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GENERAL ARSENIO MARTÍNEZ DE CAMPOS AND THE PRONUNCIAMIENTO IN SAGUNTO (29 DE DICIEMBRE DE 1874)

José ROMERO (Spain)

Resumen

Este ensayo trata del pronunciamiento acontecido en Sagunto, el 29 de diciembre de 1874, encabezado por el general Don Arsenio Martínez de Campos, que implicó el nombramiento de Don Alfonso como rey de España con el título de Alfonso XII. Esta acción fue precedida por otra notable intervención militar, golpe de Estado, del general Manuel Pavía que suprimió la Primera República española en 1873.

Tres guerras estaban asolando el territorio español en la península y ultramar: la tercera guerra carlista, la insurrección cantonal muy activa en el Levante, y la Guerra Larga de Cuba. El desgaste y la falta de confianza en el sistema republicano y las dificultades del regente general Serrano, llevaron a Don Arsenio a materializar los deseos de cambio de muchos españoles, del partido conservador (Cánovas) y de muchos en el cuerpo de oficiales que apostaban por la Restauración dinástica de los Borbones en la persona de Don Alfonso.

Don Arsenio, un mariscal de campo de primera línea, del Cuerpo de Estado Mayor, decidió actuar sin el consentimiento civilista (Cánovas) ni probablemente de la mayoría de sus superiores jerárquicos, y llevó a cabo esa arriesgada apuesta por el pronunciamiento que finalmente fue aceptado por amplio consenso de la clase dirigente política y militar, y el entusiasmo generalizado del pueblo español.

Alfonso XII dirigió personalmente los últimos episodios de la guerra carlista y consolidó su posición como rey de España.

Palabras clave: Revolución Gloriosa, Primera República, Restauración, Pronunciamiento, Sagunto, Arsenio Martínez de Campos, Tercera Guerra Carlista.

Summary

This essay deals with the Pronunciamiento that took place in Sagunto, on 29 December 1874, by General Don Arsenio Martínez de Campos, that led to the appointment of Alfonso as King of Spain with the title of Alfonso XII. This action was preceded in 1873 by another notable military intervention, a coup d'état, by General Manuel Pavía, which suppressed the First Spanish Republic.

Three concurrent wars were ravaging Spanish territory on both the peninsula and overseas: the Third Carlist War, the very active cantonal insurrection in the Levant, and the Long War in Cuba. The burden of war and a lack of confidence in the Republican system, coupled with the lack of success of Regent General Serrano led Don Arsenio to effect the desire for change by many Spaniards, both of the conservative party (*Cánovas*) and by the majority of the Officer Corps who were in favour of the dynastic Restoration of the Bourbons in the person of Don Alfonso.

Don Arsenio, a first-rate Field Marshal in the General Staff Corps, decided to act without the consent of the civilian party (*Cánovas*) and probably of most of his superiors. His risky gamble to support the Pronunciamiento was eventually accepted by a broad consensus of the political and military establishment and received the general enthusiasm of the Spanish people.

Alfonso XII personally directed the final episodes of the Carlist War and consolidated his position as King of Spain.

Key words: Glorious Revolution, First Republic, Restoration, *Pronunciamiento*, Sagunto, Arsenio Martínez de Campos, Third Carlist War.

Introduction

In Professor Emilio de Diego's biography, an expert on the 19th century and its Spanish characters, focused on General Arsenio Martínez de Campos (1831-1900), he

highlights his military beginnings, so important to the professional and political future orientation of the General.

Don Arsenio was born in Segovia in 1831, the son of a military Brigadier (Don Ramón) of the General Staff Corps. Soon, when he was only 16 years old (1848) and taking advantage of his position as a second lieutenant in the Reserve, he entered the Staff College through competitive examination (Opposition), recently created by General Evaristo San Miguel in 1842, a promoter of the professional Military Staff (MS).

Associated with the General Staff, the War Depot (Depósito de la Guerra) was created as its working technical body, the true nucleus of the General Staff. We are not wrong to say, as Colonel Ramírez Verdú always maintained, that the 19th century "was the century of the General Staff". The fact is that belonging to the General Staff, strongly influenced the career of our protagonist, who had several postings in that Staff College as a lecturer in the subjects of Geography, Topography and Military History.

The Staff College programme, whose access was regulated in different ways, allowing entrance to both young officers and countrymen, included three years of study at the school with the ensuing practical training and then, depending on the period, either employment with the diploma in the units of the trainee's home branch or as part of the Military Staff (MS) Corp as a graduate (facultativo) in its own branch.

Emilio de Diego quotes (in Real Academia de la Historia, biographies):

"He began his military career on 5 May 1848, when by Royal Order, he was granted the rank of second lieutenant in the Reserve and the grace of being able to apply the entrance exams to the General Staff College, which he entered on 16 August of the same year. There he continued his studies until he graduated as a Lieutenant of the General Staff on 1 April 1852. He did his Infantry "practice" in the Grenadier Regiment, and in the Cavalry, first in the Regiment of the King until 6 December, and then, assigned to the Captaincy General of Valencia, in the Regiment of Calatrava".

Two initial observations:

- First, he joined the MS Corp and maintained a rank in the Cavalry (Captain).
- Second, his initial preferences for the Levant, where he went to the Captaincy of Valencia as his first posting after graduating in MS.

These two observations are interesting for their contributions to his career and its ultimate pinnacle: the Pronunciamiento in Sagunto as the head of a Brigade at the end of 1874.

The dates indicate that this officer was in active service from 1850 until his death in 1900, the entire second half of the 19th century, and would have been available for deployment in operations under Juan Prim Count

of Reus (1814-1870), the Count of Balmaseda (Blas de Villate 1824-1882), and Manuel Gutiérrez de la Concha, Marquis of Duero (1808-1874), who campaigned in Africa, overseas and Mexico, as well as on the Peninsula; three generals who would inspire his conduct in the army and later in his political life.

The National Army (El Ejército Nacional)

General Arsenio Martínez de Campos served his entire career under the model that we can identify as the National Army, the result of the reforms of the generals who governed the destinies of the Nation under the reign of Isabel II in the 1850s: Narváez and O'Donnell.

The great concern of both generals was to overcome the turbulence that originated in and after the War of Independence (1808-1814) and the First Carlist War (1833-1840), followed by the brief episode of the *Guerra dels Matiners* or Second Carlist War (1846-1849). A time-frame defined by Galdós as "the school of disorder", all within a framework of very significant military, political and emotional effort overlapped with the American Emancipation campaigns up to the first quarter of the 19th century.

The National Army was based on two premises:

1. Command cadres trained in Military Academies where they followed a regulated programme of studies, and from which promoted officers would emerge, employed in a career model with successive posts, experiences and further promotions.
2. Troops that filled the ranks of the Army by means of levies or conscription from among the citizens, except in situations of exception, substitution or payment of an economic amount to avoid incorporation (redemption in cash).

The National Army, which would enter a pre-industrial stage that found it provided with both modern weapons and fast means of transport (railways and automobiles), could be summed up in this frame by the author himself (Romero in Slizhava et al, *History of the Spanish institutions...* 2019, 194):

Narvaez and O'Donnell: military reformers towards the "National Army"

The "long" moderate governments of Narvaez and O'Donnell created the conditions to reform and establish the Army, which will soon undertake missions overseas. Espartero had already reduced in 1841 the Royal Guard so that it was "proportional to the rest of the Army". In 1849 the provincial militia and the continued service troops are integrated, originating the two distinct groups of troops: a) Permanent; 45 regiments of line and 16 of cazadores (hunters) and b) Reserve Units (49 battalions). The bets are on the regiments of lancers; the artillery gets diversified (on foot, combat, position and mountain artillery) and a second regiment of engineers is created.

The salary and the barracks are normalized (taking advantage of the ecclesiastical confiscations); the missions of the army are reduced to three classical ones; a Staff with a permanent establishment (1838), a Staff College (1842) and the War Depot (1854) are created. The Guardia Civil is created (1844) and the carbineers area of action becomes national; the military administration is regulated. Lastly, a new fleet of steamboats is planned.

The bottom line is to normalize the situation after decades of wars and disorder, setting durable foundations for a national army.

Figure 1: The National Army, 1850,s

This national military system distanced itself from other proposals such as that of a professional army (British model), desired by the First Spanish Republic in its federalist phase (to be seen later), or that of a national militia model of part-time soldiers (non-regular), which was always accepted and defended in France.

The Army deployment across Spanish territory came with a modern military territorial organisation that mirrored the new civil administration of the State (*History of the Spanish Institutions...*2019, p.195):

“The territorial military organization, based on General Captaincies, districts and commands, tried to adjust to the administrative division organized by Javier de Burgos in 1833, on 49 provinces and 15 regions, very similar to the current one. These military regions were based on strategic and defense criteria, on the mobilization, readiness and on the historical and prestige tradition. Its number varied between 6 and 14, with 8 being the standard”.

Each Captain General in his region or district had wide-ranging powers, from organisation and command to judicial, economic, institutional and mobilisation within his district.

We have already commented on the basic formations that made up the Spanish Army, which in infantry units consisted of 40 regiments of the line comprising two battalions (normally) and some 20 hunter (cazadores) battalions, and up to 80 reserve battalions designed for mobilisation.

However, as we shall see, in the Peninsular Wars, the territorial command of these Captains was subordinated to the command of the armies of operations, where appropriate, to which the Government assigned Theatres of Operations encompassing several districts, which is easy to understand if we think of the Carlist wars and the cantonal insurrections. So both co-existing commands must be considered when discussing the subject of this paper: the pronunciamiento of Sagunto.

When the military career was professionalised, the General Staff arranged for an orderly and annual collection of information on active personnel and their assignments in the units. This document, *El Estado Militar* or the Official Guide to Spain, provides us with privileged information to understand the main characters and events of the period. Initially, the only Captains General (top generals) in 1863, after the Moroccan War and the Expedition to Mexico, were:

Años.	ARMAS e institutos de que proceden.	DESTINOS.
Los Excelentísimos Señores		
1838 D. Baldomero Espartero, Duque de la Victoria, 1 ^o de Mayo.....	Infantería.	"
1844 D. Ramón Narváez y Campes, Duque de Valencia 5 de Enero.....	Idem.	"
1849 D. Manuel Gutiérrez de la Concha, Marqués del Duero, 24 de Mayo.....	Idem.	Presidente de la Junta Consultiva de Guerra y del Consejo de redenciones: General en Jefe del primer Ejército y Distrito.
1854 D. Leopoldo O'Donnell y Joris, Duque de Tetuán, 30 de Julio.....	Idem.	Presidente del Consejo de Ministros, Ministro de la Guerra y de Ultramar.
1856 D. Francisco Serrano y Domínguez, Duque de la Torre, 18 de idem.....	Caballería.	Vicepresidente de la Junta consultiva de Guerra.

Figure 2: Estado Militar, captain generals in service

These five were undoubtedly the most influential military officers of this period, known in the Spanish historiography as "swordsmen" or *espadones*, career military officers who took the lead in political realms in the country. They were, again, a source of inspiration for our protagonist.

The First Republic, 1973, a Failed Attempt

General Alonso Baquer mentions that it was really in 1856 that the National Army materialised, when the National Militia was dissolved by decree and the project of an army similar to that of the *Patria Armada* of the 1820s fizzled out and vanished.

Two years earlier, in 1854, there had been the so-called *Vicalvarada* and the *Manzanares Manifiesto* (declaration), which advocated for modernising the Monarchy by incorporating a liberal approach. It was then that a Spanish politician, undoubtedly one of the most important of our 19th century, Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, along with General Leopoldo O'Donnell signed the aforementioned *manifiesto*, came onto the scene.

This *Manifiesto* also highlighted a pattern for our study: the collaboration and competition between political leadership and military command; the former willing to diminish military interference in politics and the latter glad to play a popular and influential role in politics and social life by using his professional and battlefield ascendancy.

Cánovas del Castillo (1828-1897) had a parallel life, not so much with Leopoldo O'Donnell, who died in 1867 almost at the same time as Narváez (1868), at the beginning

of the Glorious Revolution, but to Don Arsenio Martínez de Campos, with whom he would have moments of collaboration as well as open disagreement (see Annex 1).

The fact is that the Glorious Revolution of 1868 opened a political process of different alternatives, in which Cánovas headed a conservative position with the idea of recalling Alfonso (XII) to Spain and restoring the Bourbon Monarchy through a civil movement.

The intermediate attempt for stability promoted by General Prim, the reign of Amadeo I of Savoy (1871 to 1873) ended in failure and the ensuing establishment of the First Republic (1873), in turn, after the mandate of its four presidents, was aborted by General Pavía (coup d'état), handing over the leadership of the State to General Francisco Serrano, Duke de la Torre.

To understand the political importance of general Serrano let's say he who was both Queen Isabell II's supporter and later the one who ousted her in 1868. He was at the head of the Army of the North in operations to deal with the outbreak of the Third Carlist War (April 1872), an appointment, conferred by the Republic, which placed him in the favorable position to undertake the head of the State upon its demise: "a Republic without a Parliament".

The key factor in all these rapid and convulsive changes was the outbreak of the Third Carlist War which took advantage of the current political weakness of the State. This internal war, which revived the ideal of the First Carlist War (1833-1840), was soon joined by cantonal insurrections which, although limited, involved large government military contingents in complex operations combining both force and political influence in urban areas of eastern Spain, not to mention the frequent insurrections within the government army itself. In addition, a new front had opened up in Cuba, known as the Long War (1868-1878), where it was precisely D. Arsenio who would be later on the architect of its pacification, using political and military skills in equal measure.

Thus, the First Spanish Republic had to face these three conflicts with limited forces altogether, which produced attrition and little enthusiasm among the Spanish population, within the Army itself, and these factors undoubtedly drove her into failure.

General D. Arsenio Martínez de Campos; "The Colonels Of Balmaseda"

General Juan Prim y Prats, Count of Reus and Marquis of Castillejos (1814-1870), was the military commander and senior officer of D. Arsenio in his initial campaigns, that of Morocco (1859-1860) and, in particular, the Expedition to Mexico in 1861.

Juan Prim, who inspired the Glorious Revolution (1868) that overthrew Queen Isabella II, became Minister of War and President of the Government during the initial years of the Revolutionary Six Years (1868-1874) period and was the key figure in the election

of Amadeo of Savoy as King of Spain in open dispute with the French pretender, the Duke of Monstpensier. Juan Prim was killed in 30 December 1870.

During these critical years, D. Arsenio opted for the post in the Captaincy General of Cuba and on 30 January 1869 he left for Havana, taking up his post in the MS of the aforementioned Captaincy. In June he became head of the General Staff of the Count of Balmaseda's division and later on he commanded the San Quintín Hunters (cazadores) Battalion resident in Cuba.

He held various commands and took part in several operations, was promoted to Brigadier in 1871, until he returned to the Peninsula in June 1872 to end up in "cuartel" (available) in Madrid. Under the Republic, he was posted as Military Governor of Gerona (March 1873) and directed the fight against the Carlists in his area of responsibility, being promoted to the rank of Field Marshal in May 1873.

In July 1873, President Salmerón, even though he was aware of D. Arsenio's support to Alfonso, appointed him Captain General of Valencia and head of the forces in the District. His first task was to put an end to the cantonal insurrection in the capital of the Turia, his actual destination, using force and cannon fire against the city as well as his political persuasion skills. He had to fight against the Carlists in Maestrazgo, Albacete and Murcia and continue the struggle until the surrender of the Cantonal uprisings, encircling Cartagena, where those who fled from Valencia had taken refuge, in August 1873.



Picture 1: Don Arsenio Martínez de Campos painting]

President Castelar, thereafter, appointed him as Captain General of Catalonia in December 1873, but the three conflicts: Cantonal, Carlist and Cuban, put an end to the Republican system. General Pavía, Captain General of Castilla la Nueva (Madrid),

tried to redirect the situation by handing over power to General Serrano on 3 January 1874, but not without some furious Republican resistance, such as the episode in Sarriá (Barcelona) where three thousand men opposed the coup d'état with fierce resistance.

General Martínez de Campos, after various challenges, including imprisonment in Mallorca for his disagreement with Serrano, took command of the 2nd Division of the 3rd Army Corps fighting in the North in April 1874, manoeuvring successfully and entering Bilbao, surrounded by the Carlists, on 2nd May. The course of operations took him to Estella, under the command of General Gutiérrez de la Concha Marquis of Duero, where potential success could mean the end of the war along with the proclamation of D. Alfonso Rey, but the brave Marquis of Duero was killed in the battle of Monte Muro (or Abárzuza) on 27th June, relaunching the Carlist cause. D. Arsenio was dismissed and remained in barracks. The summer and autumn months were devoted to the conspiracy, and on 26 December he left Madrid for Sagunto to head Brigadier Luis Dabán's Brigade and proclaim D. Alfonso de Bourbón as King, in the face of uncertainty about the response of the generals with superior rank and authority.

Don Arsenio's decision to choose Sagunto at that particular moment, can be partially answered in Annex 1, as well as his anxiety to lead the Pronunciamiento. But before answering these key questions, let us look into detail at the composition of the two armies at war in 1874: Liberal and Carlist.

Two Armies at War in Aftermath of the First Spanish Republic

If we go back to 1874, according to the data in the Historical Yearbook, we can see that the five Captains General in order of seniority were Joaquín-Baldomero Espartero, Manuel Gutiérrez de la Concha (who died in Abárzuza), Francisco Serrano (Head of State), Juan de la Pezuela⁽¹⁾, José Gutiérrez de la Concha, and Manuel Pavía, the first two from the Infantry and the last four from the Cavalry.

D. Arsenio is listed on p.192, as Field Marshal of the General Staff Corps, along with a hundred of the same rank and behind 69 lieutenant generals.

In the Infantry, the forty Infantry regiments are confirmed, from Immemorial No. 1 to Malaga No. 40, changing the name of the first five for those of Republican inspiration, plus the Ceuta Fixed (Fijo de Ceuta). The Hunter (cazadores) battalions are numbered from 1 to 28, from Cataluña No. 1 to Manila No. 28, with eight of them deployed in Cuba. There is also a Provisional Battalion (1867) with service personnel. In reserve, as we know, there are eighty battalions grouped in 20 brigades.

1. Juan de la Pezuela (1810-1906), since he supported Isabel II in 1868 who he sided with during the times of the Glorious Revolution, did not play any significant role.

The Artillery maintained its Command, Academy, Foundry (Seville) and Weapons Factory in Toledo, and the new Central Firing School (1855) for the instruction of the hunting battalions.

The Engineers had four regiments, an Academy and a Topographical Brigade (1847), for "surveying plans, frontiers and coasts".

The Cavalry was formed by twelve regiments of Lancers, six of Hunters and two of Hussars, along with its Military Academy.

The Carabinieri Corps was divided into six Districts and the Directorate General of the Civil Guard into fourteen Tercios.

The Canary Islands maintained its Provincial Battalion, six militia battalions and four sections for the smaller islands.

The territorial organisation was made up of Captaincy Generals, Military Governments of provinces and Military Commanders of strong points.

Overseas, *Ultramar*, i.e. Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines, there were the units (garrisons) of the plazas and expeditionary units, mostly in Cuba. Puerto Rico had four battalions in two half brigades and disciplined infantry and cavalry militias; the Philippines, four regiments; in Cuba, eight regiments, three Hunter battalions, twenty-five expeditionary battalions (among them the aforementioned Hunters), and one provisional, three cavalry regiments, white infantry militias (Havana Regiment), coloured militias, disciplined cavalry militias (four).

As can be seen, it was a very balanced army, necessarily based on infantry and cavalry light units. In all it came close to 200,000 men-at-arms.

The Army in Operations at War grouped these units into tactical formations and moved them in columns under the command of brigadiers, which would confront those of the Pretender Charles VII, the cantonal insurrectionists *partidas* and the Cuban Mambises-fighters.

All these units formed part of the government, known as *liberals*.

The Carlist' Army was of a different nature. It would come up from scratch, from small political and social parties linked to rural traditional environments under the ideal of "God, Patria and King", added to the *fueros* or local medieval regulations. It was a very inherited belief since Carlist families were rooted in old traditions; in one word: you were born as a Carlist.

Carlists supported the former King Ferdinand VII's (who died in 1833) brother Charles, entitled as Charles V against Ferdinand's daughter Isabel followers, known

as isabelinos (cristinos) or liberals. When the war restarted in 1872, it was Charles VII leading the Carlist cause.

The Carlist Army was the backbone of the Carlist (temporary) State, a territorial organization constrained to the Basque country, Navarra, northern part of Catalonia and a broad area comprising Maestrazgo, Valencia, southern Ebro, and limited parts in Albacete, Murcia and Alicante. Of course, the aspiration was to reign in the whole country. Only Taxes and War were fully organized as ministries, whereas the local organization comprised Provincial Diputaciones, appointed to raise an Army Division⁽²⁾ on each and distributed into districts as the basis to raise a battalion type unit.



Map 1: Maestrazgo-Valencia at war]

According to Pardo San Gil, the total figures of the Carlist Army in mid 1874 were:

ARMY	MEN	HORSES	GUNNS
CATALUÑA	11,300	400	20
NORTH	32,000	1,200	25
CENTER	13,600	850	4

Figure 3: Carlist Army in 1874

It means over 60,000 men in all, one third of the Governmentals or Liberal Army.

2. It was not a modern Division as such, but more an amalgamation of Infantry battalions, Cavalry regiments, and a few guns each, totalling over 4.000 men on average.

In his valuable study, Pardo comes up with what it is even more interesting fact: the complete Carlist battalion roster. The picture needs to be completed with the Academies, factories, hospitals and fortresses, all shown in detail in his study.

War will last till 1876 (Puell de la Villa, *Historia del ejército en España*, 2000, 96):

“In February 1876, the Carlists were defeated and Alfonso XII paraded triumphantly through the streets of Madrid at the head of 50,000 men, surrounded by the Operations Staff that the Ministry of War had placed under his direct orders during the campaign”.

An intentional demonstration that definitively united the King with his Army, and this was understood by the population that attended the military parade that lasted "more than six hours".

We will see, in the following section, the event that led to this display.

The Pronunciamiento of Sagunto

The Pronunciamiento in Sagunto unfolded like the narrative of a book. Don Arsenio had been manoeuvring in Madrid looking for an opportunity to either lead or come together with those heading the change of the political system by inviting Alfonso to come to Spain (from Paris) and to accept the Crown.

Since the Marquis of Duero, the most visible figure of the Alfonsin party, had died in Abárzuza (27 June 1874), the Carlist cause had a second life whereas the Liberals or Governmentals were stunned.

Don Arsenio went to Valencia at the end of December 1874 dressed in civilian clothes, stayed hidden in a private house and eventually found a way to drive himself to Sagunto. He took command of the Daban Brigade and in Sagunto's camp proclaimed Don Alfonso as King of Spain.

The key moment had arrived. Captain Generals and most political figures accepted the deed and supported Don Arsenio. The Count of Balmaseda⁽³⁾, temporarily in Madrid, as in a waiting stance, moved straight to Ciudad Real to make visible the pronunciamiento. General Jovellar, commander of the Army of the Center, under which jurisdiction the Pronunciamiento took place, accepted the fact (even though he waited for four tense hours to answer positively Don Arsenio's notification) by proclaiming “the certainty that the souls of the *Cuerpos* was alfonsin” and assuming command of all the troops deployed at his area of operations.

Particularly, General Serrano, head of the State, and was commanding operations in the North, supported the outcome “as long as the order in the Army and in the rear-

3. Since many of the key protagonists were nominated as the *colonels of Balmaseda*, the pronunciamiento had certain flavour of a Cuban plot.

guard was preserved". Serrano talked to Mateo Sagasta⁽⁴⁾, head of the government (progresist), delivered command to his deputy (general La Serna) and by doing so "he gave green light to those coming from Valencia" to march over Madrid (M. de Campos, *España Bélica Siglo XIX*, 1961, 260).

The proclamation of Don Alfonso as King of Spain, Alfonso XII, created an enthusiastic atmosphere. Ramón Cabrera, the icon of the Carlist cause in Maestrazgo and hero of the First Carlist War, accepted Don Alfonso as the King. Consequently, the Carlist party suffered a setback which was, in fact, the beginning of its defeat.

The End of the War

The war was really very even until the end of 1874. Actually, in 1873 Carlists seemed to be in a position to win the war. The cantonal movement was costing many governmental forces and Carlists inflicted several defeats to the liberals in the North and Cataluña, mainly.

However, General Serrano as head of the State, mobilized conscripts and selected the most capable commanders to lead the war by forming Armys of the North, Cataluña, Maestrazgo and Valencia above territorial Captaincies.

Then, Don Arsenio's pronunciamiento happened. As a consequence of the success of the pronunciamiento and its broad support, Don Arsenio was promoted to lieutenant general on December 31st, being posted as Captain General of Catalonia. In his new position, he occupied the towns of Olot, Ripoll and, finally, Seo de Urgel, the main stronghold in Catalonia.

Under these circumstances, with only the North to be defeated, the General was appointed as head of the Army of the Right, with his headquarters in Pamplona, commanding 60 Infantry battalions, 3 Cavalry regiments, 50 mountain guns; some 30,000 men in all. His objective was Navarre. On the West, General Quesada, who came from Valencia, was given command of the Army of the Left, with headquarters in Bilbao: 108 Infantry battalions, 5 Cavalry Squadrons, and 35 batteries (around 100 guns), totalling 50 thousand men. Both armies eventually converged in the line of the Bidasoa river, on 20 February, 1876, while General Primo de Rivera (Captain General of Madrid), advanced directly towards Estella, where at the head of the Carlist Army, around 40 thousand men, is General Lizárraga. The fate of Estella would dictate the fate of the war, as Marquis of Duero tried two years ago.

King Alfonso took command of the Army, at least nominally, in Vergara on February 19th. The fall of Estella meant the end of the war and the departure of the pretender Charles VII to France.

4. Práxedes Mateo-Sagasta (1825-1903), was the political leader of the liberal-progresist Party, close to Prim at 1868. He will accept Canovas's proposal for the *turnismo*.

On October 9, 1876, Don Arsenio was posted as chief of the Army of Operations of the island of Cuba, where he worked to sign a peace, that of Zanjón, on February 12th, 1878, ending the Long War (1868-1878) and becoming a very popular General in Spain.

Interesting enough, the First Carlist War (1833-40) had its last stand at Maestrazgo whereas this Third Carlist War (1872-76) concluded in the North.

Conclusions

The public opinion of Don Arsenio will be diverse and subject to history. Esteban González signed this judgement in 1876 (page 31):

“Two words to conclude. Those in favour of general Martínez Campos believe on him, as one of the great chieftains of the century. Those against him believe he is a mere warrior of fortune [good luck]. I believe I am right by saying that even though he was not a genius, he is by far one of the most skilful captains that Spain has ever seen in the latest times. Public opinion will decide which of these three views is right”.

Don Arsenio's influence has been acknowledged by Spanish historians and Bourbons have regularly reigned in country since then. It is not surprising that his statue stands at one of the most visible places in Madrid, El Retiro Park.



Picture 2: General Arsenio Martínez Campos in Madrid]

Nevertheless, Cánovas himself was upset and very much against the daring push carried out by Don Arsenio, done without permission nor coordination with the civil approach and likely unknown by some of his senior generals.

The main conclusions are the following:

- This paper deals with two key military interventions on political transitions in the 19th Century:
- General Pavía coup d'Etat with the outcome of overriding the *Primera República*, in January 1874,
- General Martínez de Campos *pronunciamiento*, claiming Alfonso as King of Spain and removing Serrano as the head of the State.
- The true reason for the *pronunciamiento* was to gather all national wills and energies to overcome war and cease instability originated around the Glorious Revolution of 1868.
- This new era was known as "Restoration" and designed to place the King as the head of the Army with the aim of minimizing the private ambitions of the top Spanish generals in the future (Rey-soldado) and allowing an accepted shift of power of the two main political parties (*turnismo*). Both premises came into reality in a new Constitution (1876) and the Army Constitutive Law (1878), consistent and lasting laws that were in place well into the 20th Century.
- Consequently, Restoration removed the chaos, disorder and banditry, associated to the three ongoing wars: Carlist (defeated at the beginning of 1876), Cantionales (ended on late 1873), and the War in Cuba (1878, Peace of Zanjón).
- Surely, Don Arsenio was cautious to choose Sagunto to carry out the pronunciamiento: Near to Valencia, on the way to Aragón and Cataluña, a port-city, where he was well known. However, he was not the senior military figure at that time and had no direct forces under his command. He was opportunistic, he dared and won (See Annex 1).
- During the Sexenio (1868-1874), society and political classes accepted with normality all those changes in power and the predominant role of the military, particularly those Generals who had prestige and represented most of the political trends, either progressist or conservative.
- Finally, this bloodless uprising performed by Don Arsenio had a lasting effect as it paved the way to Bourbons to reign in Spain for almost 50 years in a row.

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ANEXO 1/ANNEX 1

Carta de Martínez Campos a Cánovas del 27 de diciembre de 1874, justificando el pronunciamiento

Excmo. Sr. D. Antonio Cánovas del Castillo. Madrid 27 de diciembre de 1874.

Muy señor mío y de todo mi respeto: Cuando reciba Vd. ésta habré iniciado el movimiento en favor de Alfonso XII: cargo con la responsabilidad de este acto, al cual

arrastro a mis amigos: no tengo derecho a la protección del partido: ustedes son los jueces de si deben o no dármela: la deseo, pero he perdido, separándome de la opinión de ustedes, hasta la triste satisfacción de quejarme o disculparme.

Tengo menos elementos de fuerza para el primer momento que hace mes y medio; casi estoy por decir que tengo menos de la tercera parte, pues he ido perdiéndolos paso a paso, yo creo que por dilaciones; tal vez esté equivocado: hace mes y medio podía iniciar a la vez Almería, Cádiz, Badajoz, Lérida, Valencia y ejército del Centro; hoy sólo puedo hacerlo en el ejército del Centro: no culpo a nadie; la decisión que tomo hoy la debí tomar hace cuarenta y cinco días.

No me arrojo por amor propio ni por despecho; lo hago por la fe y convicción que tengo; lo hago porque ustedes aseguran que la opinión está hecha.

No me mezclo en política: daré por manifiesto la contestación de S.A.: exijo, sí, que si el movimiento triunfa en Madrid, sea Vd. el que se ponga al frente del Gobierno; ruego que si es posible, se encargue del Ministerio de la Guerra el general Balmaseda, persona dignísima y muy competente, y que haya además de éste tres Ministros del antiguo partido moderado, los otros cuatro del partido más liberal; es necesario que haya conciliación, al menos en los primeros momentos...

Deseo que ya voluntarios, ya sorteados, vayan 60 hombres por batallón a aquella Antilla, sin excluir los de provinciales y reserva; debiendo salir en el mes de Enero, único modo de contrarrestar el mensaje de Grant y salvar la isla. Si me consideran Vds. un estorbo, estoy pronto a ir allí a mandar una división; si bien deseo que se me deje de cuartel en Barcelona, y que tengo el firme propósito de no aceptar mando, ni ascenso, ni título, ni remuneración alguna. Si consigo mi objeto, el poner a este país en vías de tranquilidad, mi ambición queda satisfecha.

No hay de mí a Vd. antipatía política alguna, y lo comprenderá Vd. cuando le diga que no ha estudiado mi pensamiento, y no quiero entender de estas cosas. La diferencia entre Vd. y yo estaba en los distintos modos de procedimientos en la cuestión de alzamiento.

Translation:

His Excellency Mr. Antonio Cánovas del Castillo. Madrid, 27th December 1874.

My dear Sir and with my respect: When you receive this, I shall have initiated the movement in favour of Alfonso XII: I bear the responsibility of this act, to which I drag my friends: I have no right to the protection of the party: you are the judges of whether or not you should give it to me: I desire it, but I have lost, by separating myself from your opinion, even the sad satisfaction of complaining or apologising.

I have less strength for the first moment than I had a month and a half ago; I am almost about to say that I have less than a third of it, for I have been losing it step by step,

I believe by procrastination; perhaps I am mistaken: a month and a half ago I could start at once in Almería, Cádiz, Badajoz, Lérida, Valencia and the army of the Centre; today I can only do so in the army of the Centre: I blame no one; the decision I am taking today I should have taken forty-five days ago.

I am not throwing myself in out of self-love or out of spite; I am doing it out of the faith and conviction I have; I am doing it because you assure me that the opinion is made.

I do not meddle in politics: I will make H.R.H.'s reply manifest: I demand, yes, that if the movement triumphs in Madrid, you be the one to head the Government; I ask that if possible, General Balmaseda, a most worthy and competent person, be put in charge of the Ministry of War, and that in addition to him there be three Ministers from the old moderate party, the other four from the most liberal party; there must be conciliation, at least in the early stages.

I wish that ready volunteers, already drawn by lot, 60 men per battalion should go to the West Indies, not excluding the provincials and reserves; they should leave in January, the only way to counteract Grant's message and save the island. If you consider me a hindrance, I am ready to go there to command a division; although I wish to be left in Barcelona, and have the firm intention of not accepting command, promotion, title, or any remuneration whatsoever. If I achieve my object, which is to put this country on the road to tranquillity, my ambition will be satisfied.

There is no political antipathy from me to you, and you will understand that when I tell you that you have not studied my thoughts, and I do not want to understand these things. The difference between you and me was in the different ways of proceeding on the question of the uprising.

Author's short CV

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Col Romero was born in Barcelona, in 1959. He joined the Army (Military Academy) in 1976 as a cadet.

Col Romero is Master in "Peace, Security and Defence" at the Open University and has participated within el Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos (1996-2001) in different studies and publications. He has written "Evolution of the Spanish Army" (Ed Dykinson, 2018), "Las Jornadas del Coronel" (Universo de Letras, Sevilla, 2018), and "Grandes Tratadistas de Interés Militar" ("Main Military Thinkers") (Ed Ministerio de Defensa, 2019).

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