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BETWEEN IDEAS AND INTERESTS
THE SPANISH FIGHT FOR FREE TRADE, 1879-C. 1903

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THE SPANISH FIGHT FOR FREE TRADE, 1879-c. 1903

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ABSTRACT

This paper reconstructs the composition and activism of the Spanish free trade *Asociación para la Reforma de los Aranceles de Aduanas* (Association for the Reform of Customs Tariffs), whose archives have long been lost. The *Asociación* was created in 1859, dissolved in 1869 and reconstituted in 1879 as a response to the protectionist reaction. We study its procedures and arguments and link its strong activism in the 1880s, just when free trade organizations in continental Europe faded, with the delayed Spanish protectionist backlash.

1. Introduction

A widespread free trade movement took place in Western Europe towards the middle of the nineteenth century. The first conclusion of Kindleberger (1975) when surveying this movement in the UK, France, Germany and Italy, was that the advance of free trade, because of diverse country economic interests at stake, had responded to different causes. However, having *second thoughts*, this author posited that the co-movement to free trade in the 1850s in the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Norway and Sweden, along with those registered in the UK, France, Germany and Italy, suggested “the possibility that Europe as a whole was motivated by ideological considerations rather than economic interests.”¹ Europe, in his words, should be considered as a “single entity which moved to freer trade for ideological or perhaps better doctrinal reasons”.²

A number of organizations played a key role in the diffusion of free trade ideas. The activism of the Anti-Corn Law League was critical in the spreading of the virtues of free

¹ The quote continued: “That Louis Napoleon and Bismarck would use trade treaties to gain ends in foreign policy suggests that freer trade was valued for itself, and that moves toward it would earn approval”, Kindleberger (1975), p.46.

² Kindleberger (1975), p.46.

trade, to win over the general public and, eventually, influence British political economy. From the beginning, this organization was seen as an example to imitate on the Continent, where similar entities soon sprang up. Proof of this success lies in the proposal to constitute a *European Association for the Reform of Customs*, with the aim of coordinating the national branches, at the Congress of Brussels of 1856.³

However, the vitality and longevity of these organizations was to be limited. The protectionist wave unleashed by the German bill of 1879 found their activism to be a weak contender. Some of the organizations that had contributed to creating a pro-free trade climate in the middle of the century, opposed no resistance to the general rise of customs of the 1880s. This is the case of the French *Association pour le Defense de la Liberté Commerciale*, whose activism faded after the French tariff bill of 1882, as also occurred in Germany with the *Kongreß der deutschen Volkswirte* (German Economic Congress) after 1879, which formally disappeared in 1885. The international congress on Tariff Reforms and Work Regulations, held in Anvers in 1892, underlined how, by then, only two pro-free trade organizations, the Belgian and the Spanish, were still alive. Significantly, the recommendation of the congress to reconstitute national organizations as a base for the formation of a European free trade organization had no practical consequences. In the following congress celebrated in Anvers in 1897, the case for a revival of organizations in the line of the Anti-Corn Law League or the Cobden Club was not even mentioned.

Why was there no strong articulated response in support of free-trade ideas in the decisive 1880s? We thought that the study of the long-lived Spanish *Asociación para la*

³ For a summary of the European pro-free trade associations in the middle of the nineteenth century, see Augello and Guidi (2001).

Reforma de los Aranceles de Aduanas (Association for the Reform of Customs Tariffs) could shed some light on this question.

The *Asociación*, created in 1859 and dissolved by internal dissensions in 1869, was reconstituted in 1879 in response to the concerns raised by the European protectionist backlash. But, so far, there is no systematic examination of its activities, not even a precise date for its dissolution, since its archives are lost. Thus, the first step was to reconstruct the *Asociación*'s composition, campaigns and arguments from its regular publications and executive board minutes. This task has required an exhaustive study of the press and libraries, mainly, the *Biblioteca Nacional*, *El Ateneo* and the libraries and archives of the *Real Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas* and the *Real Academia de la Historia*. The results can be summarized as follows.

In its second phase, the *Asociación* gathered a group of free trader academics and businessmen whose occupational and political profiles, as we will document below, did not differ from those of the members of the *Association pour le Defense de la Liberté Commerciale*, the German Economic Congress or even the Cobden Club. As had occurred in Germany and the UK itself, the academic defense of free trade evolved in a *possibilist* sense, renouncing unilateralism and accepting reciprocity. Also mirroring the arguments used in the Cobden Club and the German Economic Congress, the *Asociación* insisted on the moral-political conception of free trade and underlined its utility as a tool against rent-seeking by vested interests. Neither are differences in the campaign and propaganda procedures found. In a nutshell, we did not find that composition, arguments or procedures explained the vitality of the *Asociación* in the 1880s.

We then moved on to the economic context looking for some asynchrony with countries like France or Germany and we found a trade-related one. For a number of reasons, the

liberalization resulting from the dense network of bilateral commercial treaties signed by most European countries in the 1860s was delayed in Spain until the late 1870s. The stimulus of commercial treaties on the Spanish economy emerged in the 1880s and was positively perceived by the general public as a compensation for the sacrifices imposed on the less efficient manufacturing sectors. This is why public opinion supported the *Asociación*, which, fostered by this support, developed a strong activism in favor of liberalization in the same decade that their continental sister organizations faded.

The *German Economic Congress* disappeared in 1885 defeated by the advance of protectionism (Lambi 1963, Hagemann 2001). The delay of the Spanish protectionist backlash until 1891 explains the relatively longer life of the *Asociación*. We think that if, using the words of Mill, a “good cause seldom triumphs unless someone’s interest is bound up with it”, then, when free trade interests decayed in economic representation and lost the echo of public opinion, their ideological defenders saw no sense in maintaining the fight for the cause outside of academic forums. We organize the rest of the paper as follows. Section 2 discusses the international framework. Section 3 presents the professional and political profiles of the members of the *Asociación* and Section 4 reports its activity and arguments. Section 5 chronicles the *Asociación*’s disappearance. In Section 6, we conclude.

2. European free traders at the end of the nineteenth century

The activism of the Cobden Club as an *ideological lobbying group* pressing for free trade is well recorded in Howe (1997).⁴ Since its foundation in 1866, the Club assumed the defense of free trade through dinners, lectures in large towns, essay competitions

⁴ The expression lobby in Howe (1997), p. 116.

and the distribution of regular publications of Cobden's writings and speeches as well as tracts of other authors, local and foreign, on the subject. In its first ten years of life, the Club distributed more than a hundred thousand copies of tracts and books.⁵ Its activity would even reach new heights from the mid-1870s to the mid-1880s, when exceptional efforts were made to win over the rural laborers to free trade at a moment that protectionism was regaining strength both at home and abroad. The European depression that started in 1873 reignited the demands for tariffs in Britain under the *fair trade* movement. Meanwhile, the contracting effects of the crisis on the Continent, along with the rise of war-related expenditures, made the idea of reinforcing customs duties as a source of public revenues more attractive to policy-makers. Proof of the changing atmosphere in the 1870s was the British difficulty in negotiating the renewal of the European network of commerce treaties, of which the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty constituted the cornerstone. As a reaction to this protectionist revival, the Cobden Club embarked on a popular campaign of *immense proportions*⁶ to capture the new rural vote resulting from the Reform Act of 1884. The agitation meant the printing and distribution of millions of leaflets in a propaganda campaign that reached its peak in the electoral year of 1885. According to Howe (1997), this year was the electoral high-water mark of the Club, which, after 1886 would see its political unity broken by divisions on the issue of the Irish Home Rule. Membership declined and, although the Club's international presence continued, its involvement in a significant free trade agitation in Britain did not return until the early twentieth century.

⁵ 134,854 according to Howe (1997), p. 124.

⁶ Howe (1997), p.130.

The Cobden Club activity continued with opposition to the attempts of prohibiting sugar imports (1888-1899, 1902)⁷, the proposal of imperial preferences on the basis of discriminatory duties on foodstuffs to the detriment of third countries (1901-1902) and the restoration of duties on corn and meat to finance the Boer war-related spending (1899-1902). But it would not be until the reaction against Chamberlain's protectionist campaign launched in May 1903 that the Club redeclare a propaganda *war* of proportions comparable to that of the early 1880s. In the period 1903-1906, taking advantage of the celebrations of the centenary of Cobden's birth, the Club fostered publications, meetings (more than sixty), public demonstrations, cartoons and even propaganda films,⁸ in a campaign overlapping that of the Free Trade Union (1903), which was implemented through the journal *Free Trader* and intense house-to-house leafleting (25 million distributed by January 1904). The success of the Cobden Club in calling an International Free Trade Congress in London in 1908 was the icing on the cake.

However, the activism of associations devoted to the mobilization of public opinion against the menace of protectionism in other big European countries like France, Germany or Italy, never even came close to that of the Cobden Club. In his analysis of the French tariff of 1892, Golob (1944) details the well-orchestrated campaign for protection unleashed by the harsh fall in agricultural prices. Against this enduring campaign, carried out during the 1880s, this author finds "little evidence of a real free-trade movement".⁹ The agrarian crisis led to strong activism in favor of protection, which reached its peak following the alliance of the *Société des Agriculteurs de*

⁷ According to Howe (1997), the Clubs's dinner was revived in 1902 (for the first time since 1897) to discuss the prohibition of sugar imports.

⁸ Howe (1997), p. 231.

⁹ Golob (1944), p. 204.

France¹⁰ and the *Association de l'Industrie française* in 1888¹¹. There was no parallel activism on the free trade side. The *Association pour le Défense de la Liberté Commerciale*, founded in response to the establishment of the *Association de l'Industrie française* in 1878, had relaxed its pressure on public opinion after the tariff bill of 1882¹². Thus, when, after the elections of 1889, the opposition to protection began to organize pressure groups, most of them sprang from chambers of commerce in cities linked with export businesses and represent very specific interests.¹³ The defense of free trade ideas was only to be found in universities and academic journals.

The story is similar for Germany, where the contractionary effect of the international depression on the industrial sector and the increasing competition of foreign grain was behind the protectionist revival. In the approval of the 1879 bill, the imperious need for fiscal revenues also played a pivotal role.¹⁴ The *Kongreß der deutschen Volkswirte* (German Economic Congress) that, according to Hagemann (2001), represented the Manchester School in Germany since its foundation in 1858 led the activism against the protectionist swerve.¹⁵ This association, made up of professional economists and

¹⁰ Golob (1944, p. 94) explains how the *Société des Agriculteurs* patronized the *syndicates agricoles*. Among them, he interprets the role played by the *Syndicate Économique Agricole*, founded in 1889 by an energetic member of the *Société des Agriculteurs*, Kergall, as a pure propaganda agency. On the basis that “great movements of opinion do not occur by themselves”, the Syndicate published a weekly paper “La Démocratie rurale”, toured the country addressing public meetings to display the virtues of protection and, above all, made sure that the candidates in the election of 1889 signed the letter sent by the Syndicate declaring their support in favor of the protectionist cause.

¹¹ The *Société des Agriculteurs* de France and the *Association de l'Industrie française* established a common propaganda committee that was granted 10,000 francs per year by the former and no less than this by the latter. See Barral (1974).

¹² Cadier-Rey (1998), in her study of the *Chambres* at the end of nineteenth century France, recalls that the *Association pour le Défense de la Liberté Commerciale* had been founded by three grandsons of Jean Baptiste Say.

¹³ Golob (1944), p. 205.

¹⁴ For a detailed analysis of the factors explaining the protectionist backlash, see Dawson (1904); for the importance of the fiscal issue, see Hobson (1991). Both authors underline the role played by fiscal needs that, in turn, were the result of the decreasing tax collection during the crisis, rising military spending and, crucially, Bismark's decision to relieve the direct taxation on the *Junkers*.

¹⁵ Prince-Smith was instrumental in the foundation of the *Kongreß* according to Hagemann (2001). By then, he had been engaged in the promotion of free trade in Prussia-Germany for two decades. His goal of founding a permanent propaganda society translated into the constitution of the Scientific Society for Trade and Industry in Berlin in 1847. It was soon renamed Free Trade Union and became a model for a

industrialists, used its annual meetings and related activities (pamphlets and different types of publications) to support free trade propaganda, although, the popular free-trade agitation in the 1860s, was judged “almost insignificant when compared with the activities of the British Anti-Corn Law League”.¹⁶ Some members of the *Kongreß* also became members of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* when it was founded in 1873. Initially, these two associations cooperated, to the point that the by-laws of the *Verein* were changed in 1876 to allow members of the *Kongreß* to speak and vote in its meetings. But this cooperation was short lived because of the strain that arose from debates about the 1879 tariff. The activism of the *Kongreß* was noticeable in the months leading up to the approval of the tariff in July and, in the annual meeting of the *Verein*, the fact that the supporters of protectionism won, although by a narrow majority, convinced some Congressmen to leave the *Verein*. In 1881, the *Kongreß* cancelled the 1876 agreement between the two associations.

In his classical study about German protectionism, Dawson (1904) underlined the free trade manifestos and the demonstrations organized by the *Kongreß* against the 1879 bill. However, this author made no mention of any propaganda campaigns of the *Kongreß* against the new wave of rising protectionism in the 1880s. In fact, the *Kongreß* was dissolved in 1885¹⁷ and, when Dawson (1904) mentions free trade activism again, it was related to very specific interests, namely, those of the Commercial Treaties Association,

string of societies set up in the big trade cities in Prussia. However, the resulting Central Association for Free Trade created in 1849 to coordinate the local Free Trade societies did not last long. See Henderson (1950). According to this author, if Price-Smith’s agitation “made little headway as a popular movement” it was partly because free traders did not find, unlike they did in the UK with the anti-corn message, a “popular rallying cry” (p. 299). Dawson (1904, p. 26) had already asserted that “Free Trade never became in Germany a popular cry”. Price-Smith’s agitation activities reappeared in 1858 through the constitution, with other reformer movements that had more popular echo, of the German Economic Congress.

¹⁶ Henderson (1950), p. 302.

¹⁷ According to Hagemann (2001), the *Kongreß* disappeared defeated by the very advance of protectionism and the illiberal climate of those years.

a group of businessmen fighting for the barriers of the 1902 bill to be reduced through international negotiations.¹⁸

Finally, the Belgian attempts to create a European free trade organization also failed. The congress on Custom Reforms, held in Brussels in 1856, had concluded the convenience of constituting an International Organization for Tariff Reforms, as did the congress held in the same city in 1863, which proposed the creation of the Association for the Suppression of Custom Tariffs. Neither was created. The International League in favor of Free Trade proposed by the Congress on Tariff Reforms and Work Regulations held in Anvers in 1892 was not constituted either.

3. The *Asociación*. Who and why

The Spanish *Asociación para la Reforma de los Aranceles de Aduanas* was *reconstituted* in April 1879.¹⁹ This reconstitution opened a second phase for the *Asociación* that lasted until the early twentieth century, although there is no precise date for its end because it was never formally dissolved and its archives were lost. Consequently, the activity of the *Asociación* has to be reconstructed from its regular publications, public documents and the press.

In this Section we examine, firstly, who was behind the *Asociación*'s reconstitution and kept it active in this second phase and, secondly, we present the objectives of this reconstitution. As regards its composition, members of the *Asociación* in its first phase participated, of course, in its reconstitution. But, in 1879, the *Círculo de la Unión*

¹⁸ Dawson (1904, p. 160) talks about an active propaganda of the Commercial Treaties Association, which had 20,000 members, employed 1,500,000 people and claimed to represent "three times that number" if the consuming public were included.

¹⁹ The term *reconstituted* is that used in the first by-law. *Asociación* (1879), p. 75.

Mercantil, a powerful organization of businessmen, mainly with commercial interests, played a key role in the reappearance of the *Asociación*.²⁰

The *Círculo* never hid its role in the reconstitution of the *Asociación*.²¹ As a reflection, the interim executive board that preceded the reconstitution, included three members of the *Círculo* (one of them the president), a journalist and only one member of the old *Asociación* (the former secretary, Gabriel Rodríguez). This fact amazed the press, so much that they wondered whether it was a reconstitution or the birth of a new organization patronized by the *Círculo*.²² The *Círculo* also held the majority in the first executive committee, maintaining its good representation afterwards. Nevertheless, the former leaders of the *Asociación* soon regained public prominence.

In the first phase of its existence, from 1859 to 1868, political, social and professional pluralism characterized the *Asociación*. It involved all the liberal political parties, from the most conservative to the most progressive and the first executive board was quite balanced politically, a former conservative Finance Minister, Pastor, being its first President. Socially, the executive board was also noticeably plural, gathering politicians, professionals (university teachers, lawyers and journalists) and businessmen (financiers, railway owners, commercial interest), although with very few industrialists.

Nevertheless, the reconstitution of the *Asociación* in 1879 meant a general reduction in its pluralism and ever more homogeneity among its most important members. Socially, the group of businessmen was made up almost entirely of those with commercial interests, who were also members of the *Círculo*. Politically, at the end of the

²⁰ The *Círculo* and the *Asociación* had historically shared an excellent relationship. The founder and interim president of the *Círculo* in 1858 was Gregorio López Mollinedo, a businessman who was a vice president in the first executive board of the *Asociación* when it was set up in 1859.

²¹ “Some members (of the *Círculo*) invited the survivors of that distinguished pleiad of economists that in 1858 proclaimed the virtues of free trade to reconstitute the society, the *Asociación* that had been dissolved in 1869”. *Círculo de la Unión Mercantil* (1884), pp. 5-6.

²² *El Imparcial*, 11 April 1879.

Asociación's life, the majority of its members, including businessmen, were left-wing liberals or republicans. Few conservatives and moderate liberals joined the *Asociación* in this second phase and, the few who joined, soon left.

Proof of the homogeneity among its most important members are the examples of Laureano Figuerola and Gabriel Rodríguez, the two having occupied the relevant posts of vice president and general secretary, respectively, in the first phase of the *Asociación* and both becoming presidents (Figuerola from 1883) in the second phase. They shared many features. They were professors, they declared themselves radical in economy and, politically, they claimed to be progressist democrats before and republicans during the Borbon monarchy. Figuerola and Gabriel Rodríguez had held important political positions during the *Sexenio Revolucionario* (1868-1874), the former having been president of the Senate, Finance Minister, an MP and senator, the second, Finance vice-minister under Figuerola and an MP and senator.²³ It is true that the general secretaries, Gumersindo de Azcárate and Ildefonso Trompeta (from 1886), were apparently different. Azcárate belonged to the academic world and Trompeta was a commercial businessman. However, like the presidents of the *Asociación*, the two were active republicans (Azcárate was an MP for many years) and always strongly opposed the governmental conservative and liberal parties. To sum up, in the second phase of the *Asociación*, its four most representative members were outside the core of the political system.

Importantly, this social and political homogeneity holds for a wider spectrum of members, the nucleus of 23 people that we have selected in Table 1. They include those

²³ After the Restoration of the Borbon monarchy in 1875, Figuerola and Gabriel Rodríguez ran several times for election as congressmen with the Republican Party, but were never elected. Moreover, the second ran for the election in 1881 with the *candidatura del comercio* (trade candidature), promoted by the *Círculo*, together with the president of the *Círculo* and treasurer of the *Asociación*, Domingo Peña Villarejo.

who occupied the main posts (president, vice-president and general secretary) along with others who intervened most frequently in the activities organized by the *Asociación* or in external activities on behalf of the *Asociación*.²⁴ This nucleus was made up of 12 professionals and 11 businessmen. The former led the open meetings and were in charge of reporting on commercial issues before official commissions of enquiry. The latter provide the *Asociación* with funding, connections with the press and administrative structure, since all the secretaries, treasurers and accountants came from the *Círculo*.

Ten lawyers and two engineers constituted the group of professionals. Of these 12 members, five worked as lawyers, five were professors, one lived off private patrimony and the other was a journalist. But, for all of them, politics was their main interest as it is shown by the fact that they were MPs or senators for a shorter or longer period. In fact, seven members of this group were continuously present in the Congress or the Senate during this second phase, five of whom became ministers and one, Segismundo Moret, even reached the presidency.²⁵ Their ideology differed little, ranging between progressive liberalism and democratic radicalism and they were members of the left-wing liberal and republican parties.²⁶

²⁴ Executive boards had 55-56 members in this second phase. A list of the members of each executive board can be found in Appendix 1.

²⁵ Moret, without doubt, was the most important political figure in the *Asociación*. He was minister twelve times and, as well as president of the Congress, he was three times prime minister (in 1905, 1906 and 1909). Among the five ministers of the *Asociación*, two (López Puigcerver and Aguilera) belonged to his close circle.

²⁶ They also participated in progressive movements like abolitionism or promoted secular teaching. Figuerola was the first dean of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, which, established in 1876, was conceived as a private university completely independent from governmental parties. The *Institución* had, in members of the *Asociación* such as Gabriel Rodríguez, Azcárate, Sanromá, Costa, Moret and Pedregal, its main promoters and teachers. Other members of the *Asociación* were businessmen that, like Aura or Julián Prats, supported the *Institución*. Prats contributed “with pecuniary funds and substantial loans” to the *Institución*, according to his necrology. *Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, nº 7, 1883. Aura in Cacho Viu (1962), p. 430.

The oldest among this group of professionals had been members of the *Asociación* in its first phase, all belonged to the “economist school” and they were full supporters of the liberal economy in the extreme version of the French *optimism*. Moreover, several of them were honorary members of the Cobden Club (Figuerola, Rodríguez, Sanromá and Moret, among others). Their affinity with this Club is clear in the words of Gabriel Rodríguez when, in a dinner at the *Círculo*, proposed “a toast in honor of the Cobden Club, the society that scares the protectionists so much and whose motto is ours : free trade, peace and good will among people”²⁷.

Almost all of the second group of 11 businessmen in the nucleus of the *Asociación* were members of the *Círculo*²⁸. Four presidents of the *Círculo* were vice-presidents of the *Asociación* and other members of the *Círculo*’s board played an active role in the free trade movement. Most members of the *Círculo* had commercial businesses, although there were also some real estate and newspaper businessmen.²⁹ In the epoch, this organization was very active. It promoted the creation of Chambers of Commerce in 1886 and organized three commerce congresses and the setting up of a *Liga Nacional de Contribuyentes* (National League of Taxpayers). Politically, they were also quite active and some of them were MPs. The *Círculo* itself presented a list of candidates for election to Congress and obtained one seat in 1896. Ideologically, this group was dominated radical liberals and republicans. It is true that initially it presented a more

²⁷ *Círculo* (1884), p. 20. The *Asociación* had published a book to honor Cobden in 1865, the year of his death.

²⁸ Only two of them did not belong to the *Círculo*, a well-known financier, Félix Bona, who had been vice-president of the *Asociación* in the first phase and became vice-president again in the second, and a Valencian industrialist, Aura, who took up journalism and politics, firstly as a *possibilist* republican and, later, as a liberal.

²⁹ Juan Ruiz Castañeda and Manuel Zapatero were businessmen in Madrid, but they had also interests in the newspaper business and wrote for different papers assiduously, to the point of being sometimes taken by journalists.

varied composition than that of the professionals, since there were two conservative MPs, but they abandoned the *Asociación* in the late 1880s.³⁰

With time, the ideological similarities between the two groups led to a certain loss of influence for the *Asociación*, despite having several ministers among its members. From the beginning of the second phase, the *Asociación* had been aware of the risk of losing political influence and made an effort to present itself as neutral. In 1880, Gabriel Rodríguez boasted that the *Asociación* was made up of people representing all the Spanish political parties”.³¹ Things would shortly change. The conservative leader, Cánovas del Castillo, accepted protectionism as a partisan tenet in the late 1880s. Thereafter, no members of this party that, by then, occupied nearly half the seats in the Congress, would be on the executive board.³² Moreover, in the early 1890s, the majority of the Liberal Party, the other big Spanish party, led by Sagasta, accepted the swerve towards protection fostered by the conservatives. Convincing proof of this change in attitudes is the fact that the protectionist bill passed by the conservatives in 1891 was not repealed when liberals returned to government in 1892, with Sagasta as prime minister. In this way, ten years after its reconstitution, the *Asociación* no longer had representatives of the bulk of the Spanish political class, becoming reduced to a marginal group made up of republicans and members of the left wing of the liberal party.

So far, we have identified and characterized the members of the *Asociación* in its second phase. The next issue is to discuss the reasons for reconstituting the *Asociación*.

According to the circular sent by the executive board to its ex-members, the reasons for

³⁰ These two MPs were Carlos Prast and Bonifacio Ruiz de Velasco.

³¹ *Asociación* (1880a), p.8.

³² Gabriel Rodríguez himself recognized the relevance of this fact by declaring: “Such is the authority of Mr. Cánovas, that his solemn speech on 5th February 1888 was enough for some very learned members of the *Asociación* to leave it, even though these members had belonged to it since its foundation in 1859 and had taken an active and principal part in its activities”. Gabriel Rodríguez (1891), p. 250.

reconstituting this organization were the Spanish protectionist attempts to make us “retrace our steps on the path to free trade”.³³ In 1879, the turning point towards protection for continental Europe, Spain found itself in a transitory situation. The tariff of 1869 promoted by a party that supported free-trade, when Figuerola was Finance Minister, was still in force, although with two significant amendments introduced in 1875 by the first government of the restored Borbon monarchy.

The tariff of 1869 had removed import prohibitions and lowered tariff barriers considerably. The law that approved this bill, in its fifth base, had also established a period of twelve years for all the tariffs to be reduced to a fiscal *ad valorem* duty of 15%, the first reduction being planned in 1875.³⁴ However, following the restoration of the monarchy, this reduction was *suspended* (not repealed), with the argument that customs tariffs were to be maintained until the civil war (Carlist war) that broke out in Spain in 1872 came to an end. Interestingly, when the war concluded in 1876, the first one-third reduction remained in suspension.

Instead of unilaterally applying this reduction, a new bill was passed in 1877 with a first column of duties coinciding with the duties of the 1869 bill and a second column of duties, slightly lower, to be applied to the countries with commerce treaties with Spain. Thus, although the 1877 bill did not substantially alter the level of the customs barriers it did change the essence of the strategy. Duties had not been raised, they had even been reduced for some countries, but the progressive movement towards free trade that was unilaterally planned in 1869 had been abandoned in favor of reciprocity. On the basis of the 1877 bill, Spain negotiated a treaty with France in the same year. In exchange for the reduced duties in the second column, Spain achieved a substantial reduction on wine

³³ *Asociación* (1879), p. 78.

³⁴ On July 1st 1875, all the duties between 15 and 20% *ad valorem* would be reduced to 15%. Duties above 20% were planned to be lowered to 15% through three one-third reductions to be applied in July 1875, 1878 and 1881.

duties, which, coinciding with the advance of the *filoxera* in France, meant a remarkable increase for Spanish exports. This success bolstered the supporters of reciprocity.

This was the situation when in 1879, the *Asociación para la Reforma de los Aranceles de Aduanas* was reestablished³⁵. The first issue to address was the defense of the unilateral tariff reduction planned in the fifth base of 1869, still in suspension. There was strong concern about the high barriers to grain imports, which caused serious problems in years of bad harvest, and they also called for a free trade agreement between the Spanish peninsula and its colonies (Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines).

The *Asociación* was not only worried about the internal situation. The slide of continental Europa towards protection, “the doubts and weakness” shown by some countries as regards free trade, led to fears that the situation could be used in Spain to argue in favor of reinforcing trade barriers.³⁶ In the first meeting of the *Asociación* in 1879, Moret spoke of “a certain resurrection of the spirit of protection”,³⁷ with origins in Germany, the USA and some British colonies, like Australia. In his view, the reigniting of protectionist was mainly a reaction to the crisis: since the widespread economic depression started in a relatively low protectionist framework, protection was argued to be the solution.³⁸

³⁵ See Serrano Sanz (1987).

³⁶ *Asociación* (1879), p. 52.

³⁷ *Asociación* (1879), p. 53.

³⁸ *Asociación* (1879), p.53.

4. The *Asociación*: campaign and arguments

The ultimate goal of the *Asociación*, according to its by-laws, was to win over the public opinion to the idea of reducing tariffs until they became mere fiscal revenues, although its most renowned members declared themselves in favor of the absolute suppression of customs. Fiscal duties had been established at a 15% *ad valorem* maximum in 1869 but, in a meeting in November 1882, Figuerola, the minister behind the Law of 1869, declared that, thereafter, the *Asociación* would defend a 10% maximum.

To achieve this 10% maximum, the *Asociación* described itself as fully *possibilist*, meaning that, while its members were ideally in favor of unilateral liberalization and, consequently, opposed to reciprocity, they all accepted the interchanging of tariff reductions through negotiations. Any tariff reduction, even if it came through “wandering paths”, as Figuerola put it, was welcome. According to Gabriel Rodríguez: “The *Asociación*, which knows that it cannot be done overnight is taking and accepting, without ever lowering its flag, everything that gets it closer to the goal to which its efforts are addressed. Our formula is, thus, to take everything within our reach and keep on asking for more”.³⁹

The activism of the *Asociación* strengthened in 1882, when a new treaty with France started to be negotiated. This treaty, approved in May, basically consisted of offering the first reduction planned in the fifth base of 1869. Importantly, these lower duties would end up constituting the second column of the new bill passed in 1882, which, in turn, was offered to the bulk of countries with which Spain signed commerce treaties in

³⁹ *Asociación* (1885a), p.59.

the 1880s.⁴⁰ In this way, reductions through treaties looking for reciprocity became the center of Spanish commercial policy. The opposition of the Spanish protectionist industrialists to the treaty with France in 1882 and with the UK in 1884 was intense, as was the campaign of the *Asociación* in favor of opening up, which, by then, as already explained, had accepted already reciprocity as the lesser evil. Therefore, the combination of treaties with Europe, the reduction of duties on imports from the colonies and a law that tried to compensate industrialists by reducing duties on the imports of raw materials pushed Spain on a path towards commercial liberalization along the 1880s.

With the aim of reducing tariff barriers, they used three channels to create opinion and influence policy makers. First, the *Asociación* organized public meetings to propagate the free trade message, including recurrent invitations to protectionist figures to participate in debates. In the phase that opened in 1879, the *Asociación* organized 23 meetings in different theatres of Madrid, in which 47 pro free-trade speakers participated, some of them debating with 10 pro-protection speakers.⁴¹ All these meetings took place between 1879 and 1893 and the frequency varied depending on the controversy of current issues.⁴² For example, there were 4 meetings in 1882, while in 1888 and 1889 there were none. The issues dealt with were quite specific at the beginning (grain tariffs, commerce treaties, fifth base), but gradually broadened to cover commerce policy as a whole.

⁴⁰ By 1888, Spain had signed treaties with all the countries in continental Europe and with the UK. All these treaties included the *Most Favored Nation* clause. With countries like France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland, the treaty meant an interchange of reductions on the duties fixed in the second column.

⁴¹ See Appendix 2.

⁴² After 1893, although the press advertised the *Asociación*'s intention of calling a new meeting, no more were found.

From the beginning, the members of the reconstituted *Asociación* saw their task as a response to this revival of protectionism, a “battle against the economic reaction”.⁴³ In fact, several of the open meetings of the *Asociación* followed meetings previously held in defense of protection, like the meetings against the treaty with France in 1882, the meetings against the treaty with the UK in 1885 –when the executive board favored the idea of a permanent session, if necessary-, or the meetings of the iron industrialists asking for higher tariffs in 1893.

The second way to create opinion in favor of free trade, were publications and the frequent involvement of its members, on behalf of the *Asociación*, in public acts. The contents of the *Asociación*'s meetings were immediately published as leaflets – including the protectionist presentations-, in a series called “Recent publications on free trade”. The series also included several books by members of the *Asociación* (by Figuerola and Gabriel Rodríguez, among others) and a few translations of foreign pro free-trade authors (Fawcett, Mallet, Molinari)⁴⁴. Members of the *Asociación* regularly collaborated, on its behalf, in the economic and non-economic press. Furthermore, the *Asociación* was represented in congresses and courses, for example, in conferences of the *Círculo de la Unión Mercantil* during the 1880s, in the *Congreso de Agricultores y Ganaderos* in 1881, el *Congreso Nacional Mercantil* and el *Congreso de Vinicultores* in 1886 and the *Congreso Económico Nacional* in 1888, among others.

Finally, the third channel of influence was the participation of the *Asociación* before government agencies, which could be of two types. Either the *Asociación* led the way and proposed changes in trade policy before Parliament or it participated whenever the state asked for advice on the issue. In the first case, seven proposals were presented by

⁴³ *Asociación* (1891), p. 44.

⁴⁴ Fawcett (1879), Mallet (1879) and Molinari (1891).

the *Asociación* demanding, among other actions, the application of the fifth base and free grain imports. In the second case, the *Asociación* took part in the *Información de la Comisión especial arancelaria sobre las industrias lanera y naviera* (Report of the Special Tariff Commission on the wool and shipping industries) in 1879 and in the two most important official reports of the 1880s, the *Comisión para estudiar la Crisis Agrícola y Ganadera* (Commission to study the Agricultural and livestock crisis) in 1886 and the *Comisión para estudiar la Reforma Arancelaria* (Commission to study Tariff Reform) in 1889. The *Asociación* also reported on trade related questions at the request of the Congress and the Senate in the 1880s and early 1890s.

During this long decade, the *Asociación* was remarkably active in supporting free trade and, initially, its message had the backup of the press and public opinion, which explains the confidence and optimism its members transmitted. Gabriel Rodríguez, for example, said in 1880: “Public opinion is with us. Most of the press is free trader”.⁴⁵ But as early as 1885, he mentioned the difficulty of organizing any interests that were not protectionist. A year later, Figuerola himself criticized the press for referring to free traders as “exaggerated”⁴⁶. The time had come for the *Asociación* to directly address to consumers as the part of society most harmed by protectionism. Figuerola literally spoke of “summoning consumers”, while Sanromá proposed the organization of a *Liga Nacional de Consumidores* (National Consumers League).

The reconstituted *Asociación* behaved as a fighter for free trade. There was barely room for intellectual debate, very different to its first phase, when the *Asociación* combined academic discussion with propaganda. In the first ten years of its life, many meetings and courses and some publications were addressed to explaining and propagating the

⁴⁵ *Asociación* (1880b), p. 64.

⁴⁶ *Asociación* (1886), p. 3.

virtues of the free trade as a philosophical and political principle.⁴⁷ From 1879 on, all its activities were closely related to some particular event, most frequently, a specific policy decision on tariffs. In this way, the *Asociación* differentiated itself from the political economic societies that had spread over Europe in the middle of the century and focused more on the defense of the liberal economy than on specific trade policy decisions.⁴⁸

In this second phase, discussions on the principles of liberalism were scant. References to these principles, when made, were presented only in passing by its two presidents, Figuerola and Gabriel Rodríguez. For the former, it was sufficient to say that “free trade is a scientific tenet”⁴⁹ and for the latter that “there was no more scientific discussion on the free trade issue”.⁵⁰ Figuerola dismissed the infant industry argument, so popular among protectionists, by saying: “I have been hearing of ruin and infant industry for 60 years now. That’s some baby!”⁵¹ Gabriel Rodríguez occasionally recovered the idea, omnipresent in the previous phase of the *Asociación*, that freedom is indivisible and free trade participates in a system that includes all possible liberties, from political to religious freedoms.⁵²

The only general issue that attracted more attention then, than in the first phase, was that of defending cosmopolitanism, with which the *Asociación* aimed to counteract the idea of nationalism so dear to contemporary protectionists. According to protectionists, the defense of the nation’s interests, and not the world’s, should inspire the policy makers.

In Spain, Cánovas del Castillo, in 1882, started supporting the centrality of the nation in

⁴⁷ See Serrano-Sanz (2017). The philosophical and political principle related free trade to national liberalism, social justice and international peace.

⁴⁸ The Spanish Political Economic Society, from which the *Asociación* itself was born, disappeared in the early 1870s.

⁴⁹ *Asociación* (1886), p.5.

⁵⁰ G.Rodríguez (1881), p. 115.

⁵¹ *Asociación* (1893), p. 7.

⁵² *Asociación* (1886), p. 45.

decisions of economic policy and, subsequently, the virtues of reciprocity in international trade. In the same year, Gabriel Rodríguez responded to Cánovas as follows: “All the arguments of *reciprocitists* (sic) are based on the error that the economic interest of a nation and that of mankind are contradictory (están en contradicción). From this error, they derive that free trade, good in a cosmopolitan sense, might be against a nation’s interests”.⁵³ Figuerola also referred to reciprocity in treaties as “unacceptable”.⁵⁴ Although, as said above, by 1885, they had accepted treaties as a lesser evil.

At a more practical level, the fighters against protectionism mostly resorted to two ideas. First, free trade was presented as a guarantee that no vested economic interests would put pressure on the government for tariffs that benefited these interests at the expense of the general public. Regarding this point, Azcárate, as a member of the *Asociación*, optimistically said in 1881: “We merely have small fractions of the wool, shipping and grain industries opposing us, and supporting us, all the Spanish consumers, all the industries not susceptible of being protected and all those prosecuted”.⁵⁵ In 1882, Costa estimated that the free trade supporters amounted to “90% of Spaniards, who are rural laborers or who work in non-protected industries”.⁵⁶ Things changed radically with the threat of a protectionist backlash following the agricultural crisis. In the mid-1880s, free traders quickly understood the advantage of small and unified interest groups to organize collective action. The basis for the political economy of protection was perfectly clear to the *Asociación* in 1885. This year, Azcárate said: “The more limited the number of recipients, the more strongly privileges are defended (...) It is very difficult, in a country like Spain, with a poor tradition of social action, to connect a

⁵³ *Asociación* (1882b), p. 57.

⁵⁴ *Asociación* (1882a), p. 30.

⁵⁵ *Asociación* (1881a), p. 57.

⁵⁶ *Asociación* (1881b), p. 41.

myriad of winemakers scattered over the country (who were interested in treaties), while it is quite easy for the few privileged who live in the same province (for example, textile industrialists concentrated in Barcelona) to reach an understanding”.⁵⁷

The other big argument put forward regularly against protection was the impossibility of protecting every type of economic production at the same time. Since the debate that preceded the Spanish bill of 1820, the first approved by Parliament, one constant demand of the industrial lobbies had been protection for all. This strategy, although it was present throughout the century under different names (interchanging protection, universal protection, protectionist solidarity or integral protection), gained great momentum with the consolidation of the national economy concept.

This explains why free traders insisted on the impossibility of protecting everything at the same time. “If everybody is protected there cannot be protectors, if everybody is a protector nobody can be protected”⁵⁸. The argument was grounded on the infeasibility of protecting non-tradables (trade and services in general) and exports, while these activities, nonetheless, were harmed by the increase of domestic prices resulting from customs tariffs.

According to the *Asociación*, the strategy of integral protection was intrinsically contradictory. Protecting agriculture meant higher domestic prices for foodstuffs and raw materials and, therefore, higher costs for industry. If, to compensate for these increasing costs of production, duties on textiles and machinery were raised, then, agricultural activities would have to face rising costs of living and production and so on. The bitter discussions on the strict meaning of “raw materials” that surrounded the decision of reducing their duties in 1882, was a good illustration of the ambiguity and

⁵⁷ *Asociación* (1885b), p. 38.

⁵⁸ *Asociación* (1888), p. 30.

subsequent dangers of protection. In opinion of the *Asociación*, any item was an input in the production of other item, increasing the costs and thus reducing the competitiveness of the Spanish exportable products, of crucial relevance to finance the Spanish imports of cotton and coal, for example.

Apart from these two main arguments against protection, the *Asociación* insisted on denouncing some problems that were idiosyncratic to Spain. It repeatedly accused the *Junta de Aranceles y Valoraciones* (Board of Tariffs and Valuations) of exaggerating the import unit values on which the *ad valorem* duties were applied. The *Asociación* blamed vested industrial interests within la *Junta* for exaggeration which led to higher protection than that officially agreed. Another criticism of the *Asociación* focused on the weaker direct fiscal burden endured by manufacturers when compared with agriculture and services, an additional sectoral discrimination to that coming from customs tariffs.

5. The end

At the end of the 1880s times were changing because the grain invasion provoked by the drop in long-haul transport costs that had affected Europe since the 1870s arrived to Spain. The crisis prepared a climate that was ever more favorable to protection and added Castilian agriculture demands for protection to the historical ones of Catalan industries. In December 1890 the crisis led to a rise of duties on wheat and cattle and the repeal of the fifth base, considered by then as a relic of unilateralism. A year later, in December 1891, as part of a strategy to force France to negotiate a new treaty, duties on manufactures were also increased. The French protectionist bill passed in September 1891 raised spectacularly the tariffs on wine, which, unless Spain signed a new treaty,

would mean paying nearly 15 francs per hectoliter, instead of the 2 francs in force since 1882. The importance of this market for Spain (wine exports amounted to one third of total exports in 1891, 80% of which went to France) explains the spectacular rise of the second column of duties in the Spanish bill of 1891. The problem was that, as Spain failed to entice France into the negotiation of tariff reductions, this bill left the level of Spanish barriers substantially higher. This barriers increase, because of its intensity, has long been considered the Spanish turning point towards protectionism, or, considering the still noticeable barriers in force before 1891, the Spanish swerve towards protectionism⁵⁹.

The crisis strengthened protectionist interests, against which the *Asociación* continued fighting, even after the approval of the 1891 bill. In the early 1890s, however, its members perceived that its forces had substantially weakened. In February 1893, the general secretary recognized in his report to the executive board that neither the press nor general opinion supported free trade anymore, so much so that he considered the convenience of dissolving the *Asociación*.⁶⁰ At the end of this year, a journal like *El Imparcial*, traditionally close to the *Asociación*'s ideas, referred to its last meeting in 1893 as more remarkable "for the quality than for the number of the attendants"⁶¹. One month later, the press reported that the *Asociación*'s executive board could not be renewed "due to the shortage of members"⁶².

As had previously occurred in France and Germany, the advance of the protectionist interests led academics to abandon campaigning. Also in Spain, the fight in favor of free

⁵⁹ See Serrano Sanz (1987)

⁶⁰ *La Época*, 20 February 1893.

⁶¹ *El Imparcial*, 27 December 1893.

⁶² *El Día*, 30 January 1894. There were elections to renew the executive committee in 1896 and 1897, resulting in the reelection of the same members. In 1897, the *Asociación* drew attention to the "prosperity" of its finances, due probably, to the absence of activities. Reflecting the biological decline of the *Asociación*, a generous amount of money (500 pesetas) was assigned to build a monument honoring a historical member who had recently passed away (Manuel Pedregal). *El Globo*, 6 February 1897. There would be no more reports of meetings in the press after this.

trade moved from the world of the ideas to the world of vested interests embodied in the *Círculo*. In December 1893, while the *Asociación's* meeting was poorly attended, the press underlined the “extraordinary attendance” at the meeting that the *Círculo* held the same month, where, a proposal signed by more than 500 members asked for the repeal of the 1891 bill.⁶³

News related to its activity in the national press faded in the second half of the 1890s, for which we have found no references to meetings or publications. Most significantly, news referring to the *Asociación* was all written in the past tense after 1900, until, in 1902, Rafael M^a de Labra, a member of the executive board since 1879, confirmed its disappearance, when lamenting the once “famous *Asociación* for the Tariff Reform, whose absence is so regrettable in the present time of unstoppable protectionism”.⁶⁴ It was the last trace of the *Asociación* in the press. Noticeably, its end coincided with the death of its main leaders, Gabriel Rodríguez in 1901 and Laureano Figuerola in 1903.

The disappearance of the *Asociación* left the defense of free trade in the hands of, basically, commercial interests. Thus, in 1904, when the government asked for external advice to revise the 1891 tariff, it was Constantino Rodríguez, one-time member of the *Asociación* and later the incumbent president of the *Círculo*, who was appointed as a supporter of free trade, while no member of the *Asociación* was convened. Even more tellingly, when, in 1905, the *Círculo* sent a letter complaining about the protectionist bias of the proposal for a new bill, it identified itself as “the only upholder, as institution, of free trade ideas”. The result was the approval of a bill in 1906 that

⁶³ *El Día*, 15 December 1893. Within days, the Prime Minister received a committee from the *Círculo* reporting on this demand.

⁶⁴ Rafael M^a del Labra, *Nuestro Tiempo*, 1902, p.473. Although, in 1903, *El Imparcial* reported that the *Círculo* had invited several members of the *Asociación* to participate in a meeting, the newspaper was simply mentioning the *Asociación* as a short cut to characterizing them as free traders. These former members were Segismundo Moret, the Duke of Almodóvar del Río, Gumersindo de Azcárate and, indeed, Rafael M^a de Labra. *El Imparcial*, 31 October, 1903

reasserted, with no hope of future reductions through reciprocity, the level of protection granted to Spanish industry by the previous bill. Paradoxically, the president of the cabinet that passed the 1906 bill, Moret, had been one of the most fervent and active members of the *Asociación*.⁶⁵

7. Conclusions

The *Asociación para la Reforma de los Aranceles de Aduanas* was unique in the late nineteenth century continental European backdrop. Few other pro free-trade organizations survived into the second half of the century and none, with the exception of the Cobden Club, maintained its campaign until so late. The *Asociación*, although it could not prevent the triumph of protectionism, showed strong activism in the 1880s and early 1890s.

The *Asociación* was reconstituted in 1879. Its reconstitution was promoted by members of a powerful Madrid commercial businessmen organization, el *Círculo de la Unión Mercantil*. They contacted the professors that had run the *Asociación* in its first phase (1859-1869) to offer them the possibility of directing it again. During this second phase, the president was always a significant member of the *Asociación* in the previous phase (Gabriel Rodríguez and Laureano Figuerola). The *Círculo* provided the venue for its meetings and helped the *Asociación* with administrative and organizational issues.

But these professors and businessmen did not only share their support of free trade. The majority also shared a political militancy in a narrow band that ranged from progressive liberals to democratic radicalism, which eased their personal relationships. Intellectuals

⁶⁵ See Sabaté (1996).

were the most active lecturers in the *Círculo* in the 1880s and the 1890s and, to some extent, reinforced the *Círculo's* fight against public intervention. Moreover, the members of the *Asociación*, as well as campaigning in favor of free trade, were politically well positioned (some became ministers), if not to influence political economy, at least to maintain the presence of free trade ideas in the Congress and Senate. The *Círculo*, at the same time, apart from funding, contributed with its connections in the business world.

The reconstitution of the *Asociación* had its roots in the concerns of the *Círculo* about the European protectionist backlash of the late 1870s. A majority of its members were important merchants who feared an increase in customs tariffs but also the reinforcement of administrative controls (monitoring and bureaucratic requirements) to counteract smuggling, which, most likely, would accompany the return of protectionism. They were confident that the academic members of the *Asociación* could help with their campaign.

The press of the time gave detailed accounts of the *Asociación's* pro free trade propaganda campaign, through open lectures and reporting before official commissions of enquiry, in the 1880s and early 1890s. News from the *Asociación* became less and less frequent in the second half to the 1890s, disappearing at the beginning of the twentieth century. At this moment, the men of the *Círculo* were left as the only defenders of free trade ideas.

Paradoxically, the *Asociación* was most active in the 1880s, just when decisions on commercial policy tended towards greater liberalization, and went into crisis with the Spanish protectionist swerve. In other words, it was more active at exactly at the time their pressure was less necessary. Instead of being an incentive to campaign, the swerve to protection destroyed the *Asociación*. This defeat occurred when the weight of the

protectionist interests became heavier than that of adding the mix of free trade ideas and economic interests reunited in the *Asociación*.

On the protectionist side, there were agrarian interests harmed by the arrival of overseas and Russian grains. They represented the most important sector in terms of value added and employment in Spain. Furthermore, there were the Catalan textile interests, with very active propaganda organizations, and willing to ally themselves with the agrarians to demand protection. Finally, there was the support of the emerging Basque iron industrialists. This network of protectionist forces found a political echo in the conservative party, whose leader, Cánovas del Castillo, declared protectionism a pivotal part in the party program in 1888. The leader of the liberal party, Sagasta, did not dare to confront the agrarians and, when returning to government in 1892, appointed Gamazo, head of the protectionist faction of this party, as Finance Minister. Gamazo did nothing to revert the swerve.

On the free trade side, there was the potential force of consumers that, however, could not be mobilized by the *Asociación*. Unlike in the UK, textile workers were convinced to actively support protectionism to defend their job. Winemakers, by then the main Spanish exporters, had been an influential pressure group in favor of commercial treaties, but, once the unbreakable French tariff wall against wine imports was lifted, their demands for interchanging lower tariffs on industrial products lost all its attraction. With no pressure from consumers or industrial workers in favor of cheap grain and the winemaker's acceptance that there would be no more treaties with France, commercial interests aspired to a short influence on trade politics. Free trade had very few economic interests to get support from.

Interests rather than ideas had been behind the triumph of protectionism in Spain as in other European countries. Only the delay that the French Treaty of 1882 imposed on the

Spanish protectionist backlash can explain that the *Asociación* continued to campaign in that decade, when there was no longer free trade activism in any of the other big European continental countries.

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Appendix 1. Executive boards of Asociación for the Reform of Customs Tariffs

1879

President: Gabriel Rodríguez

Vice-presidents: Laureano Figuerola, Julián Prats, Segismundo Moret, Bonifacio Ruiz de Velasco, Joaquín María Sanromá, Félix Bona, Patricio de Pereda.

General Secretary: Gumersindo de Azcárate

Accountant: Pedro Ruiz de Velasco

Treasurer: Domingo Peña Villarejo

Vocals: Adolfo Aguirre, José Luis Albareda, Ignacio de Arce y Mazón, Ángel Barroeta, José María Alonso de Beraza, Andrés Borrego, Mariano Carreras y González, José Carvajal, Eduardo Chao, Rafael Colás, José Echegaray, Juan Antonio García Labiano, Francisco de la Haza, Prudencio de Igartúa, Rafael María de Labra, Manuel María Llorente, Saturio López, Joaquín López Puigcerver, Joaquín Maldonado Macanaz, Gabriel Martínez, Cipriano Segundo Montesino, Justo Pelayo Cuesta, Mario Pérez, Carlos Prats, Rafael Prieto y Caules, Manuel Prieto y Prieto, Pedro Rodríguez, Francisco Ruano, Jacobo Rubio, Servando Ruiz Gómez, Emilio Sancho, Luis Silvela, Francisco Somalo, Pascual Torras y Andrés Urdampilleta.

Secretaries: Eduardo García Díaz, Miguel Moya, Idelfonso Trompeta, Eduardo de la Riva, Francisco Calvo y Muñoz, Manuel Zapatero García, Ricardo Guillerna y Juan Alvarado.

1881

President: Gabriel Rodríguez

Vice-presidents: Laureano Figuerola, Julián Prats, Segismundo Moret, Bonifacio Ruiz de Velasco, Joaquín María Sanromá, Patricio de Pereda, Manuel Pedregal y Félix Bona.

General Secretary: Gumersindo de Azcárate

Accountant: Pedro Ruiz de Velasco

Treasurer: Domingo Peña Villarejo

Vocals: Alberto Aguilera, Luis Felipe Aguilera, Adolfo Aguirre, José Luis Albareda, José María Alonso de Beraza, Ignacio Arce y Mazón, Ángel Barroeta, Antonio Aura Boronat, Andrés Borrego, Francisco Calvo y Muñoz, Mariano Carreras y González, José Carvajal, Eduardo Chao, Rafael Colás, José Echegaray, Prudencio de Igartúa, Eduardo de la Riva, Rafael María de Labra, Manuel María Llorente, Joaquín López Puigcerver, Cecilio Lora, Manuel Merelo, Cipriano Segundo Montesino, Justo Pelayo Cuesta, Mario Pérez, Carlos Prast, Manuel Prieto y Prieto, Pedro Rodríguez, Jacobo Rubio, Juan Ruiz Castañeda, Gregorio Ruiz Gómez, Emilio Sancho, Enrique Serrano Fatigati, Luis Silvela, Francisco Somalo y Luis María Utor,

Secretaries: Ildefonso Trompeta, Miguel Moya, Manuel Zapatero y García, Juan Alvarado, Gutiérrez Brito, García Alonso, Gómez Ortiz y Joaquín García Gámiz-Soldado.

1883

President: Laureano Figuerola

Vice-presidents: Gabriel Rodríguez, Joaquín María Sanromá, Patricio de Pereda, Manuel Pedregal, Félix Bona, Segismundo Moret, Bonifacio Ruiz de Velasco y Julián Prats.

General Secretary: Gumersindo de Azcárate

Accountant: Gregorio Ruiz Gómez

Treasurer: Domingo Peña Villarejo

Vocals: marqués de Aguilar de Campoo, Alberto Aguilera, Luis Felipe Aguilera, José María Alonso de Beraza, Ignacio de Arce y Mazon, Antonio Aura Boronat, Ángel Barroeta, Andrés Borrego, Mariano Carreras y González, Eduardo Chao, Joaquín Costa, José Echegaray, José Ferreras, Juan Antonio García Labiano, Rafael de Gracia y Parejo, Prudencio de Igartúa, Joaquín López Puigcerver, Cecilio Lora, Rafael María de Labra, Manuel María Llorente, el marqués de Riscal, Manuel Merelo, Juan Morales y Serrano, Mario Pérez, Carlos Prast, Joaquín Reche, Nicolás Rico, Pedro Rodríguez, Jacobo Rubio, Juan Ruíz de Castañeda, Enrique Serrano Fatigati, Luis Silvela, Servando Ruiz Gómez, Cipriano Segundo Montesino, Francisco Somalo y Luis María Utor,

Secretaries: Ildefonso Trompeta, Manuel Zapatero y García, Juan Alvarado, Miguel Moya, Joaquín García Gámiz-Soldado, Enrique de la Riva, Liborio C. Porset y Lorenzo Benito.

1886

President: Laureano Figuerola

Vice-presidents: Gabriel Rodríguez, Servando Ruiz Gómez, Segismundo Moret, Joaquín María Sanromá, Gumersindo de Azcárate, Manuel Pedregal, Carlos Prast y Félix Bona.

General Secretary: Ildefonso Trompeta

Accountant: Gregorio Ruiz Gómez

Treasurer: Domingo de la Peña Villarejo

Vocals: marqués de Aguilar de Campoo, Alberto Aguilera, Luis Felipe Aguilera, José M^a Alonso de Beraza, Juan Alvarado, Rafael de Angulo, Ignacio Arce Mazón, Antonio Aura Boronat, Ángel Barroeta, Andrés Borrego, Eduardo Chao, Joaquín Costa, José Echegaray, José Ferreras, Juan Antonio García Labiano, Rafael de Gracia y Parejo, Prudencio de Igartúa, Rafael María de Labra, Joaquín López Puigcerver, Cecilio Lora,

Manuel Merelo, Gustavo Morales Díaz, Vicente Morales Díaz, Juan Morales y Serrano, Joaquín Reche, Nicolás Rico, marqués de Riscal, Jacobo Rubio, Juan Ruiz Castañeda, Enrique Serrano Fatigati, Luis Silvela, Pascual Torres, Luis María Utor, Rafael de Vega Arias, duque de la Victoria y Manuel Zapatero,

Secretaries: Sres. Miguel Moya, Lorenzo Benito, Liborio C. Porset, Joaquín García Gámiz- Soldado, Constantino Rodríguez, José M^a Cañizares, Francisco Calvo y Muñoz y Enrique de Pereda.

1890

Presidente: Laureano Figuerola

Vice-presidents: Segismundo Moret, Manuel Pedregal, Gumersindo de Azcárate, Gabriel Rodríguez, Mariano Sabas Muniesa, Joaquín López Puigcerver, Joaquín M^a Sanromá y el marqués de Aguilar de Campoo

General Secretary: Ildefonso Trompeta

Accountant: Gregorio Ruiz Gómez

Treasurer: Policarpo Pastor Ojero

Vocals: Alberto Aguilera, Luis Felipe Aguilera, Adolfo Aguirre, José M^a Alonso de Beraza, Juan Alvarado, Rafael de Angulo, Ignacio Arce Mazón, Aquilino Arias, Antonio Aura Boronat, Ricardo Becerro de Bengoa, Andrés Borrego, Angel Canosa, José Echegaray, Pablo Fernández de Barrios, José Ferreras, Agustín Galíndez, Juan Antonio García Labiano, Juan Gómez Hemas, Ricardo Guillerna, Agustín Heredia, Prudencio de Igartúa, Rafael M^a de Labra, Manuel Merelo, Gustavo Morales Díaz, Juan Morales y Serrano, Domingo Peña Villarejo, Joaquín Reche, Nicolás Rico, Jacobo Rubio, Juan Ruiz de Castañeda, Pascual Torres, Rafael de Vega, el duque de la Victoria, Eduardo Vincenti, Luis M^a Utor, Manuel Zapatero.

Secretaries: Miguel Moya, Joaquín García Gámiz-Soldado, Antonio Gabriel Rodríguez, Constantino Rodríguez, Enrique de Pereda, Lorenzo Benito, Liborio C. Porset, Ramón Pérez Requeijo

Appendix 2. MEETINGS ARAA 1879-1893

1879 Cereales (8-VI) y Cereales (26-X)

1880 Antillas (22-II), Antillas (14-III) y Vinos y comercio internacional (14-XI)

1881 Reforma general de aranceles (13-III) y Urgencia de la reforma arancelaria (26-VI)

1882 Reforma de aranceles (8-I), Base 5ª y Tratado con Francia (25-III), Base 5ª y cereales (21-V) y *sin título* (26-XI)

1883 Primeras materias (11-III), Cuestión arancelaria (24-VI) y Cuestión arancelaria y Tratados (10-XII)

1885 Cuestiones arancelarias pendientes (1-III), Tratado con Inglaterra (8-III) y Ruptura de negociaciones con Inglaterra (7-VI)

1886 Prórroga de Tratados y Tratado con Inglaterra (13-VI)

1887 Cuestiones arancelarias pendientes (1-V)

1888 La crisis y el movimiento proteccionista (25-XI)

1891 Política arancelaria del Gobierno (11-I)

1892 Nuevas tarifas arancelarias (24-I)

1893 El presente conflicto arancelario (25-XII)

Table 1. Members of the Asociación (ARAA). The core

Name	Post in the ARAA	Meetings ARAA (Nº)		Post in the <i>Círculo</i>	Profession 1879-1903	Political Party 1879-1903	Political Post	
		Presidency	Interventions				1879-1903	Before 1879/After 1903
Professionals and Politicians								
L. Figuerola	VP-P	15	5		P	R	-	PS,M,MP,S,JA
G. Rodríguez	P-VP	5	15		P-L	R	-	MP-S
J.M. Sanromá	VP	-	1		P	R	JAV	MP-JA
S. Moret	VP	-	10		P-Pol	LL	PC-M-MP	PM-M-MP
M. Pedregal	VP	2	12		L-Pol	R	MP	M-MP
S. Ruiz Gómez	VP	-	2		L-Pol	LL	M-S	M-MP
J. López Puigcerver	VP	-	2		L-Pol	LL	M-MP	MP
Aguilar de Campoo (m.)	VP	-	-		I-B-Pol	L-C	M-MP-S-JAV	
G. Azcárate	GS-VP	-	13		P-Pol	R	MP	
A. Aguilera	V	-	3		L-Pol	LL	M-MP-S	
J. Costa	V	-	4		L	R	MP	
Fco. Calvo y Muñoz	S	-	3		J	L	MP	
Businessmen								
F. Bona	VP	1	5		B	D	-	MP-JA
J. Prats	VP	-	-	P	B	D	JAV	
P. de Pereda	VP	-	-	P	B	D	-	MP
M. S. Muniesa	VP	-	-	P	B	R-L	MP	
C. Prast	VP	-	-	P	B-Pol	C	MP	
B. Ruiz de Velasco	VP	-	-	V	B-Pol	C	MP-JAV	JA
I. Trompeta	S-GS	-	-	V	B	R	JAV	
J.M. Alonso de Beraza	V	-	3	V	B-J	R	JAV	MP
A. Aura Boronat	V	-	3		B-J-Pol	R-LL	MP	MP
J. Ruiz de Castañeda	V	-	11	V	B-J	D	-	
M. Zapatero	V	-	8	V	B-J	D	-	

Notas: **Post in ARAA and the Círculo:** P: President; VP: Vice-president; V: Vocal; GS: General Secretary General; S: Secretary

Profession: P: Professor; B: Businessman; L: Lawyer; I: Engineer; J: Journalist. Pol: Politician

Political party: R: Republican; D: Democrat; LL: Left-wing Liberal; L: Liberal; C: Conservative

Political post: PM: Prime Minister; PC: President of the Congress; PS: Presidente of the Senate; M: Minister; MP: Member of Parliament; S: Senator; JA: Junta de Aranceles; JAV: Junta de Aranceles y Valoraciones