

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

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### **Abstract**

In 1917-1918, the unpredictable course of events led to the re-establishment of the Armenian statehood, which forced the creation of its own armed forces as a guarantee of its existence, which made the young republic dependent on almost all powers in terms of arms acquisition, in particular after the October 1917 Russian coup. From the Entente countries, Britain and France, which became major actors in the Transcaucasian region and were guided by their hidden deep interests, the assistance to the Republic of Armenia was conditional, partial, inadequate and in many cases outdated. Allied military-political representations in Transcaucasia and Armenia gradually replaced the initially cautious approach with outspoken pro-Muslim practices, and the interests of Britain and other countries became more in tune with Azerbaijan and Georgia. Armenia appeared in the role of a beggar for help, including the delivery of weapons and ammunition, which was incomplete, low-quality, accidental, completely outdated.

**Keywords:** *Armenian Army, weapons, gun, Entente allies, Republic of Armenia, Great Britain, Baldwin Oliver, Cloud Stokes, Turkey, war, armed forces.*

In the spring of 1920, the British version of reorganizing and arming the Armenian army seemed to be on the agenda, and it seemed that it could become sort of a support for Armenia's many problems, and contribute to the delayed establishment of the army. At the same time Av. Aharonyan and Poghos Nubar added to the issue of problematic weapons and ammunition for the Armenian army, the issue of inviting military advisers, instructors and inspectors, the memorandum about which was sent through the RA Foreign Ministry to the conference of the allied powers in London in March 1920, but received their skeptical and evasive response, which was followed by the incomprehensible struggles especially in the British cabinet and in particular in the British Ministry of War (War Office), causing some disappointment in the Armenian party and military circles. The issues of financing the invitation of no less than 30-40 councilors went from one cabinet to another, and although J. Malcolm asked for an annual loan of 100,000 pounds for five years, Av. Aharonyan and P. Nubar expressed readiness to provide bonds, as in the case of providing American flour, but the case

took a diametrically different course. During that time, the discussions were artificially prolonged, the amount of the loan was increased to 500 000 pounds, which would make the work of British advisers possible, but the end of April came, and neither the treasury nor the war ministry moved even a bit, because sending them to the Republic of Armenia without their support was considered a dangerous occupation.

In regard to the “borrowing of independence” in July 1920, A.I. Khatisyan visits the British Foreign Ministry and again requests to send military as well as financial advisers, not denying the lack of funds on behalf of RA and assuring the request for the salary to be paid or to compensate the experts in a loan or other way. The British Army Council reacts, and Curzon finds further steps in that direction desirable, and the ice seems to be melting. Ideally, the advisors would be headed by a division general attached to the RA Military Ministry, assisted by three senior colonels, who would be responsible for infantry, cavalry and artillery training, and oversee artillery, supply and medical services. The reorganized 40,000-strong army was to consist of 30,000 infantrymen, who would be deployed in 3 military divisions, each consisting of 3 brigades (brigades), each of which in turn would consist of 3 battalions. 2,000 horsemen were to be divided into 5 regiments, each with 400 swordsmen, and the artillery force was to consist of 3,000 men, the other services - 5,000 men. Over a dozen British officers were to be attached to the infantry, 2 to the cavalry, 3 to the artillery, and 5 to the other services. According to that draft, the officers would not be limited to an advisory status, but would also have broad executive authority. Along with that, working conditions were defined: salary, business trips, customs duties, etc.<sup>1</sup> However, everything was predetermined from the beginning, and on August 26, the British Foreign Ministry only informed the Ministry of War about the negative decision. "taking into account the peace terms recently concluded between the Armenian government and the Soviet authorities of Russia, according to the news, His Excellency considers that the proposal to send British officers to the Armenian army should be suspended for the time being",<sup>2</sup> although the opposite issue was also raised - the sending of Armenian officers abroad. From this point of view, the meeting of the government on March 7, 1920, which, based on the report of the Military Minister, decided to send 8 officers abroad, opening a loan of about 6 million rubles for this purpose.<sup>3</sup>

As directly testified by R. Hovhannisyan, the delivery of 25,000 rifles and 40,000 uniforms by the British Ministry of Defense should have been made only after Av. Aharonyan and Poghos Nubar Pasha signed for the transportation costs and to deposit the treasury bonds required by the English Bank, i.e. to give them to the British.<sup>4</sup> The Bolshevik riots of May jeopardized the implementation of that deal, and despite a number of expressions in the British cabinet regarding the fate of the Yerevan

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<sup>1</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 415.

<sup>2</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 416.

<sup>3</sup> Protocols of the sessions of the Government of the Republic of Armenia, 2014, 405-406.

<sup>4</sup> Hovhannisyan 2007: 563.

government, in the end, unlike the British negative approach to the aircraft, Osborne even declared that British promises to Armenia should be honored, even if Armenia should adopt the Soviet regime.<sup>5</sup>

In London in April 1920, Colonel Cl. Stokes meets with Deputy Foreign Minister J. Tilly and continues to put pressure on the Foreign Office, receiving an offer from him on 3 April to return to Transcaucasia to replace the ailing Chief Commissioner J. Oliver Wardrop, but Stokes persisted, saying that the appointment would be of no use to him if only the Armenians were to receive arms. Colonel Cl. Stokes is worried by British Assistant Foreign Secretary John Anthony Cecil Tilly's explanations that whatever the actions of Great Britain are, a decision has already been made to provide Armenians with means for self-defense and that Armenia's interests should be paramount in terms of military supplies. Stokes counters this by arguing that such a policy would "throw Azerbaijan into the arms of the Turks" and, as the Azerbaijanis fear being left at the fragile mercy of the Armenians, it would lead to confrontation and a joint Turkish-Azerbaijani attack. Thus, supplying arms only to the Armenians would actually be a very disservice to them, not to mention the elimination of all British influence in Baku."<sup>6</sup> This position of Stokes was enough that, after a conversation with Lord Curzon, it was decided to allocate certain quantities of weapons both in Azerbaijan and in Georgia. Stokes believed that Armenia, in the interests of survival, should make friends with Azerbaijan and Georgia, which should be equally armed, which allegedly could contribute to their rapprochement, which J. Milne was categorically against it, although in the end, after a struggle, there was even a proposal to put the control of the distribution of weapons and ammunition on the same Stokes and a number of other officers.<sup>7</sup>

Prime Minister Khatisyan's circular of March 8, 1920 (N 602) related to the principle regulation of military administration is one of the interesting steps on the way to establishing the army: "in non-coded telegrams, never touch on matters of war or national defense and security".<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, even the delivery of ammunition, weapons and clothing by the British was not done "cleanly", because as the subsequent processes showed, a significant part of the rifles supplied to the Armenian Army turned out to be unusable, to which the Government of the Republic of Armenia on May 19, 1920, listening to the report of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in English of a proposal to buy arms worth a million pounds, approved and authorized the Armenian delegation to sign the proposed terms. The Treasury allocated 75 percent of the market price for arms and ammunition, 5 percent for munitions, 50 percent for used clothing, 100 percent for new clothing, and 75 percent for harnesses and saddles.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 424.

<sup>6</sup> Hovhannisyan 2007: 545.

<sup>7</sup> Hovhannisyan 2007: 545.

<sup>8</sup> NAA, fund 210, inv. 1, list 7, sheet 34.

<sup>9</sup> NAA, fund 199, inv. 1, list 146, sheet 96.

In the period from May 1 to October 20, 1920, 29,000 sets of clothing (coats, jackets, hats, shoes) and weapons (cartridges, belts, water bottles, etc.) were received from Great Britain and allocated to the Armenian army, as well as 25,000 units of firearm. A significant part of the rifles supplied to the Armenian army turned out to be unusable. Military historian Artsrun Hovhannisyan has a very subtle observation-clarification regarding the above: often the names of the weapons and other technical details were wrongly stated. According to A. Hovhannisyan's Canadian rifles mentioned above are sometimes mistakenly called "Bosh" in Armenian literature. The hand machine guns were of the American "Lewis" model. The combat qualities of Canadian rifles were considered by the Armenian military to be heavy, inconvenient and useless, and in fact they had problems that the Canadian troops had abandoned during the First World War. According to the author, "they had certain problems with reliability, and even English and Canadian sources admit it. The Armenian sources spoke negative about the combat qualities of Canadian rifles."<sup>10</sup> In particular, such an opinion was voiced by S. Vratsyan, the famous Hajduk captain K. Sasuni, that those rifles were heavy, uncomfortable and unusable...the weapons actually had problems. During the First World War, they were happy to give them up.<sup>11</sup> However, later, military scientist Artsrun Hovhannisyan, in the second volume of his absolutely spectacular book "Art of War" published in 2020, contradicting himself a little, which sounds subjective, states: "However, we believe that our sources are also somewhat exaggerating everything and seem to be trying to find an additional excuse for further defeats. The author in Great Britain personally had the opportunity to interact with and even shoot this weapon and make sure that in fact the weapon is a very powerful and especially accurate rifle, it just has some problems with the bolt and required some skill to operate it."<sup>12</sup>

Observing this issue, it is difficult to agree with Y. Ter-Hakobyan that during the Turkish-Armenian war of 1920, the Armenian army was "well dressed and armed thanks to the British assistance... the Armenian soldier was no longer naked, but was clothed from head to toe like the British army",<sup>13</sup> which is completely denied by the many facts brought by us, the fact that it was just outdated weaponry that the British did not need, that was lying in the British military reserves as a reserve product, etc.

On May 10, 1920, during the meeting of the United Delegation, Poghos Nubar Pasha again discussed the issues of army organization and recruitment, but many uncertainties were clearly seen. Italian Prime Minister Francesco Nitti<sup>14</sup> speaking about the number and capacity of the Armenian army in connection with the report to General Gabriel Ghorghanyan, states that in terms of expectations, if they have ammunition,

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<sup>10</sup> Hovhannisyan 2020. 2: 170, 248-249.

<sup>11</sup> Vratsyan 1993: 508; Sasuni 1926: N 5, 80.

<sup>12</sup> Hovhanissyan 2020: 249.

<sup>13</sup> Ter-Hakobyan 1921: 86.

<sup>14</sup> Francesco Severio Nitti (1868-1953) - Nitti Francesco Severio Vincenzo de Paola, Italian politician and statesman, Prime Minister of Italy from June 23, 1919 to June 15, 1920.

they can increase the number of the army to 40 thousand, saying that the British have sent, and the Greek government sent a thousand rifles, but as it turned out later, a significant part of the British weapons was simply not suitable.<sup>15</sup>

The British and their war office shifted the center of gravity to the field of weapons and ammunition transfer to the armed forces of Armenia, and here they had uncertain approaches, moreover, they confused it with the processes of withdrawing their troops from Batumi and Transcaucasia. The British intention to subjugate the Armenian army had been a subject of controversy for months in the cabinets of the British Ministry of War, it was not aimed at strengthening the Armenian state, but was more aimed at blocking the South Caucasus from Bolshevik Russia, although there were deviations here as well. It was related to the long-range strategy of the British cabinet, ostensibly for the sake of securing appropriate commercial and economic interests with Soviet Russia for the beginning or, in the case of Turkey, for the life support of ambiguous intentions to have their interests in the Middle Eastern corridor in the event of new military and political developments, which were already noticeable and still uncertain at that time, but already from the starting points of the new strategy being outlined. Here it is appropriate to add that it was not at all a manifestation of a benevolent attitude on the part of the British, or at all it was not aimed at providing disinterested assistance to the "friendly" Armenian state in the creation of its armed forces. The May 1920 Bolshevik riots led to Allies' dissatisfaction with the RA government and seemed to jeopardize the implementation of the deal, and despite a number of statements in the British cabinet regarding the fate of the Yerevan government, in contrast to the British negative approach to aircraft, Osborne even stated that British promises to Armenia must be honored even if Armenia accepts a Soviet regime of government,<sup>16</sup> while demanding severe punishment for the rioting Bolsheviks. In this regard, Art. One can hardly agree with a controversial statement of Hovhannisyan, which is also denied by the many archival and other facts cited above: "At first glance, especially in the case of the supply of aircraft, the unfriendliness of the British Ministry of Defense is obvious, they really did not want to provide aircraft, but on the other hand, it was a clear truth that such devices are very expensive and complicated, and their operation is problematic for the Armenian side. At the same time, it will be more useful to use that money for other weapons, which the Armenian army needed more... airplanes were considered a strategic, political weapon at that time. Providing such funds is quite problematic, and the British authorities were afraid that these funds would end up in the hands of the Bolsheviks."<sup>17</sup> Such an interpretation is unfounded, especially since with the Sovietization of Armenia, those weapons would either fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks or their friendly and allied Turks, and how it happened.

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<sup>15</sup> Aharonyan 2011: 118.

<sup>16</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 424.

<sup>17</sup> Hovhannisyan 2020. 2: 250-251.

And yet the political calculations were in most cases based on the expected help from the Entente allies, on the British infantry stationed in the Transcaucasus, which was the only visible external support for all the Transcaucasian republics against renewed Turkish encroachments from the south and Russian infiltration from the north. In that sense, the announcement about the unexpected withdrawal of those troops from the Transcaucasus in August-September 1920 shocked the naive Caucasian peoples, because such disloyalty and deceit were not expected. After that, the promises of military assistance by the British and other allies also became inconsistent, particularly for the Republic of Armenia, which was already considered a doomed and hopeless state, and its people were even subject to the end, which no one really wanted to help, and the Italians also found it unprofitable to deal with Armenia. , which led to the disastrous and capitulation Turkish-Armenian war in the autumn of 1920, when Armenia fell from the supposed "heights" of Sevres and even at that moment, not sobering up from the Sevres scandal, begged for salvation from the allies, and in particular from Great Britain. The British rifle and trooper, as Oliver Baldwin, an officer of the Armenian yard, was keenly aware, turned out to be useless and useless, the Armenian army, which was praised externally by the allies, suffered a crushing defeat from the Turks, and the Armenian government, stubbornly clinging to the Treaty of Sèvres, in the infamous "negotiations" of Alexandropol by Kyazim Karabekir<sup>18</sup> signed the unconditional capitulation of the Treaty of Sèvres under heavy bayonets, followed by the fall of the First Republic and the inevitable and forced Sovietization, which was almost repeated in the 2020 Artsakh War, when the joint Azerbaijani-Turkish forces capitulated the Third Republic of Armenia, and the Republic of Armenia, begging for help, was shamefully left blind. during the process, both by the OSCE Minsk Group and by the allied countries of Azerbaijan in that war, and especially by the Russian Federation, for which it seems that the Armenian people were not on the map and could not be seen.

Nevertheless, during that entire period, RA tried to solve the problems. still on March 20, 1920, the Council of Ministers heard the report of the Minister of Military Affairs on a number of issues, including 1) in terms of giving officers 1000 rubles each for summer uniforms, the question should be addressed to the Allied Powers and rejected, 2) first of all, meet the needs of the troops, leaving out 16,000 bushels of flour and 4,000 bushels of rice or semolina per month and decides to satisfy it, 3) To ask the Allied countries for linen, footwear and clothing for 30,000 people, as well as 30,000 Lebel rifles, 10 million Lebel bullets and tri-barreled rifles bullets, and finally goods-carrying, passenger-carrying and sanitary vehicles, on the basis of which it is decided to initiate a corresponding petition<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Karabekir Kyazim Pasha - commander of the XV Army Corps stationed in Erzurum, general, professor, is the son of Mehmed Emin Pasha. He participated in two Balkan wars, was captured by the Bulgarian troops in 1913, became a major in 1914. At the beginning of the First World War, in 1915, he headed the XIV Army Corps, then became the Chief of Staff of the First Army and later the VI Army. On December 22, 1918, he was appointed commander of the First Caucasian Army Corps, and on March 2, 1919, he was appointed commander of the XV Army Corps.

<sup>19</sup> NAA, fund 199, inv. 1, list 100, sheet 48.

It is interesting to note that Hamo Ohanjanyan's series of letters written to Al. Khatisyan from April 6 to April 22, 1920 are full of concerns about the procurement of weapons and ammunition, which is very necessary for Armenia, and in particular the financial difficulties related to their transportation from Batumi and Poti to Armenia, which were difficult to obtain, which even did not provide the Caucasian Bank, which seems to be favorable towards them, to which it was provided with salt for 80 rubles, which it resold for 380 rubles, in order to provide it to Armenia.

In addition to that, the fact that, as written in Ohanjanyan's April 6 letter addressed to Khatisyan, the Georgians themselves did nothing, but forced the Armenians to share with them, otherwise they caused delays in cargo transportation from Poti and other places. And the April 8 letter informs about the negotiations with Italy's representative M. Gabba and France's military representative Lt. Col. E. de Corbeil to exchange Armenian cotton and leather for bullets and "Lebelle", in response to which Corbeil promises that it is possible for the Constantinople letter addressed to General Anton Denikin and to be provided from the flows of the Salonika war cargo. Ohanjanyan also wrote that Italy's military and political representative Colonel M. Gabba assured that they rejected Azerbaijan, but according to their agency information, it was confirmed that this was not the case, because 40-50 wagons of military uniforms and other military property, and to some extent ammunition, which the Azerbaijanis received from the Italians, entered Azerbaijan from Poti.<sup>20</sup>

In H. Ohanjanyan's letter to Al. Khatisyan dated April 14, 1920, it appeared that they went to negotiations with Georgia for arms, in which generals Kazbegi and H. Kishmishyan, noting that the Georgians were willing to allow the transportation of only "Lebel" rifles, 1000-1600 rounds, "Colt" machine guns, designed for three-line cartridges, instead asking for three-inch mountain cannon shells and howitzer shells, "Lewis" machine guns, which the Armenian side answers that they also need them.<sup>21</sup>

The situation was also complicated in the organization of the Armenian uprising; in particular the British government, the Ministry of War and its military-political representation in Transcaucasia caused great obstacles.

In the report submitted to the Council of Ministers on February 28, 1919, RA Military Minister Hovhannes Hakhverdyan, referring to the state of the Armenian Air Force, informed the government about the unfitness of the existing aviation equipment and only one operational aircraft, that the situation could be rectified after a few months, when it would be possible to destroy two collect another one from the existing planes. Hakhverdyan also informed that there were 5 pilots, 1 observer-pilot, 1 mechanic-instructor, 3 engine operators, 6 engine operator's assistants, 2 drivers, 2 driver's assistants, 10 foremen in the air force.

Based on all this, the RA military minister proposed to the government to form an aviation squadron and send a number of military personnel to France to learn aviation

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<sup>20</sup> Balikyan 1996: 74.

<sup>21</sup> Balikyan 1996: 81-82.

and acquire new equipment. General Hovh. Hakhverdyan informed that the study in France will last about 1-2 years, after which it would only be necessary to acquire modern air force equipment. General Hovhannes Hakhverdyan also noted in the report that according to Antoine Poidebar, the missionary, archaeologist, pilot, scout captain and then major representing France in Armenia, it was considered appropriate to use the airborne squadron mainly for the protection of the state border.

Based on all that, General Hovh Hakhverdyan asked the RA government to send 5 to 6 officers and 15 to 18 soldiers to France to study aviation, as well as to buy new planes and necessary equipment.<sup>22</sup> According to the "Christian Armenia" encyclopedia, Captain Antoine Marie Joseph Poidebar, the military representative of France in the Republic of Armenia, was awarded the "St. Gregory the Illuminator" order established by the Catholicos of All Armenians Gevorg Y. Surenyants probably before October 1, 1911.<sup>23</sup>

In the Transcaucasus, relations with the British military-political mission are particularly bad, due to the disputes over the purchase of two attack and two reconnaissance planes with their own funds in February 1920 and the reluctance to conclude a deal with Armenia. In addition to this, the British military authorities in Transcaucasia and Armenia, in addition to emptying the Kars and arsenals of the republic, in the person of the military governor of Batumi, General William James Norman Cooke-Collis, unequivocally blocked the transfer of 2 airplanes to Armenia, which were bought by the RA leadership in Paris, fake arguing that it is necessary to find out the "origin" of these airplanes.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, although British military personnel in Paris, including Brigadier General W. Beach assures the RA delegation that took part in the case that there is no objection against the operator, after completely unnecessary delays, the first two of the 12 airplanes bought in France are sent with Air Force captain pilot Arthur Ghulyan, but as soon as they arrive, they are confiscated by the British governor of Batumi on the way by Brigadier General William James Norman Cooke-Collis, who refuses to hand them over to the Armenian government, saying he is awaiting further instructions from his government.<sup>25</sup> It is then falsely argued that the French military authorities said that they had not been informed of such a deal, so that the British Ministry of War, which did not like the less lenient approach of the French, confirms Collis's right in the order of rejection.

On March 7, 1920, Cooke-Collis telegraphed to the War Office that the aircraft were apparently the first of 12 aircraft destined for Armenia, and that he was holding them pending instructions from London. However, on March 19, the British Army Council sent a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the decision of the Supreme

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<sup>22</sup> Hovhannisyan 2018.

<sup>23</sup> Ter-Minasyan 2004. N 2 (104), 79-105.

<sup>24</sup> Makhmuryan 2014: 211.

<sup>25</sup> Hovhannisyan 2007: 556. Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 417.



Council of Allies on arming Armenia did not say anything about the supply of aircraft, and the French military authorities did not provide any information about such a deal, so the Ministry of War approves the general governor's step.<sup>26</sup> The British also disliked the fact that the aircraft were purchased from France, a constant competitor, raising suspicions among them. The Armenians were forced to convince the British that there was no secret in buying 2 aircraft for their landlocked country, especially since the neighboring countries, Georgia and Azerbaijan, were already acquiring additional aircraft and munitions from the disintegrating White armies.

The issue of the release of the aircraft lasts for weeks, the Armenian government sends many petitions to Paris, London, Batumi and elsewhere to lift the British blockade, with which the French military mission in the Caucasus also appeals in connection with the confiscation of the aircraft intended for Armenia by James Cooke-Collis, but in vain.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, the RA Prime Minister and Foreign Minister tried to overcome the arbitrary obstacles created by the British military-political representation on the way to the creation of the Armenian Air Force.

In the letter of Foreign Minister Khatisyan dated March 31, 1920 (N 2035) addressed to M. Tumanyan, the advisor of the RA diplomatic representation in Georgia, it appeared that a telegram was received from Batumi that the military governor of Batumi, General Cooke-Collis, again refused them permission to transfer the two aircraft to Armenia. Captain Aniev, who was in Batumi, warned the Foreign Minister that it was necessary to take immediate steps, because the airplanes were damaged by the rain in the open air. Based on this, Al. Khatisyan asked M. Tumanyan to urgently contact the French and American military and political representations in Tiflis.<sup>28</sup> On April 6, 1920, in a letter addressed to Khatisyan, Ohanjanyan addresses the issue of airplanes and documents the mediation undertaken by French General Francis Depere to the British, adding that John Wardrop at the latter's insistence telegraphed Cooke-Collis, who almost agreed, but at the last minute, for some reason again hindered the request for airplanes available to Armenia.<sup>29</sup>

When Commander Harry Luke, a member of the staff of High Commissioner Admiral John Michael de Robeck in Constantinople, arrives in Yerevan in April 1920, Prime Minister Khatisyan complains that the Allies expect the Armenians to defend themselves, but block 2 aircraft and a shipment of ammunition purchased from General Denikin, and at the same time they do nothing to limit the military build-up of neighboring states. Luke reports to his superiors that the 2-aircraft issue raises serious questions about the sincerity of the British government.

On April 7, 1920, the leaders of the Ramkavar club in Egypt, Levon Mkrtychyan and Vahan Malezyan, appealed to the High Commissioner of Great Britain, Field

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<sup>26</sup> Hovhanisyan 2015. III: 417.

<sup>27</sup> NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, list 211, sheets 78-79, Hovhannisyan 2007: 55.

<sup>28</sup> NAA, fund 275, inv. 5, list 211, sheets 78-79.

<sup>29</sup> Balikyan 1996: 3.

Marshal Edmund Allenby in Cairo, that, being a moderate party and followers of the democratic principles of Poghos Nubar Pasha, and encouraged by L. George's speech in the House of Commons, they asked for a how many aircraft for the defense needs of the RA government, promising to cover the transportation costs with their own funds. Allenby also sent a message to London, informing him that in the Middle East, according to the Royal Air Force Commander R. Groves, there were more than 700 surplus aircraft with engines and another 150 without engines that could be put to work, also finding that some of the obsolete machines parked in Alexandria could be sold with permission from the Air Ministry.

Before that, James Malcolm, the latter's representative, intervened in the case on the instructions of Poghos Nubar, who raised the issue of the aircraft before the British Foreign Ministry, which later became the subject of a long dispute between the latter and the Ministry of War, expressing great confusion as to where the Armenians would get money from, how they would transport and by what means, raising the issue of pilot personnel or finding that this initiative should not be encouraged, because it is possible that these aircraft will fall into the hands of the Bolsheviks. Or the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on August 5, 1920, that some of the best pilots of the former Russian air force were Armenians, who could make the aircraft look like the device, if the materials and spare parts were provided, was not convincing, thinking that it would be logical to do everything possible to the friendly people in the Caucasus in order to support, directing the inquiry to the Army Council.<sup>30</sup> Even after Curzon's statement that the advantage of raising the morale and resistance of the Armenians was much greater than the danger of the aircraft falling into enemy hands, the matter did not move, and the process was not significantly affected by the call of the Foreign Office to the Army Council to reconsider the matter. There is a question of transferring the problem of surplus aircraft to the Liquidation Department, after which the War Office washes its hands, and War Office officials under Churchill continue to avoid unnecessary ships.

Finally, as if a solution was found, on July 18, 1920, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a telegram to the High Commissioner E. Allenby that the proposed sale was approved subject to satisfactory bilateral arrangements being reached in discussions between the Armenian delegation in Egypt and the liquidation department's agent in Cairo. Seeking to help, Deputy Foreign Minister John Tilly tried to show the Ministry of Munitions Curzon's personal interest in the matter. In his opinion, the fact that the objective of the policy of His Majesty's Government should be to help the Republic of Armenia to reorganize its armed forces, His Excellency believed that the Republic of Armenia should be granted the easiest possible terms so that they could acquire the most suitable aircraft.<sup>31</sup>

In 1920, various specialists in the field of aeronautics came to RA from different countries. Armenia bought a certain number of airplanes from England, which, however,

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<sup>30</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 420-421.

<sup>31</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 422.

having appeared in Batumi since the beginning of 1920, were not transferred to Armenia due to the arbitrariness of Cooke-Collis. From May 1 to October 20, 1920, the specialists of the air force repaired 6 helicopters, some of which were unable to fly due to malfunctioning or missing propellers. The processes of establishment of the air force did not go smoothly and encountered many obstacles. In addition, the unfortunate accident at the airport, the victim of which was the pilot Mihran Khayeyan<sup>32</sup> (may be Khayeyan as well). Ruben H. Babayan and Nikolai Khorozov were also among the first Armenian pilots. Two French planes were sent from Batumi to Armenia on June 16, 1920 by train, accompanied by Ghulyan-Rilsky.<sup>33</sup>

But the British side took no steps. Artificial barriers, first by the War Office and then by the Ordnance Office, prevented any surplus aircraft from being sent to Armenia. Months passed and in August 1920, the situation in the Caucasus took such drastic turns that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was no longer willing to pursue the issue, and the surplus aircraft of the United Kingdom Air Force did not appear in the skies of Armenia.

In May 1920, Khatisyan again complained to Luke, the British High Commissioner in Transcaucasia at that time, that the blocking of the planes confirmed the claims of the Bolshevik rebels that Armenia had been abandoned by the Allied Powers, based on which Luke urged the Foreign Ministry to ensure the release of the planes, which was their real will have a moral effect and consequence far greater than its value or importance.<sup>34</sup> On May 15, 1920, Av. Aharonyan, reminding about many memorandums and other documents, saying that everything was in vain, reminding about the latter's promise to sell some weapons to Armenia, but the British authorities in Batumi blocked the delivery of 2 airplanes, which were bought and sent by the Armenian delegation, that the weapon promised in January has not moved yet. Concluding, Aharonyan reports that the time has come when the Armenian nation has the right to know whom to rely on for advice, help, protection, salvation and justice<sup>35</sup>. And already on May 17, the British Foreign Ministry, reacting quickly, reports that they have already applied to the Ministry of War to release the aircraft, which remains suspended in the air, and despite this assurance, the Ministry of War has been resorting to dodge ships for about 2 weeks, giving ambiguous instructions to General Milne, if the latter deems it expedient for the Armenians to receive them, then he is authorized to carry out their release. On May 26, Curzon formally complained to the Army Council about the delays, and only in June did General Cooke-Collis finally lift the artificial blockade he had set up, the main recipient of which was the British War Office, which did not want to strengthen the Republic of Armenia – the enemy of their friends Azerbaijan and Georgia.

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<sup>32</sup> Matteosian 1998: 135.

<sup>33</sup> Hovhannisyan 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015.III: 418.

<sup>35</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 418.

Armenia had a reason to question the willingness and orientation of the Allies to help Armenia, it was manifested many times in the attitude of W. Churchill, who headed the War Ministry, again in another matter related to aircraft, in connection with several hundred British surplus aircraft in Alexandria, a batch of which the rich Armenian community in Egypt had expressed a desire to buy and send to Armenia. The Armenian community of Egypt was dominated by the influence of the Constituent Ramkavar Party and the Armenian Benevolent General Union, which regardless of its disagreements with the federal government, made certain changes in its strategy, expressing a desire to participate in the demonstration of aid to Armenia, especially since both organizations were closely related to Poghos Nubar and with the Armenian National Delegation. The ringleaders hoped that Great Britain would provide the Little Alliance, Armenia, with spare aircraft and parts for free or at nominal prices, and that their party would pay the £100-£200 required to transport each aircraft from Alexandria to Batumi.<sup>36</sup>

On May 24, 1920, on the instructions of the British government H. Luke, gave authorized by the RA government Av. Aharonyan and Poghos Nubar Pasha 1 million 60000 pounds, according to which the military loan was granted for one year at 5% rate, but with the condition that the weapon should be purchased from the British government.<sup>37</sup> However, the peculiarity of the situation was that the Menshevik Georgian government, taking advantage of the opportunity, demanded that the RA government leave 23 percent of the weapons and ammunition to be delivered through its territory to Georgia, which was ratified by the relevant agreement signed between the two neighboring states on May 26, 1920.<sup>38</sup>

Certain hopes were attached to Lloyd George's government, which on May 25, 1920 made a speech in the House of Commons, addressing the problems of Armenia, expressing hope that Armenians will defend their independence; they are exceptionally intelligent people, that they can easily organize an army of 40,000, that they will be happy. to assist them in arming their army, which will increase their self-respect, and when they have done this, the Turk will have too much respect, not for them, but for himself, to make any other attempt at massacres in that direction.<sup>39</sup>

Those processes were ambiguous. On June 5, 1920, US Ambassador Davis sent a top-secret coded telegram to Washington, in which he was informed that the British government had released a military loan of 1 million pounds to Armenia, for which 25,000 rifles, 50 million bullets, 400 machine guns were to be purchased, 12 field cannons, 32 mountain cannons and military equipment for 40 thousand soldiers, adding that France also intends to deliver Russian rifles to Armenia through the transit routes of Georgia.<sup>40</sup> And already on June 10, 1920, in the report sent to the Ministry of Foreign

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<sup>36</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 419.

<sup>37</sup> Galoyan 1999: 187.

<sup>38</sup> Galoyan 1999: 188.

<sup>39</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 420.

<sup>40</sup> Galoyan 1999: 188.

Affairs, Luke informs about the additional document he received from the RA government in confirmation of the 1 million 60 thousand pounds sterling previously given to Aharonyan and Poghos Nubar Pasha to pay for the weapons supplied to Armenia. After submitting detailed invoices to Paris on July 26, 1920, Poghos Nubar and Av. Aharonyan handed over thirteen bonds worth £829,634 9 shillings and 3 pence<sup>41</sup> to Ambassador Lord Edward Derby, which after signing could be used at the discretion of the Government of the Republic of Armenia. Ammunition was unloaded at Poti, and six months after the Supreme Council of Allied Powers agreed to send arms to Armenia, the first shipment of supplies crossed the Sanahin border crossing by train in the Neutral Zone and entered RA territory.<sup>42</sup>

And thus, a part of the purchased weapons was sent to Armenia in the summer of 1920, but as it turns out from a document of the British Ministry of Defense dated August 10, 2,500 rifles were left to Georgia, and on September 10, during the meeting with Luke, Al. Khatisyan makes a statement that the RA government has already received all the military equipment, and is also informed about additional supplies from France and Greece.<sup>43</sup>

Therefore, we cannot agree with the conclusion of Artsrun Hovhannisyan, according to which significant military assistance was provided by Great Britain and the supply of weapons was free,<sup>44</sup> especially since it arrived too late, and as we said above, that only a third of the weapons and munitions arrived, in a certain sense, unsuitable. One more adjustment we should note. Partially agreeing with Artsrun Hovhannisyan with the conclusion that Great Britain played a major role in the reunification of Kars, Nakhichevan, as well as other areas with the Republic of Armenia, that British troops worked hand in hand with Armenian forces to liberate those areas,<sup>45</sup> which is a very controversial process. has had and not always favorable for the Armenian side, let's take the forcible withdrawal of weapons and artillery from Kars by the British, which militarily significantly weakened and weakened the Armenian army at the time of the fall of Kars and ultimately contributed to the independence of the Republic of Armenia in the Turkish-Armenian war of the autumn of 1920. Therefore, Artsrun Hovhannisyan's in his one-sided approach to the issue of Armenian-British cooperation, the author ignored the extremely tough, openly anti-Armenian position of the British on the issue of Artsakh-Syunik, as a result of which it was annexed to Azerbaijan.<sup>46</sup>

The arrival of British weapons in Armenia was a disappointment, especially since it was preceded by a cold-hearted British bureaucracy and a heartless attitude towards a small ally and the poor quality of the ammunition transferred. It was well noticed by A.

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<sup>41</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 427.

<sup>42</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 429.

<sup>43</sup> Galoyan 1999: 187.

<sup>44</sup> Hovhannisyan 2019: 28.

<sup>45</sup> Hovhannisyan 2019: 28.

<sup>46</sup> Virabyan 2022. N 1 (15): 39-73.

Babalyan: "...two years of pleas and appeals were in vain, we received clothing and ammunition for 40,000 soldiers from the British government...".<sup>47</sup> It is sad that even during the disastrous days of the Turkish-Armenian war, the issues of the quality of arms and ammunition received from England were disputed, when the matter was already over.

In addition, on September 29, the Turks were already in Sarighamish, and on October 30 in Kars, which was left almost defenseless and had resisted to the extent possible, the capture of which, which at that time contained enormous reserves of munitions of the Russian imperial army, was absolutely impossible for the Kemalites. It was a great success.<sup>48</sup> According to K. Ataturk, there was almost no resistance,<sup>49</sup> and the Turks, encouraged by this, continued the attack, which forced Yerevan to appeal for help to the Entente again on October 30 and to the United States on November 5, but without results, and already on November 6, the Turks took Alexandropol.<sup>50</sup>

None of the great powers wanted to interfere with Bachman, Armenia was left to the whims of fate.<sup>51</sup> The Turkish attack was accompanied by slaughter, and in fact it became the most brutal ethnic cleansing in the territory controlled by them, S. Vratsyan's government was forced to record the desperate situation of Armenia, which was followed by the infamous Treaty of Alexandropol, Armenia capitulated, which was also the first international document of the Ankara government.

It turned out that the arms and ammunitions and munitions bought from Great Britain with treasury bonds deposited in the Bank of England (gold as a collateral) arrived late and had quality problems, one third was pocketed by Georgia, almost one third fell into the hands of the Turks, as well as At one time, with the permission of the British officers, the reserves of the extremely rich weapons and ammunition of the Russian Imperial Army in Erzurum were looted. And the rest of the weapons most likely fell into the hands of Bolshevik Russia, which hastily Sovietized Armenia, which directed it against neighboring Georgia, forcibly Sovietizing it, and what's more, a part was again allocated to friendly Turkey, which directed it against Armenia and Greece, crushing them with which the odyssey of this problem had its sad end.

The letter of Prime Minister Ohanjanyan dated August 28, 1920 to the head of the RA delegation in Paris Aharonyan regarding the quality of the rifles given by the British shortly before the Turkish attack is noteworthy. Ohanjanyan reported in it that the Armenian army is spread over a distance of 750 km, without weapons and ammunition, and the "Ross" rifles sent by the British are in bad condition and most of them are not usable, and the Greeks gave the Armenians 4,000 rifles of a type completely unknown to the Armenian army. half of the 3,800 rifles sent by the French had to be given to the

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<sup>47</sup> Babalian 1997: 182.

<sup>48</sup> Mukhanov 2009: 187.

<sup>49</sup> Mustafa Kemal 1934. 3: 118-119.

<sup>50</sup> Elchibekyan 1957: 172-173.

<sup>51</sup> Mukhanov 2019: 142.

Georgians as the price of transportation and transit, and more than half of those that arrived in Armenia need repair, the 5 million bullets received from General Wrangel and other sources are rusted and may not work, adding to that the important fact that Armenia's transportation system is paralyzed, as trains and cars do not move due to lack of fuel, there are few horses left, and very little bread for the soldiers.<sup>52</sup>

This is also confirmed by the report of Lieutenant Charles Valadier, a member of the French military mission in Yerevan, on October 15, 1920, who inspected the Kars front on October 9, according to which "some of the battalions of the Armenian army operating on the Kars front had already received new arrivals." "Ross" rifles, which, despite their weight and stiffness, gave almost all infantrymen the opportunity to have a weapon, the Armenian army is trained to use "Lebel" rifles, and the recently received "Ross" rifles from Britain cause problems, it is a great inconvenience for people with a weapon arming, the mode of use of which is unknown. For this reason, "Ross" rifles were mainly distributed only to reserve and irregular forces."<sup>53</sup>

In this regard, much can be understood by referring to the letter of November 8, 1920, sent by Av. Aharonyan from Paris to the RA Foreign Minister, about discussing the issue of Armenia at the general meeting of the League of Nations to be held in Geneva, about buying weapons: "Mr. Minister, I consider it my duty to address the following points in your letter dated September 27.

1. It was very surprising to us, especially to General Korkanian, that you consider the guns from England unusable because of their weight. However, it is surprising that the British conducted the entire war with this exact system.

2. We were saddened that the rifles we received from France were so few - only 1,900, and that too in need of repair, but we were informed by Marshal Foch's headquarters that a large number of rifles with bullets were sent to us from Bulgaria. At the same time, these days we will buy 5000 Lebel rifles. General Korkanian has written to the military minister in details about this all".<sup>54</sup>

However, the facts showed that the British rifles were very different from the Mosins, Lebel and other types of weapons used in the Armenian army. Harcourt, a representative of the semi-private foundation for Armenian refugees in Yerevan (Lord Mayor's Fund), later accused the British Ministry of War of dumping useless rifles on Armenians and then charging a fee for them: "At the same time, the usefulness of the cargo was greatly diminished by the fact that the Ministry of War took the opportunity to attach to the Armenians Canadian Ross rifles, which had already been tested in France and proved useless for general service.

The rifle is heavy, difficult to use, and the mechanism is complicated, it is easily out of order, and there are no shoulder straps to carry them with the rifles sent to Armenia. In addition, this rifle also has an almost useless bayonet, which on all

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<sup>52</sup> Hovhannisyan 2016. IV: 235.

<sup>53</sup> Hovhannisyan 2016. IV: 282.

<sup>54</sup> NAA, fund 200, inv. 2, list 158, sheets 1-2.

examples of rifles tested in Erivan did not mount well and wobbled. It can hardly be expected that a gun that was useless for the military exercises of the British troops could be useful to the illiterate peasants of Armenia".<sup>55</sup>

One of the reasons contributing to the defeat of the Armenian troops in the 1920 Turkish-Armenian war was considered to be that the allied states of the Entente supported their younger ally to the extent that their interests dictated, in many cases supplying the Armenian army with old-fashioned, obsolete weapons and outdated, worn-out weapons lying in British army depots in Egypt and elsewhere, rusting, in many cases without the necessary spare parts, which they sold if they wished or expediently or at half price to backward nations or to belligerents in countries mired in civil strife. And it was, of course, an accepted practice, by which it was possible to keep a monopoly on renewable weapons in one's own hands, and to have the ability to impose on the other, which such traditionally strong countries as Great Britain, which held almost until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, could afford the privilege of machine production, thanks to which it was able to maintain a high reputation as a manufacturer of high-quality weapons. And the Republic of Armenia was in the background and was forced to be satisfied with secondary weapons of others, there was simply no alternative, and there could not be, because relying on illusions has devastating consequences.

This is evidenced by L. George's coalition government minister who served in the Armenian army in 1920, British politician, member of the British Labor Party, journalist, son of three-time Great Britain Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, Labor MP and campaign participant journalist and cousin of the famous writer Regard Kipling at Khatisyan's invitation.<sup>56</sup> In 1920, he met Alexander Khatisyan, the second Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, in Cairo, with whose agreement he volunteered to serve in the army of the First Republic of Armenia as an officer in the uniform of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Armenia in 1920-1921. Oliver Baldwin arrived in Yerevan in the autumn of 1920 as an artillery instructor and enthusiastically began training the artillery units of the Armenian Army. RA Minister of Defense Ruben Ter-Minasyan awarded him the military rank of lieutenant colonel and assigned him to train the military regiment of the Yerevan region.

O. Baldwin wrote in his memoirs how insignificant British aid to the Armenian army was, that the rifles sent to Armenia were of the old "Ross" system, which "were almost guaranteed to explode after the first shot, the military boots sent were too small for an

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<sup>55</sup> Hovhannisyan 2015. III: 429.

<sup>56</sup> Baldwin Ridsdale Baldwin (Oliver Ridsdale Baldwin -1.03.1899-10.08.1958) - during the First World War, in 1916, he joined the Irish Guards and served in France. However, just weeks later, the Republic of Armenia was subjected to Kemal-Bolshevik aggression, occupied and divided by these two internationally unrecognized groups. On December 9, 1920, the Bolsheviks arrested and imprisoned Baldwin, and he was later imprisoned by the Turks for another five months. He was only able to be freed after the February 1921 uprising. Oliver Baldwin was also a member of the ARF until the end of his life and had a party membership card. – "Yaraj", 1928, May 30, daily newspaper, Hovhannisyan 2011. N 39 (904) 06.10.2011 - 12.10.2011, Baldwin 1933: 23. <https://meroughin.am/2022/04/16>, <https://bit.ly/48E70cP> (date of viewing: 1.08.2022)



Armenian peasant and for long legs, therefore useless”,<sup>57</sup> and besides, according to Sepuh, the soldiers were generally untrained and did not know how to use the newly received rifles: “That rifle was new to me, and I have been fighting for so many years”.<sup>58</sup> As for London, referring to the Canadian historian Margret McMillan, it is noted that Great Britain, recognizing the Transcaucasian republics, supplied them with low-quality weapons “The Ministry of Defense took advantage of the situation, in order to get rid of the surplus of Canadian rifles of the “Ross” company, which were distinguished by their failures even in non-combat conditions”.<sup>59</sup>

Reflecting on those bitter days, Oliver Baldwin clearly wrote: “Kars fell on the morning of October 30, and the entire Armenian army returned irregularly to Alexandropol.

The true story of treachery, incompetence and idleness that enabled the capture of this hitherto impregnable fortress may never be revealed, but the fact remains that under the cover of a dense fog the Turks passed all the distant fortifications and entered the city before the High Command awoke. It is remembered that during the irregular battles that followed, only two fortresses opened fire. Panic then gripped the garrison and a headlong flight began, leaving the Turks with thousands of prisoners, including the entire general command staff and half-destroyed arsenal.

Individual stories of heroism will always be remembered, but the appalling negligence of General Bek Pirumov and his staff is inexcusable. It was obvious that Bolshevik propaganda was undermining the morale of the troops, but what made the general's aide refuse to wake his superior when the police commissar rushed to give the first news of the Turkish advance will probably never be known. The sight of the Turks advancing with their flags led the Armenians to believe that the Russians were with the enemy, for in the hazy dawn the Turkish flag resembled the Soviet flag.

As the army fled, many of the civilian population were unable to reach Alexandropol. Their murdered bodies were seen in the waters of the river a few weeks later and were photographed by several members of the American Middle East Relief Fund.<sup>60</sup>

Vratsyan claims the same, saying that some of the Armenian troops were hastily armed with “Ross” rifles, newly received from England, which they were not used to.

The organ of the Social-Democratic Hunchakyan party “Young Armenia” also has an interesting observation about these rifles: “instead of helping our soldiers, the Canadian weapons delivered by the British at the last moment greatly harmed them. They were not only the worst type, outdated, most of them were useless weapons”, whose columnist S. Snaryan adds to what has been said that there was also a lack of

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<sup>57</sup> Baldwin 1933: 200.

<sup>58</sup> Baldwin 2022: 36; “Latest news”, February 8, 1921.

<sup>59</sup> Mustafaev 2018: 223. MacMillan 2003: 443.

<sup>60</sup> Baldwin 1924: 24-25.

weapons, cannons, machine guns and helicopters, adding to that the difficulties of communication and especially food.<sup>61</sup>

However, it is important to record the fact that a significant part of the weapons purchased from Great Britain never reached Armenia, because at the end of the 1920s, when the Soviet government was already established, a large batch of these weapons fell into the hands of the Kemalist troops, which was reported by Great Britain. A senior official R. Mac Donnell, in a writing dated February 24, 1920, stated that the weapons delivered to Armenia increased the military reserves of the Turkish nationalists by almost 100 percent, for which General K. Karabekir sent a telegram of thanks to the British military authorities.<sup>62</sup> Everything has been said, to which nothing needs to be added, especially the higher authorities of the Allies in the Transcaucasian region and in Constantinople, who were supposed to control the disarmament of Turkey, which had lost the war, practically did not pull a finger, and with their responsible position contributed not only to the arming of the Kemal troops, but also to the largest arsenals. - the looting and looting of arms and ammunition from Erzurum, Kars and other places, including facilitating the placing of British-French arms in the hands of the Turks, who used them against the Armenians and Greeks.

Naturally, not by chance, we have already said about this, all of this was also contributed to by the extremely delayed, last-minute delivery of British weapons to Armenia, that too during the difficult days of the war, when there was no chance of reorganization, and that too half-finished, often of poor quality, without of spare parts, and one-third of which only belatedly reached the Armenians, one-third to the Georgians and the same amount to the Kemalists. Obstacles were raised in the issue of military advice and instructors of the Armenian army, the delivery of aircraft and many other issues. In the end, the plans of the British regarding their satellites in the Transcaucasus were not fully implemented, and if they were implemented, then at the cost of the sacrifice of the Transcaucasian peoples, and mainly the Armenians, and the British hand never reached Baku's black gold, the oil. Of course, V. Lenin's call for anti-colonial revolution to the Muslim world, which effectively put pressure on England, which they quickly grasped and went on the defensive, changing the political course and everyone got what they got in the international game. Russia regained imperial control in Transcaucasia and a commercial contract with England, M. Kemal, through Lausanne, his Turkish republic and became the "father of civilization". It turned out that M. Kemal and V. Lenin were wise enough not to cross the line drawn by their adversary, England, that is, to enter into a struggle for border territories.

According to that, the representative of Great Britain in the Republic of Armenia Cl. Stokes offered his services to the British Cabinet to contact Kemal through agents in Tiflis. And based on this, Colonel Stokes even cynically and without any conscience advised the British General Staff in Constantinople to suspend the preparations for

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<sup>61</sup> "Young Armenia", 1921, N 9.

<sup>62</sup> Galoyan 1999: 188.

loading the weapons and ammunition for the Republic of Armenia on ships, because the Armenians have already reached an agreement on peace with the Turks, offering to hand over these weapons and ammunition to Georgia, which, in his opinion, is fully prepared to fight to the end against both the Bolsheviks and the Turks. Based on this, the British Ministry of War quickly made a decision to prevent the delivery of additional weapons to Armenia, and on November 13, the Admiralty issued an order not to supply any more fuel to Armenia.<sup>63</sup>

Of course, it was not only Great Britain that acted like this and gave priority to its interests, so was the newly created Soviet Russia, armed with outwardly extremely impressive slogans of self-determination of nations, whose leader Lenin became the strategic ally and spiritual father of the Muslim world. This is very vividly demonstrated by the complex games of Lenin's delegate Boris Legrand in Yerevan in October 1920 and the conditions proposed by him. British colonel Claude Stokes, who advised the RA government to sharply reject the conditions of the Soviet side, is also surprised by the dexterity of Boris Legrand, of Jewish origin, who, resorting to double standards, seems to offer acceptable conditions for Armenia on the one hand, but with a sharp rejection in the matter of weapons in response.<sup>64</sup>

Various authors and military specialists have repeatedly recorded that, naturally, in such a situation, the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia could not effectively organize the defense of the country, in connection with which the military and political representative of Britain in Transcaucasia, Lieutenant Colonel 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 giving importance to securing their economic and political interests in the Transcaucasian region.

It can be said that all this had a negative impact on the security of RA, and practically all the tactics contributed to the capitulation defeat in the 1920 war against Turkey, after which the First Republic, abandoned by the allies and deceived by the request for arms and ammunition support, ceased to be able to defend itself and was practically destroyed. In this regard, the solemn speech of Oliver Baldwin, the son of British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin (in French) at the event organized in Paris on May 28, 1928 on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the Republic of Armenia, which was also attended by the former leaders of Georgia and Azerbaijan: "Hello, (in Armenian). When I heard Armenian folk songs a while ago, I thought I was in Armenia. Nakhijevan, Dilijan and all of Armenia, which I love so much, appeared in my mind. I served in the Armenian army, saw the Bolshevik occupation on December 2, 1920, and then saw the uprising on February 18 with sympathy.

Today, on this solemn occasion, the main thing that I have to tell you is as follows: never trust the words and promises of big states. England completely forgot Armenia.

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<sup>63</sup> Hovhannisyan 2007: 787.

<sup>64</sup> Zohrabyan 1997: 229.

England forgot even her former warriors. They will die of a hunger and no one cares about them and today they are victims. Trust only in your strength, your children and your grandchildren. They are the only ones who will put the tricolor flag on Ararat again. I believe that the day is not far when chaos will erupt again in the Middle East. But, Armenians, if at that time you trust only in your own strength, then I believe that you can succeed..."<sup>65</sup>

However, both Great Britain and the British military-political mission in Armenia, including the son of the British Prime Minister who appeared there at that historical moment, Oliver Baldwin, who served as a general in the Armenian army, the outwardly beautiful, but highly controversial and obscure, complicated character still needs to be revealed and appreciated. From the valuable memoirs left by him, it is evident not only that the activities of the British officer in search of adventure are outlined in both positive and dark aspects, the charge meter of his devotion to Armenia, but also that he was often not always impartial in his actions and evaluations of events and cases, as a witness of his. Much of the information reported and presented was simply inaccurate, misrepresented and suffering from one-sidedness. O. Baldwin's memoir also documents his lack of firmness towards Armenia, for example, documenting the extreme measures he takes to save his own skin to escape the oppressive reality of Armenia, citing the Bolshevik slaughter as the reason, until then thinking that he had fallen into heaven and that the trials were only they are for the Armenian people, not for himself, whom Khatisyan invited to serve in the establishment of the RA armed forces, he also came, but he failed the first great tests and looked for ways to leave that unfortunate country at any cost, as did the American colonel Haskell, who gained a reputation of a philanthropist as others.

And so, according to his own testimony, on the way to escape from Armenia, he quickly gets rid of the badge awarded to him by the RA government, which he allegedly cherished from the beginning. "The only thing I decided to get rid of was my Armenian military badge, which I immediately threw on the Russian stove, where it rang carelessly." Colonel Oliver Baldwin's Caucasian silver belt, which was exchanged for one Turkish pound, with which he bought cottage cheese, suffered the same fate.<sup>66</sup>

There was no longer the fairyland full of adventures of the adventurous Baldwin, and what was the need for the badge of the country's army, which the British naively and blindly relied on, which he carelessly and easily gave up, which was not an act worthy of a true officer. However, the reality was this, just as it was a harsh and obvious reality of Great Britain's abandonment of its small and helpless ally, Armenia - Artsakh, Syunik-Zangezur and Nakhichevan were donated to neighboring Azerbaijan by the efforts of the British and other European countries, and finally, with their help, Armenia appeared under Bolshevik Russia and Kemalism. In the clutches of Turkey, and in the greatest BOOK of humanity, the promised land remembered in the Bible was ravaged

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<sup>65</sup> "Yaraj", 1928, May 30.

<sup>66</sup> Baldwin Oliver 2022, 220, 297.

and mutilated, and the Armenian people were subjected to extermination and terrible, inhuman torture and violence, genocide.

It is obvious that for both the British government and Oliver Baldwin, the Armenian activities were only an episode, touching, even if observable. But only in August 1920, in the city of Alexandria, Egypt, from a chance meeting with the first Prime Minister of RA Al. Khatisyan and an invitation to serve in the Armenian army, a small touch of adventure was born, which was based on purely self-centered adventurous impulses, the reflection of which was the memoir left by Oliver Baldwin.

And thus, the unpredictable development of the events of 1917-1918 led to the recreation of the Armenian statehood, which forced the creation of its own armed forces as a guarantee of its existence, which in terms of the acquisition of weapons and ammunition put the young republic in a state of dependence on almost all powers, and in particular after the October 1917 Russian coup. The Entente countries, Great Britain and France, which became the main players in the Transcaucasian region, were guided by their hidden deep interests, as a result of which the support provided to the Republic of Armenia was conditional, incomplete, inadequate and, in many cases, out of date. The military and political representative of Great Britain in the Republic of Armenia, colonel Claude Stokes, advised amicably to come to terms with the idea of defeat, just as today Russia advises to go to find the edges of peace and friendship with both Azerbaijan and Turkey, which still continue the bloody feasts, provocations and the encroachments against the Armenian people and the Armenian statehood.

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*Translated from Armenian by Gevorg Harutyunyan*

The article was accepted for publication on 05.09.2023.