

**GEORGIAN PRESS ABOUT FIGHTS FOR PORT – ARTHUR IN THE  
WAR BETWEEN RUSSIA AND JAPAN  
(ACCORDING TO THE DATA OF NEWSPAPER “IVERIA”)**

**ГРУЗИНСКАЯ ПРЕССА О БИТВАХ ЗА ПОРТ-АРТУР В РУССКО-  
ЯПОНСКОЙ ВОЙНЕ  
(ПО МАТЕРИАЛАМ ГАЗЕТЫ “ИВЕРИЯ”)**

**RUS-JAPON SAVAŞINDA PORT-ARTHUR CEPHESİNE DAİR GÜRCÜ BASINI  
 (“İVERİA” GAZETESİ HABERLERİNE GÖRE)**

**Roin KAVRELISHVILI\***

**ABSTRACT**

This article discusses and evaluates the data of Georgian newspaper “IVERIA” about fights for Port Arthur in the war between Russia and Japan. Information and news published in the newspaper about the war between Russia and Japan are quite a big material in the point of view of historical research. These news and publications in the newspaper yield a valuable source for the evaluation of the course followed in this war and revive the events that took place in the past.

**Keywords:** Iveria, Togo, Stessel, Port-Arthur, Chifu.

**АННОТАЦИЯ**

В статье рассматриваются материалы грузинской газеты “Иверия” о битвах за Порт-Артур в русско-японской войне. Газетные статьи ценны для исследования истории этой войны и дают возможность для восстановления картины прошедших событий.

**Ключевые слова:** Иверия, Того, Стессел, Порт-Артур, Чифу.

**ÖZET**

Makalede Gürcü Gazetesi “İveria”da Rus-Japon savaşında Port-Arthur cephesi hakkında yayınlanan haberler tetkik edilmiştir. Söz konusu haberler, anılan savaşın tarihinin incelenmesi açısından değerli olup geçmiş olayların seyirini yeniden gözden geçirmek için önemlidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İveria, Togo, Stessel, Port-Arthur, Çifu.

---

\* Prof. Dr. Ardahan & Samtskhe-Javakheti State University

In January 27, 1904 under the leadership of Admiral Togo at Port Arthur squadron by Japanese fleet led by Vice Admiral Stark from the day of unexpected attack [1, p. 258] Georgian publicists used to pay special attention to the facts taking place in the war fought between Russia and Japan.

Daily newspaper "Iveria" was widely publishing ongoing fights for Port Arthur. It had its own reporters, who indeed were providing information not directly from Port Arthur, but from the line of battle. Newspaper also was publishing information from Russian - `Новости~ (News), `Новоевремя~ (New Time), `Русскийинвалид~ (Russian Invalid), `Русскаяведомость~ (Russian Report), `Новыйкрай~ (New Land), `новостидня~ (Daily News), `Русскоеслово~ (Russian Word) and periodic editions of foreign countries - American "Morning Post~, `Times~, German `National Zeitung~, `Volf~, French `Tan~, English Agencies `DeyliTelegraf~, `Reiter~ and newspapers `DeyliKronik~, `DeyliEkspress~, `Standart~.

Herein is to be noted that unfortunately it was not possible to timely inform reader regarding the course of war between Russian and Japan, about that itself newspaper was noting. Though, immediately after the beginning of war "Iveria" successively used to manage essential objectivity for serious publication that was quite difficult, especially at that time, when it actually was in one of the fighter's party - namely in Russian camp.

"Iveria" actively reacted on the defense of Port Arthur besieged by Russian army and fleet and to all military assaults of Japanese army and fleet to Russian positions.

On July 13 Japanese people launched great attack towards the "Green Mountains". They managed to break through Russian positions, who receded to "Wolf Mountains", but in July 17 they consolidated in stronghold region. From this day was begun defense of Port Arthur [1, p. 261].

Process of military assault begun in July 13 is in details described in "Iveria". Newspaper provides information about military losses of parties in the fights taken place on July 13. Herein is noted that the military assault was led personally by Marshal Ojama. Newspaper well analyzes military strategies of fighting parties, both in land and maritime fights. There are listed all of these points, where were going all hostilities, both on land and sea. There is information about arms. There are listed all of those warships participating in maritime fights [2, 20-21 July].

As it is found from the newspaper the information about the facts taking place in Port Arthur was spread from city Chifu, where were placed various agencies. They used to find information from diplomats, military men, Chinese people run from war arrived to Chifu from Port Arthur and then spread it.

Commander of consolidated region of Kvantun, General Stesseli was leading defense for Port Arthur. The first assault of Port Arthur was begun in August 6. After 5 days heated fights Japanese people managed to invade deeply into the Russian forces. Though their assault was cast away. The first assault of Japanese people was ended ineffectively [1, p. 261].

The next editions of newspaper include description on movement of Japanese troops towards Port Arthur, transportation and placement of military equipment before the beginning of assault for hampering advancing of Japanese troops from Russian side on executed defensive actions [2, 1-10 August].

“Iveria” published those conditions offered by Japanese party to General Stesseli, if Russians would cede a stronghold. Conditions were as follows: “prison guards will leave prison under military honor and join the army of General Kuropatkin. Seven ships, namely “Retvizan”, “Sevastopol”, “Pobeda”, “Peresvet”, “Poltava”, Baian” and “Palada”, 12 Counter-torpedo boats and fourline boats are to be delivered to Japanese people”. General Stesseli was very enraged by this suggestion, broke a silence and began to and fro walking in the room. He politely acted towards Japanese messenger, who was ordered to conduct negotiation on voluntary ceding of prison, he acted very politely and afterwards answered “till even one man remains in last stronghold, then Port Arthur will have a guard” [2,2-8 August].

The second assault of Japanese people was launched on September 3 and lasted till September 9 [1,262]. Under the basis of information agencies, “Iveria” spreads information that “major attack of Japanese people will be directed to “Erlushan” and “Dzigushin” forts. Hills, where are located these forts are full of Japanese people. Attack will be very horrible. Japanese people do their best for this reason. On this place are two divisions under the leadership of Oshima and Toshima. At all 80 thousand soldiers” [2, 1 September].

There is information regarding defensive actions of Russian people: “near Port Arthur, on the ridge of cross, Russians made a fort with a new system, foundation was completely filled with cement mortar. Canons were equipped with special iron armors. If the enemy dilapidates this fort, small canon directed towards the prison is also placed on a fort in order to attack to coming enemy. Numbers of forts are changed by Russians in order to deceive Japanese spies. Stronger forts are directed towards the east, forts are merged with ditches and wire entanglement to the north and north-east side” [2, 3 September].

According to the information provided from the newspaper, Japanese people attacked on September 3, began in the morning from Shusstun and Palujian. There is described the course of fights for each fort [2,7-22 September].

The third assault of Japanese people was taking place in October 17-18 that was also repulsed by Russians [1, p. 262]. Pursuant to the information provided from the newspaper “Specially arrived people from Dalni to Chifusay that fights taking place till October 16-20 exceeded all attacks with its fervency” [2, 2-24 October].

Information provided from the reporter of `Русская ведомость~ (Russian Report), named S. K. that published in the newspaper about Port Arthur. He applies information provided from Japanese people, analyzes attack of General Nogi on Port Arthur and talks about formed condition [2, 31 October – 2 November].

Major attack on main sites of defense of Port Arthur was launched by General Nogi on November 13-22 at the time of the fourth assault. According to the information provided from the newspaper “Russians several times made Japanese people to go back, though they still managed to take the ditches”[2, 18 November].

“Iveria” continues narration on the course of fights and publishes information from English newspaper “Standard”: “After Japanese people took 203 meters heightmountain, the case of Port Arthur is fallen, now the squadron is to be exploded or if possible go to the sea and fight against Togo squadron” [1, 30 November].

In editions of “Iveria” dated by December there are furnished opinion of military reporter, named P. D. K. of newspaper “Daily News”. He notes about strategic importance of 203 meters “High Mountain” and reviews tactics taking place around it. Pursuant to the

information furnished from the newspaper, fight for 203 meters height lasted for 5 days. Military reporter of newspaper "Russian Report", named V. M expounds regarding the squadron of Port Arthur and concludes under the basis of information furnished from Japanese and European people that squadron of Port Arthur actually does not exist anymore. Military reporter of "Russian Word", named B. Rossi widely writes about destruction of Port Arthur's fleet and taking Kikvanshan fort by Japanese people and talks about its importance [1, 1-21 December].

It is known that on December 19 after the assault of Japanese people the defenders of Port Arthur retreated on the third final defensive line. In such conditions General Stesseli considered it nonsense to further resist them and on December 2 signed on capitulation [1, p. 263].

"Iveria" provides information to its reader regarding fall of Port Arthur and also publishes message of General Stesseli written to Russian emperor: "Your Majesty, judge us, but criticize with mercy". Newspaper writes that "according to the laws of Russia the warden, who actually defended prison with great courage, but as yielded and surrendered is to be brought to trial, the court has to ascertain if Stesseli could be more consolidated and do not give prison to Japanese people, if it was impossible to defend the prison and even defenders have to perforce surrender to Japanese people. Court will also pass sentence according to aforesaid" [1, 24 December].

Newspaper does not neglect the reasons on defeat with Port Arthur and publishes conclusions made by military reporters: 1) disclosure of military secret; 2) lack of military material and provisions; 3) incorrect relation of press to the troops on not praising and increasing whim; 4) defeat of General Kuropatkin on September 22, when he departed to defeat Port Arthur; 5) assault launched by general Nogi on December 16; 6) fate of Port Arthur was decided not at the walls of prison, but in the fields of Manjuria and in Finshuin gorge [2, December].

Newspaper expounds and positively characterizes General Stesseli and his family. "Iveria" side by side spreads information of one of the Swiss newspaper and Russian newspaper "News" about origin of Stesseli "General Stesseli, hero of Port Arthur appeared to be Swiss – says one of the Swiss newspaper. He was born in Canton of Zurich and till 1888 was working as engineer at railway trains' plant. Afterwards moved to the military plant of St. Petersburg. In 1890 became Russian citizen and went to Russian army. Still general loved his homeland and in summers for two months he used to be in Switzerland. His father is still alive and lives in Fulfingen. It was said that general has one brother in Switzerland.

This information is not right, says "News". General Stesseli was born in Russia in 1848 and grew up in Paul's military building" [2, 9 July].

It is written in the newspaper that "Defender of Port Arthur, General Stesseli was no such a commandant to wait for enemy without any action, let us see when he is able to assault. He does not let any enemy come close and adroitly repulses enemy. Some people do not like General Stesseli's action, because as if he is in parts killing the strength of prison guards. But they should not forget that the strength of prison guards is formed not only by multitude, but solidity of soul and heart to that is more contributing active operation" [2, 11 August].

Newspaper includes opinion of reporter of “Russian Report” about Stesseli “You will any time manage to see General Stesseli and if anybody has to tell a little, is it possible to address him without hindrance, he is experienced general in war cases, is 50 years old, with a strong temper, he is well aware in his force and completely hopes on his troops” [2, 13 July].

Moreover, “General Stesseli’s wife leads Red Cross Institution. Herself examines wounded persons and has a hard work. But still she finds time to help orphans and pay attention to making bandages. Soldiers consider him as their patron angel” [2, 9 September].

According to the information provided from the newspaper “Stesseli actually was injured during the fight, but he did not leave the battlefield and again led military forces” [2, 12 November].

Having studied materials provided from “Iveria” revealed that it followed ongoing cases of international life, namely the course of military operations conducted between Russia and Japan and as a result of peaceful negotiations taking place after the war, it systematically furnished interesting and objective information. Information published in “Iveria” regarding the war between Russia and Japan is quite arich material from the standpoint of historical research. It once more states possibility on retrieving uninterrupted image of past development at the time of research of newspaper in history.

***References:***

История СССР, часть 2-я. (1861-1917), под редакцией П.И. Кабанова и Н.Д. Кузнецова, Москва, изд. “Просвещение”, 1978.

Newspaper “Iveria”, 1904.