

19th Century Spain: Isabella II

A) Reign of Isabella II (1833-1868)

As a minor (up to the age of 13)	Regencies	Regency of María Cristina (1833-1840)
		Regency of general Espartero (1840-1843)
Age of majority	Effective reign	The moderate decade (1844-1854)
		The progressive biennium (1854-1856)
		The rotation of power between unionists and moderates (1856-1868)

1- Regency of María Cristina (1833-1840)

Ferdinand VII died leaving his crown to his daughter, Isabella, who was aged 3. Her mother, María Cristina, became the regent.

His brother, **Carlos María Isidro**, didn't accept the pragmatic sanction that had declared null the Salic law:

- The most **absolutists** opposed it and supported the king's brother, Carlos María Isidro, to whom they considered the legitimate heir.
- **First Carlist War** (1833-1840). (Read the correspondent slide to complete the information.)

María Cristina had to call the liberals for the government: First, the Moderate party, and then, from 1836, the Progressive: Juan Álvarez Mendizábal started a confiscation of Church property to finance the liberal State and the war against the Carlists.

A new **progressive constitution** was drafted in **1837**: National sovereignty, but certain powers for the queen, separation of powers and two chambers (Congress of Deputies and Senate), rights and liberties (freedom of speech, census suffrage, autonomy for townhalls).

In 1840, general **Espartero** sign the **Peace of Vergara**, that put and end to the first Carlist war. (As he won the war he was named "Prince of Vergara".)

2- Regency of general Espartero (1840-1843)

María Cristina was involved in some **scandals** and was sent to the **exile**.

The progressive general **Espartero** was appointed **regent**. However, Espartero's **authoritarian** ideas and his introduction of **free trade** measures, that were damaging to the emerging industry (specially in **Catalonia**), created strong opposition.

After he bombed Barcelona to stop the riots, he was forced to step down. **Isabella** was then **declared of age** in 1843, at **13 years** of age, and she was proclaimed **queen**.

3- The moderate decade (1844-1854)

During almost the entire effective reign of Isabella, the Moderate Liberal Party, led by general Narváez, remained in power.

The new Cortes passed a **moderate Constitution (1845)**, with a highly restricted suffrage, limited liberties and shared sovereignty between the Cortes and the Queen. Municipal administration was controlled back by the State.

They reformed the **Treasury** (Hacienda) and unified and centralized taxes (Reform **Mon-Santillán**).

A new **penal code** was created and the **Guardia Civil** was created to maintain the order in the countryside.

They sign a **Concordat** with the Holy See.

Their corruption, electoral fraud and their authoritarian leaders (Narváez and Bravo Murillo) caused another progressive pronunciamiento.

4- The progressive biennium (1854-1855)

In 1854, the Vicálvaro pronunciamiento (**Vicalvarada**) and the Manifesto of **Manzanares**, led by general O'Donnell, brought the progressive liberals, and Espartero, back to the power.

O'Donnell created a new political party, **Unión Liberal**, to group some conservatives and progressives who had common viewpoints.

Some years before, the Progressive party had been split because the universal male supporters had founded the **Democratic party**, that defended a democratic monarchy. However, some of its members eventually split as well to form the **Republican party**.

The Cortes drafted a new **constitution in 1855** which was **not approved** (Constitución **non nata**). Then government made two fundamental laws:

- The **confiscation of Madoz**, of common municipal property and Church property (1855)
- The General **Railway Law**, to boost the railway system, although it was built by foreign investors.

5- The rotation of power between unionists and moderates (1856-1868)

A new crisis in Espartero's government caused Isabela II to hand the government to O'Donnell and the Unión Liberal. From 1856 **Unionists (O'Donnell)** and **Moderates (Narváez)** alternated in power.

Colonialist foreign policy was implemented: Morocco, Indochina, Dominican Republic, Peru, Mexico...

In 1857 the Moderate government passed Claudio Moyano's educative law (**Ley Moyano**) to establish the educative levels and the compulsory access to the basic level.

Since the government of Narváez was quite **dictatorial** and **repressed** all the opponents (Noche de San Daniel, against students; Cuartel de San Gil, against part of the military), the progressives, democrats and republicans united at the **Pact of Ostende (1866)** to overthrow Isabella II.

In 1867 the pact was joined by the unionists, whereas a famine and a social crisis was taking place.

In September 1868, the progressive leader, general Juan **Prim**, and the unionist leader general **Serrano**, promoted the Revolución Gloriosa. It started when the unionist admiral **Topete** rose up in Cádiz (¡Viva España con Honra! manifesto), and then, after the battle of **Alcolea**, forced Queen Isabella II and her heir Alfonso into exile.