

Ministry of National Defence
PORTUGUESE COMMISSION OF MILITARY HISTORY

ACTA 2024

*The role of the military in political transitions:
from the 18th century to the present day*

XLIX International Congress of Military History

1 - 6 September 2024, Lisbon

Volume II





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Published by:

Portuguese Commission of Military History

Av. Ilha da Madeira, n.º 1, Room 332

1400-204 Lisboa - Portugal

Coordinator and editor: Jorge Silva Rocha, PhD

Cover Design: Jorge Silva Rocha

Book cover images: Alfredo Cunha (*front*) and Eduardo Gageiro (*back*)

ISBN: 978-989-8593-31-3

DOI for this volume: <https://doi.org/10.56092/VXIU5336>

Printed in Portugal by Rainho & Neves - Artes Gráficas

THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN REPATRIATION OF THE FUTURE KING CAROL II. 6 JUNE 1930

Ion RÎȘNOVEANU (Romania)

Abstract

In 1926, the Romanian Parliament voted a law through which Crown Prince Carol, the eldest son of King Ferdinand I, lost this status, upon his request. Thus, Mihai, the only son of Carol and the King's grandchild, became Crown Prince.

In 1927, King Ferdinand I died and Mihai became King. However, he could not be crowned as he was underage. In these conditions, Romania was led by a Regency formed of three members.

The world economic crisis, which started in 1929, affected Romania as well, a reason for which there was a state of discontent within the Romanian society, in general, and the Army, especially.

Upon this, within the Romanian Royal Army a strong opinion began to develop which wanted to bring Carol as king of Romania.

On the 6 June 1930, with the support of the 2nd Aviation Group stationed in Cluj, as well as the 2nd and 9th Huntsmen Regiments, both stationed in Bucharest, Carol returned to Romania. After two days of negotiations, on the 8 June 1930, Carol was proclaimed King of Romania, with a strong support from the Romanian Royal Army.

Keywords: King Carol II, Restoration, Crown Prince, abdication, military conspirators

The tumultuous youth of Crown Prince Carol

Crown Prince Carol's youth was tumultuous, passionate and exciting, his first female conquest being a certain Ella Filitti, with whom he fell in love in 1914. The prince's passion was so strong that, in a fiery letter, he stated, for the first time, the possibility of renouncing his prerogatives and leaving the Royal Family.

The year 1918 brought along a new love for the Prince in the person of the first woman who decisively influenced him, Ioana Maria Valentina Lambrino, whom he affectionately called "Zizi". Caught between passion and duty, Carol chose passion, which is why, on the 27 August 1918, he deserted and left the command of the 8th Huntsmen Regiment.⁽¹⁾

A few days later, the couple left Romania and arrived in Odessa, where they were married on the 31 August 1918 at the Pokrovskaya Church. It was not until the 2 September 1918 that the Romanian Royal Family learned of the Crown Prince's disappearance and desertion. Queen Maria received the news while she was at her residence in Bicz and was very disappointed by this unpleasant situation.

Moreover, the same afternoon of, King Ferdinand handed the Queen three letters in which the young prince announced to his father that he was renouncing the prerogatives of Heir to the Throne. The reasons for this decision were, according to Carol, his deep disgust with the Romanian political class and politicking in Romania, as well as the fact that he could not do his duty as a soldier. As can be seen, "political reasons" were the basis for his abdication and leaving the command of the military unit he led, without saying a word about the real reason, his marriage to Zizi Lambrino, and without addressing any farewell words to King Ferdinand.⁽²⁾

That is why the Sovereign was affected by his son's decision, given that he did not expect him to marry without respecting the Royal House Statute and, especially, to desert from the command of his regiment. However, he received special support from political leaders who proposed a discreet solution to the problem.

In this regard, at the proposal of Ion I.C. Brătianu, president of the National Liberal Party, accepted by the Sovereign, Colonel Ernest Ballif was given the mission to travel to Odessa and conduct negotiations with Prince Carol and even use force if they failed. After only one day, more precisely on the evening of the 6 September 1918, Queen Maria received the news that her wandering son had been convinced by Colonel Ballif to return to the Romanian territory and to submit, once again, to the laws of the country and the Royal House Statute. This news was received with joy and hope by the Sovereigns, especially by Queen Maria, who wanted it to be just an isolated moment of error.⁽³⁾

1.Narcis Dorin Ion, *Carol II of Romania. A controversial king*, (Onești: Magic Print Publishing House, 2020), 57.

2.Narcis Dorin Ion, *Carol II of Romania. A controversial king*, 59.

3.Narcis Dorin Ion, *Carol II of Romania. A controversial king*, 59-60.

However, according to the Military Code of the Romanian Army in force in 1918, leaving the command post of the 8th Huntsmen Regiment by Carol was considered desertion. Therefore, King Ferdinand I, as Supreme Commander of the Army, convened the Council of Generals, which included General Dumitru Hârjeu, General Constantin Coandă, General Arthur Văitoianu and General Eremia Grigorescu. In a special meeting, this body was given the mission to decide the punishment that Colonel Carol of Hohenzollern was to receive under the charge of desertion. Following the debates, King Ferdinand I decided that his son be sent to detention, for 75 days, at the Horaița Monastery, in Neamț county, starting with the 9 September 1918. Also, the prisoner was not allowed to leave the detention centre, but he was granted the right to visits.⁽⁴⁾

Although far from his beloved, Prince Carol did not lose hope that he would see her again, despite the opposition of his august parents who opposed a marriage uncompliant with the Royal House Statute and who believed that their son was, in fact, the victim of a woman, Zizi Lambrino, who wanted to destroy him.

Unstable nature, after only two weeks, more precisely on the 29 October 1918, Prince Carol declared, in writing, that he did not object if the Romanian authorities annulled the marriage act in Odessa. Under these conditions, on the 8 January 1919, in a public session, at the request of the Sovereigns, the Ilfov Tribunal annulled the marriage between Crown Prince Carol and Ioana Maria Valentina Lambrino. It was, however, a strange decision as a result of which he was released from arrest, but continued to live with his beloved at the mansion at the Royal Residence in Mănăstirea, Călărași County. It was, in fact, a compromise between the Sovereigns and the Prince, a tacit truce accepted by both parties. On the one hand, King Ferdinand I and Queen Maria tried to create the conditions for their son to not repeat such an affront to the Royal Family, and on the other hand, Carol postponed a similar gesture that he made in 1925⁽⁵⁾

This state of affairs was materialized by the first abdication of the Throne by Crown Prince Carol, who, on the 1 August 1919, addressed a letter to King Ferdinand I, as well as to the most important political leaders of the time (Ion I.C. Brătianu, Alexandru Marghiloman, Take Ionescu, Nicolae Iorga and Alexandru Averescu), to whom he announced that he was renouncing his status as Crown Prince of the Crown of Romania, both for himself and for his descendants, and was making himself available to the Sovereign to be sent to the front.

Furthermore, on the same day, Carol sent a letter to his wife Ioana Maria Valentina Lambrino informing her that he recognized the son she gave birth to on the 8 January 1920, who was named Mircea Grigore Lambrino.

4. Narcis Dorin Ion, *Carol II of Romania. A controversial king*, 61.

5. Narcis Dorin Ion, *Carol II of Romania. A controversial king*, 61.

Interestingly, unstable with his own decisions, on the 20 February 1920, the Prince recanted these letters, which he considered null and void.

A harsh indictment followed from his parents, especially from Queen Maria, who accused him, among other things, of having betrayed his country, of having disgraced his family, and of having surrounded himself with friends who had made him lose all sense of honour and duty⁽⁶⁾

Under these circumstances, on the 21 February 1920, Crown Prince Carol, newly returned to his duties as a member of the Royal Family, set off on a 7-month trip around the world, during which he visited exotic locations in countries such as Egypt, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Japan, the United States of America, England and France.

This extended trip completely distanced him from his feelings for his ex-wife. As a reward, she left Romania and settled in Paris, and in exchange for her silence, she received an annual life annuity of 110,000 francs, as well as the sum of 500,000 lei.⁽⁷⁾

However, the young Carol's conquests did not stop at Zizi Lambrino. In the period 1920-1921, two other conquests followed. With a certain Mirella Marcovici he had a son, Mirel, and on the 18 October 1921 the Royal Family regulated the situation of another unwanted relationship with Maria Martini, with whom the Crown Prince also had a son and who received an annuity of 500,000 lei.

Shortly after returning from the round-the-world trip, Prince Carol was sent to Switzerland where, at the insistence of Queen Maria, he met Princess Elena of Greece, whom he married on the 10 March 1921. Even under these conditions, the Sovereign was not sure that the new relationship would have a chance of standing the test of time, given that the prince's changeable and fickle nature was well known, as well as the fact that the wedding was the result of a political-diplomatic arrangement and, in no way, of true love.⁽⁸⁾

However, from this relationship, which Queen Maria did not seem to trust much, on the 25 October 1921, Mihai was born, the only child of the princely couple Carol and Elena and future king of Romania. The joy of the Sovereigns was special, especially since the happy event was announced with great enthusiasm.⁽⁹⁾

6. Paul of Romania, *Carol II, King of Romania*, (Bucharest, Holding Reporter Publishing House, 1991), 54-55.

7. Narcis Dorin Ion, *Carol II of Romania. A controversial king*, 61.

8. Queen Maria of Romania, *Daily Notes (January-December 1921)*, (Bucharest: Historia Publishing House, 2006), 77.

9. "Official Gazette" no. 166 bis/26 October 1921, 7006.

The affair with Elena Lupescu and the renunciation of the prerogatives of Crown Prince

The turbulent life of Crown Prince Carol was not to the liking of the Romanian Royal Family. That is why, in November 1925, King Ferdinand I and Queen Maria sent the young prince to London to represent them at the funeral of the Queen Mother of Great Britain.

Unfortunately, however, it was there that he met Elena Lupescu, for whom he had a special passion, even though he was married and had a son. Under these circumstances, Prince Carol announced that he would not return to the country because the atmosphere seemed suffocating to him.

Furthermore, while in Venice, on the 12 December 1925, he delivered a letter to King Ferdinand I announcing that he renounced all rights as Crown Prince and requested that he be excluded from the members of the Ruling Family of Romania and that he be given a name under which he could establish a new civil status. Also, on the 28 December, from Milan, Prince Carol sent a new letter confirming his decision to renounce his rights as heir and member of the Royal Family of Romania.

According to contemporaries, it was not only the love affair with Elena Lupescu that was the reason for Carol's decision to renounce his prerogatives. According to them, Carol harboured a deep hatred against his mother Queen Maria, whom he accused of adultery, against Ion I.C. Brătianu, a harsh prime minister who did not accept many of the young prince's slippages, as well as against Barbu Știrbey, the administrator of the Crown Domains, whom he accused of inappropriate relations with the Queen.⁽¹⁰⁾

The Romanian sovereigns took note of their son's decision, which is why they put pressure on him to give up his relationship with Elena Lupescu and return to the country. Moreover, they offered her a sum of money on condition she settles in Paris and breaks all ties with the Crown Prince. All in vain, nevertheless.⁽¹¹⁾

In this context, King Ferdinand I and Prime Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu granted his wish. Thus, on the 31 December 1925, the Crown Council was held in Peleş Castle in Sinaia, which stripped Carol of his rights and proclaimed his son, Prince Mihai, as Heir to the Throne.

We must emphasize that this meeting was attended, beside the politicians, by General Constantin Prezan and General Alexandru Averescu who, as representatives of the Army, supported the decision of King Ferdinand I.

10. Constantin Argetoianu, *Memoirs. For tomorrow's people. Memories from yesterday's people*, vol. VII, part VI, (Bucharest: Machiavelli Publishing House, 1996), 233.

11. Doru Lixandru, *Carol II, Carlism and the Carlists in Romania in the 1930s*, (Moldova Publishing House, 1991), 61.

Consequently, on the 4 January 1926, meeting in joint session, the two legislative chambers adopted three laws by which Prince Carol was deprived of his rights as Heir to the Throne and member of the Royal Family of Romania. Also, his minor son, Mihai, aged only 5, became Crown Prince, and in the event that he became king before the age of majority, Romania was to be ruled by a Regency consisting of three members, namely Prince Nicolae, Miron Cristea, Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church, and Gheorghe Buzdugan, President of the High Court of Cassation.

For this moment of Carol's renunciation of his rights as Crown Prince of the Romanian Throne, we must remember the words of his mother, Queen Maria, who considered her son's decision to be an act of desertion for a despicable cause and that, in the future, he could not be a guarantee for the country given that he had lost every shred of honour and loyalty.⁽¹²⁾

Under these conditions, the Romanian authorities handed Carol a passport of the Kingdom of Romania with the name Carol Caraiman, as its holder had wished.

On the 4 January 1926, when the legislation was passed that deprived Carol of his rights as heir to the Romanian Throne, King Ferdinand I was 60 years old, which was why the issue of dynastic succession seemed remote. However, following a rapidly progressing cancer, on the 19 July 1927 King Ferdinand I died, so Prince Mihai became, for the first time, King of Romania. As he was a minor, aged 6, his prerogatives were taken over and ensured by the three members of the Regency who took the oath on the 20 of July.

In the afternoon of the 20 July 1927, after the announcement of the death of King Ferdinand I, the Assembly of Deputies and the Senate met in joint session. On this occasion, a Regency was appointed consisting of Prince Nicolae, Carol's younger brother, Patriarch Miron Cristea, and Gheorghe Buzdugan, President of the High Court, who took the oath of allegiance: "I swear allegiance to His Majesty King Mihai I. I swear to protect the Constitution and the laws of the Romanian people, to maintain their national rights and the integrity of the territory".

Under these circumstances, Ion I.C. Brătianu, in his capacity as Prime Minister, submitted his resignation. By this act, he offered the new Sovereign, in fact the Regency, the opportunity to exercise the constitutional prerogative to appoint ministers. The members of the Regency took note of this resignation but, in the shortest possible time, reconfirmed the mandate of the old government. The aim was, in fact, not only to preserve political stability, but also to maintain in power a government that, through energetic but constitutional actions, could block a possible return to the country of the former Crown Prince.⁽¹³⁾

12. Maria, Queen of Romania, *Daily Notes (January 1-December 31, 1926)*, vol. VIII, (Bucharest: Cognitia Publishing House, 2010), 71.

13. Ioan Scurtu, *History of the Romanians during the time of the four kings (1866-1947)*, vol. III, *Carol II*, (Bucharest: Enciclopedic Publishing House, 2004), 7.

Immediately after the coming into force of the laws adopted on the 4 January 1926, by which Carol lost his prerogatives as Crown Prince of the Romanian Throne and with the takeover of power by the Regency in the name of King Mihai I, a minor but constitutional king, the authorities in Bucharest took a series of security measures aimed at preventing the organization and conduct of any hostile demonstrations against them, but also at blocking any possible attempt by the wandering prince to return to the country. Among these measures, the harshest were the extension of the state of siege to the entire territory of the Kingdom of Romania, including the Romanian territories united with the Old Kingdom in 1918, as well as the severe censorship applied to the press, especially opposition newspapers.

The liberal government also sent serious warnings to senior officers and politicians, including historian Nicolae Iorga, not to campaign in favour of the former Prince's return to the country.⁽¹⁴⁾

Moreover, on the orders of the authorities, several members of the National Peasant Party, led by Iuliu Maniu, who were known for their closeness to the former Prince Carol, were temporarily detained and forbidden from contacting him.⁽¹⁵⁾

Externally, some of the best agents of the State Security, one of the country's secret services, were sent from Romania to France, with the mission to carry out strict surveillance of Carol and to inform central structures about any movement or travels of the former prince.⁽¹⁶⁾

Carol Caraiman's activity during the Regency period for the return to Romania

In order to respect the historical truth, we must say that there was a serious distrust on the part of public opinion towards the Regency, both as an institution of the State that was meant to exercise power in the name of the minor king, and towards its members, taken individually. Thus, Prince Nicolae, Carol's younger brother, although educated at Eton College in Great Britain, did not have the slightest interest in politics. Gheorghe Buzdugan, one of the most eminent jurists of Romania at that time, was appointed a member of the Regency in his capacity as first president of the High Court of Cassation and Justice. However, he could not exercise his mandate to the end because he died in 1929. As for Patriarch Miron Cristea, he had no political experience whatsoever, which is why his performance was modest.

14. N. Iorga, *Contemporary Romania from 1904 to 1930. Under three kings*, (Bucharest: PRO Publishing House, 1999), 358.

15. Arhivele Naționale Istorie Centrale, fond Ministerul Justiției Direcția Juridică, dosar nr. 28/1927, f. 15; Arhivele Naționale Istorie Centrale, fond Președinția Consiliului de Miniștri, dosar 15/1928, 250.

16. Arhivele Naționale Istorie Centrale, fond Casa Regală, Carol Caraiman, dosar nr. 5/1927, 197.

The Regency was also strongly contested by Iuliu Maniu, the leader of the National Peasant Party, the main opposition political party, a declared opponent of the liberals in general and of Ion I.C. Brătianu in particular, which is why he did not miss any opportunity to express his point of view. One of the most vehement statements in this regard took place on the 25th July 1927, when, in a session of the Assembly of Deputies, the Peasant Party leader declared that the Regency had been formed “without the freely expressed participation of the nation” and without the national-peasant parliamentarians being consulted. Furthermore, Iuliu Maniu stated that the Regency’s main mission was to respect the provisions of the Constitution approved in 1923. Consequently, the Regency was obliged to dissolve the Parliament and organize free elections.

Through this political manoeuvre, the president of the National Peasant Party aimed to win the elections, form a new government and, implicitly, discuss Carol’s return to Romania as king.⁽¹⁷⁾

All in all, the “Act of the 4 January 1926”, as well as the appointment of the Regency after the death of King Ferdinand I on the 10 July 1927, only formally concluded the issue of succession to the Throne of Romania, given that these decisions were taken in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution adopted in 1923 and following Carol’s renunciation of his prerogatives as Crown Prince.⁽¹⁸⁾

However, one of the most important moments of 1927 was represented by the death of Ion I.C. Brătianu, on the 24 November, the man who led Romania with a strong hand during World War I, as well as in the following period.

Along with this state of affairs, two groups with opposing views on the institution of the Regency crystallized in Romania. The first group, represented by the National Liberal Party, acted to respect the laws adopted on the 4 January 1926, through which Carol definitively lost his status as Heir to the Throne of Romania, in favour of his son Mihai, and as a member of the Royal Family.

The second group, organized around the National Peasant Party, represented, in particular, by Iuliu Maniu and Mihail Manoilescu, virulently criticized the Regency and threatened to annul the Act of the 4th of January 1926 and bring Carol into the country.

Before closing the focus on this period, we must also specify the fact that between the liberal leader Ion I.C. Brătianu and Prince Carol there was a political confrontation, but also a confrontation of pecuniary interests, given that Carol, before renouncing the inheritance of the throne, in his capacity of Inspector General of Aeronautics wanted to endow the Aviation through the Phoker Company, promptly blocked by the intervention

17. *Debates of the Assembly of Deputies*, no. 5, meeting of the 20 July 1927.

18. Ioan Scurtu, *The dynastic crisis in Romania (1925-1930)*, (Bucharest: Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1996), 36-60.

of the Prime Minister. Here, then, the Army was involved, even indirectly, in a business that could turn into a public scandal.⁽¹⁹⁾

That is why, in the conditions of the deaths of King Ferdinand I and Ion I.C. Brătianu, the Carlist current was amplified, important intellectuals of Romania, such as Nae Ionescu and Nicolae Iorga, fuelling the myth of the “hero-saviour” Carol, who was abusively removed from the status of “ruler of the country” by a tacit plot between Ion I.C. Brătianu and Queen Maria.

Added to this state of affairs was the fact that, since mid-1927, the duplicitous Carol began to pose as a victim of the Brătianu family’s dictatorship and to insinuate that he had renounced the succession to the throne against his own will.⁽²⁰⁾

This attitude is proven by the activism that Carol Caraiman demonstrated starting with the last months of 1927, when he launched harsh attacks against the liberals and the economic, political and military situation of Romania caused by their rule.

Under these circumstances, the former Crown Prince depicted himself “as a sovereign raised in the country’s tradition, prepared for any eventuality and aware of the country’s needs”.⁽²¹⁾

Furthermore, in his statements in the foreign press he claimed, in a more or less direct way, even the throne of the Kingdom of Romania. Thus, in an interview given to the French publication “Le Monde”, in July 1927, shortly after the death of Ion I.C. Brătianu, the former Crown Heir expressed concern about the new political situation in which Romania found itself. At the same time, however, he expressed his desire to watch over the growth of his nation as a good Romanian.⁽²²⁾

The death of Ion I.C. Brătianu weakened the National Liberal Party. In these conditions, the National Peasant Party intensified its political campaign, evoking the possibility of Prince Carol’s return.

In November 1928, Iuliu Maniu, a strong supporter of Carol’s return, became President of the Council of Ministers. From this moment on, the Carlist movement grew stronger; its supporters believing that only Carol’s accession to the throne and the abolition of the Regency would lead to the establishment of a climate of order and stability in the country.

19. Aurelian Chistol, *General Gabriel Marinescu. Between law and lawlessness*, (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun Publishing House, 2014), 87.

20. Petre Țurlea, *Carol II and the Royal Camarilla*, (Bucharest: Semne Publishing House, 2010), 14–18.

21. Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, fond Casa Regală. Oficiale, vol. III: Carol Caraiman, dosar nr. 3/1929, 1.

22. Doru Lixandru, *Carol II, Carlism and Carlism in Romania in the 1930s*, 50.

This situation was caused by the weaknesses of the Regency, incapable of managing the economic crisis that had befallen Romania since 1929, but also by the disinterest of Prince Nicolae, Carol's younger brother, a member of it.

It should be reminded here, even if only in a few words, that Prince Nicolae had graduated from the famous Eton College in Great Britain and was a highly regarded naval officer.

Starting with 1929, the Army represented one of the most favourable environments for the development of the Carlist propaganda, primarily through Prince Nicolae, bored and tired of the interminable meetings of the Regency, but also through the National Freemasonry, intensely courted by the exiled Carol. We should remind the special relationship that Carol, in exile, had with Ioan Pangal, who held the dignity of Sovereign Grand Commander of the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Romania, in the periods 1922-1937, 1944-1948, as well as Grand Master of the National Grand Lodges of Romania in the period 1928-1929.⁽²³⁾

Also, Queen Maria's inconsistent position towards her eldest son, as well as the influence she exerted on the huntsmen regiments in Bucharest, which aroused the dissatisfaction of their commanders, constituted as many subversive factors regarding a possible return of Carol to the Romanian Throne.⁽²⁴⁾

One of the most ardent supporters of Carol's return to Romania was Colonel Gabriel Marinescu, especially after the 1st of April 1928, when he was appointed at the command of the 9th Guards Huntsmen Regiment "King Alexandru I of Yugoslavia", a unit that played an important role in June 1930.

The outbreak of the economic crisis, as well as the appointment as a member of the Regency of the Peasant Party member Constantin Sărățeanu, a close associate of Maniu, on the 9th of December 1929, were reasons why, starting this year, the Carlist current in Romania intensified.

Thus, in this context, during inspections carried out in various military units, Prince Nicolae presented to the officers his opinion regarding the necessity of Carol's return to the head of the country and, implicitly, of the Army, because this institution of force, the guarantor of the independence and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Romania, needed an authentic and strong commander.

Taking advantage of the economic, political and social situation in the country, but also of the desire of certain politicians and, especially, certain young officers to have a strong king, who would replace the already weakened Regency, Carol established, in

23. Bogdan Bucur, *Jean Pangal, unpublished documents: 1932-1942: contributions to the analysis of historical social networks*, (Bucharest: Rao Publishing House, 2016), 18-20.

24. Alex Mihail Stoenescu, *History of coups in Romania. 1821-1999*, vol. III, *The three dictatorships*, (Bucharest: RAO Publishing House, 2002), 51.

Paris, a real staff consisting, among others, of military with important positions in the Romanian Army, such as Colonel Nicolae Tătăranu, the military attaché of Romania in France, Colonel Dahinteanu, Lieutenant Colonel Victor Precup, Major Ion Nicoară and Captain Ion Cristescu from the 2nd Aviation Group in Cluj. They were joined by Colonel Paul Teodorescu, commander of the 2nd Huntsmen Regiment, and Colonel Gabriel Marinescu, commander of the 9th Guard Huntsmen Regiment “King Alexandru I of Yugoslavia”.⁽²⁵⁾

The special relationship between Carol and the Army was highlighted by Constantin Argetoianu, one of the most important Romanian politicians of the interwar period, who, in 1929, stated that “almost all the young officers were Carlists, especially in aviation”. Also, the historian Nicolae Iorga reinforced this situation and showed that “many young officers were for Carlism and for what was called Restoration”.⁽²⁶⁾

In his turn, Pamfil Șeicaru, one of the most important interwar journalists, emphasized that “to prepare for the Restoration, the Prince conspired primarily with the military”.⁽²⁷⁾

It should be emphasized that the Army is a disciplined institution, which is why the cult of authority, order and the commander, as well as the dissatisfaction with the weaknesses of the Regency and its insufficient endowment, armament and training, represented as many factors that gradually made more and more generals, senior officers and junior officers support the Restoration and consider the person of Carol as the only solution to solve these problems. In this respect, the position of Colonel Ion Manolescu, a close friend of Carol, who told him that “the Army needs moral and material support. His Highness is the only one who can influence for the better, through his effective presence in everything that concerns the progress of the Army”.⁽²⁸⁾

Under these circumstances, as we stated above, the monarchist military of the interwar period considered the former Crown Prince Carol a true “Savior”. That is why the cordial relations existing between a large part of the Romanian military elites and Carol represented an important political asset for him. Thus, by associating with the Army which, together with the Church and the School, represented one of the institutions of the emancipation process of the Romanian nation, Carol could legitimize his actions much more easily and presented himself, naturally, as a person who would lead Romania in an authoritarian manner, as a true commander.⁽²⁹⁾

25. Aurelian Chistol, *General Gabriel Marinescu. Between law and lawlessness*, 87.

26. Nicolae Iorga, *Under three kings. History of a struggle for a moral and national ideal*, (Bucharest: PRO Publishing House, 1999), 18.

27. Pamfil Șeicaru, *History of the National, Peasant and National-Peasant Parties*, vol. II, (Madrid: Carpații Publishing House, 1963), 155.

28. Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, fond Casa Regală. Oficiale, vol. III: Carol Caraiman, dosar nr. 7/1928, dosar nr. 3/1929, dosar nr. 5/1929, dosar nr. 1/1930, dosar nr. 3/1930.

29. Doru Lixandru, *Carol II, Carlism and the Carlists in Romania in the 1930s*, 53-54.

In this whole scenario, in which Carol Caraiman expressed his desire to return to the country, and not just anyhow, but as King of Romania, Lieutenant Colonel Victor Precup represented a special character in the group of soldiers who plotted in favour of the Restoration. During the First World War, he fought in the Austro-Hungarian Army, being decorated with the “Iron Cross”. He was also the one who brought to Iași, by plane, the message of unification of Bishop Bălan, one of the most important documents that showed the desire of the Transylvanian Romanians to unite with the Old Kingdom.

Political, military and informational preparation for the return of citizen Carol Caraiman to Romania

The three-year wait from the death of King Ferdinand I until the beginning of 1930 made the exiled Prince Carol Caraiman lose patience expecting the moment when he would return to Romania, this time as king.

Moreover, the former Crown Prince was also informed about the weaknesses of the Regency, especially of Prince Nicolae, Carol’s younger brother, who, on countless occasions, affirmed his lack of interest in politics and its membership, the inconsistency and indecision of politicians in Bucharest, but, above all, he knew very well the desire of the officers, mainly the young officers, who wanted a disciplined and authoritarian leader at the head of the Army.⁽³⁰⁾

From the first months of 1930, Carol intensified his actions aimed at attracting as many close associates to his side as possible, primarily military personnel, without, however, attracting the attention of the authorities in Bucharest and, even more so, of the State Security agents who were following him.

In this sense, the statement of Constantin Argetoianu, one of the most important politicians of the interwar period, is instructive; “As for the Prince’s return plans, there were three categories of people: the people who knew nothing, then there were the people who knew that the Prince wanted and planned to return, who had spoken or even negotiated with him, but who were not aware of the dates and the precise moment, and finally there was the group of people who prepared the coup, the immediate entourage of the Prince and Colonel Tătăranu, our military attaché in Paris, several aviation officers and Colonels Paul Teodorescu and Gavrilă Marinescu, in Bucharest. The plot, for it was a real plot, was led and carried out with such discretion that no one knew anything until the last minute. In Bucharest, the government and the authorities suddenly found themselves faced with a *fait accompli*. The Act of Restoration, as it was performed, was accomplished with great courage, but also with great luck.”⁽³¹⁾

30. Narcis Dorin Ion, *Carol II of Romania. A controversial king*, 89.

31. Constantin Argetoianu, *Memoirs. For tomorrow's people. Memories from yesterday's people*, vol. IX, part VIII, (Bucharest: Machiavelli Publishing House, 1997), 29.

We must remind here Carol's decision to return to the country as revealed in Mihail Manoilescu's "Memoirs", recorded by him following the discussion that the self-exiled prince had with Ion Lugoșianu, one of the leaders of the National Peasant Party, on the 12 April 1930, to whom he replied energetically: "I've made up my mind! Tell Maniu that I want to return to the country and that, whether he wants it or not, I will return. I give him one last deadline until the 10 May. Otherwise, I will return by myself. You owe your coming to power to me, for I decided that Prince Nicolae would give you power. And now, I will give you my royal word: do not make me withdraw my trust!"⁽³²⁾

On the 2 April 1930, in his room at the Claridge's Hotel, Carol met with Mihail Manoilescu and Lieutenant Colonel Victor Precup, with whom he worked out the details of his return to the country. On this occasion, the Peasant Party leader convinced the future king to accept the support of the military, led by Precup, given the vacillating attitude of politicians in Bucharest.⁽³³⁾

Under these circumstances, in the second half of May 1930, Lieutenant Colonel Victor Precup, who at that time had the rank of major, visited Prime Minister Iuliu Maniu and informed him of Carol's desire to return to Romania as king. It should be recalled that Maniu had particularly appreciated the young officer since he had been part of the court panel that tried Mihail Manoilescu on charges of plotting and conspiracy to bring Prince Carol into the country.⁽³⁴⁾

Lieutenant Colonel Victor Precup was also the one who ensured the technical part of the former prince's return to the country. Back in Cluj-Napoca, he contacted the commander of the 2nd Aviation Group with whom he established the necessary measures in case Carol landed in the area of competence of this Great Unit.

From here, Lieutenant Colonel Precup travelled to Prague, where he prepared the ground for a possible landing.⁽³⁵⁾

Under these circumstances, on the 27 May 1930, at the Cöesmes castle, located 180 km from Paris, the conspirator officer had discussions with the self-exiled prince, Puiu Dumitrescu and Colonel Tătăranu, who established the plan for the return to Romania. According to this, on the 3 June, the future king was to leave for Munich, where he would board a French plane prepared by the Romanian military attaché in Paris. The French pilot was to be assisted by a Romanian aviation officer, namely Captain Nicolae Popp.⁽³⁶⁾

32. Mihail Manoilescu, *Memoirs*, vol. I, (Bucharest: Encyclopedic Publishing House, 1993), 181.

33. Mihail Manoilescu, *Memoirs*, vol. I, 180.

34. *History of the National Peasant Party. Documents. 1926-1947*, 93.

35. Narcis Dorin Ion, *Carol II of Romania. A controversial king*, 101.

36. Aurelian Chistol, *General Gabriel Marinescu. Between law and lawlessness*, 92.

Then Colonel Tătăranu and Captain Popp contacted the Farman House from which they rented an aircraft for the amount of 44,000 francs, taken by the Romanian attaché in Paris from the state treasury.

We must also mention here the generous financial contribution of Mihail Manoilescu. According to him, he procured several hundred thousand lei that he borrowed from a friend. However, this amount was not enough, which is why Manoilescu borrowed another 600,000 lei that he sent to Carol.⁽³⁷⁾

After receiving assurances from Prime Minister Iuliu Maniu that he would not oppose Carol's return to the country, but, on the contrary, would welcome him with all his goodwill, the exiled prince did not hesitate and immediately took action. Thus, according to some testimonies of his contemporaries, but not verified by documentary evidence, on the 3rd of June 1930, Carol left Paris by car for Munich together with Puiu Dumitrescu, his private secretary, and Nicu Gatoski.⁽³⁸⁾

However, according to his own testimony, confirmed by a discussion with a group of close friends at the Cotroceni Palace on the 7 June 1930, the date of departure from Paris to Munich was the 4th of June 1930, a fact recalled years later by Eugeniu Buhman : "Here I find out the adventures of the journey. On the 4th of June, Prince Carol, who was at Coësmes, received a telegram when he was preparing to have breakfast. He did not touch it again. He immediately took a suitcase and left by car with Puiu Dumitrescu. The prince, having arrived in Munich, left from there on a "Farman" plane towards the country".⁽³⁹⁾

The same date is also recorded by Mihail Manoilescu, one of Carol's close associates, who recalled the following facts: "Major Nicoară, Colonel Precup's assistant, announced to me the arrival of Colonel Tătăranu, our military attaché in Paris, who had also joined the plot in the meantime. We met at 12 o'clock at night, in front of Marghiloman's house, the beautiful ornament of old Bucharest, which the lack of any respect for the past sacrificed in favour of a banal apartment building". At the beginning of the discussion, Mihail Manoilescu refused to address this subject with the Romanian military attaché in Paris because he feared it would be a trap set by the State Security, "until Colonel Tătăranu showed me an order written by the prince, which he was supposed to present to the officers in the plot. With all my pride, I liked the form of the order that the prince had given to his recommendations. So, he was starting to be king, and we, his volunteers, were his first army he could command".⁽⁴⁰⁾

37. Mihail Manoilescu, *Memoirs*, vol. I, 186.

38. M.I. Costian, *King Carol II and the political parties*, (Bucharest: "Lupta" N. Stroilă Printing House, 1933), 32.

39. Eugeniu Arthur Buhman, *Four decades in the service of the Royal House of Romania. Memoirs. 1898-1940*, (Bucharest: Publisol Publishing House, 2013), 327.

40. Mihail Manoilescu, *Memoirs*, vol. I, 187.

The discussion continued after midnight in Mihail Manoilescu's home. During it, Colonel Tătăranu confessed that "the Prince was supposed to arrive the next day, on the 5 June, or the third day, on the 6 June, because, in the meantime, the schedule had changed, the prince was going to travel by car to Munich and by plane, from there, to Cluj and Bucharest".

Following these confidences, Colonel Tătăranu gained the trust of Mihail Manoilescu, who noted that "at that moment, Tătăranu imposed himself on me, because he was taking a terrible risk, especially since he had also used a million of state money for the expenses of the plot, which, in case of failure, would have disqualified him".

We must also mention the fact that significant sums of money were spent on Carol's return to the country. Thus, Mihail Manoilescu contributed several hundred thousand lei, while Colonel Nicolae Tătăranu, the Romanian military attaché in Paris, paid the sum of 44,000 francs to the "Sier Service" House for the rental of the "Farman" airplane, piloted by the aviator Lallouette.⁽⁴¹⁾

However, the military did not only participate in the actual bringing of Carol into the country. They tried to fool the vigilance of the State Security agents who had the mission to track the former Crown Prince and prevent his return to the country. Thus, together with his wife, General Dimitrie Suțu went to Vienna where he organized a small diversion, wearing the uniform of the exiled Prince Carol. In this way, the security forces agents believed that Prince Carol was going to travel to the Austrian capital from where, together with the Suțu couple, he would return to Romania. This manoeuvre was a success because the external operative agents were sent to Vienna and, thus, they lost track of Carol who travelled unchecked to Munich, as is evident from the operative reports sent to Alexandru Vaida-Voevod in his capacity of Minister of the Interior.⁽⁴²⁾

All the necessary conditions were created for the return to the country of Citizen Carol Caraiman, who in 1925 renounced his prerogatives as Crown Prince of Romania and who, in 1930, returned illegally to Romania, with the support of important military figures, to be enthroned as King.

His luck was that Ion I.C. Brătianu, who died in 1927, if he had lived, would never have allowed the return of the adventurer prince. Given that the government was formed by the National Peasant Party and the Regency was showing serious signs of weakness, with the explicit agreement of Iuliu Maniu, in his capacity of Prime Minister, and with the deliberate lack of vigilance of Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, the fugitive Carol carried out, without any risk, his plan to return to the country and be proclaimed King of Romania.⁽⁴³⁾

41 .Arhivele Militare Naționale Române, Registrul istoric. Jurnalul de operații al Corpului 1 Armată.

42 .Mihail Manoilescu, *Memoirs*, vol. I, 187.

43 .Narcis Dorin Ion, *Carol II of Romania. A controversial king*, 104.

The Carlist Restoration. The return to Romania of the future King Carol II on the 6 June 1930

After having left Paris on the 4 June 1930, Carol and his companions arrived in Munich a day later, as can be seen from his statements: "Thinking back, I see with such clarity the journey made near Strasbourg, Kiehl, Munich, the crossing of the mountains, when the water in my radiator boiled, Rottenburg, Stuttgart, Ulm, Augsburg and, finally, the overnight stop in that small hotel of the Protestant missions. How many emotions, with the crossing of the border, after a fixed hour, so that the plane would not stop, the kindness of the German customs officers. It was a long journey, which did not cause me any shred of fatigue, so strong was the tension of the nerves, the determination to succeed and the confidence in success".⁽⁴⁴⁾

On the 5 June 1930, at 2 p.m., the French pilot Marcel Lallouette, accompanied by Captain Nicolae Popp, took off from an airfield in Paris for Munich, where he landed in the afternoon of the same day. Shortly after, Lallouette prepared the flight for the next day. A good pilot, he took into account the speed and direction of the wind, which is why he loaded an additional reserve of 50 litres of fuel. The aim was to avoid a possible landing on Hungarian territory.

At the same time, secret preparations were being made in the country for Carol's return. Thus, at midnight on the 5 June 1930, Major Ion Nicoară, a young officer of the Romanian Army, one of the conspirators close to Colonel Victor Precup, informed Iuliu Maniu about the imminent arrival in the country of the former Crown Prince.

Under these circumstances, the Peasant Party leader, as president of the Council of Ministers, took a series of measures in view of the arrival of the future king. Thus, he informed General Nicolae Condeescu, at that time Minister of War, that Prince Carol would arrive in the country on the 6 June. Furthermore, he asked him to order the Army Corps in Cluj, as well as the Army Corps with the garrison in Iași, to put all the troops subordinate to these Great Units into combat readiness, to register all the officers in the barracks and to be ready to intervene in the event that Soviet and Hungarian troops attacked the national territory of Romania upon the news of Prince Carol's return.

General Nicolae Condeescu immediately contacted General Nicolae Samsonovici, Chief of the General Staff. Here we observe the involvement, albeit tacit, of the Romanian Army commanders in the Restoration of 6 June, 1930.⁽⁴⁵⁾

On the afternoon of the 5 June 1930, Iuliu Maniu asked Colonel Alexandru Manolescu, Prince Regent Nicolae's adjutant, to immediately request an audience in which he would communicate important matters to him. Prince Nicolae received with surprise, but

44. Carol II, *Between duty and passion. Daily notes*, vol. II, 181.

45. *History of the National Peasant Party. Documents. 1926-1947*, (Bucharest: ARC Publishing House 2000, 1994), 94.

with great calm, the information according to which the Romanian political class, more precisely the national -liberal government led by Iuliu Maniu, was preparing Carol's return to the country.⁽⁴⁶⁾

As evidenced by a letter sent to Elena Lupescu, at 12:30 at night, more determined than ever, citizen Carol Caraiman, carrying a false passport in the name of Eugène Nicolas, the driver of the Romanian military attaché in the French capital, began the great adventure of his life aboard a "Farman" airplane, piloted by the Frenchman Marcel Lallouette, with Captain Nicolae Popp as co-pilot.

Captain Nicolae Popp, also a military man, played a particularly important role in Carol's successful attempt to return to the country. He was the son of the former commander of the Escort Regiment in Iași during World War I, who was at that time in Paris as a member of the Romanian Aeronautical Mission in France. The visas were obtained with great difficulty by Captain Popp, as can be seen from the "Historical Register. Operations Journal of the 1st Army Corps": "The problem was solved through the mediation of Captain Pop, a Romanian officer, who was in Paris on an aeronautical mission. Captain Pop learned that among the officials there are some in the Legation who oppose Prince Carol's departure and who would be ready to thwart the plan; therefore, a stratagem was resorted to. The means to which Captain Pop resorted was the following: he took out the passport in the driver's name military attaché in the French capital, a certain Eugène Nicolas, and then the passport photo was replaced with that of Prince Carol. The visas from the foreign consulates or legations were, of course, also made in the driver's name. Everything went wonderfully, but at the last moment it was noticed that the German visa was missing. There was no time to waste. Captain Pop immediately went to the German Legation, where, requesting the visa, he noticed that the official in charge of the visa was looking with too much strained attention at the passport photo. Prince Carol was recognized! A moment of emotion! In the end, however, the visa was granted".⁽⁴⁷⁾

Meanwhile, in Romania, Iuliu Maniu, as President of the Council of Ministers, persuaded the members of the Regency, namely Prince Nicolae, Patriarch Miron Cristea and Constantin Sărățeanu, to accept Carol's return to the country. Once he had their approval, the Prime Minister informed his colleagues in the government about the imminent arrival of the errant son of King Ferdinand I the Unifier.

In Germany, the future king of Romania said goodbye to his two friends, Puiu Dumitrescu and Nicu Gatoski, who were not taken on the plane because the pilot preferred to take 100 litres of extra gasoline on board.

46. *History of the National Peasant Party. Documents. 1926-1947*, 94.

47. Arhivele Militare Naționale Române, Registrul istoric. Jurnalul de operații al Corpului 1 Armată.

While in France, the plotters estimated that the plane would land in the Oradea area sometime in the afternoon. That is why the command of the 1st Army Corps sent three planes to Oradea, but only the aircraft piloted by Captain Ion Cristescu reached the ordered perimeter.⁽⁴⁸⁾

The flight proceeded smoothly over Germany and Austria, but in Czechoslovakia the pilot landed in a field to refuel so that he would not have to land in Hungary.

Upon arriving in Romania, the French pilot Marcel Lallouette landed in a field to avoid the Oradea manoeuvring area, leaving the engine running, as the “Farman” aircraft he was piloting ran out of oil.

Captain Ion Cristescu spotted the “Farman” aircraft from the air, landed next to it and refuelled it with oil, after which Carol continued his flight to the airfield of the 2nd Aviation Group with the garrison in Cluj county. After only 50 km, other sources say about 75 km, the “Farman” aircraft made a forced landing near Vadul Crișului due to lack of fuel.

When he landed at the Someșeni airfield, Captain Ion Cristescu thought that Prince Carol was nearby. However, because the aircraft piloted by Marcel Lallouette was not visible on the horizon, Captain Cristescu took off again and managed to spot the French aircraft from the air. After a risky landing, Captain Cristescu embarked the future king of Romania aboard the “Potez” aircraft that he piloted and landed with him at the “Someșul” airfield of the 2nd Aviation Group around 7 p.m.

The arrival at the base of the 2nd Aviation Group was rigorously described in the “Historical Register. Operations Journal of the 1st Army Corps”: “At 7:10, the “Potez” plane appeared over Cluj, bringing Prince Carol. The population of the city did not suspect anything, thinking that it was a military plane, which was doing a regular training. At 7:15 sharp, the prince’s plane landed at the airfield of the 2nd Aviation Group. The plane was pulled in front of the hangar, where colonels Precup and Dahintean were. The prince got off the plane dressed in civilian clothes. The spouse of Colonel Dahintean offered him bread and salt, and Colonel Dahintean greeted him on behalf of the army. Immediately after this, the prince went into a hangar, where he was served a snack. However, he refused the snack, contenting himself with two glasses of champagne. He then put on the uniform of an aviation general and received his decorations. A “Potez” airplane was then prepared, piloted by captain Opreș, which was to take the prince to Bucharest. The prince’s plane took off at 7:25, accompanied by two “Potez” aircrafts. An interesting detail: while the plane piloted by Captain Opreș and in which Prince Carol was flying was passing over Bucegi at night, the prince asked to fly over the Caraiman Mountain.”⁽⁴⁹⁾

48. Arhivele Militare Naționale Române, Registrul istoric. Jurnalul de operații al Corpului 1 Armată.

49. Arhivele Militare Naționale Române, Registrul istoric. Jurnalul de operații al Corpului 1 Armată.

Another edifying report is that of one of the most important participants in this mission, namely Captain-aviator Nicolae Opreș, the brave pilot who brought Carol from the Someșeni airfield, near Cluj-Napoca, to the Băneasa airport in Bucharest, in a risky flight with a two-seater “Potez XXV” airplane: “On the evening of the 6 June 1930, I received an order from my commander, Colonel Constantin Beroniade, to fly to Cluj, where I would receive instructions of great importance, being obliged under my word of honour not to speak to anyone about my secret mission. Once there, I witnessed Captain Cristescu’s departure by plane, on a mission unknown to me. Shortly after, Captain Cristescu returned, accompanied by the former Prince Carol, recalled to the country, as I later learned, by several statesmen and senior officers”.⁽⁵⁰⁾

Further on in his report, Captain Nicolae Opreș, sent on this mission for the courage he was capable of, but also for his flying experience, noted: “We took off together with Prince Carol at 7:25 p.m. and several planes accompanied us, but due to bad weather conditions, wind and rain, as well as darkness, they failed to cross the mountains at Brașov and turned back”.⁽⁵¹⁾

However, the most interesting testimonies about this flight belonged to the future king of Romania himself: “Now the emotions begin. After everything I felt during this flight, I am not ashamed to say that I will never be afraid again as long as I live. At 8:30 we were above Bran and the weather, which had been beautiful until then, began to deteriorate, with clouds, thunder and lightning. We tried to reach Zărnești River, but it was hard to see anything. We made a vertical turn to figure out where we were. The other two planes would land in Brașov. We climbed into the clouds again, and behold, my pilot entered straight under the sea of clouds and once he made a bank turn on one wing and we descended into the valley, then other turns to orient ourselves and follow the course of the river 50 meters above the ground. Finally, I recognized the Casino and the Palace of Sinaia, a place of fond memories. After another hour and a half of flying, wandering in the night, he landed. It was 10:30. We had passed in the middle of the night over Caraiman and the Prahova Valley, near Bușteni. I was frozen with cold despite my flight suit, fur coat and scarf”.⁽⁵²⁾

Inspired, Captain Nicolae Opreș did not take the risk of landing in the unsafe place set by the conspirators, more precisely the Cotroceni airfield: “Arriving above Bucharest, I did not risk landing at the originally established place, but headed towards the Băneasa Airport, which had a runway lighting system. I landed here at 10:05 p.m. First, I got off, then Prince Carol, whose face was covered with a dark scarf. He was greeted and received by several senior officers, namely Colonel Constantin Beroniade, Lieutenant

50. Valeriu Avram, “Aviation and restoration”, in *Historic Magazine*, XLIV, no. 1: 29.

51. Tatiana Niculescu, *The King and Dudaia. Carol II and Elena Lupescu beyond gossip and clichés*, (Bucharest: Humanitas Publishing House, 2019), 105.

52. Tatiana Niculescu, *The King and Dudaia. Carol II and Elena Lupescu beyond gossip and clichés*, 105-106.

Colonel Haralambie Giosanu, Lieutenant Colonel Paul Teodorescu, Gavrilă Marinescu and many others”.⁽⁵³⁾

Meanwhile, starting with 6:00 p.m., at Băneasa Airport, the officers involved in the plot, including Colonel Gabriel Marinescu, commander of the 9th Huntsmen Regiment, anxiously awaited Carol's arrival. However, around 9:00 p.m., they left the premises, leaving only Major Alexandru Cantacuzino-Pășcanu, the airport director, at the checkpoint.

At around 9:30 p.m., he turned off the landing lights. However, as he was preparing to leave for home, he heard the sound of a plane engine, which is why he turned on the runway lights. He was surprised to see two men getting off, a pilot and a passenger with a face covered by a scarf, whom he recognized as Carol.⁽⁵⁴⁾

Although he was not part of the plot, but harboured Carlist sentiments, Major Alexandru Cantacuzino-Pășcanu calmed the prince down and took him to his home until the situation was clarified.

Shortly after, however, the future King Carol II was taken over by Colonel Paul Teodorescu, commander of the 2nd Huntsmen Regiment, and by Colonel Gabriel Marinescu, commander of the 9th Huntsmen Regiment. Under the protection of subunits from the two regiments, Carol was taken to Cotroceni, a decisive action for the success of the action given that, on the orders of Iuliu Maniu, Alexandru Vaida-Voevod, the Minister of the Interior, and General Eracle Nicolescu, the Prefect of the Bucharest Police, were looking for him to arrest him.

Eventually, police agents tracked him down at Cotroceni Palace, but it was too late because the future king was having a warm conversation with his regent brother, Prince Nicolae.

The newspaper “Universul” issue of the 7 June 1930 presented the measures that the conspirator officers took immediately after Carol's arrival at the Cotroceni Palace: “The guard, which belonged to an artillery regiment from the Bucharest garrison, was doubled with elements from the 2nd and 9th Huntsmen Regiments. The Palace guard from Calea Victoriei was also doubled with elements from the same regiments, as was the guard from the Royal Palace at Șosea. All the others officers, with the troops of these two regiments, remained concentrated in the courtyard of the Cotroceni Palace all night. It should be noted, again that the officers of the two Huntsmen regiments were informed in advance that the arrival was set for yesterday evening, for which purpose preparations had begun since noon. Extensive military measures had been taken in secret during the day. In the evening, all important institutions were under military guard. Sentries were also posted at the entrances of the newspapers, and patrols circulated and continue to

53. Valeriu Avram, “Aviation and restoration”, in *Historic Magazine*, XLIV, no. 1: 29-30.

54. Aurelian Chistol, *General Gabriel Marinescu. Between law and lawlessness*, 94.

circulate along the streets, throughout the city. Henri Cihoski, former Minister of the Army in the current government, was appointed governor of the Bucharest Citadel, Colonel Paul Teodorescu was appointed general director of Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones”.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Even from the night of the 6 to 7 June 1930, under the direct protection of Colonel Paul Teodorescu and Colonel Gabriel Marinescu, the prince began to act like a true sovereign, ordering the intelligence surveillance of the leaders of the National Liberal Party. By the morning of the 7 June, Carol received in separate audiences the main non-liberal leaders and influential journalists, but especially a number of officers who assured him of their full loyalty and that of the units they commanded, although, in 1926, in accordance with the provisions of the 1923 Constitution, as well as the laws adopted on the 4 January 1926, they had sworn an oath of allegiance to the constitutional King Mihai.⁽⁵⁶⁾

Under these conditions, Carol concluded that he could force the note, directly requesting his proclamation as king of Romania.

Despite the Liberals' refractory attitude towards what they called a coup d'état and the boycott of senators and deputies of this party, on the 8 June 1930, the Romanian Parliament adopted the Law on the annulment of the act of the 4 January 1926, so that, with the complicity of the Legislative Bodies, the father dethroned his minor son.

Although the Constitution adopted in 1923 did not provide for the possibility of dethroning the minor King Mihai, on the 8 June 1930 Carol was proclaimed King of Romania by the Parliament. The ceremonial oath-taking was organised as if this moment had taken place immediately after the death of King Ferdinand I. Nothing reminded of the Crown Prince's desertion or his renunciation to his prerogatives. Acclaimed by the majority of parliamentarians, mainly the national-peasant ones, and looked down upon by the national-liberals, Carol was proclaimed king, and his son became Crown Prince. A strange swap between father and son!⁽⁵⁷⁾

The one who insisted that the newly returned Carol proclaim himself directly Sovereign was former General Constantin Prezan, hero of the First World War, future Marshal of Romania. Not coincidentally, the “Order of the Day No. 1” that Carol II issued as Sovereign was addressed to the Army. This document was intended to arouse the pride of the soldiers and to highlight the strong connection with the Monarchy, which reached its peak during the period of monarchical authority of King Carol II in the years 1938-1940.⁽⁵⁸⁾

55. The newspaper “Universul”, issue of the 7 June 1930.

56. Aurelian Chistol, *General Gabriel Marinescu. Between law and lawlessness*, 97.

57. Doru Lixandru, *Carol II, Carlism and Carlism in Romania in the 1930s*, 75.

58. Arhivele Naționale Istorice Centrale, fond Casa Regală, Miscelane, dosar nr. 630, 1-2.

One last detail: a few days after being invested as king, as a sign of gratitude for the help received, Carol II raised the 2nd Aviation Group from Cluj to the rank of a Grand Guard Unit under the title of the 2nd Guard Aviation Group.

As a result of the combined action of part of the political elite, but also of a significant number of military personnel, Romania was entering a new era.⁽⁵⁹⁾

Conclusions

We have not attempted, in this paper, to give a definitive answer to the controversy over whether the act of the 6 June 1930 was or was not a coup d'état. We have, however, intended to emphasize the decisive part played by the military.

They were not only among the most important vectors of the Restoration, but of Carlism in general. Carol's return to Romania was due, above all, to the "Carlism of the Army", namely to certain elite regiments. The Carlism of the military was motivated by their desire to have a leader, a supreme commander, given that a country threatened by all its neighbours could not rely on a strong army, capable of defending national interests on land, in the air and on the seas, without a young, energetic and intelligent king who would represent a role model, in peace and in war, for all the military.

Officers such as Colonel Nicolae Tătăranu, the Romanian military attaché in France, Colonel Dahintean, Colonel Paul Teodorescu, commander of the 2nd Huntsmen Regiment, Colonel Gabriel Marinescu, commander of the 9th Huntsmen Regiment "King Alexandru I of Yugoslavia", Lieutenant Colonel Victor Precup, Major Ion Nicoară, Captain Ion Cristescu, Captain Nicolae Opriș and, last but not least, Captain Nicolae Popp, actually the pseudonym of Captain Romeo Popescu, who directly participated in the act of Restoration, as well as General Nicolae Condeescu and General Nicolae Samsonovici, indirect participants, took the oath of allegiance to Mihai, a minor but constitutional king, in 1926.

Be that as it may, even from this aspect, we can affirm that the role of the military in the act of the 6 June 1930 was decisive.

Risking their careers in the event of the operation failure, these officers defied practically all the rules of military discipline, even violating their oath of loyalty to King Mihai and the Regency. In the act of staking everything on one card, they committed an act of insubordination and rebellion which, according to the military laws in force in 1930, were punishable by the most severe punishments under the charge of high treason and breach of the military oath.⁽⁶⁰⁾

59. Aurelian Chistol, *General Gabriel Marinescu. Between law and lawlessness*, 97.

60. Alex Mihail Stoenescu, *History of coups d'état in Romania. 1821-1999*, vol. III, *The three dictatorships*, 51.

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DOI for this text: <https://doi.org/10.56092/EDWL4253>