MARSHALL MURAT WAS NOT ARMENIAN AT ALL

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Category: Opinions

By Artsvi Bakhchinyan, Yerevan, 28 October 2023

There is an Armenian proverb: "A fool threw a pebble into a pit; seven wise men could not retreive it." In this case, the pebble was thrown by Magda Neiman (Grigor Nikoghosyan) and the "pebble" – is her (or his) invention about the alleged Armenian origin of France's Marshal Joachim Murat. The efforts of those who try to convince our compatriots the marshal was NOT ARMENIAN have not been crowned with success.

For more than half-a-century, Joachim Murat was recognized as a Frenchman until Neiman's Russian book *Armenians* was published in 1899 in St. Petersburg. There it is written that Hovakim Muradyan, who was born in Artsakh, went with his father to Austria, Germany, and finally to France, where he joined the military and promptly became a marshal and changed his name to Joachim Murat.

Where did the information come from? From the author's imagination. Some believe Neiman co-authored the book with her husband Grigory Nikohosyan (Nikohosov) who created the mess related to the origin of Murat (as well as the biography of Napoleon's bodyguard - Rustam). There is no information about Murat's Armenian origin in French or other sources. Skeptics can argue that the French could have hidden the true origin of Murat. However, there exists Murat's birth certificate which provides details related to his origin.

Armenians who want to see Murat as an Armenian, in addition to Neiman, point at another source--the Armenian translation of French writer Arthur Burnett's novel, *Napoleon's Family Secrets* which was published in Armenian in Cairo at the *Voske Dar* (Golden Letter) publishing house. There, Napoleon lists people in his circle who do not deserve to inherit the French throne. He says: "And maybe my sister's husband - Murad Hovakimyan? But he is an Armenian from the East, a brave, a hero, an invincible warrior, the most daring and brave, he is the most convenient person to be my heir. But what can we do, he is an Armenian, an Eastern person - this nation does not want an emperor of eastern origin? If he were European, I would probably appoint him as my successor" (see page 203). When I read these lines I thought Napoleon's words were over the top. The marshal's name also raises doubts. Instead of Hovakim Muradyan (according to Neiman) here is Murad Hovakimyan. And that's what it turned out to be: the passage is missing in the original. Philologist Armen Ter-Stepanyan told me his father, philologist Karnig Stepanian, worked at the *Voske Dar* (1925-1930) and asked the publisher where he got the information from. The publisher admitted he had added this passage in order to attract the attention of the Armenian reader.

Varuzhan Poghosyan, specialist in French history, was the first to disperse the legend. In his article *The 'Secret' of Marshal Murat*, published in the Moscow edition of *New and Newest History* (1987, N 3), he refuted in detail the alleged Armenian origin of Murat, considering it not only devoid of scientific basis, but also a deliberate distortion of all the facts of Murat's biography. In my book *Napoleon and Armenians* I included a chapter titled *Murat was not an Armenian*. But the speaker needs a listener.

In the aforementioned article, Poghosyan pointed out that three previous generations of Murats are known. Among them Pierre I Murat (1634-?), Guillaume Murat (1692-1754), and Pierre II Murat (1721-1799) - the marshal's father. He also cited the text of Murat's birth certificate, kept in the archive of Labastide-Fortunière (now Labastide-Murat). "On March 25, 1767, Joachim Murat-Jordi was born in this parish, the legitimate son of Pierre Murat-Jordy and Jeanne Loubières, residents of the parish, and was baptized in the church of the parish on March 26." Poghosyan refers to the first volume of the correspondence of Marshal Murat, published by Albert Lumbroso in Paris in 1908. Page 2.

Since there is such a document, it is high time for our compatriots to abandon the "Murat is Armenian" myth. Armenian should leave Marshal Murat alone and be proud of their true martial compatriots.

There are no comments yet.