

Fakhri VALEHOGHLU-HAJIYEV
Doctor of History

ACTIVITY OF AZERBAIJAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC'S DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN GEORGIA

Conclusion. See the beginning in IRS-Heritage 2-3(39-40), 2019

Azerbaijan's diplomatic representative in Georgia was authorized to hold talks and sign documents on behalf of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic's government. The *Kavkazskoye Slovo* ("Caucasus word") newspaper reported in its issue released on August 4, 1918 that the Azerbaijani government had vested general oversight over the work of Azerbaijani diplomats accredited in various government agencies of the Republic of Georgia in diplomatic representative Mammad Yusif Jafarov (1).

Another issue of the mentioned newspaper said that M. Y. Jafarov had attended a meeting held at Georgia's Ministry of Justice to discuss division of the cases that were being reviewed by the Azerbaijani and Georgian judiciary bodies (2).

Jafarov took part in the talks focusing on the release of joint bonds (securities) designated for financial, monetary and lending transactions among the three South Caucasus republics in the fall of 1918 and inked final agreements concluded as a result of the discussions.

It is noteworthy that on July 20, 1918, the Georgian and Armenian governments signed an agreement on the release of 200 million South Caucasus Commissariat bonds without notifying the Azerbaijani side beforehand. The Azerbaijani government lambasted the move (3).

In the wake of the Azerbaijani ambassador's protesting the re-issue of bonds, the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (DRG) banned

postal and bank transfers of money to Azerbaijan, the *Sakartvelo* newspaper reported on August 11, 1918 (4).

An agreement was reached in Tiflis in November 1918 to hold a Transcaucasian conference to be joined by Azerbaijani, Georgian, Armenian and North Caucasus (Mountaineers Union) representatives. A decision was passed that Azerbaijan would be represented at the event by Dr. M. Vakilov and the diplomatic representative in Georgia, M. Y. Jafarov (5). Armenian representatives did not attend the conference, which started with its first session on November 14, 1918. Therefore, the Georgian representatives brought further holding of the conference into question.

Taking the floor during the debate, M. Y. Jafarov said that this event, in fact, had not taken place and suggested declaring the start of a new conference with the participation of the representatives of the three republics who were in attendance, i.e. Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Mountaineers Union. However, this proposal was rejected by the representatives of Georgia and Northern Caucasus (6).

The conference was therefore postponed after two to three sessions due to the absence of Armenian delegates and resumed at the Georgian Foreign Ministry's building on April 27, 1919.

The Azerbaijani diplomatic representative had informed the Georgian foreign minister that final discussions were due to be held at the forthcoming confer-

The archives of Georgia store documents reflecting the relations of the ADR with the Georgian Republic in 1918-1920

ence with Armenia regarding disputed territories, asking him not to leave relevant matters at the discretion of the Armenian representatives to avoid further misunderstanding (7).

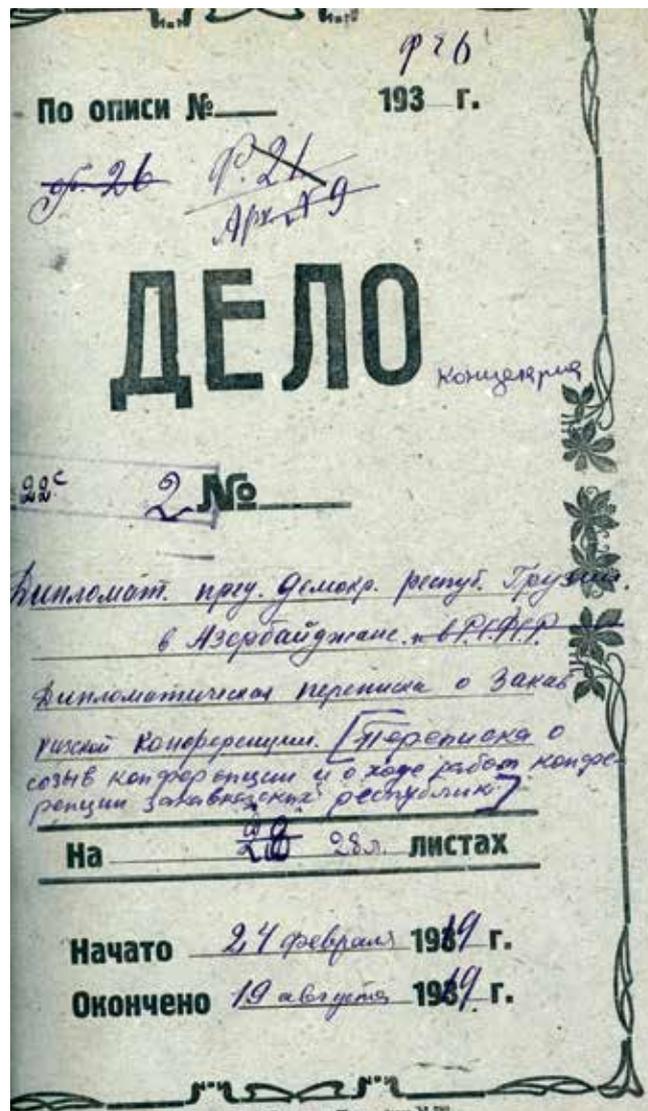
M. Y. Jafarov had already wrapped up his diplomatic mission in Georgia by that time and was serving as Azerbaijan's foreign minister. Jafarov, who was appointed to this position on March 14, 1919, held that post till December 22 before being elected Deputy Speaker of Parliament. Afterwards, Fariz Bay Vakilov (Vakilli) headed Azerbaijan's diplomatic representation in Georgia for about 11 months (March 1919-February 1920) (8) while retaining his previous position as the deputy chief of mission and further served in the capacity of diplomatic representative until the fall of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in April 1920.

Fariz Bay Vakilov (1886-1978), who was born in Tiflis to the family of Ibrahim Agha Vakilov, Major-General on Topography, was an engineer. Just like his predecessor, M. Y. Jafarov, he made a significant contribution to the development of Azerbaijani-Georgian relations while heading the diplomatic mission. He held meetings with representatives of some Western countries, defended Azerbaijan's stance on pivotal issues and signed a number of important documents on behalf of the Azerbaijani government. Many major publications based in Tiflis remained committed to their practice of covering the activity of Azerbaijan's diplomatic representation in Georgia and further collaborated with the diplomatic mission during F. Vakilov's tenure.

The Russian language *Vozrozhdeniye* newspaper released the following announcement undersigned by Khuramovich, the diplomatic mission's secretary, in its second issue published on May 28, 1919, "The Azerbaijani diplomatic representative will accept congratulatory messages over the first anniversary of the Azerbaijan Republic's independence at 3 Paskevich Street from noon to 2 o'clock". No lessons will be held at the mission at this time," the report said (9).

Furthermore, an announcement of the Muslim community of Tiflis, published in the same issue of the newspaper, informed readers that a solemn service was due at 10 a.m. on May 28 at the Juma Mosque located on the city's Botanika (Botany) Street on the occasion of the ADR independence anniversary (10).

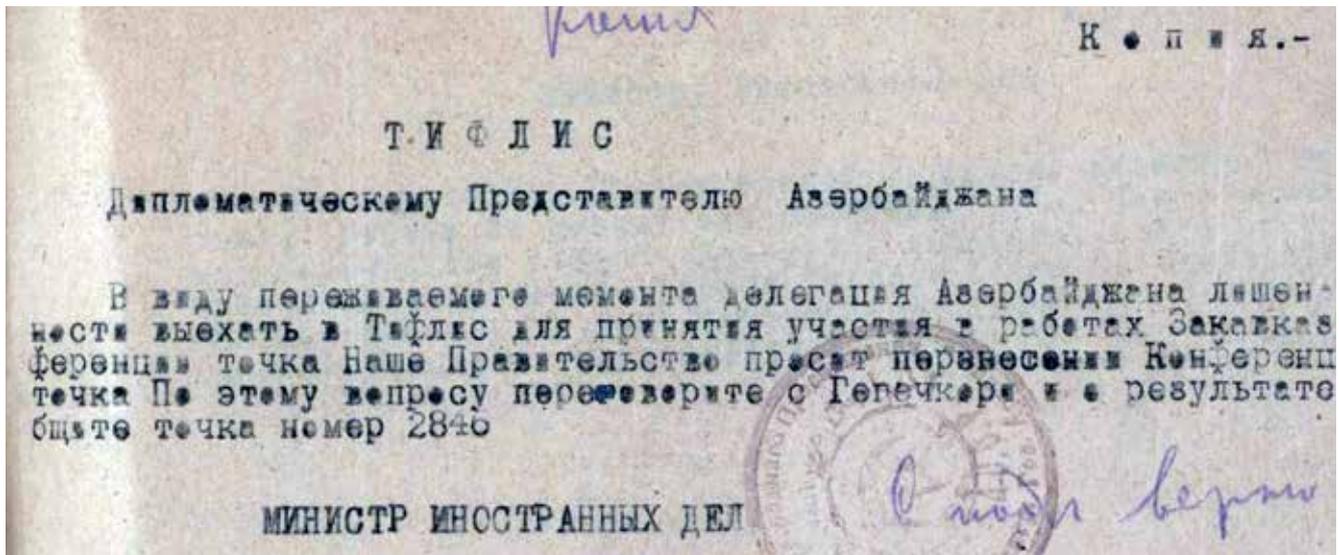
It is noteworthy that the Democratic Republic of



Georgia celebrated its independence anniversary on May 26, 1919 shortly before the ADR independence anniversary. The *Sakartvelo* newspaper published a congratulatory letter written by ADR Prime Minister Nasib Bay Usubbayov (Yusifbayli) on behalf of his government over this remarkable date.

"On this festive day marking the anniversary of the materialization of the Georgian people's national ideals, the government of the Azerbaijan Republic would like to share this great joy with the free nation," the letter said. "The Azerbaijani government extends congratulations over the historic date of Georgia's revival and strongly believes that the Republic of Georgia, a friendly state for the Azerbaijan Republic, will seal full victory and assert itself as a sovereign state" (11).

Sakartvelo reported further, citing Azerbaijan's diplomatic mission in Georgia, that the Circassians had



revolted against Denikin's Volunteer Army and that artillery installations had been brought in from Petrovsk, in addition to new military units of the Volunteer Army, in order to quell the uprising (12).

Sakartvelo, a mouthpiece of the Georgian National Democratic Party, said in its issue released on July 18, 1919 that Fariz Bay Vakilov had expressed protest to the Georgian interior minister, addressed to all Armenians, in a report circulated by Kavkazskoye Slovo, a Tiflis-based Russian language newspaper published with the aid of the Armenian bourgeoisie. This protest was also a response to the appeals defying the Azerbaijani government. The article said further that F. Vakilov had notified the interior minister of the fact that the official reports released by the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission's information bureau had not been published in all of the Press Bureau-affiliated newspapers. Afterwards, the Georgian minister heeded attention to the news reports regarding neighboring republics and issued orders to publish all of the media content provided by diplomatic missions in local newspapers (13).

Official correspondence dating back to 1919-1920 indicates that Fariz Bay Vakilov had fulfilled instructions of the central government bodies promptly and reliably. ADR Foreign Minister M. Y. Jafarov said in a message dated July 9, 1919 and sent to F. Vakilov that it was necessary to deliver a letter to the British command in the South Caucasus expressing Azerbaijan's protest over the instances of violence against Muslims in Armenia (14). Therefore, F. Vakilov discussed the situation facing the Muslims in Armenia in a meeting with Maj.-Gen. G. N. Cory, the commander of British armed forces (allied troops) in Transcaucasia, held on July 12, 1919, and

handed over an official note.

"Your Excellency, my government has been receiving information on a daily basis about the pressure and persecution of Muslims by the Armenian government in the Irevan governorate and the Nakhchivan province," the message said. "Regular Armenian military units are being sent to Muslim-populated villages and they are razing those villages to the ground, sparing no women and children. Hundreds of residents fleeing the destroyed villages cross Tiflis every day, seeking rescue in Azerbaijan. Muslims from the Irevan governorate have been temporarily transferred to the Armenian government's control against their will and in accordance with the will of the Allied Powers. Prior to the announcement of this measure, the British command received a number of letters from public organizations expressing protest over such a solution of the problem."

The Azerbaijani government's note said further that the mentioned letters of protest clearly indicated that the developments that occurred recently "provided no assurance of the Armenian government's unbiased treatment of Muslims and triggered their serious concern regarding their fate. It has now become crystal clear that this fear was well-grounded.

"While emphasizing that I am not authorized to interfere with the internal affairs of the provinces temporarily handed over by the Allied Powers to the administration of the Republic of Armenia, I express decisive protest on behalf of my government and for the sake of humanity over any acts of violence against civilian Muslim population committed by the Armenian government and consider it my duty to warn against potential bitter ramifications of such actions," the message said.

The Azerbaijani government noted that reports concerning the woes faced by Muslims in the Nakhchivan province have rightly alarmed scores of fellow believers residing in the borderline regions of Azerbaijan and Armenia and prompted their aspiration to stand up for the innocent people who are suffering. The government said it was doing everything possible to appease the public and prevent potential incidents.

“Having notified Your Excellency of the above-mentioned facts, I insistently request that you exert the power of your influence and urge the Armenian government in a proper manner to put an end to the repressions against Muslims,” it added (15).

In a similar message sent to the High Commissioner of the Allied Powers to Armenia, V. N. Haskell, on December 30, 1919, F. Vakilov noted that the Muslim-populated villages in the Irevan governorate and Zangazur were being ravaged by Armenian armed units; local residents are faced with cruel reprisals and a great number of people displaced from those villages have arrived in Tiflis en route to Azerbaijan. In his letter, Vakilov requested taking urgent action to prevent the brutal mass killings of civilians and the elimination of the residential areas settled by Muslims (16).

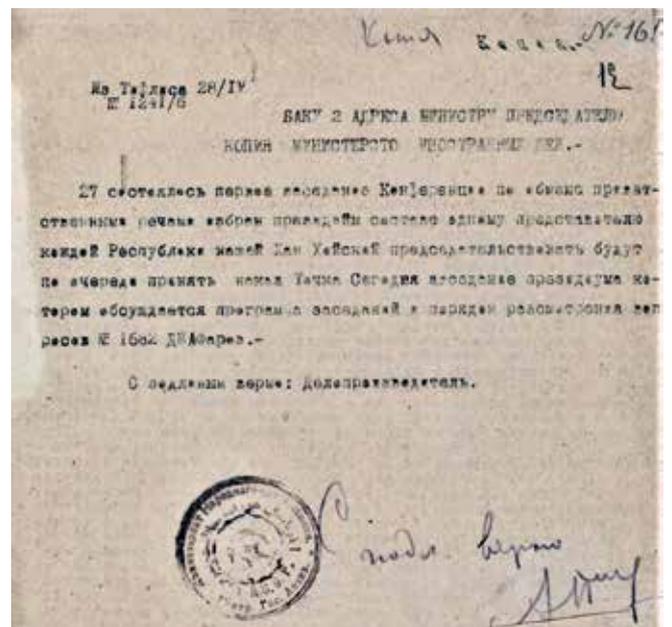
Azerbaijani officials sent a number of such letters and cables to Haskell. The text of one of these telegrams, which was sent to him on December 14, 1919, was published in the “Borba” (“Struggle”) newspaper run by the Georgian Social-Democrats (17).

An ADR Patronage Ministry representative (agent) was assigned to the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission in Georgia to deal with the problems of Muslim refugees from Armenia.

The Vozrozhdeniye newspaper reported in its issue released on January 6, 1920, referring to the “Azerbaijan” newspaper, that this representative had allocated 20 Rubles to each of the refugees and covered their transportation expenses. However, the allocated amount was insufficient for the refugees and they further sought financial aid from the Muslim province of Tiflis and some of them died of cold on the spot.

Vozrozhdeniye published a similar report in the same issue.

“The leaders of the Muslim communities of Irevan and Kars, Zeynalov and Najafov, sent a cable to Baku to Prime Minister Usubbayov and the parliament speaker,” the report said. “The telegram said a letter addressed to the Azerbaijani Patronage Ministry representative based at the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission in Tiflis indicated

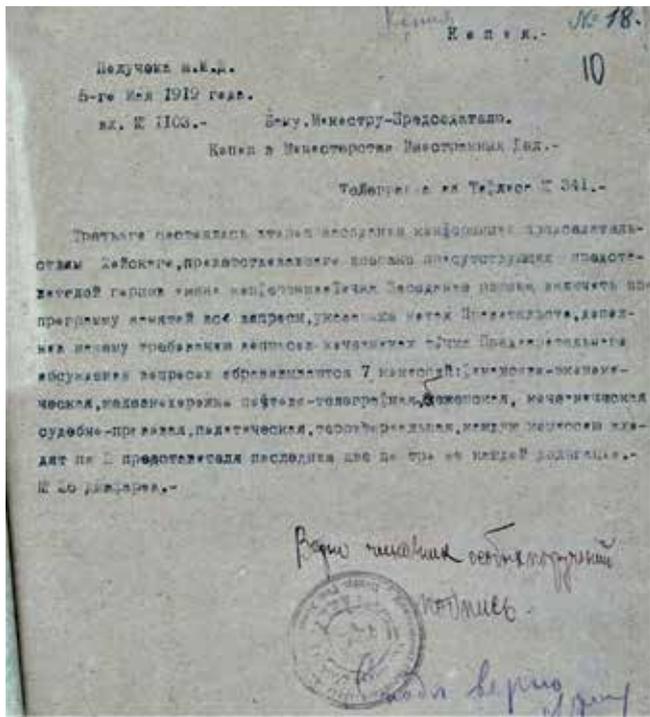


that Muslim refugees from the Irevan and Kars provinces would be barred from entering Azerbaijani territories in the future. Given that this measure enacted by the minister deprived tens of thousands of homeless and destitute Muslims of the only opportunity to save themselves physically from cold, hunger and brutal extermination by the Armenians, we request that the Patronage Minister reverse this decision, which could cause numerous deaths among innocent Muslims, who see Azerbaijan as their only defender” (18).

The Azerbaijani diplomatic mission in Georgia also reached out to the Turkic Muslim population affected by the Akhalsikh (Akhiska) disaster, allocating financial aid worth 200,000 Rubles on April 5, 1919 on the instruction of the central government to the Muslims suffering in the aftermath of an exacerbating ethnic rift (19). Moreover, an agency of the Finance Ministry was established, in addition to the Patronage Ministry. The agency was designated to serve as a correspondent institution of the Azerbaijan State Bank (20).

On January 11, 1920, a decision was passed at the Supreme Council of the Paris Peace Conference on the proposal of Lord Curzon on de-facto recognition of Azerbaijan and Georgia’s independence by the Allied Powers. F. Vakilov, deputy chief of mission at the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission in Georgia, sent a cable to ADR Foreign Minister Fatali Khan Khoyski in this regard on January 14, 1920.

“Wardrop (British Chief Commissioner for Transcaucasia Oliver Wardrop – F.V.-H.) told me today that ‘Lord Curzon had suggested to the Supreme



Council de-facto recognizing the independence of Georgia and Azerbaijan, and the proposal was adopted unanimously'. Lord Curzon asked Wardrop to notify the Georgian and Azerbaijani governments formally in this respect. People are rejoicing here. The government is receiving congratulatory messages over the recognition of our independence. I cordially congratulate You and our government on this festive occasion. I will further notify you of relevant details," the telegram said (21).

On January 14, 1920, Georgia's parliament hosted a special session dedicated to the de-facto recognition of the country's independence. F. Vakilov, the head of the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission, was among the diplomats who attended the event.

Furthermore, a solemn reception was held at the building housing the ADR diplomatic representation in Georgia to mark international recognition of Azerbaijan's independence on January 15, 1920. The Vozrozhdeniye newspaper, which published a respective announcement, said Georgia and Azerbaijan had always joined effort in their quest for independence, adding that the Georgians shared the joy of their Muslim neighbors (22).

It is worth mentioning that the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission in Georgia was based on 5 Daviti Street (23).

A separate consular department was opened under the diplomatic representation in April 1920. F. Vakilov, who headed the mission at the time, reported to Foreign Minister Fatali Khan Khoyski in this regard in

a letter dated April 19, 1920 (24). The consular department, which operated for just a few days, was headed by Rzagulu Najafov, a brother of Aligulu Gamkusar, a famous poet and publicist.

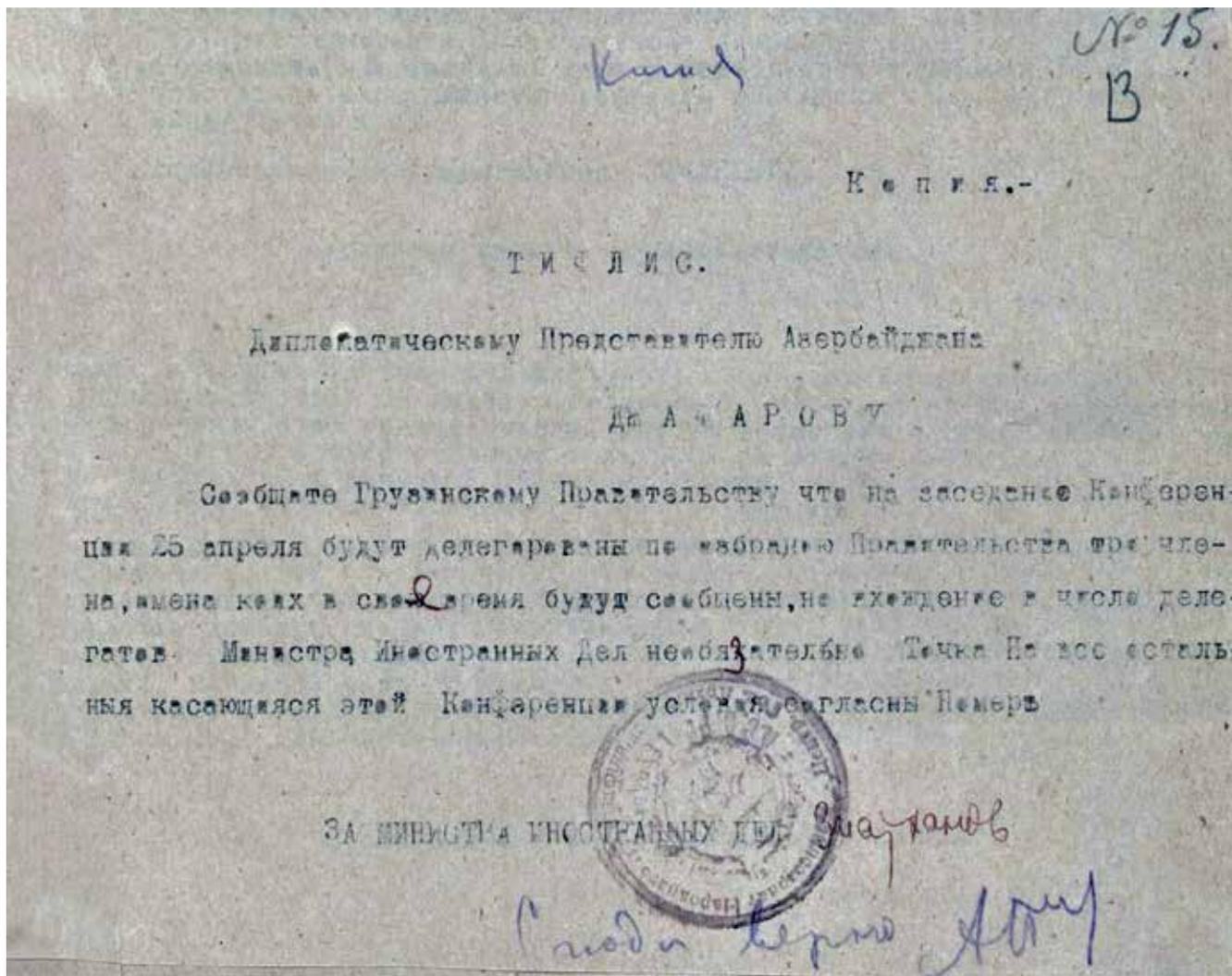
R. Najafov (1884-1937), a well-known educator, worked in the media for many years. Najafov was a reporter for the "Molla Nasraddin" magazine and also served as deputy editor-in-chief of the Azerbaijani language "Yeni Fikir" ("New Thought") newspaper published in Tiflis during the Soviet period. Moreover, he held the position of editor-in-chief of the "Dan Ulduzu" magazine and served as deputy chairman of the New Transcaucasia Alphabet Committee and as the director of the Tiflis-based Turk (Azerbaijan) State Drama Theater.

According to available sources, an officer holding the rank of colonel with the last name Aliyev served as the military attache at the Azerbaijani diplomatic mission in Georgia (25). Talyshinski held the post of assistant secretary and an employee named Khuramovich served as the secretary at the diplomatic representation.

The ADR diplomatic mission had to discontinue its operation in late April 1920 due to the establishment of the Soviet rule in Azerbaijan. The "Sakartvelos Respublika" newspaper reported on April 30 that the diplomatic mission in Tiflis had stopped issuing all types of references and entry permits (26). Furthermore, diplomatic ties were forged to a certain extent between the Soviet Azerbaijan and the Democratic Republic of Georgia, which had managed to maintain its presence about nine months longer than the ADR. Muslum Israfilov was appointed the diplomatic representative of the Soviet Azerbaijan in Georgia.

The Ertoba (translated from Georgian as "Unity") newspaper, a mouthpiece of the Georgian Social-Democrats, reported on September 29, 1920 that M. Israfilov, a representative of the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist government, had submitted his credentials in a meeting with Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister K. Sabakhtarashvili (27).

ADR also operated another diplomatic representation in Georgia, namely, a consulate in the Black Sea town of Batum, from November 1918. The opening of that consulate was necessitated by the fact that the Batum seaport was pivotal for Azerbaijan's economic and trade ties with the Ottoman state and Western countries. Dr. Mahmud Bay Afandiyev was appointed to the post of consul in Batum in accordance with the order issued by the ADR foreign minister on November 7, 1918 (28).



In a letter dated January 15, 1919 and addressed to the ADR Council of Ministers chairman and Foreign Minister F. Khoyski, M. Afandiyev wrote that Dr. Aziz Bay Gadimbayov, whose "work ethic and moral qualities" he was closely familiar with, had been appointed secretary at the consulate. In his letter, Afandiyev also said that Safvat Aghayev (from Shaki), a dedicated patriot who was known well for his activity as part of the Baku Muslim Charitable Society in Batumi, would serve as the clerk, as well as submitted a cost estimate of the consulate for 1919 (29).

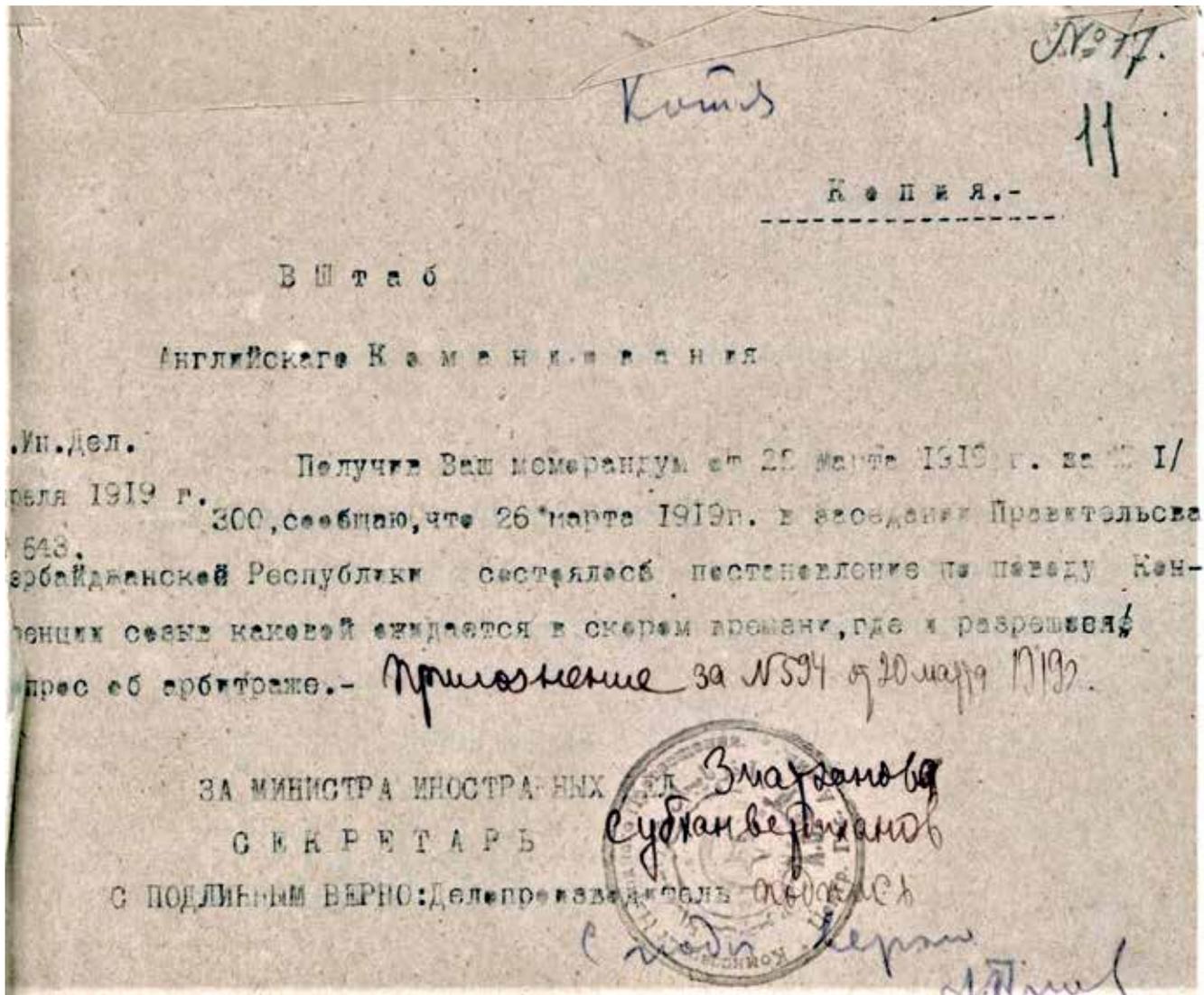
A total of 15,000 Rubles was allocated from the state budget for the Azerbaijani consulate in Batumi on February 17, 1919. Furthermore, 25,000 Rubles were allocated on February 27, 10,000 Rubles on April 7 and 40,000 Rubles on May 4. Thus, the state funding for the consulate totaled 90,000 Rubles in the first five months of 1919 (30). In addition, funds worth 10,000 Rubles were designated as assistance to Azerbaijani citizens residing

in the area of the diplomatic mission, in compliance with a decree issued by the ADR Council of Ministers on March 26, 1919 (31). In May 1919, the Azerbaijani consulate provided financial assistance worth 10,000 Rubles to the Batumi Turkish School (32).

A department of commerce was set up under the consulate on September 27, 1919. Representatives of the Ministries of Roads, Commerce and Industry, and Food were involved in running the department (33).

In October 1919, the diplomatic representation in Batumi became the Azerbaijani Consulate General and a correspondent institution of the Azerbaijan State Bank. Simultaneously, a decision was made to open a representation of Azerbaijan's Finance Ministry under the Consulate General's commerce department (34).

A commerce agency of the Azerbaijan Railway Office was founded in Batumi as well. In accordance with the agreement signed on April 17, 1919 by its head, Teymur Bay Malik-Aslanov, and mining engineer Emerio



Matiyevich, who represented F. A. Matiyevich and Co Trade House, the last representative of the Azerbaijan Railway Office in Batumi and a commercial agent were appointed (35).

“The ADR’s consulate in Batumi played an important role in ensuring the transshipment of the country’s cargo at the Batumi seaport, handling disputes regarding vehicles, rail cars and cistern cars, as well as regulating issues concerning diplomatic courier and postal services” (36).

In a nutshell, the ADR government, which was pursuing a skilled foreign policy, managed to establish cooperation with numerous countries based on mutually beneficial dialogue and to set up diplomatic institutions in some countries representing strategic importance. In doing so, it was prioritizing the neighboring countries, in particular, the Democratic Republic of Georgia.

Despite outstanding border-related issues with the DRG, good neighborly ties and reliable partnership were established and diplomatic missions were opened in both countries.

Fact-based data, official archival documents dating back to 1918-1920, as well as Georgian and Russian language media reports published in Tbilisi, lead to a conclusion that the Azerbaijani diplomatic missions that were active in the Georgian capital and Batumi in that time period successfully fulfilled their tasks in line with the state interests. ♦

References:

1. «Кавказское слово» qəzeti, 1918, 4 avqust, № 163.
2. «Кавказское слово» qəzeti, 1918, 31 iyul.

3. Q.Əliyev. Azərbaycan xalq cümhuriyyətinin Gürcüstanla iqtisadi əməkdaşlığı (1918-1920-ci illər), "GEO Strategiya", 2013, №03 (15), s.29-34.
4. "Sakartvelo" qəz., 1918, 11 avqust, № 158, s. 2.
5. "Azərbaycan" qəz., 1918, 11 noyabr, № 32 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика (документы и материалы), Баку, 1998, с. 95).
6. Документы и материалы по внешней политике Закавказья и Грузии, Тифлис, 1919, с. 432-434.
7. "Sakartvelo" qəz., 1919, 27 aprel, № 90, s. 2.
8. "Azərbaycan" qəzeti, 1920, 6 fevral, № 20 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., 1998, с. 543).
9. «Возрождение» qəz., 1919, 28 may, № 2, s.1.
10. «Возрождение» qəz., 1919, 28 may, № 2, s.1.
11. "Sakartvelo" qəz., 1919, 28 may, № 108, s. 3.
12. "Sakartvelo" qəz., 1919, 3 iyun, № 112, s. 3.
13. "Sakartvelo" qəz., 1919, 18 iyul, № 150, s. 2.
14. ARDA, f.970, s. 1, iş54, v. 50 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 291-292).
15. "Sakartvelo" qəz., 1919, 15 iyul, № 147, s. 2; ARDA, f. 897, s. 1, iş 38, v. 69 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 292-293).
16. ARDA, f. 897, s. 1, iş 38, v. 364 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 495-496).
17. «Борьба» qəz., 1919, 19 dekabr.
18. «Возрождение» qəz., 1920, 6 yanvar, № 4.
19. Q.Əliyev. Azərbaycan xalq cümhuriyyətinin Gürcüstanla iqtisadi..., s.29-34.
20. Q.Əliyev. Azərbaycan xalq cümhuriyyətinin Gürcüstanla iqtisadi..., s.29-34.
21. "Azərbaycan" qəzeti, 1920, 14 yanvar, № 9 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 502-503).
22. «Возрождение» qəz., 1920, 15 yanvar, № 9.
23. "Sakartvelo", 1919, 19 iyul, № 151, s. 4.
24. ARDA, f. 970, s. 1, iş 64, v. 43-44 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 592-593).
25. ARDA, f. 970, s. 1, iş 88, v. 52-53 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 448-450).
26. "Sakartvelos Respublika" qəz., 1920, 30 aprel, № 95, s. 3.
27. "Ertoba", 1920, 29 sentyabr, № 220, s. 3.
28. ARDA, f. 970, s. 2, iş 157, v. 1-2 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 202-203).
29. ARDA, f.970, s. 1, iş43, v. 1 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 141-142).
30. ARDA, f.970, s.2, iş84, v. 17 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 235-237).
31. "Azərbaycan" qəzeti, 1919, 4 aprel, № 70 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 189).
32. Q.Əliyev. Azərbaycan xalq cümhuriyyətinin Gürcüstanla iqtisadi..., s.29-34.
33. Q.Əliyev. Azərbaycan xalq cümhuriyyətinin Gürcüstanla iqtisadi..., s.29-34.
34. Q.Əliyev. Azərbaycan xalq cümhuriyyətinin Gürcüstanla iqtisadi..., s.29-34.
35. ARDA, f. 970, s. 1, iş 26, v. 12-13 (Baх: Азербайджанская Демократическая Республика. Внешняя политика ..., с. 203-205).
36. Q.Əliyev. Azərbaycan xalq cümhuriyyətinin Gürcüstanla iqtisadi..., s.29-34..

