

The Brazilian Rosa that upheaved the religious question in Portugal: the Calmon Case (1899–1901)

Isabel Corrêa da Silva[1]

Abstract

In the process of progressive secularization of society, which gained strength after the late 19th century in Europe and America, the relationships between State and Church assumed a conflicting dynamic that historiography began to call “religious question”. In this article, I propose to analyze the highpoint of this relational tension in Portugal based on a concrete episode, which, due to a convergence of circumstances and predispositions, became a symbol of the laicization of the Portuguese society. It is the polemic generated around the religious calling of the daughter of a Brazilian consul in Porto — situation that led to one of the most fierce debates about religiousness, individual rights, and confessionality of the State, involving governmental instances and civil society in an unprecedented mobilization in such matters. Anticongreganism, anticlericalism, and laic militancy were the key elements of this episode that involved Brazilian citizens and chancelleries and in which it is possible to clearly understand some of the most important cleavages that would later on determine the outcome of the religious question during the Republican regime, between 1910 and 1926.

Keywords: religion; anticlericalism; laicism.

A Rosa brasileira que incendiou a questão religiosa em Portugal: o Caso Calmon (1899–1901)

Resumo

No processo de progressiva secularização da sociedade, que, na Europa e na América, ganhou renovado fôlego a partir de finais do século XIX, as relações entre Estado e Igreja assumiram muitas vezes uma dinâmica conflituosa a que a historiografia convencionou chamar de “questão religiosa”. Neste artigo, proponho-me a analisar um momento alto dessa tensão relacional em Portugal a partir de um episódio concreto que, por uma convergência de circunstâncias e predisposições, se transformou num marco simbólico do processo de laicização da sociedade portuguesa. Trata-se da polémica gerada em torno da vocação religiosa da filha do cônsul do Brasil na cidade do Porto — caso que conduziu a um dos mais acesos e participados debates sobre religiosidade, direitos individuais e confessionalidade do Estado, envolvendo instâncias governamentais e sociedade civil numa mobilização até então nunca vista em assuntos dessa natureza. Anticongreganismo, anticlericalismo e militância laica foram os protagonistas desse episódio, que envolveu cidadãos e chancelarias brasileiras e no qual é possível identificar, com toda a clareza, as linhas de clivagem as quais viriam mais tarde a determinar os contornos da questão religiosa durante o regime republicano, entre 1910 e 1926.

Palavras-chave: religião; anticlericalismo; laicismo.

La Rosa brasileña que ha inflamado la cuestión religiosa en Portugal: el Caso Calmon (1899–1901)

Resumen

En el proceso de secularización progresiva de la sociedad, que, en Europa y América, ganó renovada fuerza a partir de finales del siglo 19, las relaciones entre la Iglesia y el Estado tomaron muchas veces una dinámica de conflicto a que la historiografía acordó llamar de “cuestión religiosa”. En este artículo, propongo analizar un punto alto de esta tensión relacional en Portugal a partir de un episodio específico que, por una convergencia de circunstancias y predisposiciones, se ha convertido en un marco simbólico del proceso de secularización de la sociedad portuguesa. La polémica en torno a la vocación religiosa de la hija del cónsul de Brasil en Porto es un caso que ha ocasionado uno de los debates más acalorados y concurrenciosos sobre la religiosidad, los derechos individuales y la confesionalidad del Estado, con participación de las instancias gubernamentales y de la sociedad civil en una movilización hasta entonces nunca vista en tales materias. El anticongregacionalismo, el anticlericalismo y la militancia laica fueron los protagonistas de este episodio, que involucró a los ciudadanos y las cancillerías brasileñas. Es posible identificar en ello, con toda claridad, las líneas de división que más tarde determinarían los contornos de la cuestión religiosa durante el régimen republicano, entre 1910 y 1926.

Palabras clave: religión; anticlericalismo; secularismo.

La Rose brésilienne qui prit feu à la question religieuse au Portugal: l'affaire Calmon (1899-1901)

Résumé

Dans le processus de sécularisation progressive de la société, qui, en Europe et en Amérique, renouela son élan à la fin du XIXe siècle, les relations entre l'Église et l'État se présentèrent souvent comme une dynamique conflictuelle que l'historiographie dénomme de «question religieuse». Dans cet article, je me propose d'analyser un point culminant que cette difficile relation prit au Portugal, à partir de l'étude d'un épisode spécifique qui, par un concours de circonstances et prédispositions, fut érigé en événement marquant pour le processus de sécularisation de la société portugaise. Il s'agit de la controverse générée autour de la vocation religieuse de la fille de consul du Brésil à Porto — affaire qui conduisit à un des débats les plus houleux sur la religiosité, les droits individuels et le caractère confessionnel de l'Etat, qui impliqua aussi bien les instances gouvernementales que la société civile en une mobilisation inédite pour ce genre de thèmes. L'anti-congrégationalisme, l'anticléricalisme et le militantisme laïque furent les protagonistes de cet épisode, dans lequel s'engagèrent citoyens et chancelleries brésiliens, et où on peut identifier en toute netteté les lignes de clivage qui devraient plus tard façonner les contours de la question religieuse pendant la 1^{ère} république portugaise, entre 1910 et 1926.

Mots clés: religion; anticléricalisme; laïcité.

Article received on July 15, 2014, and approved for publication on November 10, 2014.

[1] Institute of Social Sciences at Universidade de Lisboa – Lisboa – Portugal. *E-mail:* isabelcorreadasilva@ics.ul.pt

The history of the Portuguese anticlericalism in the 19th century was marked by several cases. The cases of the Sisters of Charity (1858–1862), Sara de Matos (1891) and Rosa Calmon (1899–1901) may be some of the most famous and paradigmatic ones, and that is why they always appear in the index of any global perspective about the relationships between State, Church, and society in Portugal.¹ Deep down, they represent three breaking points in the journey of the Portuguese religious issue, whose genealogy can date back to the Pombaline antijesuitism in the late 18th century, even though its truly anticlerical front — which was rapidly going toward a laic militancy — is a reality that gained relevance especially after the mid 19th century.

In 1834, the liberals — who won the civil war against absolutists, the war that, for years, divided the Portuguese society — established the extinction of religious orders, the closure of all convents, monasteries, schools and asylums, and the incorporation of the respective assets in the National Treasury.² The nickname “Mata Frades”, which was given to the minister who signed the decree of May 28, 1834, Joaquim António Aguiar, and the name “devoristas” attributed by contemporaries to the governments of 1834–1836 which sold the nationalized goods of the Church, expressively shows the reach of the social and economic consequences of that resolution-revolution.³

But more than the patrimonial damage suffered by regular orders, the confrontation between legitimists and liberals also had implications on secular clergy. The major adherence of the ecclesiastic community to the cause of D. Miguel had serious political consequences even after the armed conflict was over. Much of the rural population and that from the North of the country was mobilized against the new liberal order, forming a new social-religious conflict that was extended at least until the late 1840s and during the Costa Cabral administration.⁴ The confrontation between constitutional clergy and

¹A complete perspective about the subject is in Vítor Neto, *O Estado, a Igreja e a sociedade em Portugal (1832-1911)*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 1998. Cf. also the inclusion of “Anticlericalismo”, by António Matos Ferreira, in: Carlos Moreira Azevedo (dir.), *Dicionário de História Religiosa de Portugal*, Lisboa, Centro de Estudos de História Religiosa da Universidade Católica Portuguesa; Círculo de Leitores, 2000, p. 79-82.

²Decrees from August 5 to August 9, 1833. Decree from May 30, 1834, which finally determines the extinction of all male religious houses and the nationalization of their assets. Cf. *Diário do Governo*, 1833, p. 7; 12-13 and *Ibidem*, 1834, p. 70-71.

³See Vasco Pulido Valente, *Os Devoristas. A Revolução Liberal: 1834-1836*, Lisboa, Quetzal, 1993, and Vítor Neto, *op. cit.*, p. 62-86.

⁴As minister of Ecclesiastic and Justice Businesses, Costa Cabral worked hard to implement a pacification policy of the religious “cisma”, which, during the civil war (1828–1834), and even after, divided the national ecclesiastic community between priests that remained faithful to the legitimist cause of D. Miguel and the priests that accepted the new order defended by D. Pedro IV. Nonetheless, the prohibition of burials inside the churches became one of the most famous popular protests in Portuguese history, which was known as Maria da Fonte and counted on important support from the Miguelists.

Ultramontano clergy was, in fact, only one of the faces of the resistance of traditional society against the implementation of the regalist and centralizing project of Portuguese liberalism. Since constitutional monarchy would not be implemented by default in the country, liberal governments aimed at subjugating ecclesiastical structures to the political power in order to put religion to the service of the new national cause. Naturally, the Holy See could not help but see the rule of its jurisdiction being contested in national churches. After almost a decade of interrupted diplomatic relations, in 1842 Rome and Lisbon were reconciled based on a commitment that implied that the Portuguese government had to accept reintegration in the respective dioceses of a list of anti-liberal prelates⁵.

From anticongreganism to anticlericalism: the case of the Sisters of Charity (1858–1862)

Until the middle of the century, the Portuguese religious question was especially focused on the dialectics of friction between the throne and the altar. In the early 1860s, the case of the Sisters of Charity came up as a synthesis of this tension. Right after the epidemic outbreak that struck Lisbon in 1856–1857, a group of French Sisters of Charity, from the congregation of Saint Vincent de Paul, was installed in the city, with exceptional authorization from the government, in order to assist people in need. In 1858, the press in the capital began a merciless campaign against the Sisters, accusing them of having extrapolated their original assistance functions to teaching. The polemic grew while other newspapers became adept to the movement, until it reached the Parliament. Here, it gained a political color, and the opposite party accused the government of being conniving in breaking the law by accepting the presence and the activity of the Sisters that were subject to foreign authority.⁶ The government reacted against September 3, 1858, by issuing a decree that authorized the permanence of the Sisters in the country, as long as they were committed to exercising assistance functions.⁷ Even though it apparently responded to the demands of the public anticlerical opinion, this initiative was far from ending the anticongreganist campaign, which was already inevitable.

⁵Cf. Vítor Neto, *O Estado, a Igreja e a sociedade em Portugal (1832-1911)*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 1998, p. 147.

⁶The nationality of the “foreigners” was certainly not indifferent, since, in parallel with the case of the French Sisters of Charity, there was another polemic resulted from the diplomatic incident caused by the arrest of the French ship *Charles et Georges*, in December, 1857, after the suspicion of slave traffic. This event lasted throughout the year of 1858, and the Portuguese government was forced to give in to international pressures and to release the ship and its captain. The matter caused political embarrassment and worsened the national indisposition toward France. Cf. Fortunato de Almeida, *A questão do apresamento da barca Charles et George e o Conselho de Estado*, Coimbra, [s.n.], 1917. In a letter to the king of Belgium, king D. Pedro V says that, even though the country has given up on the *Charles et Georges* case, it will not do so with regard to the Sisters of Charity without losing face. Júlio Vilhena, *D. Pedro V e o seu reinado*, vol. II, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade, 1921, p. 205.

⁷“Decree from September 3”, 1858, *Diário do Governo*, p. 347-348.

The Historic Party worked hard to scare the liberal opinion with the ghost of the return of religious orders based on the precedent of the Sisters of Charity. The newspaper *O Português* started gathering signatures to request the exile of the religious women.⁸ In Lisbon, two anticlerical rallies were organized, and the Association to Promote the Female Gender Education was created and presided by the respected figures such as Alexandre Herculano, Oliveira Marreca, and Vicente Ferrer Neto Paiva.

The case of the Sisters of Charity ended in 1862 when the French sisters returned to their country. In contrast, the consequences of the debate generated by this issue went in the opposite directions: if, on the one hand, the polemic reinforced the evidence of a generalized anticongreganism in civil society, on the other hand, the case ended up serving as an impulse so that, by reestablishing ecclesiastic school and public care, religious orders would be gradually reintroduced in Portugal.⁹

From anticlericalism to laic militancy: the case of Sara de Matos (1891)

Throughout the following decades, clericalism spread new roots in Portuguese society, and, at the same time, anticongreganism reinforced its strongest anticlerical feature. In the early 1980s, about 200 Dorothean sisters and 400 Hospitallers sisters were in Portugal.¹⁰ By reacting both to the clerical rebirth and to the conservative and ultramontana inflection prescribed by the Holy See, the ancient regalist and anticongreganist liberal secularism began to be replaced by an anticlericalism that was more and more based on lay proselytism. The success and the popularization of anticlerical narratives, such as *Os Lazaristas* (1875), by António Enes, or *A Velhice do Padre Eterno* (1885), by Guerra Junqueiro, shows that, in the last decades of the century, religious teaching and the extra-national character of the congregations were no longer the central anathema of anticlericalism. The religious worldview was then incompatible with a positivist, scientific, and modern view of the world, and men and religious institutes began to be seen as barriers to the course of society toward progress. Especially in urban sectors, demonizing devices that had been very much used against

⁸This petition gathered 7,403 signatures, while a counterpetition initiated by the legitimist newspaper *A Nação*, in favor of the religious women staying, gathered 30,226. Cf. Vítor Neto, *O Estado, a Igreja e a sociedade em Portugal (1832-1911)*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, 1998, p. 301.

⁹The return of the religious orders significantly increased during the following decades, so, before the Republic, there were 31 congregations spread throughout the 164 establishments in the country. Cf. Vítor Neto, *op cit.*, p. 322. Veja-se também José Eduardo Franco; Luís Machado Abreu; Cristiana Lucas da Silva (orgs.), *Para a história das ordens e congregações religiosas em Portugal, na Europa e no Mundo*, Lisboa, Paulinas, 2014.

¹⁰That is, 200 Italian religious women from the Congregation of Saint Dorothea Sisters and 400 Austrian religious women from the Congregation of Hospitable Franciscan Sisters of Imaculada Conceição. Cf. M. Borges Grainha, *A propósito do Caso das Trinas. Os jesuítas e as congregações religiosas em Portugal nos últimos trinta anos*, Porto, Typographia da Empresa Literária e Typográfica, 1891, p. 25-26.

the Jesuits were extended to all religious communities in general: celibate, enclosure, and auricular confession were then seen as perfidious atavisms from which it was urgent to release any society that wished to follow the path of moral and civic improvement.¹¹

Liberal governments aimed at subjugating ecclesiastical structures to the political power in order to put religion to the service of the new national cause

In June 1891, the death of a 14 year-old orphan girl in the Convent of Trinas, in Lisbon, burst a new anticlerical bubble. Sara Pereira Pinto de Matos, together with her sister, had been given to the care of Hospitaller nuns in the Convent of Trinas in the previous year. After feeling sick for a few days, Sara passed away suddenly, without even being seen by a doctor. After some suppositions based on the results of the autopsy, the Republican press immediately suspected that Sara might have been assaulted by a priest and then poisoned, with the nuns' collaboration, to repress the scandal. Toxicological examinations confirmed the hypothesis of poisoning and a nun confessed to have mistakenly given the girl a product she thought to be a purgative, but ended up being lethal. The nun was condemned to a correctional penalty for involuntary murder.¹² Sara became a martyr of clerical perversity. This time, the case was beyond the polemic about the existence and the conditions of religious orders in the country, focusing on a more general campaign about the pernicious effects of the clerical element in society. Like in the case of the Sisters of Charity, the case of Sara de Matos gained national repercussion because of the efforts of the press. But, unlike what had happened in the late 1850s, in 1891 the case of Sara de Matos also counted on anticlerical and proto-laicism militancy of republicanism, in the campaign against the English ultimatum, taking the first steps toward the massification of its message. The newspaper *O Século* started a petition to build a mausoleum to honor Sara. In 1896, almost 20,000 people attended the ceremony to remove the body and inaugurate the funerary monument, and, for several years, the place was the center of civic pilgrimage, so, the poisoned girl's grave became a place of lay cult.

¹¹Cf. Luís Machado de Abreu, "O discurso do anticlericalismo português (1850-1926)", *Brotéria*, vol. 160, n. 2, 2004, p. 161-188. About the same topic, see also *Idem*, (org.), *Colóquio anticlericalismo português: história e discurso*, Aveiro, Universidade de Aveiro; Centro de Línguas e Culturas, 2001.

¹²Cf. Abílio Maia, *A Irmã Collecta*. Traços biográficos. A propósito do Caso das Trinas, Braga, Typographia Sá Pereira, 1892, and Eduardo Burnay, "O Caso Sara de Matos (1891)", *Archivos do Instituto de Medicina Legal de Lisboa*, vol. I, n. 4, 1913.

It is important to remember that the journey of such an anticlerical movement followed, in an indissociable manner, the path of the coetaneous development of freethought in Portugal, whose claims included the separation between the Church and the State, the laic school, the record, and civil marriage, as well as the separation between the family and the Church. Even though the foundation of the Association of Civil Record dates back to 1876, and the Association of Freethought to 1882, it was only after the 1890s when the movement effectively began to grow, partly because it was adopted by other forms of militancy, such as the socialist and the Masonic ones.¹³ In its most elitist (Masonic lodges and freethought associations) or popular forms (civilian processions or associations that promoted civilian participation), freethought integrated the organized branch of a laic militancy of which popular anticlericalism constituted the most spontaneous aspect. In effect, in the turn of the 19th to the 20th century, a coalition of negative interests — Masonic, Carbonari, republican — was forged in an anticlerical militancy, which decided not to condescend in the fight against the regime and the religious question.¹⁴

The case of Rosa Calmon (1899–1901)

In 1901, a new polemic around the religious vocation of the daughter of the Brazilian consul in Porto led to one of the most agitated anticlerical moments in the country. Rosa Calmon was a Brazilian single 32-year-old woman who lived with her parents in Porto, where her father, José Calmon, had been for almost a decade the consul of Brazil. On a Sunday morning, in February 1901, there was an argument at the end of the mass in Church of Trindade involving father and daughter: Rosa, grabbing the lateral grate of the church and hugged by her mother, in tears, refused to walk with her parents. Holding up his walking stick in the air, the father asked for help, so people could help the Brazilian consul, because his daughter was being kidnapped. A journalist from *Diário da Tarde*, who was passing by, went to help his consul friend and tried to remove the daughter from the crates, leading her to the family carriage. An undercover police officer protected the latter and ended up accompanying the Calmon family back home. In the background there were many insults — “tyrant”, “infamous father”, “thieves” —, shouts and threats from the several people who saw the confusion.

¹³Cf. Fernando Catroga, “A Maçonaria, as congregações e a questão religiosa (séculos XIX e XX)”, In: José Eduardo Franco; Luís Machado de Abreu (orgs.), *Ordens e congregações religiosas no contexto da I República*, Lisboa, Gradiva, 2010, p. 91-108.

¹⁴Cf. *Idem*, *O republicanismo em Portugal*. Da formação ao 5 de outubro de 1910, Lisboa, Editorial Notícias, 2000, p. 88-91.

But the Calmon case did not begin in February 1901 in the exuberant “kidnap” of Trindade; it had started at least two years earlier and had already distinguished some subtle profiles of the religious question in Portugal.¹⁵

The urge to live a religious life manifested by Rosa, and opposed by her parents, was a domestic drama that had been happening in the family of the Brazilian consul for several years. Since in 1899 the demonstrations of religious dedication of Rosa became more frequent, and because she had become more obstinate to challenge her parents’ prohibition, José Calmon made her daughter undergo a test by the psychiatrist Júlio de Matos, who diagnosed her with hysteric madness and recommended she should be observed.

The urge to live a religious life manifested by Rosa, and opposed by her parents, was a domestic drama that had been happening in the family of the Brazilian consul for several years

Detained in her own house, and being in a foreign country where public opinion had little sympathy for her cause, Rosa decided to appeal to her father’s hierarchical superior, and maximum representatives of her country in Portuguese territory: in the end of September 1899, she wrote a letter to the head of the Brazilian legation in Lisbon, Júlio de Melo e Alvim, exposing her dramatic situation. The letter shows her a woman who is well aware of her skills, coherent in her options, but, above all, tired and outraged by the mistrust and surveillance. Rosa claimed to be a hostage in a private prison, and asked the minister to give her protection and support her decision to leave her parents’ house to join a convent in Lisbon. In a *post scriptum*, dated from October, she complained that “her suffering” got worse in the past days, since there were office guards in front of the house. For its historiographically originality, and since this is a rare, if not single, voice expression of Rosa available in our days, it is worth to transcribe the letter here:¹⁶

¹⁵In contemporary historiography, the case was object of the following reflections: Maria Rita Garnel, “O Caso Rosa Calmon: género, discurso médico e opinião pública”, *In: Zília Osório de Castro; João Esteves, Falar de mulheres: história e historiografia*, Lisboa, Livros Horizonte, 2008, p. 71-87 and, from the same author, “Rosa Maria Calmon da Gama”, *In: Zília Osório de Castro; João Esteves (dirs.), Dicionário no feminino - séculos XIX e XX*, Lisboa, Livros Horizonte, 2005, p. 350-354; Jesué Pinharanda Gomes, *O rapto da Rosa: o Caso Calmon*, Porto, Separata de *O Tripeiro*, 2001; and Isabel Corrêa da Silva, *Espelho fraterno: o Brasil e o republicanismo português na transição para o século XX*, Lisboa, Divina Comédia, 2012, p. 194-232.

¹⁶Some months later, the letter was published in the catholic newspaper *Alliança*, from Porto. But unfortunately these copies are very difficult to find nowadays, which helps us understand why the already scarce literature on the Calmon Case never mentioned it [copy from June 9, 1900], Arquivo Histórico do Itamaraty/Ministério das Relações Exteriores (AHI/MRE), Missões Diplomáticas Brasileiras, Lisboa, Ofícios, cx. 214-3-10 (1901).

Porto, September 25, 1899

By greeting Your Honor and your family, I first would like to apologize to bother you with these lines I decided to write to mention a very serious matter, on which my whole happiness depends. I decided to do it because of everything I have known about Your Honor, who, by your name, your position and your feelings I believe is, more than anyone, competent for the wish I come to ask you. I believe you are familiar with the huge desire of mine to adopt a religious life, as well as the major opposition of my parents regarding this decision. You probably know they say this idea is owed to a hysterical madness, or any other nervous breakdown, and that it was said, in similar terms, by two doctors they saw and gave them a certificate proving that! But none of that scares me, because the truth always prevails, and no one can say that my manners are those of a hysteric or fanatic person. Thank God, I have always been, and I am now, in perfect state of mind, and my decision was only made after a lot of thinking and weighing all options, and so that Your Honor can be aware of the truth so that you can make a decision about all this, I will tell you, very briefly, my story. I was raised and educated without hardly any religious education. From a young age, I was used to attending theaters and other sources of entertainment, of which I liked, as it would be natural for that age, and also because I only knew about these things in the world. At the age of almost 24, after having heard some preaches and practices that made me aware of our holy religion, I decided to embrace the good examples advice of some people by confessing for the first time in my life, and having my first communion. All of that happened in Brazil, a few months before we came here, and I did all that without telling my Father, because he would not even admit that we talked about confessing, let alone actually doing it! I kept attending the sacraments and studying the doctrine, as well as reading good books and listening more carefully to preaches and practices, and while I became more instructed in the religion, for which I was as attracted as possible, I got annoyed with the worldly pleasures until the point that I could not stand them anymore.

For this and other reasons, I began to realize that my vocation was addressed to the religious life, and that before I could not feel it due to the ignorance I was living in, because how could I like something I did not know of! There was a time when Mother left me out on many occasions, and I took this liberty to attend some religious schools, where I could talk to the religious women over and over again, making sure that that was really my calling. I started thinking about it a lot and asking God light and grace to know His will. Three years later I did the spiritual exercises, and not only on those days, but throughout the whole year I kept thinking about the same thing. After this period, and sure that, thanks to our Lord, nothing would make me change, my decision was made forever, I thought of telling my parents about my ideas to obtain their consent to follow my calling, but before that I wanted to take all of the steps, that is, to make sure I would or would not be received in my

conditions, without dowry or even trousseau, and thanks to our Lord, I got it all quickly, without any difficulties, they receive me at any time even if I carry nothing with me but my goodwill and the huge desire to dedicate myself to the service of God and live just for Him.

I even waited for some months for my aunt, Carapebus, who was coming to spend a few days with us, because since she was very religious and kind, I imagined she could help me get my parents' consent, but before the day of her arrival my Father heard of my ideas through a stranger, and so I no longer waited and told them everything. They soon were as opposed as possible and, among other things, they cut relations with my best friends' families who were not to blame at all, because it all came *only* from me, or even better, from God. They tried everything, even convincing me that I was mad, that it was all caused by hysteria and that I must be convinced of that so I could make efforts to be cured from that state. After all, by realizing nothing would make me change and that I perfectly knew that, being almost 30 years old, I was entitled to choose whatever life I wanted, they called the infamous doctors and convinced them to provide the certificate I told you about, probably to have this evidence in their favor in case I tried to go against their will. Anyway, I have been going through things that only God knows about, my life in these two years has been a real suffering, at the age of 31 I see myself stuck and watched like a 14- or 15-year-old girl (and so many of them at that age are freer than me, at 31!).

Well, I know that love (even though a very confusing one) is what blinds them to the point of causing me so many injustices, so I forgive them with all of my heart, because I care for my parents very much and that is why I have been waiting this whole time to see if I could get their consent and blessing before I left. For me, that would be the maximum possible happiness, but unfortunately I see that my patience, submission and condescendence have gotten me nowhere. I feel as unhappy as I can be, and I can no longer suffer from that pain, so I come to ask Your Honor the huge favor of talking to my Father and telling him how unhappy I feel in this world, and how much I wish to go on with the religious life. Make them see that, if I got married, as they would like me to, I would not stay home with them either, and if I got married, for instance, to a diplomat, I would have to be apart [from them] as did my mother, from her family [and my brother], who is in Brazil, from all of us, [inside the] convent he can find me whenever he wishes to visit and heard from by through letters. Explain to him that the step I am willing to take is not dishonor to my family, on the contrary, how many distinct people and even [princesses] became nuns, and one cannot say they lowered themselves. Tell him that you also have a cousin, who is a nun, and therefore she is very acknowledged by everyone, including her family. Tell him, finally, that him being such a good Father he must be ready to make this sacrifice, even if against his will, to make his daughter happy, since she cannot be so in any other way. But I am sorry to remind you of all that when Your Honor knows a thousand times better than me what you should tell him. I trust it all to your intelligence

and good heart, all I ask of you is to use all your efforts to obtain such a desired consent by touching his heart, which is very soft and good. But if after all that he continues to say no, then I ask Your Honor for your competent protection so that I can get the freedom I am entitled to since I can no longer remain in this life of suffering, and I am more than decided to follow my calling. This will be a huge happiness for me, and satisfaction for my family, because, thanks to God, nothing will make me change my mind and I will only be a torment for them while I am depriving them from having fun, because they do not want to go if I do not go with them, and tormenting them every time I ask them to let me follow my calling.

I hope, or else, I am almost certain that Your Honor will do what I just asked you to, and that very briefly I will owe you my happiness! I also have another big favor to ask you, which is to take me with you to Lisbon when you go back there with your Honorable family, and there I will say which order I wish to join. You can tell Father (coming from you) that this will be very convenient even for him, since with the distraction from the trip, the company of your daughter, Irène, I might even change my mind, because maybe with that hope he will let me go more easily. I would like to thank you one thousand times and conclude here, very thoughtful and grateful, thank you very much,

Rosa Maria Calmon da Gama

Post scriptum on October 4, 1899. After this letter was written, while I waited to send it to you when you return to Porto, my suffering has increased greatly, they no longer respect me and even treat me badly, now I am a prisoner with guards day and night, and they follow me when I leave the house, even though I am with Mother, they treat me like I am a mad person. This is superior to human forces, and as it is true I am in my perfect senses and I do want to be a good daughter, and I wish to walk prudently. I did not want that, due to Father's position, a foreign person should be aware of these facts, but if there is no other way, I hear about Mr. Bishop from Porto, and it is possible that I ask him for protection, which I will only do if I am forced to, and that can happen even if I did not get your response, to whom I once again appeal as a friend of my father's, as a representative of my country, and as a gentleman and good man. If by any change Your Honor has any message or letter to send me, please do not send it by mail, because the letter would certainly be opened and read by someone in my family. So if you have any answers, please send them through one of the Honorable daughters, asking her to give it to me without anyone watching or noticing it.

Desperate, and without a good response, a few months after Rosa tried to escape, but ended up being caught in the railway station of Alfarelos, near Porto, by police agents who made her return home. From that point onward, the police was always at the door of the consul's residence, and Rosa decided

to publically address the civil governor of Porto, so that he could do something against the illegality of the situation she was subjected to.¹⁷ Simultaneously, afraid that Rosa would try to escape again, her father began a legal process of interdicting her for dementia. After that, an issue that was firstly limited to the domestic jurisdiction entered the courts and became a polemic matter that, for more than one year, divided opinions.¹⁸

Two doctors, Joaquim Urbano da Costa (subdelegate of health in Porto) and Júlio de Matos (director of Hospital de Alienados Conde de Ferreira), were called by the judge in the 4th civil court of the district of Porto to make a statement about the possibility of providing clinical reason for the interdiction José Calmon had on his daughter. The former considered that Rosa had control of her mental faculties. Júlio de Matos, however, supported the Brazilian consul and, supported by the diagnoses of other national and foreign doctors, made from a distance without ever having seen Rosa, on May 16, 1900, declared the following:

[...] Hereditary physical degeneration, whose syndromes are constitutional hysteria and lucid madness (affective variety). Observing the religious passion shown by the defendant, eminently suggestible, the narrowing of the consciousness field, incompatible with the free exercise of will and action, I recommend that she should be interdicted.¹⁹

In this impasse, a medical board composed of three doctors was named, and refused to declare anything about the case, pledging incompetence in the field of alienist diseases. After much controversy, the judge asked the nomination of another board, and in the latter two doctors decided in favor of Rosa's mental health, and one diagnosed her with psychic degeneration. After several months, after seeing almost ten doctors, the process was concluded after José Calmon gave up the suit.

But while judges and doctors tried to agree on Rosa's mental state, the Calmon case left the courts and took over the streets, and then the chancelleries and the Parliament. Since the Brazilian consul continued to keep his daughter under police surveillance, even though there was not any judicial deliberation for that, some catholic newspapers from Porto, such as *O Norte* and *A Palavra*, took her side and were outraged because of the violence and arbitrariness of the consul; therefore, a judicial case was moved against José Calmon.

¹⁷Ofício de Júlio de Melo e Alvim ao ministro das Relações Exteriores brasileiro, 3 de maio de 1900, AHI/MRE, Missões Diplomáticas Brasileiras, Lisboa. Ofícios, cx. 214-3-9 (1900).

¹⁸The Calmon case brought up two different legal processes: the first one, considering Rosa's interdiction due to dementia, was initiated by José Calmon, and was conducted by the 4th civil court in the district of Porto, and ended because José Calmon gave it up. The second process, initiated by Antônio Ferreira Alves Pacheco against José Calmon for allegedly keeping his daughter in false imprisonment, was conducted by the 2nd criminal district of Porto and was filed by the deliberativo of the delegate of the Public Ministry and by a corroborative sentence from judge Margarido Pacheco, on March 1, 1901. Cf. Promotion of the delegate from the 2nd Criminal District of Porto (February 27, 1901) and Sentence of judge Margarido Pacheco (March 1st, 1901), transcribed in "Uma promoção honrosa", *O Século*, 8 de Março de 1901, p. 4, and Bernardo Lucas, *Aspecto jurídico do Caso Calmon*, Porto, Typ. Arthur Souza e Irmão, 1901, p. 7-38.

¹⁹Parecer de 16 de maio de 1900 *apud* Júlio de Matos, *A Questão Calmon*. Reflexões sobre um caso médico-legal, Porto, Livraria Moreira, 1900, p. 16.

This news arrived to the Parliament fast. In the session of April 27, 1900, in the Chamber of Peers, the count of Bertandos questioned the government about the information that had arrived from Porto, which seemed to suggest that the Brazilian consul in that city committed the crime of keeping his adult daughter in false imprisonment and that the situation was overlooked by the authorities to avoid diplomatic problems.²⁰ The government gave an evasive response, and the issue was no longer addressed. But the Brazilian consul indeed counted on the solidarity of the authorities from Porto, who worked against the will of any judicial decision by preventing Rosa to leave home. In a letter written in that same month to his superior in Lisbon, the consul confessed that up until that moment, none of the authorities in Porto had denied him “benevolence and protection.”²¹ But José Calmon wanted more than benevolence from local authorities. He also wanted to ensure the sympathy of governmental authorities so that, in case he had to leave the country, he would be able to take his daughter with him, even if against her will.

“I have been going through things that only God knows about, my life in these two years has been a real suffering, at the age of 31 I see myself stuck and watched like a 14- or 15-year-old girl”

This was actually a conflict of legal framework. For the Portuguese law, the consul’s coercion was in fact illegal, once Rosa was an adult and had the right to decide to go with her father or not. However, as a diplomat, José Calmon claimed he did not have to submit to the law of the hosting country, and that it was a prerogative of his paternal power to decide upon his daughter’s destiny. Considering the ancient Portuguese Ordinances from the Kingdom, still valid in Brazil, even an adult was still under the tutelage as daughter-family. In the correspondence exchanged between the consul and the Brazilian plenipotentiary minister in Lisbon, it is visible that José Calmon was afraid that the campaign which was defended in public opinion by the catholic media in favor of Rosa’s pretensions might lead the Portuguese government to hold back and jeopardize his diplomatic rights. So, he asked the Brazilian minister in Lisbon to work on his side together with the Portuguese government and that, if necessary, seek the intervention of the Brazilian president. The Brazilian minister in Lisbon,

²⁰Debates da Câmara dos Dignos Pares do Reino (DCDPR), 8ª Sessão, 11 de fevereiro de 1901, p. 76-77. The count of Bertandos had already taken the matter to the Courts almost one year earlier, a little after the first frustrated attempt of Rosa’s escape, in March 1901. Cf. DCDPR, 23ª Sessão, 27 de abril de 1900, p. 159.

²¹Letter from José Calmon to Júlio de Melo e Alvim, April 11, 1900, AHI/MRE, Missões Diplomáticas Brasileiras, Lisboa. Ofícios, cx. 214-3-9 (1900).

however, refused to bother his superiors and insisted that the matter was personal, and that, in the worst-case scenario, it should be treated in Portuguese civil or criminal instances, but never in diplomatic chancelleries. The correspondence between the Brazilian consul and minister became more violent throughout the 1900: Calmon constantly charging Alvim due to the little support received by the legation, the minister being more and more irritated about Calmon's claims and insinuations.

The tone of the letters exchanged with the consul in Porto, or with the minister of Exterior Relations in Brazil, gives the idea that Alvim would indeed have more sympathy for the cause of the daughter than that of the father. We can also understand that he felt very troubled to see all of the manifestations of anticlerical radicalism which, at that point, were associated with the name of his country. In a report from August 1901, addressed to his boss in Brazil, Alvim complained about the problems he had had with the Calmon Case, including with employees of the legation itself that had joined the campaign in favor of the cause of the consul in Porto promoted, according to him, by "groups of Portuguese and Brazilian Jacobins".²²

In May, the newspaper *Alliança* published the letter from Rosa to Melo e Alvim, and the subject remained alive in the press of Porto. The newspapers followed the progress and setbacks of both judicial suits against father and daughter simultaneously. In the end of that year, Júlio de Matos published the medico-legal report he had prepared as a specialist in the process of Rosa's interdiction.²³ In the beginning of 1901, the life of Rosa Calmon was still a common topic in public life. In the session of February 11, in the Chamber of Peers, the count of Bertandos continued to insist with the government so that Rosa would have her individual freedom legally ensured, asking for explanations about the connivance of the police with the arbitrariness of the consul in Brazil. The prime minister, Hintze Ribeiro, guaranteed that the authorities of Porto would not agree to any action opposed to the deliberations of the judicial power. However, Rosa continued to be "protected" by a police agent. On February 17, at the door of the Trindade Church, the situation was aggravated and the rift between both sides became even worse.

The news of the following days reporting the case in the Trindade Church show such a disparity in the description of facts, that a careless reader might conclude that there were two different episodes. Practically, the single point in

²²One of the secretaries of the consulate, José de Alencar, decided to go on strike and refused to obey his boss's orders. The Brazilian minister was forced to file complaint against him to the Brazilian minister of Exterior Relations, referring to the employee as being part of a "group of Portuguese and Brazilian Jacobins" faithful to the cause of the consul in Porto. Cf. *Ofícios de Júlio de Melo e Alvim ao ministro das Relações Exteriores*, agosto de 1901, AHI/MRE, Missões Diplomáticas Brasileiras, Lisboa, Ofícios, cx. 214-3-10 (1901).

²³The report from Matos is followed by the reports of eight experts – Dallemagne (Brussels), Régis (Bordéus), Lombroso (Turin), H. Maudsley (London), Schule (Illenau), Magnan (Sant'Anna), Séglas (Bicetre), and Morselli (Genova) – which, based only on the report of Júlio de Matos, without ever seeing Rosa, generally corroborated the diagnosis of hysteric dementia. For the contextualization of the case in a broader scenario of the progresses in psychiatry and the consequences and political instrumentalization in Portugal, see António Araújo, *Jesuítas e antijesuítas no Portugal republicano*, Lisboa, Roma Editora, 2004, p. 125-129, and Ana Leonor Pereira, *Darwin em Portugal: filosofia, história, engenharia social (1865-1914)*, Coimbra, Almedina, 2001, p. 359-434.

common between the reports of conservative and radical publications is the statement that Rosa had lived in her parent's house against her will for a long time, since they stopped her from accepting her religious calling. From that moment on, the story takes two different paths. *Correio Nacional*, a liberal conservative newspaper, narrates the following scenario: at the exit of Trindade Church, Mrs. Rosa Calmon told her mother she would no longer return to the house, and that she intended to accept the invitation of a female friend, D. Maria Almeida Garrett, to stay in her house; then, she would fulfill her wish to join a convent. After hearing his daughter's statement, the Brazilian consul got desperate and made a huge mess, threatening his daughter with his cane and threatening to kill whoever got close to her; at the same time he pulled her. Resisting her father's pressure, Rosa grabbed the lateral crates of the church. Counting on the protection of a police officer and the help of a friend, the Brazilian consul could drag his daughter to the carriage. In the front of the church, people were perplexed with such a "salvage" act and some "blood stains" were seen under the crates where Rosa was removed from.²⁴

The same episode is told by *O Século*, a moderate republican newspaper, as follows: at the exit of the Trindade Church, a group of reactionary elements tried to kidnap the daughter of the Brazilian consul to lock her up in a convent. Her father ran to defend his daughter, and confronted a group of clergymen who threatened to hit him while he pulled them away with his cane; at the same time, he asked for the people's help against the thieves who kidnapped the girl. At that time, a police officer tried to control the situation and protect the Calmon family from the suspected kidnappers, and let the journalist from *Diário da Tarde* get close to Rosa, "slowly" detaching her hands from the crates she was grabbing on to, and, dispersing "with light force" the group that surrounded her, she was led, arm in arm, to her parents' carriage. The same newspaper also reported that the girl accompanied the journalist "kindly and did not resist", and that there was "very little blood" because her "hands were swollen and cut because of the cold weather", and that the "attack" had been previously arranged between Rosa and her confessor.²⁵

Regardless of the differences between the versions, the episode triggered a real anticlerical fury that began immediately in the city of Porto and rapidly spread to Lisbon and other areas of the country. On the following Sunday, a manifestation of solidarity was expecting the Brazilian consul at the exit of Trindade Church. Since no one from the Calmons attended the mass, the group went to their house; the consul came to the window and thanked the show of support "free people of Porto", and then he threw petals on them. The small group of people returned to the Trindade square to boo the priests, and burn copies of the catholic newspaper *A Palavra*. The police intervened and tried to send the people away; some were wounded and arrested. For the rest of the

²⁴"Sem Comentários", *Correio Nacional*, 18 de fevereiro de 1901, p. 1.

²⁵"O Caso Calmon", *O Século*, 21 de fevereiro de 1901, p. 1-2; "O Século no Porto", *Ibidem*, 22 de fevereiro de 1901, p. 1-2.

day, groups of people walked by the streets of Porto celebrating at the door of liberal newspapers and shouting against the Jesuits, while running from the police.²⁶ The anticlerical movement, which had begun on the previous day after stones were thrown at the office of *A Palavra*,²⁷ spread to other clerical areas in Porto. The Dorothean retreat and the Catholic Association were also attacked with stones. About 5,000 people gathered at the door of the house of José Guimarães Pestana, the recognized head of the Ultramontano party and an absolutist from Porto, and destroyed windows and crates with stones, ripping off and burning the curtains. Many priests were chased down the street amidst slogan “Jesuits, die; Beat up, form the cult!”. Municipal authorities were forced to put the main religious houses of the city under police protection.²⁸

Focuses of clerical manifestations were spread throughout the country — not only from Porto to Lisbon, but also in provincial cities, especially in the ones that had deeper republican concentration. On March 1st, the students of the Polytechnic, the Commercial Institute, and the Medical School organized a satirist procession in some streets of Porto, raising a flag with an effigy of an ultramontano “in strange clothes and extremely embellished”. As revenge, on that night, “there were small explosions” close to the Commercial Institute.²⁹ On that day, in response to the mess in the streets, the civil government of Porto published an order stopping the circulation of newspapers or any type of printed media encouraging any act that would disturb the order or attempt against individual rights, forbidding the exhibition of any “drawings or offensive images of employees, corporations or individuals”.³⁰ As expected, these censorship orders created outrage among the population of Porto. The Association of Journalists and Men of Letters from Porto wrote a collective letter of protest to the Parliament, and invited the deputy from opposition, José Maria de Alpoim, to be the observer.³¹ In the last days of February and the first days of March, the matter took over the debates. The Progressive Party did not miss the chance to denounce the prepotency and the despotism of authorities in response to disturbances in public order. However, opposition managed to turn the case into a political weapon to confront the government with one of the most sensitive pints of the national religious question related to the illegal presence of religious corporations, which had been officially forbidden by law since 1834.

In the main cities of the country, the situation became riotous, with the population in the streets swearing against the priests and newspapers preaching against the illicitness of religious orders. The public opinion and political

²⁶“O Caso Calmon”, *O Século*, 25 de fevereiro de 1901, p. 2, and “Um caso de sensação”, *O Primeiro de Janeiro*, 28 de fevereiro de 1901, p. 1 and 1º de março de 1901, p. 2.

²⁷“O Caso Calmon: tumultos no Porto”, *op cit.*, 24 de fevereiro de 1901, p. 4.

²⁸*Ibidem*, 28 de fevereiro de 1901, p. 1.

²⁹*O Primeiro de Janeiro*, 1º de março de 1901, p. 2.

³⁰“Edital de 1º de março de 1901” *apud Diário da Câmara dos Senhores Deputados*, sessão de 5 de março de 1901, p. 2

³¹“Discurso de José Maria de Alpoim”, *Ibidem*, p. 2-4.

pressure became so intense that the government was forced to act: on March 10, a decree was issued demanding that civil governors should inquire inside their jurisdiction about the existence of “religious institutions or orders of any name, institute or rule” dedicated to the monastic life, as well as “teaching, advertising, benefit or charity establishments addressed to or administered by religious congregations” and whether or not, in any of these houses, there was the “admission of sacred orders to apprenticeships for monastic life”.³²

The episode triggered a real anticlerical fury that began immediately in the city of Oporto and rapidly spread to Lisbon and other areas of the country

The results of the inquiry revealed what had been known for a while: several convents and monasteries that were fully free and autonomous were spread throughout the country. The publicity of this situation forced the government to take step in accordance with the current legal framework: after the decree of April 18, 1901, religious houses that were exclusively dedicated to the monastic life were shut down, and the requirements and regulating principles for the future installation of religious associations in the country were specified, with the obligation of being devoted to “benefits, charity, teaching or missions overseas”. The decree recognized that many religious associations, whose existence was acknowledged, had been surreptitiously introduced in the country; however, since they were officially unknown by the State, they were not under any sort of control. It also admitted it was impossible to “suddenly eliminate” everything that had been found, not only because there were many “altruistic and good things”, but also because it was necessary to avoid the danger of “disturbing the society deeply, and then administrative means and resources from the treasury would hardly be able to provide immediate assistance”. In this way, the doors were reopened to religious orders in Portugal, as long as they were named as associations, even though enclosure or religious vows were legally forbidden to their statutes.³³

The decree of April 18 drew the ire of all: of the catholic media, by corroborating the coercive closure of many religious retreats;³⁴ but also of the anticlerical

³²“Decreto-lei de 10 de março de 1901”, *Colecção Oficial de Legislação Portuguesa*. Ano de 1901 (1902), p. 61. See Ruy Ennes Ulrich, *Estudo sobre a condição legal das ordens e congregações religiosas em Portugal*, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade, 1905, p. 103-125.

³³“Decreto-lei de 18 de abril de 1901”, *op cit.*, p. 112-115.

³⁴*Cf.* “Carta do Espiscopado Português a Sua Magestade. De 23 de abril de 1901”, assinada pelo cardeal patriarca de Lisboa, arcebispo de Braga, Évora, Portalegre e Algarve, bispo de Viseu, bispo conde, bispo de Lamego, bispo de Bragança, bispo do Porto, *A Palavra*, 28 de abril de 1901, p. 1.

enthusiasts, by legalizing the *statu quo* regarding the permanence of religious associations in the country. Between the reactions to the frustrated “kidnap” of Rosa Calmon and the consequences of the promulgation of the law of April 18, anticlericalism was on fire during 1901: protests against the Jesuits and religious orders were practically staged daily, the writer Sampaio Bruno proposed the creation of an Anti-Jesuitic Union cross-sectional to political parties, and some of the press proposed the deposit of the remains of the Marquess of Pombal in the pantheon of the Monastery of Jerônimos.³⁵

While the news about the Calmon Case was still agitating the religious questions in the country, the family drama for the Calmons apparently was about to get resolved. Magistrates claimed there was not enough evidence to doubt Rosa’s sanity, or to condemn her father for the abusive coercion.³⁶ The delegate of the Public Ministry in the 2nd Criminal District from Porto stated that there were no reasons to talk about false imprisonment but that at the same time it would not be morally, legally, or criminally condemnable that a father would “use some surveillance on the acts of a daughter”, even if she is an adult woman. Likewise, it also stated that nobody would condemn a father who took the necessary precautions to stop her son or daughter, regardless of adulthood, from running away from home “to drown” or “to become a prostitute”.³⁷ Therefore, by comparing the convent to a well or a brothel, the representative of the Public Ministry had the process filed and exempted the Brazilian consul from any blame, leaving Rosa, who was an adult and legally sane, to remain under his custody.

Since this matter had long overcome the proportions of family or local polemics, the Brazilian government decided to act on the central issues of the controversy and, in the beginning of March, it ordered the Brazilian consul to be removed from his post. Before he left, José Calmon made some statements before the press in Porto and claimed to have been “succumbed” by the order of his Ministry, and “deeply penalized” for the sudden resignation. Regardless of the sorrow, the Brazilian consul left the country as he wished to, that is, taking his family, including Rosa.³⁸

Between 1900 and 1901, the Calmons were a sort of thermometer to measure anticlerical fevers in Portugal. But it was much more than that. It is true that the antijesuitic and anticongreganist campaigns mobilized a relative unanimity of opinions. But the public debate about Rosa’s misfortunes included other issues that had fewer consensuses. The weight of Science and the increasing intellectual power of doctors in the society were some of these issues.³⁹ Medical

³⁵“A união anti-jesuítica”, *A Voz Pública*, 5 de março de 1901, p. 1, and *O Século*, 26 de março de 1901, p. 1.

³⁶*Cf.* Promotion of the delegate from the 2nd Criminal District of Porto (February 27, 1901) and Sentence of judge Margarido Pacheco (March 1st, 1901), transcribed in “Uma promoção honrosa”, *Ibidem*, 8 de março de 1901, p. 4, and Bernardo Lucas, *Aspecto jurídico do Caso Calmon*, Porto, Typ. Arthur Souza e Irmão, 1901, p. 7-38.

³⁷“Uma promoção honrosa”, *op cit.*

³⁸*Cf.* “O governo brasileiro - pedido de retirada de Calmon”, *Ibidem*, 27 de fevereiro de 1901, p. 2.

³⁹*Cf.* Rita Garnel, “O poder intelectual dos médicos”, Separata de *Revista de História das Ideias*, vol. 24, 2003, p. 213-253. See also Ana Leonor Pereira; João Rui Pita (coords.), *Miguel Bombarda e as singularidades de uma época (1851-1910)*, Coimbra, Imprensa da Universidade, 2006.

knowledge — especially psychiatric knowledge — accurately served the paradigm of hegemonizing the conception of a laic and scientific world, free from all loyalties other than reason. In the introduction of his report published in 1900 about the Calmon Case, Júlio de Matos clarified this idea and stated:

The convent is like prisons and asylums, a mean to eliminate many degenerates, an instrument to segregate the ones who cannot, due to mental inferiority, be adapted to the conditions of common life. So that, after the matter is socially faced, enabling Mrs. Rosa to prosecute her obsessive desire, would maybe mean an act of collective hygiene.⁴⁰

*Therefore, by comparing the convent
to a well or a brothel, the representative
of the Public Ministry had the process filed*

The Calmon Case can only be understood by considering the success this kind of speech had at the time, in a rational and scientifically standardized view of the world where changes had to be similarly framed and institutionalized both scientifically and rationally. Rosa's story is also an example of how this speech worked as a mechanism of power and control for social and cultural matters, as well as political agendas and individual arbitrariness.⁴¹ Rosa's situation, which for many people seemed like an unacceptable violation of individual liberties, was understood by a significant part of public as a scientifically legitimate measure of exception, especially by the left groups, mostly related to a political progressivism and republican means. Indeed, if there were monarchic newspapers that supported the father and others that defended the daughter,⁴² republican newspapers were seen almost unanimously defending the Brazilian consul.

The fact that a debate that was apparently simply within the domain of Law (illegitimate coercion of civil liberties of an individual) moved to the sphere of Sciences and Morality is a clear sign that in the early 20th century the religious question was already impregnated with other problems that went beyond the

⁴⁰Júlio de Matos, *A Questão Calmon*. Reflexões sobre um caso médico-legal, Porto, Livraria Moreira, p. 7.

⁴¹For an irony of faith, about 20 years later, Júlio de Matos and Bernardo Lucas (José Calmon's attorney in the case of interdicting his daughter for dementia) were again involved in a case in which psychiatry tried to impose his ascendant on Justice. It is the famous story of the romance between Adelaide Coelho, wife of the director of *Diário de Notícias*, Alfredo da Cunha, and her driver — situation that led the husband to try an interdiction due to his wife's mental incapacity, and he even put her in Hospital Conde de Ferreira for two months, with a certificate from Júlio de Matos. Because of an ironic coincidence, the defense lawyer of Adelaide Coelho was Bernardo Lucas, who, 20 years earlier, had been with Júlio de Matos defending the cause of the Brazilian consul. Cf. Adelaide Coelho, *Doida não!* Documentação psicológica e jurídica, Porto, B. Lucas, 1920, and *Idem, Doida não e não!* [s.l.], [s.n.], 1923.

⁴²See the opposite opinions, for instance, of monarchic newspapers *O Primeiro de Janeiro* and *Novidades*, from February 18 and during March 1901.

traditional liberal anticlericalism. Progressively led by radical republicanism, the Portuguese religious question began to be indissociable from the laic faith that pumped in the heart of those who believed in a revolutionary project for the regeneration of the Portuguese society.

By the simple reading of the main republican publications it becomes clear that the Calmon Case was considered beyond its legal framework. By adorning the mystification around the “tragedy” of the jesuitic conspiracy and the profession of faith in the infallibility of medical diagnoses, there is the condemning semantics of “immorality” and “impurity” revealing a revolutionary worldview that not only doesn’t admit competition, but also bases its indefectible legitimacy simultaneously on the certainty of Science and on the purity of Morality. Sampaio Bruno, who never suffered from the anticlerical radicalism of many of his republican coreligionists, afterwards reflecting about the Calmon Case, expressed his understanding of a specific hierarchy of values:

A father [...] has the right, one that is animal, from deep inside, with no reasons or syllogisms, to defend his daughter... against *herself* [...]. Man has, and it is certain, irrefragable and indispensable natural rights, and among these rights there is not the *right of repudiating them*. No one is entitled to abdicating one’s freedom [...], no one is entitled to passing as a friar or a nun, and no one is entitled to being a slave... appealing to freedom against freedom is, therefore, a vile sophism.⁴³

Beyond the historic–scientific justification, or precisely because of it, the criticism against the voluntary alienation of a supposed “natural” sociability of the individuals was covered by ethical and moral aspects: “They tried to convince her of indignity. She no longer realized what it was”,⁴⁴ wrote *O Século*, while reporting the efforts, which were in vain, made by Rosa’s parents when they tried to persuade their daughter to abandon the idea of religious retreat.

It is possible to observe that the perception of the religious sphere in Portuguese republicanism was beyond the consecrated principle of separation “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s”. In its essence, the formula was one of the main ideals of republican utopia, but, in this secularized, just, and democratic society idealized by republicans, there was in fact very little Caesar could give up, let alone in favor of God. As noticed by Fernando Catroga, the project of laicization of the society led by the republican alternative implied a “totalizing dechristianizing process”, which automatically made the confessionalism of the State indissociable from the consubstantiation of a laic worldview,⁴⁵ to the point where, by the hand of the republicanism, the religious question merged in the political and philosophical project of creating a new regenerated citizenship.

⁴³Sampaio Bruno, *A Questão Religiosa*, Porto, Chardron, 1907, p. 197; 202, emphases from the original text.

⁴⁴“O Caso Calmon”, *O Século*, 25 de fevereiro de 1901, p. 2.

⁴⁵The expression belongs to Fernando Catroga, “O laicismo e a questão religiosa em Portugal (1865-1911)”, *Análise Social*, vol. XXIV, n. 100, 1988, p. 211-273; 226. Cf. *Idem*, *Entre deuses e césores: secularização, laicidade e religião civil. Uma perspectiva histórica*, Coimbra, Almedina, 2006.

Therefore, the Portuguese republic that was implemented in 1910 denied the model of “Free Church in the Free State”, and the priority was given to the promulgation of a law of Separation clearly determined to destroy the hegemony of religious values within society. This is understandable, since the State had an ideological program to be applied on people’s consciousness, its neutrality would always put it in disadvantage in comparison to other rival spiritual instances.

It is impossible to deny that the secularization considered by the Portuguese republicanism predicted the laicization not only of the society, but also of minds.⁴⁶ And it is precisely when this objective became incompatible with a religious worldview that the Republican anticlericalism started to distinguish itself from liberal anticlericalism. Therefore, it is understandable how by being monopolized by the political and philosophical republican agenda, the religious question became inseparable from the regime question. It all happened slowly during a process that gained strength during the 1890s, to burst in the transition of the century. The flame lit by the young Brazilian Rosa, in 1901, would explode one decade later, in a religious war that seriously compromised the hypotheses of success of the first republican experience in Portugal.⁴⁷

⁴⁶Fernando Catroga, “Secularização e laicidade”, *Revista de História das Ideias*, vol. 25, 2004, p. 114.

⁴⁷With regard to this matter, see, specifically about the religious question, the reference study: Maria Lúcia de Brito Moura, *A guerra religiosa na I República*. Lisboa, CEHR, 2010.