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UNDER THE MENACE OF THE “WHITE” RUSSIA: THE FIRST DIPLOMATIC ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN THE INDEPENDENT STATES OF GEORGIA AND POLAND IN 1918 AND 1919

by Beka Kobakhidze

The collapse of the Tsarist Russia amidst the World War brought political havoc in the surroundings of the Empire. But it was Poland who knew well enough what was she aspiring to. Poland enjoyed greater political autonomy in the Russian Empire than any other “smaller nationality”; hence the country’s elites met turbulent times with better preparedness. Poland was the only part of the former empire whose independence was recognised by the new provisional government of Russia in 1917.

Simultaneously Georgia together with its neighbouring peoples of Armenia and Azerbaijan was challenged by a possible Ottoman offensive and various internal problems, thus needed to remain loyal to the cause of democratic Russia.

The Bolshevik coup and death of the Russian democracy led the Caucasus to secession. First Georgia formed a Diet with its neighbours and then declared her own independence on 26 May 1918.

The First World War ended and the Victorious Powers gathered in Paris for a Conference to draft a new world map and shape a new world order. But continuous civil war in Russia between the Reds (Bolsheviks) and Whites (Tsarist generals), uncertainty in relations between the “neighbouring states” and former capital cities, boundary disputes, and the possible spread of Bolshevism prevented peace on the territories of the former Russian Empire. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George stated with regard to this: “It would be manifestly absurd for those who are responsible for bringing about the Peace Conference, to come to any agreement and leave Paris when one-half of Europe and one-half of Asia is still in flames.”¹

¹ *Papers Relating to Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), Paris Peace Conference (PPC), Vol. III, p. 591.*

The Allies feared the spread of Bolshevism in their own countries; they wanted Russia to pay foreign debts accumulated by the Tsarist regime and to have respect for foreign investments made in Russia by Great Britain, France, Italy and the United States. None of these terms were treated amicably by the Soviet government. The Bolsheviks outlined that the debts were accumulated by the Tsarist regime, but not by the Russian people and all the wealth in the country belonged to the people, thus the Bolsheviks nationalised all private property. But most dangerously, the Soviets in the future could have allied themselves with revanchist Germany. Henceforth the Allies gave strong support in the civil war to the Volunteer Armies of the Tsarist Generals. They sent substantial supplies of arms and munitions, troops to the White generals, and assisted them militarily and economically. In return Admiral Kolchak of the Siberian and Far East Armies and the supreme commander of all anti-Bolshevik forces, General Denikin of South Russia and General Yudenich of North-Western Russia made it clear to the Victorious Powers that their intention was to topple the Bolshevik regime, hold Constituent Assembly elections and to be loyal to the Russian national obligations towards the Allied countries. But neither Whites nor Reds would accept secession of the bordering nationalities.²

With this regard, again, Poland was an exceptional case, the Whites were unable to change the course of action taken by the provisional government and maintained recognition of Polish independence. The Allies too specifically favoured the case of Poland. At the end of 1918 the American peace delegation recommended to the US President: “1. It is recommended that encouragement be given, at opportune times, to the reunion with Russia of those border regions of the south and west, which have broken away and set up their own national governments... 2. It is recommended that there be excepted from general application of the principle the above mentioned Finland, Poland, the Armenians of Transcaucasia and probably Lithuania.”³ This position was reaffirmed by the US State Secretary Bainbridge Colby in his letter to the Italian Ambassador in August 1920.⁴

Georgian diplomats were dissatisfied with the Allied stance. In November 1918 Former Foreign Minister Akaki Chkhenkeli wrote to Georgian diplomatic envoy to Great Britain – David Ghambashidze: “Georgia is a notable case in the whole of Russia. She founded her statehood, prevailed over the Bolshevism, sustained gains

² See more details on the Allied policy towards Russia in: J.M. Thompson, *Russia, Bolshevism and the Versailles Peace*, Princeton 1966; R. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations 1917–1921*, vol. I, Princeton: 1965; vol. II, Princeton 1968; vol. III, Princeton 1972; L. Kopisto, *The British Intervention in South Russia 1918–1920*, PhD Diss., University of Helsinki 2011; G.A. Brinkley, *The Volunteer Army and Allied Intervention in South Russia 1917–1921*, Notre Dame 1966.

³ D.H. Miller, *My Diary at the Conference of Paris: With Documents*, vol. IV, New York 1924, pp. 219–220.

⁴ FRUS 1920, vol. III, pp. 463–468.

of the revolution etc. If the same was done in Finland and Poland through the good offices of others, we did it all ourselves.”⁵ The Georgian delegation in Paris wrote to the British delegation: “As are Poland, Finland and Bessarabia, Georgia also is a separate case from Russia...”⁶ On 15 August 1920 the Georgian Foreign Minister Evgeni Gegechkori formally submitted a note of protest to the Allied Supreme Council where he inquired what was the legal basis of different attitudes of the Victorious Powers on the one hand to Georgia, and to Poland, Finland and Armenia on the other.⁷

Georgia as a smaller country was not important enough to have explanations from the Great Powers. In fact the Allies were seeing matters of the bordering nationalities in the light of Russian civil war. They were carefully observing whether the Volunteers would succeed. Georgia’s existence was fully dependent on the support of the political west, because it was obvious that after the end of the civil war either the Russian Whites or the Reds would assault neighbouring states in an attempt to regain lost imperial boundaries. Poland too was dependent on the Allies but her independence was a recognised case, she just wanted to register her eastern frontier with Russia. A strong Polish state between Russia and Germany that could prevent an alliance between the two was crucial for the Allies, especially for France. For her safety and boundary settlement Poland preferred to have a weaker rather than a stronger Russia as a neighbour. Providing this Poland could have been a natural ally of Georgia from the very beginning, but the former had to keep her foreign policy in full compliance with the Allies. Georgia on the other hand was trying to upgrade her status in international relations and to push forward her case alongside with Poland, the Baltic States etc. while keeping a very limited partnership with the “internal provinces” of Russia (Kuban, Belarus etc.).

The first high level diplomatic contact between the independent states of Georgia and Poland was registered on 27 November 1918 when Akaki Chkhenkeli, then residing in Berlin, sent a diplomatic notification to the Polish Minister Plenipotentiary in Germany, Seweryn Czetwertyński. The Georgian minister described the legal rights of his country to independence, submitted a memorandum and called on Poland to recognise her independence. “Counting on the sympathies of the people and government of Poland, the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia believes that Poland will accord a formal recognition...”⁸ It was a turbulent time, the World War was just over and Poland herself was looking for allies among the

⁵ Georgian Central Historic Archive (GCHA) 1831/2/88/1.

⁶ GCHA 1864/2/111/16; FO 608/195/2; FRUS Russia 1919, pp. 47–49.

⁷ GCHA 1864/2/379/1–8.

⁸ GCHA 1864/2/45/122–123.

victors, hence she was unable to give any response to Georgia. Time passed and on 17 September 1919 the Georgian delegates in Paris Karlo Chkheidze, Irakli Tsereteli and Varlam Cherkezishvili were invited on a formal dinner by the head of the Polish delegation, Roman Dmowski. The Polish host inquired of his Georgian colleagues how could his country help Georgia? He said that future of smaller nationalities would be clarified through the mandate system and Poland needed some formal ground to push forward the case of Georgia, thus hinting a possible Polish mandate. The Georgians doubted how could Poland handle the mandate, Poland was fully dependent on the Allies and her commitments towards Georgia could possibly be harmful for both countries. The argument was accepted by the Polish diplomats. Then Tsereteli stated that both countries had the same enemy and security challenges, hence it would have been understandable for everyone if the Polish diplomats did not spare their good offices to the Georgians in mediation with the Allied decision maker politicians: informational support, lobbying for the Georgian case where appropriate, reacting on diplomatic notifications etc. Dmowski committed himself to do so and asked for the copies of the Georgian Memorandum in order to present it personally to the Allied decision makers.⁹ The head of the Georgian delegation, Karlo Chkheidze, in his letter to the Prime-Minister Noe Zhordania quoted Dmowski as saying: “We are just witnesses at this conference, we must do what we are told to do, but with whatever power is in our hands we shall be supporting Georgian people.”¹⁰

In April and May of 1919 Admiral Kolchak commenced his main assault against the Bolsheviks. From Siberia his troops crossed the Ural Mountains and it was thought that nothing could stop them taking Moscow. The Allies did not trust him, because when he would be in Moscow he could restore the old regime, suppress democracy, disregard rights of so called bordering nationalities and be disloyal to the Russian national obligations. Hence the Allies thought it would be wiser to reaffirm Kolchak’s commitments before he was granted the success of being a dictator in Moscow. The secretary of Lloyd George, Philip Kerr was instructed to draft a letter to Kolchak. It comprised six points. For the bordering nationalities, the fourth and fifth points were crucial:

“Fourthly, that the independence of Finland and Poland be recognized, and that in the event of the frontiers and other relations between Russia and these countries not being settled by agreement, they will be referred to the arbitration to the League of Nations.

⁹ GCHA 1864/2/129/86.

¹⁰ GCHA 2115/1/60/4.

Fifthly, that if a solution of the relations Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Caucasian and Transcaspian territories and Russia is not speedily reached by agreement the settlement will be made in consultation and cooperation with the League of Nations, and that until such settlement is made the Government of Russia agrees to recognize these territories as autonomous and to confirm the relations, which may exist between their *de facto* Governments and the Allied and Associated Governments.”¹¹

On 4 June Admiral Kolchak replied to the Allied Supreme Council:

“Considering the creation of a unified Polish State to be one of the chief of the normal and just consequences of the world war, the Government thinks itself justified in confirming the independence of Poland, proclaimed by the Provisional Russian Government 1917, all the pledges and decrees of which we have accepted. The final solution of the question of delimiting the frontiers between Russia and Poland must, however, in conformity with the principles set forth above, be postponed till the meeting of the Constituent Assembly. We are disposed at once to recognize the *de facto* Government of Finland, but the final solution of the Finnish question must belong to the Constituent Assembly.

We are fully disposed at once to prepare for the solution of the questions concerning the fate of the national groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and of the Caucasian and Transcaspian countries, and we have every reason to believe that a prompt settlement will be made, seeing that the government is assuring as from the present time, the autonomy of various nationalities. It goes without saying that the limits and conditions of these autonomous institutions will be settled separately as regards each of the nationalities concerned.

And even in case difficulties should arise in regard to the solution of these various questions, the Government is ready to have recourse to the collaboration and good offices of the League of Nations with a view to arriving at a satisfactory settlement.”¹²

Admiral Kolchak complied with all the conditions set forth by the Allies with the exception of Finnish independence. The victors were happy to see the collaborative tone of the Whites and sent a letter of support and gratitude undersigned by Lloyd George, President Woodrow Wilson, Prime-Minister Georges Clemenceau and Prime-Minister Vittorio Orlando.¹³

The exchange of letters and courtesy left both, partisans of “the united and indivisible Russia” and representatives of the bordering nationalities unhappy. Here their maximalist claims were not considered. Former Tsarist Foreign Minister and

¹¹ CAB 29/38, ff. 142–143; FRUS, PPC, vol. 6, pp. 34–36.

¹² FRUS, PPC, vol. 6, pp. 321–323; CAB 29/39, ff. 43–44.

¹³ FRUS, PPC, vol. 6, pp. 356; CAB 29/39, f. 54.

one of the leaders of *Soveshchanie*¹⁴ Sergey Sazonoff was disquieted because of the recognition of Poland and the formal intervention of the Allies in relations between Russia and the “smaller nationalities”. This feeling was further exacerbated because the Victorious Powers refused to grant even *de facto* recognition to Kolchak’s government.¹⁵

The exchange of letters reaffirmed the very special status of Poland, but her eastern boundary case of the Galician region was still of great concern and in the future it could have led to tensions with Russia.

The Georgians were jolted. It was clear that only Polish and Finish independence was in the plans of the Allies. Moreover, even the autonomous status of Georgia was discouraged by placing it under the label of “Caucasian territories”, which put the country far behind the Baltic States. Kolchak refused to recognise the independence of Finland and the Allies counted this noncompliance as such a minor thing in comparison with the bigger question of Russia that in their next letter they did not even mention this country. In these circumstances what could have been the future of “the Caucasian territories”? According to Kolchak, “the limits and conditions of these autonomous institutions will be settled separately as regards each of the nationalities concerned.” Subordination of the nationalities was vividly displayed in the correspondence and it gave no hope to the Georgians. Moreover, Kolchak while being still in Omsk refused to recognise Finland and what could he have done to Georgia were it in power of centralised Russia?

The situation deteriorated further in June. At the beginning of 1919 the British put a precondition to Denikin that he was not supposed to occupy the Caucasian Republics including the Mountaineers Republic of North Caucasus, otherwise he would be deprived of the British material support. In February the Volunteers ignored the British demand and intervened not only in the western and central flanks of the North Caucasus, but also occupied the territories of Georgia from Sochi to the River Bzipi. The protest of His Majesty’s Government and that of the Georgians were in vain. On 6 June the British sent a new ultimatum to Denikin, thus putting Dagestan, Azerbaijan and Georgia out of his area of operations. The Russian general once again ignored the ultimatum and occupied Dagestan. Great Britain had to amend the demarcation line for already the third time and “ceded” Dagestan to the Volunteers. Denikin himself was assuring the British that he would not go any further, but now the corridor was open to him to march to Transcaucasia through

¹⁴ *Soveshchanie* was a body comprising former ambassadors and ministers of the Tsarist regime and provisional government. They were acting as diplomatic representatives of Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich in Europe.

¹⁵ J.M. Thompson, *Russia, Bolshevism and the Versailles Peace*, p. 304.

the lowlands of Dagestan and Azerbaijan or via the Caspian Sea. Having bitter memories of Denikin’s “commitments”, Georgia and Azerbaijan could no longer rely on his verbal assurances.¹⁶

The increased Russian menace to Transcaucasia accompanied by the Allied correspondence with Kolchak had a panicking effect not only on the Georgians and Azerbaijanis, but on nearly all of the bordering nationalities. It triggered cohesion. They realised that the Russian success might have a domino effect, and that they could be swallowed one by one. Georgia and Azerbaijan signed a defence treaty on 16 June. Diplomatic missions of the two countries were joined by the envoys of the North Caucasus and they established in a joint council Paris. Together they were “bombarding” the Allied Supreme Council with notes of protests. On the note of 17 June the Estonian, Latvian, Belarusian and Ukrainian delegations put their signatures together with their Caucasian colleagues.¹⁷

But the culmination of solidarity came on the 26 June. Besides the delegates of Estonia, Latvia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and North Caucasus, the document was also signed by the representative of the Lithuanian Poles Bronisław Krzyżanowski. The delegation of the Polish Republic wrote a special note below the diplomatic dispatch: “The Polish signatories of this document are conscious of the fact that the independence of the Polish State, recognised by all the Powers, established in advance the severing of all the ties that bound one part of Poland to the former Russian State; they desire to manifest by their signatures that solidarity exists today as in the past among all the nations subjugated to Former Russia, in their struggle for independence.” The Polish signatories were: Former Minister of Culture and then delegate in Paris Medard Downarowicz, Former Minister of Interior and then delegate in Paris Stanisław Thugutt, member of the Polish Sejm and leader of the Polish Socialist Party Dr. Herman Lieberman, member of the Polish Sejm Jerzy Kantor, former Foreign Minister and then delegate in Paris Leon Wasilewski, and Professor of University of Warsaw Antoni Sujkowski.

¹⁶ WO 32/5678, f. 154A, War Office to General Officer Commanding in Chief (GOC), Constantinople, 6 June 1919; FO 608/85 no. 12226; WO 32/5678 f. 162A, War Office to General Holman in Ekaterinodar; FO 371/3662/1015/100460/58; FO 608/88 no. 15996, War Office to GOC Constantinople, 17 July 1919; *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1939*, Series I, vol. III, London 1949, p. 451; FO 371/3662/1015/100552/58; FO 371/3663/1015/121653/58; FO 608/88 no. 14304, Ekaterinodar to Troopers in London, 5 July 1919.

¹⁷ GCHA 1864/2/129/9; FO 608/118 nos. 13477 and 16780; FO 371/3662/1015/94192/58; FO 371/3662/1015/113022/58; Archives de Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de la France (AMAE), Europe, Russie, Caucase (Georgie) 1918–1919, vol. 833, ff. 228–231; GCHA 1864/2/114/45–49; GCHA 1864/2/79/1–9; FO 608/88 no. 13027; AMAE, Europe 1918–1940, URSS, Georgie 1918–1919, vol. 648, ff. 261–262; GCHA 1864/2/111/35–36; GCHA 1864/2/114/58; AMAE, Europe, Russie, Caucase (Georgie) 1918–1919, vol. 833, f. 205

The document contains important messages; hence probably it should be cited in a substantial manner:

“...Now the occupation of the Ciscaucasian Republic by the troops of General Denikin and the threatening attitude of these troops towards the Republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan seem on the contrary to be inspired by an avowed plan of the Russian reactionaries, who wish to bring back under their yoke the independent national states newly formed within the limits of the former Russian Empire; these reactionaries are trying to present to the Peace Conference a fait accompli by the military occupation of these states.

The inevitable consequence of such a plan would be to destroy the order in these new states...

The undersigned delegates emphasise the fact that General Denikin is accomplishing this fatal work with the military and financial assistance of the Allied Powers, who cannot nevertheless be desirous of destroying order in these states or of depriving these nations of their right to self-determination.

All the delegates of the states within the confines of Russia are unanimous in protesting against this intervention, along with the delegates of Georgia, of Azerbaijan and the Republic of North Caucasus, and with all the delegates of the states of the Caucasus. They insist on thus showing that they have a clear consciousness of the solidarity that unites all the nations within the confines of Russia, so that each one of them feels any threat directed against the independence of another as strongly as if it were directed against its own independence. They proclaim that in view of a sincere application of the right of self-determination it is necessary to maintain the territorial integrity of the states at present existing in the Caucasus, while waiting for the establishment of a definitive regime which will be instituted, not by the Russian Constituent Assembly, but by the Peace Congress, acting according to the will of the populations, expressed by the national assemblies of the new states. Consequently, the undersigned delegates bring their protests to the knowledge of the Allied and Associated Powers. They request them to put an end at once to the aggressive moves of General Denikin against the Republic of Georgia and Azerbaijan, and to make him evacuate the occupied territory of the Georgian Republic. They request them to take all necessary measures to oblige General Denikin to observe strictly all the rules of international justice.”¹⁸

On 10 July the British Peace Delegation informed their Georgian counterparts that their militaries did all in their power to deescalate relations between Georgia and Denikin in the Black Sea littoral and there was a good reason to believe that

¹⁸ FRUS, Russia 1919, pp. 766–768; AMAE, Europe, Russie, Caucase (Georgie) 1918–1919, vol. 833, f. 220; FO 371/3662/1015/104443/58; GCHA 1864/2/112/98-102.

the Volunteers did not have offensive plans regarding Georgia, but rather towards the Bolsheviks.¹⁹

Forthcoming events proved that the fears were slightly exaggerated. The April–May success of Kolchak was the last for him. From the summer the Bolsheviks concentrated troops against him, thus the White admiral first had to halt, and then reverse and he finally declined and collapsed at the end of 1919. Shortly after that he was arrested and executed. When Kolchak’s nearly half a million army was pursued by the Bolsheviks, Denikin was preparing his decisive march towards Moscow. In fact, Denikin did not have enough time and manpower to undertake offensives against the Bolsheviks and bordering states simultaneously, thus the surroundings of Russia were spared from his aggressive manoeuvres for the moment. Bordering states were fearfully awaiting the end of the Civil War, because they knew that Russia White or Red would inevitably challenge their independence using all of its military might.

¹⁹ FO 608/88 no. 14304; AMAE, Europe 1918–1940, URSS, Georgie 1918–1919, Vol. 648, ff. 269–270; GCHA 1864/2/111/42–43; GCHA 1864/2/119/95.

Appendix I

Minutes of the Georgian Peace Delegation Meeting in Paris

9 September 1919

Present:

Karlo Chkheidze as Chairman; and Varlam Cherkezishvili, Zurab Avalishvili, Mikheil Sumbatashvili, Irakli Tsereteli, Ioseb Gobechia, and Eter Tsereteli as Secretary

(...) 6. **I. Gobechia**²⁰ – Delivers the news to the delegation that a certain Polish man, who is working as an adviser for the Azerbaijani delegation, asked the Polish delegation to intervene in the relations between Azerbaijan and Denikin or, alternatively, he asked for a meeting with Dmowski. He was asked by the Poles whether Georgia was also willing to have a Polish intervention in the relations with Denikin or not? In the end, this person received a letter from Dmowski that he was ready to meet them with great pleasure. That certain Polish man does not want the Azerbaijani delegation to go to the meeting alone. He suggests having the Georgian and Azerbaijani representatives together with Dmowski.

The delegation made a decision to go for this meeting; moreover, it was discussed even before meeting the representatives of Poland.

It was decided that the Chairman and Zurab Avalishvili would go to Dmowski together with the Azerbaijani delegates. (...)

²⁰ Nine topics were discussed at this meeting. This one was the sixth.

Appendix II

Minutes of the Georgian Peace Delegation Meeting in Paris

17 September 1919

Present:

Karlo Chkheidze as Chairman; Varlam Cherkezishvili, Zurab Avalishvili, Irakli Tsereteli, Ioseb Gobechia and Eter Tsereteli as Secretary

1. Irakli Tsereteli²¹ – The chairman, V. Cherkezishvili and I visited Dmowski for lunch. Our meeting did not have an official character, but rather was a meeting of ordinary acquaintances. After the lunch Dmowski offered a topic for discussion: how could Poland possibly use her status of a formally recognised state to be of assistance to Georgia.

He started from the following: the conference decides everything in the light of pragmatic interests, only from that angle do they approach the situation of the smaller nationalities and in the future they only expect economic profits from the independence of these smaller states. These economic profits will be legalised in the form of mandates. Every Great Power will possess several mandates and only on this basis can they support smaller states. Poland needs some formal argument to push forward the question of Georgia at the conference.

From here we concluded that Dmowski wanted the mandate over Georgia to be given to Poland, but he did not say it straightforwardly and he only proposed signing an economic convention. He said this formal excuse will enable Poland to be of use to Georgia. But we all knew and one could also conclude from his speech that Poland is unable to do much for us, because she is only a member of that group, which surrounds the four Great Powers, and [Poland] decides nothing, but only undersigns decisions made by the “Council of Four”. We told him that he himself was saying that the fate of Poland was dependent on the Great Powers and that they are assisting smaller states only if they are expecting economic profits from these smaller countries. Considering this, if Georgia signs the economic convention with you, what she will have left to offer to the Great Powers? This might harm Georgia and will also not be very advantageous to Poland. He appreciated the importance of this argument and gave his consent.

²¹ At this meeting there were five information heard and seven topics discussed. This was the first one. It is obvious that after the delegation's decision of 9 September some things changed: Georgians went to see the Polish counterparts alone and instead of Avalisvhili the chairman took along Irakli Tsereteli and Varlam Cherkezishvili.

Then we gave him a proposal: let us admit the truth of what the reality is. Poland and Georgia are facing the same threat from the Russian reactionary circles, which very reluctantly accepted Polish independence and are not going to accept Georgian independence. Hence, it should be easily understandable for everyone that on this ground Poland will give support to Georgia. In practice you can express this support by telling us the details of the conference proceedings, namely the state of affairs of the Russian questions; matters related to the smaller states etc. and in your capacity support the activation of our case, support our notification and pleas.

Dmowski promised to do all these things and he asked them give him a Georgian Memorandum so that he can present it personally to the leaders of the conference.

By the way, he confirmed what we were actually thinking that the Great Powers have not come to any decision related to the aforementioned topics, the future is unclear for them and they entrust the solution of these issues to the natural flow of life. Those smaller states will survive and will be recognised if they do not die and survive this transitional phase. Concerning the Allied policy towards Russia, Dmowski thinks that it is also possible that everything will change if Denikin does not secure a victory some time shortly, the Bolsheviks might be recognised first by the British and then by the others. He also told us that he will support us, but will never take anti-Russian steps. We replied that our support is possible exactly in the same way, because we do not have an anti-Russian policy; moreover, we still have deep sympathies for the Russian people and we think that the defeat of Denikin's policy in every respect will be of great advantage to Russia itself. By the way, another argument why he should be defeated is that for Russia it is far easier to overcome the current crisis by the creation of the Russian state within the national²² boundaries. (...)

²² Here probably ethnic boundaries are meant.

Appendix III

Private Letter of the Head of the Georgian Peace Delegation in Paris – Karlo Chkheidze to the Prime-Minister of Georgia – Noe Zhordania²³, 20 September 1920. From Paris to Tbilisi

(...) Several days ago we met the Polish representatives and specifically Dmowski. They passed information to us that Poland is willing to give some help to Georgia. We went to the meeting with a great interest. Dmowski told us that Poland could take a mandate over Georgia. We refused it because we are still in the state of affairs that the Great Powers have not clarified our fate. But it does not prevent us from having economic ties with Poland. With regard of the political relations: we expect support from Poland, because strengthening our independence is also in the national interests of Poland. Dmowski told us: “We are just witnesses at this conference; we must do what we are told to do, but with whatever power is in our hands we shall support the Georgian people.” (...)

²³ This letter comprises 8 pages, but here is given only the fourth page, because only this one is relevant to the Polish-Georgian relations.

Appendix IV

Formal Notification of the Georgian Foreign Minister Akaki Chkhenkeli to the Polish Minister Plenipotentiary Berlin, 27 November 1918

Berlin, 27 Novembre 1918

A Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre de Pologne
Berlin

Monsieur le Ministre,

Par la proclamation de son indépendance, le vœu de la nation géorgienne a été de prendre entre ses mains sa propre destinée, d'user de droits imprescriptibles et entrer dans le concert des nations, consciente des devoirs que les nouvelles conditions lui imposent.

Constituée sur les bases démocratiques de la souveraineté nationale, la Géorgie est prête à se guider dans ses relations internationales des principes du droit public européen.

Désirant cultiver des rapports étroits avec les Puissances de la communauté internationale, le Gouvernement de la République Géorgienne, de son côté, procède auprès des Etats neutres et belligérants aux démarches pour la reconnaissance de sa personnalité juridique internationale.

Le Gouvernement de la République, se basant sur l'intérêt commun de nos nations respectives, sur leurs sympathies et l'identité de l'idéal poursuivi, est convaincu que peuples et Gouvernements, nous nous montreront solidaires, à cette heure décisive pour nous assurer la liberté et l'indépendance.

Nous avons subi ensemble pendant plus d'un siècle le poids et les avanies de l'administration étrangère. Nos droits légitimes ont été systématiquement et continuellement méconnus. Ce souvenir laisse en notre mémoire²⁴ la trace indélébile de nos épreuves passées. Seule une indépendance entière et complète peut assurer à nos nations la prospérité et la satisfaction morale. Tel doit être notre mot d'ordre devant la conscience des nations civilisées et devant le prétoire des peuples où nos destinées doivent recevoir leur sanction.

²⁴ This document cannot be traced in the archives, but it should be the same as the one that the Georgian diplomatic envoy Mikheil Sumbatashvili published in Berne in 1918. See: "Mémoire soumis par le Prince Soumbatoff, Délégué de Gouvernement Géorgien aux Représentants des Puissances Alliées à Berne au mois de Novembre 1918".

Comptant sur ces sympathies, tant de la nation que du Gouvernement Polonais, le Gouvernement de la République Géorgienne aime à croire que la Pologne accordera la reconnaissance formelle que la Georgie a l'honneur de solliciter d'Elle.

Ci-joint j'ai l'honneur de remettre à Votre Excellence un Mémoire avec annexes et la prier de le faire parvenir à son Gouvernement.

Ces documents permettront au Gouvernement Polonais de prendre connaissance par l'acte de l'indépendance de la formation définitive de l'Etat de Georgie sur les bases de la souveraineté nationale, puis d'un court aperçu des événements politiques derniers que la nation géorgienne a dû vivre et traverser jusqu'au recouvrement de son indépendance, d'une annexe relevant les avantages économiques d'une Géorgie indépendante et son intérêt politique que le mémoire ci-annexé a tout spécialement pour tâche de relever.

Je profite de l'occasion, Monsieur le Ministre, pour réitérer que le Gouvernement de la République Géorgienne compte sur l'action solidaire et amicale du Gouvernement Polonais et Vous prie d'agréer l'assurance de sa très haute considération.

Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de Géorgie
Akaki Chkhenkeli