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## **The Involvement of the European Powers in the Greco-Turkish War of 1919–1922 from the Perspective of the Documents of the Second Department of Polish General Staff (Polish: Oddział II Sztabu Generalnego Wojska Polskiego)**

### Abstract

Fought between 1919 and 1922, the Greek-Turkish War, also known as the Turkish War of Independence, involved numerous states that were superpowers at the time or aspired to such a role. The primary belligerents, Greece and Turkey (both Sultan loyalists and Kemal Pasha's nationalists), were intermittently supported by external actors throughout the course of the conflict, including Britain, France, Italy, and Bolshevik Russia. Poland, as a country politically and militarily tied to the Western powers and fighting for its independence and the shape of its borders, was also interested in events in Asia Minor. Through its intelligence and diplomatic services, it received information on the course of this conflict and the aforementioned involvement of third countries. The principal objective of this article is to present the Polish perspective on these events, based on the available archival material of the Second Department of Polish General Staff.

**Keywords:** armed forces, intelligence, Turkey

### Introduction

The Great War, fought between 1914 and 1918, was an armed conflict on an unprecedented scale. With the end of the war, a series of territorial and political changes took place in Europe. These changes led to a reshaping of the previous balance of power. In 1919, Greece, with the support of the Western powers, decided to exploit the weakness of the defeated Central Powers and the internal problems of the Ottoman Empire by launching a war of aggression<sup>1</sup>, accompanied from the outset by atrocities against the civilian popu-

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<sup>1</sup> On 30 October 1918, a twenty-five-point peace treaty was signed in Mudros between the Entente powers and the Ottoman Empire. Among other things, the agreement provided for the opening of the straits to the Allied



lation<sup>2</sup>. Despite the initial successes of the invading forces in compelling the Sublime Porte to negotiate<sup>3</sup>, Turkish resistance grew steadily. Regardless of the political decisions of the Ottoman authorities, the loss of sovereignty was not accepted, which strengthened the resistance movement around the figure of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk<sup>4</sup>. Turkish military successes and the gradual withdrawal of individual states from the conflict led to the expulsion of the Greeks from Anatolia and peace talks on terms favourable to the new government in Ankara. Despite the loss of part of its territory, the Republic of Turkey, founded in 1923, emerged victorious from this conflict and over time has rebuilt its potential and aspired to become a regional power<sup>5</sup>.

There is no doubt that Poland was one of the main beneficiaries of the Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War. However, the early years of the reborn Republic were marked by numerous serious challenges. In the lap of the authorities was not only the responsibility for creating well-functioning state structures (based on the remnants of the three partitioners), but also the struggle for the final shape of its own borders. In charge of intelligence and military diplomacy, the Second Department of Polish General Staff was

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fleet (including the de facto occupation of Istanbul), the assumption of control of Ottoman communications, the demobilisation of the Sultan's army and the right of the Allies to occupy Armenian-populated areas and, if necessary, any part of Turkish territory. The Empire also lost parts of its territory to individual states, including northern Iraq with Mosul, parts of Cilicia and the southern coast of Anatolia. Finally, on 15 May 1919, with the approval of the Entente countries (except Italy, for whom the Greek presence in the region was a threat to Rome's particular interests), the Greeks landed in Izmir (Smyrna) intending to put into practice the idea of a "Greater Greece" (Megali Idea), born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, of uniting all their compatriots within the borders of a single state; R. Clogg, *Historia Grecji nowożytnej*, Warszawa 2006, pp. 59–63, 112, 113; D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja*, Warszawa 2011, pp. 92–96.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to emphasise that atrocities were committed by both warring parties in the course of the conflict in question. The principle of collective responsibility for past abuses against the enemy was widely applied; *Atrocities in the districts of Yalova and GueMLEK and in Ismid Peninsula*, Londyn 1921; R. Clogg, *Historia Grecji*, pp. 113, 119.

<sup>3</sup> After the initial rejection of the proposed provisions by the Entente states, the Ottoman delegation signed the treaty at Sèvres, near Paris, on 10 August 1920. According to its provisions, the Arab provinces were to be granted independence or become mandated territories of Britain and France, Greece was to receive the islands of Imbros and Tenedos, eastern Thrace (including Edirne), and north-eastern Anatolia was to be acquired by Armenia. The question of Izmir's membership was to be decided by a plebiscite, while east of the Euphrates it was envisaged that Kurdistan would be established. The dependence of Cilicia on France and of south-western Anatolia on Italy was reaffirmed, as was the placing of the straits under international control and the limitation of the Turkish army to 50,000 soldiers; D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja*, pp. 97, 98.

<sup>4</sup> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) was undoubtedly a key figure in these events. However, it should be noted that the resistance movement had been active in various forms since the beginning of the hostilities. In the early days, the main burden of fighting the invading forces fell on irregular formations, both controlled by the Kemalists and operating independently, based on local structures; P.J. Jowett, *Armies of the Greek-Turkish War*, Nowy Jork, pp. 16, 17; S.J. Shaw, E.K. Shaw, *Historia Imperium Osmańskiego i Republiki Tureckiej 1808–1975*, vol. 2, Warszawa 2012, pp. 515–522.

<sup>5</sup> This conflict ended with the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne on 24 July 1923. According to its terms, Turkey regained sovereignty over Eastern Thrace, Imbros and Tenedos. The straits were removed from international control and demilitarised. The Alexandretta district has since been incorporated into Syria and Mosul into Iraq. In the context of the signed agreement, population exchanges have also taken place between Greece and Turkey, with religion rather than language or nationality being the main criterion for resettlement; Y. Bayar, *In pursuit of homogeneity: the Lausanne Conference, minorities and the Turkish nation*, "Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity" 2014, no. 1 (42), pp. 109, 110; D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja*, pp. 115–118.

primarily responsible for tasks directly related to ensuring the survival of the state. For Warsaw, therefore, the ongoing war in Asia Minor was not a priority. However, the officers on the ground were carrying out the tasks that had been assigned to them, gathering information and reporting on the conflict.

The events in Turkey were of great interest to the European powers of the time, in particular to Great Britain, France, and Italy. They wanted to control the Straits and dominate the Middle East. The Bolsheviks, too, were determined to exert their influence on events. This was because Moscow was keen to control the situation in the Black Sea basin and, above all, to limit the possibility of Western states supporting the White forces. As a result, the communists decided to support Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish nationalists, who were fighting against the troops of the Entente. In this way, the conflict between the two regional players – Greece and the Ottoman Empire – became the de facto arena of the game played by the superpowers. This situation affected both the direction of interest of the Polish intelligence and the perspective of the officers of the Second Department of Polish General Staff, also known as “Two” (Dwójka).

The course of the Greco-Turkish War, its military aspects and the political and diplomatic events that accompanied it, undoubtedly merit a comprehensive study. This would go far beyond the scope of a single article. This article is therefore a minor contribution to further research into the intelligence and diplomatic activities of the Second Department, and aims to add to the existing knowledge of the Turkish War of Independence.

### **The Second Department of Polish General Staff and Outpost in Constantinople**

The reborn Polish state, regardless of the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, had to fight militarily for the shape of its own borders, territorial integrity, survival, and a chance for development from the very beginning of its existence. To achieve this, the right military, intelligence and diplomatic structures had to be put in place. On 25 October 1918, the Ministry of Military Affairs and the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces (Polish: Sztab Generalny Wojska Polskiego) were established, headed by General Tadeusz Rozwadowski. Within this body, an Information Department on was created to deal with intelligence and counter-intelligence matters<sup>6</sup>. Shortly afterwards, at the end of November 1918, the VI Information Department of the General Staff was created based on the Information Department, which was renamed Department II in May 1919, at the same time increasing its staff from 7 to 40 officers<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> The Information Department consisted of seven sections. It is likely that intelligence activities were carried out by Polish officers even before the formal establishment of the General Staff on 25 October 1918, and thus the Information Department, which was responsible for intelligence matters, became part of the General Staff; A. Krzak, *Afera MOCR-Trust 1921–1927*, Toruń 2020, pp. 23, 24; *Opracowanie dwójkarskie o strukturze O II Szt. Gen. w latach początkowych*, Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe (hereinafter CAW), Zespół Oddział II Sztabu Generalnego (Głównego) Wojska Polskiego 1921–1939 (hereinafter Oddział II SG WP), sygn. I.303.4.30.

<sup>7</sup> A. Misiuk, *Tworzenie się systemu wojskowych służb specjalnych w Polsce w latach 1918–1922*, in: *Studia nad wywiadem i kontrwywiadem Polski w XX wieku*, W. Skóra, P. Skubisz (eds.), vol. 1, Szczecin 2012, pp. 17, 19.

By 1921, Department II had undergone numerous changes in its organisational structure, which was gradually expanded and adapted to the wartime conditions<sup>8</sup>. After the last major reform of the war against the Bolsheviks, in April 1920, the structures of the “Two” included the following units: Szef Oddziału/Adiutantura, Wydział Organizacyjny, Referat szyfrów własnych i korespondencji, Wydział Ewidencyjny (which consisted of: Referat Wschód, Referat Zachód, Referat Północ, Referat Południe, Referat Narodowościowy, Referat Statystyczny), Wydział Wywiadowczy (Referat Technik Wywiadu, Referat Centralny Agentury/Centralna Agentura, Referat Kontrwywiadu, Referat Szyfrów Obcych i Radiowywiadu, Kancelaria, Archiwum)<sup>9</sup>.

The tasks of the Second Department of Polish General Staff were as follows:

- Collecting information about the enemy’s armed forces and the socio-political situation.
- Carrying out analytical work, recording the information obtained and preparing analytical documents.
- Carrying out counter-intelligence operations.
- Preparing and carrying out diversionary and sabotage activities.
- Preparing and carrying out military diplomatic service activities inside and outside states<sup>10</sup>.

The end of the war with the Bolsheviks meant, among other things, that the organisation of the state and its structures were put on a peaceful footing. This also applied to the Polish Army, i.e. Department II. A new organisational structure was adopted in June 1921: Szef Oddziału, Zastępca Szefa Oddziału, Wydział I Organizacyjny, Wydział II Ewidencyjny, Wydział III Wywiadowczy. As in previous years, the various departments consisted of specific offices. From the middle of 1921, the tasks of the “Two” were included:

- Organising the spy network, training cadres and agents, counter-intelligence prophylaxis.
- Managing and supervising the agency.
- Gathering and analysing information, preparing summary studies for senior government and military authorities.
- Conducting research and studies on the methods, forms, means, and tools of the operational activities of the intelligence services and developing new techniques for intelligence and counter-intelligence activities.
- Directing activities against foreign intelligence services<sup>11</sup>.

The next major structural reform of Department II took place in 1923, after the end of the Greco-Turkish War, and will therefore not be discussed in this article.

Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for international relations, military diplomacy was quick to establish its own outposts, the first four being in Bern, Budapest, Bucharest, and Zagreb (the attaché was later transferred to Belgrade). The establishment of missions in these places coincided with the interests of the Polish

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<sup>8</sup> For more on the restructuring of the Polish military special services during this period: A. Krzak, *Afera MOCR-Trust...*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 23–31.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> *Projekt organizacji służby informacyjnej naczelnych władz wojskowych nr 3575/21/Org. z 5 kwietnia 1921 r.*, CAW, Oddział II SG WP, sygn. I.303.4.28.

General Staff at the time, i.e. the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, cooperation with Romania and ensuring the continuity of supplies from France<sup>12</sup>. The main tasks of military attachés were to obtain information about the armed forces of other countries, to represent the Polish army and to mediate in international contacts. Information has been gained through observation, through the analysis of press material and literature, as well as during official meetings<sup>13</sup>.

With the development of the international situation, the focus of interest of the Polish authorities and their subordinate services has also changed. Some of these were given priority (such as the German and Russian directions), but new outposts set up over time also had their tasks to fulfil, such as the Mission in Constantinople, established on 11 September 1919 with the rank of a military mandate. Its tasks included intelligence on Russia and the Caucasus, gathering information on the status of the Turkish armed forces and on transit through the Bosphorus<sup>14</sup>. During the Greco-Turkish War, the post of attaché was held by three officers: Major Stanisław Wężyk (5 October 1919 – 18 October 1919), General Józef Pomian-Porzecki (18 August 1919 – 1 August 1921) and Colonel Leon Bobicki (1 August 1921 – 1 December 1924)<sup>15</sup>.

The course of the conflict was of interest to the Polish intelligence services for numerous reasons. Above all, it was in line with the tasks assigned to the Delegation to carry out activities in the above-mentioned areas. Moreover, the rapprochement between Moscow and Ankara has not escaped the attention of the officers. Cooperation between communists and nationalists, ideologically opposed parties, was mutually beneficial. For the Bolsheviks, the Western powers' involvement in Anatolia, and ultimately the Kemalists' control of the Straits, meant that they needed to reduce support for the Whites<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, Kemal initially allowed Turkish communist organisations to operate<sup>17</sup>, and the nationalists relinquished some of their influence in the Caucasus under the mutual friendship treaty signed in Moscow on 16 March 1921. In return, the government in Ankara received recognition and military and political support from the Kremlin, which was a real help during the ongoing hostilities<sup>18</sup>. In the longer term, especially if cooperation with the Bolsheviks weakened, Turkey was seen by Poland as a potential partner<sup>19</sup>.

As noted above, regardless of the fate of the moribund Ottoman Empire, the Western powers were pursuing their own interests in supporting Greece. But Kemalist forces and the

<sup>12</sup> R. Majzner, *Attachaty wojskowe Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1919–1945. Strukturalno-organizacyjne aspekty funkcjonowania*, Częstochowa 2011, pp. 153–155.

<sup>13</sup> A. Peplowski, *Wywiad a dyplomacja II Rzeczypospolitej*, Toruń 2005, pp. 69–73.

<sup>14</sup> R. Majzner, *Attachaty wojskowe...*, pp. 156, 157.

<sup>15</sup> *Dziennik Placówki Wojskowej w Konstantynopolu*, CAW, Oddział II SG WP, I.303.4.7186.

<sup>16</sup> S.J. Shaw, E.K. Shaw, *Historia Imperium Osmańskiego...*, pp. 521, 522.

<sup>17</sup> This was a purely tactical move by Mustafa Kemal to maintain good relations with Moscow. Organisations such as the People's Communist Party and the Turkish Communist Party were relatively few in number, their influence on political life in Turkey was infinitesimal, and they were controlled by the Kemalists. Furthermore, the treaty signed in Moscow allowed Kemal to legally pacify communist circles, as the signatories pledged not to support subversive groups operating in each other's territories; *ibidem*, pp. 536, 537, 544; D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja*, pp. 107, 108.

<sup>18</sup> A. Karbowska, *Kultura strategiczna Turcji za czasów Atatürka*, Kraków 2016, pp. 96–98, 104.

<sup>19</sup> The authorities in London tried to weaken relations between Ankara and Moscow, for example by establishing trade relations with the Bolsheviks, which understandably hurt Polish interests; A. Peplowski, *Wywiad a dyplomacja...*, pp. 160–164.

Turkish people continued to resist, forcing some states to rethink their policy, even if it meant sacrificing solidarity. In the early years of the Second Polish Republic, it was also subject to the foreign policy of France and Great Britain, for whom it was to act as a bulwark against the resurgence of German potential and the threat of Bolshevik Russia<sup>20</sup>. To some extent, the dependence on the Allies can be seen in the content of the documents written by Polish officers on the Greco-Turkish War, which will be discussed in more detail later in this article.

After the end of the hostilities and the success of the Turkish nationalists, there was a noticeable change in the rhetoric presented in the Polish documents. It can be described as objective, and at times even as sympathetic. The Greek army is explicitly described as an occupying army, and the patriotism of the Turks is emphasised, as well as the personal qualities of Mustafa Kemal, including his military experience from the Great War<sup>21</sup>.

### Conflict from a Department II Perspective – Selected Examples

There is no doubt that the knowledge accumulated by Department II officers is not complementary. It has been obtained on an ongoing basis in the course of diplomatic and intelligence activities, rather than through the use of scientific methods. The authors of the documents usually do not indicate the sources of the information, possibly limiting themselves to phrases such as “German sources”, “Turkish press”. It was not often necessary for the end user to know exactly where this knowledge came from, and its disclosure could be detrimental to the conduct of further activities. Nevertheless, an analysis of the available archival material provides a partial insight into the course of the Greco-Turkish War from the perspective of Polish intelligence, as well as the role of third countries in this conflict.

It is worth mentioning here the characteristics of the Department II documents relating to the events in question. “Two’s” material reveals a lack of objectivity and a view of reality identical to that of the then Western allies of the Second Polish Republic, which favoured the Greeks and other non-Muslim inhabitants of Anatolia, particularly in the early stages of the war and the functioning of the Polish representation<sup>22</sup>. Nationalist troops are repeatedly referred to as “band”, while the nationalist movement in Turkey itself is described as threatening “the lives of all Christians living in Turkey, who are at the mercy and disfavour of the rampant fanaticism of the followers of Mohammed”<sup>23</sup>. It should be noted that Mustafa Kemal’s rhetoric did indeed refer to the religious question and the duty to wage a holy war against the infidels, and he called on the entire Islamic world to help him with this<sup>24</sup>. However, the authors of the documents overlooked the fact that the call for jihad by the nationalists came after the Greek and Allied invasion and was not at the ideological core of the movement. Little attention has also been paid to the problem of the Greeks who have committed crimes against the Muslim population. However, it is difficult to say whether this was due to deliberate activity or a lack of knowledge for Polish intelligence in this

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, pp. 12–15.

<sup>21</sup> *Delegacja Polska przy Wysokiej Porcie*, CAW, Oddział II SG WP, I.303.4.7198.

<sup>22</sup> D. Kołodziejczyk, *Turcja*, p. 95.

<sup>23</sup> *Referat informacyjny z dnia 1 czerwca 1920 roku: Turcja*, CAW, Oddział II Naczelnego Dowództwa Wojska Polskiego z lat 1919–1921 (hereinafter Oddział II ND WP), sygn. I.301.8.68.

<sup>24</sup> S.J. Shaw, E.K. Shaw, *Historia Imperium Osmańskiego...*, pp. 529, 530.

area<sup>25</sup>. At the same time, there were some very pertinent observations made by the authors of the documents in relation to developments at the front. The outcome of the conflict was, in their view, already difficult to predict by mid-1920. The Turks were supposed to be tactically successful, but according to Polish intelligence they were unable to gain a strategic advantage. On the other hand, the insufficient number of Allied divisions<sup>26</sup> and the hostile attitude of the local population<sup>27</sup> were to work against the invading troops.

### The Case of the Death of the Grand Vizier

Polish intelligence reports on the death of the Grand Vizier Damad Ferid Pasha are very intriguing. According to them, the representative of the Sublime Porte was killed in an assassination attempt organised by the Kemalists. The authors of the document state that this was a great loss for the Western interveners (the Grand Vizier was explicitly described as their ally) and should mark the final defeat of the forces opposed to Kemal, as well as the impossibility of crushing the nationalist movement in Turkey. This left the intervening states with two options: to seek an agreement with Mustafa Kemal and withdraw from the war, or to continue the hostilities with little chance of victory<sup>28</sup>.

At this point, it is important to note the extremely erroneous information provided by Polish intelligence officers – Grand Vizier Damad Ferid Pasha did not die in the assassination attempt, but died three years later in Nice in 1923<sup>29</sup>. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly what caused such a drastic “mistake” to happen. There may have been a translation error, as in March 1920, the Grand National Assembly under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal condemned Ferid Pasha to death *in absentia*. However, it is difficult to confirm this hypothesis, as the authors of the paper again failed to indicate where they had obtained the information.

### Equipment and Situation of the Turkish Army

Representing a military institution, the officers of Department II tried to adequately describe the equipment of Mustafa Kemal’s troops. Bolshevik Russia was to be the main supplier of munitions, especially in the early stages of the war. The Turks also used weapons

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<sup>25</sup> The brutal treatment of Muslim civilians by the Greeks appears in a study of the Battle of Sakarya and the Ismida clashes. The authors of the document note that the Greeks burned villages and looted their inhabitants, similar to what they did at Ismida, where Greek troops also used the scorched earth method; *Zestawienie sytuacyjne w walkach grecko-tureckich*, CAW, Oddział II SG WP, I.303.4.7198; *Ewakuacja Ismidu*, CAW, Oddział II SG WP, I.303.4.7198; M.L. Smith, *Greece in Asia Minor 1919–1922*, Londyn 1998, pp. 214, 215.

<sup>26</sup> In the spring and summer of 1920, Polish intelligence estimated the number of Allied troops at 14 or 20–24 divisions. The first value was given in the information paper of 1 June 1920 on the situation in Turkey, while the second value was given in the information paper of 1 May 1920 on Greece; *Referat informacyjny z dnia 1 maja 1920 roku: Grecja*, CAW, Oddział II ND WP, sygn. I.301.8.68; *Referat informacyjny z dnia 1 czerwca 1920 roku...*, sygn. I.301.8.68.

<sup>27</sup> *Referat informacyjny z dnia 1 czerwca 1920...*, sygn. I.301.8.68.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>29</sup> S.J. Shaw, E.K. Shaw, *Historia Imperium Osmańskiego...*, pp. 532, 555–560.

obtained from the Italians. “Two’s” officers reported guns with Italian maker’s marks captured from the Nationalists and seaborne arms shipments requisitioned by the British<sup>30</sup>. In general, the Turkish army’s provisioning was judged to be of a high standard. The lack of warm winter clothing was considered the most acute. However, this was to be supplied from Italy. The total number of Kemal’s troops for the second half of 1920 was estimated at 150000 soldiers, equipped with large quantities of artillery, small arms<sup>31</sup>, team weapons (mainly in the form of 7.92 mm calibre MG08 machine guns) and ammunition<sup>32</sup>.

According to an unnamed Turkish army officer, morale is strictly dependent on the command taking care of the officer cadre, i.e. a sufficiently high and timely military salary. Military service was perceived by society as a lucrative job and a chance to earn a decent living, according to the informant. In other words, most people fought for financial rather than ideological reasons. The authors of the paper believe that this information is greatly exaggerated, but that there may be some truth in it<sup>33</sup>.

### The Rapprochement between Ankara and Paris

In a letter dated 23 November 1921 from the Head of the Second Department of Polish General Staff to the Polish Military Attaché in Paris, we learn that a treaty between France and the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye was signed in Ankara on 29 October 1921. The signatories were represented by Foreign Minister Yusuf Kemal Bey and Henry Franklin-Bouillon<sup>34</sup>. The document focused on the declaration of a ceasefire between the two sides and the conditions attached to it, including the release of prisoners of war, the withdrawal of troops and the correction of borders within Syria. The rapprochement between the former enemies was to be influenced by the success of the Kemalists in their battles against the Greeks and by Paris’s attempt to create a counterweight to Britain’s Middle East policy. The government in Ankara would also benefit from cooperation with France – support in attempts to regain land lost to Greece, as well as scientific and technical assistance from the French, who would receive numerous concessions in the mining and transport sectors. Such separatist and successful negotiations naturally met with opposition from the British, who accused France of “breaking the solidarity of the Entente”. The Polish military probably agreed, describing the treaty as a “violation of international rules”. The officers of Department II also expected greater Italian-Turkish rapprochement in the future, since the Italian delegate was already in Ankara at the time (i.e. in October 1921). The letter is accompanied by the text of the Treaty itself<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> *Referat informacyjny za drugie półrocze 1920 roku: Turcja*, CAW, Oddział II ND WP, sygn. I.301.8.154.

<sup>31</sup> The main small arms used by the Nationalist forces were Mauser rifles and carbines, and later the Carcano. The handguns were Mauser C96 pistols in the 9×19 mm Parabellum version and FN Browning M1903; P.J. Jowett, *Armies of the Greek-Turkish...*, p. 22.

<sup>32</sup> *Referat informacyjny za drugie półrocze 1920 roku...*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> Bouillon was supposed to be the first foreign diplomat to officially arrive in Ankara to talk to the Mustafa Kemal Government; S.J. Shaw, E.K. Shaw, *Historia Imperium Osmańskiego...*, pp. 546–550.

<sup>35</sup> *Do polskiego Atache Wojskowego w Paryżu*, Centralne Archiwum Wojskowe, Zespół Oddział II SG WP 1921–1939, sygn. I.303.4.7428.

## Description of the Course of Hostilities – Selected Examples

Department II documents include an account of Greek troops landing in Smyrna on 14 May 1919, as well as referring to atrocities committed by the Greeks against the local Muslim population. Looting, killings, “excesses” and “rapes of the worst kind” were to take place. The handwritten corrections and deletions are particularly striking. They were probably made by a supervisor. Some sentences relating to the behaviour in question were deleted in their entirety, and in other cases individual words were replaced – “invaders” by “Greeks” or “Greek army”, and “people” by “Turks”. Some information about the incident has been left intact. – Presumably the original content of the document was felt to be too direct in its portrayal of the Greeks, then allies of Britain, among others. The amendments, therefore, may have been intended to soften the message about the course of events in Smyrna<sup>36</sup>.

In connection with the withdrawal from Ismid, the authors of the document also noted an episode which they themselves described as “hilarious”. The Greek 11<sup>th</sup> Division was ordered to retreat. The only route available at the time was along the coast. As they approached an unspecified ravine, the division’s forces came under small arms fire, forcing them to halt their retreat and take up defensive positions. Another attempt was made to cross the gorge. This time it was successful, and no fire contact was recorded. A statement from the Greek army said that the soldiers of the 11<sup>th</sup> Division had taken up arms against as many as three Turkish divisions and, through their heroism, had managed to break through the enemy resistance. However, the contents of the Polish document reveal that the opposing force was to be a group of only 50 guerillas, recruited mainly from the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, and led by a certain Zeb Oglu Hassan<sup>37</sup>.

At the end of April and beginning of May 1920, according to the intelligence papers, the nationalist forces achieved military successes in the area of the Dardanelles Straits as a result of fierce fighting: Lampsaki (“on the Sea of Marmara and opposite Gallipoli”) and Panderma were captured, where the Turks had heavy artillery. The aim of these operations was to take Bighi. At the same time, Kemal’s forces were to launch an offensive towards Çanak and Kalih with the task (in addition to destroying the “considerable English forces” there) of capturing the village of Sultanieh (sic), because of its location, which was to be of great importance in terms of access to the straits, as well as the Lampsaki-Çanak section, and establishing a base there for further operations against the Allied forces<sup>38</sup>. Nationalist formations were also to operate in the north of the country, “in the Brussa vilayet area”, leading an attack on Ada-Bazar (“on the Gulf of Ismid/Gulf of İzmit (Turkish: İzmit Körfezi), on the eastern shore of the Sea of Marmara”), with the aim of capturing the southern part of the Sea of Marmara in its entirety, together with the eastern shore of the Dardanelles Strait, thus cutting off the invading army’s link with Constantinople<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> *Wylądowanie Greków w Smyrnie*, CAW, Oddział II SG WP, I.303.4.7198.

<sup>37</sup> *Ewakuacja...*, I.303.4.7198,

<sup>38</sup> Çanak and Panderma were to be linked by a railway. This would have obvious implications for the mobility of troops.

<sup>39</sup> *Referat informacyjny z dnia 1 czerwca 1920 roku...*, sygn. I.301.8.68.

The authors of the documents paid particular attention to the Battle of Sakarya, fought between Greek and Turkish troops in the summer of 1921. A study of the event is a description of the battles between the two sides of the conflict, with the emphasis on tactical aspects. Indeed, especially in the early stages of the conflict, the Nationalists had to rely mainly on field fortifications supported by heavy artillery, which effectively slowed the pace of the Greek advance. The Greek attack failed, allowing the Turks to mount an effective counter-offensive<sup>40</sup>.

After the victory over Sakarya, Atatürk's troops set their sights on recapturing all of Anatolia and finally defeating the Greeks. According to written accounts, the Turkish army in the final stages of the war was characterised by high morale, an efficient supply system and good weapons and equipment, much of it from France and Italy. The Turks also had military advisers from these countries, which were already neutral towards the government in Ankara. On the Greek side, the situation was the opposite – as a result of their defeat, the Greek forces were unable to take any offensive action. Their poor situation was exacerbated by disciplinary problems within the officer cadre, which had a direct impact on the demoralisation of the army as a whole<sup>41</sup>.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1922, an Extraordinary War Commission under the chairmanship of Mustafa Kemal met in Ankara to analyse the current military and political situation. Not wanting to lose the initiative, it was decided to prepare an offensive and finally defeat the Greeks. The main thrust was directed towards the Afyonkarahisar area and then towards Smyrna, which the Turks were to reach on horseback along the railway line, thus ensuring continuity of supply. Preparations for this operation were carried out in secret from enemy intelligence – a communication's blackout was imposed from 24 August, and a series of strikes were carried out between 19 and 24 August to confuse the Greeks as to the actual direction of the attack<sup>42</sup>.

The offensive was to begin on 25 August 1922 with an attack on the centre of the Greek positions. The attackers managed to assemble a total of 23 infantry and 5 cavalry divisions for the operation, while the defenders' forces consisted of 18 infantry divisions and 1 cavalry division. The manpower of these tactical units was generally expected to be greater than that of the Turkish divisions. By 28 August, the Turks had taken Afyon and the surrounding fortifications. After initial successes, compounded by the initial effect of surprise, there was a lull in the main line of advance, so the weight of the fighting shifted to the wings, which resulted in the defenders being pushed back. On 30 August 1922. The Turks tried to flank the Greeks from the north at Tulun–Punar, while the cavalry tried to cut off communication and supply lines in the rear. Despite fierce resistance, the Greek forces were defeated (the group's command was captured) and the remaining forces were divided into two parts – the northern part, which retreated towards Brusa, and the southern part, which retreated towards Smyrna. The city was captured almost without a fight on 9 September<sup>43</sup> by a cavalry brigade commanded by Mursel Pasha, and the very next day, 10 September

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<sup>40</sup> *Zestawienie sytuacyjne...*, I.303.4.7198.

<sup>41</sup> *Delegacja Polska...*, I.303.4.7198.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>43</sup> Because of the terrain in the area of operations, the Turkish cavalry units were able to manoeuvre quickly and also to attack the enemy's supply lines and the hinterland; P.J. Jowett, *Armies of the Greek-Turkish...*, p. 20.

1922, Atatürk entered the city. Finally, on 14 September 1922, most of the surviving elements of the Greek army retreated by sea. The last outbreaks of resistance by the Greek troops were in the area of Panderma<sup>44</sup>.

The Turkish booty from the Greeks was estimated as follows: 358 cannons, 258,000 cartridge cases, 40,000 artillery shells, 160,000 rifles, 36 cars, 1,800 motor vans, 20,000 uniforms, 86,000 pairs of shoes, 25,000 tents, 22,000 carts, 42,000 draught animals (horses, mules, camels). It is estimated that around 40000 prisoners of war were also taken<sup>45</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

The Greco-Turkish War, fought between 1919 and 1922, is in many ways a fascinating event, both for contemporary researchers and for the intelligence apparatus of the Second Republic at the time. The Turks were attacked by the Greeks who, with the political and military support of the European powers, wanted to become a regional power. Despite the initial successes of the Allies in forcing the Sublime Porte to negotiate, the resolutions adopted at Sèvres could not be implemented due to the growing opposition of Turkish nationalists and the local population. Mustafa Kemal, a hero of the Great War who is still respected in Turkey, coordinated and led these forces. Despite the initially desperate situation, the Turkish troops managed to resist the invasion, drive out the enemy troops and finally start and conclude peace negotiations on their own terms.

The role of the powers in this conflict was not clear-cut. The degree of involvement of each player varied and depended on its own interests and needs. Both Greece and Turkey were objectified from the start, which changed to some extent with the rise of the Turkish resistance, the formation of the Grand National Assembly and the military successes of the nationalists. As the front changed, states began to leave Greece, supporting Kemal's forces to varying degrees. The assumptions underlying the 1919 invasion could not be realised, and the establishment of relations with Ankara provided opportunities to try to secure their interests by peaceful means.

In the Turkish War of Independence, the Russian Bolsheviks played a special role. From the outset, they provided essential support to the nationalist forces in the form of equipment and advisers, and were considered by the Second Department of Polish General Staff to be the main supplier of arms to Kemal's forces. Nevertheless, both the Turks and the Bolsheviks approached this cooperation in purely instrumental terms – it was in Moscow's interest to involve Western states in the fighting in Anatolia, while Ankara needed Russian arms.

The officers of Department II attempted to report on the course of the conflict, highlighting both the military action and the political aspects. However, the content of the documents produced appears to be incomplete, subject to certain errors and even lacking in objective judgement. However, it should be remembered that, unlike today's researchers, the intelligence services of the time were gathering knowledge and developing material on current events. The quality and accuracy of the information may vary depending on the

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<sup>44</sup> *Delegacja Polska...*, I.303.4.7198.

<sup>45</sup> *Ewakuacja...*, I.303.4.7198.

source. It remains an open question, however, as to the reasons for the actions of some officers, which were linked to a rather subjective, unprofessional approach to the events described. This may have been due as much to the unpreparedness of some cadres for the tasks set before them as to the adoption of a British perspective on the perception of the Greco-Turkish war. Nevertheless, the documents testifying to the work of Department II provide a certain complement and contribution to further research into the course of the aforementioned conflict and the history of the Polish Intelligence agency.

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