

The pronunciamiento in independent Mexico, 1821-1876

A research project at the University of St Andrews

Acta del pronunciamiento de Cuernavaca

25 May 1834

Cuernavaca, Morelos

Content:

Acta del pronunciamiento de Cuernavaca, 25 de mayo de 1834

Sumergida la república mexicana en el caos más espantoso de confusión y desorden a que la han sujetado las medidas violentas con que los cuerpos legislativos han llenado este periodo de sangre y lágrimas, desplegando los atentados de una demagogia absoluta sobre la destrucción de la carta fundamental que tantos sacrificios ha costado, es indispensable manifestar expresamente la realidad de los votos que emiten los pueblos, para que se apliquen remedios exactos y positivos que basten a calmar los males y a destruir la existencia de las logias masónicas, que producen el germen de las divisiones intestinas.

Considerando igualmente que el espíritu de reclamación es general y unísono en todos los ángulos de la república, y que para expresar este concepto a que da lugar la conducta de las legislaturas, no es necesario pormenorizar hechos que por su misma naturaleza han producido la dislocación general de todos los vínculos sociales; la villa de Cuernavaca, animada de las más sanas intenciones, y con el deseo de abrir una nueva era, echando un velo a los acontecimientos pasados, manifiesta libre y espontáneamente sus votos por medio de los artículos siguientes:

Art. 1°. Que su voluntad está en abierta repugnancia con las leyes y decretos de proscripción de personas, las que se han dictado sobre reformas religiosas, la tolerancia de las sectas masónicas y con todas las demás disposiciones que traspasan los límites prescritos en la constitución general y en las particulares de los estados.

Art. 2°. Que es conforme a esta misma voluntad y al consentimiento del pueblo, que no pudiendo funcionar el congreso general y legislaturas particulares, sino en virtud de las facultades que les prescriben sus respectivas constituciones, todas las leyes y providencias que han dictado saliéndose notoriamente fuera de aquel círculo, deben declararse nulas, de ningún valor ni efecto, y como si hubieran emanado de alguna persona privada.

Art. 3°. Que el pueblo reclama respetuosamente la protección de estas bases justas y legales el Excmo. Sr. presidente de la republica don Antonio López de Santa Anna, como única autoridad que hoy se halla en la posibilidad de dispensarla.

Art. 4°. El pueblo declara, que no han correspondido a su confianza los diputados que han tomado parte en la sanción de las leyes y decretos referidos; y espera que así ellos, como los demás funcionarios que se han obstinado en llevar adelante las resoluciones de esta clase, se separen de sus puestos y no intervengan ni en contra ni en favor de esta manifestación hasta que la nación representada de nuevo, se reorganice conforme a la Constitución, y del modo más conveniente a su felicidad.

Art. 5°. Que para sostenimiento de las providencias que dicte el Excmo. Sr. presidente, de conformidad con las ideas que van expresadas, se le ofrece la eficaz cooperación de la fuerza que tiene aquí reunida.

Estos artículos han sido proclamados por el pueblo en masa, y otorgados por la junta que al efecto se ha celebrado por el ayuntamiento y principales vecinos de esta villa; por lo que se da cuenta inmediatamente al Excmo. Sr. primer magistrado de la república, para que este plan obre sus efectos en su superior conocimiento.

Cuernavaca, 25 de mayo de 1834.

Excmo. Sr. Ignacio Echeverría
José Mariano Campos, secretario

Context:

The radical congress of 1833-34 displayed from its inception a marked anticlerical agenda. Between 12 June and 6 November 1833 it proposed and passed a whole array of highly controversial laws. The following deserve a mention: 12 June: The staff of Mexico City town council (which was still composed of politicians who had been named by Bustamante) were replaced with their 1829 predecessors; 23 June: The Ley del Caso expelled from the republic fifty-one politicians whose views were considered to be unpatriotic (including General Bustamante); 17 August: The missions in California were secularised; 31 August: Church property belonging to the missionaries from the Philippines was expropriated; 14 October: The ecclesiastical Colegio de Santa María de Todos los Santos was shut down; 18 October: The properties of the Philippine and San Camilo missionaries were placed on auction to the general public; 19 October: The Catholic and church-dominated University of Mexico was shut down; 21 October: The closed university was replaced by a (secular) Dirección General de Instrucción Pública; 24 October: The closed Colegio de Santa María de todos los Santos was to become a national library; 24 October: The Dirección General de Instrucción Pública was to be financed through the expropriation of the following church properties: the Monastery and Church of San Camilo, the Hospital and Church of Jesús, the Hospital de Belén, the Asylum of the Poor of Santo Tomás, the Old Inquisition building, and the Monastery and Church of the Espíritu Santo; 27 October: The civil obligation to pay diezmos (tithes to the Church) was abolished; 3 November: the 16 May 1831 Law that granted the church the right to nominate its priests, bishops, and archbishops was abolished; 6 November: The civil obligation to take ecclesiastical vows was abolished. The 1833 Escalada-Durán-Arista pronunciamiento cycle had already shown that there were high-ranking officers who were virulently opposed to Congress' measures and believed in defending church and military privileges. Nicolás Bravo's Plan of Conciliation or Chichihualco of 2 December 1833 had actually called for the summoning of a new congress. As can be seen in this and the 200+ pronunciamientos that were launched in 1834, Congress' anticlericalism proved intensely unpopular, provoking the largest number of recorded pronunciamientos in the nineteenth century. The fact that in the first months of 1834 Congress directed its attention to reforming the regular army inevitably inspired most army officers to join the cycle that was unleashed by this pronunciamiento: the Plan of Cuernavaca of 25 May 1834.

In terms of how the events unfolded: Santa Anna returned to Mexico City from his retirement in his hacienda Manga de Clavo on 24 April 1834. He challenged some of the measures being discussed by Congress, but did not resort to force immediately. It was clear, however, that he was going to take action. As he stated in a Manifiesto he issued on 29 April, he was not the servile supporter of the disorganising plans of the demagogues. The nation had elected him president to "contain or moderate precipitated decisions or excessive passion." He promised to defend religion, liberty, security, and all the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. He was against the "rigours of tyranny in the same way that [he was] opposed to the exterminating excesses of an ill-understood liberty." His main concern lay in the impact "the immature introduction of [certain] reforms" was having on the country. Congress' response was to ignore Santa Anna's summons to meet on 21 May. The time for action had come. Santa Anna's loyal informer, propagandist, and former Minister of War, José María Tornel went to Cuernavaca with his brother-in-law, Miguel Díez Bonilla, and drafted the plan that was proclaimed on 25 May 1834, calling for "Religion, the fueros, and Santa Anna" and demanding a reversal of Congress's policies. According to the plan's five articles, in response to the "atrocious chaos, confusion and disorder" the country was in as a direct result of the legislature's behaviour, its advocates wanted to ensure that (1) all decrees issued against individuals (the Ley del Caso) and the Church, and in

favour of Masonic sects were abolished; (2) all laws that violated the constitution and the general will were reversed; (3) Santa Anna be given the authority to execute these demands; (4) all deputies who favoured these deeply unpopular reforms were removed from office and replaced by others following the corresponding procedures specified in the 1824 Constitution; and (5) that Santa Anna would have those forces that defended the plan at his service to ensure that it was executed accordingly. Tornel, albeit not mentioned by name in the actual plan, played a major role in co-ordinating the outpouring of support for the Pronunciamiento of Cuernavaca that followed its proclamation, from a wide range of garrisons. According to an embittered José María Luis Mora, Tornel pulled this off by promising “mountains of gold to those that proclaimed, protected or even just accepted” the Plan of Cuernavaca. Having said this, the Plan of Cuernavaca was popular. The mobilisation that took place was such that it would be hard to believe that the fall of the radical 1833-34 administration was entirely Tornel and Santa Anna’s doing. Evidently there were those who believed this shift in the country’s politics was entirely Santa Anna’s fault. Nevertheless, the evidence does point towards a broader consensus of rejection. Large sections of the population as well as the army were not yet ready to embrace Congress’s radical attack on Church and army. There was no instance of a garrison who opposed the Plan, and the 316 plans of allegiance it received between May and August 1834 included a high proportion of civilian-led groupings (such as town councils, municipalities, and regional councils). Following the Plan of Cuernavaca, Santa Anna gave himself extraordinary powers, closed down Congress, dismissed Gómez Farías and his advisors, and set about reversing most of the laws passed by the radical Congress.

WF

<https://arts.st-andrews.ac.uk/pronunciamientos/database/index.php?id=1004>