

## Eugeniu Carada: The Dynamic of Perceptions Across Time

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**Abstract:** *Very often we see that our perceptions about a specific time or a specific person may be altered by bias, ideology or simply by misunderstanding facts. Based on the information preserved in the press and in memoirs, we will try to follow how the representations of various generations concerning a character – Eugeniu Carada, in this case – transited from passionate criticism to adulation and praises. This article argues in favour of accepting that our ways of understanding the past and the sense of the past are often tributary to either a rhetoric that is propagandistic (intentionally or not), or to legitimization exercises, or even to the temptation of leaving behind a certain image for posterity.*

**Keywords:** Eugeniu Carada, Liberal Party, historiographic discourse, propaganda

### Introduction

There are people who, through the force of their personality, managed to summarize their era. This is why exploring an individual destiny becomes – for a historian – an incursion in the past, a method of acknowledging the spirit of a period, the aspirations and obsessions animating it. By studying a character, the researcher examines a historical time in order to unravel its significance and to get a better insight into its meaning.

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Eugeniu Carada – a remarkable protagonist of his generation – summarizes the era he lived in, with its noble aspirations and passionate contradictions. He was “in the shadow” during his lifetime and he managed to remain “in the shadow” after his passing, in the memory of posterity. Therefore, our historiography needs to rediscover Carada. Currently, there is an astonishing disproportion between the measure of his activity – regardless of the positive or negative connotation ascribed to it by historians – and the forgetfulness shadowing his memory.

It is well known that the historiographic discourse does not necessarily reconstruct the pages of the past, but that it forms and influences our representations about the past. This is also the case of Carada: from the “bad *Eugeniu* of Romania”<sup>1</sup> (as contemporaries have described him), he is now perceived as a fighter “for a free Romania, at all times, in all ways, with anybody, against everybody”.<sup>2</sup> I will be able to track down, based on a specific case, the way in which both the historiographic discourse and our perceptions may often be tributary to either a rhetoric that is propagandistic (intentionally or not) or to legitimization exercises, or even to the temptation of leaving behind a certain image for posterity.

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<sup>1</sup> \*\*\*, “Carada”, in: *Furnica*, year VI, issue 25, 25 February 1910, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Nicolae A. Andrei, *Istoria învățământului din Craiova*, Craiova, Editura Alma, 2003, p. 273.

## **Carada: the dynamic of perceptions across time**

Nowadays, Eugeniu Carada is mainly described as “the true leader of the Bank”<sup>3</sup> and the initiator of the law that founded the BNR [National Bank of Romania], “the head of the Occult” or the “grey eminence” of the Liberal Party, a great patriot, a modest and correct man characterized by moral integrity. As I have mentioned before, this perception does not seem to coincide in the least with the one shared by most of his contemporaries.

For instance, according to Eminescu (a vehement and conservative journalist), Eugeniu Carada represented the archetype of the corrupt foreigner: “only the great grandchildren of the Carada brood *may become* Romanians. The current Carada members, *even if they wanted to, they cannot be Romanians*, just like we cannot make an oak tree out of a sage tree, much as would try it”<sup>4</sup>. The same Eminescu wrote, “if a person is not good at anything in our country, he is still good at something: he will become a Liberal, he will shout in slums against reactionaries, he will swear in the name of the Rosetti – Brătianu – Carada trinity, he will bust a gut during elections by promising to one person to get a job for his nephew, to another that he will lease for free an estate belonging to the State and – the homeland is saved”.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ion Bulei, *Atunci când veacul se năștea...*, Bucharest, Editura Eminescu, 1990, p. 139.

<sup>4</sup> Mihai Eminescu, “Pătura superpusă”, in: \*\*\*, *Culegere de articole d'ale lui M. Eminescu. Articole apărute în «Timpul» în anii 1880 și 1881*, Bucharest, Tipo-Litografie E. Wiegand & C. C. Savoiu, 1891, p. 92.

<sup>5</sup> Mihai Eminescu, “Publicistică”, in: *Opere*, vol. X, Bucharest, Editura Academiei Române, 1989, p. 172.

After the deaths of Brătianu and of Kogălniceanu, Carada remained the most influent man of the Party. He inherited the power and influence of Ion Brătianu, which he used to fulfil the plans of the *Occult* (he was its “pontiff”<sup>6</sup> and “dictator”<sup>7</sup>). These words are followed by some plastic phrases specific to the period, which described the head of the “Occult”: “the anointed one who sacralises a moment, a situation”,<sup>8</sup> “the Great Dalai-Lama”,<sup>9</sup> “the great pontiff of the National Bank”,<sup>10</sup> “the representative of the Statue on earth”,<sup>11</sup> (a phrase used after the inauguration of I. Brătianu’s statue), “Mr. Carada does not speak much, but he does and, mostly, undoes things”,<sup>12</sup> “what Carada proposes, he also decides”,<sup>13</sup> “he didn’t even finish his school”,<sup>14</sup> “a speculator who ended up making and destroying Liberals”.<sup>15</sup> It seemed that the “image of Mr. Carada disturbed the minds of opposition journalists”<sup>16</sup>. In fact, the sincere antipathy felt by his opponents was based on political rivalry. And Carada – with a prime role at the National Bank, to the exasperation of his rivals – seemed to always be in power: “Look who’s passing full of pride/ Followed by entrepreneurs/ Who, in this triumphal ride,/

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<sup>6</sup> \*\*\*, “Oculța și d. Sturdza”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5260, 24 March 1904, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> \*\*\*, “D. Haret președinte de Consiliu”, in: *Adevărul*, issue 5383, 29 July 1904, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> \*\*\*, “D. Carada în scenă”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5250, 14 March 1904, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> \*\*\*, “Marele Dalai-Lama”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5248, 12 March 1904, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> \*\*\*, “În jurul remanierei ministeriale”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5471, 26 October 1904, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> \*\*\*, “D. Carada în scenă”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5250, 14 March 1904, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> George Ranetti, “Domnul Carada”, in: *Furnica*, year I, issue 14, 14 December 1904, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> \*\*\*, “Denunțările d-lui N. Fleva”, in: *Epoca*, year I, issue 270, 18 October 1886, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Barbu Ștefănescu Delavrancea, *Regimul . Discurs rostit de d-l B. Ștef. Delavrancea în ședințele Camerei de la 29 și 30 Noembrie, 1894*, p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> \*\*\*, “Informațiuni”, in: *Epoca*, year II, issue 439, 13 May 1887, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> \*\*\*, “Lăcomia Calomniilor”, in: *Voința Națională*, year IV, issue 970, 18 November 1887, p. 1.

Throw him only flowers?/ It is him, the financier,/ It is him, the speculator,/ It's the famous Carada!" (The original text is: "Cine trece plin de fală/ Urmărit d'antreprenori/ Cari în calea-i triumfală/ Îi aruncă numai flori?/ Este el, financiarul,/ Este el, e gheșefterul,/ E vestitul Carada!")<sup>17</sup>. As a journalist highlighted when he died, "Carada was the lightning rod of the Liberal Party"<sup>18</sup>. In his opponents' discourse, he became guilty of any corruption deeds, of hatching any real or imaginary backstage plots.

After his death, Carada's image began to be completely redefined. First of all, in regards to the 1910 moment, upon his passing, all the journals and newspapers wrote laudatory articles, (even those in Transylvania). Personalities who were abroad at that moment – such as Ioan Slavici<sup>19</sup> or Constantin Stere (he turned Carada into a literary character, in the novel *În preajma revoluției*, under the name Leonid Ciupangea),<sup>20</sup> representatives of Romanians who were not part of the kingdom – hailed Carada's activity and also spoke about the numerous times he materially supported the people in Transylvania or Bessarabia. There was yet no knowledge about this aspect. The amount given by Carada for supporting the national cause would have been as high as 700 000 lei.<sup>21</sup> This was the time when Eugeniu Carada began to acquire a new image (of a great patriot, of a supporter of the national cause and promoter of the unity of all Romanians).

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<sup>17</sup> \*\*\*, "Marșul lui Carada", in: *Epoca*, year II, issue 497, 26 July 1887, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> \*\*\*, "Carada", in: *Furnica*, year VI, issue 25, 25 February 1910, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Ioan Slavici, "Eugeniu Carada", in: *Luceafărul*, issue VII, year IX, 1 April 1910, p. 14.

<sup>20</sup> cf. Eugen Simion, *Dicționarul general al literaturii române*, vol. II, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, Bucharest, 2004, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup>; I. Lupaș, "Eugeniu Carada", in: *Revista economică*, year XXXIX, issue 14, 3 April 1937, p. 3.

A second such moment unfolded in 1924, when his statue at the National Bank was inaugurated. Once again, all publications covered this event and used laudatory terms to describe it. The good fame of Carada was reiterated by great personalities of the time – who eulogized the memory of the deceased, such as Liviu Rebreanu and the patriarch Miron Cristea (who said that Carada “really helped the writers; he built schools and churches; he helped a lot those in the annexed territories for their national ideas”).<sup>22</sup> According to Mihail Romașcanu, Liviu Rebreanu would have stated, “Under difficult circumstances, when the leaders of the free country could not or did not dare to do anything for us, Carada paid the fines to the Hungarian Courts who fought to shut down our newspapers; he subsidized our publications; he helped us support our schools and build churches [...] For him, Romania’s borders reached the Tisa, long before the definitive demolition of the artificial borders that butchered the body of the Romanian nation”.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, three literary biographies were dedicated to him in the interwar period, the first of them with a memoir character. These efforts sought to honour his memory and to transform Eugeniu Carada into a symbol. Thus, the portrait constructed by them was flawless.

In the communist period, the image of Eugeniu Carada was not given any special attention. Post-1990, however, the BNR organized a series of symposiums and events, during which they also referred to the institution’s past. Following these moments, works and articles were published, including

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<sup>22</sup> \*\*\*, “Eugeniu Carada”, in: *Argus*, year XV, issue 3248, 20 February 1924, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> cf. Mihail Gr. Romașcanu, *Eugeniu Carada (1836-1910)*, Bucharest, Editura Albatros, 2007, p. 253.

in the press and Eugeniu Carada represented one of the key characters of these events. One may also assume that they also represented PR actions of the BNR. In 2010, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Carada's death, The National Bank organized a symposium and launched again, in a single volume, the three biographies penned during the interwar period. The press covered the event. Some sensational-seeking articles insisted upon phrases such as “an illustrious conspirator” or “the man in the shadow”.<sup>24</sup>

His idealized image has always been fuelled by the various studies written about him. For instance, one of the most commonly cited quotes allegedly belonging to Carada are “all for the others, only work for me”<sup>25</sup> or probably another version of the same quote “nothing for us, all for the country and the nation”.<sup>26</sup> Within the BNR, he would have worked without pursuing any personal interests and without being animated by Party interests – “he was the first to arrive at the Bank in the morning and the last to leave at night”.<sup>27</sup> Such descriptions were meant to highlight his abnegation, his spirit of sacrifice, and his dedication to the institution that he was serving.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that the rare critiques against Carada also managed to take hold. In 1930, for instance, his nephew defended his deceased uncle and he addressed, in his book, certain accusations alleging

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<sup>24</sup> Alexandru Ruja, “Un spirit garibaldian” în *Orizont*, an XXIII, nr. 3, 29 martie 2011, p. 13

<sup>25</sup> Mihai Opreșcu, “Eugeniu Carda: Un conspirator convertit în bancher”, in: *Dosarele istoriei*, year IV, issue 10, 1999, p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> \*\*\*, “Eugeniu Carada”, in: *Luceafărul*, year IX, issue 7, 1 April 1910, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Constant Răutu, *Eugeniu Carada. Omul și opera (1836-1910)*, Craiova, Editura Ramuri, 1940, p. 244.

that Eugeniu Carada would have become rich because of politics.<sup>28</sup> The same source notes that, in 1929, a political opponent of the Liberals of that time stated that they were hated in the country because they were under the domination of “Carada’s spirit”.<sup>29</sup>

### **Propaganda against Carada: the “Occult”**

The Cambridge dictionary defines the term “propaganda” as: “information, ideas, opinions, or images, often only giving one part of an argument, that are broadcast, published, or in some other way spread with the intention of influencing people's opinions”.<sup>30</sup> We will try to follow how Carada’s image was influenced by his political opponents or allies in their political struggle.

Most of the voices criticizing Carada “post-mortem” actually went against the National Bank, the Liberal Party, or various Masonic organizations. Mentioning Carada was only a means in this respect. On the other hand, the voices eulogizing him often sought to legitimize themselves; various Liberal political groups have had such attempts. These cases illustrate in the most flagrant way possible how the use of history can be subscribed to propagandistic efforts. This also represents one of the greatest challenges one may face in the study of political history. The struggles for power are always

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<sup>28</sup> Mariu Theodorian-Carada, *Efimeridele*, vol. I, Bucharest, Tipografia «Capitalei», 1930, p. 33.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 152.

<sup>30</sup> \*\*\*, *Cambridge Dictionary*, available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/propaganda>, accessed on 16.12.2017.

accompanied by passionate stances, by the temptation of manipulation, or by secret details that dwell backstage. All of the aforementioned aspects may generate a deformed or incomplete understanding of a context. In the following line, I will outline a relevant example concerning this issue.

In the fall of 1904, when the Parliament began the first session, Ionel Brătianu (who aspired to become leader of the Party) asked Sturdza (who was the leader of the Party at the moment) to resign, but the latter refused to comply. Therefore, the president of the Chamber, the vice-president, and 12 other “occultist” deputies handed in their resignations. The “Occult” was a term used by the opponents to describe a group of politicians, led by Carada, who secretly took the major decisions of the Liberal Party. The “Occult” asked Sturdza to dismiss V. Lascăr from the Internal Affairs (a Ministry with high stakes because it was in charge with appointing the prefects, who “ensured” victory during the elections), which Sturdza refused, thus causing the resignation of Ionel Brătianu. In the strategy of the “occultists”, as explained by themselves in the power circles, this gesture was a guarantee that the entire government would fall: “When you learn that the current minister of Internal Affairs resigned, you can be sure that it will be followed by that of the other ministers”.<sup>31</sup> Despite the fact that Sturdza was set to resist, Emil Costinescu and V. Lascăr – both targeted by the assault of the “Occult” – resigned; Sturdza eventually made the same move.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> \*\*\*, “Convorbire cu un amic al d-lui Carada”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5336, 12 June 1904, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Ion Mamina, Ion Bulei, *Guverne și guvernanți*, Bucharest, Editura Silex, 1994, pp. 114 - 115.

How can this episode be interpreted? The *Adevărul* newspaper stated as follows, by citing those “initiated in the secrets of the gods” (namely, in the power circles): “The Occult banished Fleva from the ministry and the Party allegedly because he wanted decentralization; now they want to banish Lascăr because the law is decentralizing. Thus, for the occultists, this is not a matter of principles, but of political and personal interests”.<sup>33</sup> Hence, the entire scandal would have taken place within an “occultist cleaning operation”.<sup>34</sup> Lascăr and Costinescu – a former collaborator of Carada at *Românul* and at the National Bank, who “left the Occult ostentatiously”<sup>35</sup> – were a threat regarding domination in the Party, thus weakening the chances of Ionel Brătianu.<sup>36</sup> This was a long-term calculation.<sup>37</sup>

On a closer look, it appears there was a second motivation for Carada and the “Occult”. We often build or outline theories based on our current interpretations and on those noted in that period and preserved in the press, memoirs, or archives. These are the available means, based on which we operate, but they are all fatally – one way or another – marked by subjectivism and prone to error. The press, for instance, whereas it provides rich information, often takes the side of a Party (which affects the accuracy of information) and it is susceptible of stirring ridiculous comments and

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<sup>33</sup> \*\*\*, “Demisia d-lui Carada”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5251, 16 March 1904, p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Const. Mille, “Luptă de principii”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5263, 27 March 1904, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> \*\*\*, “Criza continuă”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5494, 20 November 1904, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> “He could influence and lead Mr. Sturdza according to taste and necessity [...] I know Mr. Costinescu as an individuality unlikely to be influenced” (\*\*\*, “Explicațiunile Ocultei”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5278, 14 April 1904, p. 1).

<sup>37</sup> \*\*\*, “Există sau nu Oculta?”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVII, issue 5249, 13 March 1904, p. 1.

interpretations, even when animated by sincere intentions. This is the case today; this was the case back then.

I have provided all these details in order to illustrate a specific case. Based on the press and the memoirs concerning the protagonists of the political struggles unfolded in the year 1904, the impression is that all these fights were meant to take down Vasile Lascăr, in order for the “Occult” to take hold of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the ultimate purpose was to name Ionel Brătianu the leader of the Party. To a certain extent, this is actually the truth, but the entire context definitely implies more subtleties.

One of them is suggested by Constantin Bacalbașa – a former conservative journalist – who wrote a literary, memoir-like history, but free of passions. From this perspective, the reason for the fall of the Liberal Party from government also involved the total divergence of opinions between Sturdza and Carada concerning oil exploitation and the position concerning the king. Carol I and Sturdza supported the offer made by “Deutsche Bank”, while Sturdza would have signed a convention in this respect without obtaining the Party’s approval.

Furthermore, the entire dispute had older causes. As early as 1903, Liberals stated that they disagreed with oil-related concessions for foreign investors. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of June 1903, an “Oil Commission” was constituted; its purpose was to make a decision in this respect. Until such decision was made, all proposals “meant to obtain concessions for exploiting oil on State properties” were to be dismissed. Despite this fact, before dealing with “Deutsche Bank”, D. A. Sturdza started negotiations in Vienna with the

House of Rothschild.<sup>38</sup> For this reason, Carada – who supported oil exploitation with domestic capital – began sabotaging the German interests by striking Sturdza’s government, (subservient to the king and a partisan of the deal with the Germans). The campaign through which the “Occult” took down the Liberal government would have been seemingly caused by the power struggle within the Party, but the real stake was related to oil.<sup>39</sup>

Once the conservatives came to power, the “Occult” was able to oppose both conservatives and the German project in a more open and vehement manner and this was exactly their course of action. Bacalbașa stated that this “new version on the Liberals’ fall from power [...] circulated in closed circles”<sup>40</sup> (as a journalist, he was in the circle of the conservative leader Gh. Cantacuzino). I chose to provide this explanation, on one hand because it is highly intriguing and challenging (though difficult to validate or invalidate) and, on the other, because it illustrates the way we can make highly incomplete interpretations as long as we are not open to several possibilities.

## Contradictions

Concerning Carada, an immediate question to ask would be: which of the two totally opposable conceptions regarding his personality is closer to

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<sup>38</sup> Ion Mamina, Ion Bulei, *op. cit.*, pp. 113 - 114.

<sup>39</sup> Constantin Bacalbașa, *Bucureștii de altă dată*, vol. III (1901-1910), Ediția a II-a, Bucharest, Editura Ziarului "Universul", 1936, pp. 95-96.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 96.

the truth? The one of the detractors or the one of the admirers? The most likely answer is that the truth lies somewhere in the middle. A highly relevant aspect for understanding the political man Eugeniu Carada is that he never hesitated to plot cynically in order to protect his political interests. Some of his manoeuvres targeted the opponents, while others his own Party; many of them were in total contrast with the democratic ideals, which he claimed to represent. For instance, during the 1870 elections, according to the state authorities, Eugeniu Carada was among the radicals' leaders who had their "bats" confiscated after street fights with the opponents. The accusation belonged to the Prime minister of that period, Manolache Costache Epureanu, who ascribed the radicals the exclusive fault for all the violence during the elections.<sup>41</sup> Therefore, Carada proved to be a practical man of the Party. He was a man of ideals, but he also was able to engage in physical violence during elections.

There is also the question related to his brutal approach to Lascăr and Costinescu, both of them highly capable men. In retrospective, I. G. Duca used negative terms to describe Carada's domination in the Party: "in this period of obvious fall of the Party, [...] when Gogu Cantacuzino, Carada and others were the intellectual inspiration sources of the Party", "people who joined the Party were less able to reform".<sup>42</sup>

During the conservative government, a collaboration was set in motion between Alexandru Beldiman – Romania's delegate to Berlin – and

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<sup>41</sup> *Monitorul Oficial*, issue 154, 14 July 1870, p. 844.

<sup>42</sup> I. G. Duca, *Amintiri politice*, Munich, Collection "Memorii și mărturii", München, Jon Dumitru-Verlag, 1981, p. 12.

Eugeniu Carada, in order to determine the strategy for undermining the conservative government. In Berlin, Beldiman was going to discredit the conservative regime of Romania.<sup>43</sup> A younger Carada could have accused this gesture of vassalage, as he did in 1863, (when Cuza went to Istanbul). In 1896, Carada's "Occult" contributed to the fall of the leader Anastasie Stolojan from Internal Affairs by seeking help from conservatives, who would have been in possession of several compromising documents about the minister. Based on these documents, he was going to be interrogated in the Parliament if "Stolojan's presence were not a defiance to the honour of the Party".<sup>44</sup>

In this last phase of his life, his power and influence as "grey eminence" reached the maximum level. The main objectives pursued by Carada in this period were to impose Ionel Brătianu as the Party's leader, to subsidize the national movements of Romanians in the neighbouring States and to encourage domestic capital.

"The leader from the shadow"<sup>45</sup> referring to his role inside the Party became a historiographic cliché, a fact which in my opinion should be nuanced. It has been accepted – based on evidence available to historians – that Eugeniu Carada played a prominent role in the often-backstage influence on the policy of the National Liberal Party. However, the unconditional acceptance of such a cliché may entail a misunderstanding of the context.

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<sup>43</sup> Traian P. Lungu, *Viața politică în România la sfârșitul secolului al XIX-lea (1888-1899)*, Bucharest, Editura Științifică, 1967, pp. 154-155.

<sup>44</sup> \*\*\*, "Oculța și Stolojan", in: *Epoca*, seria 2, year II, issue 294, 2 November 1896, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> Traian P. Lungu, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

Despite his strong influence, Carada did not benefit from a total, discretionary power. On the contrary, there were many groups of interest in the Party, countless vanities and ambitions, which stirred numerous internal fights among the Liberals, mostly when they were in power. Carada did not impose his view easily; he needed time and tenacity to attain his objectives.

Older historiography – affected by the Marxist rhetoric – accredited the idea that the groups fighting for power inside the Liberal Party actually included the “representative of estate owners” and those of “bank capital owners”. This classification appears now – due to the almost complete lack of ideological constraints – simplistic and somewhat arbitrary, but it does contain a valid premise. Indeed, the situation was more complex; groups were also formed by other criteria and interests than those of a social or economic nature. However, it is also true that Carada’s influence in the Party also relied consistently on his position at the National Bank. Furthermore, he had a renowned expertise in matters of finances and of his personal wealth. By controlling the financial means, Carada’s opinion acquired importance and mileage and this position only consolidated across time.

It also remains a fact that Eugeniu Carada always refused to seize the power himself, although he had numerous chances to do so. Among the people who were most grateful to Carada – the “grey eminence” – it is worth noting the Romanians in Transylvania. For them, Carada “covered the expenses of the National Party for decades during the elections organized under Hungarian domination”.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> M. C. Foșăneanu, “Eugeniu Carada și Banca Națională a României”. in *Cele trei Crișuri*, year XVIII, issue 5-6, May – June 1937, p. 109.

We can try to make a meaning of the chaos represented by these contradictory records and proofs. Carada's project, as I understand it, was constructed around the following main axis: an independent State comprising all Romanians. It also had several secondary axes: the economic development of the country based on Western models, the instauration of individual liberties (which he himself violated sometimes) and the domination of the Liberal Party and of the Brătianu family. The help he provided to Ionel should not be understood exclusively from the perspective of personal relationships. Carada and Ion Brătianu (the father) trained a generation of successors to inherit their projects. Ionel Brătianu had been raised by his father to be an engineer, too, for the economic era to come,<sup>47</sup> while Vintilă was supposed to replace Carada at the Bank. The Brătianu-Carada duality perpetuated through the brothers Ionel and Vintilă Brătianu.<sup>48</sup> This is the perspective from which one must analyse why Eugeniu Carada was so eager to fight anyone who opposed this project. Mariu Theodorian-Carada, his nephew, even stated that he was sure that Vintilă and maybe some of the Brătianu sisters would have actually been Carada's children.<sup>49</sup>

On the other hand, Eugeniu Carada himself may have been tempted to leave to posterity a certain image of his own personality. The book *Efimeridele* – that actually outlines his memories, as told by his nephew – is often cited and it represents the initial source of certain information

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<sup>47</sup> Nicolae Iorga, *Supt trei regi*, Bucharest, Editura PRO, 1999, p. 32.

<sup>48</sup> Tudor Șoimaru, *Istoria vieții publice din România*, Bucharest, Editura Vreamea, 1938, p. 31.

<sup>49</sup> Sabina Marițiu, Romeo Cîrjan, *Eugeniu Carada. Corespondență și mărturii inedite*, vol. VII, Bucharest, Banca Națională a României, 2013, p. 184.

circulating in the Romanian historiography. More than one can imagine, Eugeniu Carada contributed – through selected information – to the image that we construct regarding this period. With a role of symbol for posterity, Carada was interested in erecting statues for the great Liberal politicians. He himself monitored from Paris the works for the statue of Ion Brătianu. According to the press that was unfavourable to him, he was also in charge with the statue for Rosetti, the monument of Dealul Spirii, the statues of the Golești brothers, and that of Mihail Kogălniceanu.<sup>50</sup>

His image after death is semi-legendary and flawless. This article does not constitute an attempt to demystify the figure of Eugeniu Carada, but it would seem that his political personality was characterized by contradictory nuances. On one hand, he was a man of great projects, of long-term projects for the country. On the other, he was a cynical man of the Party: he participated in elections with a bat; he undermined the conservative governments that also worked in Romania's interest; he fought with opponents from his own Party, where he took down men of value. Carada was perseverant and a tireless worker, but he was far from elegant and subtle. An interwar newspaper mentioned the incongruence between his character and the one of the political work<sup>51</sup>: “[..] not to be in permanent contact with the world of politicians, which was so different from his own character” but this interpretation is highly subjective.

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<sup>50</sup> \*\*\*, “Din culisele liberale”, in: *Adevărul*, year XVI, issue 4842, 3 May 1903, p. 1.

<sup>51</sup> \*\*\*, “Centenarul nașterii lui Eugeniu Carada”, in: *Ilustrațiunea română*, year VIII, issue 48, 25 November 1936, p. 2.

## Conclusions

Carada left a solid inheritance to both the Liberal Party and the Bank. From his youth to his death, Carada served the national ideal, though using different methods. Some of his methods were controversial, while others were downright hazardous.

On Carada's death, a journalist of the opposition accurately highlighted this flagrant contradiction of completely opposable perceptions: "There is a new Carada, so to speak. Not the Carada who knew only how to gather piles of gold, not a Carada who knew just to take, but a Carada who gave back for philanthropic and nationalist purposes anonymously, without parading around his generosity. [...] Let us not haste to judge our contemporaries while they are still alive"<sup>52</sup>.

In the case of Carada, Brătianu and others, whereas they were demonized during their lifetime, the posterity managed to separate the positive aspects from the negative ones and mostly the positive ones lasted.

We can thus see how the representations of various generations concerning a character – Eugeniu Carada, in this case – transited from passionate criticism to adulation and praises. This observation can only remind us that we are prone to producing interpretations and to outlining meanings based on incomplete and/or incorrect knowledge. As observers of both the past and the present, we highlight that the press – or most of it, anyway – has always taken the side of one Party or another. In order to

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<sup>52</sup> \*\*\*, "Carada", in: *Furnica*, year VI, issue 25, 25 February 1910, p. 2.

understand a situation or a context, we will gain if we lose perception automatisms such as the duality of good / evil, positive / negative, black / white. Most of the times the truth lies somewhere in the middle, and instead of black and white, we have numerous shades of grey. This was a fact during Carada's time and things have remained the same today.

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