

A LOST ALLIANCE: POLISH-GEORGIAN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND THE INTERMARIUM (1918-1921)¹

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“Released to the East, we always aspired to the West. Every winding path of our history bears the marks of these aspirations; ... We have always endured the tragedy of geography ... We stopped halfway: we drifted away from the East, yet we never became part of the West”. Grigol Robakidze (Address to the European Socialist Delegation on behalf of Georgian writers, Tbilisi, September 1920)

Abstract: This article examines the attempts to establish a military-political alliance between the Democratic Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Poland during the years 1918-1921 within the framework of Józef Piłsudski's geopolitical concept of the Intermarium. It analyses how the strategic interests of Poland and Georgia intersected with Józef Piłsudski's federalist vision and what place Polish-Georgian military-political cooperation occupied within this geopolitical concept. Particular attention is devoted to the diplomatic mission of Tytus Filipowicz in the spring of 1920 as the most significant initiative aimed at establishing military-political cooperation. The study demonstrates that the failure of this initiative resulted from a combination of interconnected military, geopolitical, and logistical factors, including the shift in Poland's foreign policy priorities following Poland's victory in the Battle of Warsaw, the absence of effective international security guarantees, the expansion of Bolshevik Russia into the South Caucasus, and the difficulties of both land and maritime communications. The article concludes that, despite the converging strategic interests of Georgia and Poland, these circumstances made it impossible both to establish a military-political alliance and to implement military-political cooperation with Georgia at the state level within the framework of the Intermarium concept.

Keywords: Poland; Georgia; Intermarium; Józef Piłsudski; military alliance; diplomatic relations; Soviet Russia.

Introduction. The years 1914-1918 constituted a turning point in the history of many nations. In place of the great empires (Austria-Hungary, Germany, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire), new states emerged that differed from one another in terms of their territorial, demographic, and political scale but, in many cases, shared similar historical experiences. From the outset, their principal objective was to preserve the

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independence they had attained through national liberation struggles and the favorable convergence of historical circumstances. For some of these states, their history became an interesting example of the successful realization of the principle of national self-determination, whereas for others it turned into an unsuccessful experience of state-building and the struggle for international recognition of their sovereignty.

Although separated by thousands of kilometers, the Democratic Republic of Georgia, which restored its independence on 26 May 1918, and the Republic of Poland, which regained its independence on 11 November 1918, shared many common features: a rich historical past; the experience of forced incorporation into the Russian Empire, differing in historical and legal terms yet equally detrimental to national dignity; the struggle to achieve independence and secure international recognition within the new geopolitical reality created by the First World War; and the defense of statehood against the expansionism of Bolshevik Russia. Their subsequent destinies also proved remarkably similar: the occupation of Georgia by Soviet Russia in 1921 and the liquidation of its independence, followed by the conquest of Poland by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939, the destruction of its independence, and the partition of its territory between the two occupying powers. Thus, from the perspective of statehood, Georgia and Poland followed fundamentally similar historical trajectories. Prior to these tragic developments, however, both newly established states sought to develop cooperation with one another in the difficult international environment of the time in order to safeguard their national interests and security. During 1918-1920, the common threat emanating from Soviet Russia created favorable preconditions for the development of diplomatic relations between the two states, resulting in short-lived but nevertheless significant cooperation.

The Head of Government of the newly independent Republic of Poland, Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935), sought to ensure that Soviet Russia remained as far removed as possible from the area in which the Polish state was taking shape, thereby preventing any renewed infringement of Poland's sovereignty by Russia (Borzecki, 2008, p. 28). Piłsudski regarded the weakening of the Russian state as the most effective means of achieving this objective. A key component of his geopolitical vision was the separation of the territories inhabited by non-Russian peoples from Russia and the formation, under Polish leadership, of an anti-Russian military-political coalition incorporating the Baltic states and Finland. At the same time, Piłsudski sought to persuade Russian émigré politicians to accept the concept of a Russian state confined within strictly ethnic boundaries, which he referred to as the "Third Russia," in contrast to either Red or White Russia (Borzecki, 2008, p. 28).

At first glance, Poland's centuries-old tradition of resisting Russia, its military potential, cultural and economic resources, and the support of the leading European powers enabled it to assist the national liberation movements of Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, and Lithuania. Through this policy, Warsaw sought to establish a voluntary federation in which it would assume the leading role in resolving the most important political and military issues. The formation of such a union would have significantly constrained Russia's expansionist ambitions in the region (Borzecki, 2008, p. 28).

Piłsudski's geopolitical vision is known in history as the Intermarium – Międzymorze – which literally means "between the seas." From a geographical perspective, it encompassed a considerably broader area than the above-mentioned federal project. Initially, it referred only to the idea of uniting the territories situated between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. However, in Piłsudski's expanded vision, the concept of the Intermarium came to envisage the creation of a federal or confederal union of the states located between the Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas. The objective of this bloc was to counter future threats posed by Bolshevik Russia in the east and by Germany in the west, which, although temporarily defeated, retained revanchist

aspirations. Owing to its geographical location and access to the Black Sea, Georgia was regarded as a potentially important south-eastern partner in Piłsudski's anti-Russian strategy².

At the end of March 1920, Warsaw dispatched a diplomatic mission to Tbilisi headed by Tytus Filipowicz. Within the framework of the negotiations, the parties actively discussed the possibility of concluding a military agreement; however, the negotiations were never brought to completion. At the end of April 1920, following the Sovietization of Azerbaijan and the arrest of T. Filipowicz in Baku, the negotiations were discontinued. On 11 February 1921, the Red Army invaded Georgia, and on 25 February it occupied Tbilisi. As a result, the attempt to establish a Polish-Georgian military-political alliance failed at this stage.

The present study aims to examine the attempts to establish a Polish-Georgian military-political alliance during 1918-1921 and to analyze the reasons for its failure. It explores how the military-political interests of Poland and Georgia intersected with Piłsudski's Intermarium concept and identifies the factors that hindered the institutionalization of this cooperation.

The historiography of Polish-Georgian relations during the period 1918-1921 within the context of the Intermarium remains relatively limited. At the same time, a noticeable difference exists between the research emphases of Polish and Georgian scholars. Georgian historiography has primarily focused on the issue of the diplomatic recognition of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and the role of particular individuals (heads of diplomatic missions and émigrés) in this process. By contrast, Polish scholarly literature has predominantly concentrated on the analysis of Józef Piłsudski's federalist concept and the assessment of the strategic role of the Caucasus – particularly Georgia – within the framework of the anti-Soviet strategy. Furthermore, the comparatively limited cross-utilization of primary sources is also evident. In the present study, we seek to examine Polish-Georgian relations within the framework of the strategic concept of the Intermarium and to evaluate them not only in terms of bilateral diplomacy but also within the broader context of regional security.

The attempts to establish a Polish-Georgian military-political alliance during 1918-1921, the course of the negotiations, the role of Tytus Filipowicz's mission, and the reasons for the failure of the project have not yet become the subject of comprehensive scholarly research. Existing studies have largely focused either on the concept of the Intermarium, Poland's Eastern policy, or selected aspects of bilateral diplomatic relations, whereas the attempt to establish Polish-Georgian military-political cooperation has received comparatively little attention as a unified subject of research.

The present study aims to fill this gap, at least in part. It is based on documents preserved in the Historical Central Archive of the National Archives of Georgia, Polish documentary publications, memoirs, periodical press, and Georgian, Polish, and English-language scholarly literature.

Particular attention is devoted to the circumstances surrounding the preparation of the documents, their authorship, intended recipients, degree of confidentiality, and their consistency with information published in the official press. Polish-Georgian relations are analyzed through the prism of the relationship between the bilateral interests of the two states and Piłsudski's federalist policy. Such an approach makes it

² W. Materski, in his article "Tytus Filipowicz's Mission to Tbilisi (April 1920)," notes that: "Józef Piłsudski recognized the similarity between the historical destinies of Georgians and Poles, as well as the potential for their cooperation in the struggle to free themselves from the domination of the Romanov Empire, long before the necessary conditions for such cooperation had emerged. While living in exile in London (1891-1903), where he was working for Poland's independence, he established contacts with Georgian activists fighting for their country's independence through his closest associates, Tytus Filipowicz and Witold Jodko-Narkiewicz."

According to Materski, Piłsudski's interest in the Georgians was motivated both by the similarity of their historical experience and by the traditionally benevolent and friendly attitude of Georgians towards Poles exiled to Transcaucasia (Materski, 1991, p. 26).

possible to assess not only the dynamics of bilateral relations but also the prospects for the practical implementation of the Intermarium concept in the South Caucasus.

Methods. The study is based on a qualitative historical methodology and employs historical-critical and comparative historical methods, as well as source analysis.

The principal source base of the research consists of Georgian and Polish archival documents, diplomatic correspondence, official acts, contemporary Georgian and foreign press materials, and memoirs. The sources were analyzed in accordance with the principles of historicism and objectivity, on the basis of a critical assessment of their provenance, reliability, and informational value. Through the comparative analysis and cross-examination of sources of different types and origins, the study reconstructs and interprets the reasons behind the attempts to establish military-diplomatic cooperation between Poland and Georgia during 1918-1921, the dynamics of its development, and the factors that contributed to its failure.

With regard to the scholarly literature relevant to the subject, this study draws upon the works of Z. Avalishvili, N. Kirtadze, B. Kobakhidze, O. Janelidze, and other Georgian historians, who have examined the foreign policy and international position of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. In analyzing Józef Piłsudski's Eastern policy, the concept of the Intermarium, and Poland's geopolitical vision, the study relies on the works of M. Dziewanowski, J. Borzęcki, F. Kazemzadeh, A. Waingertner, Saralidze, and other scholars. The studies of W. Materski and M. Włodarczyk are of particular importance for the examination of Polish-Georgian relations, Tytus Filipowicz's mission, and the relevant documentary sources.

Discussion. As noted above, the term Intermarium, derived from Latin, literally means "*between the seas*" and originally referred to the idea of a union of the states situated between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea (later extended to include the Adriatic Sea). A brief review of the historical origins of the Intermarium is necessary in order to identify the political ideas and projects that emerged during different historical periods and that, to a certain extent, influenced the formation of Józef Piłsudski's geopolitical vision. The origins of this concept cannot be associated with a single episode or individual in Polish history; rather, they can be traced back to the era of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Rzeczpospolita*).

For example, in the mid-sixteenth century, the claims advanced by the rulers of Muscovy to the East Slavic lands that at that time formed part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth raised questions concerning the constitutional structure of the Commonwealth that had previously remained largely unaddressed. More specifically, should the *Rzeczpospolita* remain a dualistic state, or should the East Slavic population also be granted an appropriate place within this political union? This question was closely linked to another fundamental issue – namely, who was the legitimate heir to Kyiv (Dziewanowski, 1969, p. 379).

Both the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Moscow could advance numerous arguments in support of their respective positions. Muscovy's claims were essentially dynastic and religious in nature. According to the Muscovite interpretation, the Lithuanians and the Poles had annexed the western territories of the former Kyivan Rus' only because of the "Tatar Yoke" and the temporary weakness of the local princes. The Tsar of Muscovy regarded himself as the sole legitimate heir to Kyiv, the "gatherer of the Russian lands," and the rightful ruler of the territories once governed by the Rurik dynasty. Following the fall of Byzantium, the Grand Prince of Moscow also came to be regarded as the supreme defender of the Orthodox Church. Consequently, he considered it his duty to liberate the Orthodox population from the "Latin Yoke" and unite them under his own sceptre (Dziewanowski, 1969, p. 379).

Like Russia, the Polish side also sought to provide a historical justification for its territorial claims. This tendency became particularly evident in the strategy pursued by the Hôtel Lambert political group of the Polish émigré community in Paris during the nineteenth century.

At the initiative of this group, and following approximately a decade of work, the map entitled "Karta dawnej Polski" was published in 1859. The publication of the map served several objectives: (1) to

demonstrate the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as they existed in 1772 and to promote the idea of Polish independence; (2) to provide documentary evidence of Poland's historical rights to the territories depicted on the map and to emphasize the necessity of restoring Polish independence within those borders; and (3) to serve as a practical instrument in the event of an uprising (indeed, the absence of a unified standard map of Poland has also been identified as one of the factors contributing to the failure of the November Uprising of 1831) (Zajac, 2020, pp. 327-354).

We argue that the political vision of Hôtel Lambert may be regarded as one of the precursors of the Intermarium concept, as both were founded upon the idea of limiting Russia's geopolitical influence through cooperation among independent states.³ However, the Hôtel Lambert project was primarily aimed at the restoration of Polish statehood, whereas the Intermarium sought to establish a system of interstate security and regional cooperation. At the same time, these concepts should not be viewed as successive stages in the development of a single political project but rather as distinct visions that emerged under different historical circumstances, sharing certain conceptual similarities while differing in their objectives and geopolitical context.

The final formulation of the Intermarium geopolitical concept is associated with Józef Piłsudski, the Head of State of Poland between 1918 and 1922. Despite his active involvement in the socialist movement in earlier years, he was, above all, a political leader committed to the construction of a strong nation-state. Moreover, more than any other Polish politician, he represented a statesman who was unacceptable first to Russia and, subsequently (from 1917 onwards), also to Germany (Wiatr, 1988, p. 12). Piłsudski interpreted the post-war territorial reconfiguration of Europe from the perspective of Poland's national interests and security. He believed that the small states of Central and Eastern Europe would be unable to defend themselves individually against Bolshevism and German revanchism. Only the establishment of a unified political and security system could guarantee the preservation of the independence of the newly created states. It was precisely this strategic vision that underlay Poland's interest in Georgia, as the Caucasus occupied a priority position within Piłsudski's Eastern strategy.

Piłsudski's strategic concept rested upon two closely interconnected components. The first was the Intermarium, whose geographical scope expanded over time from the area between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea towards the Adriatic Sea, envisaging the military-political integration of the states located within this region. The second was Prometheism, which advocated support for the national liberation movements of the peoples remaining within the borders of the former Russian Empire with the aim of destabilizing and weakening the Bolshevik regime. Nevertheless, the question of the institutional form that this union should take – whether a federation or a confederation – remained unresolved. At different stages, Piłsudski considered both models without ever defining the final institutional structure of either. The federal model, in which Poland was envisaged as the leading state, clearly conflicted with the sovereignty of the newly established states. The confederal model, based on voluntary cooperation, proved problematic from military and logistical perspectives. The implementation of the Intermarium was further hindered by the divergent foreign-policy interests of the participating states and by territorial disputes among them, including disagreements in Polish-Lithuanian, Polish-Ukrainian, and Polish-Czechoslovak relations.⁴

³ Polish historian P. Waingertner notes that the leader of the Hôtel Lambert political faction, Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, advocated a federal model for the future Polish Republic. According to Waingertner, with the support of France, Great Britain, and the Ottoman Empire, Czartoryski also considered the creation of a federation comprising Czechia, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and the South Slavic peoples (Waingertner, 2022, p. 34).

⁴ In this context, the British historian Charlotte Alston notes that, at the Paris Peace Conference, the Lithuanian delegation had to contend with the territorial claims of both the political representatives of White Russia and the Polish delegation. At the same time, the Polish delegation itself was far from unified: the federalists advocated the establishment of a close political union with Lithuania, whereas the conference was largely dominated by the National Democratic (annexationist) camp, which regarded

Access to the Black Sea was of decisive importance for the Intermarium concept. The Baltic states – Finland, Estonia, and Latvia – formed its northern flank (or, according to some scholars, an independent northern bloc); Poland, Lithuania, and Belarus constituted the core of the alliance; Ukraine represented the continuation of its strategic axis towards the south; while Romania and Bulgaria served as the principal pillars of its southern dimension. In this way, a geopolitical system encompassing the space between the Baltic, Black, and Adriatic Seas was envisaged. The states of the South Caucasus constituted the south-eastern – and at the same time the most vulnerable – part of this system.

For Georgia, the significance of this concept lay in the fact that the South Caucasus, and Georgia in particular, occupied the strategic south-eastern direction within Piłsudski's geopolitical vision. Owing, however, to its geographical isolation and the prevailing international environment, it was regarded as the most vulnerable part of the proposed alliance. It is within this context that the attempts to establish Polish-Georgian military-political cooperation during 1918-1921 should be understood.

Support for national liberation movements constituted one of the principal components of Piłsudski's Eastern policy and was closely connected with the strategy of the Intermarium. The origins of this approach are generally associated with Piłsudski's visit to Tokyo in February 1904, during which he proposed that the Japanese government support the national liberation movements of the non-Russian peoples living within the Russian Empire (Piłsudski, 1971, p. 159). In the memorandum submitted to the Japanese authorities during the same visit, Piłsudski specifically identified the Georgians among the nations oppressed by the Russian Empire, thereby demonstrating that Georgia already occupied an important place in his political vision at that stage (Jędrzejewicz, 1982, p. 36). This approach remained unchanged after 1918. Support for the newly independent states, as well as for the nations that remained under Russian rule, constituted interconnected elements of Piłsudski's strategic vision, ultimately aimed at containing Russia's expansionist policy.

The present study adopts the interpretation according to which, during 1918-1921, Prometheism, as an idea, developed in parallel with the geopolitical concept of the Intermarium, whereas its institutionalization belongs to a later period. Accordingly, the idea of Prometheism assigned particular significance to the South Caucasian states – Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan – within Piłsudski's geopolitical vision. It was within the framework of this interconnected strategy that Poland dispatched its diplomatic mission to the Caucasus and considered the possibility of establishing a military alliance with Georgia.⁵

As noted above, the implementation of the Intermarium was considerably hindered by regional contradictions; however, the international environment was no less significant. The balance of power established by the Versailles peace settlement, together with the priorities of the Great Powers, was not conducive to the practical implementation of the Intermarium project. Although the Western powers – each acting in accordance with its own national interests – viewed Poland as the principal bulwark against Soviet Russia, they did not share the idea of establishing a broad federal or confederal bloc in the region, as such an arrangement would have considerably complicated the maintenance of the balance of power in Eastern Europe.

Vilnius as an integral part of a centralized Polish state. Lithuania, in turn, considered Vilnius to be its historic capital (Alston, 2018, p. 106).

⁵ In general, the geographical boundaries of the Intermarium concept and the relationship between Prometheism and Intermarium remain subjects of scholarly debate and continue to constitute a distinct field of historical research. Some scholars regard Prometheism as an integral component of the Intermarium project, whereas others consider it an independent political concept. Moreover, Józef Piłsudski's geopolitical vision evolved continuously in response to changing international circumstances, resulting in corresponding changes to the geographical scope of the Intermarium project. It may be argued that these conceptual modifications, together with the evolving objectives of the project, contributed, at least in part, to the failure of its practical implementation.

Moreover, "from the perspective of the Allied Powers, the resolution of the Georgian question was linked to determining the future of Russia. France favored the restoration of a united and indivisible Russia for several reasons: (1) during the First World War, Russia had accumulated substantial debts to France, which the Bolsheviks refused to repay; (2) French capital was being expelled from Russia; (3) a weakened Russia could, in the future, become a potential ally of a revanchist Germany; and (4) there existed the danger of the export of Bolshevism into France itself" (Kobakhidze, 2015, p. 13).

Great Britain was no exception, likewise favoring the preservation of a united and indivisible Russia (Baramidze, 2020, p. 9). These circumstances demonstrate that, for the Western powers, the Georgian question was not regarded as an independent regional issue but rather as part of the so-called "Russian Question." Nevertheless, the cautious policy pursued by the West did not preclude Poland from undertaking independent regional initiatives, although it significantly limited their prospects for success. Furthermore, within this international environment, the prospects for cooperation between Poland and Georgia became increasingly dependent not only upon their bilateral interests but also upon the course of the Polish-Soviet War and Soviet Russia's policy towards the South Caucasus.

Furthermore, as noted above, the newly established states – Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, and Latvia – had their own territorial disputes with Poland, which made the idea of creating a voluntary federation or confederation difficult to realize. In this context, an alliance with Georgia, owing to the geographical distance and the military-logistical difficulties involved, represented the weakest component of this ambitious geopolitical design.

The Democratic Republic of Georgia, proclaimed on 26 May 1918, was regarded as a comparatively more stable model of statehood in the South Caucasus. Under the leadership of the Menshevik wing of the Social Democratic Party and its leader Noe Zhordania (1868-1953), Georgia established a parliamentary republic that functioned within the framework of the European social-democratic tradition and actively sought integration with the Western world.

Georgia possessed a unique geographical position. Through the Port of Batumi, it constituted one of the principal transit hubs of the Black Sea basin, facilitating the movement of various types of cargo – including energy resources, mineral resources, military supplies, industrial products, and other goods – between Europe and Asia.⁶ At the same time, Georgia had the potential to become one of the principal military-logistical hubs along the Black Sea route. It was precisely this geostrategic significance that accounted for Poland's particular interest in Georgia. Nevertheless, military threats emanating from Bolshevik Russia in the north and the Ottoman Empire in the south, together with the ongoing border and territorial disputes with Azerbaijan and Armenia, created a complex security environment that compelled the Georgian government to seek international guarantees and alternative military-political alliances. Moreover, these regional conflicts affected not only Georgia's international position but also the prospects for the consolidation of the South Caucasus as a whole. They not only weakened Georgia's position but also significantly hindered the establishment of a unified anti-Soviet political and military cooperation among the South Caucasian states, thereby further complicating the implementation of the south-eastern dimension of the Intermarium.

⁶ From this perspective, Batumi had already become a focal point of European strategic interest in the 1870s. As a result of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, much to Russia's surprise, the city was transferred from the Ottoman Empire to the Russian Empire (Jibashvili & Diasamidze, 2013, pp. 241-246).

In 1919, the Georgian delegation attending the Paris Peace Conference likewise emphasized Georgia's economic resources, particularly the ports of Poti and Batumi. The significance of Transcaucasia – and Georgia in particular – for the development of economic and cultural relations between Europe, Central Asia, and Western Asia was also underscored by the head of the French Military Mission in Georgia, Colonel Chardigny, in a report submitted to his government (Georgian National Archives (GNA), Historical Central Archive (HCA), f. 1864, inv. 2, file 376, fols. 1-8; Kirtadze, 1998, p. 12).

The comparative analysis of the scholarly literature and archival documents employed in this study demonstrates that Poland's interest in Georgia was determined by three principal factors. The first was geostrategic: Georgia controlled the eastern coast of the Black Sea, making it the south-eastern pillar of the Intermarium's geopolitical architecture. The second factor was related to the concept of Prometheism, within which Georgia, together with Azerbaijan and Armenia, constituted a stable southern flank against Bolshevik expansion; the preservation of the sovereignty of these states directly weakened the position of Soviet Russia in the Caucasus. The third factor was ideological affinity: the Georgian Menshevik government, with its distinctly European social-democratic orientation, was politically close to Józef Piłsudski's worldview. Both sides had emerged from the socialist tradition, and both were united by a firm anti-Bolshevik position.

These circumstances contributed to the fact that, in April 1918, Georgia was accorded a special place in Poland's plans for the establishment of a diplomatic representation in the Caucasus. Accordingly, Poland took the initiative in establishing relations between the two states (Włodarczyk, 2016, p. 464).

In August 1918, the Regency Council of the Kingdom of Poland appointed the Polish politician Wacław Ostrowski, who was already in Tbilisi, as its plenipotentiary. On 1 October of the same year, he also assumed the position of Head of the Polish Mission in the South Caucasus (Janelidze, 2018, p. 273; Włodarczyk, 2016, p. 465). This decision provides grounds to assume that, from as early as 1918, Georgia was regarded by Poland not merely as an ordinary diplomatic destination but as one of the principal pillars of its policy in the South Caucasus. Ostrowski was entrusted with three principal tasks:

1. To organize the repatriation of the Polish population that had remained in the region as a result of the military and political upheavals of the First World War;
2. To establish close political contacts with the governments of Georgia and Azerbaijan and to prepare the ground for a future military-political alliance within the framework of the Intermarium;
3. To establish a Polish bank in Tbilisi and promote bilateral industrial and commercial relations (Janelidze, 2018, p. 274).

The strategic calculations of the Georgian side regarding Poland's plans have received comparatively little attention in the historiography. Nevertheless, Tbilisi's foreign-policy motivations present an equally significant picture. An alliance with Warsaw was attractive to the Democratic Republic of Georgia for several concrete reasons. The leading European powers – France and Great Britain – were clearly delaying the *de jure* recognition of Georgia.⁷ Although the Georgian delegation was among the most active participants at the Paris Peace Conference, the results achieved fell short of expectations. In this context, partnership with Poland offered Georgia the prospect of strengthening its links with Western Europe and becoming part of a regional collective security system, particularly given that Poland enjoyed considerable attention from the Great Powers. Furthermore, the newly established Georgian state suffered from an acute shortage of military and technical resources, and a military alliance with Warsaw offered a realistic opportunity to alleviate this problem, at least in part.

⁷ France's and Great Britain's reluctance to grant *de jure* recognition to Georgia was defined by a number of factors. Georgia's perceived "German orientation" was one of them, and a timely reorientation might have been of decisive importance under the circumstances. It was precisely this necessity that the Georgian diplomat Zurab Avalishvili had in mind when he wrote of the need for "as rapid a shift as possible toward the victorious powers." The objective was to establish "contacts with the governments of Great Britain and France" (Avalishvili, 1990, p. 183).

Also noteworthy is Avalishvili's observation regarding Akaki Chkhenkeli, Georgia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, who at the time was heading the Georgian diplomatic mission in Berlin. The purpose of Chkhenkeli's mission was to secure international recognition for the newly independent Georgian state. Avalishvili writes: "As for A. Chkhenkeli, only now – only now – has he become convinced that his stay in Berlin... had dragged on somewhat too long. Germany's complete defeat and the revolution were necessary for him to realize this, and it was only a revolutionary bullet, fired quite unexpectedly from the street and shattering the window of his room, that finally compelled him to vacate it..." (Avalishvili, 1990, p. 184).

The ideological dimension should also be taken into account, particularly the close ties between the Georgian Menshevik government and European social democracy. In this regard, the visit of the leaders of the Second International to Georgia in September 1920 is especially noteworthy. During the meetings held in Tbilisi, the principal subjects of discussion were the international legitimacy of the Republic and the support of the Socialist International. During the visit, the British member of the delegation, Ramsay MacDonald (1866-1937), emphasized:

"Today we have shaken hands with a free people, not with an enslaved nation. We have not come here for a holiday. Our purpose is to assist you and to learn from your experience... Georgia is a socialist republic that has remained faithful to European social democracy" (Berishvili, 2021, pp. 27-30).

Accordingly, within Georgia's foreign policy, an alliance with Poland was viewed as an additional instrument for expanding such international contacts and strengthening the country's position within the European political space.

An analysis of the geopolitical chain of the Intermarium demonstrates that Georgia constituted the most distant, yet simultaneously one of the most strategically significant, links within this system. Whereas the Baltic states bordered directly on Poland and Ukraine conducted joint military operations with Poland along the front line, developments in the South Caucasus unfolded in a far more dramatic manner.

The inability of the South Caucasian states to resolve their mutual conflicts and to confront external aggression through coordinated action made them an easy target for Russia. During the spring of 1920, all attempts by Georgia to reach an agreement with Armenia and Azerbaijan ended in failure, while the scale of Bolshevik activity in Baku increased rapidly (Kazemzadeh, 1951, p. 276). The Bolshevik occupation of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan in the spring of 1920 (Armenia was occupied later, in November of the same year) altered the regional balance of power before Polish diplomacy had been able to fully implement its plans in the region.

The new geopolitical reality that emerged in the South Caucasus further weakened the foreign-policy position of the Georgian state. Tbilisi became the last sovereign political entity in the region, which, on the one hand, increased its strategic importance in the eyes of the European powers – including Poland – but, on the other hand, accelerated Moscow's preparations for the annexation of Georgia.

By the beginning of 1920, the prerequisites for bilateral diplomatic rapprochement had fully matured, a development that was largely facilitated by the entry of the Polish-Soviet War (1919-1921) into its decisive phase. Against the backdrop of the Red Army's active offensive, the acquisition of a reliable ally in the South Caucasus became for Warsaw not merely an ideological objective within the framework of the Intermarium project but an urgent military-strategic necessity. Even a partial diversion of Bolshevik attention towards Transcaucasia would, to some extent, have eased the pressure on the Polish front. At the same time, the Sovietization of Azerbaijan at the end of April 1920 and the growing Bolshevik threat prompted Georgia to adopt preventive measures. Thus, the interests of the two states converged. The initiative came from the Polish side. In 1920, the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stanisław Patek, officially proposed to Tbilisi the exchange of diplomatic missions and the establishment of full-fledged political relations – a proposal that was, in all probability, also part of a broader strategy conceived within the framework of the Intermarium.

The Georgian response was immediate. At a time when the government of Noe Zhordania was engaged in difficult negotiations with the Ottoman Empire over territorial issues, resisting Bolshevik pressure, and simultaneously conducting a campaign for de jure recognition in Western Europe, it regarded the Polish initiative as a possible means of overcoming Georgia's foreign-policy isolation. A practical manifestation of Warsaw's strategic interest was the dispatch of the diplomatic mission headed by Tytus Filipowicz to Tbilisi

on 30 March 1920 (Materski, 2019, p. 141).⁸ Tytus Filipowicz was one of Józef Piłsudski's closest associates,⁹ a proponent of the historical tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and one of the leading figures of the Prometheist movement. As the head of the Polish Special Political Mission, he was sent to Georgia with the purpose of establishing close political cooperation and discussing the project of a military alliance (Materski, 2019, pp. 141–156). Thus, the Polish authorities dispatched to the Georgian capital not an ordinary diplomat but one of Piłsudski's closest political associates, a fact that underscores the exceptional importance attached to the mission.¹⁰

It is noteworthy that, prior to the dispatch of Tytus Filipowicz's mission, the Supreme Council of the Allied Powers, on 10 January 1920, had decided to grant *de facto* recognition to the independence of Georgia and Azerbaijan. The particular significance of this decision is demonstrated by the extraordinary ceremonial session of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia, convened on 14 January 1920 to commemorate Georgia's *de facto* recognition (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, 2019, pp. 7-26). This development "made it easier for the Polish authorities to define their position towards these two South Caucasian republics. Poland's desire to cooperate with them encountered no opposition from the leaders of the Entente" (Janelidze, 2018, p. 278).¹¹

The agenda of the Polish mission in Tbilisi proved to be extensive. Tytus Filipowicz conducted negotiations with the Georgian side in several directions, including the establishment of official diplomatic relations, agreement on the fundamental principles of a military alliance, and the determination of the conditions under which Poland would provide military-technical assistance. Our analysis of the available scholarly literature and archival materials indicates that the objectives of the Polish mission extended far beyond the establishment of ordinary diplomatic relations. The involvement and attitude of the Georgian governmental institutions – particularly the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense – demonstrate that the leadership of the Republic attached exceptional importance to this process. For them, an alliance with Warsaw represented not merely a formal political act but a genuine opportunity to strengthen the security of the Georgian state.

⁸ The arrival of Tytus Filipowicz's mission in Tbilisi on 30 March 1920 is confirmed by the official Bulletin of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (No. 1, 30 March 1920). Although the information contained in the document is extremely brief – "Official transfer to the South Caucasus. The Polish mission under the leadership of Titus Filipowicz has arrived in Tiflis." – its historical significance is indisputable (Materski, 2019, p. 141).

The Polish researcher Magdalena Włodarczyk notes that the dispatch of the Polish military mission to the South Caucasus had initially been planned for the end of October 1919, but the mission ultimately arrived in Georgia in March 1920 (Włodarczyk, 2016, p. 466).

⁹ In the government of Jędrzej Moraczewski (17 November 1918 – 16 January 1919), he served as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Włodarczyk, 2016, p. 466).

¹⁰ Tytus Filipowicz's participation in Józef Piłsudski's mission to Tokyo in early 1904 provides grounds to assume that he enjoyed Piłsudski's particular trust. Filipowicz's involvement in one of the most important and confidential international missions of the period suggests that Piłsudski entrusted him with especially sensitive diplomatic assignments. In our assessment, a further indication of this trust was Filipowicz's dispatch to the South Caucasus, including Tbilisi, in 1920, where he was tasked with exploring the prospects for military and political cooperation with Georgia and conducting the relevant negotiations.

¹¹ Poland's foreign policy was largely shaped by the position of the Entente. This is also reflected in the note dated 24 March 1920, sent by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stanisław Patek, to the Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Evgeni Gegechkori: "Mr. Minister, I have the honor to inform you that the Polish Government is prepared to recognize the Government of Georgia as an independent entity *de facto* until such time as the Peace Conference recognizes a status for Georgia consistent with the wishes of its people". The same note also refers to the forthcoming mission of Tytus Filipowicz, for whose friendly reception Patek requests the cooperation of the Georgian authorities (Poland and Georgia, 1920, p. 2).

The extent to which the resolution of many important issues for Poland depended on the will of the Allied Powers became evident once again in December 1920, when Ignacy Jan Paderewski, Poland's representative, abstained during the vote on the admission of the Democratic Republic of Georgia to the League of Nations. The Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eustachy Sapieha, explained Paderewski's abstention by stating that he had not been authorized to act contrary to the position adopted by Great Britain and France.

The concept of the military alliance developed during the negotiations comprised several principal elements: (1) Poland would supply the Georgian armed forces with military equipment and ammunition, thereby significantly enhancing their capabilities; (2) the two states would conduct coordinated military operations, compelling the Bolshevik forces to fight simultaneously on two fronts; and (3) the alliance would most likely become part of the broader Intermarium framework, while Georgia would assume the role of Poland's strategic partner in the South Caucasus.

Although the implementation of these objectives appeared theoretically feasible, the principal obstacle was the logistical factor. Between Warsaw and Tbilisi lay hundreds of kilometers of territory controlled by Soviet Russia. The only possible route for the delivery of military assistance ran across the Black Sea, specifically through the Port of Batumi, making such assistance directly dependent upon the technical constraints of international maritime transport, the capacity of the local railway infrastructure, and the goodwill of Great Britain. In our view, the British presence in Batumi simultaneously facilitated and constrained the rapprochement between Poland and Georgia. While it created a relatively stable security environment, British influence over the region's strategic affairs and its own political interests limited the prospects for the establishment of an independent Polish–Georgian military and political alliance.

Despite the positive atmosphere and the convergence of interests between Poland and Georgia, the governments of both countries understood the necessity of exercising the utmost caution in their relations with Soviet Russia. For obvious reasons, Bolshevik Russia could not afford to relax its attention towards the Caucasus, a fact that was well understood by its historical neighbors (Janelidze, 2018, p. 283). A similar degree of secrecy is reflected in a letter dated 14 October 1920, sent by Leo Kereselidze, who had been dispatched to Warsaw with the consent of the Georgian government and with the assistance of the French Mission. Referring to the participation of Georgian officers on the Polish front, Kereselidze warned that any disclosure of such information "would provide our enemies with grounds to bring accusations against our country" (Janelidze, 2018, p. 276).¹²

Notwithstanding the goodwill demonstrated by both sides, the conclusion of a full-scale military alliance proved impossible for several reasons. Above all, the decisive factor was the geographical distance separating Warsaw and Tbilisi, together with the Bolshevik-controlled territory lying between them. Moreover, during the spring and summer of 1920, the Republic of Poland itself was passing through the most critical stage of the war against Soviet Russia. In particular, the Battle of Warsaw in August 1920 required the mobilization of virtually all of the country's military and strategic resources. At the same time, following the annexation of neighboring Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia found itself surrounded by Soviet republics, reducing the possibility of receiving external military assistance to a minimum.

Furthermore, Poland's victory in the Battle of Warsaw in August 1920 fundamentally altered the priorities of Polish foreign policy. Once the immediate military threat posed by Soviet Russia had been neutralized, the question of the state's survival ceased to dominate the political agenda. The principal objective became the rapid conclusion of the war and the consolidation of Poland's international legal position. Simultaneously, the influence of the National Democratic camp led by Roman Dmowski (1864–1939), Piłsudski's principal political opponent, increased significantly. This political movement favored the construction of a strong nation-state rather than the establishment of broad federal ties with the peoples of Eastern Europe.¹³ This orientation also corresponded to the interests of the Great Powers – particularly Great

¹² Alongside other unfavourable circumstances, the risk of compromising operational secrecy also compelled L. Kereselidze to distance himself from the initiative and to refrain from consenting to the dispatch of Georgian officers to Galicia and Warsaw (Janelidze, 2018, p. 277).

¹³ It is noteworthy that, in early 1904, when Józef Piłsudski, accompanied by Tytus Filipowicz, arrived in Tokyo to seek the support of the Japanese government and to explore the possibility of forming a Polish Legion to fight against Russia, he found Roman Dmowski already there. According to the commentary of Darsie Rutherford Gillie, the translator and editor of Piłsudski's

Britain and France – which likewise favored bringing the Polish-Soviet War to an end as quickly as possible. Against the backdrop of these domestic and international political developments, the Treaty of Riga (1921) finally brought an end to the practical prospects of implementing Piłsudski's federalist policy. Poland abandoned its support for the independence of Ukraine and Belarus, while the attempt to establish a Polish–Georgian military-political alliance within the framework of the Intermarium likewise lost any realistic prospect of realization (Światłowski, 2014, p. 151).¹⁴

As a consequence of these circumstances, the Polish-Georgian alliance, despite its strategic rationale, proved impossible to realize in practice. This latent geopolitical contradiction became a painful reality in February-March 1921.

By the end of 1920, Soviet Russia's military-political strategy in the South Caucasus had assumed its final form. Following the Sovietization of Azerbaijan (April 1920) and Armenia (November 1920), Georgia – the only remaining sovereign state in the region – became Moscow's principal target. The annexation of Georgia would enable Soviet Russia to achieve several major strategic objectives. By bringing the country under its control, Moscow would establish complete control over the eastern coast of the Black Sea, the Port of Batumi, and the strategically important Baku-Batumi oil pipeline, while simultaneously destroying the very concept of the south-eastern flank of the Intermarium. This process was facilitated by the cessation of hostilities between Poland and Soviet Russia in October 1920, following the conclusion of the Preliminary Armistice of Riga,¹⁵ which enabled the Bolsheviks to release military reserves and redeploy them to the Caucasian front. Moreover, Moscow sought to act before events could take a different course. Had the Western powers – France, Great Britain, and the United States – demonstrated greater political support, the conclusion of a Polish-Georgian alliance might have created a new geopolitical reality that would have confronted the Soviet state with a serious long-term strategic threat from the south.

Accordingly, the Soviet military intervention of February 1921 was not a spontaneous act; rather, it constituted a carefully planned strategic operation, one of whose objectives – though not the primary one – was to prevent the formation of anti-Soviet international alignments, including Polish-Georgian and Georgian-Western cooperation, and to force Georgia into the Soviet sphere of influence at a politically opportune moment. On 11 February 1921, the Soviet 11th Army crossed the borders of Georgia. The official justification for this act of aggression – the alleged "uprising of the working people of Georgia" – represented a classic pattern of Soviet propagandistic historiography, substituting a fictional narrative for historical reality. The military offensive was launched from two principal directions: from the north, through the Dariali Gorge, and from the south-east, through the territory of Sovietized Armenia.

The Georgian armed forces offered organized but ultimately short-lived resistance, proving unable to withstand the overwhelming numerical and material superiority of Soviet Russia. On 25 February 1921, despite the heroic sacrifice of the Georgian military cadets (junkers), the Red Army entered Tbilisi. On 18 March of the same year, following the collapse of the last centers of resistance, the Government of the

memoirs, Dmowski had travelled to Tokyo to pursue his own political objectives and had already resolved to obstruct Piłsudski's initiative (Piłsudski, 1971, p. 159).

¹⁴ The Polish scholar Bartosz Światłowski notes that, in the opinion of the majority of historians and publicists, the Treaty of Riga signified the failure of Józef Piłsudski's federalist concept. According to Światłowski, responsibility for this outcome rested, to a considerable extent, with the Polish delegation participating in the peace negotiations. In particular, its leading representatives – Stanisław Grabski and Jan Dąbski, both members of the National Democratic camp – conducted the negotiations in accordance with Roman Dmowski's eastern strategy. This strategy advocated limiting Poland's territorial claims in order to avoid a substantial increase in the number of national minorities within the Polish state. As a result, the fundamental principles of Piłsudski's federalist project, which were based on the creation of a system of political and military cooperation with the newly independent states of Eastern Europe, were abandoned. Consequently, the Treaty of Riga effectively eliminated the possibility of implementing this concept (Światłowski, 2014, p. 151).

¹⁵ On 12 October 1920, the preliminary peace agreement was signed, whereas the Treaty of Riga was formally concluded on 18 March 1921, at a time when Georgia had already fallen under Soviet occupation.

Democratic Republic of Georgia departed the country through the Port of Batumi and went into exile – first to Istanbul and later to Paris – where it continued for decades to function as the legitimate government in exile.

The fate of the head of the Polish mission, Tytus Filipowicz, became a symbolic precursor to these dramatic events. At the end of April 1920, he was arrested by the Bolsheviks in Baku. Having arrived in the Caucasus to establish Poland's official diplomatic mission in Georgia, Tytus Filipowicz became one of the first victims of the newly Sovietized Azerbaijan.¹⁶ The effective obstruction of his mission and, subsequently, the fall of Georgia clearly demonstrated that the South Caucasian dimension had been eliminated from the geopolitical concept of the Intermarium.¹⁷

As for the scarcity of information concerning Tytus Filipowicz's mission, this was most likely the result of the confidential nature of the negotiations. Public discussion of issues relating to military-political cooperation, particularly in the context of the complex relations with Soviet Russia and the political situation prevailing in the region, would have been neither appropriate nor consistent with contemporary diplomatic practice. This assumption is further supported by the fact that the contemporary Georgian press published only a single brief notice concerning Tytus Filipowicz's expected mission (Poland and Georgia, 1920, p. 2), referring merely to his anticipated visit to Georgia, while no information was released regarding either the course or the substance of the negotiations.

That issues relating to military-political cooperation and a possible alliance were indeed discussed at the official level is confirmed by the document entitled "Instruction for the Representative of Georgia in Poland," drafted after Tytus Filipowicz's mission and preserved in the National Archives of Georgia (GNA, HCA, f. 1864, inv. 2, file 404, fol. 6). On the basis of its content, it may be assumed that the document was prepared during the second half of 1920, after the conclusion of the Peace Treaty of 7 May 1920 between Georgia and Soviet Russia, but before Poland's *de jure* recognition of Georgia. The document reflects the official foreign-policy position of the Georgian government with regard to relations with Poland. Its contents demonstrate that, by this stage, the Georgian leadership had moved beyond the sole objective of securing international recognition or political support for the country's independence.

Particular attention should be paid to Point 5 of the document, which explicitly refers to the possibility of establishing a union with Poland and other neighboring states for the purpose of safeguarding the independence of the participating countries. At the same time, the instruction requires the Georgian representative to adhere, in relations with Soviet Russia, to the principles established by the Peace Treaty of 7 May 1920 and to refrain from any statements or actions that might be interpreted as violating that agreement or as indicating a change in Georgia's foreign-policy orientation.

¹⁶ The exact date of Tytus Filipowicz's arrest remains unknown. In Radio Telegram No. 395, dated 9 May 1920, sent by the Polish military representative in Constantinople, reference is already made to the "probable arrest" of Filipowicz and three other members of his mission (Materski, 2019, pp. 142-143). On 22 May 1920, Filipowicz's wife, Wanda Filipowicz, formally appealed to state authorities for assistance in securing the release of her husband and the other members of the mission (Materski, 2019, pp. 143-144). On the same day, Professor Emil Godlewski, Extraordinary High Commissioner for Epidemic Control, requested the assistance of the Polish Red Cross in obtaining the release of the mission members (Materski, 2019, p. 145). The researcher Magdalena Włodarczyk notes that Filipowicz and the other members of his mission, who had been invited to Baku for negotiations by the Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fatali Khan Khoyski, were arrested on 24 April 1920 (Włodarczyk, 2016, p. 466). Establishing the precise chronology of Filipowicz's arrest is important not only for the accurate reconstruction of the events but also for analyzing the motives behind the decision of the Bolshevik authorities. The question of whether his arrest had been planned in advance and to what extent it reflected a particular attitude toward Filipowicz's mission remains a subject for further research.

¹⁷ The Polish diplomatic representation that remained in Tbilisi, under the leadership of Wiktor Białobrzewski, sought to maintain the functioning of the Polish Consulate despite the mass evacuation of foreign diplomatic missions. However, this effort amounted to little more than a symbolic political gesture and was no longer capable of influencing the course of events.

The document therefore clearly illustrates the efforts of the Georgian government to pursue a dual-track policy: on the one hand, to comply with the obligations assumed under the peace treaty concluded with Soviet Russia, and, on the other, to develop military-political cooperation with Poland while preserving the prospect of a future alliance. It constitutes one of the rare official sources in which the possibility of a Polish-Georgian military-political alliance is articulated so explicitly. This provides sufficient grounds to assume that the question of a possible military-political alliance with Poland did not end with Tytus Filipowicz's mission but remained an important component of Georgia's foreign-policy vision even after the mission had come to an end.

From this stage onward, the future of Polish-Georgian cooperation depended not only on bilateral negotiations but also on the rapidly changing international environment.

Although the Soviet intervention ultimately put an end to the possibility of establishing a Polish-Georgian military-political alliance, the reasons for its failure were far more profound and lay in the structural weaknesses of the Intermarium concept itself. As noted above, from a geographical perspective, the overland communication route between Warsaw and Tbilisi passed either through Soviet Russia or through the territory of Ukraine, which was itself engulfed in military conflict. The only alternative maritime route depended upon the position of the Entente, particularly Great Britain, making the rapid delivery of military assistance virtually impossible. The international situation was further complicated by the fact that France and Great Britain delayed granting *de jure* recognition to Georgia until the end of January 1921. This delay meant that the international legal legitimacy of the Georgian state consistently lagged behind the rapidly evolving military and political developments.

By 1921, the attempt to implement the broader concept of the Intermarium, of which Georgia constituted an important component, had failed. Lithuania remained in open conflict with Poland, Czechoslovakia preferred alternative coalition arrangements, and the Treaty of Riga, signed on 18 March 1921, finally brought the Polish-Soviet War to an end and, with it, the first historical phase of the Intermarium. The Treaty of Riga established Poland's eastern borders: the western territories of Ukraine and Belarus were incorporated into Poland, while their eastern parts came under Soviet control. Consequently, Warsaw's strategic vision for the Caucasus came to an end. Thus, the Soviet occupation of Georgia, carried out two weeks earlier, became part of a new geopolitical reality that placed the region within the sphere of the Soviet totalitarian regime for decades to come.¹⁸

The view that "the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921) was significantly prolonged by the Polish-Russian War, which ended in Russia's defeat. ... It was precisely when the Polish army was approaching Kyiv that Russia signed the so-called 'peace' treaty with Georgia" (Saralidze, 2008, p. 35) is well founded. This dynamic is further corroborated by another important circumstance. As early as 1 May 1920, immediately following the Sovietization of Azerbaijan, Soviet forces crossed the Georgian border and attempted to advance towards Tbilisi. Their first attempt was repelled through the determined resistance of

¹⁸ Another document preserved in the Georgian National Archives deserves particular attention. It is a confidential report by the commander of the 11th Army, Anatoly Hecker, addressed to the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council, Sergo Ordzhonikidze. The report concerns preparations for an attack on Tbilisi and the normalization of relations with Turkey. The document is dated 18 December 1920.

At a time when the Georgian government still hoped to develop close political, military, and economic cooperation with the Western powers – particularly Poland – including the consolidation of international recognition, the establishment of a military-political alliance, and the expansion of economic relations, the military leadership of Bolshevik Russia had, in practice, already planned a military operation against Georgia. According to Hecker, the successful execution of the operation required the fulfilment of three essential conditions: the concentration of sufficient military forces, the effective organization of logistical and food supplies, and the achievement of an agreement with the Turkish military leadership.

Notably, the report contains no reference to the possibility of either military or political intervention by the major Western powers or by Poland in support of Georgia. This suggests that, by December 1920, the Soviet military leadership no longer anticipated significant opposition from that direction (GNA, HCA, f. 1864, inv. 2, file 258, fols. 1-6).

the cadets (junkers) of the Georgian Military School at Red Bridge, later reinforced by units of the regular army. As some scholars argue, "these military operations, at that stage, were merely reconnaissance missions for Russia, which explains why no large numbers of troops were deployed. The Bolsheviks sought to assess not only Georgia's military preparedness but also Europe's reaction to their adventurist actions" (Saralidze, 2008, p. 35).¹⁹

This interpretation is, to a certain extent, consistent with the official explanations provided by the Soviet authorities themselves, offering insight into the motives that shaped Moscow's policy in May 1920. The People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs explained the Soviet government's recognition of Georgia on the basis of four principal considerations: (1) the necessity of securing an unrestricted outlet to the Black Sea, since Batumi was at that time the only port open to foreign shipping; (2) the need to protect the Bolsheviks operating in Georgia; (3) the desire to demonstrate to the workers of Western Europe the consistency of Soviet foreign policy; and (4) the conviction that Georgia, with its relatively small proletariat, could under no circumstances play a decisive role in determining the fate of the world revolution, which constituted a principal objective of Soviet policy.

Among these four considerations, two were of particular strategic importance: the use of Georgian territory as a transit corridor and support for the Georgian Bolsheviks. Accordingly, the diplomatic activities of Sergei Kirov, appointed Soviet representative to Georgia, were essentially directed towards the implementation of these two objectives (Kazemzadeh, 1951, p. 301).

Nevertheless, these arguments alone do not fully explain why Soviet policy towards Georgia changed precisely in May 1920. In our assessment, these two factors should be supplemented by another important consideration – the necessity of neutralizing Georgia against the backdrop of the Polish-Soviet War. Consequently, the Soviet government's unexpected decision to suspend military operations on 5 May provides grounds for assuming that Moscow was, to some extent, concerned about the prospect of a Polish–Georgian military-political rapprochement and the possibility of confronting a war on two fronts. From this perspective, the Treaty of 7 May 1920 also served to prevent Georgia from becoming involved in the Polish-Soviet War.²⁰

¹⁹ Commenting on the developments in Russo-Georgian relations in early May 1920, the Head of the Georgian Government, Noe Zhordania, wrote: "in general, fear of Russia was widespread. It was believed that if Russia moved against us, we would be powerless to resist. Considerable effort was therefore required to weaken such a sense of panic. It was precisely at this moment that the treaty with Moscow was concluded, bringing the hostilities to an end. It was evident that Moscow pursued two distinct tendencies: one political and based on good-neighborly relations, the other imperialistic. The latter was led by Trotsky, the People's Commissar for Military Affairs, and Stalin, the People's Commissar for Nationalities, whereas the former was represented by Lenin. The first two ordered their troops in Azerbaijan to conquer us, believing that this would be an easy task. However, when Lenin realized that this could not be achieved without war, he sought to avoid a scandal in Europe and decided instead to conclude the treaty" (Zhordania, 1990, pp. 16-17).

²⁰ The Georgian government's instructions issued to its representation in Poland in the autumn of 1920 likewise emphasized the importance of maintaining a friendly attitude toward Russia and of strictly observing the provisions of the Treaty of Moscow. The document states:

"Not a single step, not a single statement – whether in the press or in official notes – should contain anything hostile toward Soviet Russia. We regard it as a state with which our relations are regulated by treaty. ...The various disputes existing between Poland and Russia, whether territorial or of any other nature, lie outside the scope of our relations. We must not become involved in this sphere. Any involvement in these matters is entirely unacceptable" (GNA, HCA, f. 1864, inv. 2, file 404, fol. 6).

The historian L. Toidze argues that, during the negotiations between Soviet Russia and the Democratic Republic of Georgia held in Moscow between 28 April and 6 May 1920, the Georgian side displayed the greater degree of initiative. Following the Sovietization of Azerbaijan, the Georgian leadership had little doubt that Georgia would be the next target. According to Toidze, Lenin's government was no less interested in concluding a peace agreement with Georgia, for several reasons. First, although the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party would not have objected to the Sovietization of Georgia had it been accomplished without difficulty, the Georgian side offered serious resistance. Second, Lenin chose to heed the demand of the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, to agree to Wrangel's amnesty and to suspend military operations in Crimea and the Caucasus. This would allow him to concentrate all available resources on what was regarded as the principal threat – the ongoing war with Poland – particularly since "everything of value" (namely, Baku's oil) was already under Soviet control (Toidze, 1991, pp. 15-16).

This interpretation is further supported by an analysis of the official Soviet press of the period. The sequence of events demonstrates that the military clashes of 1-5 May 1920 were followed, only a few days later, first by the signing of the Georgian-Russian Peace Treaty on 7 May, and subsequently, on 9 May, by the publication in *Pravda* of two articles adopting a distinctly conciliatory tone towards Georgia. In our view, this chronological sequence provides grounds for assuming that these developments constituted elements of a unified tactical strategy pursued by the Soviet leadership.

The significance attached to the peace treaty with Georgia may also be reflected in the publication of two separate articles in the same issue of *Pravda*, on the same page, on 9 May 1920. One article, "Мир с Грузией" (*Peace with Georgia*), authored by A. Mirsky, offers a political assessment of the treaty, while the other, "Договор с Грузией" (*The Treaty with Georgia*), published anonymously, discusses its principal provisions. Moreover, in the newspaper's list of the day's leading topics, the peace treaty concluded with Georgia appears among the three principal news items, further demonstrating that it was regarded as one of the most important developments in Soviet foreign policy (Mirsky, 1920, p. 1; *Dogovor s Gruziei*, 1920, p. 1).

In the article "Мир с Грузией", the position of the Georgian government is assessed in distinctly favourable terms:

"One cannot but note with satisfaction that the temporary successes of the Polish Pans did not in the slightest confuse the representatives of Georgia. In doing so, they undoubtedly demonstrated both their sincerity and their understanding that the fate of the border states is closely bound up with the existence of Soviet Russia. If Soviet Russia ceases to exist, neither an independent Georgia, nor Armenia, nor Lithuania, nor Latvia, nor, finally, an independent Poland will continue to exist." To support this argument, the author refers to the long years of Polish subjugation and the oppression of the Polish people under Tsarist Russia (Mirsky, 1920, p. 1).

In our assessment, this passage acquires particular significance because *Pravda* evaluates the Georgian government's position not in general terms but specifically within the context of the Polish-Soviet War. In effect, the newspaper explains Georgia's "sincerity" precisely by the fact that Poland's military successes did not alter Georgia's political position. This circumstance further reinforces our assumption that the Soviet government's conciliatory policy towards Georgia in May 1920 was closely linked to the situation on the Polish front.

The peace treaty with Georgia, however, was not merely a political and propagandistic instrument; it also produced tangible practical consequences for both parties. One of its principal outcomes for Soviet Russia was the acquisition of access to the Port of Batumi. Following the Sovietization of Azerbaijan, Batumi assumed particular military-strategic and economic importance for Bolshevik Russia. For Georgia, by contrast, the treaty meant, at least temporarily, the suspension of the military threat from the north, thereby allowing the government to concentrate its attention on other pressing issues relating to national security and foreign policy.

Nevertheless, the relatively favorable international circumstances that emerged for Georgia in May 1920 proved to be short-lived. Although Józef Piłsudski achieved military success in the Battle of Warsaw, the Intermarium project failed to attain political realization, while the attempt to establish a Polish-Georgian military alliance, despite its strategic rationale, proved impossible owing to geopolitical, military, and logistical constraints, as well as – beginning in the second half of 1920 – the shift in Poland's own foreign-policy priorities.

Accordingly, the favorable circumstances that emerged for Georgia in 1920 were linked to a specific phase of the Polish-Soviet War, rather than to the existence of long-term international guarantees.

Conclusion. The present study demonstrates that Polish-Georgian relations during 1918-1921 extended well beyond the framework of conventional diplomatic relations between two states. Despite the considerable geographical distance separating them, the two countries attempted to establish a strategic partnership driven by their shared determination to safeguard their national interests and security. Within the geopolitical concept advanced by Józef Piłsudski, Georgia occupied a distinctive functional role²¹ as one of the key actors in the Black Sea region. For the Georgian side, in turn, the Polish initiative was regarded as an alternative mechanism for preserving the country's sovereignty.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the failure to establish a military-political alliance resulted from the combined impact of several interrelated factors:

1. **Military-logistical constraints and geographical isolation** – the considerable distance separating the prospective allies would have made the rapid and effective delivery of military assistance and matériel extremely difficult at a critical moment.

2. **An unfavorable regional environment** – bilateral relations developed against the backdrop of intensive military conflict and territorial reconfiguration in both Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

3. **The shift in Poland's foreign-policy priorities** – the policy aimed at bringing the war with Soviet Russia to a rapid conclusion and securing the international legal recognition of Poland's eastern frontiers, a process ultimately formalized by the Treaty of Riga (1921), effectively brought to an end the prospects for Polish – Georgian military cooperation at that stage.

4. **The indifference of the international system** – the geopolitical priorities of the Great Powers did not coincide with the interests of the smaller states²², revealing a structural weakness of the Versailles system, which became even more evident during the period preceding the Second World War.

The historiography presents two fundamentally different interpretations of the Intermarium project. On the one hand, it is regarded as Józef Piłsudski's far-sighted strategic vision, one that possessed the potential to reshape the political map of Europe. On the other hand, it has been interpreted as an anti-communist and hegemonic vision lacking realistic foundations. On the basis of the analysis of Polish-Georgian relations during 1918-1921, it may be concluded that, given the reciprocal political will and the convergence of interests between the two states, the concept of an alliance was theoretically compatible and politically well founded. Its failure, however, resulted from weak mechanisms of practical implementation and the limited time available for its realization.

²¹ Further evidence of this is provided by the report of Captain of Artillery A. Svanidze, Military Attaché of the Diplomatic Mission of the Republic of Georgia in Ukraine, dated 13 January 1920 and addressed to the Georgian diplomatic representation in Switzerland. Svanidze emphasized the favorable attitude of the Poles toward the Georgians and reported that the Polish government had already appointed Tytus Filipowicz to head a special mission to the South Caucasus. He attached particular importance to the fact that Tbilisi had been designated as the mission's permanent headquarters and that its departure for the Caucasus was already scheduled for the end of January 1920. According to the same report, Svanidze had already met with all members of the mission, to whom he presented an overview of the political and military situation in Georgia at that time (Mamulia, 2011, p. 146).

²² The contradiction between the geopolitical priorities of the Great Powers and the interests of small states was also clearly reflected in relations between Georgia and Great Britain, as confirmed by documents preserved in the Georgian National Archives. For example, in a report dated 25 May 1919, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia requested that the Georgian delegation in Paris take into account the fact that "during these six months, the presence and activities of the British here, in the Caucasus and further south, have not improved the situation either in general or in our country in particular; on the contrary, they have considerably aggravated and worsened it..." (GNA, HCA, f. 1864, inv. 2, file 33, fol. 12). Likewise, on 21 September 1920, the Georgian Committee in Poland informed the Georgian representative in Bern that political circles in England were circulating the perception of Georgia as a pro-German state. According to the Committee, "it is evident that this is yet another piece of propaganda; however, in a great and serious state such as Poland, it gives rise to doubts, and we have therefore provided the necessary clarification to dispel them. This is indeed a provocation..." The Committee also requested that information about Georgia, together with brochures and the latest periodical publications, be sent so that representatives of the Polish Government and the press could obtain an objective and comprehensive understanding of the situation in Georgia at that time (GNA, HCA, f. 1864, inv. 2, file 398, fol. 5).

The originality of the present study lies in the fact that Polish-Georgian relations during 1918-1921 have been analyzed not only from the perspective of bilateral diplomatic relations but also within the context of the South Caucasian dimension of the Intermarium. The combined analysis of Georgian and Polish primary sources has made it possible to reconstruct the attempt to establish Polish-Georgian military-political cooperation and to provide a comprehensive assessment of the factors that hindered its practical implementation.

The geographical position of a state largely determines its role within a collective security system whose geographical scope extends over a vast area. The greater the geographical distance separating a state from its allies, the more vulnerable it becomes when surrounded by hostile powers.

Accordingly, the findings of this study are consistent with the idea of the "tragedy of geography" expressed in Grigol Robakidze's epigraph. Georgia's geopolitical position, which simultaneously determined its strategic importance and increased its vulnerability, became one of the principal factors limiting the realization of Polish-Georgian military-political cooperation during 1918-1921.

The research further demonstrates that, in periods of crisis, the absence of formal legal guarantees reduces a state's capacity for self-defense to a minimum. The experience of 1918-1921 exposed the traditional and ambiguous position of small states within the international system. Georgia represented a strategically valuable buffer state, yet one lacking reliable security guarantees – a reality clearly illustrated by the failure of the Intermarium project.

Furthermore, the results of the study indicate that Polish-Georgian relations during 1918-1921 should not be viewed solely within the framework of bilateral diplomatic cooperation. Analyzed within the context of the South Caucasian dimension of Józef Piłsudski's Intermarium, these developments demonstrate that, alongside diplomatic relations, the attempt to establish Polish-Georgian military-political cooperation formed part of a broader regional security project whose implementation was ultimately impeded by the combined effect of military-logistical, international, and geopolitical factors. This approach makes it possible to evaluate Polish-Georgian relations not only within the framework of bilateral diplomacy but also from the perspective of the concept of collective security in Eastern Europe.

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