



Earlier published in Haratch - an Armenian daily of Paris
in its May 11, 1960 issue

Free translation from KERMANIG Vol 39, # 164, Jan-July, 1969 pp 10-12.

HISTORICAL.

HOW WAS MARASH ABANDONED by Vahan Portugalian.

In our personal files we found a cutting from the daily paper "Haratch" of Paris of May 11, 1960. The author is the worthy son of the wellknown national activists, ^{V. Portugalian} Mugurditch Portugalian. He served (the son) as a commander in the Armenian Legion, as a judge in Aleppo and later in the courts of southern France. In his official capacity, he is, therefore, well acquainted with events which relate to the occupation of Cilicia, the bungled retreat of allies, its tragic consequences to the Armenian inhabitants of Cilicia, and especially to the holocaust of Marash.

Editor (Kermanig)

In the editorial of the Feb. 11, 1960, issue of "Haratch" Mr. Hrant Samuelian (the editor) ^{of Haratch} on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the tragedy of Marash asks the question as to the source of the command for retreat, whether it originated in Paris, Beirut or Adana.

One of the participants of the event was Lt. Col. ^{Corneloup} Cornelu, at that time still a major. Presently he has completed his 87th anniversary and lives in Aix-en-Provence. We meet occasionally. I recounted to him the question raised by the editor of "~~XXXXXXXX~~" "Haratch". Despite his age he has kept his keen memory. He is unable to control his emotions when he recalls events of Marash.

Generally speaking, the explanations given by Lieut. Col. Cornelu ^{du V&eou} confirms the recounting of Paul Veyoux in the "La Passion de la Cilicie" (page 93).

(I am not sure of the correct spelling of the names)



It is necessary at first not to consider the responsibility for Adana; the evacuation of Marash, however, became a catastrophic surprise to General DuFoe, the Commander of Adana. No doubt about that. The blame directed to Paris or Beirut is unfounded. They would not have given such an order about a limited operation from such a distance without the knowledge or request of the fighting forces (i.e., of General ^{DuFieux} Du Foe).

It is certain that du Voe ^{du Voeu} published as information (p. 95-96) a letter addressed to him by General Bremond, according to which General Gouraud had wired from Beirut to Adana stating that "there can be no question of evacuation of Marash". General Bremond considering the telegram unusual (extraordinary) concluded that he (General Gouraud) must have given underhandedly a contrary order. The well-known deep adversity between Generals Bremon and Gouraud and the final confrontation, (~~collision~~) in the absence of supporting evidence, ~~deprives~~ the above mentioned ~~xxxxxxxx~~ interpretation of its value. If General Gouraud had wanted to evacuate Marash he would have no compunction ~~to~~ hesitation to order a subordinate officer, General ^{DuFieux} Du Fee, rather than endangering with such a Machievellian plan the battlefield. It is not possible to think unprejudicially and to ^saxcribe such a plan to General Gouraud, the supreme Commander who had answered the sinister telegram of ^{DuFieux} Du Fee of Feb. 22, No. 384/2/ ^{DuFieux}

"I have received and read with emotion and sorrow your telegram of Feb. 15 No. 342/3."

"I thank the courageous units who fought so bravely against the enemy and the weather, and also in Marash ~~in~~ those who defended and those who rescued them."

"They will all know tomorrow to keep the flag flying in the country entrusted to their protection."



Some have surmised that as a result of severe wounds received at the Battle of the Dardanelles Gouraud was maimed and perhaps was weakened physically and consequently lacked the verve and vitality to prosecute an effective war.

According to Lieut. ^{Corneloup} Cornelu the person really responsible for the evacuation of Marash was General Querrette, the Commander of the Expeditionary Forces in Marash. The appraisals of Paul du Veau arrive to the same conclusion. Paul du Veau adds that Querrette was called to answer to an investigative Committee after his return to France (the result is not known). Lieut. Col. ^{Corneloup} Corneloup verified this statement saying that it was considered to question him and others as well, but it was later regarded unnecessary as they had carried out the instructions of Querrette.

General Querrette had recently arrived in Cilicia after having been liberated from a prisoners' camp in Germany. Long imprisonment had reduced his will and stamina. The forces in Marash, said ^{Corneloup} Corneloup were thus deprived of good leadership. Several communications which were received from him did not conform to the situation and were impossible to do and sometimes unintelligible. Every one was obliged to operate independently.

Reenforcements arrived under the command of ^{Colonel Normand} Lieut. Normand. Normand without consulting Querrette sent a message directly to Cornelu^P stating that he had encamped in the ^{southerly approaches} ~~south~~ side of the city; adding that his food supplies and ammunition were barely sufficient for his own needs ordering him to evacuate Marash and to join him for retreat. In conformity with this order ^{Corneloup} Corneloup began to abandon his outposts and prepared for retreat.

This was the first mistake. Col. Normand had no right to issue such a

directive to Corneli^{us} without consulting Querrette, his superior.

When people saw our preparations for retreat they panicked. The message reached General Querrette what should he have done. He was obligated to call Lieut. Norman to him and ask ^{for} an explanation. Instead, he decided to depart by night to meet Norman. He must have felt inwardly willing and ready to comply as before leaving he had asked his second, Lieut. Thibault to prepare for the retreat. Just before his departure to meet Norman, the physician in charge of the American Hospital had told him that from the Turkish side Dr. Mustafa wished to seek terms of surrender. Despite this most ~~favorable~~ propitious circumstance the general postponed the meeting with the Turkish delegate and followed his initial decision to go and meet Norman.

No! 500.

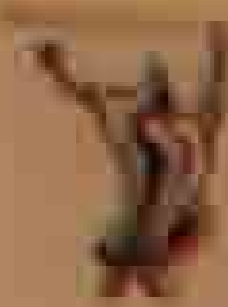
^{Colonel} Lieut. Norman ~~was~~ had been appointed initially to ~~xxx~~ become the Commander Sandjak of Adana. He had no idea about the mentality of the inhabitants. He was a man familiar with military tactics and was not a reserve officer trained to handle civilian affairs. He had a tendency to look at things with the eyes of an engineer. Also it is possible that the failure of his prior mission to Diarbekir had discouraged him. Nevertheless he was a man of character.

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Querrette ~~approved~~ gave his approval to the order of retreat without taking advantage of the fact that the Turks had already accepted defeat. After returning to his post he gave an audience to Dr. Mustafa. To the request of unconditional surrender Querrette answered saying that he had already ordered his troops to retreat to Islahiyeh.

Not true

No one can say with certainty that the final status of Cilician would have been different if Marash were not abandoned. The effect of external pressures could have become overpowering. But the military situation would not have deteriorated as rapidly nor the unprotected people would have been subjected to immense suffering



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