GEOHISTORY

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CAUCASIAN ÉMIGRÉS IN THE RUSSIAN MASONIC LODGES IN FRANCE (1922-1939)[1]

Abstract

This article, which is based on materials found in three French archives, looks at several scientific questions relating to the activities of Caucasian émigrés in France in the 1920-1930s. The author concludes that Russians preferred to invite émigrés from the Caucasus to their Masonic lodges who had either served in the Russian army, been employed as civil servants, or been elected to legislative bodies, and also took into account their attitude to Russia, the Russian culture, and the future of the Caucasus as part of the Russian Empire.

KEYWORDS: ***Caucasian émigrés, Russian Masonic lodges, France, the Russian statehood, monarchy, national politics.***

[1] I would like to thank the Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme, France for the opportunity to work in the French archives and libraries (2009-2014).

Introduction

The exodus from the Caucasus of those members of the local peoples who failed to reconcile themselves with Soviet power was fairly impressive even though historical science has been concentrating on the emigration of Russians from the Russian Empire. France, which gave shelter to Russian émigrés and émigrés from other parts of the former empire, including the Caucasus, was the choice of many. Quite a few of those who arrived from the Northern and Central Caucasus initiated strong sociopolitical movements.

Many of those Russians who found themselves in emigration had a vast experience of membership in the Masonic lodges of the Russian Empire.[2] When in emigration, starting approximately in the early 1920s, they revived their lodges mainly within two French lodges called *the Grande Loge de France* and *the Grand Orient de France*. It was Russian freemasons who first paid attention to the sociopolitical potential of the Caucasian émigrés in order to close their ranks within a Masonic lodge to engage in a common struggle (as a united Russian Empire) against the Soviet Union. The Russian freemasons in France were determined to remove the national barriers to create a single political front of struggle for new Russia.

This article is based on the materials I found in three French archives, the Archive of the Grande Loge de France (Paris, Rue Puteaux), the Archive of the Grand Orient de France (Paris, Rue Cadet), and the Manuscript Department of the Mitterrand Bibliothèque nationale de France. I relied on these documents to find answers to the following questions related to the activities of Caucasian émigrés in France in the 1920s-1930s: How were these people drawn into the Russian Masonic lodges of France in the early 1920s? What was the purpose of their participation in the Russian Masonic lodges? To which extent were the Caucasian émigrés able to overcome their national aspirations and contribute to a unified political and philosophic platform within the framework of certain lodges? What were the main forms of their activities in the Russian Masonic lodges? What were the results of their activities in the Russian Masonic lodges?

The Astrea Freemason Lodge

The Astrea Lodge was the first to invite Caucasian émigrés into its ranks. It was set up in Paris in 1922 and had prominent Russian political figures (L. Kandaurov, P. Bobrinsky, E. Bennigsen, and others) among its members. According to the General Rite of the Astrea Lodge,[3] its aim was to set up a "group of brothers spiritually strong, homogenous, and unknown to the profane world, the force and influence of whom, both in the Masonic and profane world, should be greater than before due to their selflessness, unity, discipline, and spiritual like-mindedness," its slogan being Wisdom-Beauty-Strength. According to Leonty Kandaurov, the aim of Russian freemasonry in France was "involvement of the masons in restoring life in Russia."[4]

According to its General Rite, "the lodge should not strive to increase the number of brothers but, rather, upgrade their qualities, by which not only intellect, education, and knowledge are meant, but also the ability to imbibe Masonic sentiments and brotherhood, unification in the spirit of the General Rite, as well as decency, faithfulness to the word, self-sacrifice, and active love of people."[5] Yet, as Pavel Buryshkin later wrote, the lodge was "rapidly augmenting its membership:"[6] the number of members increased from sixty at the end of 1922 to 100 two years later.

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[2] See: A.A. Serkov, *Istoria russkogo masonstva v XIX v.,* Moscow, 2000.

[3] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Paris, Box 3.

[4] P.A. Buryshkin, *Istoria russkikh masonskikh lozh*, Rough typewritten copy, Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 3, p. 13.

[5] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 3.

[6] P.A. Buryshkin, op. cit., p. 25.



Photo 1

Emblem of the Astrea Lodge.

During formation of this lodge and its activity, its leaders turned their attention to people from the Caucasus who had found themselves in emigration along with Russians. Nine Caucasian émigrés joined the lodge in the first two years: four of them represented the Northern Caucasus (K. Khagondokov, I. Shakov, T. Shakmanov, and M. Kuriev); three were Georgians (A. Amilakhvari, A. Andronnikov, and I. Vachnadze), and two were Armenians (S. Lianozov and A. Shakh-Nazarov).[7]

I found the following materials relating to the above-mentioned representatives of the Caucasus and how they joined the lodge, with the exception of S. Lianozov and A. Shakh-Nazarov, who joined the lodge much earlier than the others:

(1) *a request for initiation of those who wanted to join the lodge*;

(2) *an interview on political issues*;

(3) *an interview on philosophical and religious issues*;

(4) *a general talk about the applicant's biography to identify his personal traits*.

First, I will describe how the Caucasian émigrés were adopted into the Masonic lodge to better understand "the invitation process."

Stepan Lianozov,[8] a Moscow Armenian, was the first; according to the list of members, he was initiated on 11 November, 1922. It should be said that by late 1923 he had reached third (master) grade. He started in first (pupil) grade on 11 November, 1922. There is no more information about him in the archives.

Konstantin Khagondokov from Kabarda also wanted to join the lodge.[9] His application was dated 24 May, 1923; he was recommended by Petr Polovtsov,[10] one of the founders of the Astrea

[7] See: I.L. Babich, "Severokavkazskaia natsia v evropeyskoy emigratsii: mif ili realnost," in: *Obshchestvo kak ob'ekt i sub'ekt vlasti,* St. Petersburg, 2012, pp. 376-402.

[8] Stepan Lianozov (9 August, 1872, Moscow-10 August, 1949, Paris), buried in the Passy Cemetery in Paris. He was a lawyer and worked in the oil sector; graduated from the departments of natural science and law, Moscow University; was the assistant of a lawyer in the Moscow Chamber of Law. In 1901, he moved to Baku to go into the oil business; was managing director and sat on over twenty boards of directors of oil and other companies; was among the organizers of the Russian General Oil Corporation. After 1917, he moved to Finland to become one of the organizers of anti-Bolshevik movement; was a member and a financial manager of the Political Congress under General Yudenich. During Yudenich's march on Petrograd in August 1919, he chaired the Council of Ministers and was first minister of finance and, later, foreign minister of the Northwestern Government. In 1920, he emigrated to Paris.

[9] Konstantin Khagondokov (14/16 September, 1871, Pyatigorsk, Vladikavkaz Gubernia-2 December, 1958, Sainte-Geneviève-des-Bois, buried in the local cemetery), was Major General of the General Staff; graduated from the 2nd Cadet Corps and Konstantinovsky Military College; took part in suppressing the Boxer Uprising in China in 1900; graduated from the Nikolaevskaya Academy of the General Staff; took part in the Russo-Japanese war. During World War I, commanded a brigade of the Caucasian Native Mountainous Division (also known as Savage Division); was awarded the St. George Order and the Gold Sword for Bravery. In 1916, he served as military governor of the Amur Region and hetman in the interim of the Amur Cossacks troops.

[10] Petr Polovtsov (Polovtsev) (30 May/12 June, 1874, Tsarskoe selo, Petersburg Gubernia-9 February, 1964, Monte Carlo, Monaco); Lieutenant General, public figure and writer; studied at the Historical-Philological Institute, served in actual military service; passed an officer exam at the Nikolaevsky Cavalry College; served as officer of the life-guards of the Grodno

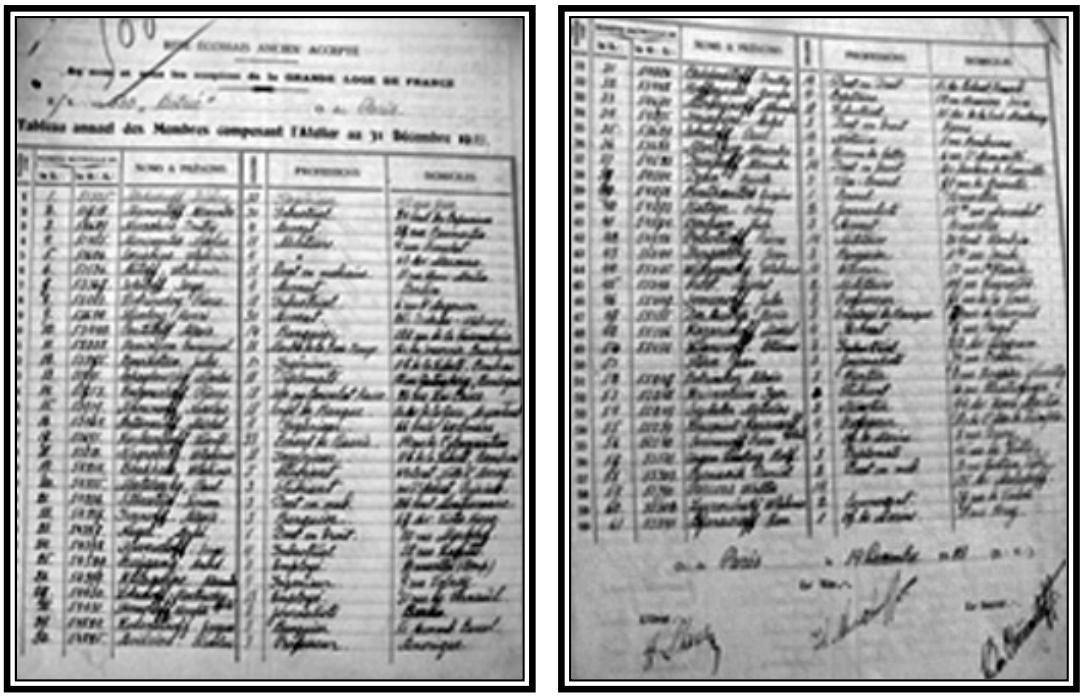

Photo 2

List of members of the Astrea Lodge.

lodge. Both were approximately of the same age; both were military men and graduated from the Nikolaevskaya Academy of the General Staff, which meant that their acquaintance went a long way back into the past. Konstantin Khagondokov was interviewed by *P. Polovtsev, M. Kazarinov*, and *E. Bennigsen* on 7 and 14 June and was initiated on 23 June, 1923 into the first (pupil) grade.

Lezghian *Ibrahim-bek Gaydarov* was the second member from the Northern Caucasus.[11] He applied on 30 October, 1923[12] and was rec-

Hussar Regiment. Later he graduated from the Nikolaevskaya Academy of the General Staff; fought in the Russo-Japanese war; in 1905, was assistant of the military agent in London. In 1906, he served in the Main Department of the General Staff; during World War I, commanded the Tatar Regiment, later a brigade of the Savage Division; was head of staff of the Caucasian Corps; was awarded the St. George Gold Sword for Bravery and the Cross of St. George. In 1917, commanded troops of the Petrograd military district, served as military governor of the Terek Region; commanded the troops of the Terek-Daghestan Territory; was undersecretary of the foreign minister of the Provisional Government. Lived in France after 1919; was an industrialist and one of the directors of a casino in Monte Carlo.

[11] Ibrahim-bek Gaydarov (23 August, 1879, Derbent—date of death is unknown); railway engineer, member of the Third State Duma, where he represented the Daghestan Region. In 1917, was elected member of the Central Committee of the Union of the United Mountain People; commissar of the Daghestan region. Minister of Post and Telegraph of the Mountain Republic; in 1919, participated in the Versailles Peace Conference in France, in 1921, emigrated to Paris where he worked as a draftsman at the Renault factory. In the mid-1920s, moved to Turkey where he started his own business as a railway engineer.

[12] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 5.


DEMANDE D'INITIATION

Nom Kagondokoff
Prénoms Constantin
Lieu et Date de Naissance Pratigorsk, Russie
Profession Actionnaire de Société Pétrolifère
Domicile actuel 9 rue Brémontier Paris XVII
Domiciles antérieurs et successifs Petrograd, Russie
Références Polovtzoff
Êtes-vous Célibataire ou Marié? marié
Avez-vous des Enfants? trois filles, trois fils
Avez-vous déjà demandé à entrer dans la Franc-Maçonnerie? non
Je demande à faire partie de la Franc-Maçonnerie et à entrer dans la Loge Astrée
J'ai pris connaissance des principes de l'institution, auxquels je déclare donner mon adhésion; je m'engage, en outre, à supporter les charges pécuniaires
le 24 Mai 1923
Signature C. Kagondokoff
APPUYÉ PAR LE SOUSSIGNÉ
Pr. Polovtsoff.

Photo 3

Application of Konstantin Khagondokov.


FERMETÉ-COURAGE

OBLIGATION

Constantin Kagondokoff
Pratigorsk
Paris
actionnaire pétrol.
à Paris le 23 juin 1923
Signature C. Kagondokoff

Photo 4

K. Khagondokov's confirmation to pay dues of 5 francs a month (instead of the obligatory 160 francs for all other members).

ommended by P. Polovtsev and L. Kandaurov and interviewed by *P. Polovtsev, D. Sheremetev*, and *V. Vyazemsky* (on 2 and 15 November); was initiated on 15 December, 1923 into the first (pupil) grade.

He was followed by two men from Nalchik (Kabarda) and one from Nazran, whom Khagondokov, born in Kabarda, knew well: they were *Izmail Shakov* from Kabarda,[13] Balkarian *Tau-Sultan Shakmanov*,[14] and Ingush *Murzala Kuriev*.[15] K. Khagondokov recommended them all. It seems that they were initiated on the same day. Izmail Shakov was recommended by D. Sheremetev, however there were two unofficial recommendations from Khagondokov and Gaydarov; S. Novoselov, one of the interviewers, mentioned this in his report. Shakov applied on 8 June, 1924 and was interviewed on 8 and 9 July, 1924 by *D. Sheremetev, S. Novoselov*, and *K. Khagondokov*. Ingush Murzala Kuriev applied on 14 June, 1924. He was officially recommended by D. Shereme-

[13] Izmail Shakov (6 April, 1878, Nalchik Area, Terek Region-no later than 1945 in France?). Doctor of Medicine, specialized in gynecology and obstetrics; freemason; graduated from the medical faculty of Kiev University; worked in the provinces, graduated from a surgery course at the Red Cross hospital in Elisavetgrad. In 1914-1917, owned a surgical hospital in Grozny. In 1920, emigrated to Constantinople, in 1923 moved to Paris.

[14] Tau-Sultan Shakmanov (3 July, 1885, Nalchik, Terek Region-date and place of death unknown), a lawyer, public and political figure, freemason; studied at the Kharkov Institute of Technology; graduated from the Department of Law, Moscow University; worked in Vladikavkaz as an assistant of a lawyer; was involved in the Central Committee of the Union of the United Mountain People; chaired the Kabarda National Committee; in the Civil War, fought in the ranks of the Kabarda Brigade of the Volunteer Army; emigrated to Constantinople; in 1924, moved to France and lived in Paris and environs.

[15] Murzala Kuriev (26 November, 1882, Nazran, Terek Region-7 September, 1952, Munich, Germany); colonel of the Ingush Regiment, industrialist, freemason; graduated from the Tiflis Military College; fought in the Russo-Japanese war; during World War I, fought in the Chechen Cavalry Regiment, which was part of the Savage Division; during the Civil War, commanded the Ingush Regiment but was not involved in the actual fighting; owned oil-rich areas. In 1920, he emigrated to Constantinople; in 1921, he moved to Paris.

tev and interviewed by *A. Mamontov, V. Vyazemsky*, and *V. Lyshchinsky-Troekurov* on 8 and 9 July, 1924. Tau-Sultan (Kelemet) Shakmanov was recommended by K. Khagondokov and D. Sheremetev.[16] He applied on 20 June, 1924 and was interviewed by *D. Sheremetev, A. Mordvinov*, and *S. Novoselov* on 3 and 10 July, 1924.[17] The three new members from the Northern Caucasus were initiated on the same day, 12 July, 1924.

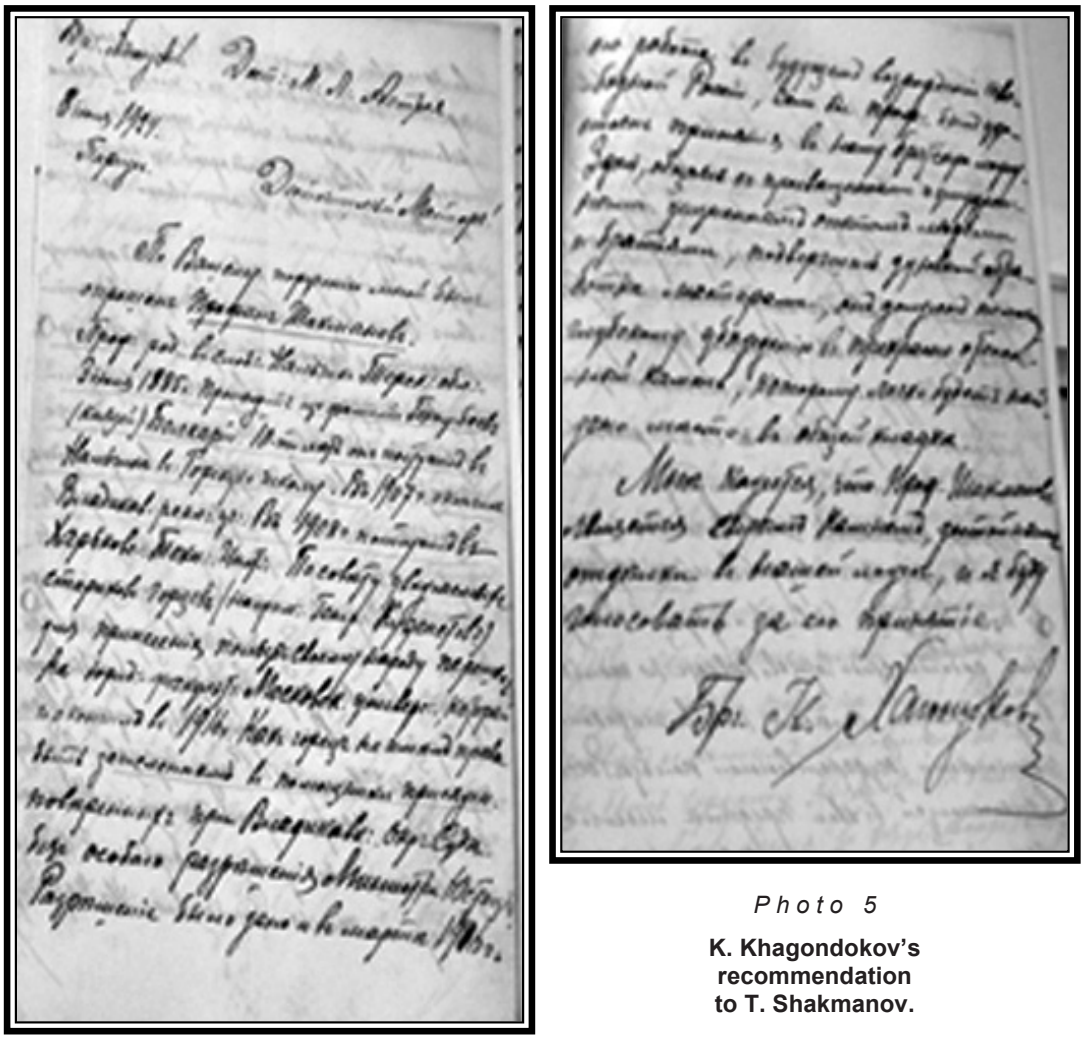

Photo 5

K. Khagondokov's recommendation to T. Shakmanov.

During 1923-1924, three Georgians were initiated: A. Amilakhvari, who was the second after K. Khagondokov, A. Vachnadze, and A. Andronnikov. A. Amilakhvari filed his application on 11 June, 1923[18]; he was recommended by P. Polovtsov and interviewed on 17 June and 22 September, 1923

[16] Dmitry Sheremetev, Count (20 May/1 June, 1885, St. Petersburg-23 December, 1963, Paris, buried in the Sainte-Genèvieve-des-Bois Cemetery), Gentleman of the Bedchamber at the Supreme Court, businessman; studied at the law department of St. Petersburg University; served in the Horse Guards Regiment; during World War I, served in the headquarters of the Northern Front; in 1919, emigrated to Constantinople; the next year arrived in France, where he lived in Paris.

[17] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 6.

[18] Alexander Amilakhvari, Prince (20 November, 1879, Gori, Georgia-21 August, 1968, New York), colonel of the guards, freemason; graduated from the Tiflis Cadet Corps and the Corps of Pages; in World War I, fought with the Kabarda

by *P. Polovtsev, V. Dezobri*, and *I. Tkhorzhevsky*.[19] He was initiated on 29 September, 1923 into the first (pupil) grade. Alexander Vachnadze[20] applied on 15 February, 1924.[21] He was recommended by V. Vyazemsky and interviewed by *V. Vyazemsky, V. Lyshchinsky-Troekurov*, and *B. Furstenberg* on 3 April and 4 May, 1924; he was initiated together with new members from the Northern Caucasus on 12 July, 1924. Archil Andronnikov, another Georgian, applied on 16 March, 1924[22]; he was recommended by D. Sheremetev and T. Maksheev, interviewed on 2 and 8 May by *P. Bobrinsky, D. Sheremetev*, and *A. Mamontov*, and initiated on 10 May, 1924.

For a better understanding of why these people were elected for membership in the lodge, we need to look deeper into their political and religious-philosophical views.

Political Views of the Caucasian Freemasons

I have already quoted Leonty Kandaurov, who saw the aim of Russian freemasonry in France as "involvement of the masons in restoring life in *Russia*."[23] This means that the views and opinions about Russia, the future form of governance in Russia, and the attitude to the future of national regions of the former Russian Empire, the Caucasus included, were the central political issue among the freemasons.

When describing the gist of Russian freemasonry of the Scottish Rite in emigration, Petr Buryshkin specifically stressed that "it is a national Russian organization … the contacts of which with the traditions and spirituality of Russian freemasonry of the past are very much alive."[24] He further specified: "I said that Russian masonry was national. This should not be taken to mean that *it is intolerant of other nations*. Members of all tribes and peoples of the Russian state conglomerate were actively involved in the Masonic lodge set up by the Russians—there were Great Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Poles, Russian Germans, *nationalities* (the word was replaced with people born in the Caucasus.—*I.B.*) of the Caucasus and others who had *the great Russian culture* (here and hereafter italics mine.—*I.B.*) and their moral and political rejection of the Bolsheviks in common."[25] This means that the main condition of membership in the Astrea Lodge was a positive attitude to Russia, the Russian Empire, and the Russian culture.

Petr Polovtsov stressed that Profane Khagondokov "has wide political views that combined *reasonable Russian patriotism with deep-seated devotion to his native Kabarda tribe*." The Profane believed that in the future, "the peoples living on the peripheries of Russia will have *to reunite with it* for economic and political reasons." The fact that "after the revolution too few people in the Caucasus can think at the state level" was one of the key political factors in the region. Konstantin

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Regiment; awarded with the St. George Gold Sword for Bravery; after the revolution, remained in Tiflis where he worked for the Optorg French Trading Company; in 1920 (1921), evacuated to Constantinople and, later, to Paris, where he worked at a factory and the Kitmir House of Embroidery; in the 1930s, contributed to the *Kavkaz* journal.

[19] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 7.

[20] Alexander-Irakly (Irakly-Alexander Vachnadze), Prince (6 March 1885, Tiflis Gubernia-October 1957, France, buried in the Sainte-Genèvieve-des-Bois Cemetery); captain, studied in the Oriental Languages Department, St. Petersburg University; graduated from the Alexeevskoe Military College and the automobile school in St. Petersburg; fought in World War I, was awarded a St. George Order; emigrated in 1920; lived in Paris from 1924.

[21] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 7.

[22] Ibidem.

[23] P.A. Buryshkin, op. cit., p. 13.

[24] P.A. Buryshkin, *Istoria Russkogo Masonstva v emigratsii*, Handwritten rough copy, Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 3, p. 11.

[25] Ibid., p. 13.

Khagondokov believed that the monarchy was the only acceptable form of governance for Russia, "since only a strong monarchic government will pacify Russia," although he also recognized parliamentarianism. He said that new Russia should acquire an "all-imperial sejm," in which all and every person should have the right to speak out and which should be based on disproportionate representation. He argued that "the voices of the smaller peoples," by which he meant the North Caucasian peoples in particular, "will remain unheard in the masses of Russian representation" in conditions of proportionate representation. He further wrote that the national peripheries, Turkestan, Siberia, and the Caucasus, need broad local self-administration, of which they had been deprived in the Russian Empire (it was an "over-centralized" country, the harm of which was obvious). M. Kazarin also wrote that Khagondokov believed that "*the Caucasian tribes cannot live separately and independently from Russia* and that for historical, economic, and geographic considerations, their unification with Russia is inevitable."[26]

Tau-Sultan Shakmanov, likewise, stressed that all peoples should be involved in governing new Russia. When talking to Sheremetev, he stressed that "the regime [of Russia] should be representative, irrespective of whether the country is a monarchy or a democratic republic… It should be educating for the masses and create the best possible conditions for the majority of its population… When taking about future relations between the Caucasus and Russia, he sees them not as a new conquest by the use of force, but as *a federation with a clear understanding by the Caucasus of its place and role in this federation*. The Profane believes that these federative relations will be practiced in Russia ruled by law." Shakmanov "does not attach great importance to the state order, since it is nothing more than a method of realization and depends on the historical reasons and special features of any given nationality." He attached great importance to the ideas and aims pursued by the State and the methods it employed. "When talking about Russia, he remains convinced that not only *the Caucasus cannot exist without Russia, but also that the Caucasus needs Russian culture per se*. In the past there was the danger of Turkic influence, but having dealt with the Turks at closer range, the Caucasus lost its respect for them, being aware that they were totally uncultured. On the other hand, Russian culture became blended with the Caucasus and it cannot flourish without it."[27] Konstantin Khagondokov, who also spoke to Shakmanov, wrote in his recommendations of 8 July, 1923 that Shakmanov "had and has no evil designs against Russia and its interests" and that he was prepared to carry out social work "among the mountain people of the Caucasus, not only in the narrow national sense, but also in the wider sense of Russia's state interests, which contains within its boundaries many millions of so-called *inorodtsy* (non-Russian.—*Ed*.)."[28]

Dmitry Sheremetev pointed out that Ibrahim-bek Gaydarov was convinced that Russia needed a strong centralized government and that not only Russia, but also all other peoples should be granted the right of extensive self-administration. "He, as an *Inorodets,* will probably be forced to fight against this government, depending on what it is, that is, he thinks that complete unification with the Russian State will be possible only if it is organized strongly and reasonably … but local self-administration should be extended." In the Caucasus, "schools and religion should be very special. *The Muslims, who are the second largest group after the Russians, should play a greater role and serve as a link between Russia and the Muslim world*." Gaydarov deemed it necessary to specify: "Daghestan needs special governance, but this should be connected with the common governance of the State. The Caucasus is economically connected with Russia and *the idea of its independence is utopian*. The interests of the populations of Daghestan and Azerbaijan are common, which means that they may have common representatives in Moscow… When talking about sympathy toward Turkey, he was convinced that despite this sympathy, *Russian culture is higher than*

[26] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 5.
[27] Ibid., Box 6.
[28] Ibidem.

Turkish culture, and it has become rooted in people's minds to the extent that it will always enjoy greater influence."[29]

The interview with Shakov on political issues was less positive—he was more "nationalist-minded;" he placed "the historically developed culture of the Kabardins and its moral principles" very high and feared that the continued existence of the Kabardins in Russia would speed up their assimilation. On the other hand, he said "that a flower turns toward the light, which shines for Kabarda from the North. Kabarda never rejected Russian statehood," while association with Turkey did not correspond to its immediate interests. It is interesting to note that Shakov was not ready to revise the status of women and stressed "the chivalry toward women among the Kabardins, who never contemplated women's equality."

In his recommendation to Murzala Kuriev, A. Mamontov deemed it necessary to stress that the "Kuriev family has been well-known in their tribe from time immemorial because of *its loyalty to Russia and service in the Russian Army*." Kuriev's great grandfather, grandfather, and father served in the Imperial Escort. Mamontov wrote that Kuriev himself "has all the best features of the North Caucasian mountain people, which were eloquently described by our writers and poets, namely, honesty, straightforwardness, and noble convictions. The Profane is *a Russian patriot and is eager to restore Great Russia*."[30] Meanwhile, Kuriev believed that "in future Russia, all nationalities should be equal, including the Jews. Russian culture exerts a very positive impact on the Caucasian peoples; *the Caucasus should remain within Russia with an autonomous status*."

Alexander Amilakhvari was also convinced that in the future, Russia should become "a free state with representative bodies and a federative organization." Monarchy was a very much needed principle, which kept Russia together. "Relations between the nationalities should *rest on equality and mutual respect*;" this also included the Jews. "The peripheries tend in a very natural way toward Russia, while the federative structure will not only not interfere with, but add to the strength of our state ties if the single throne, common army, and unified international relations survive."[31] Talking to Archil Andronnikov on 29 April, 1924, Mamontov pointed out that the Profane "was an ardent Georgian nationalist. As a member of one of the most prominent families with many centuries of serving the interests of Russia behind it, he cannot imagine Georgia and the Caucasus in general without close economic, cultural, and state ties with future Russia. He wants to see Georgia as an autonomous part of Russia. The Profane is a great Russian patriot. The future Russian state should be built on the equality of all citizens, Jews included. The Profane favors local self-administration."

The political ideas of Irakly-Alexander Vachnadze[32] received the most detailed coverage. He believed that a revolution in Russia could not be avoided and that the Bolsheviks "played a great role in the political education of the peasants. The masses were responsive, albeit mechanically, to their consistent and persistent propaganda," therefore, the Profane thought, "constitutional monarchy was the best form of governance for Russia, since, he believed, the Russian people prefer undivided authority, which was represented by Lenin under the Bolsheviks. The Profane said that in Russia the personality of the monarch was much more important than the form of monarchy. He said that he did not see a person who could become a monarch of the cultural type and concluded that Russia should become a federative republic with extensive presidential powers." He also added that "*the huge territory of Russia and the patchwork nature of its population call for a federative republic*." "New states, Georgia and others, *cannot survive on their own; they will inevitably reunite with Russia on federative principles*. They have already revealed their political inconsistency (the only result of activity of the Georgian Menshevik rulers is chauvinism, which is previously unheard of and alien to the Georgians)."

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[29] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 5.

[30] Ibidem.

[31] Ibid., Box 7.

[32] Ibidem.

The above confirms that all new members were loyal to Russia; they wanted to live in Russia; they accepted Russian culture even though practically all of them said that the Caucasus should enjoy more freedom.[33]

Religious Convictions of the Caucasian Freemasons

According to *the General Rite of the Astrea Lodge*, "each and every one who joins the ranks of Russian Freemasons confirms that he cannot and should not be a non-believer or an atheist; he becomes a fighter for the spirit and the freedom of spirit against materialism and godlessness."[34] Pavel Buryshkin, in turn, wrote that Russian Masonry belonged to a "category of spiritual-religious formations."[35] The initiation procedure presupposed an oath on the Bible.[36] This made the religious idea of the Lodge's potential members highly important, which explains why the aspirants were interviewed about their religious-philosophical ideas or, rather, about their religious views, since the above-mentioned profanes had practically no philosophical ideas to speak of.

In his interview with Bennigsen, Khagondokov pointed out that he "belonged to Greek Orthodoxy" despite his Muslim parents.[37] Gaydarov, Shakmanov, Shakov, and Kuriev were Muslims. T. Shakmanov admitted that he knew next to nothing about Islam and was ready "to study the fundamentals of the world religions and world culture."[38] I. Shakov, "who being a Muslim, the faith the form and meaning of which he respected, had profound respect for all religions and was convinced that God is one for all people and that religion is a method of moving closer to the Divine Being."[39] The situation with M. Kuriev was much more complicated. V. Lyshchinsky-Troekurov wrote that Kuriev "is a faithful Muslim who performs all religious rites and who believes that faith is the foundation of morals,"[40] which meant that he would hardly agree to take an oath on the Bible. P. Polovtsov wrote the following about I. Gaydarov: "He places his Muslim religion very high and is convinced that when correctly interpreted it supplies man with a lofty ideal… There should be no separation of the Church from the state in a Muslim country because Islam rules schools, courts of justice, etc. Any Dagestani feels comfortable with the Shari'a and adats as a code of laws and will hardly understand anything else." When talking about pan-Islamism, which was very popular at that time, Gaydarov pointed to Kemal Pasha, who was guided by its principles. "Pan-Islamism cannot be viewed as a factor of history since historical traditions differ from country to country while Islam allows all of its followers to find a common language of spiritual communication." He approved of "certain reforms in the Muslim faith related, in particular, to the status of women, distorted by the mullahs." Petr Polovtsev recommended him with the words: "His faith will not interfere with membership in the lodge but, on the contrary, will help him become a good freemason."[41]

There were no religious problems with the Georgians, who were Orthodox Christians tolerant of other religions. A. Andronnikov, for example, said that "he is familiar with Islam and thinks

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[33] See: I.L. Babich, "Kubantsy i kavkaztsy: vmeste i vroz v evropeyskoy emigratsii," *Nauchnaia mysl Kavkaza,* Rostov on Don, No. 1, 2012.

[34] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 3.

[35] P.A. Buryshkin, *Istoria Russkogo Masonstva v emigratsii*, p. 14.

[36] See: Ibid., p. 12.

[37] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 5.

[38] Ibid., Box 6.

[39] Ibidem.

[40] Ibid., Box 5.

[41] Ibidem.

highly of the Koran."[42] A. Amilakhvari said that "Orthodoxy meets all his requirements, but he respects all other religions and is deeply tolerant."

The opinions of the interviewers of the future freemasons. Here is what the interviewers wrote about the people from the North and South Caucasus invited to the lodge: "*material suitable for further perfection*" (V. Lyshchinsky about I. Vachnadze); "*there is a good potential in him*" (V. Vyazemsky about I. Vachnadze); "*good material for further improvement*" (D. Sheremetev about A. Andronnikov); and "*rather raw, but promising*" (B. Dezobri about A. Amilakhvari). V. Vyazemsky wrote the following about I. Gaydarov: "A good, but still half savage nature … *material for moving from what is promising to something more real that is there*"[43] and about M. Kuriev: "My first impression was far from favorable—a very reserved and passive person. My further acquaintance convinced me that it would be wrong to measure him by the Russian 'Slavic' standards. I am inclined to think that his purely Oriental apathy and indifference conceals a whole-hearted and good nature. He is not a star, but might prove to be a reliable stone."

How did people from the Caucasus explain their desire to join the lodge? Here are their answers to the interviewers. I. Vachnadze stressed that "he wants to join us in the hope of finding support and development of his spiritual and moral requirements [wrote V. Vyazemsky]; he does not like political parties and for this reason has not joined any of them." B. Dezobri pointed out that A. Amilakhvari "is seeking contacts with strong and united people who, as he sees it, are the only ones who can create the foundations for building Russia. He wants to serve his motherland and he expects that freemasonry will give him a chance to choose the right road where he can be as useful as possible for

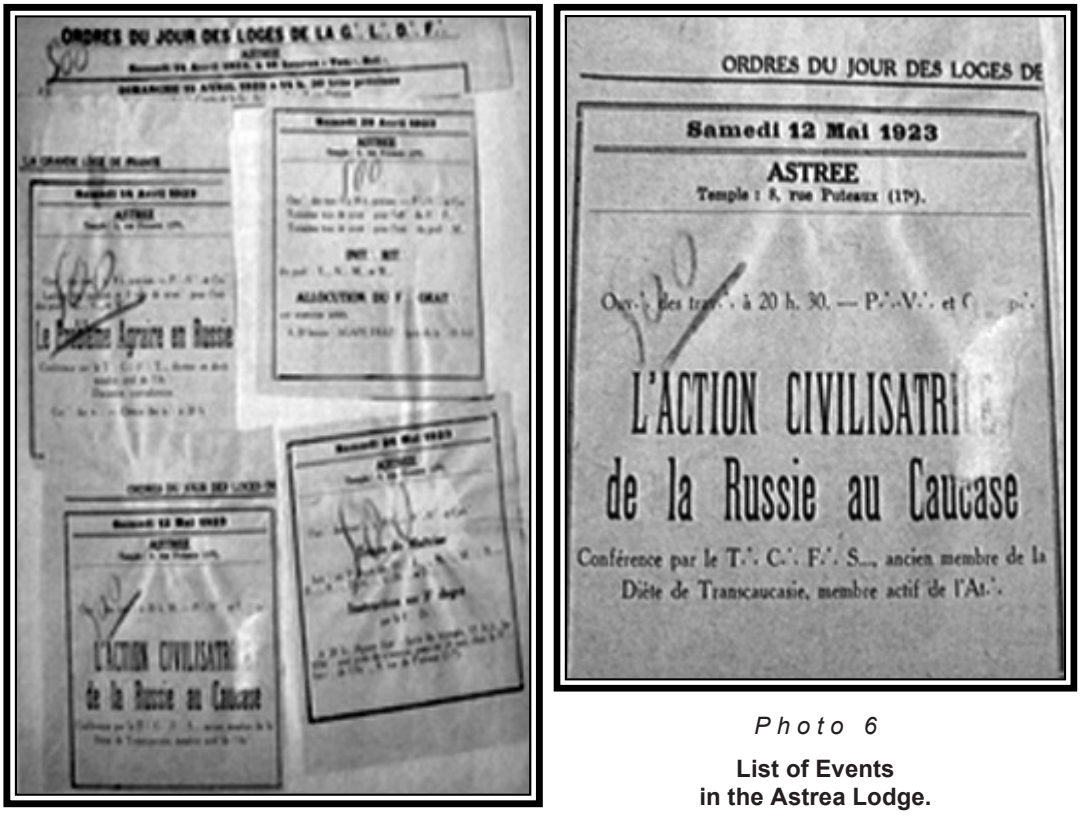

Photo 6

List of Events in the Astrea Lodge.

[42] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 7.
[43] Ibid., Box 5.

future Russia and masonry." In the course of his interview, K. Khagondokov said about M. Kazarin that "the Profane regards masonry as a means for Russia's revival."[44]

Activities of the Astrea Lodge and of its Caucasian Members. The lodge functioned through reports, collective work, fulfillment of individual tasks, helping brothers, and taking care of them.[45] The reports dealt with the past, present, and future of Russia. On 23 May, 1923, the lodge initiated a conference called *Russia's Civilizational Actions in the Caucasus*.

Achievements of the Caucasian members—moving from lower grades to higher. Armenian S. Lianozov, Kabardin K. Khagondokov, Lezghian I. Gaydarov and Georgian A. Amilakhvari showed the best results—they reached the third (master) grade; the latter three were made masters on the same day, 15 November, 1924. I. Shakov, T. Shakmanov and M. Kuriev remained in the lower (pupil) grade.

	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade
S. Lianozov	11.11.1922	26.05.1923	26.05.1923
K. Khagondokov	23.06.1923	29.05.1924	15.11.1924
I. Gaydarov	15.12.1923	25.10.1924	15.11.1924
A. Amilakhvari	29.09.1923	29.05.1924	15.11.1924
A. Andronnikov	10.05.1924		
M. Kuriev	12.07.1924		
I. Shakov	12.07.1924		
T. Shakmanov	12.07.1924		
I. Vachnadze	12.07.1924		

The Lodge of the Golden Fleece

The lodge started its history from the preliminary stage when on *12 November, 1924* it was decided to set up a lodge under the slightly different title of Symbolique à l'Or. In later documents drawn up in December 1924, the lodge was referred to as the Lodge of the Golden Fleece. Its 19 members (nearly all of them from the Caucasus) used to belong to the Astrea Lodge: L. Kandaurov (the founder), K. Khagondokov, D. Sheremetev, I. Gaydarov, E. Lianozov, I. Shakov, and S. Rotinov born in Tiflis, V. Kochubey and A. Shakh-Nazarov (the Caucasus), M. Kuriev, T. Shakmanov, and Yu. Semenov born in the Caucasus, I. Vachnadze, A. Seydeler, and P. Steingel born in Vladikavkaz,[46] N. Goleevsky (military expert in Oriental studies), A. Andronnikov, A. Amilakhvari, and S. Zilberstein (born in Odessa). There were several new members—Alexander S. Shakh-Nazarov, an Armenian

[44] Ibidem.

[45] Ibid., Box 3.

[46] Pavel Steingel, Baron (2 July, 1880, Vladikavkaz, Terek Region-24 August, 1965, Château d'Abondant, outside Paris, buried in the cemetery in Chaville), engineer technologist, built a tile factory in Grozny; was involved in the oil business; organized an irrigation system on the lower Terek; fought in the Civil War; reached France via Constantinople; lived in Paris from 1920.

from Moscow,[47]who used to belong to the Garibaldi Lodge. According to the lists of members of the Lodge of the Golden Fleece, he was admitted to the Garibaldi Lodge on 7 June, 1922; on 4 April, 1923 he was awarded the second, and on 13 April, 1924, the fourth grade.

The offices were distributed in the following way: Master—L. Kandaurov, Orator—N. Goleevsky, First Sentinel—D. Sheremetev; Treasurer—Yu. Semenov; Second Sentinel—I. Gaydarov; Secretary—A. Seydeler; Hosp (the lowest and so far unclarified office)—S. Lianozov. This means that there were two members with third grades who had offices in the new lodge. There is another document in which A. Amilakhvari, K. Khagondokov and A. Shakh-Nazarov are listed as holding certain lower offices.

According to the document the new Lodge of the Golden Fleece was registered in the Grande Loge de France on 16 January, 1925; the final decision was passed on 25 January, 1925.[48]

The lists that appeared at on the Virtual Website of Dmitry Galkovsky allow us to say that in the two years of the lodge's existence, the following people from the Caucasus were involved in its functioning[49]: *8 members from the Northern Caucasus: Ajigoev Pkhemat* (initiated on 26.12.1925; retired from the lodge on 31.12.1926); *Bammat Gaydar* (initiated on 29.4.1925; raised to second grade on 10.10.1925, to third grade on 4.8.1926; retired on 31.12.1926); *Baduev (Badi) Abduk-Mejid* (initiated on 28.2.1925; raised to the second grade on 27.6.1925, to the third grade on 28.1.1926; retired on 31.12.1926); *Dalgat Aziz-Girei* (initiated on 26.12.1925; retired on 26.12.1926); *Janbekov Ruslan Alievich* (initiated on 29.4.1925; retired on 26.12.1926); *Namitok Aytek Alievich* (initiated on 29.4.1925; raised to the second grade on 10.10.1925, to the third grade on 4.8.1926; retired on 31.12.1926); *Chermoev Osman* (initiated on 28.11.1925; retired on 31.12.1926); *Shipshev Jembakh Temirkhan* (initiated on 29.4.1925; raised to the second grade on 24.4.1926; retired on 31.12.1926); *5 Georgians: Gvazava Georgy* (initiated on 27.3.1926; retired on 31.12.1926); *Gobechia Iosif* (initiated on 29.5.1926; retired on 31.12.1926); *Karamudze Shalva* (initiated on 31.1.1925; worked under the guidance of D. Sheremetev; retired on 31.12.1926); *Kobiev Ter-Mikelovich* (initiated around 28.11.1925); *Khachalava Yakov* (initiated on 27.3.1926; retired on 31.12.1926); *2 Armenians: Gurjian Akop* (initiated on 27.3.1926); *Ter-Osipov Pavel* (initiated on 31.1.1925; raised to the second grade on 27.6.1925; worked under the guidance of Yu. Semenov); *4 Azeris*: *Gajinsky Sadyk Bek* (initiated on 29.4.1925)[50]; *Kassim-zade Kassim* (initiated on 31.1.1925; retired on 31.12.1926); *Mir-Kasimov Abidin* (initiated on 29.4.1925; worked under the guidance of L. Kandaurov; retired on 31.12.1926); and *Khajibeyli Jeykhann* (initiated on 28.2.1925). Nearly all of them were initiated during 1925.

We can rely on this list to see how far those members of the Caucasus who belonged to the Astrea Lodge moved:

	Second grade	Third grade
A. Andronnikov	**27.06.1925**	
M. Kuriev	**28.03.1925**	**23.05.1925**
T. Shakmanov	**28.03.1925**	**23.05.1925**

[47] Alexander Semenovich Shakh-Nazarov (10 August, 1896 [20 July, 1895 according to other sources]-17 January, 1933, lived in Paris, buried in the Thiais Cemetery), officer, cinema actor and director; graduated from the Nikolaevskoe Cavalry College; fought in World War I in the Zaamursky Cavalry Regiment and later in the Alexandriysky Hussars Regiment, took part in the Civil War; emigrated to France.

[48] Les Archives de la Grande Loge de France, Box 5.

[49] [http://samizdat.com].

[50] Sadyk Bek Gajinsky (23 April, 1890, Baku-20 April, 1929, France), worked in the oil business, emigrated to France after 1917.

The grades of other "old members" did not change.

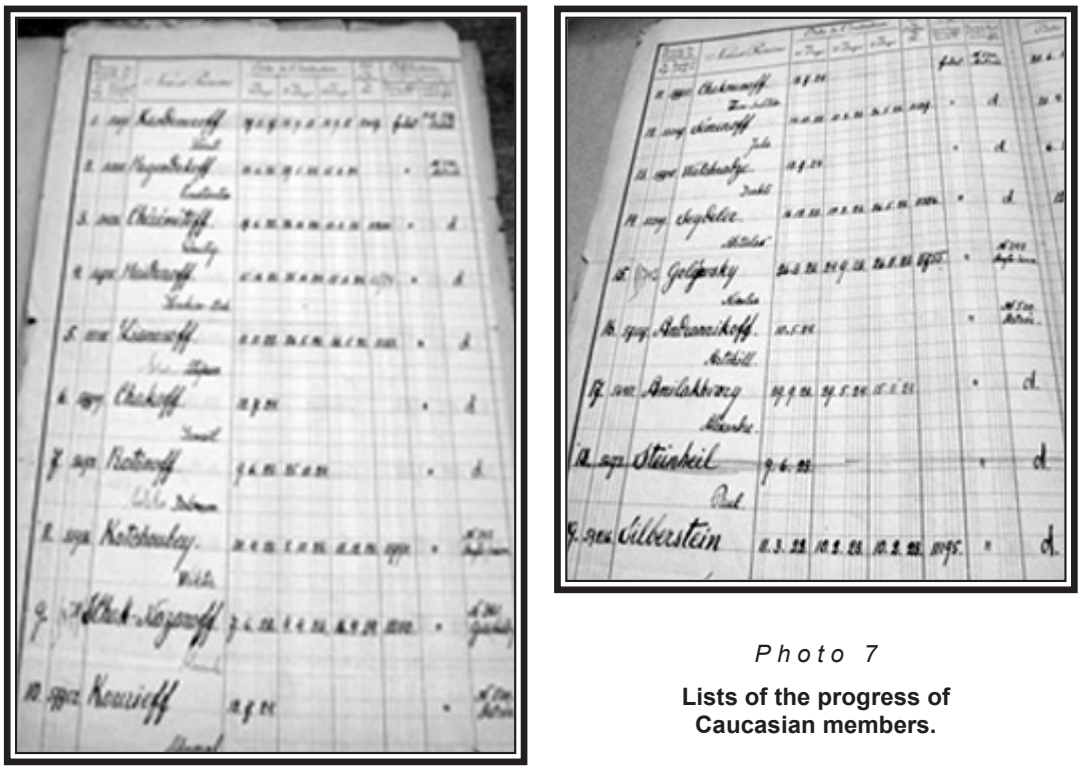

Photo 7

Lists of the progress of Caucasian members.

The history of the lodge (history of the Jupiter and Prometheus lodges) is clearly described in two important documents found in two archives:

- The Archive of the Etoile du Nord Masonic Lodge (the Manuscript Department of the Mitterrand Bibliothèque nationale de France)—a typewritten text of *Istoria russkikh lozh vo Frantsii* (The History of Russian Lodges in France, prepared in 1929-1930 by L. Kandaurov and, probably, P. Pereverzev).[51]
- The Archive of the Grande Loge de France—a typewritten text of *Istoria russkikh lozh v emigratsii* (The History of Russian Lodges in Emigration, prepared in 1949-1952 by P. Buryshkin).

These documents cited 25 January, 1925[52] as the foundation date of the lodge.

"*The lodge was set up to bring the French Masonic light into the milieu of people from the Caucasus* and give them a chance to set up their own Franco-Masonic lodges later, in their homeland. The following inorodtsy were meant: *Georgians, Armenians, the mountain people of the Northern Caucasus, and Azeris*. The Russian and inorodtsy founders of the lodge (the latter were initiated in the Astrea Lodge) agreed that the former would remain members of the lodge for two years and were expected to educate the inorodtsy in Freemasonry and instruct them, after which the brothers would leave the Golden Fleece Lodge to start their own; if they stayed, the Russians would leave." In 1925, L. Kandaurov was appointed Worshipful Master, in 1926, the title went to *Sheremetev*. It seems that the lodge was a "school in masonry" set up to educate its members from the Caucasus rather than a functioning Masonic lodge.

[51] Archives of the Etoile du Nord Lodge, Box FM 8-4, The Manuscript Department of the Mitterrand Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[52] See: P.A. Buryshkin, *Istoria russkikh masonskikh lozh*, p. 29.

Those Caucasian members (25 people in all) who retired from the Lodge of the Golden Fleece set up a Prometheus Lodge with the consent and approval and under the jurisdiction of La Grande Loge de France.

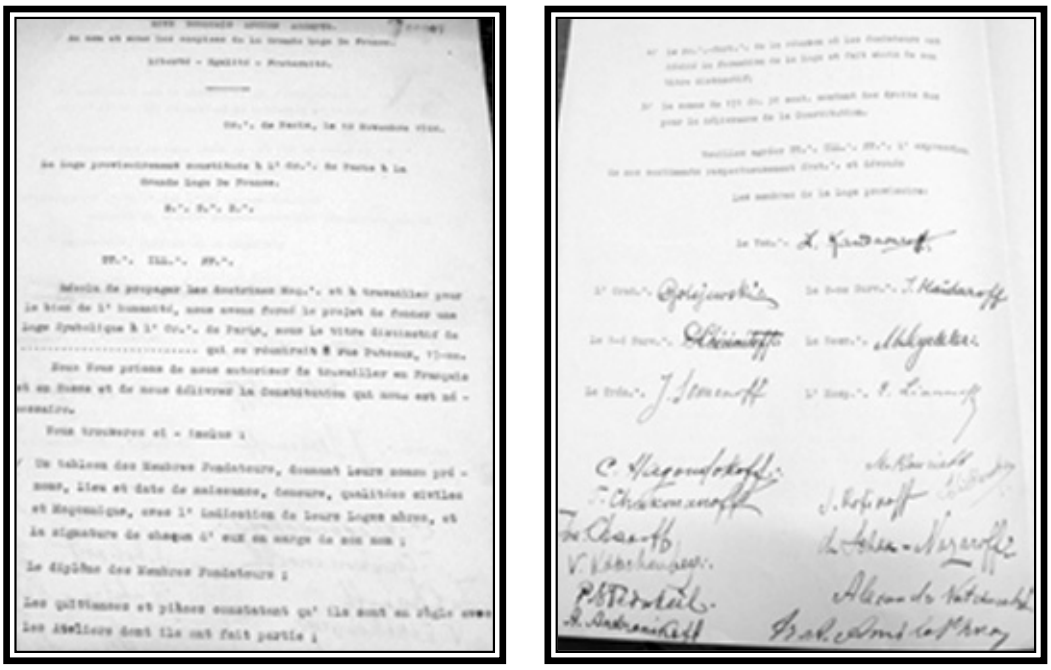

Photo 8

Documents related to the foundation of the Lodge of the Golden Fleece signed by its Caucasian members.

According to the initial plan, the lodge functioned for two years, from 1925 to 1926. Leonty Kandaurov wrote the following in this respect: "After two years *the first alternative* proved to be the only acceptable one because *the Armenian members did not want to separate from the Russians*, although other inorodtsy formulated different or even contradictory demands. The impression was created that they did not know what they really wanted. *In December 1926, after suitable parental persuasion these brothers lodged their resignations from the Golden Fleece Lodge. They were accepted, but several Russian members also left*. After that the lodge was given the new name Jupiter."

In his Notes, Pavel Buryshkin said the same and offered a very important comment: "This experience of joint work between the Russians and representatives of the Caucasian peoples failed. *No cohesion between the Russian and Caucasian members was achieved*; the non-Russian part of the lodge was split by tension and disagreements especially between *the Armenians and Georgians*. *Long talks* brought no agreement" and the lodge fell apart.[53]

There were two types of disagreements in the lodge:

(1) *between the Russian and Caucasian members* and

(2) *between the Armenians (S. Lianozov and A. Shakh-Nazarov) and the Georgians (A. Amilakhvari, I. Vachnadze, and A. Andronnikov)*.

Since at some later date the Armenians preferred to side with the Russians rather than with the Caucasian members, we can conclude that they disagreed *over Russia, its future, and the place of the Caucasus in new Russia*.

[53] See: P.A. Buryshkin, *Istoria russkikh masonskikh lozh*, p. 29.

The following fact speaks volumes. Pavel Buryshkin wrote that "people who belong to all national groups, profess different religions, and have different political convictions meet at Russian Masonic gatherings as brothers. Against the background of emigrant turbulence, this makes masonry an oasis of tranquility and peaceful construction even of the most contradictory elements of emigration. Throughout the entire history of the Russian lodges, *there was not a single religious or political clash, not a single manifestation of intolerance or lack of respect for the convictions of others*."[54] The author deliberately passed over in silence the history of the Caucasian lodge and, most importantly, referred to it as insignificant. It should be said that when the author gathered materials for his Notes, he left the materials on the Caucasian lodge aside. We can rely on the opinions of Leonty Kandaurov, who headed the lodge and compiled the first history of the lodges in 1928-1929.

The Jupiter Lodge

The Armenians remained with the Russians in the Golden Fleece Lodge, which retained its registration number (536) and changed its name to Jupiter. Armenian Stepan Lianozov, about whom Buryshkin wrote in his Notes that "he was very successful," was appointed its head. The North Caucasian members, together with Russians and Jews, set up the Prometheus Lodge.

This means that the following people should have remained in the Jupiter Lodge: *S. Lianozov, A. Shakh-Nazarov, A. Gurjian, and P. Ter-Osipov*. In fact, A. Shakh-Nazarov moved to the Prometheus Lodge together with the North Caucasian members. S. Lianozov joined the new lodge and, as a founding member, acquired the title of Worshipful Master from the very first day of its existence. He left it in late 1927. Armenians A. Gurjian and P. Ter-Osipov also belonged to this lodge. However, Ter-Osipov left together with Lianozov, while Gurjian remained its member until 1935 and left it after reaching the third grade. One Armenian (I. Galamian) and one Azeri joined the lodge; it met in the Russian Masonic House at 29, Rue Yvette.

The Prometheus Lodge

Twenty-five non-Russian members who left the Lodge of the Golden Fleece set up the Prometheus Lodge under the jurisdiction of La Grande Loge de France; all the Caucasian members joined it, except those who preferred to stay behind. *S. Zilberstein* became the Worshipful Master, since none of the Caucasian members had the required three years of membership on their records. The Lodge was instituted on 19 January, 1927; it closely cooperated with La Grande Loge de France under No. 558 according to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry; it was set up to train people to join masonry in the Caucasus.

According to Buryshkin, "at first the Lodge was very active."[55] In 1927, several more people from the Caucasus joined it. They were *Azeris Ayub-Semgog Amin* (initiated on 21.5.1927; raised to the second grade on 17.12.1927); *Zeki Abdullah* (initiated on 5.6. 1927; raised to the second grade on 17.12.1927 and to the third grade on 28.7.1928); *Sultan-Zade Khosrau-Bey* (initiated on 19.2.1927); *Georgian Shirtladze David* (initiated on 19.2.1927); *people from the Northern Caucasus Tukaev Saiid Amin* (initiated on 16.4.1927); *Chermoev Abdul-Mejid* (initiated on 2.4.1927); *Chermoev Abu-Bakar* (initiated on 5.3.1927; raised to the second grade on 17.12.1927); and *Chermoev Magomet* (initiated on 18.6.1927).

The lodge was funded by *Abdul-Mejid Chermoev*. A year later, early in 1928, an outflow of Georgians and some of the North Caucasian members began. In 1928, the lodge was still functioning with K. Khagondokov as its Master. It was finally closed early in 1930.

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[54] P.A. Buryshkin, *Istoria Russkogo Masonstva v emigratsii*, pp. 13-14.

[55] P.A. Buryshkin, *Istoria russkikh masonskikh lozh*, p. 29.

So far, no materials related to its functioning in 1927 have been found and the nature of its activities remains unknown. We can rely on a comment by Leonty Kandaurov: "This is temporary failure *caused by the miscalculations of those who set up the Golden Fleece Lodge* as an independent Franco-Masonry composed of inorodtsy from among the Caucasian nationalities. The founders had overestimated the brothers, whom they planned to educate in only two years. This task probably required a much longer period of supervision. The present author remains convinced that it is too early to conclude that this supervision is doomed to a failure… There are elements among the Caucasian nationalities responsive to the ideas of freemasonry."[56]

There is only one document related to T. Shakmanov, which says that he was expelled from the lodge on 14 January, 1930 for non-payment of membership dues. The document speaks of the Prometheus Lodge as part of the Astrea Lodge, which means that Prometheus largely continued the traditions of the "school of masonry" rather than functioning as a full-fledged independent lodge.

Further Lives of the Caucasian Freemasons within the Masonic Context

The fate of Ibrahim-bek Gaydarov was very interesting. He left the Prometheus Lodge in 1928 to go to Turkey where he joined a Turkish Masonic lodge; there is a corresponding document from the Grand Lodge of Turkey dated 1935.

Petr Polovtsev opened a new school called Aurore Boréale, of which he was master in 1925-1926. Its membership partly consisted of the former members of Astrea. K. Khagondokov, who was a member of the North Caucasian lodge, started visiting it in 1924; he became Tyler (Outer Guard) and later Grand Standard Bearer; he left late in 1929.

The Friends of Philosophy Lodge was founded in 1925 and functioned in the Russian Masonic House on Rue Yvette. It was headed by *P. Bobrinsky*, another member of the Astrea Lodge; L. Kandaurov was its member, along with several people from the Caucasus, including S. Lianozov. He remained its member until 1938 and was raised to several consecutive grades: the fourth on 9.01.1935; the ninth on 8.5.1935; the thirteenth on 11.12.1935; and the fourteenth on 27.5.1936. K. Khagondokov also joined the lodge (raised to the fourteenth grade on 15.12.1927 and was made the Second Inner Guard in 1929). Throughout 1927, K. Khagondokov recommended three people from the Northern Caucasus: I. Shakov, with whom Khagondokov had been member of the Astrea Lodge; G. Bammat (raised to the fourth grade in 1927); and A. Namitok (raised to the fourth grade in 1927).

The L'Etoile du Nord lodge proved to be a long-liver—set up in Paris in 1924 it survived until the late 1960s; Armenians were especially active in it; Gayto Gazdanov, a prominent Osset writer and the lodge's last Master, was also its member (more details in the next article).

Conclusion

The materials from the French archives related to the history of Russian masonry revealed that at *the first stage* of drawing people from the Caucasus to the Russian Masonic lodges in France, it was prominent Russian masons with great pre-revolutionary Masonic experience in Russia who played a great role.

Future members from the Caucasus were selected on the basis of *their attitude to Russia, the Russian Empire, Russian culture, Russian politics in the national peripheries, relations with the peoples of Russia, and the future of the Caucasus as part of Russia*. This means that at *the first stage* the Caucasian members demonstrated a pro-Russian orientation; it was much more pronounced among those

[56] Archives of l'Etoile du Nord Loge, Box FM8-4.

who had "worked" for the Russian Empire. It was not easy for the Caucasian émigrés in France to correlate their political and ethnic identities; in many cases their political orientation prevailed.[57]

At the first stage, the aims of the Russian and Caucasian masons were very different. The Russian masons wanted to "educate" their Caucasian colleagues, *to overcome their nationalist convictions*, and to draw them into active work within the lodge. The Caucasian members, in turn, looked at their membership as a form of their adaptation to emigration, the quest for new forms of public activities being less important. Practically none of them had their own inner reasons to join a lodge; many of them joined lodges after they settled in Paris.

At the second stage, those who had already tasted masonry invited their compatriots whom they had known at home, in the Caucasus. At that stage, their ideas or their involvement in public life were not so important, their Caucasian origin being the main criterion.

The archives of the Russian Masonic lodges and two histories (Kandaurov's of 1929 and Buryshkin's of 1952) offer enough information about *the first stage of the Caucasian Masonic membership* and practically no information about the second stage. The two histories merely say that the experience of setting up a Caucasian Masonic lodge failed.

It seems that the Caucasian members could not overcome their nationalist feelings to arrive at a single political and philosophical platform within these lodges. They occupied themselves with writing reports on the situation in the Caucasus; the main results of their activity in the Russian Masonic lodges were enriching the Russian sociopolitical movement in France with the experience of certain Caucasian leaders, while the Caucasian sociopolitical movement developed the spiritual life of their compatriots and deepened their public political ideas.

[57] See: I.L. Babich, "Sootnoshenie politicheskoy, religioznoy i etnicheskoy identichnosti v sovremennom kabardino-balkarskom obshchestve," in: *Faktor etnokonfessionalnoy samobytnosti,* Moscow, 1998, pp. 140-167.