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remis à M. Chénouère

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C. R. 212

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RAPPORT CONCERNANT L'AGRESSION DONT FUT VICTIME LE 8  
DECEMBRE 1936 L'AVION DE L'AMBASSADE DE FRANCE A BORD  
DUQUEL JE ME TROUVAIS <sup>etait</sup> ~~EN TEMPS QUE~~ DELEGUE DU COMITE  
INTERNATIONAL DE LA CROIX-ROUGE.

Monsieur Neuville, Consul de France à Madrid, m'avait  
admis comme passager avec les deux enfants Cabello à bord d'un  
l'avion français en considération de mon titre de délégué du Comi-  
té International de la Croix-Rouge et de la mission humanitaire  
que j'accomplissais en Espagne. C'est après quelques hésitations  
d'ailleurs qu'il m'avait accordé cette faveur exceptionnelle du vent  
fait que je n'étais pas Français.

L'avion devait partir le 6 décembre.

Ce jour là, le matin à 10 heures environ, nous nous ren-  
dons au champ d'aviation à Bazaras, passagers et équipage, soit :  
M. Chateau de L'AGENCE HAVAS, M. Louis Delaprée de PARIS SOIR,  
les 2 enfants Cabello et moi-même, le pilote Charles Boyer et le  
radio-télégraphiste Bougrat.

Nous étions accompagnés d'un représentant de l'Ambassade  
de France et d'un radio-télégraphiste attaché à la dite Ambassade.

Nos passeports sont munis d'un visa de sortie d'Espagne.

Nous attendons sur le terrain plusieurs heures, puis le  
pilote vient nous aviser qu'il faut renvoyer à plus tard notre  
voyage; une dynamo de mise en marche d'un des moteurs ne fonctionne  
pas.

Il est tard, j'invite à déjeuner à Madrid les deux jour-  
nalistes, le pilote et les deux s-s-filistes avec lesquels j'avais  
d'emblée sympathisé.

Le lundi 7 décembre le départ ne peut avoir lieu, la répa-  
ration de la dynamo n'est pas terminée. Le soir cependant on m'assure



par téléphone que l'avion pourra quitter l'Espagne le lendemain.

Le mardi 8 décembre, nous sommes à 9 hres à Bajaras.

Nombreuses tentatives pour mettre en marche le moteur qui ne voulait pas tourner l'avant-veille. Des miliciens, en curieux, tournent autour de l'appareil, quelques-uns même s'y introduisent.

Enfin les 2 moteurs tournent!

Les formalités de police et de douane sont faites sans difficulté. Mes valises ne sont même pas visitées en vertu du passeport diplomatique dont je suis porteur.

On fait descendre les quelques miliciens qui se trouvent dans l'avion. Nous embarquons, le pilote est à son poste et à 12 h. 15 - 12 h. 30, c'est le départ.

Les deux moteurs tournent bien, nous prenons rapidement de l'altitude.

Les 2 enfants Cabello sont à l'avant de l'appareil, assises sur des valises et enveloppées dans des couvertures. Chateau et Delaprée s'installent dans la carlingue, Bougrat est à l'écoute à la radio. Je suis au second poste de commande; c'est un avion à double commande.

Nous rencontrons des avions de chasse que le pilote salue par un battement d'ailes. L'un d'eux s'approche assez près de l'appareil, je ne puis cependant distinguer ses couleurs mais par la forme de ses ailes particulièrement larges à leur base, il me paraît appartenir au gouvernement légitime. Il a fait un virage et déjà il s'éloigne. Le voyage se poursuit pendant un certain temps puis Boyer à nouveau fait balancer son appareil pour saluer un avion que je ne peux voir. Il essaye de me le montrer de la main. Je cherche encore à le voir quand brusquement je reçois un violent coup dans le mollet droit.

Bougrat se précipite près du pilote, lui crie :

" On nous a tiré dessus, il faut descendre à tout prix, le réservoir

Report on the aggression to which the French Embassy plane on which I was on board as a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross fell victim on December 8, 1936.

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Mr. Neuville, the French Consul in Madrid, had admitted me as a passenger with the two Cabello girls on board a French plane in consideration of my title of delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the humanitarian mission I was carrying out in Spain. Incidentally, he had granted me this exceptional favor only after some hesitation, since I was not French.

The plane was due to take off on December 6.

That day, around 10 a.m., we went to the Barajas airfield, passengers and luggage, that is: Mr. Château of the HAVAS AGENCY, Mr. Louis Delaprée of PARIS SOIR, the two Cabello girls and myself, the pilot Charles Boyer and the radio operator Bougrat.

We were accompanied by a representative of the French Embassy and a radiotelegrapher attached to the French Embassy.

Our passports have an exit visa for Spain.

We wait on the ground for several hours and then the pilot comes to warn us that we must delay our trip: a starting dynamo of one of the engines is not working.

Late in the afternoon, I invite to lunch in Madrid the two journalists, the pilot and the two radio operators with whom I had sympathized from the first moment.

On Monday, December 7, the departure cannot take place, because the repair of the dynamo is not completed. In the evening, however, I am assured that the plane will be able to leave Spain the next day.

On Tuesday, December 8, we are at 9 a.m. in Barajas.

Repeated attempts are made to start the engine that did not want to turn the day before. Some militiamen circled around the apparatus like voyeurs, some even entered it.

Finally, both engines start.

We go through the police and customs formalities without any problem. In fact, my luggage is not checked because of my diplomatic passport.

We let off some militiamen who were in the plane. We board the plane, the pilot is already at his post, and at 12:15-12:30 we take off.

Both engines are running well, and we are soon at altitude.

The two Cabello girls ride in the front of the aircraft, seated on suitcases and covered with blankets. Château and Delaprée are installed in the cockpit, Bougrat is listening to the radio. I'm in the second command post: it's a dual-control aircraft.

We come across some fighter planes, to which the pilot salutes with a movement of wings. One of them comes quite close to the aircraft, I can not distinguish its colors, but by the shape of its wings, especially wide at the base, it seems to me that it belongs to the legitimate government. It has made a turn and is already moving away. The trip continues for some time and then Boyer swings the aircraft again to wave at a plane I can't see. He tries to show it to me with his hand. I try to see him again, when suddenly I am shot violently in the right calf.

Bougrat quickly approaches the pilot shouting: "We have been shot at, we must go down at all costs, the fuel tank is leaking".

I see Delaprée staring in terror at the blood gushing from a wound in his thigh. Château groans beside him, also badly wounded.

We are at 3,300 m altitude, the aircraft descends vertiginously, in a very short time makes contact with the ground without too much brutality, rolls between 200 and 300 meters and hood. We rush on top of each other with the luggage and all the contents of the plane. The plane is rendered useless.

The little Cabello girls are already out of the apparatus. Bougrat helps Château. Boyer runs for help...

I apply a tourniquet to Delaprée to stop the bleeding.

It is 1 pm, we are in the countryside, 7 km from Pastrana, the nearest town.

Despite this, in about half an hour we are surrounded by about twenty peasants. They help us to move away from the aircraft and to shelter us a little from the icy wind that blows.

I check Delaprée's hemostasis and go to the side to help Château, who is also bleeding profusely. He has an open fracture of the tibia and fibula in his right leg. After tying a ligature on his thigh, I made an improvised fixation with some branches and a blanket. He feels relieved.

Delaprée suffers a lot, receives an injection of Pantopon. Château is also calmed down by this same medicine. I can't take it anymore and I lie down to wait for the help Boyer has gone to get.

At about 4 p.m., a doctor arrived and gave us some care. At 5 p.m., the little Cabello girls, Delaprée and I were taken by car to a small S.R.I. [Socorro Rojo Internacional] aid station in Pastrana.

Château, whose condition is considered more serious, was transferred to the military hospital in Guadalajara.

In Pastrana, we are placed on beds and helped. Finally we are given temporary bandages after an otherwise rather illusory disinfection.

At 9:00 p.m., several cars from the French Embassy, Mr. Fontanel, Chargé d'Affaires at the Swiss Delegation, and Mr. de Vizcaya, came to pick us up to return us to Madrid. I was transferred to the military hospital, at the Palace Hotel, where at 7:00 a.m. on December 9, Dr. Bastos proceeded to remove the bullet I had received in my right leg.

Mr. Fontanel did not leave my side until he saw me comfortably in bed and having received all the care my condition required.

Mr. de Vizcaya cared for the two Cabello girls, the older of whom, fortunately, was unharmed, while the younger suffered a fractured right ulna and a sprained foot.

They were taken on December 9 to the French hospital in Madrid, together with Delaprée and Château.

Delaprée's condition is very serious. A bullet to the thigh has fractured his ilium and caused several intestinal perforations.

As for Château, they hope to be able to save his foot, but he is likely to remain lame.

Fortunately, the pilot and Bougrat escaped the bullets and, thanks to their cold-bloodedness and ability, we all escape death.

At the end of this story, which I did not want to lengthen, I must clarify certain circumstances, certain facts.

1) If I could not figure out to whom the plane that committed the attack belonged, I must say that, from the beginning of the aggression, the pilot Boyer and the radio operator Bougrat declared that it was a government plane carrying a red band.

2) Given that the aircraft providing the Madrid-Toulouse service was a military aircraft placed at the disposal of the French Embassy in Madrid by the French Ministry of National Defense, it could be thought that it was attacked by mistake.

I put the question to Boyer, who replied that the Potez-54 he flew was a bombing plane with two turrets and did not have the French colors, but that it had "FRENCH EMBASSY" written on the cockpit in white letters and the regulatory R.F. with the registration number on the tail.

On the other hand, he added, the aggressor aircraft came close enough to recognize us, and the way it attacked showed that it knew it was heading against an undefended aircraft.

3) When Mr. Neuville came to interrogate me, proceeding with the investigation requested by the French Government, he told me, after having listened to me, that the reports of Bougrat and Boyer were unequivocal as to the identity of the aggressor aircrafts.

In addition, he confidentially advised me that, at the time of our takeoff from Barajas, a Frenchman named Marcelin had said:

"There's one that won't make it anyway."

This Marcelin, although French, was attached, I do not know in what capacity, to the Ministry of War of the Spanish Government, and his very suspicious attitude brought him, on the part of the French Embassy and of Mr. Neuville in particular, a very special vigilance.

4) It may seem strange that the Ministry of War in Madrid, warned of the accident by telephone around 3:30 p.m., did not warn the French embassy until 7:00 p.m., when Boyer had asked it to do so immediately.

5) At a roadblock, when they came to pick me up in Pastrana with the vehicles of the French Embassy, Mr. Fontanel and Mr. de Vizcaya were warned by a militiaman that a little before them, an official vehicle had passed whose occupant had asked that, when the French vehicles passed, they should be held for 20 to 30 minutes.

6) The militiaman told them that he was warning them of this fact so that they would hurry because he had the impression that this request made in bad Spanish came from a spy.

Later we were able to identify the individual who wanted to delay the French cars. It was the same Marcelin from point 3, who, being the first to arrive in Guadalajara, immediately contacted the military government.

G. Henny  
Geneva, January 2, 1937

[Translated into ENGLISH from a Spanish translation by Mercedes Corral].

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