

THE QUESTION OF THE SUPPLY OF WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION TO THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA IN 1918-1920

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Abstract

Until now, there have been superficial, incomplete and one-sided, sometimes politicized references to the Armenian-British military-political relations and British support in terms of military assistance and the supply of weapons and ammunition to the Republic of Armenia in 1918-1920, as well as in terms of the professional training of officers of the Armenian army. All this has left the study of the problem incomplete. There were blank pages that needed to be covered, as well as to offer rethinking, new historical and in-depth approaches. In this context, in the Armenian-British military-political relations and the British military-political mission in the Transcaucasus, there were both individual positive phenomena and cumulative pro-imperialist and pro-British phenomena that need a new assessment, revealing, in particular, the so-called Armenian-friendly British cabinet officials, as well as, in particular, purely imperialist officials, on the one hand, considering military and political figures who have a certain positive attitude towards Armenia, such as Oliver Baldwin of Bewdley, as well as Captain J. Gracie, who knows Armenian and has a positive attitude towards Armenia, Colonel Cl. Temperley. The activities and steps, on the contrary, of V. Thomson, D. Shuttleworth and the purposeful actions of others are sharply anti-Armenian, pro-Azerbaijani - pro-Turkish in their nature, as a result of which the Republic of Armenia suffered significantly, relying on its faithful allies. Different sides of the problem, some facts and details can be found in the books by R. Hovhannisyan, G. Galoyan, Arts. Hovhannisyan, as well as other sources. In the works of contemporaries and state politicians Al. Khatisyan, S. Vratsyan and other statesmen, there is factual selective material, the authors of which, as well as in memoirs, for the most part, are dominated by the approach of proofreading realities and facts, due to which the truth is presented incompletely or distorted, depending on the party and political affiliation of these people and the interests of which country they served or what rank they had in world processes, their possible influence. For example, the Armenian political forces that collaborated with the Young Turks and Al. Parvus or with the main characters of the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 - V. Lenin, L. Trotsky and others. It is also obvious that the Armenian-British military-political ties and a new assessment of the military support of the Republic of Armenia, the activities of military-political mission of Britain in Transcaucasus should be covered with a deep consideration of geopolitical factors,

focusing on the short existence of the Armenian statehood, its losses in the Turkish-Armenian war in the autumn of 1920 and the deepest causes of the fall of the Republic of Armenia. This is important because in 1918-1920 Armenia never showed any results in the military sphere, not without the participation of Great Britain, an ally of Armenia, with its incomplete, untimely and insufficient military assistance, and as for the rest powers, they did not show significant interest in this issue, as the oil and socio-political interests of these countries and the same England had other priority. The former “Entente ally” of Great Britain and rival Russia also chalked up its contribution to the above mentioned, which, after the fiasco by the “efforts” of the world powers in 1917, by superhuman efforts in the late 1919 and early 1920s, gradually came to its senses, as a result of which both sides turned the issue Armenia’s support in just a tool to fight against each other, and eventually came to a consensus to control the fate of Armenia by mutual agreement.

Keywords: *weapons and ammunition, allies, Entente, Republic of Armenia, Great Britain, Turkey, armed forces*

The October Revolution of 1917 in Russia marked the beginning of a new and long-term geopolitical process, in which many peoples were involved, as well as the Armenian people, which was subjected to genocide. The Armenian people had heroic battles in Sardarapat and, in the struggle for existence, decisively stopped the advance of Turkish terrorists in the Transcaucasus and in particular, in Eastern Armenia, as a result of which, after a 900-year break, a geopolitically favorable, but difficult opportunity arose for the further survival of Armenia and the restoration of Armenian statehood.

Unpredictable developments in 1918-1920 led to the restoration of Armenian statehood, which forced the creation of its own armed forces as a guarantee of its existence, and made the young republic dependent on almost all powers in terms of acquiring weapons and ammunition, and especially after the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, when Great Britain and France became the protagonists in Transcaucasus, who were guided by their hidden deep interests, as a result of which the support provided to Armenia was conditional, half-hearted, inadequate and in many cases untimely. The military occupation of Transcaucasus by the British side significantly changed the political course of the Republic of Armenia, since they did not like the Russophilia of the Armenians.¹ The “orientation” of the Armenian leadership had a dual character and was constantly changing, the issue of choosing a foreign policy course was constantly dependent on powerful geopolitical factors, and it gravitated towards the Entente countries. But after the middle of 1919 and from the beginning of

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¹ Denikin 2002: 247.

1920 Bolshevik Russia began gradually to become the dominant power on the outskirts of the former Russian Empire, including the Transcaucasus, Great Britain, France and other states gradually gave way to Russia, and Armenia could not avoid this circumstance, which is also connected with the concession strategy of the former allies, which was the result, perhaps, of a mutual agreement. Again there was a desire for Russia, because the allies could not prevent the Armenian genocide, which was carried out throughout the Transcaucasus. However, in 1918-1919, Armenia gravitated towards the main European countries: Great Britain, France, and in terms of Russia, some far-sighted politicians had a premonition that one day Russia would be reborn and return to the Caucasus.

Armenia was particularly interested in the position of the British from “ethnic, economic, financial, military and other points of view.”² The Armenians had almost no alternative, and in 1918, after gaining independence, Armenia was an ally of Great Britain, a member of the Entente, and this alliance is due to the fact that Armenia continued the war against Turkey, which was one of the most active opponents of the Entente.³ The strongest evidence of this was the presence of the Armenian Legion as part of the Entente troops, as well as Armenian volunteer military units as part of the Russian armed forces on the Caucasian front.

Moreover, this is in case when the Armenian people, their political leaders, by the time the allies came to the Caucasus, believed that the victory of the allies in the First World War was their victory, that Armenian interests would triumph in the Caucasus. Armenians warned the British authorities that the last food supplies were running out, that hospitals and orphanages were not receiving bread, that the Armenian people was in danger of destruction, and this expectation was well expressed by Prime Minister H. Qajaznuni. In a letter addressed to the British on February 7, 1919, he simply writes: “The Armenians were fully confident that with the victory of the allies and their arrival in the Caucasus, the situation would improve. However, I must say that a feeling of indignation, fear and disappointment began to creep into their thoughts. They start to think that the allies don’t care if they live or die.”⁴

So it was, the allies, the even more politically savvy British, saw very well how devoted the Armenians were to them, but the imperial interest remained above all, although some British officers, such as Cl. Temperley, J. Gracie⁵ or Oliver Baldwin were somewhat different from other officers, they loved the long-suffering Armenia and its people, and repeatedly called on their government to support them with military supplies

² Denikin 2002: 251.

³ Hovhannisyan 2019: 17-18.

⁴ Yenukidze 1954: 118-189.

⁵ George F. Gracie - On July 22, 1919 the British government appointed the chief British commissioner in Transcaucasus, the representative of Oliver Wardrope in Yerevan, intelligence officer, captain, who knew Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish languages - Hovhannisyan 2014: 131. After Gracie’s departure, the British military delegation was headed by Gordon Brown – Ashkhatavor, 1920, October 20, N 231.

and weapons so that the Armenians could effectively defend themselves against the Azerbaijani-Turkish encroachments, and not arm only Azerbaijan.

Already in the second half of 1919, the Azerbaijani government has already refused to accept the confirmation of the American governorship of Sharur-Nakhijevan, although it had given preliminary consent, subject to the withdrawal of Armenian troops from Zangezur, accusing the Armenians of continuing the occupation of the region. Al.Khatisyan refutes this claim, saying that it is a completely false pretext to thwart the Haskell plan and justify an open attack in Zangezur, which was supported by the British representative in Yerevan, George F. Gracie, informing Wardrope that Armenia did its best to keep the peace, but was constantly deceived, the Azerbaijanis and their agents have already tried to incite the Azerbaijanis in the Bashkend-Artsvashen region near Lake Sevan to attack this large village of 800 houses and seize their pastures.

At the same time, J.Gracie added to what was said: "From the self-confident smile and behavior of the representatives of Azerbaijan, it is easy to understand that they do not doubt their ability to conquer these regions by force of arms. They never hid from me that the troops were on the move, and that all this would probably lead to trouble." This situation continues to remain the same in December, during which J.Gracie again defends the Armenians, despite the fact that, in general, British support for one of the parties at intervals played a negative role in resolving the situation. Captain J. Gracie again stood up for the Armenians in response to Wardrope's instructions to reprimand the leaders of Yerevan for the fact that after the truce in Daralyagyaz, a military operation was provoked by Muslims, and heavy weapons were used in Zangezur that had nothing to do with the army, since these weapons were distributed in 1918 among Andranik's "partisans" by a British commissioned officer. Captain Gracie also accused Khosrov-bek Sultanov of new conspiracies, writing on December 12, 1919, that he would insist on taking measures to remove Khosrov-bek Sultanov from the Karabakh region, since he was a dangerous person.

Although it is worth saying that Wardrope and the American representative, Colonel James Ray, as if accusing both sides, tried to stop the bloody operations in Karabakh, Zangezur and other places, appealing to Prime Ministers Al. Khatisyan and N. Usubbekov with a demand to meet with each other and inform the Paris Armistice Commission, in connection with which the British Foreign Office considered it necessary to warn the Azerbaijani delegates in Paris, in response to which A. Crowe said that the Supreme Council knew little about the region and that only the warnings seem futile and no one is surprised that there were rational grounds. J.Gracie seems to have retained his sympathy for Armenia and Armenians. This is even evidenced by his speech on November 23, 1920, when the Republic of Armenia was going through difficult days, and J.Gracie had just returned from Yerevan. He conveys to the government a petition from the American Committee of Armenia asking the British Navy to introduce a permanent patrol service in the Black Sea and give the Sultan the authority to ratify the Treaty of Sevres. The Committee demanded that in the event of a possible revision of

the treaty, the articles relating to Armenia should not be weakened, and the revision of other provisions should be conditional on the removal of the Turks from all the lands that were provided to Armenia under the W.Wilson Arbitration, as well as the return of the seized weapons and ammunition, the payment of all reparations and compensation for all losses. However, the Foreign Ministry of Great Britain accepts the conditions of the Armenian committee presented to it with surprise and irritation, as if it did not concern them.⁶

However, it was so deceptive that the first Military Minister of the Republic of Armenia Hovh. Hakhverdyan disappointedly remembers: "Thomson was in no hurry to arrive in Yerevan, while the Armenian government was especially waiting for him, rightly assuming that the Armenian people, who fought the enemy to the end and remained loyal to the Allies, seemed to have the very right to special treatment from the Allies. During the first meeting with Gen. V. Thomson,⁷ Qajaznuni made this clear. Thomson objected rather sharply that they had more important things to do than simply express sympathy, but then, Prime Minister Hovh. Qajaznuni told him about the government's upcoming plans, and Thomson changed his "anger" to mercy and declared that he was pleasantly surprised by the government's sober standpoints. It should be noted that such sober approach refers to the first period of Armenia's existence, when Qajaznuni served as a Prime Minister. Later, along with the apparent successes of Armenia's foreign policy and after the resignation of Qajaznuni, the approaches and way of thinking of the government led by the hotheads of the party (meaning the ARF Bureau-Government -V.V.) became more "aggressive",⁸ but rather less harsh, not deeply thoughtful and carefully prudent rather than aggressive.

Returning to the strictly self-interested and self-centered policy of Great Britain in the Transcaucasus, it should be clearly stated that the first obvious proof of this was the creation of a neutral zone in Lori for Armenia immediately after the victorious Armenian-Georgian war, when the predominantly Armenian Lori was declared neutral against the will of its native Armenian population by British officer colonel N. Stewart.

However, the behavior of the British command and its military-political representation in Transcaucasus in the person of General V. Thomson and Shuttleworth,⁹ was emphatically anti-Armenian especially in terms of artificially declared

⁶ Hovhannisyan 2007: 804-805.

⁷ Thomson William Montgomery (December 2, 1878 - July 23, 1963) - Major General, from November 17, 1918 to 1919. On March 10 he was in command of the 39th Division, which occupied Baku, bringing with him about 2,000 soldiers from the British Indian Army, followed by his appointment as Governor of Baku.

⁸ NAA, fund 45, inv. 1, file 32, sheets 3-4.

⁹ Digby Inglis Shuttleworth (August 23, 1876-May 15, 1948) - British brigadier general known for his anti-Armenian activities in Karabakh. 1905 received the rank of captain. 1912-1916 he served with the rank of major in India, Mesopotamia and northwestern Iran, 1917-1919 he was the commander of the 39th infantry brigade in the Caucasus, in April-August 1919 he was involved in the withdrawal of British troops from Baku and Transcaucasus in general, being in warm relations with the leadership of Azerbaijan. D. Shuttleworth commanded all British forces in Azerbaijan, Petrovsk and Krasnovodsk. D. Shuttleworth in 1920 in Constantinople, he was a member of the Allied Control Commission of the military administration

right by British side disputed territories of Nagorno-Karabakh, Syunik-Zangezur and Nakhichevan between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Openly supporting Azerbaijan, Thomson and his supporters did everything they could to subjugate Nagorno-Karabakh and Zangezur to Azerbaijan, emphasizing British oil interests and mainly wanting to create a barrier against Russia, convinced that the Armenians, who were considered incorrigibly pro-Russian, should not be helped. This was done with a cynical openness, which sometimes surprised even the other allies of the Armenians, about which there is a very interesting observation in the May 20 report of the diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan in Yerevan, the famous Khan Tekinsky with his espionage activities against Armenia.¹⁰

“During lunch at my place, the representative of France in Armenia expressed his displeasure with the policy of the British, which was directed exclusively in favor of Azerbaijan, and mainly with the policy of Thomson, who managed to hand over Karabakh to Azerbaijan with his reports, which, according to the French, was an injustice. He then said that with the arrival of other allies, the policy would have to change. He openly expressed the sympathy of the French towards the Armenians, considering them somehow as an ally”.¹¹

As for the sympathy expressed by the Transcaucasian representatives of France, Italy and other countries with much smaller weight, it must be said that it was also the case for the 2020 Armenian-Azerbaijani war with the support of Turkey, in which case it was a matter of declarative sympathy and impressive outbursts from the point of view of emotion. Their strategies on territorial disputes did not have radical or essential differences and were almost identical, they could propose more favorable conditions and solutions for Armenia.

Thus, it was obvious that after the end of the World War I and the forced withdrawal of Turkish troops from the Transcaucasus, the expected conditions for the implementation of Armenian plans were not created, although the borders of the Republic of Armenia which was founded under the Batumi Treaty had an incomparable expansion and included a number of parts of the Ararat valley, Surmalu, Alexandropol provinces, Kars Province not completely, the entire territory of the Republic of Armenia became about 45 thousand square meters from the initial 10-12 thousand square meters. However, it was not possible to more or less restore the ethnic-territorial integrity of the RA, from which Akhalkalak-Javakhk and the neutral zone of Lori, Nagorno-Karabakh and Sharur-Nakhijevan were left out, mainly due to the British efforts and the overt military support shown to Azerbaijan, with the delivery of weapons and ammunition, giving Azerbaijan the opportunity to claim the Arax Valley, and all this with the support and indulgence of the much-awaited and glorious Allies in Transcaucasus,

of the Ottoman Empire and the commander of the 83rd infantry brigade during the Chanakian and Dardanelles crisis 1920-1923 during the unstable situation following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. In 1936 receives the military rank of Major General.

¹⁰ Virabyan 2021: 51-81.

¹¹ NAA, fund 200, inv. 1, file 358, sheet 25.

Great Britain and other allies taking care to create a great and powerful Azerbaijan, which would block them from Bolshevik Russia, and not at all interested in a strong Armenia. On the contrary, until the end, they did nothing to help Armenia against the danger coming from the north, and at the moment of danger, they left and subordinated its interests to Azerbaijan, which was Bolshevized by the advice of M. Kemal, the leader of the Turkish extreme nationalist "Milli" movement. The British military and political representations and generals, with some reservations, only encouraged and militarily supported the separatist sentiments of the Muslim rebel regions, which undermined RA's positions in the region, causing enormous material and moral damage to the Armenian people, who, being weakened, could not face the challenges of the future.

According to R. Hovhannisyan, such position of Great Britain is due to an important circumstance. "At the end of 1918, they believed that the eastern Ottoman vilayets would be allocated to Armenia. Therefore, it seemed natural to view Karabakh and Zangezur as compensation for Azerbaijan, whose claims to western lands would be rejected. Several critics single out economic exploitation as the foremost factor in British politics.

... Great Britain managed to acquire thousands of tons of petroleum products worth millions of pounds. "Whether oil imperialism dictated British policy or not, in any case, economic factors could not be ignored."¹²

However, those very circumstances played a disastrous role in the fate of Transcaucasus. The South Caucasus was of utmost importance for the British colonial empire, primarily due to its geographical location, which made it possible to view the three Caucasian republics (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) as a "blocking barrier" against Russian and Turkish expansion in the Middle East and India,¹³ considering also the rich oil and other resources in the South Caucasus region.

As the military and political representations of the Allies appeared in Transcaucasus and Armenia, the initially cautious approach was gradually replaced by open pro-Muslim practices, the interests of the British and other countries were more harmonized with Azerbaijan and Georgia than with Armenia, which appeared in the role of begging for help from the Allies, including in terms of the delivery of weapons and ammunition, which was shoddy, touchy and completely out of date. However, the possibility of an alternative was small, from time to time it was possible to find some batches of weapons and ammunition from the Volunteer Army of general A. Denikin in the south of Russia with difficulty, a part of which, about 27 percent, was confiscated by Georgia at the time of transit, to some extent from Greece, which itself was fighting against Turkey, etc., that is why the main hope remained on the allies of the World War I, the Entente, Great Britain and France, which, coming to Transcaucasus, quickly transformed, other interests appeared, pro-Azerbaijani and pro-Georgian, which RA did

¹² Hovhannisyan 2005: 17-171.

¹³ Hovhannisyan 1971: 269.

not quickly understand, let's say there was almost no other option. The foreign policy option remained suspended and strategic maneuvers failed one after the other.

Nevertheless, the creation of the national army was paramount, about which H. Qajaznuni says: "We had an army that was well armed with English weapons and dressed in English clothes, we had enough military supplies, and we had an important fortress like Kars in our hands."¹⁴ Much of what was said is not true, because the Armenian army had severe shortages of weapons, rifles, and ammunition.

Those political speculations and games of the Allies could not be kept completely under wraps, something always leaked out from the veil of secrecy and became obvious to the socio-political and military circles. Representative of the Socialist-Revolutionary faction, deputy V. Minakhoryan, speaking at the Council of Armenia during the meeting on January 25, 1919, emphasizes that "not only the neighbors want to destroy us, but England does the same. It can be said that the responsibility for 99 percent of our misfortunes falls on the allies. Today, the only practical step of our parliament should be to show that we feel and understand all those deceptions of the allies."¹⁵ We meet such a very remarkable testimony of the Armenian diplomatic representative of Tiflis. On September 1, 1919, the Secretary of the Parliament of Armenia H. Ter-Hakobyan says the following in his message: "From the writings of our delegation in Paris, it is clear that the British throughout their presence in the Caucasus were insincere towards us and systematically pursued a Muslim policy. Everywhere, as well as in the Caucasus, England conducts a covert Muslim policy."¹⁶ In 1919, on March 6, RA Foreign Minister S. Tigranyan in the letter addressed to the chairman of the RA delegation in Paris A. Aharonyan, emphasized the following idea that "it seems that England does not want to rely on any Armenian power, because in its opinion, an Armenian is more Russian than a Russian, and one cannot rely on an Armenian when anything against Russia is being undertaken¹⁷," that the British "don't miss an opportunity to emphasize their aversion to the idea of a united Russia".¹⁸

In reality, it was much more complicated. From the telegram of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia on April 24, 1919, addressed to the diplomatic representative of Armenia in Tiflis, it becomes an obvious reality what behavior the British had, what interests and goals they had in the region and in particular in Armenia, which was trying to establish itself as a state, trying to get out of economic and political isolation and the clutches of hunger. Thus, it was mentioned that the British continue to take out cannons, shells, three-line bullets from Kars. The Minister of Foreign Affairs strongly interceded in the said telegram to the commander of the armed forces of the Entente countries in Transcaucasus, British General V.

¹⁴ Qajaznuni 1923: 41.

¹⁵ NAA, fund 198, inv. 1, file 15, sheet 89.

¹⁶ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 97, sheet 126.

¹⁷ NAA, fund 200, inv. 2, file 43, sheet 1.

¹⁸ NAA, fund 200, inv. 1, file 181, I part, sheets 35-36.

Thomson to cease the withdrawal of these goods, because of dire necessity, and particularly of shells. The Minister of Foreign Affairs asked the diplomatic attaché of Armenia in Tiflis to take vigorous measures against the withdrawal of Armenian property, and at the same time, he discussed the issue of receiving clothing accessories for the needs of the army.¹⁹ Furthermore, another document states about this more emphatically.

On April 30, 1919, the Prime Minister of Armenia Al. Khatisyan, during a conversation with the British Commander-in-Chief in the East G. F. Milne,²⁰ protests against the withdrawal of military property, weapons, etc. from Kars by the British, demanding to stop it. To that, G. Milne answers very ambiguously that first of all - 1) as if “the war is over, there is no need to strengthen the army, that they fought for 4 years not to strengthen the army... it is enough to have not troops, but a good gendarmerie, 2) that there is a lot of everything in Kars, especially clothes, that not all the forts were seen there, and if the British took out the artillery and ammunition from there, then it was sent to the army of General Denikin, because Denikin is fighting against the Bolsheviks, and the Bolsheviks are considered by the British serious enemies for Armenia as well, and the remaining 2 million bullets will supposedly fully satisfy Armenia’s needs,²¹ which was not so, and Al. Khatisyan protested against it.

It should be said that the British general’s point of view did not come from a realistic, non-calculative and comprehensive and uncorrupted accounting of all factors and a sober assessment of the real geopolitical situation, in which Armenia was at that time, surrounded by enemies. He did not take into consideration that in order to solve the problems of Armenia, not only a good police force was needed to solve internal problems, but mainly a well-armed and equipped army that could provide real security guarantees to the Armenian people. And finally, it became obvious from all this that everything was adapted to the state interests of Great Britain only, and this was already destructive from the point of view of ensuring the national-state security of the Republic of Armenia.

Moreover, the study of archival documents and various other documents clearly proves that the situation in that field was much more serious and complicated than it could be imagined at first glance. The British military representation in Armenia operated in a very discreet way, covering up and encrypting all the actions of a military and political nature undertaken by it. This anti-Armenian policy was expressed more

¹⁹ NAA, fund 200, inv. 1, file 211, I part, sheet 92.

²⁰ Milne George Francis (1866-1948) - general, from October, 1915 he headed the Thessaloniki expeditionary corps, and in May, 1916 he was appointed the commander-in-chief of the British forces in Macedonia, and after the armistice also in the Middle East and the Black Sea region. In 1920, on March 16, British troops under the leadership of Milne occupied Constantinople, introducing martial law there and the parliament was dissolved. In 1920 Milne was recalled from the Middle East, and beginning with February, 1926 he held the position of Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

²¹ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 101, sheet 48, inv. 114, sheet 196.

clearly and more openly later on, and particularly in the fact that the British, despite the appeal of the Armenian side and the sharp position of General Tovmas Nazarbekyan, in the middle of 1919 still continued to take away from Kars cannons (more than 60 pieces), large quantities of shells, bullets, undertook the withdrawal of automobile equipment, cotton and other property, and moved it to Musavat Baku to reinforce General Lazar Bicherakhov's²² army.²³ The fact that the British military authorities withdrew more than 60 cannons and a large amount of shells and bullets, automobile equipment, cotton and other property from Kars left a bad impression in the sense that it was addressed not only to Denikin but also, perhaps, only to the Azerbaijanis. Captain A. Poidebard²⁴ addresses this issue as well, mentioning the seizure of weapons by the Turks from the Russian arsenal in Kars, and instead of handing them over to the RA government, 65 cannons, six wagons of shells and several million bullets were sent to Tiflis, as a result of which the Armenians were deprived of the weapons and ammunition that are very necessary to protect the resettled immigrants. At the same time, Poidebard found that the British command had to take into consideration the power of the anti-Armenian Muslim organization created by the commander of the Turkish army, General Shevki Pasha, in Kars immediately after the armistice, the propaganda of Turkish agents.²⁵

The RA Minister of Foreign Affairs also intervenes in the case. On April 24, 1919, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia in a telegram (N 1327) addressed to the diplomatic attaché of Armenia in Tiflis, stressed that the British continued to take out shells, three-line bullets, etc. from Kars. At the same time, he requested to intercede with General V.Thomson to stop this, citing their great need, and especially the need for shells and bullets.²⁶ It is clear from a number of documents that even the rank-and-file officers of the British were not very respectful, and sometimes simply showed an incorrect attitude towards the main staff and command of the Armenian Army. The British brought out not only from Kars, but also from Sarighamish

²² Lazar F. Bicherakhov (Russian, November 15 (27), 1882, Saint Petersburg, Russian Empire - June 22, 1952, Dornstadt, Germany), Russian officer, participant of the World War I and Civil War in Russia. George Bicherakhov's brother. At the beginning of 1918, he formed a small detachment (about thousand people) in Persia, serving with the British. In July 1918, the detachment left the port of Bandare Anzali by sea for Baku and joined the Turkish-Azerbaijani forces defending the city (where the Baku Commune ruled at that time). During the attack of Turkish-Azerbaijani-Dagestan troops on Baku, Bicherakhov and his squad retreated to Dagestan on July 30, 1918, where they captured Derbent and Port-Petrovsk (Makhachkala) with the help of the British. In January 1919, Bicherakhov's detachment moved to Batumi, where it was formed in April 1919. The personnel and property of the detachment was transferred to the replenishment of AFSR. In 1920 he immigrated to Great Britain - Bezugolny 2011: 25.

²³ Mahmuryan 2002: 64-65; Karapetyan 1999: 92-93; Hovhannisyan 2005: 243-245; Armenian soldier 1994, June, N 10 (24).

²⁴ Antoine Poidebard (1878-1955) - archaeologist, historian, pilot, cartographer, missionary who knew Armenian well, Ter-Minasyan 2004.

²⁵ Ter-Minasyan 2004: 90.

²⁶ NAA, fund 200, inv. 1, file 92, sheets 208-209.

and Alexandropol the above mentioned ammunition, as well as railway property, machines, locomotives, wagons, etc.

It should also be added that General Nazarbekyan, protesting against these actions, believed that the actions of the Brigadier General, head of British intelligence in the Caucasus V. H. Beach²⁷ are completely incomprehensible, in addition to the fact that the property taken out of Kars by trains by British individuals, especially the railway property, was being taken to Georgia for resale. In this connection, a question was also raised through Major Charles to urgently request General V. Thomson to prohibit illegal export of the above-mentioned products.²⁸ However, according to another version, as claimed by R. Hovhannisyan, according to the explanation given by General G. N. Cory²⁹ (V. Thomson's successor) to the Georgian government, the Kars ammunition was not intended for the Volunteer Army, but allegedly for the Turkmen forces fighting against the Bolsheviks.³⁰ About that action, based upon M. Silikyan's report, T. Nazarbekyan and Chief of Staff, Major General H. Hakhverdyan, on May 2, 1919, reported to the Military Minister K. Araratyan: "All this leaves a depressing impression on the army and the people, especially since this property is sent to Baku, which may appear in the hands of the Azerbaijani government".³¹

However, not being satisfied with that, they also took out the N 3 armored train, which was in Kars, as reported by Major General Silikyan to the Commander-in-Chief of the RA troops, T. Nazarbekyan, in his report dated May 4, 1919.³² In this report, Major General M. Silikyan protested against similar unfriendly actions on the part of the British command and requested the Commander-in-Chief to initiate a petition for the recovery of all the property they had taken.³³

General Nazarbekyan received the head of the Alexandropol group of troops M. Silikyan's aforementioned report, on May 5, 1919 (N 0060 / 0228) addressed to the Minister of Military Affairs, in which he asked the minister to mediate the return of the taken weapons and ammunition, the rest of the property and to stop their withdrawal without the permission of the Government of the Republic of Armenia³⁴. Finally, the Minister of Defense presents the above-mentioned letter to the Prime Minister, waiting for the necessary order in this regard. The document was signed by the Minister of Military Affairs Major General Araratyan and the acting Chief of General Staff and one of

²⁷ Beach William - the head of British military intelligence in Transcaucasus, considered the head of the political bureau of the headquarters of the British occupation forces in the Caucasus and Transcaucasus, brigadier general.

²⁸ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 158, sheet 4, fund 200, inv. 1, file 92, sheet 251, file 299, sheets 4, 7.

²⁹ George Norton Cory (1874-1968) - Major-General, from May 10, 1919 to September 6, 1919, he was the commander of the 27th Division and in general all British troops in Transcaucasus, until their withdrawal from this region.

³⁰ Hovhannisyan 2005: 244.

³¹ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 158, sheet 4.

³² NAA, fund 199, inv. 1, file 67 (77), sheet 20.

³³ NAA, fund 199, inv. 1, file 67 (77), sheet 20.

³⁴ NAA, fund 199, inv. 1, file 67 (77), sheet 20, fund 200, inv. 1, file 92, sheet 251.

the main organizers of the intelligence work in Armenia, Colonel Zinkevich (N 00921)³⁵. In addition, a corresponding order is made to send copies of this document to the delegation of the Republic of Armenia in Paris (May 6, 1919, N 1553) and the Diplomatic Representative of the Republic of Armenia in Constantinople.³⁶

The confirmation of this reality becomes evident from the telegram of the diplomatic representative of Azerbaijan in Armenia, Khan-Tekinsky, sent on May 10, 1919, to the president of the government, F. Khan-Khoysky. "On the pretext that the Bolsheviks are threatening Baku, ask the British to transfer from Kars to Baku"³⁷. And it is very likely that one of the main reasons for the heavy and disastrous defeat suffered by the Republic of Armenia during the Turkish-Armenian war, which began on September 23, 1920, and, in particular, the inglorious fall of Kars on October 30, are the anti-Armenian actions of the British. During the meeting at the Armenian government on June 7, 1919, Al. Khatisyan demands from English General G. Cory to stop the illegal removal of military property from Kars, as it was RA property. For that reason, General Silikyan stopped the British train, which General Thomson used as an excuse to justify the removal of military property from the fortress of Kars³⁸. The solution to that problem was of great importance from the point of view of strengthening the defense capability of the Republic of Armenia, and it was this circumstance that the RA Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs focused on in the letter dated August 11, 1920 (N 3155) addressed to the British military representative: "At the moment when the government of the Republic is forced to organize its army in order to suppress the Tatar rebellion on the one hand and to protect its borders from the attacks of Kurdish and Turkish guerrilla groups on the other hand, at the moment when it receives munitions from the British command, taking the munitions out of Armenia would be a blow to the Armenian people, its security. The British representatives do not allow the Armenian military authorities of Kars to undertake necessary steps and make the fortress of Kars capable of defense".³⁹

Complaints of the RA government continue. In a letter to British military representative in Yerevan, His Excellency Colonel Sh. Baldwin, dated August 11, 1919 (N 3155), the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, informing that General Biramov and the governor of Kars had informed that Captain Evechel of the British army and two officers of Denikin's army had come to Kars to take cannons and munitions from there.

At almost the same time, the British Ministry of Defence simply rejected the RA government's request to establish a factory for the production of ammunition for small

³⁵ Mikhail M. Zinkevich, colonel [03.01.1883 - 24.12.1944] - Until 07.1918 was in the Transcaucasus (chief of staff of the Armenian Corps). 09. 1918 - 1920 was in the Volunteer Army, actually on a permanent mission in the Republic of Armenia, the Chief of Staff of the Armenian Army, Chief of the General Staff of the RA Military Ministry. Ganin 2009: 227, 460, 593, 727, 835.

³⁶ NAA, fund 200, inv. 1, file 92, sheets 251- 252.

³⁷ NAA, fund 200, inv. 1, file 92, file 299, sheet 7.

³⁸ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 114, sheet 196.

³⁹ NAA, fund 200, inv. 1, file 92, sheet 357a.

arms. Back on August 28, 1919, the military advisor of the RA delegation to the Paris Peace Assembly, General G. Ghorghanyan⁴⁰ having meetings with representatives of the British Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Defense, requests military aid and support. For this purpose, on September 1, he met with Colonel William Gibbon and presented him the information about the military forces of the Republic of Armenia, and then handed it over to the Minister of Defense W. Churchill, in which it was reported that there are 17,729 soldiers, 824 officers, 3 armored vehicles in the RA army, as well as 4843 horses⁴¹. In November 1919, H. Ohanjanyan and General G. Ghorghanyan, as part of the peace delegation of the Republic of Armenia in Europe, in Leeds, England, studied the possibility of buying a factory that could produce 12,000 bullets per day, but it turned out that the cost was high.

On December 27, 1919 (N 220/c.o), RA Prime Minister A.I. Khatisyan in a letter addressed to Captain Gracie, the representative of Great Britain in Transcaucasus, stated that they are encouraged by the attitude of the allies, the British government gives them financial, material and organizational support, which is quite reasonable. He notes about the following necessary things: 1) radiograph management and assistant specialists, 2) air fleet 3) army "ammunition"-clothing manufacturing factory, 4) a high-ranking military officer with several assistants in the position of general instructors of the army. To overcome these difficulties, A.I. Khatisyan, on behalf of the RA government, asked the British government for a loan of one million pounds at an affordable interest rate, saying that they would come to a separate agreement on the details. A.I. Khatisyan assured that they would pay back the mentioned loan in installments. He emphasized on behalf of the Government that these needs are urgent and they believe that the British government will have a favorable attitude towards this issue, stressing that they need specialists and experienced leaders in several branches.⁴²

On April 7, 1920, General G. Ghorghanyan again raises the issue of purchasing the bullet factory, urging Av. Aharonyan to allocate the money collected for these purposes at least to buy a small factory with used equipment, which could produce up to 50 thousand bullets per day, while asking the latter for permission to continue negotiations in Leeds to start a more modest venture with a company there. James Malcolm submitted the issue of the founding of such a factory in Armenia under consideration of the British government, which we learn about from the April 27 memorandum. J. Malcolm expresses himself in favor of the desire of the Republic of Armenia to produce its own munitions, offering to transport the necessary equipment to Armenia along with the intended weapons. The British War Office, which was wary of providing Armenia with even one shipment of weapons, rejects Armenia's request. On May 12, Colonel V. H. Gibbon informs J. Malcolm that after reviewing the issue "the

⁴⁰ Gabriel G. Ghorghanyan [3.05.1880 - 8.01.1954]. He was born in the family of a nobleman; his father was Major General G. G. Ghorghanyan. Since the declaration of the First Republic, Ghorghanyan has been involved in diplomatic work as a military adviser.

⁴¹ Galoyan 1999: 172-173.

⁴² NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 101, sheets 100-101.

Army Council does not find it appropriate to support in this way”, finding that “the supply of such equipment is not necessarily in the interests of Armenia in the long term”, in connection with which even some employees of the British Foreign Office come to the opinion that it will be difficult to convince the Armenians that the British want to help the Armenians.⁴³

On May 20, 1920, RA Prime Minister H. Ohanjanyan, the diplomatic representative of Armenia in Georgia T. Bekzadyan was asked by the British military representative in Transcaucasus, Colonel Stokes'⁴⁴ deputy, through Commander Harry Luke, to report to Paris, where Aharonyan was, that the British government had authorized him and Poghos Nubar to give a bond of up to one million pounds at 5 percent for 12 months for arms and equipment sold by the British government to the Armenian government.⁴⁵

Another high-ranking British official, A. McDonnell was convinced that it would be a fundamental mistake to arm Armenia and not to arm the other republics of the Caucasus, finding that such a move would nullify all sympathy for them both in Georgia and Azerbaijan, that it was this policy of supporting the Armenian armed forces in 1917 that threw Georgia and the Tatars [Azerbaijani] into the arms of their enemies, saying at the same time that refusing to supply arms to Azerbaijan would deprive them of any influence over that people, and they would certainly try to get arms from elsewhere, and if the only people receiving arms were the Armenians, they would certainly try to act in their own way.⁴⁶

Various authors and military specialists have recorded many times that, naturally, in such a situation, the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia could not effectively organize the defense of the country. Stokes stated that they refrained from supplying arms and munitions to the three republics, which would have enabled them to face various threats, including the Bolshevik threat, but at the same time emphasizing the securing of their economic and political interests in the Transcaucasian region.⁴⁷

One thing was bad, that in the absence of an alternative, the calculations in many cases were based on the expected help from the Entente allies, which was well noticed by R. Hovhannisyan. “And indeed, the British infantry unit composed of Englishmen, Scotsmen and the formidable Indian Gurkha, Rajput and Punjab soldiers was the only visible external support for all the Transcaucasian republics against the renewed encroachment of the Turks from the south and the penetration of the Russians from the

⁴³ Hovhannisyan 2015: 413.

⁴⁴ Stokes Claude Bayfield (October 27, 1875 - December 7, 1948) - In 1907-1911 he was a military attaché in Tehran, served for many years in Asia as the intelligence department of the General Staff of the British Indian Army from the beginning of the World War I.

⁴⁵ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 231, sheets 126-127.

⁴⁶ Hovhannisyan 2015: 406-407.

⁴⁷ Galoyan 1999: 188.

north”,⁴⁸ the announcement of the subsequent gradual withdrawal from Transcaucasus in August-September 1920 “just spread appalling across the entire Caucasus”.⁴⁹

In 1920, in general, in the Armenian political-military field, as well as among the top political and military officials of the Allies, there was a half-hearted mentality that the Armenian state, which was being created and was showing development tendencies, could not be viable without Western Armenia and universally guaranteed access to the sea. It was also obvious that this calculation was built solely on external support, particularly military support, which was a pending issue. It was also clear internally that the Allies had practically failed the issue of taking over the guardianship or mandate over Armenia, and had left the option of military assistance actually. The allies, not wanting to take a direct part in these issues, shifted the center of gravity to the sphere of arms and munitions transfer to the Armenian armed forces, even though they did not show sufficient consistency and compassion here. It meant leaving the men of the Armenian state with the difficult task of opening a way for themselves and fitting into the world community of nations, being satisfied with ineffective and paper-declarative hollow words.

It became obvious that the Allies, even in the pre-August period, were not determined enough to complete the Versailles process with Germany, and even more so to be determined to the end with Turkey, in particular for its disarmament and the imposition of a full version of peace. Therefore, it seems that the British and their war office, having moved the center of gravity to the field of weapons and ammunition transfer to the armed forces of Armenia, had uncertain approaches, moreover, they connected it with the processes of withdrawing their troops from Batumi and the Transcaucasus. The British intention to subjugate the Armenian army had been a matter of contention for months in the cabinets of the British War Office, it was not aimed at strengthening the Armenian state, but was more aimed at blocking the South Caucasus from Bolshevik Russia, although there were strange deviations here as well. It was related to the long-range strategy of the British cabinet, allegedly for the sake of securing appropriate trade and economic interests with Soviet Russia for the beginning, or in the case of Turkey, in the case of new military-political developments, to support their ambiguous intentions to have their military-political interests in the Middle Eastern region.

Throughout 1919 and the first half of 1920, the RA delegates made attempts to “convince” the Allies to show proper determination to go all the way in the restrictions against Turkey stipulated by Mudros, but they did not take any serious measures to deprive Turkey of the huge reserves of arms and ammunition that it had and practically did not prevent the Turks from taking possession of the extremely rich warehouses of munitions and weapons, artillery, and firearms left in Erzurum after the retreat of the Russian army. Moreover, the Turks, taking advantage of the allies' indecisiveness,

⁴⁸ Hovhannisyan 2014: 23.

⁴⁹ Hovhannisyan 2014: 23.

insufficient consistency, and the almost absence of control operations, in order to undermine the foundations of the newly created Armenian state and military forces, in order to fulfill their intentions to create a foothold in the Caucasus in the form of Azerbaijan and Georgia, sent agents, spies, to provide arms and ammunition to the anti-Armenian forces, forming insurgent-rebellious forces in different regions of Armenia, inciting them to oppose the pro-Armenian decisions of the allied states and the Paris Peace Assembly.

The situation was getting worse, because Azerbaijan and Georgia in particular became the owners of the rich heritage left after the collapse of the Russian Empire: Russian imperial arsenals, munitions and other property, which did not satisfy them, and even after the defeat of the White armies, the Georgians and Azerbaijanis took possession of their huge stocks of weapons and munitions. General G. Ghorghanyan in the cabinets of the British Ministry of Defense, trying to ensure the resolution of the issues of finding military support and inviting military instructors for the reorganization and modernization of the Armenian army, linking the needs and capabilities of the armed forces with the liberation of Western Armenia and the gradual establishment of the Armenian state there, still did not achieve the expected results. G. Ghorghanyan did not receive any real promises and commitments from the British War Office,⁵⁰ and the Minister of Defense W. Churchill had an unenthusiastic premonition that any munitions would end up only in the hands of the Red Army and the Turkish nationalists, which made sense, since the British Cabinet had already adopted a different strategy, deciding to pull the defensive line back to the railway tracks in Palestine, Mesopotamia and Birjand in north-eastern Persia, and under such conditions it was considered expensive and dangerous to maintain an isolated British garrison at Batumi. This was explained by the advance of the Red Army and the threat of a joint Soviet-Turkish invasion, which would endanger the small number of British troops and force the British unit to leave Batumi in an inglorious manner.⁵¹ However, it is quite another thing to claim that, as stated in an archive document, the British Government provided the Armenian army with weapons and ammunition for a 40,000-strong army, which at the prices of that time was worth 1,200,000 pounds.⁵² but as accurately stated by Al. Khatisyan, “the Armenians accused the British of the fact that the weapon arrived too late, that the weapon was not of the type that the Armenian soldiers were used to, and these accusations and dissatisfaction coincided with the disastrous outcome of the Armenian-Turkish War in the autumn of 1920”.⁵³

By the way, the 22 airplanes bought by the Ankara government in Germany were delivered to Turkey through the territory of Russia without any customs and tax duties. From the port of Novorossiysk, the planes were quickly brought to the Turkish coast by

⁵⁰ Hovhannisyan 2015: 398.

⁵¹ Hovhannisyan 2015: 399, 404.

⁵² NAA, fund 200, inv. 1, file 498, sheet 768, fund 199, inv. 1, file 146, sheet 96. Khatisyan 1968: 183.

⁵³ Khatisyan 1968: 183.

the ship "Shakhin" in great secrecy. The delivery of the planes coincided with the attack of the Turkish army, they were successfully deployed on the Anatolian front.

In the same way, arms and ammunition were sent from Novorossiysk to Turkey. Three Soviet submarines were used for the transportation of diplomatic delegations and envoys between Sevastopol and Inebulu.⁵⁴ On March 27, 1920, French Marshal Foch wrote to the Turkish government: "Russia's continued sea supplies at any cost, as well as the unprecedented self-sacrifice of the Turkish people, will never put them in a difficult situation." According to modern researchers, in total, Russia provided assistance to the national liberation movement of Turkey in the amount of about 80 million Turkish golden liras, which was more than half of the Mejlis budget in the early 1920s.

Soviet specialists helped to regulate military production. Under their leadership, two gunpowder factories were built, and Russia provided financial assistance to purchase field printers and film equipment. M. V. Frunze handed over 100,000 roubles in gold to the Turkish authorities in Trabzon to build an orphanage for children who lost their parents during the war. An abstract from M.K. Atatürk's letter to Lenin states: "In terms of history, filled with the bloody wars that took place for centuries between the Turks and the Russians, such a rapid reconciliation between us astonished other nations. Turkey is closer to Russia, especially the Russia of recent months, than to Western Europe. Turkey will not back down from its course towards Soviet Russia, and all rumors to the contrary are baseless. I assure you that we will never sign an agreement or enter into an alliance directly or indirectly against Soviet Russia."⁵⁵

In this regard, professor of political science and history E. Andersen, and the researcher from Georgian Technical University and State University, cartographer-historian G. Partkhaladze have a very interesting standpoint: "The naivety of the political leadership of Armenia was also expressed in the development of relations with the South Caucasian neighbors, Georgia and Azerbaijan. Here the leaders of Armenia assumed that the territorial conflicts that had arisen would be resolved by the great powers in their favor as a reward for the Armenian efforts during the war and accordingly refused to resolve them through negotiations with the neighbors. As a result of such an approach, Armenia's military conflict with Georgia at the end of 1918 caused significant damage to both, and a long "hybrid" war began between Armenia and Azerbaijan for control of the disputed territories of Karabakh, Zangezur and Nakhichevan, which was accompanied by the most brutal ethnic cleansing and was partially interrupted only by the fall of the two republics. During those conflicts, the command of the British armed forces, which was entrusted with the exercise of control over the Eastern Mediterranean region (the former territories of the Ottoman Empire, the Caucasus and the Northern Mediterranean region) and assumed the role of "objective and honest mediator", actually stood by the side of oil-rich Azerbaijan, in

⁵⁴ Embassy Russia in Ankara: 2021.

⁵⁵ Embassy of Russia in Ankara: 2021.

particular when the Karabakh issue was on the agenda.”⁵⁶ Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as the conflict that arose parallel to it and was provoked by the efforts of the British military-political mission based on the right of the owner in the Transcaucasus and the Republic of Armenia and by the hollow declarative regulations, and later exacerbated by the imperial policy of even more Bolshevik Russia, with the foci of new conflicts in Sharur-Nakhijevan, Syunik-Zangezur and other legal territories of Armenia, became a permanent conflict and a process threatening the Transcaucasus, the roots of which with some intervals come from the depth of almost 100 years, again became a topic of severe tension during the Azerbaijani-Turkish aggression against Armenia in the autumn of 2020, at the same time acquiring new colors of tension and features in the conditions of deaf solidarity of European countries and the Russian Federation:

1) Turkey was involved in the active conflict, including the elite Turkish Special Forces, which had been trained in punitive operations against the Kurds, enjoying the concession of NATO, thus becoming an important factor threatening the peace of the region.

2) Russia’s new position was sudden and can be interpreted from the starting point of the strategy of imperialism, which openly repelled and alienated Armenia, and unlike the 1991-1994 war, when it seemed to favor the Armenian side in some issues in the Karabakh problem, which was a result of its unstable and unclear geopolitical situation, in 2020 did not show any significant support to Armenia within the framework of the existing alliance, and even on the contrary, openly supported Azerbaijan, strengthening close and friendly ties with Turkey, as it was during the 1920-1921 cooperation, and the main propagandists of the Moscow Kremlin without hesitation put the blame for the Karabakh conflict on the Republic of Armenia, claiming that Azerbaijan only “liberated” its legally “occupied territories.” As a result, what happened was what the Allied European-Entente powers did in 1918-1920, using the human and other resources of the Armenian people during the war, they began to consider the small, but rich in natural resources, Armenia as a saucer full of problems, not at all in a hurry and not wanting to meet its just territorial demands, even questioning the existence of its independent statehood and the preservation of territorial integrity within its current borders.

The peculiarity of the 1918-1920 situation and the developments had such content that no matter how much the government of the Republic of Armenia made its best, as it was not sufficiently experienced in only two years, not much could be achieved. Moreover, we should mention about the black gold of Baku, the oil, on which the British focused on. The Republic of Armenia born in Sardarapat was shattered, and Russia, together with Turkey, left only a small, fragmented Armenia to survive under the Soviet veil, under the dictates of the Moscow Kremlin. Azerbaijan took Artsakh-Syunik, Nakhichevan and other territories from Armenia with the active support of Bolshevik

⁵⁶ Andersen, Partskhaladze 2020; Virabyan: 2021: 72.

Russia, Great Britain, and Turkey, and during that time many Russian and Georgian officers and soldiers served in the Azerbaijani army.

Naturally, in those years, it was not possible to arm the more or less complete Armenian army, provide it with military equipment, the obstacles and biased solutions were numerous.

On March 10, 1919 (N 60) in Georgia, the military attaché of the RA, Major General H. Kishmishyan⁵⁷ reported in the secret report submitted to the Minister of Defense that he together with the RA diplomatic commissioner in Tiflis L. Yevangulyan and Umikyan, left for Batumi to receive the bullets, artillery shells, as well as the French airplanes brought by the steamer "Cossack" and transport them to Armenia. It was said that upon arriving in Batumi, they hear the declaration of the British command that they do not have the right to allow the transportation of bullets and shells. They applied to General Milne for permission. RA military attache in Tiflis, General H. Kishmishyan informed that in the conditions of such an attitude of the English command, he and Yevangulyan made a mutual decision to send the cargo to Poti. However, due to the fact that the crew of the steamer was in a Bolshevik mood and threatened to throw the cargo into the sea, they hired a special guard of three people, who, together with two Cossacks, were supposed to guard the cargo until it reached Poti, accompanied by an officer of the Volunteer Army and Second Lieutenant Umikyan, who was to take care of sending the cargo to Armenia. Referring to the issue of airplanes, General Kishmishyan reported that the British command has again created obstacles on the way to transfer them to Armenia, again insisting that they should contact General Milne. It was said that the negotiations conducted together with Yevangulyan and Umikyan in order to resolve the issue did not lead to any results, based on which they requested the support of the RA Military Minister.⁵⁸

On March 24, 1920 (N 71), General Kishmishyan informed the Chief of the RA General Staff that the cargo with bullets and shells was not even allowed to be unloaded at the port by the order of the British command of Batumi, and the steamer "Cossack" was sent to Poti for a raid, from where the cargo had to be loaded into wagons to send to Armenia.⁵⁹ Already on March 29, 1920 (N 71), General Kishmishyan in a letter addressed to the Assistant Minister of Defense of Georgia reported that according to the verbal negotiations between Minister of Defense Lordkipanidze and Yevangulyan, he had the honor to ask not to reject the written order, so that the Georgian government would not create obstacles in case of transit through Georgia⁶⁰.

⁵⁷ Hovsep A. Kishmishyan (Kishmishev) (born in Tiflis, 1881 - 1921). Was an assistant prosecutor of the Caucasus Military District Court in 1916-1917, and a military representative (military attaché) of the diplomatic representation of the Republic of Armenia in Georgia from July 1919. - Virabyan 2015: 37-42, 50-52, 151-153, 258- 267 etc. Gogitidze, Bezhitashvili 2014: 64.

⁵⁸ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 209, sheets 60-60.

⁵⁹ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 209, sheet 68.

⁶⁰ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 209, sheet 82.

On April 3, 1920 (N 100), in the report submitted to the Minister of Military Affairs, General Kishmishyan reported that the complete device and 4 new English-made 1916 “Sopwich Triplan”⁶¹ destroyer airplanes, which were imported by the Georgian authorities, are in their hangars.⁶²

On April 5, 1920 (N 110), General Kishmishyan reported on the receipt of 1,200,000 bullets and artillery property sent from the Volunteer Army by the steamer “Cossack”, which arrived in Batumi on March 5 and encountered obstacles from the British to settle it. Kishmishyan and Umikyan are going to Batumi to find means to deliver them to Poti, while having the Deputy Military Minister General Prince A. K. Gedevanov’s⁶³ assurance that the necessary orders have been made by him. Meanwhile, the representative of the Volunteer Army, General Porokhonsky, comes forward, allowing the steamer “Cossack” to go to Poti, on the condition that the ship will be supplied with coal, but the British do not allow it to stop in the port and sent it to sail. However, it doesn’t help either, because they fail to convince the British, who this time claim that they cannot release the cargo without a written agreement from the Georgian government, to solve which, Umikyan goes to Tiflis and meets with Gedevanov to get permission.

The ship arrives in Poti on March 21. The People's Guard intervenes in the course of the case and a new misunderstanding occurs, which declares that without permission of N. Zhordania and V. Jughely the cargo will not be released from Poti. In the current situation, Umikyan leaves for Tiflis, and together with Prince Mikael Tumanyan,⁶⁴ advisor of the RA diplomatic representation in Georgia, goes to meet with the assistant of the Georgian Foreign Minister Karpivadze, who informs that it is not allowed to transport military goods in transit, that they put veto also on the Azerbaijani cargo. Umikyan disputes that question, saying that Georgia acted like that in terms of the transit cargo of Azerbaijan in connection with some events that took place at the Yalam station. The Georgian side reports that they reached an agreement as a result of the negotiations conducted by Yevangulyan with Lordkipanidze. At that time, Karpivadze announced that if the Armenian side gives at least 50 thousand bullets to Georgia, then they will find it possible to tell Azerbaijan that they have seized part of the cargo, to which the Armenian side categorically refuses. However, two days later, Karpivadze informs that all obstacles have been overcome, and Umikyan was received by the Chairman of the Government of Georgia, informing him about the obstacles. On March 26, Zhordania gave his consent and handed him a letter signed by the Secretary of the Council of Ministers Tsitsadze, after which Umikyan left for Poti.

⁶¹ Hovhannisyan 2005: 14.

⁶² NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 209, sheet 108.

⁶³ General A. K. Gedevanov (16.02.1870 -1933, general since 1914) - Jamalian 1928: 85; Gogitidze 2001: 74; Hayazn, Ghazaryan 2009: 290.

⁶⁴ Mikael G. Tumanyan (b. November 28, 1887, Tiflis). A lawyer by profession. In 1930s was the last victim of Stalinist violence. M. Tumanyan was an adviser to the RA diplomatic mission in Tiflis, actually being the second person after the diplomatic chargé d'affaires.

However, the events took a surprising turn again, because Umikyan had not yet reached Poti, when on March 29, Zhordania's telegram (N 1198) was received with the order to immediately take the cargo to the Tiflis arsenal. The Armenian guard was removed, the keys of 14 locks were taken from Umikyan. Everything starts again, Umikyan meets with Karpivadze and receives his assurance that there are no more obstacles and the Armenian side can receive the cargo from Tiflis. On March 29, General H. Kishmishyan meets with Gedevanov and negotiates again, after which on March 31 General Gedevanov orders an armed guard of 10 men and an officer to accompany the cargo to Sanahin, which reaches Armenia on April 8, despite countless obstacles from the Georgian side.⁶⁵

On July 1, 1920 (No. 3), Colonel R. Martirosyan, on behalf of the representatives of the RA Military Ministry, informed the Minister of Defense that on May 17, according to the order, they left for Crimea, Sevastopol, where the Russian army representation was located, as well as the RA diplomatic representation. They tried to receive from Colonel Turbin information regarding the Artillery Department, as the Russian side promised to show support. Despite the difficulties of the Russian army in Crimea, however, Colonel Turbin promised to support by giving one million bullets for Armenian needs, adding that in a few days he will be able to provide another 2 million bullets.⁶⁶ It was reported that Lieutenant Umikyan arrived in Sevastopol on July 4, who, together with Saghatelyan presented General Shatilov, assistant commander-in-chief, new demands. Only on July 4, Umikyan was attacked by the authorities as a result of his separate activities, and said that the representatives of the RA government, on behalf of General Kishmishyan and others, had reached an agreement with the Georgian military ministry to share the munitions from Crimea, and until then, they decide to take the promised 3 million bullets on the ship "Phoenix", as was agreed with Yervand Ter-Minasyan in Batumi.

The two Armenian military representatives acted separately from each other, and it was too problematic, but both sides were interested in the issue and wanted to resolve it as soon as possible, using the transit provided by Georgia. However, it was reported by Colonel Martirosyan, they were meeting in Crimea with another representative group of the RA Military Ministry, Captain Aniyev and M. Makaryan, which were authorized by the Military Minister, without waiting for information from the RA representative in Tiflis about those, who were already in Crimea. Satisfaction was expressed that thanks to the agreement reached by their representative office in Tbilisi with the Government of Georgia, it was possible to solve the issue of 3 million bullets, dividing it equally between Georgia and Armenia, and moreover, it was possible to get aluminum under certain conditions, assuring that in the near future it will be possible to get another million bullets, if the course of events would be favorable for the Armenian representatives. It was emphasized that the responsibility of receiving those bullets was

⁶⁵ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 209, sheets 114-116.

⁶⁶ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 154, sheets 204, 207.

placed on Umikyan, who remained in Crimea to finish the negotiations. In addition, they receive a promise from Turbin that in the near future they will also receive a thousand machine guns, cannon bombs and other generally necessary munitions.⁶⁷

On July 24, 1920 (N 1292), the assistant to the Military Minister of the RA, acting Chief of the General Staff, went on a business trip, receiving General Hovh. Hakhverdyan's resolution, stating that according to General Kishmishyan, Lieutenant Umikyan, according to the order of the Minister of Defense, was sent to South Russia to purchase a large amount of ammunition. Baghdasaryan set the problem of finding out the course of the business trip of Captain Aniyev and M.Makaryan, because he personally did not know about it. Baghdasaryan reported that he only learned that they went to Theodosia to bring back the 500,000 bullets already bought and taken by Shkuro. It was recorded that if General Kishmishyan knew about this before giving additional assignment to Aniyev and Makaryan, then, of course, he should have instructed Lieutenant Umikyan to arrive in Crimea, first of all find Aniyev and Makaryan and act in full cooperation with them. A question was raised that if General Kishmishyan knew about the new assignment given to Aniyev and Makaryan, then the misunderstanding was the omission of him and Umikyan. On July 24, B. Baghdasaryan, Acting Chief of the General Staff, sent copies of this letter to the General Artillery Department on behalf of the Military Minister, with a request to inform him regarding the report addressed to the Military Minister, which was done.⁶⁸

However, the problem does not end there. In connection with this case, Military Minister R. Ter-Minasyan ordered on July 27, 1920 (Bx 1321) to check the following: 1) on what basis were Aniyev and Makaryan allegedly already delegated, and Umikyan was sent along with them with new instructions and new conditions, 2) why there was a contradiction and dualism in the case, 3) then it is required to inform General Kishmishyan.⁶⁹

On August 11, 1919 (N 8), the representative of the Military Ministry of the RA in Tiflis, military attaché General Kishmishyan, in a report sent to the Military Minister, states that the Armenian troops are in need of three-line bullets, he and the mission's advisor M. Tumanyan appealed to the British High Command with the request. It was reported that in response to their petition, they received an answer from the British that they did not have such bullets at their disposal. At that time, as Kishmishyan reports, they asked if there might be any of them in Batumi, whose chief of staff, General Cory, replied that they should contact Colonel Bellew for information, who, however, denied the existence of the bullets, hinting at the same time that the bullets can be found in Tiflis. Accordingly, Kishmishyan asks the British to provide them with transportation means to take cargo to Yerevan, and gets an agreement to load two wagons, based on which Makaryan promises to deliver 30-40 thousand bullets. Kishmishyan informs that

⁶⁷ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 154, sheet 204.

⁶⁸ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 154, sheet 206.

⁶⁹ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 154, sheet 206.

according to their information, there are many war reserves in the Neutral Zone of Lori, especially in the village of Uzunlar.⁷⁰ As it turns out from Kishmishyan's report of August 15, 1919 (N 128), they learned from the representative of the Volunteer Army, Dan, about the telegram of General Sannikov, according to which the General Staff was ready to give our representative 1 million bullets, and the Armenian side, in its turn, should give two million Lebel cartridges. Kishmishyan reports that they have given their consent, while taking measures to deliver immediately the bullets to Armenia.⁷¹

Kishmishyan's report to the RA Military Minister dated August 16, 1919 (No. 8), again refers to the acquisition of bullets in Tiflis. It was reported that the Minister of Foreign Affairs received irrefutable assurances from Advisor Tumanyan that a sufficient amount of bullets would be sent from Tiflis, but later it turned out that difficulties suddenly arose with the purchase of bullets due to the risk of arrest by civil authorities, as well as the unwillingness of the owners of these goods, which was reported to the British authorities, and on August 11, also to the Georgian government. It was reported that in any case, efforts are being made to send the English echelon, new sources of ammunition purchase are being considered, noting that this task is assigned to Makaryan, the property manager of the mission's military department. It was said that when the number of bullets reaches 20-25 thousand, they will be sent to Armenia by the military representative of France in Armenia A. Poidebard. A telephone and several topographical maps will be sent along with that cargo, which will be brought to Armenia accompanied by an English officer. Kishmishyan reported that another million bullets were expected from the Volunteer Army, but to find out the details, appropriate instructions were given to Lieutenant Aniyev in Batumi. It was mentioned that in any case, every effort was being made to organize the transit of these goods through the British.⁷²

In another report of August 16, 1919 (N 134) addressed to the RA Military Minister, General Kishmishyan once again refers to the problems of weapons and ammunition, stating that on August 14, Colonel Zinkevich, Major General Voskresensky arrived in Tiflis with an escort group alongside with General Baratov. There was talk of providing 1 million bullets. According to Kishmishyan, General Baratov promises to support, offering to contact Colonel Dan. The latter promises to help, saying that a month or two ago they contacted Ekaterinodar with a request to facilitate the purchase or exchange with "Lebel". Later, he finally informs that at the last moment the British prevented him from taking advantage of the created opportunity.⁷³

⁷⁰ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 177, sheet 25.

⁷¹ NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 177, sheet 36.

⁷² NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, file 17, sheet 45.

⁷³ NAA fund 275, inv. 5, file 177, sheets 47-48.

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