular War was seen as a pattern that had to be followed by the peoples against their absolutist kings better than against a foreign invader (Spini 1950, 10) and the 1812 Constitution, popularly known as the *Pepa*, the 'starter of nineteenth century liberal constitutionalism', was its most important embodiment (Basabe 2012, 69). However, 'Spain's myth' was very ambiguous because the fight against Napoleon was developed in the name of freedom, but it also fought out to save Ferdinand VII's monarchy.

As the core of Spanish liberal political model, the *Pepa* was put forward and widely spread in Europe in the context of the self-called fight for freedom and national sovereignty. It had the advantage of combining revolutionary principles (aforementioned national sovereignty, a single chamber elected by universal manhood suffrage, the division of powers...) and traditional values (monarchy, recognition of Catholicism as the only and true religion), which made its wide acceptance easier (Rodríguez López-Brea 2014, 116). The Constitution was omnipresent in texts, speeches, and revolutions led by different local ambitions and vindications (Isabella 2015, 556). At the end, it became a spectre, an empty nominal syntagma under a too big umbrella.

In the Italian case, admiration towards Spain grew facing the resistance Spaniards had shown against Napoleon. *Fare come in Spagna!* ('Do like in Spain!') was heard in Milan in 1814 while fighting against the French soldiers (Delpu 2014, 197-8; Scotti Douglas 2003, 319). Like in Paris and London before, several translations of Cadiz Constitution were published in Messina (1813), Milan, Piacenza, and Rome (1814) and later in Pisa and Turin, too. Beyond epic and mystification, practical, almost logistical, issues cannot be forgotten: it was the only available text and it was easily translatable, so it was the 'key to open again the space of possibilities and to active post Napoleonic energies' (Arisi Rota 2019, 83).

Lastly, in Naples, once the liberal movement had triumphed, the official constitutional paper, the *Giornale costituzionale del Regno delle Due Sicilie*, talked about Spain in more than a third of its pages during its first two months (Delpu 2014, 198-9). That process was framed in a language ('patriotic resistance', 'extraordinary Cortes') which had been born in Spain and reached Naples in 1820, but also in 1848 and 1860, moments where Italy had a central role in Europe. Both peninsulas alternated in that part (Pascual Sastre 2007, 798-801).

The Italian idealization of Spanish guerrilla was related to the interest in learning lessons on how face a better-prepared invading army. The initial success of Liberal Triennium (1820-1823) gave strength to that trend (Butrón Prida 2012, 75-7). 'Alla spagnola' war was seen through a distinctly nationalistic lens because it included the active participation by a fatherland up in arms fighting for its freedom. It had features of a ruthless, irregular, and ambushed war (Fraser 2008, 341-3). This military typology was reflected in the officers' strategic training (Della Peruta 1988, 351). The Neapolitan liberal-constitutional process from 1820 was defined in the annoyance over the difficulties born with the Congress of Vienna. That spring was the context for intense conspiracy works in the Italian peninsula, which were led by young soldiers who had grown up between the achievements of the precedent wars and the dissatisfaction on the later situation.

Like other nineteenth century political generals, Guglielmo Pepe had started fighting in the battlefield being a 16-year-old boy in 1799, during the Parthenopean Republic (Pepe 1846, 97-100). After its fall, he had to flee to Marseilles, where he experienced exile for the first time (Stites 2014, 141). When he returned to Italy, he was presented to king Joseph Bonaparte. and he participated in several sieges and combats,

facing a population who did not trust the French monarch (De Lorenzo 2006, 235). Those episodes made him learn about the features and challenges of wars that he would later suffer again in the Iberian Peninsula while serving General Murat.

He was part of the heterogeneous group of Italians who participated in the Napoleonic Wars, fighting in Naples, Switzerland, Dalmatia, Germany, Tirol, Carinthia, Spain and Russia. These last two locations were especially hard and bloody. From 1800 to 1814, around half a million men were recruited in the vassal kingdoms and the departments annexed to the French Empire. By 1815, around 100.000 Napoleonic soldiers rested in the Italian Kingdom (Capra 2014, 366; Della Peruta 1988, 343; Sarlin 2013, 357). Pepe guided an 'Italian Legion' as a colonel while he was in Spain from 1811 onwards.

In Naples, liberal success arrived after several fruitless insurrectional attempts by the Carbonari. Pepe had been offered the leadership of those actions many times, but he had always rejected it. The general thought that secret societies were 'awful' in free political systems, but positive under despotic ones (Talarico 1982, 109), because he saw them as the almost only possible way to channel political dissatisfaction. That thought created a dilemma: he had to take into account those secret societies in order to defeat despotism; but, once he had reached that goal, they must disappear to guarantee stability. As Fernández Álvarez (1961, 7) says, a deep understanding on secret societies shows how important are their members' features, men who considered themselves 'like the advanced ones of a new order', so they had to face the current powers. With that aim, there was only one resource: the *mystery*, what explained the hidden character shared by those men (Gil Novales 1975, 431).

In May 1820, with the excuse of reordering the troops, Pepe made a trip through Foggia (Puglia) and Avellino (Campania). At the end of those days, he concluded that both provinces were ready to initiate an insurrection. At that point, some Carbonari offered him the post of Captain General of the Revolutionary Army, but he said 'no' at the beginning because he wanted to hold certain freedom of movement over the conspiracy (Pepe 1822, 26-7). He thus behaved, maybe without being fully conscious of it, as a 'double agent', and he preferred to have a tighter control over the situation.

Later, on 1 July 1820 Pepe was required by the authorities to stop the Carbonari plots initiated by Michele Morelli and Joseph Silvati under priest Luigi Minichini's command in Nola (Campania). Soldiers and members of the secret society gathered in

Avellino, where they were received by a passionate crowd. There, Lorenzo de' Concilj, acting according to Pepe's orders, took the command and proclaimed the Cadiz Constitution (Delpu 2019, 87; Scalamandrè 1993, 111). When Pepe returned from Naples five days later, he decided to personally lead the actions. He promised to defend the constitutional system, or to die while doing it (*Annali del patriottismo. Giornale politico e letterario*, 2, 5/8/1820, 45). The situation became a full *pronunciamento*. The Government was not facing few agitators: there was a complete *constitutional army*, trained under the recently overthrown control of the Napoleonic Empire, and manned with liberal officers like Pepe. They were part of the ranks thanks to the Treaty of Casalanza (1815), which allowed Murat supporters, and allies to remain in the Neapolitan institutions, although with a disciplinary code that was different from the rules applied to the Bourbon military branch of the kingdom's army. The latter followed the mercenary logic from *ancien regime*, and not over the idea of national defence and mass recruitment supported by the Muratians (Capra 2014, 363-5; Corciulo 2010, 37-8), whose regulations were based on the principles of the French Jourdan Law (1798).

The Neapolitan Revolution of 1820 was a brief *pronunciamento*, followed by displacements over the territory raising supporters and extending the movement, which finished in a tripartite negotiation among military officers, civilian liberals, and the government of king Ferdinand I. When the success was guaranteed and Pepe was chosen by the 'general vote of the People' (*Giornale Costituzionale del Regno delle Due Sicilie* [*GCRDS*, from now], 18, 28/7/1820, 2), he claimed that 'he would resign from the top of the army as soon as the national representation gathered' (Scotti Douglas 2021, 74). This 'utilitarian' approach to the political soldiers' role, in which they were specific instruments in order to reach goals, could be seen several times and was related to figures like Cincinnatus, who returned to 'save Rome' from his garden to go back again there once his mission was accomplished. Those soldiers knew they were useful vectors, almost accelerators, for achieving specific political targets, and many times they decided to retire themselves once they had been successful (*GCRDS*, 84, 13/10/1820, 1).

The king surrendered, and a *Governo costituzionale* was established through an edict on 7th July, which established that the Spanish Constitution of 1812 would be the Constitution of the Two-Sicilies except from the modifications that 'national representation' would decide, according to Masdeu's translation (Ferrando Badía 1991, 237; Pinto 2020, 44-5 y 52). However, the king made clear that he accepted the revolution

against his will: he did not abdicate, but he alleged an illness and ceded his constitutional duties to his first-born son Francisco (Rodríguez López-Brea 2014, 118-22).

Salutes and other theatrical displays were used to cheer the around 14.000 soldiers when they entered Naples. The expected amount of people from other provinces was so high that the official entrance parade was postponed for one day. The 'popular aura' (*El Látigo Liberal*, 28, 1822, 4) attributed to Pepe was based on a 'frank and sincere mood'. King Ferdinand received Pepe with 'cordial fondness' and 'love words' (*GCRDS*, 2, 10/7/1820, 1), at least publicly. Pepe's prominence in the press was total, and it shows the character's centrality.

Naples and Spain were part of a 'Bourbonic space', claimed by Pepe when he spoke about his role as 'defender of fatherland, dynasty and independence' (*Lettera di S.A.R. a S.E. il Generale in capo, ordine del giorno del generale G. Pepe all'esercito*, 9/9/1820, 1). At the same time, the Neapolitan king had recognized the Cadiz Constitution in Spain for diplomatic interest (Stites 2014, 121-3): in that moment he still could inherit the throne in Madrid (his nephew Ferdinand VII did not have descendants until 1830, when Isabella II was born). That recognition was used by the revolutionaries to press the monarch to sanction constitutional rule. Like in Spain and in Portugal, many pamphlets, leaflets, and catechisms were published to spread the contents of the Constitution (Scotti Douglas 2021, 77-8; Simal 2012, 135). Pepe was shortly after appointed Supreme Commander, and due to his prominence, almost from the beginning he set himself up as the main political reference for the liberal-constitutional movement. As it happened with Riego, almost his *alter ego*, his presence in theatres made the performances be cancelled among applauses and songs. Comparisons between both soldiers were usual (Cañas de Pablos 2021, 147; Delpu 2014, 204).

On 24 August Porto followed Naples steps: several officers who belonged to the secret society *Sinédrio* rebelled against Regent William Carr Beresford and established in Portugal a system based on the Cadiz Constitution through the Constitution of 1822. There were similar events in Piedmont in 1821, and the possibility was present in the Duchy of Lucca, ruled by Mary Louise of Bourbon, Ferdinand VII of Spain's sister. There were attempts and similar conspiracies in the German states, where publications about Spain were common, and in France. There the assassination of the Duke of Berry by the Bonapartist Jean Louvel, in February 1820, was attributed by the ultras to an international Anti-Bourbon conspiracy, and it caused a conservative turn amongst the ruling elites

(Simal 2012, 139-140 y 144-6; Spini 1950, 32-3). The bloody ending of the actions by the Four Sergeants from La Rochelle in 1822, driven by the Naples-inspired *Charbonnerie* secret society, finished this conspirative cycle (Basabe 2021, 103-4).

These liberal movements were legally and logistically inspired by what had happened in Spain, being sometimes faster: ‘the Constitution that the Spaniards got in three months, you [Duke of Calabria, Neapolitan King’s son] got it from our good King in six days’ (*Lettera di S.A.R....*, 2). When they succeeded, they were perceived as own triumphs in Spain, primarily in the secret societies. For example, one of them settled in Segovia, among others, appointed Pepe as full member (Gil Novales 1975, 182 and 373; Rújula and Chust 2020, 156). His answer appeared in the *Diario Constitucional de Barcelona* (234, 3/11/1820, 1-2), where he praised the force of the union between the two nations, stating that ‘if any foreigner’s perfidy dared joy of the regained rights by humanity, we must remember that our strength lies over our union’. These and other letters show the relevance acquired by some core tenets originating in the Spanish-Neapolitan liberal connection, and its confluence with the prominence of the individual hero. On the one hand, there was an evident and clear bond emerging from the sharing of the Cadiz Constitution, which was the basis for fraternity between these two Mediterranean peoples. A true political brotherhood over legal-constitutional and behavioural foundations.

An Austrian invasion of the Italian peninsula was backed by Metternich’s interventionist ideas in the Congresses of Troppau (1820), and Ljubljana (1821), which discredited the isolationist position defended by Spain. Its governments tried to go unnoticed in Europe in order to avoid diplomatic incidents (De la Torre del Río 2011, 289-290; Spini 1950, 53-5). Ferdinand I of Naples had gone to the present Slovenian capital using the false excuse of defending the Constitution and soothing the powers with a mere reform; he left his son as the regent, self-proclaimed ‘guardian of the Constitution, to protect national glory and welfare’. However, when the king arrived at the Congress, he announced that he considered every legal text and action since the previous July as void and null (Morelli 1961, 161-4), and he asked for the intervention of Austria. Spain protested formally because of the powers intromission, unsuccessfully. Contacts and interchanges of information between Pepe and Spanish ambassador Luis de Onís during the conflict were continuous. The diplomat even passed secret news about the sure Austrian intervention, despite Naples’s optimism.

Foreign intervention did not find any opposition from the Papal States, because its authorities had seen nervously the Neapolitan revolution, so geographically close. Pius VII's position was so favourable that he allowed the occupation of Ancona by Hapsburgs' soldiers (Rodríguez López-Brea 2002, 261-5). After a Neapolitan victory, even mentioned by Riego in a speech (Sánchez Martín 2016, 541), the defeat in the Battle of Antrodoco facing Frimont-led troops in March 1821 was a hard blow for the brief Neapolitan liberal experience. Pepe proposed several resistance plans, but they were not implemented because his soldiers could not surpass Capua (Campania). According to his own account (1822, 84-6), Pepe then tried to go back to Naples, but, on his way, he witnessed the dispersion of the first body of the army, and the disposition of the Parliament and the Regent to turn themselves in to the Austrians. He was persuaded to go instead to Castellamare di Stabia (Campania), where he set sail to Spain. Tension and panic were so widespread and intense that Pepe pressured the captain to make him depart immediately (Talarico 1982, 163). His second exile began.

Imperial troops' triumphal entrance in Naples took place 24 March 1821 (Martini 2015, 90-4). They occupied the territory for many years, for much longer in fact than the nine-month constitutional phase. A period of political reaction began. Still frightened, Ferdinand I did not arrive at *his* capital until May 15th, but once there he recovered all his powers: in the same way of what Ferdinand VII of Spain did in Spain since 1823, he infringed every promise of mercy, and launched a fierce repression campaign. The process was so excessive that the rest of the members of the Holy Alliance protested (Morelli 1961, 183; La Parra 2018, 494-5).

As his relative, the Neapolitan king claimed for revenge, and expressed his desire that Silvati and Morelli, captured initiators of the movement, to be immediately executed. Guillotined at Piazza San Francesco on 12 September 1822 (Pinto 2020, 54; Scalamandrè 1993, 194-6 and 240-1), both officers were the only accused in the Process of Monteforte who were not included in the sovereign's pardon. After that ending marked by suffering, both entered into the *Mezzogiorno's* symbolical liberal martyrology (D'Ayala 1861; Ricciardi 1860, 186-9), in a process which was analogue to what happened in Spain with Riego in 1823 (Cañas de Pablos 2021, 150-4; Tardy 2010, 88-9).

3. Consequences of 1820-1821 revolutions

The need for a closer level of cooperation between European peoples was especially evident after 1820 failings. The end of this period, king Ferdinand I's tricks, and the

massive desertions by the officers that followed, anticipated what happened in Spain during Liberal Triennium. The correspondence between both monarchs (Rújula 2019, 3) was primarily useful for the Spanish kings because he learned how to improve the Holy Alliance's predisposition to cooperate with him, and the *effectiveness* of foreign invasions in order to destroy liberal-constitutional systems. Ferdinand VII took his complaints to the extreme when he described the situation in Spain in the letters he wrote to other European kings, who did not appreciate him and advised not to go backwards 'too much' in case of absolutist triumph. At the same time, they were frightened by the possibility of overflowing of the Spanish liberal system. Neapolitan and Spanish kings directly participated in the organisation and promotion of counterrevolutionary movements, and they encouraged other European countries to intervene to make them recover absolute power (La Parra 2007, 65 and 75). Pepe thought about this, soon after leaving for exile: 'European peoples, seeing what has happened in Naples, have understood the need for making a common cause' (Pepe 1822, 102). He also lamented in Madrilenian liberal circles the few existing contacts among Southern European liberals, meanwhile he warned about the importance of reinforcing bonds between Iberian liberals (Manfredi 2009, 215). The continuous works by Spanish ambassador Luis de Onís to get Spanish aid for Italy were fruitless, which reduced the Neapolitan possibilities of success. In Portugal, Sá de Nogueira also tried to organise an expedition with volunteers who could contribute using their guns defending the Neapolitan liberal regime (Bron 2014, 128-9; Stites 2014, 169). When Pepe left Spain in July 1821, and with an analogue aim, *El Universal* (190, 9/7/1821, 2) commented on the effects of his presence in the country as an exile, and the lesson it represented to Iberian liberal systems, the last survivors of 1820-1 wave:

Despotism never forgives, and if we were so disgraceful to lose facing our enemies, our brave men would have to look for shelter abroad (...) General Pepe is today vilified in Naples (...); despotism satellites insist on denigrate his memory with rude slanders; but his name will be remembered as a blemish to his pursuers.

The political consequences and long-term projection of Frimont's troops, as well as the annihilation of Neapolitan and Piedmont's liberal systems at the beginning of 1821 (Scotti Douglas 2021, 81-97) were undeniable. Previous texts from press appeal to several central strong ideas: national pride, liberty, Europe, but also *statu quo* fragility. The 'first

grand crisis of Restoration system' has left liberal Spain in a vulnerable state (Carantoña Álvarez 2021, 12).

All aforementioned ideas were weaved together: there were then 'two Europes': the Southern one living in freedom one through rebellion, and the one which lived under despotism, embodied by the Central European powers from the 'Europe of the Congresses'. After the final collapse of Liberal Europe in 1823, Pepe (1824, 223-86) placed elements like the reigning Bourbons, Spanish stubbornness of retaining the American colonies, or the impossibility of creating true alliances which prevented Absolutist interventions, as possible causes for the end of the Southern European revolutionary wave. Spain and Naples had been, along with Portugal and Piedmont, two stars of the same constellation of countries that propelled the fight for freedom, so there had to be further political and military solidarity among them, for self-love... and for the political interest of surviving. The Holy Alliance had benefitted from its coordinated and directorial action over the continent: the 'Absolutist International' had played better its cards than the 'Liberal International'.

4. Pepe arrives in the Iberian Peninsula

Before discussing Pepe's stay in the Iberian Peninsula, the ongoing situation there made it the last bastion of European continental liberalism. Spain and Portugal were the most obvious destinations for Italian activists to flee, for practical, political, and even linguistic reasons, in order to go ahead with the fight against absolutism (Di Mauro 2019, 1 and 10). The debate on the Spanish declaration of inviolability of people and 'properties of any kind belonging to foreigners' (Simal 2012, 152-3) was about the subordination, or insubordination, to signed international treaties, and the role of political crimes. It was decided to include in the future clauses that banned the extradition of people who had gone to Spain escaping from prosecuting processes for political reasons (*Diario de las Sesiones de Cortes*, 18 and 26/9/1820). This legal position allowed the arrival of thousands of Italian refugees few months later.

When news about desertions among the troops who left alone the 'disgraced general Pepe', arrived in Spain, it was received with sadness and worrying by the Madrilenian radical press (*El Universal*, 97, 7/4/1821, 2), and even the *Moderada* (*Miscelánea*, 403, 6/4/1821, 3). Fear of a possible similar foreign intervention in Spain led to riots in Burgos, Seville, and Barcelona. The Government sent on 9 April a memo to provincial *Jefes*

Políticos to force them make an effort on calming in some places the overreacting spirit (Simal 2012, 153; Spini 1950, 105).

Maintaining public order was another important worry of the authorities, especially the local ones, so a geographical dispersion of the refugees was decided. This policy and the incentives to cross the frontier proved later to be serious failures, that confirms the image of a 'tolerant, but passive' government attitude described by Morán Ortí (1989, 989-96 and 1015). Furthermore, facing the budget and public order problems, Martínez de la Rosa's *Moderado* government eliminated in March 1822 the support for the second-class refugees, who had to find any income source or leave Spain, offering a three-month pension and a ticket to Italy. Bureaucratic procedures were made more difficult because it was suspected that there were opportunists without liberal connection who only wanted money. That trend was inverted in 1822 with the return of the *Exaltados* to the Government (Morán Ortí 1989, 999 and 1003; Simal 2012, 154-5).

Barcelona was Pepe's entrance into Spain. He arrived on 18 April 1821, accompanied by several liberal noblemen and generals of his staff, with Vincenzo Pisa and General Rosaroll among others (Sánchez Cervelló 2019, 70-1), in a vessel which had been chartered by Luis de Onís. The city was suffering a yellow fever epidemic; and Pepe was put in a quarantine of eight days (Di Giuseppe 2010, 166; Nicolai 1834, 18). Soon after a Piedmontese contingent arrived in Barcelona, after having been defeated in Novara on 2 April by the Austrians (Sánchez Cervelló 2019, 71-3). The fear after the Italian collapses was so big, that some rumours about the coming of Imperial troops towards the Pyrenees were spread. (*El Espectador*, 10 and 15, 24 and 29/4/1821, 2; Pulvirenti 2017, 35).

At the Catalan capital, Pepe was warmly welcome by the local population, with poems being read to honour him, and the presence of 'deputations of all bodies (...) who go to show him their interest in his disgrace, and the hospitality that he must expect in his new fatherland'. In addition, a public subscription was opened to help 'several Neapolitan and Piedmontese men' by several Barcelona-established officers, who felt 'sensitive to their situation' (*El Constitucional. Correo General de Madrid*, 62, 1/5/1821, 3; *Gaceta de Madrid*, 156, 3/6/1821, 826-7). There he was received by General Pedro Villacampa, General Captain of Catalonia and former Pepe's enemy during the Napoleonic invasion.

On 2 May, commemorating the initiation of the Peninsular war, he received a message from a committee of Spanish members of Parliament stating: 'If you have lost a

fatherland because of insisting on the noblest of the ventures, surely rely on that we will lose ours, or in other way you will find here the refuge and the rewards that free men can offer to every true hero' (Pepe 1822, 148-9). This initiative was somehow paradoxical since he had been a member of Napoleon's troops. His participation can be explained through the levelling of the fight for national freedom, which linked the uprising against French troops and the defence of constitutionalism in the 1820s. Tyranny had mutated, and former foes had become friends thanks to a common enemy. Finally, Pepe asked for permission to be transferred to Madrid (Di Mauro 2019, 2-3), where he stayed for a month and a half, from 14th May to July 6th. He started there a friendship with Giuseppe Pecchio (*El Universal*, 137, 17/5/1821, 3 and 190, 9/7/1821, 2; Talarico 1982, 168). The Neapolitan group did not need to make much effort to integrate into the Madrilenian political scene thanks to Pepe's international fame (Di Mauro 2019, 3).

The press did offer not many details of his presence in the Spanish capital, but it is well known that one of Pepe's main goals there was the foundation of the first see of the secret society *Fratelli costituzionali europei*: he wanted to build a structure and strengthen contacts and actions among continental liberals, reproducing the capillary and hierarchical organisation of Carbonari. Founded by Pepe and Pecchio with the help of Pisa, it was based in reciprocal collaboration and wanted to 'regroup men from all over Europe known for their virtue and political philanthropy', apart from the overwhelming fact that 'Portuguese and Spaniards did not get on' (Bustos 2017, 112; Michel 1940, 444). The society tried to avoid the lack of coordination and international aid which had been suffered by Naples, and to reinforce links with Iberian liberal systems (Delpu 2018, 611; Delpu 2019, 170; Manfredi 2009, 215). Several Spanish politicians became members of this exclusive society.

Pepe transferred himself to Portugal in order to create a new section of the *Fratelli*, but he had serious financial difficulties after being robbed by some bandits next to Elvas, while going towards Lisbon, and not returning to Madrid, as mistakenly argued by Delpu (2018, 601-2). He lost all his money and valuable goods. As soon as he was received by the Cortes President, Francisco Antonio de Almeida Moraes, and several ministers, many subscriptions were opened to make him recover the equivalent of goods than he had lost. Pepe thanked that aid through an emotive letter for the Cortes President (*Diário das Cortes Geraes e Extraordinárias da Nação Portuguesa*, 132, 20/7/1821; *Miscelânea de comercio, política y literatura*, 514 and 520, 26/7 and 1/8/1821, 2). At the beginning, he

has been reluctant to accept the compensation of 20.000 francs, but he would have faced difficulties to get resources any other way (Michel 1940, 44). Pepe would later aim to extend his project during his stays in London, Paris, and Brussels (Letter from Giuseppe Pecchio to Guglielmo Pepe [Madrid, 27/7/1821], in Moscati 1938, 228-9), in an attempt to create a larger international network of liberty supporters, especially with British funding (Bustos 2017, 112).

In Lisbon, Pepe developed actions of propaganda for the *Fratelli* in liberal circles for three months, including the organization of two important revolutionary banquets. He was received even by Colonel Sepúlveda, leader of the Oporto revolution in 1820. The success was big, because he would also meet Almeida Moraes, and several ministers in that pro-*Fratelli* tour. This warm response was maybe more guided by a certain sense of kindness than a real commitment to his political schemes (Calzavara and Cassino 2012, 119; Delpu 2019, 167). However, the Iberian press covered every single move, including the publications which were critical to him (Delpu 2018, 601-3; Nobre Vargues 1996, 417). His assistants Vincenzo Pisa and Gabriele Cobianchi, also Napoleonic veterans, were intermediaries between the two Iberian conspiracy cores (Bustos 2017, 113).

Growingly convinced of being fighting a solitary battle (Cassino 2015, 217-8), at the end of July of 1821 he embarked to England. From his arrival, he entered in touch with conspiratorial groups, in which Lafayette was also present, who aim to finish the absolutist monarchy of Louis XVIII through the collaboration of Spanish and Portuguese liberal governments (*El Eco de Padilla*, 38, 7/9/1821, 3). The project wanted to provoke a French intervention in Spain destined to fail, due to the supposedly liberal trends among the ranks of a majority of soldiers, in an international diplomatic play that included the Spanish recognition of Colombian independence. Francesco Carrano (1857, 143) argues that the recognition of Mexico as an independent country was also discussed. Therefore, while Spain would send troops to fight; Colombia would help its ancient mother country with 100 million of francs to finance the war against the French (Manfredi 2009, 223; Sánchez Martín 2016, 789). Pepe set out a similar proposal in Portugal that implied the recognition of Brazilian independence (Cassino 2015, 242). Conspiracies were continuous in that Europe full of soldiers and civilians who were constantly crossing the continent, with connections that passed through the Atlantic. Fighting for freedom was seen as an almost planetary goal although it was connected to national realities.

In the summer of 1822 Pepe went back to Spain through Lisbon. The country was suffering an economic and political crisis, and political stability and public order were threatened by royalist groups in Navarre and Catalonia. Months before his arrival, in March 1822 *El Censor* reviewed Pepe's book on events in Naples in 1820 and 1821, stressing that 'Pepe[sic] is already famous and historical (...), a man who must preserve pure his glory. (...) His only crime, the cause of his proscription, is his aim of establishing a constitutional regime in his country' (*El Censor, periódico político y literario*, 86, 23/3/1822, 2 and 10). Retrospectively, his vision had to be taken into account only because of the person who was expressing it: an unfortunate hero whose lessons were valid for the Spanish situation. Focus was situated over him also for worse reasons, as the false rumours accusing him of having fled from Naples with stolen millions of francs (Carrano 1857, 141).

In spite of Stites' (2014, 182) opinion that Pepe witnessed in Madrid the counterrevolutionary attempt in July 1822, the soldier was not in Spain that day. According to Talarico (1982, 177), he arrived in Lisbon on 5 August, where he wanted to reorganise the Carbonari, because the Portuguese 'patriotic spirit' was 'in decline', through a rhetoric that would end the lack of communication between them and the Spaniards (Cassino 2015, 238). However, Araújo (2021, 67-71) deepened in the Iberian relationships defending that 'an idea of an Iberian union that protected the Independence of both states was made diplomatically official'. This momentary unity, more defensive than national, but also ideological, would be based on the liberal internationalism and the 'universalist conception of citizenship' (Araújo 2021, 70).

Although authors like Michel (1940, 445-6) say that Pepe travelled directly from Lisbon to Madrid, actually he went first to Seville. The proof of that Andalusian stay is the text published by the Milanese politician Manuel Marliani about the subscriptions to defray Pepe's trip from Seville to Madrid (*El Mensajero de Sevilla*, 38, 18/9/1822, 6):

The hero who refused the grade of general captain who was offered by the national parliament (...); that has refused the pension offered by the Spanish government (...); that general Pepe has too much dignity and soul elevation to have authorised the steps taken in Seville in his glorious name.

Yet in Madrid, he went to local civic party that was honouring those who had defended the liberal system in the counterrevolutionary attempt from July. He was the main celebrity in the occasion (*El Indicador de las novedades, de los espectáculos y de*

las artes, 143, 27/9/1822, 1). Pepe was eager to re-meeting Riego, and he intervened in the meetings of the delegations of *Fratelli* (Letters from Guglielmo Pepe to Vincenzo Pisa [London, 19/4 and 11/6/1822], in Moscati 1938, 248 and 267). In addition, he set forth the aforementioned “Colombian” plans to Spanish liberals (Istúriz, Quiroga or Alcalá Galiano, among others) at Riego’s house. But they rejected the plan because they supposed that would be very unpopular at the Cortes if they recognized the colonies independence, apart from how detrimental it would be for the country’s future. The return of the troops from America would not significantly improve the situation and the French invasion would not find big obstacles (Bustos 2017, 114; Manfredi 2009, 226-7). Facing the failure of his proposal, Pepe, disappointed, decided to go back to England, and inform Lafayette of the fiasco. His successive stays in the Iberian Peninsula increased his pessimism on the masses’ revolutionary potential. Pepe’s British phase was closely followed by the press, who paid special attention to the duel he had with his former companion Michele Carrascosa in 1823.

After the Hundred Sons of Saint Louis invasion in 1823, the Spanish government approached Pepe to make him the leader of part of the national troops, but he did not accept (Manfredi 2009, 228; Rújula and Chust 2020, 165-8). He arrived in Lisbon on 21 May. He made two proposals to the Portuguese minister of War Gonsalves de Miranda: the first was to declare war against France and to support the Spaniards; the second one was to send an expedition to the Two-Sicilies in order to create a new front which would reduce the pressure over Spain (Calzavara and Cassino 2012, 119). The Portuguese parliament debated the first one, and it was ready to accept the second one as long as the Spanish government would fund part of Pepe’s Neapolitan incursion. However, the *Vilafrancada*, the aforementioned Absolutist uprising led by Dom Miguel on 27 May, cut any option short, and stopped Pepe from moving for the defence of the Spanish liberal regime, because he could not cross the frontier without being trapped (Letters from Guglielmo Pepe to Maria Anna Gilchrist [Lisbon, 24 and 30/5/1823], in Moscati 1938, 298-9). His previsions towards the success possibilities of Portuguese uprising were finally confirmed. In addition, seeing the advances by Duke of Angoulême’s troops towards southern Spain, a movement to Portugal was to be expected, in a turn similar to that by the Austrians between Naples and Turin the previous year. Due to the total blocking situation, Pepe opted to go back to England again.

5. Conclusions

Guglielmo Pepe was in Spain firstly as a foreign invader, but later as a representative of the growing international group of activists who took the Iberian country as a reference in the fight for freedom and independence. Pepe's generation, with its forceful expulsion from the Kingdom of Two Sicilies, began to construct a myth that served as a base for Mediterranean political relations that survived for decades. Connections between both Mediterranean peninsulas were centuries old, but Riego's pronunciamiento was a powerful incentive in the reinforcement of liberal link between Spain and Italy, later extended to Portugal.

When Pepe led the Neapolitan revolution in 1820, he reproduced the threefold Napoleonic political model: a) fighting for freedoms, b) facing an external threat, and c) becoming a providential soldier. In his case, the aforementioned pattern includes Bourbon absolutism as the regime to be brought down through the implementation of the Spanish 1812 Constitution. In a hostile European context, the charismatic vector that accelerated that political process was his belonging to the Army and political effects it had, in a movement whose leadership he played personally.

Before and after the defeat against the Austrians, Guglielmo Pepe *was* the Neapolitan revolution, as Riego *had been* after the Spanish one. For this reason, he became an important target for Bourbon authorities again when they recovered unrestricted political power. That embodiment also explains that his Iberian trips received so much attention by both the press and the authorities from different territories; it did not matter if they were liberal or absolutist. Popular receptions in Barcelona, Madrid, Seville, or Lisbon showed his celebrity status.

As a member of the post Napoleonic "International Liberal" of soldiers, Pepe acted like other Italians, Spaniards, French or Portuguese, with the conviction of the existence of a group of political goals shared by the Liberal constitutionalists against the Holy Alliance. That certainty led the Neapolitan hero to look for the way to re-establish the fallen liberal system in the Kingdom of Two-Sicilies, pressing and trying to make liberal Spain and Portugal help him to disembark there. That position also explains why he tried to save the Spanish constitutional system once the French aggression of 1823 was real, when he travelled to Portugal. However, another challenge against Iberian liberalism, the Portuguese *Vilafrancada* made him desist, and go back to the United Kingdom. Pepe never returned to the Iberian Peninsula. As many other revolutionaries, he went on

moving across Europe and finally settled down in Paris for some years. Nevertheless, he had enough time to go to Venice to defend the city against the Austrians in 1848 before dying in Turin in 1855, where he had retired.

Guglielmo Pepe's political career from 1820 to 1823 perfectly exemplifies how far the tangible impact of the Spanish 1812 Constitution went in Naples. Furthermore, the Italian soldier set the pattern of a transnational model able to project an image of Liberal commitment. Both dynamics operated in a very specific context in which the political and army effects of the Napoleonic Wars became obvious in a wide and deep sense. Members of "International Liberal" were developed in that social and post-war environment.

Thus, as he was seeing how the Tagus estuary was left behind, we can imagine the downheartedness invading Pepe. He was travelling in the boat which was carrying him to the United Kingdom facing the failed attempt of crossing to Spain, and the imminent collapse of Portuguese liberal system. As a house of cards, the four southern European liberal systems, contemporaneous only for a few weeks in 1821, Naples, Piedmont, Portugal and Spain, had been falling or were about to. That wave had conditioned decisions in Europe and for the Holy Alliance, but the lack of solidarity and coordination among their leaders had condemned those projects. Conscious of the political aura he had acquired, Pepe had tried to propel the collaboration among the liberal systems in any possible way; when Naples fell in Austrians' hands, he tried to convince Spaniards and Portuguese to fund an expedition to reduce the absolutist pressure over the Iberian Peninsula; he even wanted to launch an expedition from Spain to France, relying on soldiers' liberal ideas. Despite his perseverance, everything was insufficient, and the defeat of his project was resounding. At least, unlike many other soldiers and comrades, he could live to tell.

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