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ADR AS A STAGE OF IDEOLOGICAL UNITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AZERBAIJANI-POLISH RELATIONS: TRANSCENDING SPACE

The rapidly expanding relations between Azerbaijan and Poland at the level of friendship and cooperation are benefitting essentially all areas of science, culture and education today. Just a decade ago, citizens of Azerbaijan had only a slight idea about the contribution of Polish engineers, oil workers and architects to the overall layout of the Azerbaijani capital and its outskirts. However, currently, one may hardly come across a Baku resident who would be unfamiliar with such names as Potocki, Zglenitsky, Goslawski and Ploszko (1). Polish scholar T. Sventokhovsky went down in the history of science as one of the founders of Azerbaijan studies in Europe. Having focused on the study of the ethnic, ideological and political development of Azerbaijan in numerous articles and monographs ("Russia and Azerbaijan", "Historical dictionary of Azerbaijan", etc.), the author pointed out the peculiarities of the traditions of statehood in the history of this nation (2).

Azerbaijan and Poland are linked by long-standing historical traditions. Polish diplomats were involved in mediation between the Ag Goyunlu state and Western European countries. Thus, following the capture of Trapezund (1461) by Mehmed the Conqueror, Hasan Padishah of Ag Goyunlu, who lost his only outlet to the Black Sea, stepped up diplomatic efforts by sending delegates to Europe. The route of one of those trips traversed the Black Sea and the territory of Ukraine. Having reached Poland, he held talks with King Casimir IV of the Jagiellonian dynasty (3) and the latter's ambassador accompanied him to Italy where he was hosted by representatives of the Venetian government (4). In 1516, the Safavids, in turn, sent envoys to Poland, headed by P. de Monte Libano (a Maronite monk from Syria), who carried a letter from Shah Ismail I on creating an anti-Ottoman coalition. However, the Polish king was not in favor of spoiling relations with Ottoman Turkey (5).



King of Poland Casimir IV of the Jagiellonian dynasty and Hasan Padishah of the state of Aq Qoyunlu laid groundwork for the diplomatic relations between Poland and Azerbaijan in the Middle Ages

17th century archival documents include an important letter of Shah Abbas I to the King of Poland Zigmund III, which is referenced by the Polish researcher I. Sierakovska. The letter, which contained a proposal of Abbas I on friendship and cooperation with Poland, was delivered to Zigmund III by Mahdi Kuli Bay Turman in 1605 (6).

The letters discovered in the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw (Archiwum Glowne Akt Dawnych w Warszawie) date back to the 17th and the early 18th centuries (1607, 1624, 1647, and 1712). The letters were mostly sent on behalf of Shahs Abbas I and Abbas II (the name of Shah Safi I is cited less frequently) to the Polish kings Wladyslaw IV Vasa, Sigismund III and Zigmund III (7). It is particularly worth mentioning the letters to the royal commander-in-chief N. Potocki and the royal chancellor on behalf of the seventh grand vizier of Shah Abbas, the Great Sultan Khalifeh (8), whose personality is extensively covered by a chronicle of Iskandar Bay Turkoman Munshi (9). All of the mentioned documents indicate a peaceful and friendly relationship between the two sides.

The period from the late 18th to the early 19th cen-

tury ushered in a new and dramatic stage in the history of the Azerbaijani and Polish people, which was largely due to the loss of their territorial integrity. For Azerbaijan, this loss was reflected primarily in the fate of a nation divided into two halves. This destiny turned out irreversible and led to the inclusion of the northern part of its territory into the Russian Empire, as a result of two phases of the Russo-Qajar (Russo-Persian) wars (1804-1813, 1826-1828) (10). As for Poland, this historical period primarily saw a loss of statehood until 1918 and the territorial division of Rzeczpospolita (the Polish state) (from 1569) between Austria, Prussia and Russia, which consisted of three stages (1772, 1793 and 1795). As a result, the territory of the present-day AR and the lion's share of the Polish land became part of a single Tsarist empire. At the same time, this led to the beginning of rapprochement between the two nations.

Well-known Polish Orientalist V. Kostiuszko provided interesting information in his writings dated 1858 about Mirza Kazembay, an outstanding Azerbaijani enlightener of the 19th century. Kazembay, who lived in Poland for 18 years, learned the Polish language and dedicated a number of wonderful poems to Warsaw. Many Polish and Azerbaijani political prisoners were exiled to the regions of Siberia and the Caucasus. Most of these people were part of the educated and advanced groups of the population. They met and exchanged ideas while in exile. Thus, A. A. Bakikhanov, the founder of Azerbaijani scientific historiography, met the well-known Polish poet Tadeusz



Polish composer Anton de Kotski (1817-1899) made a great contribution to the promotion of Azerbaijani music in Europe

Lada Zablotsky, who had been exiled from Poland to the Caucasus, in Tiflis (11). By that time, Bakikhanov had compiled the first academic monographic study titled "Gulistani-i-Iram", which centered on researching the eastern part of the Caucasus (1841). It was written in Persian and translated into Russian in 1844. T. L. Zablotsky considerably facilitated the preparation of the Russian text.

Familiarization with the data that has been available in recent years inevitably leads us to the conclusion that the establishment of a democratic republic in Azerbaijan (from 1918) and the second Rzeczpospolita, a revived Polish state, was the most conducive time period in the entire history of the Azerbaijani and Polish people for close cooperation and rapprochement between the two nations. This period differed from the previous ones as it was a special stage in the development of Azerbaijani-Polish relations, which was rather based not on strategic and economic goals commonly pursued by most politicians and statesmen, but mainly on ideology. It was shaped from the period of early political activity

of the leaders of the Republics of Azerbaijan and Poland and was gradually nurtured, increasingly bringing together its followers under a single platform.

As early as in the second half of the 19th century, the Poles actively joined the independence movement of the highlanders under the leadership of Shamil. They even organized the production of artillery installations to support this movement. Having heard about the rise of the national liberation movement during the Russo-Turkish war in 1879, Joseph Adam Gverkovich, who took part in the 1863 uprising, moved to prepare a Polish military unit to facilitate these efforts. The 200-people-strong troops of Colonel Teofil Lapinsky fought for the independence of the Caucasus for three years. The Poles perceived the endeavors of the Caucasus nations as a common struggle. Having joined the national movements of the nations enslaved by the Tsarist regime and subsequently by the Soviet authorities, the Poles sought to weaken the Russian Empire and the USSR. These ideas were drawn up by the Polish statesman J. Pilsudski (the

*Memorial plaque honoring scholars
of the two nations: Polish astronomer Nicolaus
Copernicus and Abbasgulu Agha Bakikhanov,
Azerbaijani historian and Orientalist*

future leader of the Second Polish Republic), who reflected them in a systematic political project that went down in history as “prometeism”.

M.A. Rasulzade recalled from his childhood memories about the Polish military doctor of the Baku garrison named Menzhinsky, who was a friend of his father. “My father used to say that he had to be a true Muslim,” he said.

Rasulzade also recalled his physics and mathematics teacher, who in addition to teaching nurtured in his students “a revolutionary spirit against tsarism” (12). Later, this thinker cited what he believed were the three main reasons that linked the people of Poland and Azerbaijan: 1. Azerbaijan’s affiliation with the family of the Caucasus nations; 2. the predominance of Turkic population; 3. the suppression of this nation by Russian imperialism.

The afore-mentioned factors bolstered the unity of Polish and Azerbaijani public figures and politicians, who subsequently established independent national states, although different political regimes were at the helm of state. The ADR’s establishment included ethnic Poles Viktor Viktorovich Klevensky, Stanislav Stanislavovich Vosnevich, Lieutenant-General Masey Alexandrovich Sulkevich (who came from a family of Polish Tatars) and others (13). However, the closest cooperation was maintained when representatives of the Azerbaijani democratic government were in emigration. According to M.A. Rasulzade, who emigrated to Poland in the early 30s, the above-mentioned Colonel Lapinsky, who fought heroically in the Caucasus, continued his struggle for the liberation of these peoples decades thereafter. In 1937, he published a pamphlet titled “Revolution in the Caucasus” in Paris whereby he cited the need for achieving freedom of all Caucasus nations (14).

In recent years, the Azerbaijani government contributed to the publication of a huge number of archival documents pertaining to the heritage of A.M. Topchubashov (Topchibashi). The documents derived from his Paris archives of 1919-1940 reveal numerous letters, protocols and reports concerning the active participation of Azerbaijani democrats in Promethean organizations in the period from 1923 to 1940, as well as the circulation of the “Prometheus” magazine (15). It is hard to say which of these is the most interesting document. For example, there is a letter from T. Holowko, a



Polish politician and close associate of J. Pilsudski, addressed to Topchubashov, whereby Holowko asked him to accept a subsidy from the Polish government and promote the publication of the Prometheus magazine dated September 17, 1926.

“I kindly request you, honorable chairman, to dedicate all of your experience and authority to ensure possible publication of the magazine soon... This will be proof of the fact that Paris is capable of interaction,” Holowko wrote.

At the same time, Holowko noted that the assistance that the Polish government was requesting to accept was deemed by the latter as necessary, “taking into consideration the friendship that you [Topchibashi - N.A.] displayed to my people in the difficult years of bondage.”

The conclusion of the letter perfectly reflects all the realities of the two nations’ destinies. “In conclusion of my letter, let me heed attention to the fact that my people are aware better than anyone else of all the tribulations and misfortunes of emigration and when someone came to their aid... Be assured, honorable Chairman, of my sincere respect for you. I am always at your service. T. Holowko.” (16).

There is also a document entitled “Letter of A.M. Topchibashi to Ismet Inonu, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Turkey, concerning the memorandum allegedly filed to the Turkish government by the executives of the Caucasus Center in Paris, which was opposed to the Caucasus parties and organizations that were part of the Promethean movement”, dated January 31, 1931, from Saint-Cloud.

“I don’t know anything about the content of this document,” Ali Mardan Bay wrote when he served as chairman of the Azerbaijan Republic. “However, the same Georgian sources cited its tendency to unfriendly interpret the real sympathy that Poland has been displaying toward us and



Memorial plaque and a photo of Colonel Vali Bay Yedigâr, Azerbaijani officer of the Polish army

our Georgian and North Caucasus neighbors. I am referring to the sympathies that move us so profoundly and that all Caucasus patriots are highly appreciative for." (17).

Numerous documents indicating that a significant number of Azerbaijani officers served in the Polish army have been revealed as well. The "Paris Archives" of Topchibashi contain 17 documents dating back to 1922-1928 that are absolutely different -- from ordinary letters and reports to diplomatic notes. For example, one may even trace Topchibashi's consistent solicitations regarding the recruitment of servicemen to the Polish army, such as the one concerning Colonel Israfil Bay Israfilov.

1. November 27, 1923. "A letter from Colonel Israfil Bay Israfilov, a former commander of the 5th Baku Regiment, to A. M. Topchibashi, requesting assistance in drafting Azerbaijani officers who are in Poland to the Polish army" (18).
2. December 14, 1923. "Note[! – N.A.] (19) of A. M. Topchibashi to the General Staff of the Polish Army requesting to admit Colonel Israfil Bay Israfilov and Captain Vali Bay Yedigâr to a course of study in Polish military schools" [Paris].

3. December 14, 1923. "A note by A. M. Topchibashi to First Lieutenant Vali Bay Yedigâr regarding the enrollment of the latter and Colonel Israfil Bay Israfilov for training in the officer schools of the Polish army [Saint-Cloud].
4. March 31, 1924. "A letter from A. M. Topchibashi to Colonel Israfil Bay Israfilov, a former commander of the 5th Baku Regiment, whereby congratulations were extended over the admission of Azerbaijani officers to military schools of the Republic of Poland" (20) [Paris].

Certain information concerning Azerbaijani military men serving in the Polish army was also found in the Military Archives of the Republic of Poland (21). It is noteworthy that petitions on drafting Azerbaijani officers to the Polish army are marked with a slightly earlier date in Warsaw documents. In this case, the correspondence was kept between M.A. Rasulzade and J. Pilsudski:

1. March 31, 1923. A letter of M.A. Rasulzade in French, sent from Istanbul to Warsaw and addressed to "His Excellency Marshal Pilsudski, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Poland". In the



Busts of military leaders in Warsaw located adjacent to one another: Colonel Vali Bay Yadigarov, Azerbaijani officer of the Polish army, and Maciej Sulkiwicz, Polish general of the Azerbaijani army

letter, Rasulzade requests admission to the Polish army of Azerbaijani officers who could not support themselves.

2. Marshall Pilsudski's reply to "Mr. M.A. Rasulzade, President of the National Center of Azerbaijan, sent to Constantinople" whereby he had to decline the request. "It is my greatest wish to save the brave officers of the Azerbaijani army and at the same time admit them to our army...However, since there is currently a lack of vacant spots in our military schools, I have to postpone the answer to this question until the fall of 1923" (22).

Taking into consideration the cited dates, this correspondence was carried out after Pilsudski stepped down to be succeeded by Gabriel Narutowicz in 1922, though in December that year he was appointed Chief of General Staff. However, he resigned from this post on May 30, 1923. Moreover, Rasulzade's letter cited 10 Azerbaijani officers residing in Constantinople at the time as immigrants, including Israfil Bay and Vali Bay Yadigar. Nevertheless, the letter addressed by Col.

Israfil Bay Israfilov to A.M. Topchibashi (November 27, 1923) was sent from Chmielno, Poland. Perhaps, the initiative on arranging the above-mentioned officers' drafting to the Polish army was taken over by A. M. Topchubashov under these circumstances. As a result, the first Azerbaijani officers of the Polish army from 1924 were the following military men: Vali Bay Yadigar, Israfil Bay Mammad [referenced in the Paris archives as "Israfil Bay Israfilov" - N.A.], Jahangir Bay Kazim, Hamid Bay Mammadzade, and Kazini Bay Safaroglu. Drafting to military service certainly ensured the provision of financial support to the servicemen. At the same time, in keeping with one of Pilsudski's formal decrees concerning "religious worship in the military", "soldiers professing Islam were exempted from military training and exercises on their religious holidays". In the garrisons where mosques were available, "soldiers were [also] exempt from exercises" from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Friday.

On the one hand, these and many other documents testify to the significant support provided by Poland for representatives of the Azerbaijani government and its

people who ended up in exile; on the other hand, they indicate that former members of the ADR government had assumed full responsibility for taking care of their fellow countrymen living outside their home country. They did not abandon the idea of establishing a true democracy either, which is seen from the "Note of M. Y. Mehdiyev (23) [Paris, April 12, 1938], the head of the Azerbaijani delegation and a member of the Azerbaijan National Center, to V. Peltz, the attache of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Paris. The note said, "In order to maintain its influence, the National Center needs to represent our political emigrants as much and as comprehensively as possible and be comprised of representatives of all political trends, including those that are opposed to it" (24).

The fate of Azerbaijani democrats has been reflected in everlasting struggle. Initially, it was a struggle for the nation's inalienable right to have its own language, religion and self-determination, which further translated into a struggle for establishing an independent state. Having founded an independent state, which was the first parliamentary republic in the East and a perfect model of democracy, members of its government left no stone unturned to maintain the republic and attain its international recognition amid an extremely challenging political situation both at home and on the world stage. A group of more than 30 eminent thinkers, policymakers, diplomats and encyclopaedist scholars contributed to the founding of this state. This group of heroic enlighteners of the 20th century, led by M.A. Rasulzade, had come a long way, formulating the idea of national revival into a coherent system of views within the framework of a secular state. It lasted only 23 months. However, the history made during this time period, the road covered, as well as the political and cultural outcome of those accomplishments, became a true asset of the nation. Perhaps, the ADR's demise was followed by the most dramatic time in the lives of its founders, who ended up away from their homeland. As mentioned above, it was this particular period of their activity that saw their most frequent contacts with the Polish government. At the same time, all of the data revealed through research of the Azerbaijani-Polish cooperation in the 1920s and 1930s confirm that Azerbaijani democrats continued struggling for the idea of an independent democratic Azerbaijan even during their stay abroad and remained committed to this cause until their dying day. ❀

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12. Resulzade Mehmed Emin. Azerbaydzan w walce o niepolegosc. Azerbaydzanskie wydawnictwo narodowe Warszawa, 1938, с. 169.

Memorial plaque honoring Michal Andrzejkovich-Butovt, Polish explorer and researcher, who described Azerbaijani monuments in his book "The Caucasus chornicles" in the mid-19th century

13. V.V. Klevensky served as Minister of Social Security. He was born in 1883 in the city of Yelizavetpol and was an ethnic Pole [N. Yagublu. Founders of the Republic. Baku, Nurchular, 2018, p.378]. S.S. Vosnevich was born on May 8, 1889. He came from a noble family. He graduated from Petersburg University, majoring in Law. He served as an officer in the Tsar's army. He held the position of Secretary of the Consular Agency of Poland in Baku [the same source, p. 468]. He also headed the committee for Poland in the ADR parliament [Wilson H. Graeme. Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. Abu Dhabi, 2018, p.153]. M.A. Sulkevich (1865-1920), Lieutenant General. He was born in 1865 in the Kemeishi suburb on the territory of present-day Lithuania. In 1919, he arrived in Azerbaijan and was appointed Chief of General Staff of the ADR Army. He made a great contribution to the formation of the national military units of Azerbaijan. Following the invasion of Azerbaijan by the Bolsheviks, he was arrested on April 27, 1920 and sentenced to execution by shooting on June 15, 1920 [the same source, p. 391].
14. Rezulzade Mehmed Emin. Azerbaydzan w walce..., c. 169.
15. A.M. Topchibashi. The Paris archives of 1919-1940. 4 volumes. Moscow: "Fiction", 2016/2018. Statistical data regarding the countries where the "Prometheus" magazine was circulated was confidential and handwritten by the person reporting the information strictly in the specially designated copies of the document. One of those copies is kept at the Russian State Military Archive in Moscow, which has a large stack of so-called "Polish trophy documents." According to this data, "Prometheus" issues were sent out to numerous countries in the following quantities: Poland - 109 copies, Syria - 70 copies, Germany - 65 copies, England - 25 copies, Turkey - 91 copies, etc.
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17. Topchubashov, himself, explained the mentioned misunderstanding by a provocation from a "third



power" [USSR – N.A.], "aimed at influencing the Turkish public opinion, which would be unfavorable for Poland, whose friendship and pro-Turkish sympathy do not need to be reminded here." A.M. Topchibashi. The Paris archives, 1919-1940. Volume 4. Moscow: "Fiction", 2018, p. 19-20.

18. The letter is supplemented by the following words, "Since the day of the occupation of our poor homeland by the Bolsheviks we have been unable to contact our people, who might be able to lend a hand to us; on the other hand, we are aware of the critical (financial) plight of our delegation [the Paris archives, V. 2, p. 555-557].
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23. M.Y. Mehdiyev (1891-1952) was a member of the ADR parliament and the Azerbaijani delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. Along with M.A. Rasulzade he represented Azerbaijan in the Prometheus organization [N. Yagublu. Founders of the Republic. Baku, Nurchular, 2018, p. 454].
24. A.M.Топчибаши. Парижский архив. Том 4..., с.300.