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# ACTIVITY OF THE AZERBAIJAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC'S DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN GEORGIA

The government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic began to pursue an active, constructive and principled foreign policy from the very proclamation of the ADR's independence in an effort to attain the country's recognition internationally and ensure its security. Taking into consideration relevant geopolitical interests, this policy had a special emphasis on developing relations with the neighboring countries, in particular, the Democratic Republic of Georgia (DRG), which declared independence two days prior to the ADR. Fruitful work was swiftly done to establish a legal and contractual basis required for forging and expanding mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries in the economic, financial, energy, communications, transport and military and defense fields. The two countries signed a number of agreements (1), including those on the issue of additional bonds (November 15, 1918), exchange of goods (December 26, 1918), telegraph communication (January 3, 1919), a railway link (March 8, 1919), the emission of additional bonds and exchange of Transcaucasian bonds (June 4, 1919), military and defense cooperation (June 16, 1919), and transit (February 5, 1920).

The two countries de-facto recognized each other's sovereignty. In order to diversify and develop bilateral

relations, they established ties at the level of diplomatic missions. Azerbaijan opened its diplomatic representation in Georgia in June 1918, while the neighboring republic launched its diplomatic mission in Azerbaijan in October the same year. Mahammadyusif Jafarov and Faris Bay Vakilov sequentially served as the ADR's diplomatic representatives in Georgia, and Nikolay Kartsivadze and Grigol Alshibaya held the same position, representing the DRG in Azerbaijan. In November 1918, an ADR consulate (later designated as Consulate General), headed by Dr. Mahmud Bay Afandiyev, was established in the Georgian city of Batum.

Mahammadyusif Jafarov (1885-1938) was appointed Azerbaijan's first diplomatic representative in Georgia in June 1918. M. Y. Jafarov, a lawyer, was an MP represented in the 4th Russian State Duma in 1912-1917 and in the Transcaucasian Seim from February 23 to May 26, 1918. M. Y. Jafarov, one of the 24 members of the Azerbaijani National Council who signed the Declaration of Independence, served in the first ADR government and previously as Minister of Commerce and Industry in the Transcaucasian Commissariat, the independent government of Transcaucasia, which was established on November 15, 1917. M. Y. Jafarov's tenure as a statesman, including his efforts as a lawmaker and

*Besiki Street in Tbilisi where Azerbaijan's diplomatic representation was located in 1918-1920*



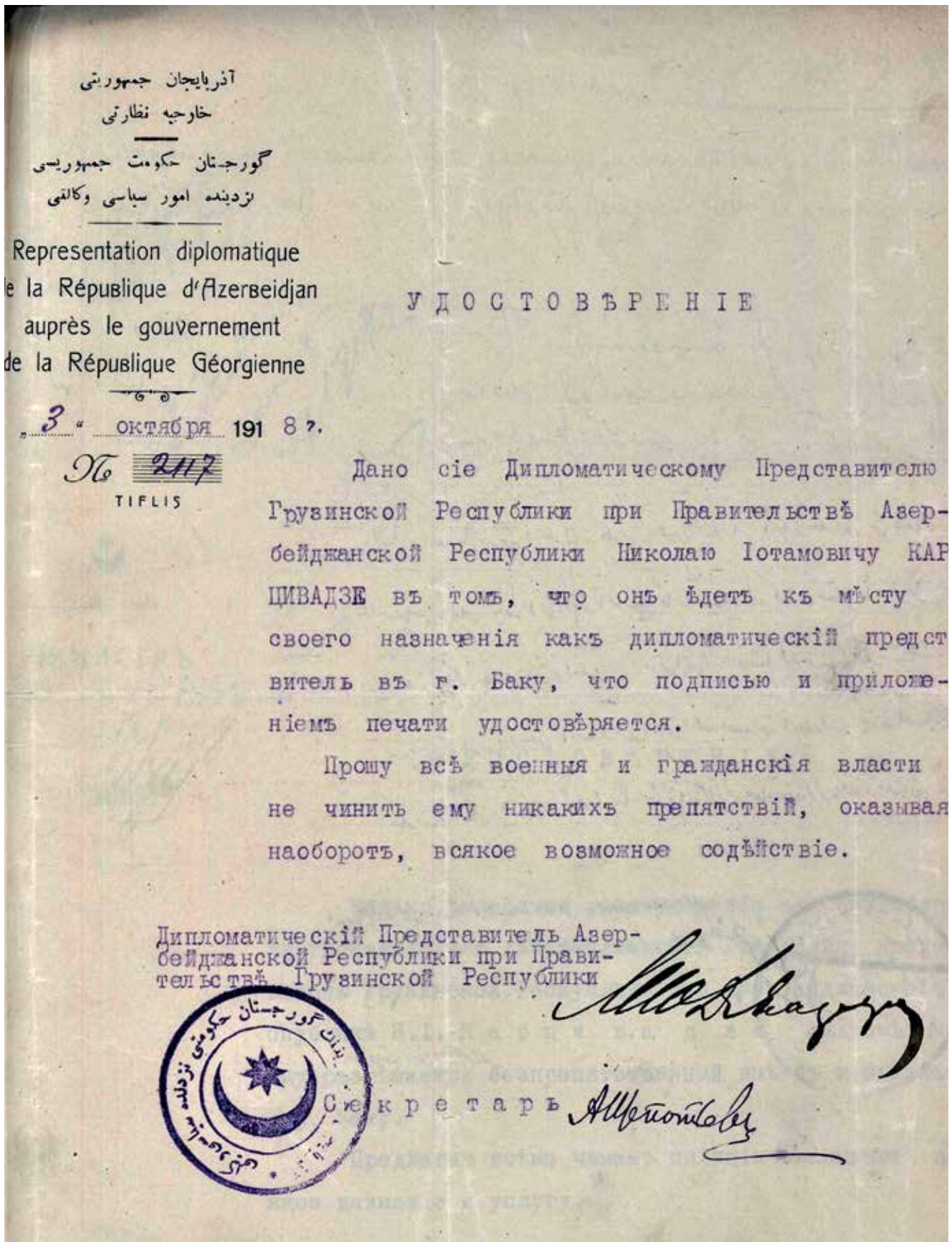
short-lived experience of serving as a cabinet minister, certainly affected the activity of the diplomat, who was well-known in the South Caucasus political circles.

According to archival documents and media publications released in the Georgian and Russian languages in Tiflis in 1918-1919, the ADR diplomatic representation in the Georgian capital and the head of the mission stood out for their vigorous efforts, in particular, in terms of the latter's worthily representing his country at official events and international meetings held in the city, in accordance with the rules of diplomatic protocol. He also closely followed the political and social developments ongoing in the region, communicated closely with the local community and the media, and focused on delivering the truth about Azerbaijan abroad, the reports said. M.Y.Jafarov's regular press statements regarding the military and socio-political developments that occurred during the liberation of Baku from the Bolshevik-Dashnak invasion in August 1918 were pivotal for not only informing the Georgian public on the matter but also dismissing the circulating false rumors in this regard.

Sakartvelos Respublika (translated from Georgian as "the Republic of Georgia") newspaper, the DRG government's official mouthpiece, quoted the Azerbaijani diplomat as saying in an article headlined "Jafarov's opinion" in its issue released on August 6, 1918, "Ottoman and

Azerbaijani troops entered Baku on August 1, lodging over a distance of about 1 verst (an obsolete Russian unit of length) around the city. As for such oil-refining districts as Balakhany and Surakhani, they are said to have been fully rescued. We also learned on Saturday that Khan Khoyski, Ashurov and Hajinski, members of the Azerbaijani government, have already arrived in Baku. The rumors suggesting that the Ottoman army's aid would clear the way for Baku's transfer to the Ottoman control are false; Baku will definitely be under full jurisdiction of Azerbaijan." (2).

Several days after the complete liberation of Baku, on September 15, 1918, the "Sakartvelo" (translated from Georgian as "Georgia") newspaper, a mouthpiece of the Georgian national democrats, published a report of the information office of the ADR's diplomatic representation which said, "We have received information from Baku that absolute stability has been established in the city. All incidents ceased after the troops entered the city. Dozens of looters have been killed. Nazim Bay has been appointed the commandant. The authority of the previous self-government of the city, which existed prior to the Ilyushkin-led Bolshevik Seim, has been reinstated. All the food-related tasks have been vested in the self-government. The stores are gradually opening. A water pipeline is operational. The oil industrialists have essentially managed to save themselves. Traffic



### *ID card of Georgia's diplomatic envoy in Azerbaijan Nikolay Kartsivadze (front side)*

was swiftly resumed over the telegraph and the railroad. The fleet sent a delegation to see the commandant, seeking permission to send their wives and children out of the city. They were granted permission to do so. The Azerbaijani government provided assistance to the Georgians, allocating 50,000 Rubles for their primary needs. The publication of the "Open Word" newspaper, which was suspended during the Bolshevik rule, has resumed. The Kaspi newspaper will also be published in the coming days" (3).

The DRG government was concerned over the fate of the Georgian citizens residing in Baku during the tensions in the city in August-September 1918. Konstantin Gvarjeladze, Georgia's acting foreign minister, sent Letter No. 3154 to M.Y.Jafarov in this regard on September 9, 1918. The Azerbaijani diplomatic representative was quick to respond to that query (4). In a response letter sent to K. Gvarjeladze on the following day, M. Jafarov pledged on behalf of the ADR government that resolute measures would be taken to ensure the personal safety and security of the property of all Baku residents, including the Georgian population (5).

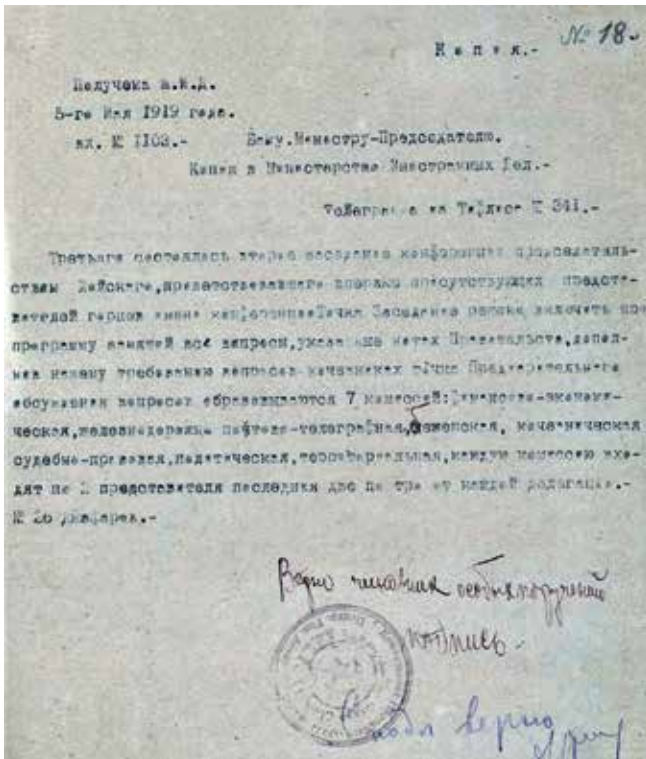
The Sakartvelos Respublika newspaper published an interview with diplomatic representative M. Jafarov in its issue released on October 26, 1918. Jafarov answered questions regarding the obstacles impeding Azerbaijani-Georgian cooperation in the oil sector, the solution of problems that emerged with Baku's food supply, the Ottoman army's advances toward Derbent, and the ongoing efforts to achieve recognition of Azerbaijan's independence. He also said the reports of some Tiflis-based newspapers regarding significant destruction of areas and the killing of numerous Armenians during the liberation of Baku from occupation were overly exaggerated, false or biased (6).

Archival sources indicate that M. Jafarov closely communicated with Georgian government officials from the very beginning of his diplomatic service and held talks with them on various issues. In a "classified" letter dated June 21, 1918, he reported to ADR Foreign Minister M. H. Hajinski about the meeting he had with the head of the Georgian government, Noe Ramishvili. M.Jafarov noted that the Georgian government was in favor of boosting its cooperation with Azerbaijan, saying that N. V. Ramishvili had expressed his government's readiness to speedily solve the issues causing



a cool-down in bilateral relations, in line with the interests of the two countries. According to the letter, the head of the Georgian government also touched upon the issue of dividing the property of the former Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic (TDFR) among the South Caucasus countries. He also informed his interlocutor that a 2,500 people-strong German regiment had been deployed in Georgia and that another regiment was due to arrive there in the coming days, adding that they were looking to move toward Baku to acquire oil and oil products. M. Jafarov, for his part, brought Ramishvili's attention to the division of the disputed territories between the two countries, stressing the need for finding a negotiated solution to this issue, as opposed to military action. In this context, he regarded the acts committed by the German and Georgian armed forces against the local Turkic population during the Borchali incident as unacceptable. N. Ramishvili replied while commenting on the matter that the military operations in Borchali were allegedly aimed at opening up roads upon the request of Vahit Pasha (Note 1) (7).

It is worth mentioning that in the summer of 1918, certain armed groups in Borchali, mainly comprised of Armenian gangs, relying on the presence of German troops, stepped up pressure on the local Muslim



*One of the documents reflecting Azerbaijani-Georgian events in 1918-1920*

Turkish residents. M. Jafarov’s concern over the challenges faced by the Borchali residents is clearly seen from his rhetoric during the meeting with N. Ramishvili. Moreover, he sent several letters regarding this issue to the head of Germany’s military mission in the Caucasus, Maj.-Gen. Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein. The head of the ADR’s diplomatic mission in Georgia supplemented one of those letters, undersigned on August 31, 1918, with copies of the complaints, filed by influential Borchali figures Boyuk Bay Akhundov (Note 2) and Jalal Bay Akhundov to the headquarters of the German military mission in Georgia, as well as a copy of a response letter from a captain of the German HQ, which proved that Armenians were responsible for the pillaging that had taken place. He noted once again that instances of pressure on the Muslims similar to the Borchali clashes persisted, suggesting that an international commission be established to investigate the havoc that had taken place and prevent further attacks on Muslims (8).

The head of the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission reiterated the ADR government’s stance on the issue of dividing the property and documents of the former TDFR, which was raised during the above-mentioned meeting with N. Ramishvili, in a letter addressed to the acting Georgian Foreign Minister K. Gvarjeladze on August 15, 1918. He added that a decision had been passed to consider the issue in arbitration bodies (9). The Georgian

government, in turn, agreed to establish an arbitration commission comprised of Azerbaijani and Georgian representatives to deal with the matter.

The military aggression perpetrated by the Armenian (Ararat) Republic against Azerbaijan in 1918-1920 prompted the ADR’s diplomatic mission in Georgia to step up its efforts to address the issue.

The ADR government and the Armenian leadership sometimes maintained correspondence and communication not directly, but through the diplomatic representations active in Georgia. The first protest note was sent to the opposing side in the summer of 1918 via the diplomatic representation in Georgia. It condemned the initial invasive actions taken by Gen. Andranik-led Armenian military units, namely, intruding into Azerbaijani territory and taking over the road leading to the city of Shusha near Asgaran and a part of the Zangazur province in an area close to Gorus. In a protest note to Armenia’s Charge d’Affaires in Georgia A. Jamalyan, dated August 15, 1918, M. Jafarov made a call on behalf of the ADR government for an immediate pullout of the Armenian troops from the Azerbaijani territory. M. Jafarov reported in writing to the acting Azerbaijani Foreign Minister, M. Takinski, on October 23, 1918, that in accordance with the latter’s cable, he had met with A. Jamalyan and informed him that T. Bekzadyan’s appointment as Armenia’s diplomatic representative in Azerbaijan was inadmissible for the Azerbaijani government. M. Jafarov’s letter made it clear that he had spoken with the Armenian charge d’affaires in a peaceful manner, in accordance with the instructions of Azerbaijan’s Council of Ministers issued on October 15, 1918. M. Jafarov said during the meeting that some Armenian media outlets were seeking to drive a wedge between the two countries by embellishing certain developments; A. Jamalyan concurred and pledged to inform his government in this regard; the sides further discussed ways of leaving behind the differences, putting an end to the conflict and normalizing the relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia (10).

In an urgent diplomatic cable sent to M. Jafarov on December 9, 1918, ADR Foreign Minister M. Takinski asked him to notify Armenia’s charge d’affaires in Georgia that the Garagoyunlu village pertained to “the Gazakh province, which is an integral part of the Azerbaijan Republic”, and residents of that village were

### *ID card of Georgia's diplomatic envoy in Azerbaijan Nikolay Kartsvadze*

not in favor of acceding to the Ararat Republic in any shape or form (11).

"Kavkazskoye Slovo" ("Caucasus Word") newspaper's issue released on October 23, 1918 and the Baku-based official "Azerbaijan newspaper's issue, published on October 27, 1918, carried M. Jafarov's response letter to A. Jamalyan's protest note (Note 3) over the liberation of Baku from occupation by the Islamic Army of the Caucasus, sent to Azerbaijan's diplomatic representative in Georgia on October 16, 1918. In his letter, M. Jafarov said that A. Jamalyan's allegations regarding mass arrests, blackmail and looting of Armenians in Baku, as well as the Azerbaijani government's purportedly taking belated measures to prevent the pillage, were based on inaccurate information. Jafarov noted that just a few months ago, in March 1918, "the Armenians, who curried favor with the Bolsheviks", committed mass killings of the civilian Muslim population in Baku and Shamakhi, with the death toll exceeding 10,000 people, according to official estimates; in spring that same year, Armenian armed units razed to the ground over 200 villages in the Irevan governorate (12).

A diplomatic note sent by M. Jafarov to A. Jamalyan was published in a story headlined "Armenian army's attack on Azerbaijan", which was carried by Sakartvelos Respublika, an official Georgian newspaper, in its November 22, 1918 issue.

"According to the data available to my government, on November 2, Armenian military units crossed the border of the Azerbaijan Republic, trespassing the boundaries of the 9th section located on the northern side of the Goycha lake in the Ganja province. 60,000 local Muslim residents faced military violence and looting. I express protest of my government in this regard. I request bringing information about this incident to your government's attention in order to take urgent measures to prevent violence against Muslims in the Ganja province and clear the Azerbaijani territories of the Armenian units," the message said (13).

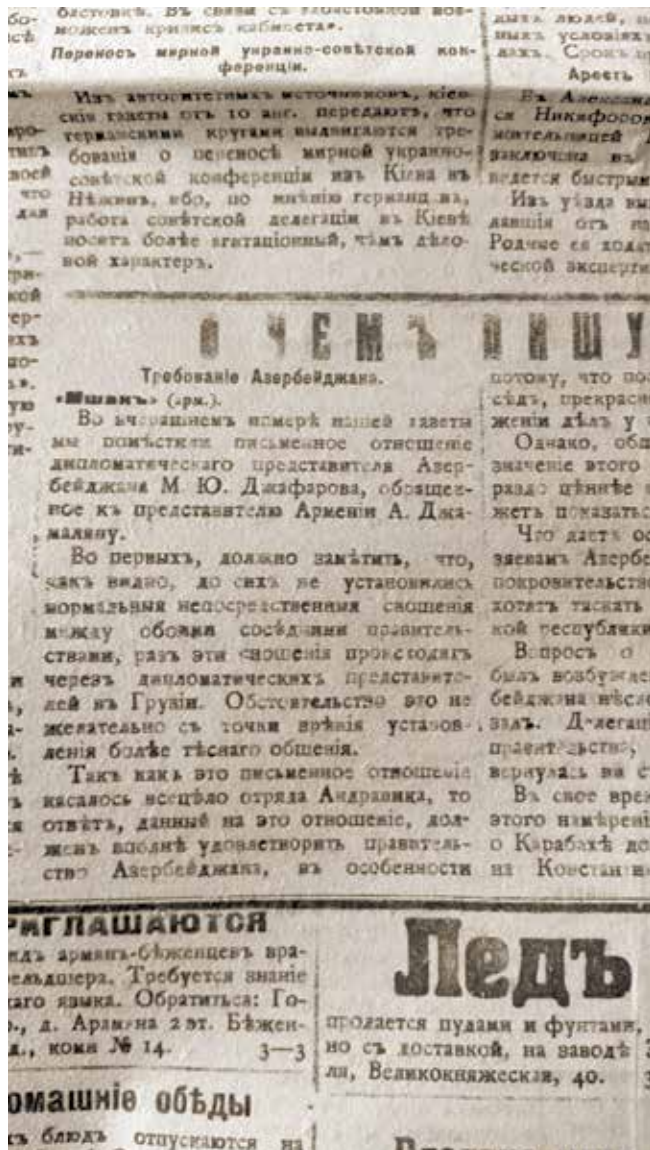
M. Jafarov also held regular meetings with representatives of other countries based in Tiflis to exchange views on pressing issues. Those discussions were covered by the Georgian state-run media. Sakartvelos Respublika reported in its issue published on January 29, 1919, "Beach, the head of England's civilian political mission, met with the head of Azerbaijan's diplomatic



mission in Georgia, M. Y. Jafarov, and had a long conversation with him. The head of the French diplomatic mission, General Chardinye, had a meeting with M. Jafarov as well" (14).

During the first session of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia (Parliament), held on March 12, 1919 in the former Governor's Palace and the Seim building White Hall, both lounges designated for diplomats were full. The meeting was attended by the heads of the diplomatic missions of Azerbaijan (M. Y. Jafarov), England (Major Sanders), France (Captain Hasfeld), USA (Dr. Mein), Switzerland (Berlemon), Spain and the Netherlands (Pereslianta), Poland (Ostrowski), Greece (Manuilidis), Ukraine (Kulinski), Lithuania (Dailida), Czechoslovakia (Svatosh), Iran (Mazaratdovle) and the Mountain Republic (F. Akhundov and V-G. Jabagiyev), chairman of the Armenian parliament (Sako Saakyan), as well as members of the Armenian delegation participating in a Georgian-Armenian conference (15).

Available sources indicate that M. Jafarov had extensively participated in the events of the Azerbaijani Muslim community in Tiflis and conducted charity campaigns on religious holidays. The Kavkazskoye Slovo



*Georgian media clearly expressed the stance of Azerbaijan’s diplomatic representative in 1918-1920*

needy Muslim families on the holiday date on behalf of the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission,” the article said (16).

In another issue, Kavkazskoye Slovo reported that M. Jafarov had authorized Mirza Sharif Mirzayev (1860-1937), a graduate of Gori Seminary, teacher, Orientalist, translator and publicist, to receive documents from the former Caucasus vicarate’s chancellery archives concerning Muslim clerics, education, the special department and the former press-related issues committee of Tiflis (17).

The powers and scope of the activity of the Azerbaijani diplomatic representation in Georgia included providing consular services and legal assistance to citizens. A notification of the diplomatic mission published in the Sakartvelo newspaper’s February 22, 1919 issue said most of the people arriving in Azerbaijan lacked due permission, which caused confusion at the border. According to the notification, authorization from the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission was compulsory for those traveling from Georgia to Azerbaijan, along with permission from the Georgian authorities (18). 🌟

**to be concluded**

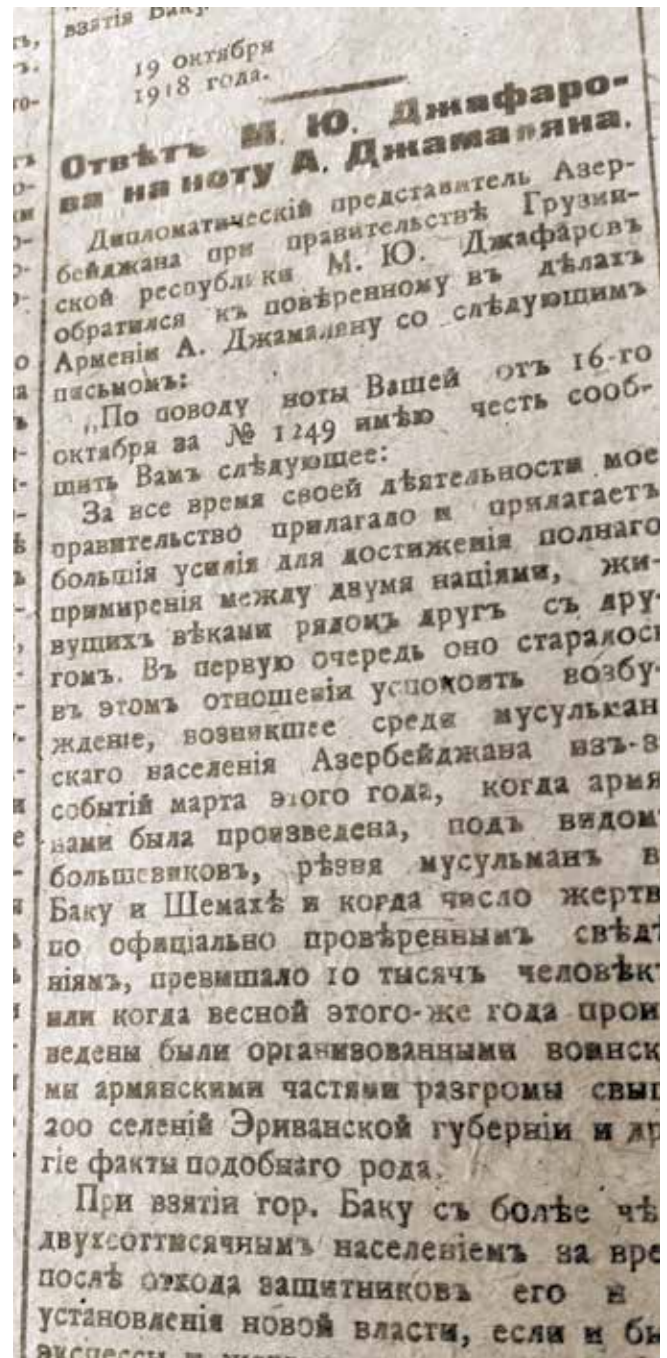
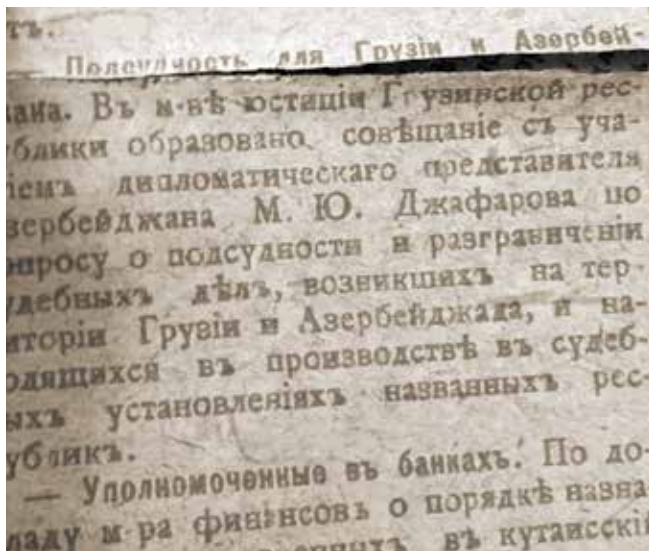
**Note 1.** Mehmet Vahit Pasha was Commander of the Ottoman Eastern Army group. Initial establishment of the Islamic Army of the Caucasus, which was an administrative division of the Eastern Army group, was supervised by Vahit Pasha.

**Note 2.** Boyuk Bay Akhundov hailed from the Ashaghi Saral village of the Borchali province. Akhundov stood in the elections to the Constituent Assembly of Georgia (Parliament) in February 1919 as a nominee of the Borchali Province Muslims Group (see Fakhri Valehoghlu-Hajilar. The first-ever Turkish Muslim member of the Georgian parliament. Garachoplu Huseyngulu Mammadov. “Birlik” (“Unity”) magazine, Baku, 2018, No. 30, p. 50-53).

**Note 3.** See the text of A. Jamalyan’s diplomatic note. Kavkazskoye Slovo newspaper, 1918, October 18, No. 223.

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248-249, 269-271, 534, 542; Gürcüstan Mərkəzi Tarix Arxivi, fond 1864, siyahı 2, iş № 33.

2. "Sakartvelos Respublika" qəzeti, 1918, 6 avqust, № 11, s. 6.
3. "Sakartvelo" qəzeti, 1918, 24 sentyabr, № 176, s. 2-3.
4. Документы и материалы по внешней политике Закавказья и Грузии, Тифлис, 1919, с. 442.
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6. "Sakartvelos Respublika", 1918, 26 oktyabr, № 75, s. 3.
7. Azərbaycan Respublikasının Dövlət Arxivi, fond 970, siyahı 1, iş 7, vərəq 13 (Бах: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика (документы и материалы), Баку, 1998, с. 26-27).
8. ARDA, f.970, s. 1, iş 18, v.89 (Бах: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика (документы и материалы), Баку, 1998, с. 55-56).
9. Документы и материалы по внешней политике Закавказья..., с. 438-439.
10. ARDA, f.970, s. 1, iş 7, v. 1-3 (Бах: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя..., с. 90-91).
11. ARDA, f. 970, s. 1, iş 14, v. 9 (Бах: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя..., с. 109).
12. «Кавказское слово» qəzeti, 1918, 23 oktyabr, № 227.
13. "Sakartvelos Respublika" qəz., 1918, 22 noyabr, № 98, s. 3.
14. "Sakartvelos Respublika" qəz., 1919, 29 yanvar, № 22, s. 2.
15. "Sakartvelo" qəz., 1919, 13 mart, № 57, s. 2.

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16. «Кавказское слово» qəz., 1918, 19 sentyabr, № 199.
17. «Кавказское слово» qəzeti, 1918, 5 noyabr, № 238.
18. "Sakartvelo" qəz., 1919, 22 fevral, № 41, s. 2.