

## The Napoleon Series

### The Campaign of 1814: Chapter 18, Part XI

By: Maurice Weil

Translated by: [Greg Gorsuch](#)

# THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814

(after the documents of the imperial and royal archives of Vienna)

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## THE ALLIED CAVALRY

DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814

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### CHAPTER XVIII.

OPERATIONS OF THE ALLIED ARMIES FROM 25 MARCH 1814 IN THE MORNING  
UNTIL THE END OF THE CAMPAIGN.

FÈRE-CHAMPINOISE. -- SAINT-DIZIER. --PARIS.

**Negotiations. --Armistice.** --A little after 4 o'clock, the aide de camp of General Lagrange, sent in negotiation by Marmont, had managed to cross the lines of the Allies and to be conducted near the sovereigns and the Generalissimo. The powers given to the French officer were slightly extended: he should simply obtain a truce. If only for the very reason that the progress made by the attack, taking positions that dominated Paris, it was impossible to admit that the sovereigns and the Generalissimo would be happy with a similar agreement, would give up the benefits they had gained and consent to give the defense, naturally eager to drag out negotiations in length, the ability to wait for the arrival of the army of the Emperor. The Czar, however, was careful not to push the opportunity he had been looking for since the day before and that he had tried to restart in the morning. He therefore instructed Colonel Orlov, his aide de camp who had accompanied Peyre into Pantin, to confer with the French parliamentarian. The interview was short. The lack of powers given to the French officer having not allowed him to engage, the Tsar commissioned Orlov and Colonel Count Paar to go with him to Marmont. Galloping through and under a terrible fire from the chain of Russian and French skirmishers, Orlov saw a French general to whom he headed and immediately gave the order to cease fire. "I am the Duke of Raguse, he said, with the meeting of the Russian officer, "and you, who are you? --The Colonel Orlov, aide de camp of H. M. the Emperor of Russia. His Majesty wants to save Paris for France and for the world. --That is also our desire and hope. What are your conditions? --The struggle will cease immediately. The French troops will withdraw behind the barriers. We immediately appoint a commission to address the basis for capitulation. --*I agree.* The Duke of Trévisé and I will go to the barrier of Pantin where we will await you. We will hurry to stop the fire on the line. Goodbye."

Starting to join his sovereign, Orlov turned around once towards the Marshal and said, "Are the heights of Montmartre to be within the number of points you must evacuate your troops from?" --Marmont thought for a minute before answering: "No doubt, since they are outside the barriers."

On his return to the sovereigns, Orlov found the Czar on the height in front of Belleville about to give the order to establish a battery. From when the colonel had given him an account on his mission, Alexander summoned Count Nesselrode and communicated to him the instructions he had previously agreed with the King of Prussia and Prince Schwarzenberg. Nesselrode, Orlov and Colonel Count Paar, aide de camp of the Generalissimo, designated to serve as Commissioners and accompanied by Captain Petersen, chamberlain to the Emperor of Russia, headed quickly toward the barrier of Pantin where they arrived around 5 o'clock.

At that time the fire had completely ceased all along the front positions of the Allied Great Army and Marmont. One only heard the cannonade and the sound of musketry that came from the side of the Army of Silesia and the north face of the enclosure. Marmont alone, surrounded by his staff, was waiting the Allied commissioners at the barrier of Pantin. Mortier had not appeared. After several minutes of interview, the Allied commissioners accessing the proposal of the Duke of Raguse, consented to go, first to La Villette, then to La Chapelle, where one finally found the Duke of Trévisé. The Allied commissioners and the two Marshals then came to discuss the basis for capitulation in an inn, not far from the Saint-Denis barrier.

Meanwhile the Duke of Trévisé had been joined around 4 o'clock by General Dejean, who, after vainly chasing King Joseph had brought the Marshal the announcement of the imminent arrival of the Emperor and the verbal but formal order, to defend to the last extremity. General Dejean simultaneously informed Marshal Mortier he was carrying a letter from the Emperor to Schwarzenberg, in which letter Napoleon was informing the Generalissimo that he had submitted directly to his stepfather proposals that were to bring peace. Mortier, although he had not yet received the order left by Joseph at his departure from Montmartre and as he had no illusions about the reception of this kind of communication in such a moment, had nevertheless instructed the General Lapointe, his chief of staff, to seek an armistice and surrender to the Generalissimo the confidential letter addressed to him.<sup>1</sup>

At the opening of the conference, at the inn of "*Petit-Jardinier*" Nesselrode posed an unacceptable conditions: Paris was to be handed over to the Allies, the garrison would put down their arms. The Russian commissioner tried in vain to calm the indignation of the Marshals by declaring that the Allied sovereigns did not impose similar conditions to force Napoleon to make peace. The Marshals remained steadfast at least, when suddenly one heard a violent cannonade and the sound of a lively shooting. It was Langeron attaining the hardly defended heights of Montmartre. Nesselrode, thinking that the new progress of the Allies could persuade the marshals to accept his conditions, returned again to the charge; but before their refusal, he had to resign himself to end the conference and returned with his colleagues to seek new instructions in Belleville. "The Allied commissioners," says Orlov, "were accompanied by General Lapointe, bearer of the letter provided by General Dejean. Spurned by the Generalissimo, General Lapointe was soon to return to Paris by the barrier of La Villette."<sup>2</sup>

At 7 o'clock in the evening, the Allied commissioners, armed with new instructions were back at the cabaret where they found the Marshals.

The new proposals were little softer than the first.

The rulers were willing to let the troops out of Paris with arms and baggage; but they wanted, however, to determine a direction of their choice for retirement.

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<sup>1</sup>According to Koch, Schels and Damitz, General Lapointe was sent by Mortier directly to the headquarters of the Allies. We, instead, give preference to the version of Count Orlov who recorded in his diary the smallest events of talks and negotiations leading to the signing of the surrender.

<sup>2</sup>Journal of Count Orlov (*Topographical Archives*). Orlov who conferred at Belleville with the Emperor Alexander, had no knowledge of the response of Schwarzenberg to the letter delivered by General Lapointe. The Generalissimo informed the Marshal that he was misinformed that the sacred and indissoluble bonds between the sovereigns made their sovereign unable to deal separately with peace and joined his letter to a copy of the statement made by Allied sovereigns during the rupture of the Congress of Châtillon.

The Marshals strongly protested against these claims, all the more unacceptable that, as Marmont remarked to the Allied commissioners, Paris was not blockaded. For him, as for Mortier, the French troops should be able to use for retirement all roads still available to them.

The Duke of Raguse also invited Nesselrode to inform him as to what roads the Allies would have relied upon to assign them if they would had accepted these unacceptable proposals. As soon as he knew they were forcing them to take the road to Brittany, Marmont declared that: "Determined to defend, in this case, Paris foot by foot, and only could, in any event, be thrown back on the Faubourg Saint-Germain and from there on the road to Fontainebleau, it was impossible to grant an incompatible armistice with the honor of an old soldier that the Allies would be unable to obtain by force." Visibly moved by the exorbitant claims of the commissioners, the Marshal added in conclusion: "Fortune favors you; the success of your arms is certain. The consequences of your victory is incalculable. Be moderate and generous. Do not push us to the latest resolutions. Magnanimity is often more useful and profitable than force."

While acknowledging the correctness of the arguments of the Marshals, the commissioners, bound by their instructions, dared not and could not give in to anything. In these circumstances, the discussion continued without result until Mortier, renouncing playing any longer a diplomat that little role suited his character, told the commissioners that he was abandoning to the Duke of Raguse the task of negotiating with them, and he left them to go and take the necessary measures to ensure and continue the defense of the capital.

**Suspension of talks and negotiations, on 30 March at 8 o'clock in the evening.** --Night came. It was 8 o'clock. One had discussed for nearly three hours without being able to reach a solution. The situation seemed all the more serious as the Allied commissioners had knowledge of the arrival of General Dejean, and they knew the Emperor and his army marched on Paris.

Then Colonel Orlov remarked to Nesselrode that the Allies could attack Paris at night, as they were finding it absolutely impossible to prevent the French to withdraw from the route the Marshals choose. It was necessary, in his opinion, either to immediately sign the capitulation, or suspend the negotiations and be left hostage in Paris until the signing of the armistice or until the resumption of hostilities. Count Nesselrode not daring to break the formal instructions of Emperor Alexander accepted the proposal of Orlov, and suspended the session by stating to the Duke of Raguse that the Allies would not recommence hostilities before Colonel Orlov had been recalled and brought back to the Russian outposts.

Marmont, accompanied by Orlov) returned to Paris. Nesselrode, Colonel Count Paar and Captain Petersen returned to the headquarters of Alexander.

**Orders given by Schwarzenberg on 30 March at 6 o'clock in the evening.** --While one was negotiating without managing to agree on the terms of surrender, the Generalissimo had, at 6 o'clock, sent to his various corps his first disposition and renewed the order to cease hostilities on the line. Under this disposition the Army of Silesia was to establish at Montmartre and cover its right occupying the Bois de Boulogne and the bridges of the Seine from Paris to Neuilly. The Russian grenadiers and VI<sup>th</sup> Corps were bivouacked on the heights of Belleville and Bagnolet, with support from the Guards and reserves stopped in the hills behind Pantin and Romainville. The IV<sup>th</sup> Corps, having behind it the III<sup>rd</sup> Corps, remained in the Bois de Vincennes and guarded the bridge of Charenton.

The headquarters returned to Bondy. The troops of the Allies then described around Paris a huge arc based on the Seine upstream and downstream of the capital. On the left, the Crown Prince of Württemberg had his light troops distributed between the Bois de Vincennes and Charenton. The bulk of the IV<sup>th</sup> Corps remained for the night at Nogent and Neuilly-sur-Marne. Behind it, the III<sup>rd</sup> Corps was bivouacked in the second line between Montreuil and Fontenay-sous-Bois. The brigade of Crenneville used for investment of Vincennes, had his bulk at the Pissotte. The cavalry of the two corps was in Saint-Mandé, covered by a line of vedettes stars established at fusil shot from the barriers of Paris.

In the center the VI<sup>th</sup> Corps and the Russian grenadiers had lit their campfires on the heights of Belleville, Ménilmontant, Mont-Louis and Charonne, the grenadiers in the first line, the VI<sup>th</sup> Corps second. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the Russian Guard extended to the right of the grenadiers in the hills and spread across the plain, north of Prés-Saint-Gervais. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the Guard and the brigade of Prussian and Baden Guard encamped on the plain in front

of Pantin. The Russian cavalry and cuirassiers of the Russian and Prussian Guard remained in a second line around Pantin. The Russian artillery was in battery at Charonne, Mont Louis and Belleville.

Barclay de Tolly, who had just been appointed field marshal, moved to Romainville.

The King of Prussia came to establish in Pantin. The Emperor of Russia and Schwarzenberg had kept their headquarters at the château of Bondy.

On the right wing, the advanced guard of Katzler had not moved from Rouvroy; Prince William of Prussia occupied La Villette; the cavalry of Zieten established at the level of La Chapelle; the division of Horn encamped between the hill of the Cinq-Moulins and Montmartre; the II<sup>nd</sup> Corps and the corps of Langeron on the Montmartre butte and Vorontsov in front of Clignancourt.

Detachments provided by the corps of Langeron occupied Monceaux and Les Ternes, Clichy and Neuilly, Boulogne and Auteuil.<sup>3</sup>

Blücher, although still cruelly suffering from his Ophthalmia, had risen for the first time on horseback towards the end of the day, without having seen anything of what had happened, without having taken any part in the fighting delivered by his army, he had established at first near La Villette, then in a completely devastated and ransacked house on the butte of Montmartre.<sup>4</sup>

The slow pace of negotiations was not without worrying the Allied generals and especially the Chief of Staff of the Army of Silesia. To be ready to counter any event, he had established at Montmartre a large battery of 84 pieces and gave the order to keep the troops ready either to receive the French attack, or to make an assault. Furthermore, he had informed the commanders of corps and divisions that without waiting for the opinion of the denunciation of the armistice, they would have to move forward as soon as the Great Army resumed the offensive. Yorck and Kleist, wrapped in their cloaks, had spread out on a bale of straw. Always careful, always inclined to anticipate difficulties, the commander of the I<sup>st</sup> Corps expected to see the struggle renew the next day as he had given orders to profit in the night by distributing to his troops who had more cartridges ammunition abandoned by the French. Around 11 o'clock he was somewhat reassured when the Count of Brandenburg, who he sent to the headquarters of the King of Prussia, brought him to Pantin a dispatch announcing that the Marshals would be forced to withdraw to Rennes, but the capitulation was however not yet finally signed.<sup>5</sup>

**Positions of the corps of Wrede and of Sacken.** --The two corps of Wrede and of Sacken were, one remembers, left at Meaux and Trilport to cover the rear of the Allies. Later in the afternoon, the Bavarian Field Marshal had reported to the Generalissimo of the positions occupied by the V<sup>th</sup> Corps and by the Russians. He informed him, moreover, that the bulk of the cavalry of Frimont stood at Quincy, the vanguard at Crécy; two squadrons of the tip held in the Grand Morin the bridge of Coulommiers. General Sacken had pushed most of his cavalry on Château-Thierry and had detached parties on the road to La Ferté-Gaucher. Neither the Cossacks of Sacken or the cavalrymen of Frimont had seen the slightest column of French troops.

But the baggage and convoys had not finished crossing the Marne. "Only tomorrow," Wrede said, in finishing his dispatch, "will there be no cavalry left on the left bank of the Marne."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>STÄRKE, *Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März.* (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1.)

<sup>4</sup>Tagebuch des Generals der Kavallerie Grafen von Nostitz. (*Kriegsgeschichtliche Einzelschriften*, 1884, V.)

<sup>5</sup>DROTSSEN, *Life of Field Marshal Count Yorck von Wartenburg*, II, 388-89.

<sup>6</sup>Field Marshal Count Wrede to Prince Schwarzenberg, Meaux, 30 March afternoon (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 496), and TAXIS, *Tagebuch* (Ibid., XIII, 32).

**Temporary dispositions of the Generalissimo 31 March.** --The Generalissimo, after giving at 6 o'clock in the evening the orders we have reproduced above, was still not expecting signature and the final conclusion of the armistice to send his lieutenants interim guidelines governing operations for the next day.

By the reports provided by Seslavin and Kaisarov he already knew, before returning to his headquarters in Bondy, that the army of the Emperor was marching on the road from Troyes to Sens and headed to Fontainebleau.<sup>7</sup> The arrival of Nesselrode leaving him more doubts on the outcome of negotiations, he addressed without further delay new instructions to Wrede, the Crown Prince of Württemberg, to Rayevsky and Field Marshal Blücher.

The dispatch for Wrede was conceived in these terms: "The Marshals Marmont and Mortier will probably fall back to Fontainebleau, and Napoleon, it seems, will march on Paris by the road of Sens. Only leave a detachment on La Ferté-Gaucher. Come tomorrow with your corps to Chelles in order to arrive in Paris after tomorrow, the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. The corps of Sacken will remain until further notice in Meaux and send off parties on Montmirail and La Ferté-sous-Jouarre."<sup>8</sup>

Rayevsky was pushing, from the 31<sup>st</sup> in the morning, his light cavalry on the road to Fontainebleau and charged with the rapid pursuit of the French troops leaving from Paris.<sup>9</sup>

The Crown Prince of Württemberg received for his part orders to cross the Marne at Charenton, marching on Melun and ensure the bridge of the Seine.<sup>10</sup>

As the Generalissimo had decided that only part of the Allied army would come into Paris, he had joined to his dispositions instructions for the positions that the various corps of the Allied army would occupy 31 March, from 7 o'clock in the morning. The Army of Silesia had to guard the barrier from La Villette to the Seine towards Passy and push from there on to the left bank; the VI<sup>th</sup> Corps had to provide posts from the Pantin barrier to the road of Montreuil; the IV<sup>th</sup> Corps, those established from Montreuil to the Seine.

**Observations on the battle of Paris.** --Before returning one last time to the conclusion of the capitulation and re-opening of negotiations to which it gave rise, it seems essential to take a last look at the character of the battle of Paris. From both sides, the side of the attack as the defense, the conduct of operations leads to more criticism.

Although expected and desired by the Allied generals as it was feared by King Joseph and his counselors, the battle of Paris had above all this singular peculiarity that it had, for most of the day, taken on the character of a combat formed by the very fact that senior direction and the rational preparation for combat have been lacking on both sides. Although despite the complete disappearance of Joseph, despite such serious mistakes as the abandoning of

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<sup>7</sup>STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im Monate März. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1.)

<sup>8</sup>Prince Schwarzenberg to Field Marshal Count Wrede, Bondy, 30 March evening. (*Ibid.*, III, 504.)

<sup>9</sup>Prince Schwarzenberg to General Rayevsky, Bondy, 30 March evening. (*Ibid.*, III, 503.)

<sup>10</sup>Prince Schwarzenberg to the Crown Prince of Württemberg, Bondy, 30 March evening. (*Ibid.*, III, 502.)

The Crown Prince of Württemberg responded again on the night of the 30<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup>, from Fontenay-sous-Bois, to the dispatch of the Generalissimo. He informed him that as of 10 o'clock in the morning, a Württemberg regiment and two battalions of Austrian grenadiers of the IV<sup>th</sup> Corps, an Austrian infantry regiment of the III<sup>rd</sup> would be made to remain in Pantin and the troops of the IV<sup>th</sup> Corps would guard the barriers between the barrier of Trône and the Seine. A second brigade of the III<sup>rd</sup> Corps was also to reinforce the troops responsible for the investment of the Château Vincennes. The bulk of the two corps would cross the Marne at Charenton and would take a position on the Villeneuve-Saint-Georges--Noiseau line. The advanced guard of the IV<sup>th</sup> Corps would push towards Melun and that of the III<sup>rd</sup> Corps on Brie-Comte-Robert with orders to watch from there the road to Provins. The Crown Prince also changed a few hours later the instructions for the III<sup>rd</sup> Corps. This corps was ordered to begin its move at 8 o'clock crossing the bridge of Saint-Maur and taking position: the main body at Boissy-Saint-Léger, the vanguard in Brie-Comte-Robert, watching the roads leading to Tournan, to Fontenay, to Rozoy and to Guignes.

Romainville and Pantin, that the Marshals were able to hold out all day, it would be wrong never the less to assign to their dispositions the duration a resistance, that the weakness of command and lack of leadership of the Allied armies had only made possible.

Not to even mention the superfluous luxury of precautions taken to cover the rear of the masses brought to Paris, stopping unnecessarily two corps in Meaux and Trilport, it is hard to explain why one conducted the two corps of Gyulay and Crown Prince of Württemberg to the far left of the attack on the points where resistance would be serious, while they confided to the one corps of Rayevsky the difficult task of taking the plateau of Romainville.

One had also given a disproportionate extension to the front of attack and neglected especially to adjust the march of the different columns so they were able to get in line at the right time and in a condition to support each other. Far from profiting from the error of the French abandonment of Pantin and Romainville, the Allies had evacuated the villages the 29<sup>th</sup> in the evening. Without the initiative of Prince Eugene of Württemberg who by his quickness of eye and energy repaired in part, within the limits of the forces at his disposal, the errors and made up for the lack of higher command, Marmont had managed to occupy the heights and to prevent the VI<sup>th</sup> Corps foothold on the plateau whose possession alone could allow the Allies to debouch from Pantin.

The movements of the Army of Silesia were neither better combined nor more skillfully prepared than those of the Great Army. This they did so slowly that Mortier had time to settle in positions that they could have occupied without resistance if, in the morning, one had marched to the sound of the cannon and pushed Langeron towards Aubervilliers near the banks of the Ourcq canal and La Villette. Finally, while the Russians of Rayevsky and the brigade of the Prussian guard supported the brunt of the fight, they would not, at the headquarters of the Army of Silesia, depart from the usual methods of Gneisenau and instead of seeking to disengage the battle front of the center by a sudden offensive against the left of the French lines, they methodically prepared the attack positions north of the Ourcq canal by the action of artillery.

The Allies for the rest, paid dearly for the mistakes they committed, and it is those, we repeat again, the lack of a single leadership, the faulty dispositions of command, their successive efforts, their partial seizures, that we must attribute the relatively large losses of their troops took during the day of 30 March.

**Signing of the capitulation.** --At 11 o'clock in the evening, the Emperor of Russia having obviously agreed in principle to the conditions posed by Marmont and Nesselrode had undertaken to file for approval, because the Generalissimo, writing to Blücher, said: "Following the capitulation, the French troops evacuate Paris tomorrow morning at 7 o'clock and are likely to withdraw by the road to Fontainebleau. You will agree with me that it is even more important to the pursuit that we do no favors for the enemy after leaving Paris. So make sure this pursuit is very vigorous and by the shortest route, those of your most advantageously placed troops for this purpose. The light cavalry of the VI<sup>th</sup> Corps are ordered to participate in this pursuit. It will be supported by the III<sup>rd</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> Corps that will push their light troops on the roads leading to Melun and neighboring roads."<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile Marmont, accompanied by Orlov, returned to Paris. All who remained in the capital of high functionaries and official persons were looking forward to the return of the Marshal. General de Girardin, an aide to Chief of Staff, arrived from Troyes in the evening, had also visited the hotel of the Marshal, and despite the protests of the assistants, all with the exception of Valletta, supporters of capitulation, he had given again the Marshal a formal order to continue the defense and said again to the Duke of Raguse that he only preceded by a few hours the Emperor himself. Nothing was done; nothing was finalized.

One could have started the fight the next day. The arrival of Talleyrand,<sup>12</sup> the private interview he had with the Marshal, succeeding the insinuations of Bourrienne, the praise, the congratulations which were constantly filling the

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<sup>11</sup>Prince Schwarzenberg to Field Marshal Blücher, Bondy, 30 March, 11 o'clock in the evening. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 561.)

<sup>12</sup>Colonel Orlov says that Talleyrand, after the meeting he had had with Marmont, crossed the room, and heading for the Russian officer who stood on the sidelines, said in a solemn tone: "Sir, please relay to the feet of H. M. the Emperor of Russia, the expression of the profound respect from the Prince of Bénévent." "Prince," Orlov replied

characters together at home, defeated the last hesitations of the Marshal and he decided, to use the same words used by General-Lieutenant von Bismarck, "to sacrifice his honor and the honor of the nation to the hatred that he bore for Napoleon."

At 2 o'clock in the morning, Colonel Count Paar<sup>13</sup> rejoined Orlov and brought him the authority to sign the capitulation, and that allowed the Allied commissioners to accept the conditions imposed by Marmont and Mortier. A few hours later, Orlov and Paar, on behalf of the Emperor of Russia and the Generalissimo, colonels Fabvier and Denys de Danrémont<sup>14</sup> aides de camp of Marmont and delegated by him, signed the capitulation following the text that had been read previously by Marmont himself to the characters together in his salon:

"First article. --The corps of Marmont and Mortier will evacuate the city of Paris, on 31 March, at 7 o'clock in the morning."

"Art. 2. --They carry with them the *equipment* of their army corps."

"Art. 3. --The hostilities will resume two hours after the evacuation of Paris, that is to say, 31 March, at 9 o'clock in the morning."

"Art. 4. --All arsenals, workshops, stores and military establishments will be left in the state they were before there was any question of this capitulation."

"Art. 5. --National or urban guard are completely separate from the troops of the line. They will be preserved, disarmed or disbanded according to the provisions of the Allied powers."

"Art. 6. --The body of the municipal police fully share the fate of the National Guard."

"Art. 7. --The wounded and marauders remaining in Paris after 7 o'clock will be prisoners of war."

"Art. 8. --The city of Paris is recommended to the generosity of the high Allied powers."

The capitulation was and could only be purely military; but there was still a lot of issues to deal with, issues which, although of paramount importance, could only be resolved by civil authorities, by a deputation one agreed to send to the Czar and that Colonel Orlov had promised to lead to Bondy and submit to his sovereign. The Russian colonel, who led negotiations with the sad spirit of moderation and delicacy that matched the instructions of Emperor Alexander, had also taken care to declare that Article 8 had been drafted on the formal order the Czar, wishing "to save the inhabitants of Paris the humiliation of the keys of the city appearing in a foreign museum."

Led by Colonel Orlov, the deputation of Paris, composed of the prefect of the Seine, Chabrol, the prefect of police Pasquier, some City Council members, the Chief of Staff of the National Guard Allent, of Tourton, of and of Alexander de Laborde, adjutant commanders of that guard, set off for Bondy. After presenting the deputation to Count Nesselrode, Colonel Orlov went to the chamber of the Czar, gave him an account of his mission and prepared

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softly, "I will carry, you may be sure, this blank check to the attention of His Majesty." A thin smile appeared on the lips of Talleyrand, satisfied with the meaning of his words, walked quickly away and left the hotel of the Marshal. (Journal of Michael Fedorovich Orlov; *Topographical Archives*, n° 47346.)

<sup>13</sup> The letter from Count Nesselrode was in these terms: "To Mister Orlov, Colonel. Sir, His Majesty the Emperor, agreeing with Marshal Prince Schwarzenberg, that it is more beneficial to the Allied armies not to insist on the condition that he put on the exit of troops reserving the right to pursue them on the road by which they head. You are therefore authorized, together with Colonel Count Paar, to conclude an agreement on the surrender and occupation of Paris to the conditions we agreed before leaving with the M.M. (misters) the Dukes of Trévisé and Raguse. Bondy, 18/30 March." (Journal of Orlov; *Topographical Archives*, n° 47346.)

<sup>14</sup>The same who was killed in the assault of Constantine.

to leave for the barrier of Pantin where the French and Allied commissioners were to meet the 31<sup>st</sup> at 8 o'clock in the morning.<sup>15</sup>

**Position of Marmont and Mortier the 30<sup>th</sup> March in the evening.** --The French troops had not expected the final signing of the surrender to begin their movement of retreat and leaving of Paris. As soon as he left the *Petit-Jardinet*, Mortier had returned the barriers to the National Guard and given General Curial the order to evacuate Paris, gaining by the outer boulevards and the bridge of Austerlitz the route of Fontainebleau and to settle militarily at the level of Villejuif. At midnight, the movement was completed.

Marmont's corps rallied at the Champs-Élysées, where he spent the night. Some battalions only remained a short distance from the last combat positions.<sup>16</sup> All of the 6<sup>th</sup> Corps was ordered to get under way 31 March to 4 o'clock in the morning, cross the bridges of Iéna and Concorde and out through the barriers of Orléans and Maine to go to establish at Essonnes.

The cavalry Belliard, before the column of General Curial, was marching towards Juvisy.

**Movements of the army of the Emperor during the day of 30 March.** --Before leaving Troyes, March 30 at 10 o'clock in the morning, the Emperor, increasingly worried, had spent all morning hastening the march of his army on the road from Troyes to Sens and Fontainebleau.<sup>17</sup>

At 6 o'clock in the morning, he had sent to General Maurin the order to go to Nogent-sur-Seine from the arrival there of the head of the column of Sebastiani. Maurin would find General Souham who repaired the bridge and had to build a second one. This general officer was to move with his division on Montereau and charge moreover to guard the bridges of Moret and of Loing.

At 9 o'clock in the morning, the Emperor mandated to Saint-Germain that he prescribe General Maurin to go to Villeneuve-l'Archevêque and that the army taking the road of Sens, Saint-Germain was with his cavalry to follow the movement of Maurin.

At 10 o'clock, he sent his final instructions to the marshals and warned he was going in person to Fontainebleau. Ney would follow as closely as possible the movement of the Emperor. Macdonald would march by Doulevant, Nully, the bridge of Dolancourt, Troyes and Villeneuve-l'Archevêque on Sens and Fontainebleau. Oudinot, who acted as the rear guard, would follow the same route.<sup>18</sup>

**Positions of the corps of the Emperor, 30 March in the evening.** --While forcing his marches, the foot and horse Imperial Guard could not however go further than Villeneuve-l'Archevêque. Preceded by the cavalry of General DeFrance, Ney was forced to stop at Troyes where the division of Lefol did not arrive until well into the evening.

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<sup>15</sup>Journal of Michael Fedorovich Orlov (*Topographical Archives*, n° 47346). Orlov tells in these terms of the interview he had with the Czar in Bondy who had not yet risen: "What news do you bring me?" --"The capitulation of Paris, sire?" --The sovereign took what was written, read it, folded it, slipped it under his pillow, saying to the colonel: "I congratulate you for having your name attached to this great event." The Emperor made Orlov give details of his stay in Paris and especially the meeting with Talleyrand. "It is still only an anecdote, but it can become history," he added, dismissing Orlov. Some moments after the Russian Emperor slept again in a deep sleep.

<sup>16</sup>Journal of the division of Boyer de Rébeval. (*Archives of the War*.)

<sup>17</sup>STÄRKE, Eintheilung und Tagesbegebenheiten der Haupt-Armee im März Monate. (*K. K. Kriegs Archiv.*, III, 1.)

<sup>18</sup>Chief of Staff to General Maurin, Troyes, 30 March, 6:15 and 9 o'clock in the morning; General Souham, *ibid*, 8:30; to General Saint-Germain, 9 o'clock; to the Marshals Ney, Macdonald and Oudinot, 10 o'clock. (Records Berthier, (*Archives of the War*.)

The absolute lack of food and the need to send to Troyes for bread, that the Prince of the Moskowa had had made had prevented Marshal from pushing up to Saint-Liébauld as it was proposed.<sup>19</sup>

Macdonald had left Nully at daybreak. To save time, his infantry marched in column by battalions to the right of road, the battalions separated from each other by a suitable distance, the head of the artillery at the level of the first battalions, the horses being led, canteens, etc. ., etc., to the left of the path. The cavalry of Milhaud flanked the march. But these troops, arriving at 11 o'clock in the evening, were so exhausted that the Marshal was unable to reach La Villeneuve-au-Chêne until the 11<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry.<sup>20</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps had to stop in Vendevre, where Oudinot arrived in the evening with the 7<sup>th</sup> Corps and 6<sup>th</sup> Cavalry.<sup>21</sup> Piré, who was trying hard to reach the head of the army, spent the night with his cavalry in Fontaines.<sup>22</sup> Souham, only with 6 line battalions and a battalion of the National Guard, representing a total of 1800 men and 150 horses, and therefore too weak to guard the line of Montereau to Moret and the bridges of Loing, had recalled the posts placed on the left bank of the Seine, and leaving Nogent, had been placed in march on Montereau.<sup>23</sup>

**Arrival of the Emperor at La Cour-de-France.** --While his troops were performing these forced marches, the Emperor, accompanied by the old Marshal Lefebvre, by Caulaincourt, Drouot, Flahaut and Gourgaud had left Troyes at 10 o'clock, escorted by service squadrons to Villeneuve-l'Archevêque. When the road was sure to be clear, he jumped into a post-chaise.

On leaving Sens, where he arrived at one o'clock, the bad news had been successively relayed in series. In changing horses, he first learned that the Empress and the King of Rome left Paris, and the Allies attacked the capital. Instead of stopping at Fontainebleau, as he had intended, he continued to travel to Paris, taking with him Berthier, Caulaincourt and Flahaut.

At 11 o'clock in the evening, while changing horses in La Cour-de-France, General Belliard arrived there with his cavalry. Surprised to meet French troops on this side of Paris, worried about the silence that reigned in the direction of the capital and that cannon noise only came to interrupt, the Emperor summoned Belliard, took him aside and, walking with him on the road, he overwhelmed him with questions that the adjutant general barely had time to respond to. In short, Belliard told him the events of the day. The Emperor stopped and turning to Caulaincourt and the other officers, "You hear, gentlemen, what Belliard said. Come on! you have to go to Paris. Caulaincourt, advance my carriage! "

Despite comments from Belliard and Caulaincourt, the Emperor, persistent in his plan to go to Paris, continued to advance on the road, waiting for his carriage, which had not arrive.

Striding, questioning Belliard, commenting in violent terms on the conduct of Joseph and Clarke, he pushed on to Athis on foot where he met the column of General Curial.<sup>24</sup> Finally yielding to the instances of Berthier, of

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<sup>19</sup>Ney to the Chief of Staff, Troyes, 30 March, 4 o'clock in the evening. (*Archives of the War.*)

<sup>20</sup>Macdonald to the Chief of Staff, Nully, 30 March, 4 o'clock in the morning. "The villages in our rear and on our flanks are filled with stragglers of all kinds and of all corps. If we do not march with a little order, we will form a long tail and the appearance of some Cossacks will be enough to cause the dissolution of the column." Macdonald to the Chief of Staff, Villeneuve-Mesgrigny, 30 March, 10 o'clock in the evening. (*Archives of the War.*)

<sup>21</sup>Oudinot to the Chief of Staff, Vendevre, 30 March in the evening. (*Ibid.*)

<sup>22</sup>Piré to the Chief of Staff, Fontaines, 30 March, in the evening. (*Ibid.*)

<sup>23</sup> Souham to the Chief of Staff, Nogent, 30 March. (*Archives of the War.*)

<sup>24</sup>*Memoirs of Belliard.*

Caulaincourt, of Belliard, he called Flahaut, charging him to ride at full speed to Paris, to join Marmont, to order the Duke of Raguse to break off the talks and to continue the fight with his army corps and the National Guard.

When Flahaut was gone, the Emperor returned to La Cour-de-France and there hastily wrote the instructions, sending Caulaincourt to the sovereigns and the Generalissimo, "the investing him with all power<sup>25</sup> to negotiate and conclude peace."

A little after 4 o'clock, a letter from Caulaincourt announced to the Emperor that the capitulation was signed at 2 o'clock in the morning and the Allies<sup>26</sup> would enter Paris on the 31<sup>st</sup> in the morning. Moments later, Flahaut returned in turn carrying a letter from Marmont. According to the Marshal, "the National Guard and the Parisians have decided not to defend" and, as the Duke of Raguse has always accused someone, he did not hesitate to find the explanation of this sudden reversal of their state of mind in the departure of Joseph and members of the Government. Taking care not to talk about the feelings of the army, Marmont finished his dispatch saying he would put his troops in motion at 5 o'clock in the morning in order not to have on our hands the Allied cavalry that could menace his march from 9 o'clock.<sup>27</sup>

That was everything, and Napoleon, having no reason to stay at La Cour-de-France, decided to return to Fontainebleau, where he arrived a little after 6 o'clock in the morning.

### **31 March. --The Emperor of Russia receives in Bondy the deputation of Paris and the Duke of Vicence. --**

Waiting for the awakening of Alexander, Nesselrode had conferred with the deputation of Paris and sent to the Generalissimo the officers of the National Guard, specifically responsible for settling the conditions of turning over of the barriers. Schwarzenberg consented without difficulty to leave the National Guard the task of providing at any of the same barriers within the city, the positions required to maintain order and tranquility. A Russian officer and two adjutant commanders of the National Guard immediately departed for Paris in order to ensure on-site execution of these measures. The Adjutant Commander Laborde was soon to follow. Nesselrode had sent to invite Talleyrand not to leave Paris.

Shortly after, the deputation of Paris was presented to the Czar, who received them benevolently. Outlining briefly the reasons why he had been obliged to make war, not on France but the Emperor Napoleon, he also avoided pronouncing the name, referring to the proclamation that he would launch few hours later, saying he wanted to know the wishes of Paris and the opinion of the country, the Emperor of Russia promised to safe guard museums, public monuments and private property. At the urging of the delegates he even consented to keep the National Guard and asked that only measures be taken to sustain the Allied troops designated to enter the capital.

When the deputation had gone back to Paris, Caulaincourt was introduced in turn into the Tsar's presence. The reception given to the Duke of Vicence was cordial, but the hearing was brief and did not bring any results. Impatient to leave, Alexander refused to listen to the proposals Caulaincourt brought him and confined himself to invite him to come back to confer with him on the same day in Paris, pledging also to receive him at any hour.

**Orders of Schwarzenberg.** At 6 o'clock in the morning Schwarzenberg had issued the dispositions for the movements to be effected on the 31<sup>st</sup>, and designated the corps called upon to enter with the sovereigns at Paris. Knowing that the Marshals would retire to Fontainebleau, wishing on the other hand to show the Parisians only those of his troops, whose dress was not too much to be desired, and whose uniforms were not too tattered, he ordered the guards of the Russians and Prussians, to a Württemberg infantry regiment, the Russian grenadiers, and two battalions of Austrian grenadiers, the cavalry of the reserve and the guard to mass at 9:30 in the morning

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<sup>25</sup>The Emperor to Caulaincourt, La Cour-de-France, 31 March. (Correspondence, n° 21546.)

<sup>26</sup>FAIN, *Manuscript of 1814*.

<sup>27</sup>Marmont to the Emperor, Paris, 31 March, 4:30 in the morning.

between Pantin and the Faubourg Saint-Martin.<sup>28</sup> The Russian and Prussian Guards were only to be kept inside Paris.

The light cavalry of Pahlen, in charge of pursuing the Marshals, was to begin its movement at 9 o'clock, cross Paris from the barrier of Trône to the bridge of Austerlitz, and enter the road to Fontainebleau. The III<sup>rd</sup> and IV<sup>th</sup> Corps remained momentarily at the barriers of Charenton; the IV<sup>th</sup> Corps at Belleville. The corps had orders to come to Chelles. The guard of the barriers from the Seine upstream of Paris to the Porte de Pantin was entrusted to the troops of the III<sup>rd</sup>, IV<sup>th</sup>, and VI<sup>th</sup> Corps.<sup>29</sup> The Army of Silesia remained in their positions of the day before at the gates of Paris, with the exception of the cavalry of General Emanuel, who was to continue to follow the Marshals.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> 1,000 men belonging to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Russian Corps (Prince Eugene of Württemberg) were assigned to occupy the l'Hôtel de Ville. Prince Eugene could not comply with Barclay's formal order, according to which the detachment should be made up of men with boots, not clogs, and clothed in Russian uniforms. At the time of the campaign, the soldiers of Rayevsky and Prince Eugene had only ordnance shakos, and instead of their worn capotes they all donned the French uniforms picked up on the battlefields of Arcis-sur-Aube and Fère-Champenoise. (Memoirs of Prince Eugene of Württemberg.)

<sup>29</sup>Dispositions of Schwarzenberg for the day of 31 March, Bondy, 31 March, 6 o'clock in the morning.

<sup>30</sup>Dispositions of Gneisenau for the day of 31 March, Special provision to the Army of Silesia.