

Paweł Libera

Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences
Historical Research Office of the Institute of National Remembrance

Polish authorities and the attempt to create the Caucasian Confederation (1917–1940)

Zarys treści: Przedmiotem artykułu są próby utworzenia związku państw na Kaukazie, realizowane wspólnie przez polityków kaukaskich w latach 1917–1940. Idea ta, mająca na celu przede wszystkim wspólną obronę przed utratą niepodległości, a następnie wspólną walkę o jej odzyskanie, została zrealizowana dopiero przez polityków kaukaskich na emigracji. W 1926 r. powstał Komitet Niepodległości Kaukazu, którego członkowie w 1934 r. podpisali Pakt Konfederacji Kaukaskiej i utworzyli Radę Kaukaską. Od 1925 r. politycy kaukascy współpracowali blisko z władzami polskimi w ramach tzw. ruchu prometejskiego, którego celem było utworzenie wspólnego frontu przeciwko Rosji/ZSRR, a tym samym władze polskie miały wpływ na utworzenie i częściowo na funkcjonowanie Konfederacji Kaukaskiej.

Outline of content: The article focuses on the attempts to create a union of states in the Caucasus made collectively by Caucasian politicians in the years 1917–1940. This idea, the primary aim of which was joint defence against the loss of independence, and subsequently a joint struggle to restore it, was only possible to implement by Caucasian politicians in exile. The year 1926 saw the establishment of the Caucasian Independence Committee, whose members signed the Caucasian Confederation Pact in 1934 and formed the Caucasian Council. From 1925 on, Caucasian politicians cooperated closely with the Polish authorities as part of the so-called Promethean movement to create a common front against Russia/the USSR, and thus the Polish authorities influenced the creation and, to some extent, the functioning of the Caucasian Confederation.

Słowa kluczowe: Gruzja, Azerbejdżan, Kaukaz, Armenia, konfederacja kaukaska, Rosja, ZSRR, ruch prometejski

Keywords: Georgia, Azerbaijan, the Caucasus, Armenia, the Caucasian Confederation, Russia, the USSR, the Promethean movement

The Russian Empire's attempts to conquer the Caucasus, occurring from the end of the eighteenth century, ended after suppressing the uprisings of Caucasian highlanders in 1864. For a few decades the region remained under Russian rule; the situation changed only after 1917. The weakening and collapse of tsarist Russia on the one hand and the independence aspirations of the Caucasian nations on the other shaped the circumstances which favoured regaining their lost sovereignty. However, the great strategic importance of this region for the near and distant powers, and the national and religious diversity of the Caucasus made this task considerably difficult. Even then, the Caucasian political elites were aware that although they represented mostly nations with rich history and traditions, they would always individually lose in a direct challenge towards the military potential of the Russian Empire. Also, the allies they sought in the Western Europe considered the small but conflicted Caucasian countries and nations to be insufficiently valuable partners for talks, let alone for political and military agreements. This situation gave rise to the concept that it was necessary to create a community of Caucasian states, which should include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and the nations of Caucasian highlanders.

After the outbreak of the February Revolution in Russia, the provisional government set up the Special Transcaucasian Committee (OZAKOM), which had jurisdiction on its behalf throughout the entire Caucasus, as in the times of the Empire. However, when the Bolsheviks took over in Petersburg in November 1917, a Sejm and its executive body (the Transcaucasian Commissariat) formed in Transcaucasia, dominated by representatives of left-wing Caucasian parties: Georgian social democrats, Armenian Dashnaks and Azerbaijani Musavatists. On 22 April 1918 they made the decision to break away from Russia and establish the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic. The first Caucasian state existed very briefly, as it collapsed a month later due to the proclamations of independence, first of Georgia on 26 May 1918, and then Armenia and Azerbaijan on 28 May 1918. The young states did not enjoy their restored sovereignty for long. In June 1920, Bolsheviks conquered Azerbaijan, in the second half of the year – Armenia, and in March 1921 – Georgia. The elites of the conquered nations chose political emigration to Europe in order to fight for independence in exile, primarily through the activities of their delegations at the Paris Peace Conference.¹

In the discussions within the circles of Caucasian émigrés, the issue of establishing a larger union of countries from this region appeared regularly from the beginning of the twentieth century, however – excluding the short-lived Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic – only after the loss of independence by the

¹ The conquest of the Caucasus by the Bolsheviks has been described in many works; a synthetic approach is presented in the still pertinent work of R. Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union*, Cambridge (Mass.) 1964.

countries in the region did their attempts bring relative success. The interest of Polish authorities in these activities gave them significant dynamism, as they sought to concentrate the efforts of the nations conquered by Bolshevik Russia, and to create a broad front against the common enemy. During the entire interwar period, with varying degrees of intensity, the Republic of Poland supported the emigration movements and organisations of nations subjugated by Russia/USSR. This concept was referred to as “Promethean”, and its aim was to regain the lost independence based on the cooperation of the conquered nations’ representatives. It was at that time that the Caucasian Independence Committee was formed, uniting the representatives of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Caucasian highlanders, who in 1934 signed the Caucasian Confederation pact, subsequently appointed the Caucasian Council, and planned to undertake activities aimed at creating a common constitution. Although the organisation existed only in exile, it was undoubtedly the longest-functioning political organisation to unite three, and later four (from 1940 onwards also Armenia) Caucasian nations.

The question of the Promethean movement has already got an extensive bibliography,² but the matter of the establishment and functioning of the Caucasian Confederation has attracted less interest from researchers and has been discussed in few works so far. The most valuable among them is undoubtedly the collection of documents (preceded by an extensive introduction) prepared by the Georgian-French scholar Georges Mamoulia.³

In the existing research little attention has been given to the attitude of the Polish authorities towards the union of Caucasian states, although at the time the Polish-Caucasian relations flourished, and the Polish side had some influence on the Caucasian emigration and its activities. There are three distinguishable stages in the period when the representatives of the Caucasian emigration made attempts to form a union of states: the first, when talks were held exclusively among the Caucasian nations and the Polish side did not take part (1918–1924), the second, when the Caucasian Independence Committee was founded (1925–1934), and the third, in which the Committee was transformed into the Caucasian Confederation (1934–1940). The representatives of Polish authorities took part in these works only in the second stage and played an active role in the creation of the Caucasian Independence Committee, and later the Caucasian Confederation.

² The works dedicated to this issue published until 2013 have been described above all in: J. Pisułiński, “Prometeizm – problemy i pytania historiograficzne”, in: *Ruch prometejski i walka o przebudowę Europy Wschodniej (1918–1940)*, ed. M. Kornat, Warszawa, 2012, pp. 91–104; *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, ed. P. Libera, Warszawa, 2013, pp. 18–27. Many noteworthy studies which, directly or indirectly, touch on this subject have since appeared, but discussing them would require a separate publication.

³ Г. Мамулия, *Кавказская Конфедерация в официальных декларациях, тайной переписке и секретных документах движения “Прометей”*. Сборник документов, Москва, 2012.

From the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic to the Union of Caucasian Republics (1918–1924)

The idea of creating a common state organism in the Caucasus had already been present in the history and political thought of the Caucasian nations,⁴ but it was only in the twentieth century that it found fertile ground and favourable political conditions. The first to formulate it, in 1903, was most likely one of the leaders of the Georgian socialist-federalists Archil Giorgadze in the magazine *Georgie. Politique et sociale* published in Paris. The fundamental goal of the newly-formed political party was to fight for the autonomy of Georgia within the Russian Empire, but this autonomy was to include all the Caucasian nations that were to establish the Caucasian Federation.⁵ However, this idea was not yet sufficiently publicised, since the main specialist in the nationalist issues of the Polish Socialist Party, Leon Wasilewski, who met with the socialist-federalists at the Paris congress in December 1904,⁶ recalled years later that the Poles noticed “no separatist tendencies” in the activities of Georgians.⁷ The talks about autonomy in the various parts of the Russian Empire were reinvigorated in 1905, after the outbreak of the revolution and the announcement of the October Manifesto by Tsar Nicholas II. Representatives of many national minority parties spoke in this spirit, and one of the Azerbaijani leaders, Alimardan Topchubashov, talked about broader rights and a separate Sejm for the Caucasus at the meeting of the zemstvos in Moscow on 6–13 November 1905.⁸ The creation of the Autonomous-Federalist Union in the first days of November was a symbolic moment. Although its existence was very brief – only in the period of the functioning of the First State Duma and marked by differences among the representatives of the twelve nations participating in the founding congress regarding the expected autonomy of individual parts of Russia and their federation⁹ – this was undoubtedly a crucial stage in the development of the concept which became the foundation of independence aspirations.

After the dissolution of the First Duma, the politics of the tsarist authorities very quickly restricted the possibilities of an open discussion about the system of the Russian state, and the issue of restoring the independence of the Caucasian

⁴ For a synthetic approach to the issue in the earlier period see: A. Furier, “Kształtowanie się idei jedności kaukaskiej od średniowiecza do początku XX wieku”, *Przegląd Zachodni*, 2000, no. 2 (295), pp. 181–198.

⁵ Г. Мамулиа, “Как самурай стал союзником Прометея: Японо-кавказская смычка в годы русско-японской войны (1904–1905)”, *Nowy Prometeusz*, no. 3 (2012), pp. 129–130; И.С. Багирова, *Политические партии и организации Азербайджана в начале XX века (1900–1917)*, Баку, 1997, p. 164.

⁶ See for example “Deklaracja zbiorowa przeciwko absolutyzmowi rosyjskiemu”, *Słowo Polskie*, Lwów, 2 December 1904, no. 567, p. 1.

⁷ L. Wasilewski, *Sprawy narodowościowe w teorii i w życiu*, Kraków–Warszawa, 1929, p. 187.

⁸ Багирова, *Политические партии*, p. 140.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

nations resurfaced only after the outbreak of World War I. Their representatives tried to seek support from the opponents of the Russian Empire, including Juozas Gabrys, within the then Union of Nations. The most expressive manifestation of the plans and the will to create a union of Caucasian states was the Caucasian Committee, formed in Turkey and composed of representatives of Azerbaijan, Caucasian highlanders and Georgia. On 15 October 1915 the Committee issued a memorandum to German and Austrian authorities, in which it clearly stated the objectives of its activity: regaining independence – with the support of the powers fighting against Russia – was to enable the creation of a Caucasian confederation with a common defence and economic policy.¹⁰

The situation in Russia changed only with the outbreak of the Russian Revolution. Following the February Revolution of 1917, the Caucasus was administrated by the Special Transcaucasian Committee on behalf of the authorities in Petersburg, but the issues of obtaining a wide autonomy for the territories and transforming Russia into a federal state returned to the fore with new momentum. Meetings of the representatives of the Caucasian highlanders in May and in September 1917 led to the establishment of the Confederation of the Highlanders of South Caucasus and Dagestan, which was to be associated with Russia as part of a federation. However, during the talks held at the time it was mentioned that the long-term goal was to create one entity across the whole of Caucasus.¹¹ In reality, the Caucasian highlanders did not join the states which soon formed in the North Caucasus.

After the October Revolution, 25 November 1917 saw the first opportunity to declare independence from Russia and form the Caucasian Confederation. After the elections to the Constituent Assembly, the assembly established the Transcaucasian Commissariat with governmental competences; at this point, OZAKOM ceased to exist. This moment was later recognised by Caucasian politicians as the beginning of the implementation of plans to create a federation, although they were aware that originally that was not its goal.¹² Wojciech Materski emphasises that for some unknown reasons the Commissariat did not establish itself as a government, did not mention the separateness of the Caucasus, and that it even underlined its ties with Russia. Parallel to the Commissariat, three national councils were in operation (Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian), with effective legislative and executive powers. This situation continued for a fairly long time. It was not until 23 January that the Transcaucasian Sejm was elected; after three months of activity,

¹⁰ G. Mamoulia, “Rosyjskie ludobójstwo narodów Północnego Kaukazu w dokumentach kaukaskiego ruchu narodowo-wyzwoleńczego podczas pierwszej wojny światowej (1914–1918)”, *Przegląd Wschodni*, 12 (2012), no. 2 (46), pp. 2–3, 7–8.

¹¹ А.Х. Кармов, *Материалы съездов Горских Народов Северного Кавказа и Дагестана 1917 года*, Нальчик, 2014, pp. 59, 66–69, 129.

¹² See e.g.: Мир Якуб [Мехтиев], “К истории идей Кавказской конфедерации”, *Северный Кавказ*, 1934, no. 3, pp. 34–37, in: В. Гулиев, *Из наследия политической эмиграции Азербайджана в Польшу : 30-е годы XX века*, Торунь, 2010, p. 174.

on 22 April 1918, it announced the creation of the independent Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic.¹³

The Sejm and the Commissariat discussed key issues related to the creation of a common state. A central place among them was given to the debate on the form of the state, specific issues of foreign policy and attempts to reconcile the divergent interests of the three countries. Of particular importance in these talks was the preparation of a draft of the future constitution. Immediately after the creation of the federation was announced in the Sejm, a committee was formed with the purpose of developing the text of the constitution. The first obstacle the committee had to face was the form of the state (either federation or confederation) and the division of competences between the federation and the member states. Both issues provoked many emotions. The spectrum of views was very broad – from social democrats, who demanded the creation of a federation and wanted to grant the greatest power possible to the central government, to national democrats, who demanded full independence. The proponents of this last possibility reminded that it was impossible to create a confederation of states whose interests were so dissimilar and not necessarily compatible with Georgia's interests. Particularly important was that a confederation dominated by Muslims would lean towards close relations with Turkey, while Georgia was closer to European countries and Germany in particular.¹⁴ The form of the state provoked heated discussions, while the issue of dividing the competences was settled much more easily, as most were of the opinion that a central authority should take care of foreign policy, military matters, customs and finances.

One of the greatest difficulties faced by the Federation was its relations with Turkey, which in January 1918 invaded Kars, Batumi and Ardahan. Negotiations conducted in Brest were to grant Turkey all of its previously lost territories. In turn, the Federation hoped to maintain the 1914 border and obtain an autonomous status for Armenians living in Turkey. The demands proved unrealistic. In the absence of a possibility to settle these misunderstandings, the Transcaucasian Sejm adopted the following resolution: "Considering the fact that in the question of war and peace there has been a most dramatic difference of opinions between the nations which have formed the independent Transcaucasian Republic, and that there is no authority with the power to speak on behalf of Transcaucasia, the Sejm states the breakdown of Transcaucasia [...]". On the same day, Georgia declared independence, and two days later Armenia and Azerbaijan followed suit.¹⁵ The internal and external motives of the collapse of the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic are likely to be discussed in greater detail in the historiography

¹³ W. Materski, *Georgia rediviva. Republika Gruzjińska w stosunkach międzynarodowych 1918–1921*, Warszawa, 1994, pp. 31–32, 36–49.

¹⁴ М. Мацаберидзе, "Разработка конституции Закавказского Сейма и Национальный Совет Грузии", *Кавказ и глобализация*, 2 (2008), pp. 151–160.

¹⁵ Materski, *Georgia rediviva*, pp. 45–52.

of the Caucasian states, but it has to be emphasised that creating independent states did not entail a re-evaluation of the existing belief in the value of such a union. It is worth recalling, in the words of the President of the Republic of Georgia Noe Zhordania, that on the day when the common state broke down the following words were uttered at the first meeting of the National Council of Georgia:

Citizens! Today you have witnessed a historical act, as unusual as it was dramatic: in this palace a living State has just expired, but in the same palace the foundations of a new State will be created. There is no possibility of a conflict of interests between these two States, of which one has died and the other is to be born. The Georgian nation, united under one banner, will form a covenant with all the neighbouring peoples, and thanks to this covenant the federative union will be reborn: in this way, the State which has died before our eyes will be resurrected. It will be called the Caucasian Confederation. Our path, our ideal is to strive to create this union.¹⁶

Although the union of the three nations proved to be very short-lived, the period in which the Republic existed with the joint Commissariat and Sejm was a moment of symbolic significance for the Caucasian elites. Later on, during debates on the creation of the Caucasian Confederation, this episode of common history was frequently referenced.

In the short period of independence, suggestions regarding the necessity to create a common state reached Caucasian politicians from the European powers, whose favour they needed to gain, and at the same time the difficult geographical location between Bolshevik Russia and Turkey forced them to return constantly to this subject. Representatives of the Caucasian nations held negotiations in this field from at least 1919. In contrast to the initial formula from 1918, when the representatives of the Caucasian highlanders were only observers of the entire process, this time they actively participated in the concerted efforts and negotiations, which nevertheless eventually failed. Another attempt was made at the beginning of April 1920 at a conference in Tiflis, but due to the Azerbaijan occupation by the Bolshevik army these works were suspended.¹⁷

The final version of the agreement between the Caucasian nations was eventually prepared in exile. Discussions on the establishment of a union of states in the Caucasus commenced in March 1921, but the most critical talks were held in May that year in Paris. The issue of Armenia's membership was particularly contentious: its representatives demanded that the association of states should take a clear position regarding Armenian borders, which should include both the territories occupied by the Bolsheviks and by the Turks; moreover, they insisted that the future confederation was to have two clearly defined enemies: Russia

¹⁶ N. Jordania, "La confédération caucasienne", *Le Prométhée (édition spéciale)*, no. 92 (juillet 1934), p. 15.

¹⁷ Мир Якуб [Мехтиев], К истории идей Кавказской конфедерации, pp. 175–178.

and Turkey.¹⁸ On 15 June 1921, a declaration of four Caucasian states (dated 10 June) was signed in Paris.¹⁹ Any controversial issues, including those related to the borders, were agreed to be submitted for arbitration, but the declaration contained no description of a specific arbitration mechanism, nor any details about it. It was agreed that foreign policy would be decided collectively, that the customs border would be common, and that in the event of aggression against one of the states the military alliance would include all of the others. The issue of the Turkish-Armenian dispute was solved by a provision which stated that the goal was to establish friendly relations with Turkey based on the 1914 borders.²⁰ The Union of Caucasian Republics, established in 1921, was yet another step towards building the unity of Caucasian nations. Regular meetings made it possible to coordinate activities and appearances on the international arena. There were also discussions dedicated to military cooperation and the possibilities of assessing the military potential of the Caucasian nations. An important stage was the creation of the Information Bureau of the Union of Caucasian Republics, which operated in Istanbul from December 1921. It functioned in a formalised manner, as evidenced by regular and recorded meetings held at least until the end of September 1922.²¹

Poland did not participate in the activities described above. Nevertheless, it is worth posing the question of how well informed it was about them and study the attitude of Polish authorities towards the attempts of creating a union of Caucasian states. It seems that Polish authorities initially did not pay much attention to the question of the existence of a union of Caucasian states. The Polish press of the time (even publications specialising in Eastern issues) as well as diplomatic and military reports were limited to expressing satisfaction with the Caucasian republics regaining their independence and to closely monitoring their international situation. On the other hand, the one-month existence of the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic falls in the period when the independent Polish state did not formally exist yet. In addition, this period was too brief for this fact to be noticed and commented on in great depth. For this reason, many reports on this area do not mention it at all, as the attention of the civil and military authorities focused on the political situation of the whole region.²² Additionally,

¹⁸ See reports from the meetings of representatives of the four nations in May and June 1921 in Paris in: А.М. Топчибаши, *Парижский архив 1919–1940. В четырех книгах. Книга вторая 1921–1923* (составители, предисловие, перевод и примечания Г. Мамулия и Р. Абуталыбов), Москва, 2016, pp. 21–107.

¹⁹ Г. Мамулия, Р. Абуталыбов, *Страна огней. В борьбе за свободу и независимость. Политическая история азербайджанской эмиграции 1920–1945 гг.*, Париж–Баку, 2014, pp. 131–137.

²⁰ Мамулия, *Кавказская Конфедерация*, pp. 41–44.

²¹ Государственный архив Российской Федерации (hereafter: ГА РФ), ref. 6144-1-3.

²² The Józef Piłsudski Institute of America (hereafter: IJP NY), Adjutant-General of the Supreme Commander [AGNW], ref. 64, p. 179, Wężyk to the Second Department, December 1919.

in hindsight, some authors dealing with the Caucasus did not mention the existence of the republic,²³ while others, even an observer as insightful as Leon Wasilewski, barely registered the attempts to create a Caucasian confederation, but did not pay them any more attention.²⁴

Polish intelligence and diplomatic services focused on the issues to a slightly greater extent. At least from the beginning of 1921 they noted the attempts to create a federation in the Caucasus, but there were no thorough analyses in this respect. One report emphasised that Georgia's policy was to create a federation of four Caucasian states, "but it was faltering and unsystematic. At the slightest pressure from Soviet Russia on the peoples of the Caucasus, the Georgians withdrew and at the same time officially approved the operations of the Soviets. Such politics have alienated Georgia from all the nations of the Caucasus and it was left alone, surrounded on three sides by the Bolsheviks [...]"²⁵ We find a more complete overview by the Polish side of the events taking place in the Caucasus only after Georgia lost independence at the end of 1921. Władysław de Bondy, an official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who had previously been a member of Tytus Filipowicz's mission in the Caucasus, believed that the breakdown of the common state through the creation of independent states in May 1918 meant that at that moment those states signed their own sentence by "condemning their spontaneous existence to extermination". "Only such a union gave these nations the strength and power to resist invader tendencies [...]" He gave the émigrés great credit for their actions towards European states, but he stated that "the only effect of the Transcaucasian emigration activities is the act of uniting the republics of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Highlander or Mountain Republic, or the Caucasian peoples' federation, signed by their representatives in Paris; on 10 June 1921 this act was submitted to the League of Nations with a request to support the cause of independence of the Caucasus, and the Parisian federation was supposed to give these nations a greater external power through their unification. This attempt, however, yielded no real results". Władysław de Bondy, at that time one of the few specialists in Caucasian issues within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was of the opinion that after the Treaty of Riga Poland should no longer support the independence aspirations of the Caucasian nations: because of Polish politics towards Russia, he claimed that "all the ways of striving for independence of the republics of the Caucasus by reconstructing their former national governments must be abandoned. We cannot [...] support such a campaign of the Paris Transcaucasian federation [...]"²⁶

²³ E.g. T. Szpotański, *Gruzja*, Warszawa, 1924.

²⁴ Wasilewski, *Sprawy narodowościowe*, pp. 206, 209–211, 214.

²⁵ IJP NY, AGNW, ref. 35, p. 195, Intelligence Report from Georgia, 18 February 1921.

²⁶ Central Archives of Modern Record in Warsaw, Polish Embassy in London, ref. 171, pp. 23–35, W. de Bondy, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia [n.d., ca January–March 1922].

The Polish side maintained rather close contacts with the Caucasian emigration at the time, above all with Georgians,²⁷ and was aware that the idea of the Caucasus confederation is being pushed by various countries, including Turkey.²⁸ However, in the Polish political and military circles, the attitudes towards the potential cooperation among Caucasian nations were rather sceptical. In December 1922, Colonel Tadeusz Schaetzel wrote during the conference works in Lausanne: “In view of the large diversity of religions, races, types and traditions of the three South Caucasus states, it is difficult to presume that their federation and close political cooperation could be possible. Even in today’s period of purely negative activity, the communal character of actions faces difficulties due to their different political situations”.²⁹

Creation of the Caucasian Independence Committee and the role of Poland (1925–1934)

After Georgia lost its independence in 1921, representatives of the Polish civil and military authorities in Turkey maintained close relations with the Caucasian émigrés and monitored the development of the situation in the Caucasus. In 1922, a group of officers and cadets from the Caucasus joined the Polish Army as contract officers, but the Polish side did not take any active actions towards Caucasian emigration. The circumstances changed after the Poland-Turkey Treaty of Friendship was signed on 23 July 1923 and the appointment of a new Minister of Foreign Affairs in January 1924, Maurycy Zamoyski, whose views on Eastern affairs differed from those of his predecessor, Aleksander Skrzyński.³⁰ According to Henryk Bartoszewicz, in the field of foreign policy in the Middle East the Polish authorities followed the direction outlined in 1919–1922. In this regard, both Józef Piłsudski and Roman Dmowski agreed that the Soviet influence in the Near and Middle East should be mitigated. The first envoy in Turkey was Roman Knoll, and the instructions he received from Minister Maurycy Zamoyski in June 1924

²⁷ Col L. Bobicki to Chief of General Staff, 10 June 1922, no. 352/22 in: *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, p. 83.

²⁸ IJP NY, AGNW, ref. 83 p. 364, Col. L. Bobicki to Chief of General Staff, 27 September 1922. Record of conversation between A. Topchubashov with Bekir Sami Bey, the Foreign Minister of Turkey, London, 11 March 1921, in: A.M. Топчибаши, *Парижский архив 1919–1940. В четырех книгах. Книга первая 1919–1921* (составители Г. Мамулиа и Р. Абуталыбов. Введение, перевод и примечания Г. Мамулиа), Москва, 2016, pp. 11–18.

²⁹ T. Schaetzel, “Raport z Konferencji Pokojowej w Lozannie, 26 XII 1922”, in: J. Gierowska-Kałuża, M. Kornat, “Turcja w koncepcjach polskiego Sztabu Generalnego w okresie Konferencji Lozańskiej (1922–1923). Nieznane memorandum Tadeusza Schaetzela”, *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 49 (2014), no. 2, p. 45.

³⁰ J.J. Bruski, *Między prometeizmem a Realpolitik. II Rzeczpospolita wobec Ukrainy Sowieckiej 1921–1926*, Kraków, 2010, p. 77.

included, among others, the “extension of the front resistant to Russia”. The way to attain this goal was to be determined at a later date, but the instructions stated that in this respect Turkey’s influence on the Muslim nations in the south of Bolshevik Russia was considered particularly important. According to the reports of Władysław Günther, who set out to the new diplomatic post together with Knoll, the latter was to say that they were going to “decompose Russia from the inside”.³¹ We can definitely say that he quickly established contacts with Georgian émigrés – probably through Colonel Leon Bobicki – and that in July 1924 he was apparently already in talks with a representative of the Georgian government in exile, Konstantine Gvarjaladze, about the planned outbreak of an uprising in Georgia, to which both he and Bobicki were definitely opposed.³²

In August 1924, the uprising broke out in Georgia, soon to be bloodily suppressed by the Bolsheviks.³³ After the fall of the uprising, whose start was not coordinated with the actions of neighbouring nations, new activities were undertaken to forge cooperation between the Caucasian nations. On 27 September 1924, the Council of Four, consisting of delegates from the Caucasian nations to the Paris Peace Conference, signed a declaration in Paris which confirmed that it was imperative to create political and economic unity of the four nations.³⁴ Soon, as a result of internal disputes – above all regarding future relations with Turkey – Armenia left the committee, and the representatives of the other nations signed a new declaration on 11 November 1924 on the importance of establishing a Caucasian Confederation, which was to be created shortly after the liberation of the lands occupied by the Bolsheviks and to include a military alliance and a customs union. In order to advance these efforts, a Caucasian Committee was established, which was later referred to as the Caucasus Liberation Committee and comprised four sections: organisational, financial, diplomatic and propaganda.³⁵ After a few months, as a result of actions undertaken by Tadeusz Hołówko,³⁶ the Caucasus Liberation Committee established cooperation with the government of the Ukrainian People’s Republic in exile, and on 26 July 1925 the sides signed a joint declaration on the coordination of efforts to regain independence.³⁷

³¹ H. Bartoszewicz, “Misja Romana Knolla w Ankarze 1924–1925”, *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 36 (2001), pp. 110–113.

³² Col. L. Bobicki to Chief of General Staff, 8 June 1924 and: R. Knoll to MFA, 20 September 1924, in: *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, pp. 116–118; G. Mamoulia, *Les combats indépendantistes des Caucasiens entre URSS et puissances occidentales: Le cas de la Géorgie (1921–1945)*, Paris, 2009, p. 80. The reports of the then Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU), convinced that Knoll made first contacts with the emigrants only in October 1924 through Sultanov are therefore unreliable (cf. Мамулия, Абугалыбов, *Страна огня*, p. 244).

³³ W. Materski, *Gruzja*, Warszawa, 2010, pp. 144–152.

³⁴ Мамулия, *Кавказская Конфедерация*, pp. 45–46.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 47–48.

³⁶ See: Bruski, *Między prometeizmem a Realpolitik*, pp. 323–329.

³⁷ Мамулия, *Кавказская Конфедерация*, p. 55–56.

Roman Knoll strongly supported the idea of creating a union of Caucasian states in emigration and in a report addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs argued that “the message of a strict federation of the Caucasus nations comes to the fore [...]”, but at the same time viewed Georgian socialists’ initiatives with caution. His scepticism towards Georgian social democrats resulted from the fact that he blamed them – as did their political opponents – for provoking the uprising in Georgia and for the lack of coordination of the insurrection with the activities of other Caucasian nations. Knoll suggested that the Polish authorities should establish contacts with other political groups within the Georgian emigration residing in Paris at the time.³⁸ Soon, in October 1924 – it is not clear whether it was with the consent of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or on his own initiative – he led to the creation in Turkey of the Caucasian Confederate Committee associating Caucasian politicians with right-wing views and standing in opposition to the Georgian Mensheviks and Azerbaijani Musavatists.³⁹ Both Georgian and Polish sources confirm that it was Knoll’s initiative to form this organisation.⁴⁰ “Their main proposals are: a federation of the entire Caucasus, an alliance with Turkey and Persia, the protection of the Republic [of Poland], striving for the liberation of Ukraine. The tactical principle is to avoid any premature riots and to come forward only at a given signal, in case of a coup in Moscow – presumably simultaneously with Turkestan and Ukraine” – so claimed Roman Knoll, who hoped to expand the Confederates’ Committee by including representatives of Musavatists, supporters of the People’s Party of the North Caucasus led by Said Shamil, and Georgian Mensheviks.⁴¹ It turned out that after eighteen months the Confederate Committee had not only failed to expand, but its most important members had no backing from the largest political groups and showed almost no activity in Turkey or the Caucasus, while the Georgian national democrats, on whose support Knoll counted, established closer contacts with Mensheviks. Parties with real support within the emigration circles and in their occupied homelands were to organise a “block” against the Confederate Committee and unanimously act against it.⁴² The activities of the Council of Three were also critically assessed by the Polish side. Poles complained about the inactivity of Abdul “Tapa” Medjid Bey Ortsa Tchermoeff, the attacks against Said Shamil by Haidar Bammat, and the opposition activities of Alimardan Topchubashov against the Azerbaijani National Centre controlled by Musavatists.⁴³

³⁸ R. Knoll to MFA, 25 November 1924, in: *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, pp. 120–122.

³⁹ Mamoulia, *Les combats*, pp. 91–92.

⁴⁰ Российский государственный военный архив (hereafter: РГВА), Office 2 of the Second Department of Polish General Staff (hereafter: E2 OII SG), ref. 461-2-33, Sprawy Rady Trzech i KNK, p. 9.

⁴¹ R. Knoll to MFA, 13 June 1925, in: *Dokumenty i materiały do historii stosunków polsko-radzieckich*, vol 4: *April 1921 – May 1926*, ed. A. Deruga et al., Warszawa, 1965, p. 434.

⁴² T. Hołowko to MFA, 21 July 1926, in: *Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. 4, pp. 29–30.

⁴³ РГВА, E2 OII SG, ref. 461-2-33, Sprawy Rady Trzech i KNK, p. 7.

The aim of the representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Roman Knoll and Tadeusz Hołowko) and of the Second Department of Polish General Staff (Tadeusz Schaetzel, a new military attaché) in Turkey was to establish contact with an organisation that would simultaneously support the unification of Caucasian states and have the widest possible support in the Caucasus society. To this end, it was to unite representatives of not individual political parties, but of the governments in exile, or the circles aspiring to the role of “national centres”. Tadeusz Schaetzel suggested that both organisations – the Paris committee and the Constantinople committee – should join forces by creating a new entity: the Caucasian Independence Committee, comprising three representatives of each of the previous committees. Following a transition phase, both organisations were persuaded to adopt the suggested solution, as well as raise additional financial resources for their activity.⁴⁴ On 15 July 1926 the Caucasian Independence Committee was created in Constantinople: a secret organisation whose purpose was to organise and prepare the nations of the Caucasus for a fight to regain their independence and to establish a Caucasian Confederation state. Despite the fact that its members represented both organisations, the statute it soon adopted gave priority to national centres, which were the only ones able to delegate their representatives to the Caucasian Independence Committee. The committee operated in Turkey, but its three representatives resided permanently in Paris to maintain contacts with national centres. The Caucasian Confederate Committee was completely absorbed into the new structure, while a special place was reserved for the Council of Three, which was originally meant to coordinate diplomatic activity.⁴⁵

In November 1926 the Caucasian Independence Committee began publishing a French-language periodical in Paris, titled *Le Prométhée*. At the proposal of the Polish side, the editorial team was expanded to include a representative of the Ukrainian People’s Republic, and later, on suggestion from Caucasian émigrés, a representative of the Turkestan emigration. In this way and at this very moment the Promethean movement was born, subsequently joined by émigrés from other countries and peoples conquered by the USSR.⁴⁶

The Caucasian nations played a crucial role in the front of the nations conquered by Bolshevik Russia, but it was necessary to speak with one voice and take coordinate actions. For this reason, the Polish side made efforts for the national centres to include representatives of all political factions of each nation, and at

⁴⁴ T. Hołowko to MFA, 21 July 1926, in: *Dokumenty i materiały*, vol. 4, p. 31.

⁴⁵ Мамулия, *Кавказская Конфедерация*, pp. 65, 67.

⁴⁶ This moment is considered by the majority of scholars as the date of the establishment of the Promethean movement, as the date of forming the Caucasian Independence Committee is too early and the organisation comprised only three Caucasian nations, while the date of creating the Prometheus Club in Warsaw (1928) is too late (the alleged Prometheus Club in Paris, of which the Warsaw club was to be a branch, was established only in 1939).

the same time for the Committee to associate all the nations of the Caucasus, including the Armenians. The furthest-reaching conflict, which threatened the integrity of the existing coalition, was the dispute between the Council of Three and the Caucasian Independence Committee, created by national centres. The Council of Three comprised experienced politicians who had played a significant role during the period of short-term independence, and subsequently some of them were part of the delegations sent to the Paris Peace Conference. After the loss of independence, they considered themselves the only official representatives of their nations and did not want to be subordinate to the national centres. This situation affected Georgia to a lesser extent, since the National Georgian Centre was identical with the government in exile, however a serious conflict existed in the circles of Caucasian highlanders and Azeris.

The National Azerbaijani Centre, created in 1927 by Musavatists and managed by Amin Rəsulzadə, was boycotted above all by Alimardan Topchubashov, the chairman of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, extremely respected for his efforts to restore independence. This ardent supporter of creating a Caucasus federation did not want to recognise the authority of the Azerbaijani Centre over him. The dispute was finally resolved with the intervention of the Polish side, which forced the elderly politician to move aside while maintaining titular positions.⁴⁷ The conflict in the Caucasian highlander circles had a similar background (experienced politicians and representatives of the Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus for the Paris Peace Conference, including Haidar Bammät and T. Tchermoëff, who refused to submit to the National Centre formed by the younger and less experienced Said Shamil), but it also overlapped with old conflicts from the period of independence struggles, when the Christian Circassians and Ossetians supported General Denikin's armies fighting the Muslim Dagestanis and Chechens. For a long while, Georgians tried to find a solution which would appease both sides and for this reason were inclined to recognise the Council of Three as the diplomatic emanation of the Caucasian Independence Committee. However, this met with strong opposition from the Azerbaijani and the Caucasian highlanders, who expected this problematic situation to be unequivocally resolved. In order to settle the internal disputes, in February 1930 a congress of the Caucasian Independence Committee was held in Warsaw. Despite several days of discussions, Georgians could not be convinced to change their position altogether, however it was agreed that the seat of the Committee would be moved to Warsaw, and that its members would not cooperate with groups opposing the goals of the Committee. This slightly enigmatic formula made it feasible to achieve the aim set by the Caucasian highlanders, Azeris and Poles, but also satisfied the Georgian side, which was not obliged to sever ties with specific politicians, but made them

⁴⁷ For more on this see: P. Libera, "Ali Mardan bey Topczybaszy w oczach Mehmeda Emina Resulzade (1936)", *Nowy Prometeusz*, 4 (2012), pp. 191–192.

dependent on their attitude towards the Committee.⁴⁸ In this situation, in July 1930 Tchermoeff and Bamat ended cooperation with the Caucasian Independence Committee.⁴⁹ The National Georgian Centre did not have an opposition in the Council of Three, but consisted primarily of representatives of left-wing parties, while the influential national democrats remained on the outside. At the time of establishing the Caucasian Independence Committee, it was possible to secure the support of a faction of national democrats led by Alexander Asatiani, but in 1927 this group broke off contacts with the Centre as the Bolsheviks intercepted a Georgian emissary at the border and made public the letters he was carrying from Paris to the Caucasus. The letters testified to the two-faced politics of Georgian Mensheviks against national democrats. Ultimately, however, ties with Alexander Asatiani's group were restored in November 1932.⁵⁰

The Caucasian Confederation and the reform of the Promethean movement (1934-1940)

The non-aggression pact signed in July 1932 between Poland and the Soviets forbade both states from participating in agreements hostile towards the other party (art. 3),⁵¹ and thus hindered Poland's cooperation with the Promethean movement. This manifested itself mainly in the removal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and governmental factors from the open support for émigrés from countries conquered by the USSR.⁵² From that moment onwards, such support was surrounded by greater conspiracy than before. However, the reduction of funds allocated for this purpose was not due to political but economic reasons; as the reform of the Promethean movement was blocked in 1934, it could seem that it entered a phase of stagnation.⁵³

After the death of Marshal Józef Piłsudski, the issue of possible shifts in current policy emerged again. The head of Office Two, Major Edmund Charaszkiwicz, expected a decision regarding the scope of further cooperation with the Promethean movement. In December 1935, shortly after Tadeusz Kobyłański took over the

⁴⁸ See the record of the congress of the Caucasian Independence Committee in 1930 in Warsaw: Мамулия, *Кавказская Конфедерация*, pp. 75–80.

⁴⁹ РГВА, Е2 ОИІ SG, ref. 461-2-33, Sprawy Rady Trzech i KNK, pp. 8–9.

⁵⁰ Mamoulia, *Les combats*, pp. 114–115, 143–144.

⁵¹ *Journal of Laws*, 1932, no. 115, item 951, p. 2535. For the controversy regarding the wording of art. 3 see: W. Materski, *Na widecie. II Rzeczpospolita wobec Sowietów 1918–1943*, Warszawa, 2005, p. 388.

⁵² Cf. E. Charaszkiwicz, "Zagadnienie prometejskie (complementary paper)", 12 February 1940, in: *Zbiór dokumentów ppłk. Edmunda Charaszkiwicza*, ed. A. Grzywacz, M. Kwiecień, G. Mazur, Kraków, 2000, p. 77.

⁵³ Capt. E. Charaszkiwicz to Maj. W. Dąbrowski, 9 December 1935, Warszawa, in: *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, p. 346.

Eastern Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was partially reporting the state of affairs, but did not have an opportunity to present it to the head of the Second Department of Polish General Staff at the time, Colonel Tadeusz Pełczyński and Marshal Śmigły-Rydz.⁵⁴ The situation remained unchanged in the subsequent years. In order to discuss the entire issue, at the end of 1938 Edmund Charaszkiewicz prepared a paper on the Promethean movement, submitted to Śmigły-Rydz in March 1939, but received no reply until the outbreak of World War II.⁵⁵ As a result, until then the same direction was maintained in the ongoing activities: on the one hand, consolidation of combating political organisations within the same nation, on the other – efforts to create a broad front of nations conquered by Russia. The first type of activity consisted in winning over further factions of political parties and, through negotiations, convincing them to recognise the authority of national centres. The latter point aimed to foster relations between nations within the Promethean front and encourage closer cooperation between them – for instance, uniting Caucasian nations by urging them to create a Caucasian confederation pact as well as building a wide front by changing a journal from Caucasian to general-Promethean.

After the position of the Caucasian Independence Committee stabilised, the next stage consolidating the cooperation of the Caucasian nations was to create a Caucasian confederation. From the point of view of Polish authorities, the key point was to make the Committee a legitimate executive body and stimulate “the Caucasus emigration to form a **strong, justified and fixed principle of general Caucasian political unity**”. At the same time, the long-term goal of these activities was to build an “ideological-political act which would become a guiding star for young people, which could arouse enthusiasm and inspire them (as those who will decide the fate of the Caucasus) to fight for revival and independence”.⁵⁶

Work on creating the functioning principles of the future union of the Caucasian states lasted from 1927, and despite the fact that in August 1932 information emerged that the text of the pact was ready and signing it was a matter of just a few days,⁵⁷ the process took another two years. During this time, two different drafts of the pact were created. One was prepared by Georgian politicians, the other by officials from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Georgian project was jointly created by politicians and a well-known specialist in international law, Professor Michel Mouskhely (born Mikheil Muskhelishvili), who from mid-1932

⁵⁴ E. Charaszkiewicz to W. Dąbrowski, 9 December 1935, in: *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, p. 346.

⁵⁵ Charaszkiewicz, *Zagadnienie prometejskie* (complementary paper), p. 79; P. Libera, “Ewolucja ruchu prometejskiego w okresie międzywojennym”, in: *Ruch prometejski i walka*, pp. 234–244.

⁵⁶ Bureau of Military History (hereafter: WBH), Second Department of Polish General Staff (hereafter: O II SG), ref. I.303.4.5782. *Konfederacja kaukaska. Podstawy polityczne, ideologie, historia i następstwa podpisania paktu zawarcia konfederacji*, Warszawa 1934–1935, p. 8.

⁵⁷ Mir Jacoub, “La confédération de Caucase”, *Le Prométhée*, no. 69, août 1932,

to mid-1933 published a series of articles dedicated to this issue in the magazine *Le Prométhée*. In his texts, he considered various aspects of the future relations of the states from the point of view of international law and the existing knowledge about the functioning of state unions. He discussed the advantages of individual solutions related to the sovereignty of member states, division of competences, matters of finance, the army and the federal court.⁵⁸ His was one of the few substantial voices that appeared in the public debate. In November 1932, Simon Mdivani passed the Georgian project to Tadeusz Schaetzel, and in February 1933 it was deliberated at a meeting of representatives of the Caucasian Independence Committee.

The Georgian project did not meet Polish expectations.⁵⁹ The text referred to preserving sovereignty, which to the Polish side seemed like a “league of Caucasian nations”, that is it did not introduce a clear-cut federation of the Caucasian states which the Poles were waiting for, but used indirect means instead. The text emphasised sovereignty of the Caucasus states and mentioned a possible common customs border, potential military cooperation and, also potentially, joint diplomatic missions. The Polish project, supposedly inspired by Tadeusz Hołówko in cooperation with the long-term head of the Treaty Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Professor Julian Makowski, presented a different stance, leaning towards a federative state. During the talks it transpired that none of the Caucasian states was ready for such a far-reaching integration. To them a federation was only a future project. After mutual consultations, the Polish party came to the conclusion that Polish and Caucasian aspirations could be reconciled and limited to forming a confederation, but that it was necessary for the “Caucasian friends to recognise the necessity of: common defence, common policies, common treasury and common borders as requisite foundations for the future union of the republics”. The Pact would also mention that a draft of the constitution should be created in the near future.⁶⁰

In the end, instead of adopting a constitutional pact, forming a union of states and describing in detail the organs of the future union, a relatively short declarative text was chosen which guaranteed that each member state would maintain sovereignty, but at the same time established a common political and customs border, common foreign policy, joint command over troops of each state, and an arbitration or the supreme court in case of disagreement. However, while it was not possible to pass a resolution for the total unity of the Caucasian army, the text of the pact imposed on the signatories the obligation to draft a constitution for the future confederation (point 5). It is worth noting that a separate point of the agreement guaranteed a future place for Armenia, should it decide

⁵⁸ His texts, initialled M.M. were published in *Le Prométhée* from September 1932 to August 1933 (nos. 70–76, 79–81).

⁵⁹ The text of the project was published in: Мамулия, *Кавказская Конфедерация*.

⁶⁰ WBH, O II SG, ref. I.303.4.5782. Konfederacja kaukaska. Podstawy polityczne, p. 8.

to join the Caucasian Confederation (point 6).⁶¹ The pact was officially signed in Brussels on 14 July 1934 by representatives of three Caucasian nations: Georgians, Azeris and Caucasian highlanders. Its value would be only declarative, therefore in practice the most important consequence of the pact was the creation, in July 1935, of the Council of the Caucasian Confederation, which was to take over the role of the Caucasian Independence Committee. The key difference between the Committee and the Council was that the Committee did not make vital decisions on behalf of the nations it represented: these remained within the competence of the national centres. The Council of the Caucasian Confederation did make decisions regarding the joint diplomatic, intelligence and propaganda campaigns on behalf of the three centres. In this way, in the absence of a possibility to establish a Confederation, it was possible to consolidate the efforts of the three nations and make them cooperate closely in key issues, also prospectively. The Council included four representatives delegated by each of the national centres. The members of the Council selected a three-member Presidium from among themselves.⁶² During the first two years of the Council's activity it focused primarily on issues related to *Le Prométhée* magazine, the creation of the Prometheus Club in Paris, and organising diplomatic activities.⁶³

Further stages of work related to the creation of an agreement around the future Caucasian Confederation, which undoubtedly was the establishment of cooperation with the Armenians and preparing a draft constitution of the Caucasian Confederation, could not be realised before the outbreak of World War II. Although the signatories of the Pact reserved a place for Armenia, the most important Armenian group, i.e. the Dashnak Party, was leaning towards a different solution. The party's leader, Arshak Djamalian, originally tried to persuade the Polish side to support an Armenian-Georgian union. Poland rejected the proposals in 1936, as they assumed the formation of a platform different to the Caucasian Council. The negotiations were resumed in 1938-1939, but stalled just before the outbreak of World War II. The obligation to prepare the constitution of the future Caucasian Confederation resulted from the Pact signed in 1934, but after the formation of the Caucasian Council *Le Prométhée* and its successor *La Revue de Prométhée* did not publish a single text reflecting on the future Confederation or the constitution to be created. On 10 March 1936 Captain Charaszkiwicz brought up the need to start works on drafting a constitution for the future Caucasian Confederation during a meeting with Noe Zhordania.⁶⁴ Such a commission was set up by the Council on 27 January 1937, but probably began operating only at the end of 1938

⁶¹ S. Mikulicz, *Prometeizm w polityce II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa, 1971, pp. 177-180; Мамулия, *Кавказская Конфедерация*, pp. 95-96.

⁶² Мамулия, *Кавказская Конфедерация*, pp. 126-129.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 130-196.

⁶⁴ A report from the conference of Major E. Charaszkiwicz with N. Zhordania, 10 March 1936, Paris, in: *II Rzeczypospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, p. 368.

and according to the Caucasian Confederation Pact, signed on 28 May 1940, it did not prepare such a project.⁶⁵

From the point of view of the Polish side, the formation of the Caucasian Council was not only the next stage of unifying the Caucasian emigration, but above all an element of building a wide front of nations fighting to regain independence. Due to the significant fragmentation of the emigration circles it was necessary to create a single platform that would concentrate their activities and initiate joint actions by all nations associated with the Promethean movement. In practice, this role was partly played by the Prometheus Club in Warsaw (with branches in Harbin and Helsinki playing only minor roles), whose board was composed of representatives of nine nations (the three Caucasian nations, Crimean and Volga Tatars, Ukrainians, Kuban Cossacks, Karelians and Komi), but it also officially represented Turkestan and Don Cossacks. In practice, however, due to administrative difficulties such a club was not formed in Paris for many years (it was not established until 1939) and the only common emanation of the entire Promethean front were secret announcements issued irregularly in Russian and signed “Prometheus. A League of Nations Conquered by Russia”.⁶⁶ Attempts at a reform made due to pressure from the Polish side in 1936/1937–1938 aimed to strengthen this tendency and create an “International of the oppressed”, aspiring to unite “all peoples oppressed by Russia without exception”.⁶⁷

A symbolic moment was the dispute over the ownership of the magazine *Le Prométhée*, which was launched and functioned as an organ of the Caucasian Independence Committee with an expanded editorial board including representatives of Turkestan and Ukraine. The Polish side demanded that the magazine should become a tribune for the entire Promethean movement, while the representatives of the Caucasian nations were not unanimous regarding this idea: some supported the Polish position, some were convinced that the journal should become the property of the Caucasian Council. After a lengthy, emotional dispute it was decided that the magazine would change its title to *La Revue de Prométhée* and be an organ of the entire Promethean front. The discussion ended with the reform of the magazine, which changed the title, format, and editors and from the end of 1938 became a magazine of the entire Promethean front. This conflict was also related to the demand that the members of the movement be divided into those who came from the “historical” states and those whose states existed briefly after 1917 or were only planning to gain independence. The final arrangements on the total and unconditional equality of all members of the movement were made at Warsaw congress in 1938.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Мамулия, *Кавказская Конфедерация*, pp. 178, 193.

⁶⁶ The contents of issues 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 were reproduced in *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, pp. 501–532.

⁶⁷ Cf. Ł. Dalnicki [W. Pele], “Uwagi w kwestii reorganizacji pracy prometeuszowskiej w Paryżu”, in: *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, pp. 415–416.

⁶⁸ Mamoulia, *Les combats*, pp. 178–181.

The outbreak of World War II and the consequences of the defensive war of 1939 meant that further cooperation between the Polish authorities and the Promethean movement was in doubt.

The first advocates of continued close relations with the Promethean nations were the officers and employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who had dealt with these matters so far and were aware of the importance of nationality issues for the USSR and the situation in Central and Eastern Europe. Major Edmund Charaszkiwicz and others supported this view, and suggested raising funds from the British government to support the Promethean campaign.⁶⁹ Ultimately, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to maintain the cooperation and financially support the emigration from the Promethean nations. The instructions sent to all missions in April 1940 informed that the cooperation is to be sustained, albeit confidentially. It was to consist primarily of assisting the Promethean movement, observing the attitudes of individual states towards the Promethean movement, propagating information on the benefits of this cooperation among Poland's allies, as well as cultivating relations with Turkish delegations and emphasising the closeness of common goals in this area and, finally, maintaining connections with all Caucasian organisations and influencing them towards national unity. The main political line towards the Caucasian nations was preserved: "Our interest is that, on the one hand, individual Caucasian nationality groups fighting for their independence should appear on the outside as a cohesive front with a single political line within the Caucasian Confederation, and on the other hand, that the representations of the individual sections of the Confederation should include political organisations of these nations in the widest possible way". The document contained crucial instructions regarding the policy towards Armenian emigration, whose representatives did not yet belong to the Caucasian Confederation. Above all, the document made it clear that it was difficult to consider the future of the Caucasus without taking into account Turkey and its aspirations in this region. According to information of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey was ready to recognise the Caucasian Confederation, but on the conditions clearly specifying that the "main and only" enemy of the Confederation was Russia, consenting to close cooperation with Turkey, renouncing territorial claims by Georgia, maintaining a balance between Muslim and Christian sections in the Confederation, and including the Armenians. In the latter case, however, it was clearly indicated that Armenians would have to waive their existing anti-Turkish policy.⁷⁰ The new version of the Caucasian Confederation Pact was signed on 28 May 1940 in Paris. During the discussions on the new version of the Pact,

⁶⁹ Major E. Charaszkiwicz, *Zagadnienie prometejskie* – note, 15 November 1939 [London], in: P. Libera, "Pierwsza notatka mjr. Edmunda Charaszkiwicza o 'zagadnieniu prometejskim'", *Nowy Prometeusz*, 8 (October 2015), p. 150.

⁷⁰ *Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1940*, ed. M. Hulas, Warszawa, 2010, pp. 286, 290.

the Azerbaijani side proposed a slight change to point 2 of the Pact. The existing version of the provision stated that the southern border of the Caucasian Confederation would be the southern border of the Soviet republics of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia. The Azerbaijani delegate suggested that this phrase should emphasise that these are the “permanently established” borders of the Caucasian Confederation. The version was approved, but later dropped at the request of the Georgian side.⁷¹

The interest of the neighbouring countries in an area of such strategic importance as the Caucasus had very tragic consequences for the nations inhabiting the region. One of the few solutions aimed at improving this situation was the idea of creating a union of nations that would jointly oversee security and a coherent foreign and economic policy. Caucasian elites made attempts to implement the concept into life since the weakening of Russia through the Bolshevik revolution, but due to internal reasons as well as international conditions they did not succeed. Subsequent efforts were made when all the Caucasian nations lost their independence, and their representatives found themselves in exile. One of the few countries to establish close cooperation with émigrés was Poland. There were Polish politicians who sought to create a broad front of emigration from the countries conquered by Russia, seeing in it a way to undermine one of Poland’s main opponents. An important stage in this process was forging an agreement between the Caucasian nations and persuading them to form the Caucasian Confederation. The possibilities to exert pressure which Poland had at its disposal undoubtedly contributed to the unification of the Caucasian nations, and later to the signing of the Caucasian Confederation Pact in 1934 and to establishing the Caucasian Council (1935), an organ of joint executive power for three Caucasian nations. In 1940, Armenia joined the Pact. Although the international circumstances impeded further activities of the Caucasian Council, this period provided valuable experience in the attempts to implement the idea of the Caucasian Confederation in exile.

Bibliography

- Bartoszewicz H., “Misja Romana Knolla w Ankarze 1924–1925”, *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 2001, no. 36.
- Bruski J. J., *Między prometeizmem a Realpolitik. II Rzeczpospolita wobec Ukrainy Sowieckiej 1921–1926*, Kraków, 2010.
- Furier A., “Kształtowanie się idei jedności kaukaskiej od średniowiecza do początku XX wieku”, *Przegląd Zachodni*, 2000, no. 2 (295), pp. 181–198.
- Gierowska-Kałuża J., Kornat M. (ed.), “Turcja w koncepcjach polskiego Sztabu Generalnego w okresie Konferencji Lozańskiej (1922–1923). Nieznane memorandum Tadeusza Schaetzela”, *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, 49 (2014), no. 2.

⁷¹ Hoover Institution Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ref. 35/6, pp. 663–664.

- Jordania N., "La confédération caucasienne", *Le Prométhée (édition spéciale)*, no. 92 (juillet 1934).
- Libera P., "Ali Mardan bey Topczybaszy w oczach Mehmeda Emina Resulzade (1936)", *Nowy Prometeusz*, 2012, no. 4.
- Libera P., "Pierwsza notatka mjr Edmunda Charaszkiwicza o 'zagadnieniu prometejskim'", *Nowy Prometeusz*, October 2015, no. 8.
- Libera P. (ed.), *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, Warszawa, 2013, pp. 18–27.
- Mamoulija G., "Rosyjskie ludobójstwo narodów Północnego Kaukazu w dokumentach kaukaskiego ruchu narodowo-wyzwoleńczego podczas pierwszej wojny światowej (1914–1918)", *Przegląd Wschodni*, 12/46 (2012), no. 2.
- Mamoulija G., *Les combats indépendantistes des Caucasiens entre URSS et puissances occidentales: Le cas de la Géorgie (1921–1945)*, Paris, 2009.
- Materski W., *Georgia rediviva. Republika Gruzińska w stosunkach międzynarodowych 1918–1921*, Warszawa, 1994.
- Mikulicz S., *Prometeizm w polityce II Rzeczypospolitej*, Warszawa, 1971.
- Pipes R., *The Formation of the Soviet Union*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1964.
- Pisuliński J., "Prometeizm – problemy i pytania historiograficzne", in: *Ruch prometejski i walka o przebudowę Europy Wschodniej (1918–1940)*, ed. M. Kornat, Warszawa, 2012, pp. 91–104.
- Polskie Dokumenty Dyplomatyczne 1940*, ed. M. Hułas, Warszawa, 2010.
- Szpotański T., *Gruzja*, Warszawa 1924.
- Wasilewski L., *Sprawy narodowościowe w teorii i w życiu*, Kraków–Warszawa, 1929.
- Zbiór dokumentów pphk. Edmunda Charaszkiwicza*, ed. A. Grzywacz, M. Kwiecień, G. Mazur, Kraków, 2000.
- Багирова И.С., *Политические партии и организации Азербайджана в начале XX века (1900–1917)*, Баку, 1997.
- Исхаков С.М., *Первая русская революция и мусульмане Российской Империи*, Москва, 2007, pp. 178–181.
- Кармов А.Х., *Материалы съездов Горских Народов Северного Кавказа и Дагестана 1917 года*, Нальчик, 2014.
- Мамулиja Г., "Как самурай стал союзником Прометей: Японо-кавказская смычка в годы русско-японской войны (1904–1905)", *Nowy Prometeusz*, 2012, no. 3.
- Мамулиja Г., Абуталыбов Р., *Страна огней. В борьбе за свободу и независимость. Политическая история азербайджанской эмиграции 1920–1945 гг.*, Париж–Баку, 2014.
- Мамулиja Г., *Кавказская Конфедерация в официальных декларациях, тайной переписке и секретных документах движения „Прометей”*. Сборник документов, Москва, 2012.
- Мацаберидзе М., "Разработка конституции Закавказского Сейма и Национальный Совет Грузии", *Кавказ и глобализация*, 2008, no. 2, pp. 151–160.
- Мир Якуб [Мехтиеv], "К истории идей Кавказской конфедерации", *Северный Кавказ*, 1934, no. 3, pp. 34–37, in: В. Гулиев, *Из наследия политической эмиграции Азербайджана в Польше: 30-е годы XX века*, Торунь, 2010.

Dr Paweł Libera, PhD in history, associate professor in the Department of History of the Twentieth Century at the Tadeusz Manteuffel Institute of History, Polish Academy of Sciences, and the Historical Research Office of the Institute of National Remembrance in Poland. His research interests include eastern policy of the Second Polish Republic, particularly the interwar Polish-Soviet and Polish-Lithuanian relations; his publications include: *II Rzeczpospolita wobec ruchu prometejskiego*, ed. P. Libera (Warszawa, 2013), and *Lietuvos ir Lenkijos Diplomatinių Santykių 1938–1940 Metais. Dokumentų Rinkinys*, co-edited with A. Kasparavičius (Lietuvos Istorijos Institutas, Vilnius, 2012) (pawel.libera@interia.pl).