

SWISS-AZERBAIJANI RELATIONS IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Continuation. See the beginning in IRS-Heritage, № 41, 2019

Union of Nationalities (“Union des Nationalites”).

A decision was passed to establish an organization dealing with issues pertaining to the self-determination of European nations during the First Universal Races Congress held in London in 1911. Jean Pelissier, a French journalist, and Juozas Gabrys, a Lithuanian expatriate, founded an organization titled the Union of Nationalities (“Union des Nationalites”) for this purpose in June 1912. The founders believed that the right of nations to self-determination was a crucial factor for the solution of all outstanding issues in Europe. The Union’s main idea in this regard was based on the right of each ethnic minority to define its national and political fate. A magazine of that organization called “Revue des Nationalites” was published as well.

The Union was based in Paris during the outbreak of World War I. Afterwards, the publication of this magazine became unfeasible due to censorship, according to J. Gabrys, who was serving as the organization’s secretary general. For the same reason, the Union’s headquarters was transferred to Lausanne, Switzerland from Paris. Furthermore, the Union organized the first congress of Nations in 1912 and the second one in Paris in 1915 (1).

Despite controversy among historians regarding the dates for the holding of the third congress, most likely, the event took place in Lausanne on June 25, 1916. Capitalizing on this opportunity, representatives of the “Caucasus Committee” and the “Akchura-Huseynzade”

committee successfully made speeches with regard to the independence of the nations subordinate to Russia. Those speeches were “the first powerful advances” in the quest for independence of the Turks internationally (2).

Addressing the event, Lausanne City Council Vice President Burnier said Lausanne was located in a neutral country, asking participants to refrain from harming the city’s reputation, taking into account the overall sensitivity of the situation.

A number of significant decisions were made as part of the mentioned event. According to one of those decisions, each nation was expected to provide its propaganda materials and submit all of them to the League’s Central Bureau. Based on this content, relevant bulletins were to be prepared in Sweden and Switzerland in the French, Italian, German, Swedish and English languages. The bulletins that were due to be published in Switzerland were supposed to reach the countries of southern and Central Europe, as well as Russia, while those to be released in Scandinavia were to be delivered to Britain and the United States.

A foundation of the League was also established. The League member states were required to transfer funds to this organization upon three categories. The first category included Finnish people, the Baltic states, Poland and the Jews, who were expected to contribute 3,000 Swiss Francs; the second category included Lithuania, Ukraine and the Tatars, who were to pay 2,000 Swiss

Report in "Azerbaijan" newspaper on preparations for the opening of a diplomatic representative office of Switzerland in Azerbaijan. 5 February 1919

Сообщение газ. "Азербайджан" о ходатайстве швейцарского Национального Совета на Кавказе перед правительством Швейцарии о назначении в Азербайджан дипломатического представителя страны

5 февраля 1919 г.

Швейцарский Национальный Совет на Кавказе, имеющий постоянное пребывание в Тифлисе, обратился к швейцарскому

Francs; the third group included Ruthenians, Cherkez people and Georgians, who had to pay 100 Swiss Francs. Thus, the foundation would accumulate money worth 21,000 Swiss Francs at the expense of these contributions. However, funds worth at least 30,000 Francs were required for the League's activity. Ropp promised that if money totaling 25,000 Francs was collected, he would allocate 5,000 Francs on his own. The remaining amount was to be provided through Germany's Foreign Ministry.

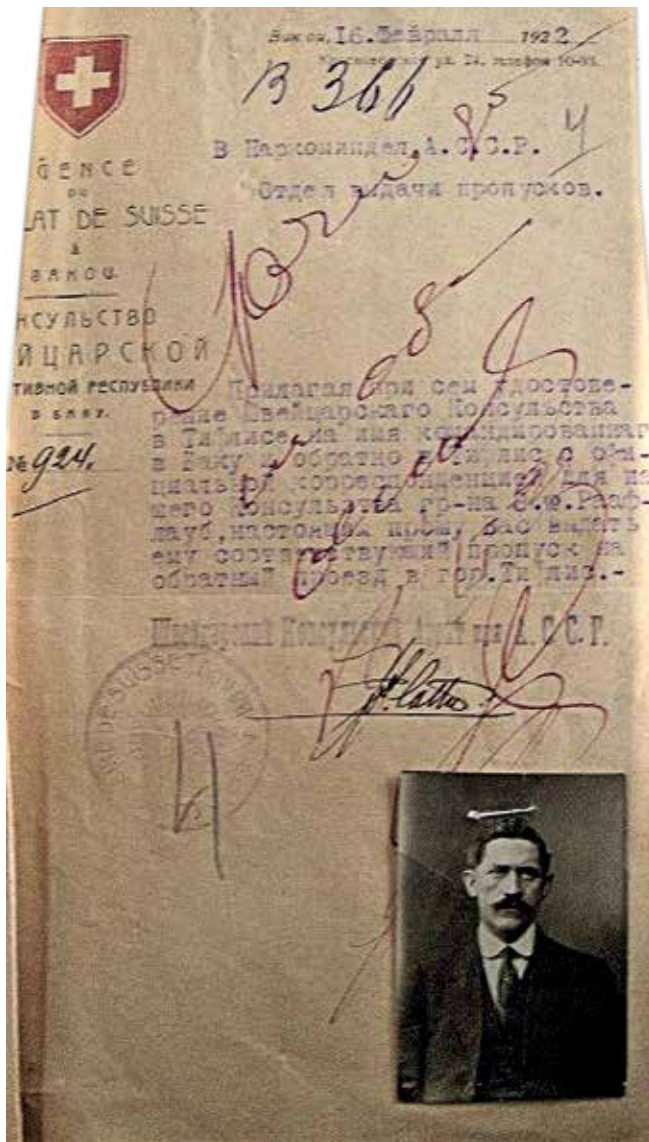
Yusuf Akchura noted that Switzerland's French language newspapers slightly covered the mentioned conference, while German language papers actually placed more emphasis on the event. According to Akchura, 300 copies of "Muslim Turkic Tatars' current state and activity in Russia" and the Memorandum of the Committee for the Protection of the Rights of the Muslim Turkic Tatar Nations in Russia were published in French and delivered to Switzerland for further distribution in this country, as well as in France, Germany and Sweden. Akchura

stressed that the mentioned representatives' participation in the conference entailed exclusively propaganda goals as he believed it was important to inform the European community of the challenges faced by the Muslim minorities in Russia. V. I. Lenin's views raised hope for the struggling people of the ethnic groups residing in Russia. Lenin and Akchura, who was considered "the founding father of pan-Turkism", had a four-hour meeting in Zurich, Switzerland in 1916, though this information is not cited in Swiss sources. Akchura was looking to inquire about Lenin's opinion regarding the nations that were part of Russia. Nevertheless, Akchura's impressions about that discussion suggested that the two apparently did not concur on this issue (3).

Swiss diplomatic missions abroad in the early 20th century. As for Switzerland's foreign policy in the early 20th century, there was a turning point in 1920. Until then, Switzerland acted in line with the neutrality principle and did not interfere with the conflicts among

правительству в Берне с ходатайством о назначении дипломатического представителя Швейцарской Республики в Баку. Председатель Совета Роберт де Риа находится в настоящее время в Баку и по всей вероятности будет назначен швейцарским федеральным правительством в самом ближайшем будущем дипломатическим представителем его в Баку.

Азербайджан. 1919. 5 февраля. № 26.



Documents on the history of relations between the ADR and Switzerland are stored in the archives of Azerbaijan

other countries. However, it had to join the sanctions imposed by the Union of Nationalities in 1920-1938 (4). As for the Swiss diplomacy, evidently, honorary consulates provided consular services in the beginning through business circles. Initially, Switzerland opened consulates in Livorno (in 1809), Naples (in 1812) and Amsterdam (in 1815).

Following the undesirable actions of the Swiss honorary consul in Washington in 1867, Switzerland decided to pursue its foreign policy via professional diplomats. The country's diplomatic representation was established in the U.S. in 1882. This was followed by the founding of the Swiss diplomatic missions in London and Buenos Aires in 1891 (5). A bill on Swiss missions abroad was drafted in 1893. However, the draft law was rejected at the referendum held in February 1895. A new draft law was prepared

on October 3, 1917 and approved on December 16, 1919. In 1906, Switzerland opened diplomatic missions in St. Petersburg and Tokyo. During World War I, Switzerland established a diplomatic mission only in Romania. In 1917, the country delegated its diplomat to the Hague and established its diplomatic mission in this city in 1920. In 1919-1923, it opened diplomatic missions (6) in Toulouse, Strasbourg, Freetown, Zagreb, Joinville, Porto Alegre, S. Miguel (1920), Shanghai, Catania, Casablanca, Kolkata, Madras (1921), Canton, Kaunas, Reval, Lourenco-Marques (1922) and Curitiba (1923).

The number of foreign diplomatic missions operating in Switzerland nearly doubled in 1919-1923.

Russia's role in the Swiss economy and foreign policy in the early 20th century. A total of 20,000 residents of Switzerland had to migrate to Russia until 1917 due to low living standards and limited opportunities in their home country's job market. The migrants established up to 300 industrial enterprises in regions across Russia in this period. Funds worth 300 million Swiss Francs were invested in these businesses, which contributed to the modernization of the Russian economy (7). Swiss citizens founded the first-ever lamp factory in this country. Switzerland imported raw materials, such as grain, oil and metals, from Tsarist Russia in those years, while the Swiss exports to Russia included processed goods (watches, cheese, woven products, etc.) According to the figures available as of 1913, Switzerland's imports from Russia amounted to 71.5 million Swiss Francs, while its exports to the Russian Empire made up 58 million Francs. In 1872, Switzerland signed an agreement with Russia on the residence of people. The document began to be comprehensively enforced as soon as the Swiss consulate started its operation in St. Petersburg in 1905.

Switzerland ran diplomatic missions in the following cities (8):

- consulate in Moscow in 1828-1918; embassy in 1906-1918 and from 1946
- consulate general in St. Petersburg in 1817-1906
- consulate in Kiev in 1902-1918
- consulate in Odessa in 1820-1918
- consulate in Riga in 1868-1920
- consulate in Abo in 1914-1917 (the same consulate was located in Turku, Finland)
- consulate in Tiflis in 1883-1922

The people arriving in Switzerland from Tsarist Russia until 1917 may be divided into three categories:

- tourists
- political migrants and revolutionaries
- students

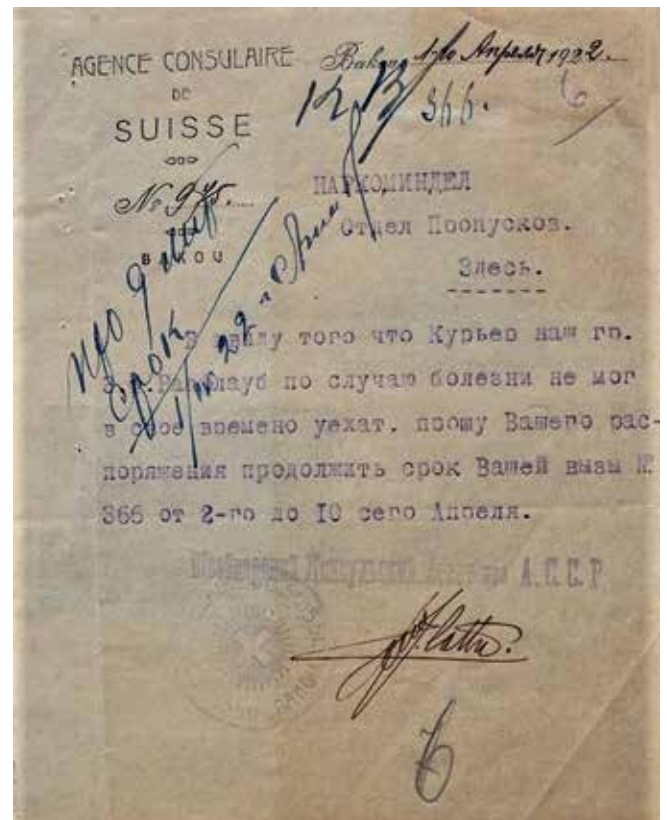
Proper protection and security guarantees for the people seeking political asylum in Switzerland had led to the increase in emigration, with a lot of migrants heading to Zurich and Geneva. A total of 8,500 emigrants moved to these two cities alone (9). Mikhail Bakunin, Pyotr Lavrov, Pyotr Kropotkin, Georgi Plekhanov and Pavel Axelrod were among the notable emigrants. V. I. Lenin lived in a number of Swiss cities during World War I (10). Moreover, political emigrants ran publishing houses in Geneva, while Russian students receiving education in Switzerland served as an audience for the revolutionaries. Over 25 percent of 7,500 students attending Swiss universities in 1914 had arrived in the country from Russia. Switzerland was particularly an attractive place for Russian women who were unable to receive education in their home country. Nadezhda Suslova was the first woman from Tsarist Russia to graduate from the University of Zurich. A great number of people not only from Russia but also from the Caucasus emigrated to Zurich and Geneva as well. For instance, Niko Nikoladze, a young Georgian man, received education in Zurich (11). Nikoladze further founded the "Ugheli" ("Slavery") association, citing Switzerland as an exemplary country. Noe Zhordania, a Sosial-Democrat who further served as prime minister, lived in Geneva as an immigrant in 1893-1914.

Following Georgia's gaining independence on May 26, 1918, "Journal de Geneve" magazine editor Jean Martin and Otfried Nippold, an internationalist and rights defender, made an attempt to achieve international recognition of Georgia's independence. 🌱

to be continued

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