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## Jusuf-bek Umaszew and the importance of the Caucasus for Polish intelligence services during World War II in view of documents kept in Polish archives in London<sup>1</sup>

**Zarys treści:** W artykule zaprezentowano wojenne losy Jusuf-bek Umaszewa. Do 1939 r. był on oficerem kontraktowym w Wojsku Polskim, zaś w okresie II wojny światowej, przebywając w Turcji, został zwerbowany przez polski wywiad. Drugim poruszonym w tekście wątkiem jest znaczenie Kaukazu dla polskich służb specjalnych. Artykuł oparto na materiałach archiwalnych przechowywanych w polskich archiwach w Londynie.

**Content outline:** The article outlines the wartime fate of Jusuf-bek Umaszew. A contract officer in the Polish Army until 1939, during World War II he resided in Turkey, where he was recruited by Polish intelligence. The article's second theme concerns the importance of the Caucasus for the Polish secret service. The article is based on archival materials kept within Polish archives in London.

**Słowa kluczowe:** II wojna światowa, Turcja, polski wywiad, Kaukaz, Jusuf-bek Umaszew

**Keywords:** World War II, Turkey, Polish intelligence, Caucasus, Umaszew

The issue of Caucasian soldiers serving in the Polish armed forces has been quite well described in terms of the pre-war period and the Campaign of September 1939. Only a few works concern the period after 1939, although some wartime biographies are very well described. London is an important place for conducting research on the involvement of Caucasian people in the Polish armed forces during World War II. There are three Polish archives: the archive in the Gen. Sikorski Institute and Museum, the archive in the Józef Piłsudski Institute, and the archive of the Polish Underground Movement Study Trust, which contains

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numerous documents on the government-in-exile and military issues, including documents concerning Jusuf-bek Umaszew (Eng. Jusuf-bek Umashev). Little is known about his background. Jusuf-bek Umaszew was probably born in Dagestan, although sometimes it is said that he was an Azerbaijani or a Georgian. Jusuf-bek Umaszew was probably a Kumyk, although the documents do not confirm it. Such a conclusion can be drawn because in Dagestan, or more broadly speaking in the Caucasus, the surname “Umaszew” is related to Umashaul (Rus. Умашаул), a town in the Khasavyurtovsky District. It cannot be ruled out that Jusuf-bek Umaszew could have acquired Azerbaijani citizenship in the years 1918–1920, but this information is uncertain.

Before World War II, Jusuf-bek Umaszew served in the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment stationed in Warsaw.<sup>2</sup> As a contract officer in the rank of captain, he was on active duty in the Polish Army until the final days of the September Campaign in 1939. Jusuf-bek Umaszew arrived in Turkey in March 1940 using a Turkish passport. One of the documents in the archive of the Polish Underground Movement Study Trust highlights that he had received the passport in Poland as an Azerbaijani (perhaps he received the passport as a Kumyk or he had already had a Azerbaijan Democratic Republic passport). Upon his arrival in Istanbul, Jusuf-bek Umaszew maintained contact with the Polish consulate, doing various favours for its employees.<sup>3</sup> In November 1940, Polish intelligence became interested in Jusuf-bek Umaszew: it examined his behaviour and studied his views and attitude to Poland. After several months of such observations, it cleared him of suspicion because he behaved modestly, always expressed a strong liking and loyalty to Polish issues, sought contact with Poles, was discrete and calm, and could adjust his life needs to the money he had. In January and February, intelligence agents conducted interviews with Jusuf-bek Umaszew, examining the extent of his usefulness, while at the same time he was given to understand that they wanted to establish cooperation.<sup>4</sup>

Verification went well. Additionally, Bolesław Piłeczki,<sup>5</sup> a member of the Second Department<sup>6</sup> in Turkey, gave him a positive reference letter. Taking into account his involvement in the September Campaign of 1939 and his behaviour in Poland during occupation, the intelligence agency concluded that Jusuf-bek Umaszew might be used for their tasks.<sup>7</sup> On April 1, 1941, he was enlisted in the Polish

<sup>2</sup> M. Ceglarek, “Muzułmańskie duszpasterstwo wojskowe w II Rzeczypospolitej. Zarys historyczny Pułku Ułanów Tatarskich,” *Piotrkowskie Zeszyty Historyczne*, 14, 2013, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> Polish Underground Movement Study Trust (hereinafter: “PUMST”), TP, Folder 2/52.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> From 1920, Bolesław Piłeczki served in the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, i.e. the same regiment in which Jusuf-bek Umaszew served. In the 1930s, Bolesław Piłeczki started intelligence work. In 1940, he became a representative of the Second Department of the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief in the “Bey” Foreign Communication Base in Istanbul.

<sup>6</sup> The Second Department of the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief was responsible for intelligence and counter-intelligence.

<sup>7</sup> PUMST, TP, Folder 2/52.

Army. He was assigned to the Fifth Department<sup>8</sup> and appeared in the records of the Main Headquarters of the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>9</sup> Jusuf-bek Umaszew was sworn in on April 2<sup>10</sup> by Lt Col Stanisław Sulma<sup>11</sup> from the “Bey” base.<sup>12</sup> He chose “Junus” and last name “Jusuf Umar” as his operational alias. In the archive, the text of the oath is preserved; it says, “*Before the almighty God, I put my hands on this holy Koran and swear that I will faithfully and steadfastly guard the interests of the Republic of Poland and defend its independence with all my might until I give my life for it. I will fully obey the orders given by the organization and military men, and I will indomitably keep secrets, whatever may happen to me.*”<sup>13</sup> The Commander-in-Chief gave the order to accept Jusuf-bek Umaszew to the army on April 26.<sup>14</sup> He was employed in the rank of captain.<sup>15</sup>

The involvement of Jusuf-bek Umaszew in military action again could be related to the plans concerning the Caucasus that the Polish intelligence agency made in 1941, mostly due to the establishment of a transfer route across this region to Poland, which after September 1939 was occupied by the Soviet Union (mainly to Lviv and Białystok).

In the initial wartime period, the use of the Caucasus for communication with Poland was not considered justified. This is proven by Stanisław Sulma’s report, which he sent to his superiors on 22 August 1940. He informed them that as far as he knew there could be only three routes from Turkey to Poland: across Constanța and Romania; across Bulgaria; and across Belgrade and Hungary. He ruled out the direction to Odessa, because of very strict port control, and to the Caucasus. He considered the latter route; however, due to the distance and costs he thought that it should be completely ruled out because it would not be beneficial in any way.<sup>16</sup>

Stanisław Sulma’s report of 17 March 1941 proves that the Polish intelligence agency changed its view on the establishment of a transfer route across the Caucasus. The report concerned mainly Jusuf-bek Umaszew, who was described as the chief of a reserve unit in case the “Bey” base was evacuated. Stanisław Sulma wrote that he was a Georgian who had not signed a declaration for Germany after the outbreak of war because of his clearly pro-Polish leaning. The document says that Jusuf-bek Umaszew had a Polish fiancée and, in the future, he wanted to

<sup>8</sup> The Fifth Department of the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief was responsible for communication.

<sup>9</sup> PUMST, TP, Folder 2/52.

<sup>10</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 335, Depesze Bazy „Bey” nr 1-303.

<sup>11</sup> In these archival documents, Stanisław Sulma had the alias “Selim.”

<sup>12</sup> The “Bey” base in Istanbul was a secret intelligence and communication unit of the Polish armed forces.

<sup>13</sup> PUMST, TP, Folder 2/52.

<sup>14</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Wodza Naczelnego, call no. A.513, Stambuł. Sprawy organizacyjne i operacyjne bazy.

<sup>15</sup> PUMST, TP, Folder 2/52.

<sup>16</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 334, Depesze Bazy „Bey.”

permanently settle in Poland. Stanisław Sulma reported that he had been at the Caucasian border since 14 February because preparations for the route across the Caucasus had begun. Furthermore, he wrote that Jusuf-bek Umaszew had a Turkish passport, spoke Turkish and Russian, and had been in Turkey since March 1940.<sup>17</sup>

A report of 22 April 1941 from Stanisław Sulma to Gen. Józef Smoleński also concerns Jusuf-bek Umaszew<sup>18</sup> and the development of transfer routes across the Caucasus. Stanisław Sulma informed his superior that he had been thinking about the development of routes across the Caucasus for a long time. In September and December 1940, Stanisław Sulma turned to Capt. Zaleski<sup>19</sup> about this matter and studied the options of the Caucasian direction with the possible support of Georgian organizations. However, he always received replies that it was impossible. According to Stanisław Sulma, when the situation was getting more and more uncertain in March 1941 (he probably means the difficulties in contacting Poland across the territory of Hungary and Romania), the Caucasian route became increasingly important. Thus, he started working on his own route. For this purpose, he found Jusuf-bek Umaszew, who was born near Kars (this is questionable information since Jusuf-bek Umaszew was probably born in Dagestan; it is also possible that for Stanisław Sulma, the Caucasus was “near Kars”).<sup>20</sup>

Polish intelligence sent Jusuf-bek Umaszew to the Turkish-Caucasian border on 14 February 1941 to perform reconnaissance of the area and examine the possibility of establishing a Caucasian route to eastern Małopolska.<sup>21</sup> This task was based on the need to establish communication with the part of Poland that was occupied by Russia, in order to give people financial support.<sup>22</sup> Jusuf-bek Umaszew was the first to be placed in a transfer agency that was to be established at the Turkish-Caucasian border, where he went to undertake reconnaissance.<sup>23</sup> On March 17, he returned to Istanbul with the following observations: 1) it was very difficult for foreign people to move in the border area, even those who had Turkish documents<sup>24</sup>; 2) it was possible to find local people for this task, but they were mainly smugglers (thus they were unreliable and of little value). The price was calculated as follows (“uncertain information” was added by hand): a resident located in Trabzon requested 100 Turkish pounds<sup>25</sup>; 100 Turkish pounds for a man

<sup>17</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 335, Depesze Bazy „Bey” nr 1-303.

<sup>18</sup> In the document, Józef Smoleński has the alias “Łukasz.” In early 1939, he was appointed chief of the Second Department. After organizational changes in the command of the Polish forces, in the mid-1940s he became the chief of the Sixth Department of the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief.

<sup>19</sup> In this case, it probably concerns Wiktor Zaleski, an employee of the Polish consulate in Istanbul.

<sup>20</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call no. A.91, Ruch kurierów.

<sup>21</sup> Małopolska (Lesser Poland) is a historical region of Poland.

<sup>22</sup> PUMST, TP, Folder 2/52.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> In the “Bey” base documents, they were called “upholsterers.”

<sup>25</sup> From 1939 to 1946 a strict currency rationing and a system of many rates was in force in Tur-

going, for example, to Batumi; the same amount for a man who would go from Batumi to Tbilisi. They would have to obtain documents on their own. Stanisław Sulma reported to his superiors that the villages that would be an entrance on the Turkish side were 15–20 km away from Trabzon towards Batumi.<sup>26</sup> Hiding or camouflaging a Polish intelligence agent in the borderland area would be impossible because of the vigilance of the Turkish security apparatus.<sup>27</sup> Stanisław Sulma pointed out that the involvement of local people would be risky because for them it would be simply a source of income and this was not enough for this kind of task. At the end of the report he concluded that: a) support of the Turks was needed for the establishment of a Polish route and would be based on the same rules the Poles had with the Romanians<sup>28</sup>; b) transfers would have to be conducted by people from the Polish intelligence agency who would only use help from local guides; c) the agency on the other side of the border (in the Caucasus) would have to be staffed by the Polish intelligence agency. Stanisław Sulma also stressed that Turkey's permission was the key element for establishing a route across the Caucasus, otherwise the whole project would be impossible.<sup>29</sup>

The traces of Jusuf-bek Umaszew's stay in the Caucasus at the beginning of 1941 can probably be found in the financial records of the "Bey" base. In these documents, a person called the "Caucasian man" appears. In fact, there is no specific information about this person; however, if we assume that Jusuf-bek Umaszew was at the Turkish-Caucasian border at the same time, it can be assumed that the "Caucasian man" was in fact him. From the balance sheet for the month of January we learn that a certain "Caucasian man" received 198 Turkish pounds for the establishment of a transfer route across the territory of Russia.<sup>30</sup> In the balance sheet for February, there is a note: the "[e]stablishment of a messenger route across the country of con men – Ałpuła,<sup>31</sup> covering travel and living costs for 5 days, 10–14 February – 20 Turkish pounds." In the March balance sheet, it appears that the "Caucasian man" received 211 Turkish pounds for the "[e]stablishment of a route, travel expenses, and salary for February 1941." In the balance sheet for April, the "Caucasian man" appeared for the last time. In that month, he received 80 Turkish pounds of remuneration for the month of March.<sup>32</sup>

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key. By the end of the 1930s the rate of Turkish pound was 1.25 pound for a dollar, while in 1946 2.8 pounds were paid for a dollar. See: W. Morawski, *Zarys powszechnej historii pieniądza i bankowości*, Warszawa, 2002, p. 376.

<sup>26</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call no. A.91, Ruch kurierów.

<sup>27</sup> PUMST, TP, Folder 2/52.

<sup>28</sup> The term "tradesmen" was used in the document. In the documents of the "Bey" base, this term most likely concerned Romanians.

<sup>29</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, No. A.91, Ruch kurierów.

<sup>30</sup> In the documents of the "Bey" base, the Russians have the alias "con men" and Russia is "the country of con men."

<sup>31</sup> It has not been clarified what or who was hidden under the name "Ałpuła."

<sup>32</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 803, Sprawozdania i zestawienia rachunkowo-kasowe Bazy „Bey.”

Another point supporting the linking of the “Caucasian man” with Jusuf-bek Umaszew is the fact that he does not appear in the subsequent financial balance sheets. Most probably, this is related to the fact that on April 1, 1941, Jusuf-bek Umaszew joined the Polish armed forces again and assumed the alias “Junus,” under which he began to appear in the financial documents of the “Bey” base. Therefore, his visit to the Turkish-Caucasian border should be interpreted as a kind of rehearsal before the army accepted him. The superiors were apparently content with Jusuf-bek Umaszew’s mission since he was sworn in and appointed chief of the “Alf” reserve agency, which would take on the duties of the “Bey” base if it had to be evacuated from Istanbul.

The operational instructions of the “Alf” agency are preserved in the archive of the Polish Underground Movement Study Trust. The fact that there are two versions of these instructions poses a problem. In one of them, some points are crossed out. It is unknown who or why made these changes. It is likely that the instruction bearing no crossings-out is a mere draft, or that the changes had been already made when the agency was formed. The latter option seems to be more likely. Such a conclusion can be made after an analysis of the financial documents. In one of the instructions, 235 Turkish pounds were entered in the column “salary for the chief of the ‘Alf’ agency” and this amount was crossed out, while 316 pounds were added. In the financial reports of the “Bey” base, there is a note that Jusuf-bek Umaszew initially earned exactly 235 Turkish pounds, and his salary then increased to 316 pounds. This article is based on the document in which the crossings-out were not made, so most likely on the instructions that were applicable in the initial period of the agency’s operations.

The instructions of the “Alf” agency, according to a “Bey” base report drawn up on 10 September for the period of June 1 – September 15, 1941, were sent to the command unit of the Polish Armed Forces in London by Alfred Krajewski.<sup>33</sup> In the point concerning evacuation instructions for the “Bey” base, it was explained that the substitute secret agency, “Alf,” had already been fully staffed. It consisted of three people: an operating officer, a radio operator, and a replacement staff person. It was pointed out that these were local people legally staying in Turkey and that the instructions for the “Alf” agency were annexed to the aforementioned report.

The instructions said that the “Alf” military agency was established in Istanbul as part of the “Bey” base and under the its military authority. The “Alf” agency was to begin its full operations only when the “Bey” base had been evacuated. The staff consisted of three people: the chief, with the alias Junus (i.e. Jusuf-bek Umaszew) and two support staff, one with the alias “Emir” and the other with the

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<sup>33</sup> In the documents of the “Bey” base, Alfred Krajewski appears under the alias “Polesiński.” After the September Campaign in 1939, he got into Hungary, where in July 1940 he became the commanding officer of “Romek” intelligence base. At the end of that year, he arrived in Turkey and he worked for the intelligence forces there.

alias “Bronisława.” If necessary, the chief of the agency could select external assistants for certain tasks. It was pointed out that it would be best if they were Poles with Turkish citizenship, but their selection should be done secretly and only some of the work should be revealed to them. The main task of the “Alf” agency was to maintain a constant and uninterrupted communication with the “Bey” base and with the “Muł” agency in Cairo after evacuating the “Bey” base; then, the “Alf” agency would be subjected to the order of the “Muł” agency. In addition, the role of the “Alf” agency was to maintain contact with the “Romek” base in Budapest and “Bolek II” base in Bucharest. In one of the instructions, the surname Michajłowicz “Drawa” was added in pen.<sup>34</sup> The instruction said that if bases in Sofia or Belgrade were established, “Alf” should also maintain contact with them.

The “Alf” agency was ordered to maintain contact through radio and post, mostly to facilitate their travel from Turkey to the “Romek” base and to the “Bolek II” base, alternatively to the “Bey” base and the “Muł” agency. It was recommended that in some cases the “Alf” agency should arrange their own couriers to the “Bey” base, in particular if some of collected information was to be handed over. The “Alf” agency was also ordered to use the official postal service to send letters or telegrams, and to hand over messages or diplomatic post of some of the missions of foreign countries upon the arrival of couriers and trusted people (it was not specified which ones).

The instruction said that another task of the “Alf” agency was to collect military messages from Turkey and the surrounding countries and send them to the “Bey” base and the “Muł” agency. The “Alf” agency was to pay them every time they provided a service and to avoid continuous payments. The justification for this was that informants often gave false and incorrect information to prove that they constantly had new messages.

The radio equipment at the disposal of the “Alf” agency had a range of 600 km. It was placed in a specially rented room where the radio operator lived. The instruction stressed that any contact with the radio station must be indirect (for example, through trusted shop workers or a special mailbox). Direct contact with the radio operator was only allowed in emergency cases and only outside the facility of the radio station. Additionally, it was forbidden to acquaint the radio operator with the coding method. The document stressed that a night radio station was preferable in the “Alf” agency (between 10PM and 8AM) because private radio sets, which could receive transmitted messages, usually did not work at that time. An exception in this matter was the correspondence with the “Romek” base, where local underground regulations did not allow it to operate at night.

The instruction explained that the “Alf” agency was a liaison in the transfer of couriers by connecting the stations close to Poland with more remote units

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<sup>34</sup> In this case, it concerns Dragoljub Mihailović, the chief of the Yugoslav Second Army, i.e. the partisans subordinated to the government-in-exile of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

(i.e. the “Bey” base and the “Muł” agency) that had to contact the headquarters in London directly. In the case of couriers travelling legally (i.e. those with documents and required visas), the “Alf” agency was to help in a limited way, while people travelling illegally were to be provided with care and help in obtaining the required documents. Temporary shelters were to be established for both groups of couriers among Polish or French people, while the Turks were to be avoided as they were considered unreliable.

The correspondence specified that it was recommended that a handling company should be designated. It would be best, the instructions said, if it were a trading company or a person who would deal with a lot of correspondence and allow for their address to be used. If possible, text should be sent as photographs. It was pointed out in the instructions that money and more important documents should be sent by diplomatic mail.

As for finances, the instruction specified that a month’s salary for the chief of the agency was 235 Turkish pounds (in one of the documents, this amount was crossed out and replaced with 316 pounds): 150 pounds for a radio operator and 115 pounds for a replacement staff person (no document confirms that this position in the “Alf” agency was taken). 50 pounds were allocated for the monthly rent of the radio operator and 30 pounds for the couriers. Administrative expenditure was 20 pounds. The amounts listed above were converted at a rate of 2.50 Turkish pounds to one American dollar, so the cost of the agency’s operations was 240 dollars per month.

The subsequent financial items in the operation of the “Alf” agency were for business trips and allowances for the staff at the amount of 200 dollars. Financial reserves for half a year for the couriers, their equipment, documents, travel costs, costs of obtaining information and extra expenses for the development of routes were determined at the amount of 500 dollars. Two dollars per day were allocated for all the personnel in the agency for expenses during their business trips.

The cash intended for six months’ expenses was to be placed at an agreed address. Cash would be paid out every month upon the holder receiving the correct password. The chief of the agency was to be given the address and password if the “Bey” base was to be evacuated.<sup>35</sup>

After his swearing-in and starting work in the Polish intelligence structures, Jusuf-bek Umaszew, in accordance with orders given by his superiors, was to maintain the appearance of having a legal job, and he was to explain that he contacted Poles because he provided them with legal and business services (sending parcels, intervention with Turkish authorities, support for visitors, etc.). The superiors stated that Jusuf-bek Umaszew was helpless in finding a job. He quit his previous very low-paid job in a factory in Istanbul, but he could not find a new

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<sup>35</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, No. A.510, Stambuł. Sprawy organizacyjne i operacyjne bazy.

one. In June 1941, he entered into partnership with some Turks who were renting a swimming area in Moda.<sup>36</sup> With time, Jusuf-bek Umaszew took up trading and occasionally purchased things. From documents kept in the archive, it appears that for some time, he ran a jewellery shop with a Turkish citizen, selling gold in the old part of Istanbul. As far as occupational training is concerned, Polish intelligence and Jusuf-bek Umaszew discussed underground activities, preparation of an agency in case the “Bey” base was to be evacuated, issues related to communication, the development of transfer routes, locating hiding places and the hiding and smuggling of couriers. Additionally, Jusuf-bek Umaszew was trained in how to use encrypting code.<sup>37</sup>

In view of the documents kept in the archive of the Polish Underground Movement Study Trust, it appears that in the first half of 1941, the staff of the “Bey” base started to develop a transfer route to Poland across the Caucasus, but there is no information whether Jusuf-bek Umaszew was involved in this work. This can seemingly be inferred from the fact that the base relied on Georgian organizations, not on its own people. The earliest document concerning this matter was a report sent from London by Józef Smoleński to Stanisław Sulma on March 8, 1941, in which Smoleński informs him that Shalva Berishvili,<sup>38</sup> allegedly an outstanding Georgian national activist, was in Istanbul under the name of Karol Berik. The latter agreed to arrange a route from Lviv across the Caucasus. The Georgian assured the Polish party that his organization could smuggle people across the border, provide passports, and escort Polish couriers to their destinations and back. Józef Smoleński established contact with Shalva Berishvili through Wiktor Zaleski, an employee of the Polish consulate in Istanbul. At the same time, Józef Smoleński was ordered to be wary when contacting the Georgian, as a possible provocation was expected. On the other hand, he advised Stanisław Sulma to try to find ways to establish a route across the Caucasus because he did not rule out that in the future, the only way to Poland might run across this very region.<sup>39</sup>

The first parcel consisting of a thousand American dollars was sent across the Caucasus to Poland by Georgians in April 1941. Five hundred dollars were

<sup>36</sup> Moda is a district in Istanbul located in the Asiatic part of the city.

<sup>37</sup> PUMST, TP, Folder 2/52.

<sup>38</sup> In 1924, Shalva Berishvili participated in an anti-Bolshevik uprising in Georgia; then he went to France. He was a member of the Georgian Social Democratic Party. In the years 1939–1940, Shalva Berishvili stayed in Turkey, where he was the chief of an intelligence group. When Shalva Berishvili was in Batumi illegally in the mid-1940s, he offered his cooperation to the NKVD. In autumn, he was sent to Moscow, where he was recruited by Lavrentiy Beria himself. By the end of 1940, he was sent to Turkey again. Shalva Berishvili provided information mostly about Georgian emigrants in Europe. By the end of 1942, he was arrested by the NKVD in Georgia. The NKVD suspected him of being a double agent. See: Г. Мамулия, *Борьба за свободу и независимость Кавказа (1921-1945)*, Тбилиси, 2012, pp. 453–454.

<sup>39</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call no. A.98, Instrukcje i sprawozdania.

given to the “Bey” base for military purposes, while 500 dollars were sent for political purposes to the embassy.<sup>40</sup> More information about this issue is found in a report on the operations of the “Bey” base that was sent on May 28, 1941 by Stanisław Sulma to Józef Smoleński. In the document, Stanisław Sulma reported that a Georgian courier had been sent around April 20 to blaze a trail to Lviv, while on May 17, he had delivered the parcel with cash to a specified address. Apart from the aforementioned money, the parcel included political information and letters from the Vatican about church issues that were hidden in a roll of film. The cost of this entire task was a hundred dollars. Stanisław Sulma reported that the results of the first parcel sending had been positive, but he pointed out that he was still afraid to send larger amounts of money across the Caucasus since he was not sure whether the route was completely reliable. He also highlighted that he found it impossible to develop a route across this area by using only Polish forces due to the Turkish secret service’s firm refusal to cooperate. Stanisław Sulma suggested that the route arranged by Georgians should be maintained; it could be used if needed because it was cheap. He advised using it only to reach the area occupied by the Soviets, mainly Lviv, and possibly Białystok. However, he pointed out that it would be impossible to smuggle people across the Caucasus because it could lead to the route being blocked completely. This was related to the fact that Georgians were supported only by Turks who smuggled them, and, in return, they received information from the Caucasus or the Russian interior.<sup>41</sup>

In addition, Alfred Krajewski gave a positive report after the first successful smuggling of money across the Caucasus to Poland. In early June 1941, he reported to Gen. Kazimierz Sosnkowski<sup>42</sup> that the route was working efficiently and a similar one should be created from Tehran.<sup>43</sup> While in London, Józef Smoleński ordered the staff of the “Bey” base to use the route across the Caucasus rarely to prevent it from being blocked.<sup>44</sup>

In June 1941, Alfred Krajewski reported to his superiors in London that there had been a second attempt to smuggle three thousand dollars across the Caucasus to Poland.<sup>45</sup> The courier set off on June 3 and, like with the first parcel, half of it was intended for military purposes and the other half for political activities.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, there were eighteen rolls of film hidden in soap included in the parcel.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 335, Depesze Bazy „Bey” nr 1-303.

<sup>41</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, No. A.91, Ruch kurierów.

<sup>42</sup> In this document, he has the alias “Godziemba.” Kazimierz Sosnkowski was the commanding officer of the Union of Armed Struggle in the years 1939–1941, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Armed Forces in 1943–1944.

<sup>43</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 336, Depesze Bazy Bey nr 303-601.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call no. A.509, Stambuł. Sprawy org. i oper. bazy.

<sup>47</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 336, Depesze Bazy Bey nr 303-601.

However, in July it turned out that the Georgians had been collaborating with Soviet intelligence.<sup>48</sup> Thus, despite the warnings from March 1941, the staff of the “Bey” base decided to establish cooperation with Shalva Berishvili, and it was he who organized Polish smuggling. On July 1, A. Krajewski reported to London that “K.W.”<sup>49</sup> had informed him that his contact, Karol Berik (i.e. Shalva Berishvili), collaborated with the Russian NKVD. His collaboration allegedly started in autumn 1940. The report also said that the second parcel sent to Poland might have not reached its destination due either to war<sup>50</sup> or counterintelligence. At that time, this issue could not yet be clarified because the communication with the base in Lviv broke off. At the same time, A. Krajewski emphasized that the development of a new route with Georgian organizations was very dangerous, as Georgian contacts with Russians had emerged.<sup>51</sup> On July 15, Józef Smoleński ordered the “Bey” base to break off contacts with the Georgians and arrange their own routes to Lviv.<sup>52</sup> However, no documents prove that after July 1941, the Polish intelligence took action which would cover the territory of the Caucasus. Due to the situation related to the German-Soviet war, this seems very unlikely.

The failure of the Georgians to smuggle money was subsequently discussed. On January 4, 1942, Stanisław Sulma, excusing himself before Colonel Leon Mitkiewicz,<sup>53</sup> informed him that only Wiktor Zalewski had direct contact with the Georgians, in accordance with the headquarters’ order. He had worked with them for a long time and vouched for their loyalty. Stanisław Sulma stressed that he used their services alone as he considered them to be safe.<sup>54</sup>

An interesting paper, most likely drawn up in 1942, concerns the flaws in the organizational work of the “Bey” base. The charges included the planning of a route from Lviv across the Caucasus and Russia in the summer of 1941. When a second courier was unmasked, it turned out that the route was based on German agents working against Russia.<sup>55</sup> The content of this document is different from the previous ones, which indicated that it was the Georgians collaborating with the Russian NKVD who were responsible for the parcel’s failed delivery. Other documents that would explain this issue have not been found in the archives. Perhaps this is related to the arrest of Sh. Berishvili by Soviet intelligence in 1942 on charges

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> It seems it should be “Z.W.” here – Zalewski Wiktor, an employee of the Polish consulate in Istanbul who contacted Shalva Berishvili.

<sup>50</sup> On June 22, 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union.

<sup>51</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 336, Depesze Bazy Bey nr 303-601.

<sup>52</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call no. A.509, Stambuł. Sprawy org. i oper. bazy.

<sup>53</sup> Leon Mitkiewicz was then the deputy chief of staff of the Commander-in-Chief; he was responsible for the Second and Sixth Departments.

<sup>54</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call no. A. 514, Stambuł. Sprawy organizacyjne i operacyjne bazy.

<sup>55</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call no. A. 511, Stambuł. Sprawy organizacyjne i operacyjne bazy.

of being a double agent. The author of the paper seems to have believed that the Georgian in fact worked for the Germans.

The archive of the Polish Underground Movement Study Trust contains no documents that would bear testament to the activity of “Alf” agency staff. This is probably related to the fact that the “Bey” base was not evacuated from Istanbul; therefore, the reports from a reserve agency were not submitted directly to the headquarters of the Polish armed forces in London. In 1943, the process of the closing down of the “Alf” agency began. It can be assumed that this was influenced by both financial factors and the general political and military situation in Europe. Most probably, superiors from the United Kingdom requested to reduce posts in the Polish intelligence structures in Turkey. We can find evidence for this in Stanisław Sulma’s report sent to the “special unit of the Commander-in-Chief” on May 2, 1943. In this report, he stated that the minimal staff of the “Alf” agency could be reduced more without any damage to intelligence services provided, and consist of three people: “Junus,” “Warecki,” and “Bronisława.”<sup>56</sup>

Finally, on September 14, 1943, the headquarters in London gave the order to close the “Alf” reserve agency, justified with the claim that “the agency was unnecessary due to the clear situation in favour of the Allies.”<sup>57</sup> This happened on October 1.<sup>58</sup> Jusuf-bek Umaszew asked his superiors for permission to stay and work in Turkey even before the agency was officially closed down. By the end of September, Michał Protasewicz<sup>59</sup> gave his permission, but a permission from “Atlas”<sup>60</sup> was also required. However, on October 17, 1943, Stanisław Sulma reported to the Special Unit of the Commander-in-Chief that since they had not received any decision on Jusuf-bek Umaszew from “Atlas,” Umaszew was to be sent to the Reserve Centre in Jerusalem at the beginning of November.<sup>61</sup> Based on Stanisław Sulma’s report of November 6, 1943 to Michał Protasewicz,<sup>62</sup> the decision must have arrived soon, although it was unfavourable for Jusuf-bek Umaszew. Sulma informed him that because of “Atlas’s” refusal, Jusuf-bek Umaszew went to Jerusalem. “Warecki” (who was probably a radio operator) was sent to “Hol”<sup>63</sup> on 1 October, while “Bronisława” (a liaison officer) was dismissed and paid three months’ gratuity.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>56</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call. no. A.512, Sztambuł. Sprawy organizacyjne i operacyjne bazy.

<sup>57</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Wodza Naczelnego, call. no. A.513, Sztambuł. Sprawy organizacyjne i operacyjne bazy.

<sup>58</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call. no. A.65, Poczta różnych baz.

<sup>59</sup> PUMST, TP, Folder 2/52.

<sup>60</sup> It has not been clarified who had the alias “Atlas.”

<sup>61</sup> PUMST, TP, Folder 2/52.

<sup>62</sup> In the document, Michał Protasewicz has the alias “Rawa.” He was the chief of the 6<sup>th</sup> Division in the years 1942–1944.

<sup>63</sup> It has not been clarified what or who was given the alias “Hol.”

<sup>64</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call. no. A.189, Finanse – Baza Bey, Turcja.

Jusuf-bek Umaszew's work for the Sixth Department in Turkey is reflected in financial documents. The financial statements of the "Bey" base for November and December 1941 have been preserved. The item "Down payments and salaries" includes JUSUF-BEK Umaszew, who at the time was paid 235 Turkish lira monthly, one of the highest wages at the base. The highest salary was paid to Stanisław Sulma: 353 lira monthly.<sup>65</sup> In 1942, the salaries increased and Jusuf-bek Umaszew was paid more than 300 lira monthly.<sup>66</sup> In 1943, the salary rose to 316 lira monthly.<sup>67</sup>

In the end, Jusuf-bek Umaszew left Istanbul and arrived in Jerusalem at the Middle Eastern Polish Army Reserve Centre on December 20, 1943.<sup>68</sup> His travel plan has been preserved in the archive, along with a cost estimate of 104.50 Turkish lira, 75 Syrian pounds, and 5.5 Palestinian pounds. This amount consisted of the following expenses: a second class ticket from Istanbul to the Turkish border – 77 lira; transport (possibly a taxi in Istanbul or transport to a border post) – 2.50 lira; a ticket to Aleppo – 8 lira; a hotel in Aleppo (one day – 4 pounds and two transport items – 2 pounds) – 6 Syrian pounds; a ticket to Tripoli – 24 pounds; a ticket to Beirut – 10.75 pounds; a hotel in Beirut (one day – 14 pounds and transport 3.25 pounds) – 17.25 pounds; a ticket to Haifa – 2 Palestinian pounds; a ticket to Tel Aviv – 0.80 pounds; a ticket to Jerusalem – 0.35 pounds; a hotel in Jerusalem (one day – 0.80 pounds, transport – 0.55 pounds) – 1.35 pounds. In addition, Jusuf-bek Umaszew was paid the following allowance: two allowances in Turkey – 17 lira; two allowances in Syria – 17 Syrian pounds; one allowance in Palestine – one Palestinian pound. The visa cost of 3.05 Turkish lira<sup>69</sup> was added to the costs of travel and allowances.

In the archive of the Polish Underground Movement Study Trust, Jusuf-bek Umaszew's records have been preserved in his personal file. It says that Jusuf-bek Umaszew used the aliases "Junus" and "Emir." While it is certain that he used the former, the latter raises doubts. Documents in which Jusuf-bek Umaszew operates under the alias "Emir" have not been found. However, from the archival documents, it appears that the radio operator of the "Alf" agency used this alias. One must be sceptical about the thesis that Jusuf-bek Umaszew could have played the dual role of both chief and radio operator. Maybe the second alias was a mistake in the records. The document also wrongly notes that Jusuf-bek Umaszew was a Georgian. Besides that, the full course of service in Turkey until his departure to Jerusalem was detailed in the records.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 831, Zestawienia rachunkowo-kasowe baz Hasan, Bey.

<sup>67</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 865, Zestawienie rachunkowo-kasowe Placówki Hasan ("Bey" base was renamed to "Hasan" base).

<sup>68</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Wodza Naczelnego, no. A.513, Stambuł. Sprawy organizacyjne i operacyjne bazy.

<sup>69</sup> PUMST, SK, call no. 865, Zestawienie rachunkowo-kasowe Placówki Hasan.

<sup>70</sup> PUMST, TP, Folder 2/52.

At the beginning of 1944, or maybe by the end of 1943, Polish intelligence came up with the idea of using Jusuf-bek Umaszew in the Promethean movement.<sup>71</sup> That said, no direct documents have been found that contain any information about how Polish intelligence wanted to implement their plans in this matter. The archive of the Polish Underground Movement Study Trust holds some opinions about Jusuf-bek Umaszew. One of the documents, drawn up on January 29, 1944 by Stanisław Sulma, was written at the request of the Second Department of the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief. Its author said that he was against using Jusuf-bek Umaszew in the Promethean action due to a note that Stanisław Sulma had received just before Jusuf-bek Umaszew's departure to Jerusalem. The British informed him that Jusuf-bek Umaszew had offered them his services when he was in Trabzon in 1941. At that time, he did not inform his superiors about it. Before his departure to Jerusalem, Stanisław Sulma asked Jusuf-bek Umaszew to explain this issue. Jusuf-bek Umaszew said that during his voyage to Trabzon he had met a British consul on board the ship. Since the British did not speak Turkish, he helped him to move in the field. The consul was then to ask Jusuf-bek Umaszew about the amount of oil passing through Batumi. He allegedly refused to answer and denied that he had offered his services to the British. Stanisław Sulma wrote that he had known that the British had watched Jusuf-bek Umaszew's correspondence with Poland. He saw a letter of March 1943 to a Polish officer that had been intercepted by the British, but it did not contain anything improper. In the end, Stanisław Sulma stressed that he had not personally observed any reprehensible behaviour coming from Jusuf-bek Umaszew. Nevertheless, due to the issue with the British, in his opinion, he should not be used in actions related to the Promethean movement.<sup>72</sup>

In his opinions on Jusuf-bek Umaszew, Stanisław Sulma emphasized that his behaviour made him a role model of a loyal, honest, and sympathetic Polish ally. He had the same feelings about Poland as he had about his homeland. Stanisław Sulma pointed out that it did not have anything to do with the transfer of local people from the Caucasus; he was only interested in him because he had information and was knowledgeable about the current situation. However, he stressed that Jusuf-bek Umaszew was not too resourceful or clever in life. As for personal traits such as energy, a sharp mind, organizational skills, etc., he did not represent the required level.<sup>73</sup>

The aforementioned documents on Jusuf-bek Umaszew are the last ones found in the archive from the war period; however, he also appears in post-war doc-

<sup>71</sup> The Promethean movement was established in the 1920s and its aim was to divide the Soviet Union by gaining statehood by non-Russian people living in its territory. The operation of the movement was mostly coordinated by Poland, it was also funded by Poland.

<sup>72</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Wodza Naczelnego, call no. A.513, Stambuł. Sprawy organizacyjne i operacyjne bazy.

<sup>73</sup> PUMST, collection TP, Folder 2/52.

uments. “Dziennik Personalny Polskich Sił Zbrojnych” of December 15, 1946 states that Jusuf-bek Umaszew was decorated with The Silver Cross of Merit with Swords<sup>74</sup> for the second time.<sup>75</sup>

An analysis of documents from the archive of the Józef Piłsudski Institute provides interesting information: Jusuf-bek Umaszew became involved in the actions of the Promethean movement. One of the documents, dated December 14, 1948, is addressed to the Polish Promethean Centre in the United Kingdom. It contains a report by Jusuf-bek Umaszew and Hussejn Kumuz<sup>76</sup> about the establishment of the North Caucasian National Centre at 32, Bolton Gardens, London SW5 and the text of the resolution concerning the establishment of the “Promethean Club” in the United Kingdom: “*At a meeting of December 9, 1948, the North Caucasian National Centre was pleased with the establishment of the Polish Promethean Centre, reviving the traditions represented by the Promethean Club that was once founded on hospitable Polish land, and decided to establish the North Caucasian Promethean Centre and urge the colonies of other Caucasian nations in the United Kingdom to establish similar centres to start the Promethean Club in the United Kingdom.*”<sup>77</sup>

In the archive, there is another document on Jusuf-bek Umaszew’s post-war actions. On February 16, 1949, he informed Colonel Tadeusz Schaetzel,<sup>78</sup> the chairman of the Polish Promethean section, that the president of the National Azerbaijani Assembly (Majlis), Abdurrahman Fatalibeyli,<sup>79</sup> had authorized him on January 10, 1949 (i.e. Jusuf-bek Umaszew) to represent Azerbaijani interests in the United Kingdom, as well as represent Azerbaijan in any current or future organizations of which Caucasian nations are or will be members.<sup>80</sup>

In view of the documents collected in the archives, there is no certainty that Polish intelligence engaged Jusuf-bek Umaszew in the Promethean movement, but it remains very likely. One of the documents presented in this article shows that Jusuf-bek Umaszew was not particularly interested in Caucasian issues and

<sup>74</sup> This award was established by Poland’s president in 1942. It was given “to award brave actions taken indirectly during fight against the enemy and services for the country or its citizens in particularly dangerous circumstances.”

<sup>75</sup> PUMST, Oddział VI Sztabu Naczelnego Wodza, call no. A.317a, Awanse i odznaczenia.

<sup>76</sup> Hussejn Kumuz also served in the Polish Army. He was a major and commanded an artillery unit in the September Campaign of 1939.

<sup>77</sup> Józef Piłsudski Institute, *Prometheus*, call no. 148.

<sup>78</sup> In the interwar period, Tadeusz Schaetzel was i.a. the chief of the Second Department of the General Staff. In the years 1939–1944, he was interned in Romania. After World War II, T. Schaetzel got involved in the revival of the Promethean movement.

<sup>79</sup> Abdurrahman Fatalibeyli was a major in the Soviet army in 1941, he voluntarily surrendered to the German army. In Germany, he started establishing Azerbaijani organizations of collaborators. In 1942, A. Fatalibeyli worked for the Nazis and formed Azerbaijani troops in Wehrmacht. In 1943, he was elected chairman of the Azerbaijani National Committee. Since 1945, A. Fatalibeyli had cooperated with American intelligence. He was murdered in 1954 by a KGB agent.

<sup>80</sup> Józef Piłsudski Institute, *Prometheus*, call no. 148.

people from that area during his stay in Turkey during World War II. Perhaps his change of attitude in this matter was related to the actions of the Second Department of the Staff of the Commander-in-Chief. At that time, Polish intelligence planned to revive the ideas of the pre-war Promethean movement, which in the 1920s and 1930s was mostly a project of Polish politicians and military men against the Soviet Union. However, in post-war conditions, with a lack of proper funds or support from Poland where communists had come to power, it quickly turned out that this project had no chance of succeeding.

## Abstract

Jusuf-bek Umaszew was most probably born in Dagestan and was most likely of Kumyk origin. In the interwar period he served as a contract officer in the 36<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment stationed in Warsaw. He was on active duty in the Polish Army until the last days of the defense in September 1939. After the campaign he left for Turkey. There he was recruited by Polish intelligence, which entrusted Umaszew with the task of building a courier route through the Caucasus to Polish lands occupied by the Soviet Union (Lviv and Białystok). This was achieved after the beginning of the German-Soviet war in June 1941. In 1943, the post where Umaszew worked was terminated, and he was transferred from Istanbul to Jerusalem. Around that time, the idea of using him in the activities of the “Promethean movement” emerged. However, no decisions were ultimately made in this regard. Nevertheless, following the end of World War II Umaszew became involved in the movement, though it is not possible to determine whether he did so in cooperation with the Poles or on his own initiative.

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