

the 150 French generals available in North Africa many were retired, some were veterans of the 'phoney war' period, all were seeking positions and all were stamped with the mark of the collaborationist and with the military thinking that led to the defeat of France. Fighting Frenchmen in North Africa, on the other hand, were young and skilled in modern warfare. Many of them had driven to victory beside the British 8th Army. Should they now be subjected to leadership of former collaborationists who had known only defeat in the field? Would it not be preferable to have a young, powerful, dynamic and seasoned army in which there would not be place for more than 25 or 30 generals?

On June 26 Bonneau developed further the argument that Frenchmen have a right to thresh out the question of rejuvenation of the French army and restoration of the laws of the French Republic without interference, just as any other democratic government would wish to do. He was writing in reply to an impatient editorial in the Ottawa Journal, which had called recent developments in North Africa a sickening spectacle of pride, jealousy and futility - a tragic reminder of the political mess that existed in France for several years prior to the war and that was largely responsible for its sudden collapse later. The patriotism of Generals Giraud and de Gaulle should be equal to their own voluntary elimination from the scene, the Journal had said. Perhaps unity would not be impossible if the principals were out of the picture. Bonneau replied that the discussions in North Africa were a healthy sign of a return to democratic practices. The difficulty, however, was that each difference of opinion, reported outside its context without relation to perspective, strained through military censorship and exaggerated to the proportions of a major battle on the Russian front, served only the purposes of enemy propaganda. In all Allied countries there were parallel problems which must be analysed and settled. But if there was to be solidarity before the enemy each must observe the courtesy of allowing others to settle their own problems in their own way.