

## NEGOTIATIONS OF THE DIRECTORY WITH THE FRENCH COMMAND IN ODESSA IN 1919 IN THE MILITARY-THEORETICAL HERITAGE OF GENERAL OLEXANDER GREKOV

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In the article author analyzes a part of general Grekov's memoir heritage, which covers the process of negotiations between the Entente and the Ukrainian Directory in 1919, compares the official version of these events with the materials of the memoirs of general. The dynamics of the negotiation process in the context of the changing international situation were also traced, the place and role in the negotiations of the general were determined. The main reasons for the failure of the Ukrainian delegations are outlined and the thematic memoir material is summarized in terms of its informative value for historical science.

**Key words:** memoirs, Directory, Entente, negotiations.

## ПЕРЕГОВОРИ ДИРЕКТОРІЇ З ФРАНЦУЗЬКИМ КОМАНДУВАННЯМ В ОДЕСІ У 1919 р. У ВІЙСЬКОВО-ТЕОРЕТИЧНІЙ СПАДЩИНІ ГЕНЕРАЛА О. П. ГРЕКОВА

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У статті проаналізовано частину мемуарної спадщини генерала Грекова О. П., яка висвітлює процес переговорів Антанти та української Директорії у 1919 році, порівнює офіційну версію цих подій із матеріалами спогадів військовика. Вперше подано версію переговорного процесу між Директорією та французьким командуванням в Одесі очима сучасника – міністра військових справ УНР, який брав безпосередню участь у цих переговорах, надано характеристику кількох діячів Директорії крізь призму особистих симпатій та антипатій генерала Грекова, що дало можливість краще зрозуміти політичну кон'юнктуру того часу та особливості відносин всередині цього керівного державного органу. На основі мемуарів також простежено динаміку переговорного процесу у контексті зміни міжнародного становища, визначено місце та роль у переговорах генерала. Окреслено основні причини невдачі українських делегацій та підсумовано тематичний мемуарний матеріал з погляду його інформативної цінності для історичної науки.

Загалом, військово-теоретична спадщина Олександра Грекова стосовно досліджуваного питання є дуже структурованою, обґрунтованою фактологічно. Олександр Петрович подає матеріали в хронологічному порядку, здійснює спроби періодизувати революційні події та державотворчий процес в Україні. Водночас державні інституції, провідні політичні діячі представлені через призму власного, часто надто суб'єктивного бачення, а постать С. Пеглурі отримує негативні оцінки. Так державні позиції О. П. Грекова та його блискуча військово-правова освіта визначали характер його спогадів.

**Ключові слова:** спогади, Директорія, Антанта, переговори.

**Introduction.** During the last years, Ukrainian society all more often calls to its historical heritage. The special curiosity is presented by the military historical

events of a hundred years ago, the urgency of which has not subsided until now, especially in the face of Russia's military aggression in the east of the state. And now,

along with hostilities, the state is conducting diplomatic work to defeat the enemy, but even now, not all means are unequivocal and guarantee a positive result.

In the history of Ukraine of the twentieth century events of 1917–1921 occupy one of the central places, as exactly then there was quality transformation of nationally-political consciousness of wide public of people, that and did in future possible construction of the own state.

The complex, multidimensional and unpredictable course of revolutionary events, the defeat of a number of state-building projects, the emigrant life, and the desire to reflect on the recent past have all been a powerful motivation for the memoirs of many of the leading figures of the time. The vast majority of them left memories, diaries, epistolaries. Such figures aimed to ground the positions, to evaluate other political forces, and to record historically the events of which they themselves were involved. [Malyk, 1995:83]

One of such prominent military and political figures in the early twentieth century in Ukraine was the UNR Minister of Military Affairs, general Olexander Grekov. Exactly he played one of important roles in of that time political life of – was authorized to form new troops to serve in the Directory and, eventually, negotiated with the French command in Odessa in 1919 as part of the Ukrainian delegation. Olexander Petrovych left his not popular in Ukraine “Memories”, which he wrote at different times of his emigrant life. One of fragments of these remembrances, titled “Vesna 1918 v Ukraini”, was published in 1964 in the 11th issue of magazine “Za derzhavnist”, published in Toronto. [Grekiv, 1964] Other parts of the memoirs were published in Russian in 1965–1966 in the white-emigrant edition of the magazine “Vestnik pervopohodnika”, published in Los Angeles. These are the sections “Na Ukraine v 1917” (No. 44), “Perogovory ukrainskoy Direktoriyi s frantsyzkin komandovaniyem v Odessa v 1919” (No. 45–48), “Petliurovshchina” (No. 51–52), “Vosem’ let ssylki v Sovetskom Soyuze” (No. 59–60) [Grekov, 1965].

**Analysis of recent research.** The Franch-Ukrainian negotiations problemacy is partly reflected in Ukrainian historiography. The total number of papers on this topic is sufficient, but they do not claim to be exhaustive in view of the multifaceted and multifaceted nature of this topic. Since the publication of the 7-volume work by M. Stakhiv in Ukrainian diaspora in the 1960s, “Ukraine in the Age of the UNR Directory”, whose scientific level does not correspond to the current state of historical science, virtually no single research specifically dedicated to this issue has been practically created. [Stakhiv, 1962] We have only the memoirs of deputy of foreign affairs of Directory Margolin A. and the memoir of general Grekov – direct participants in this

process [Grekov, 1965], [Marholyn, 1977]. Some factual material was left in his memoirs by the famous figure, government official and diplomat O. Lototsky [Lototskyi, 1932]. The author provides interesting information about the activities of UNR governments, the struggle, the beginnings of Ukrainian diplomacy and more. The documents published in the appendix include notes, memoranda, correspondence with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France, England and representatives of the Entente. Aspects dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the beginning of national liberation competitions published a number of popular science articles on educational resources on the Internet [Horodnia, 2017; Datskiv, 2010; Achkinazi, 2005; Popenko, 2014].

**Research results.** Coming to power, the Directory restored the laws of the UNR and appointed its first government, headed by B. Chekhivsky. Shortly afterwards, disputes over the form of statehood of Ukraine, the ways of its development, and the personal rivalry between V. Vynnychenko and S. Petliura intensified inside the Directory. In his memoirs, general Grekov wrote: “There has already been a fierce struggle between the parties for seats in the cabinet. Behind the scenes there was a secret fight between Vynnychenko and Petliura; Petliura tried his best to advertise himself (not the Directory) in the peasant-rebel units, and Vynnychenko put forward his famous project on the lack of a need for troops for a modern leading democratic republic. The purpose of the project was to eliminate the possible Petliura initiative in the embryo” (here and further translation of author) [Grekov, 1965:17].

Meanwhile, the bolsheviks launched a civil war in the territory of the former Russian Empire at the end of 1918 and made Central and Eastern Europe an area of extreme military tension that could spread to Western Europe. The potential danger has forced the Entente countries to take precautionary measures to stabilize the situation, especially in the territory of the Russian Empire. At the end of November of 1918p., there was the published declaration that proclaimed, that the countries of the Entente “assert the inflexible will” to keep order on South of Russia and that this “inflexible will in the nearest time will be supported by the armed force in such amount, as that is required by circumstances” in Odesa press on behalf of countries of the Entente [Kosyk, 1981:8].

It should be noted that December 23, 1917. The United Kingdom and France divided the territory of the Russian Empire into spheres of influence (the Anglo-French treaty on the division of spheres of influence in Eastern Europe) [Kettle, 1981:25]. Ukraine has fallen into France’s area of responsibility. In September 1918, French Prime Minister Jean Clemento approved a plan to establish military control of the northern Black Sea ports. As early as November 16 (according to some sources,

November 23, 1919), the Entente troops passed the Dardanelles and went to all ports from Odessa to Novorossiysk [Symonenko, 1962:43]. Two French divisions, as well as English, Greek and Romanian and Polish units with a total population of 60,000 landed here in early 1919. [Kosyk, 1981:33] They supported the White Guards in Ukraine, who advocated the restoration of “a unified and indivisible Russia” [Symonenko, 1987:90]. December 27, 1918 UNR Directory published a note “To the democracies of all nations of the world and the democracies of the Entente States”, which expressed a strong protest against the intervention of the Entente in the internal affairs of Ukraine [Korolivskii, 1967:93].

In general, the French military representatives tried to understand the complex conglomerate of local political groups, not to allow a single reinforcement of any of them [Derzhaliuk, 1998:52]. But they did not conceal their antibolshevism prejudice and commitment to the idea of preserving a united Russia, which could not negatively affect the dialogue with the Directory.

In early 1919, the Directory sent a delegation to Odesa, where the headquarters of the French military mission was located to conduct about joint actions. The main task of general Grekov in this delegation was: “to find out exactly how many French troops in Odessa, what plan of action they have, what they have the latest technical equipments, and whether they have” blinders who were blinded by the whole German forces at once fronts and dismantled them. “Giving instructions to the general about the negotiations, Petliura underlined that trusting frenchmen is impossible, because they support Denikin, but “we must try to deceive them” and use this technique for Ukraine [Grekov, 1965:15].

These events coincide in time with the arrival of the commander of the French troops, general Philippe Henry d’Anselm, and the chief of staff of Colonel Henry Freidenberg, in Odessa. Colonel G. Freidenberg stunned the figures of “White Russia” and the Volunteer Army by stating that “Allied command is interested in all antibolshevik forces, including Ukrainian forces, in the fight against the bolsheviks” [Kosyk, 1981:97]. It meant that a white army though had to get complete support of the Entente, however will be not the only recipient of the French aid. Developing these ideas, the French command offered Directory on negotiations to attain the mutual understanding with guidance of the Voluntary army. According to the French opinion, the subject of the negotiations should be the dividing of the South of Russia into Ukrainian and Russian zones, in which the command should perform coordination functions [Kosyk, 1981:115].

But, most importantly, the French representatives insisted on personal changes in the leadership of the UNR. In his memoirs, general Grekov later wrote about

this requirement: “...Colonel Freidenberg marked that the French command does not trust the figure of the director of the Directory Vynnychenko, because he is a convinced germanophile and a “Bolshevik”, and while this man stands at the head of the Ukrainian authorities, it is difficult to count on the possibility any agreements and joint actions” [Grekov, 1965:17]. Requirements about retirement in the top management of Directory concerned not only V. Vynnychenko, but also S. Petliura and A. Chekhivskyi: “... with Petliura, as well as with the Directory under Vynnychenko, no serious cooperatives first the French can not be” [Grekov, 1965:19]. The fact that S. Petliura, Vynnychenko and A. Chekhivskyi was considered the convinced socialists. This plan of the French did not find understanding either in the UNR Directory or in the higher command of the Volunteer Army.

During the negotiations, the Ukrainian delegation also made a number of demands and proposals, among which the most important was to admit the independence of Ukraine. However the measures of diplomacy of Ukraine could change position of allies in relation to the questions of national self-determination. [Mahochii, 2012:425] Confirmation of this is the words of Colonel G. Freidenberg: “Our task is to fight against bolshevism. The case of Ukraine’s independence is resolved in Paris” [Kosyk, 1981:131]. However the mutual interest of the parties forced to seek compromises.

In general, the negative attitude of the Ukrainian political forces to the French proposals did not hinder the continuation of the negotiations. A kind of catalyst for the negotiation process was the rapid advance of bolshevik troops into Ukraine. Having consulted with political parties, the Directory decided to continue negotiations: “Having lost all Left Bank Ukraine in the first month of its reign, the Directory decided to seek the assistance of the French and to regain the lost territories” [Grekov, 1965:20]. With the consent of the French command, Colonel Freudberg left for Birzula station to negotiate with a special mission, which consisted of Ostapenko, Bachynsky and Mazepa. Olexander Petrovych was added to this group as a military expert without the right of a mission member and Baron Steingel as a translator. On the night of February 4 to February 5, the negotiative group of such members left a special train to Birzula. The next stage of the negotiations took place at the Birzula station near Odessa and was quite difficult for the Ukrainian side [Grekov, 1965:21].

Ukrainians put forward the following conditions: immediate recognition by the Entente states of Ukraine’s independence on its ethnic borders; non-interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine; ensuring free implementation of social reforms; participation of the Ukrainian delegation in the Paris Peace Conference;

recognition of the autonomy of the Ukrainian army with the right of representation in the Supreme Allied Command and the non-admission of Russian officers to the Ukrainian army [Malyk, 1995:85].

Another interesting question is why the French command was so hostile to V. Vynnychenko's figure? We have the testimony of the general that V. Vynnychenko tried to bribe to reach the sympathy of the French side in order to somehow retain his authority in the state [Grekov, 1965:19]. Vynnychenko, apparently, himself had little hope for the success of Ostapenko's mission, for in parallel he organized another – Mazurenko's mission – for the bolsheviks with a proposal in case of their recognition of the Directory of joint actions with them (and a number of territorial concessions) against the French. Bolsheviki, however, did not stop their combat operations for a minute. As a result, this circumstance and the Birzul negotiations led to Vynnychenko's withdrawal from the Directory.

The consultations between the two sides also ended with a secret declaration by the Directory addressed to the French command on 17 February [Lozovyi, 2007:223]. Thus, there was a convergence of positions between the two parties, which, by all indications, was doomed to success. This was again confirmed by the draft contract sent in March by the d'Anselm Directory [Kosyk, 1981:183].

The project was a significant achievement for both parties. He gave the Ukrainian government assistance in building a state and the French command to find another foothold for the Entente in eastern Europe to further combat the bolsheviks [Marholyn, 1977:221]. Despite the dominance of the pro-Russian sentiment, the French command was able to rise above narrow party interests and embark on a confrontation with the leadership of the Volunteer Army on issues of the Ukrainian-French Union. It is known that because of "Ukrainian policy", the French command has completely lost touch with the Volunteer Army.

However, at the end of March, G. Freidenberg informed A. Margolin that he had been instructed from Paris not to sign an agreement with the Directory and, accordingly, terminated the negotiations [Marholyn, 1977:227]. Suddenly, negotiations were concluded, which should be effective for both Ukraine and the Entente. The Entente, halfway to success, refused to engage in further dialogue.

UNR leaders made sure in the most important – that France will not be able to provide immediate assistance to Ukraine, even if the agreement were signed. This conclusion came after two months of negotiations with the French, even general O. Grekov. Regardless of the diplomatic successes in the negotiations of the Entente, in his opinion, even if he could, he could not provide any real assistance to the Directory; the landing

in Odessa was so small that it could not hold even Odessa itself; the French also did not have weapons and clothing brought to Ukraine; military units in Romania are "more jabber" [Grekov, 1965:20].

At the beginning of spring 1919, the Entente could no longer wage large-scale military operations in Ukraine. In March, under pressure from parts of the Red Army, her troops left Kherson and Mykolaiv, and in early April – Odessa [Petriv, 2002:547]. The overwhelming majority of the Entente landing force was redeployed to Romania [Smolii, 2003:147]. The local nature of the deployment of the Entente troops, their relative small size, their passive form of military behavior alone, do not give rise to any mention of the Entente's military intervention in Ukraine, as depicted by soviet historiography.

At the conclusion of his vision of the situation and in giving reasons for the failure in the negotiations by Directory leaderships, the general noted: "they lived in a hotel, spent a lot of time at lunch and dinner, and sat there, discussing endlessly, discussing party programs, platforms and differences between them" [Grekov, 1965:15]. Petliura spat political intrigues, hopelessly nurturing such a precious time, Vynnychenko was always afraid of the growing popularity of the Chief Ataman of the UNR troops [Grekov, 1965:16].

**Conclusions.** An analysis of the memories of the general's investigations makes it possible to understand how important it was for him to deal with independent Ukraine. Such a vision of the current political and military situation in Ukraine was determined by the previous experience of the his service in Ukrainian armies. First, a supporter of the tsarist regime, and later, after the October Revolution of 1917 – convinced Ukrainian noun, Grekov believed that the bolshevik's evil should be stopped as soon as possible, so he hoped to get help from the French side. Post factum, can summarize, such hopes were vain and the row of reasons induced the allied troops to abandon the south of Ukraine in short enough.

Olexander Petrovych took pains to acquaint the Ukrainian reader with ideas that were decisive in the political life of Ukraine at that time, and further, during the negotiations themselves, to inform the world about the Ukrainian issue. It is necessary to look more deeply into the memoir heritage of general, because, unlike other political figures of the early twentieth century, he viewed the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921 strategically, from the standpoint of the dynamics and perspective of a professional soldier, not just a political figure.

Of course, the memories of the general, like everyone else, should be treated with caution, consideration and impartiality, since these materials are quite subjective to the events described. His point of view, individual perception and a certain interest cannot but reflect on the coverage of the events and phenomena being analyzed.

Therefore, these materials need a more critical approach when using the information they have available.

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