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RUSSIAN EXPANSION IN THE CAUCASUS AND GEORGIA

The Expansion of Russia in the Caucasus and Georgia project offers the readers collection of scientific-popular articles which aims to cover the Georgian-Russian relations of the XVIII-XX centuries in a manner different from the widely propagated perspective of the official Russia.

Editor-in-chief: Giorgi Cheishvili

Editor-corrector: Tinatin Evdoshvili

Project author: Irakli Gegechkori

Designer: Tornike Bokuchava



Otar Janelidze

SIMON MDIVANI



As a statesman, diplomat, and politician, Simon Mdivani holds a prominent position among the Democratic Republic of Georgia's leaders. His name has a strong connection to the history of the Georgian parliamentarism which existed from 1918 to 1921.

It is widely stated that Simon Mdivani was born on October 20, 1876, to the family of nobleman Gurgen Mdivani and Olga Zghenti, in Khoni, Kutaisi County. In reality, according to the birth certificate preserved in the central archive of Kutaisi, his actual date of birth is April 3, 1874. He received his primary education in Khoni, then at the Kutaisi progymnasium, and in 1896, he graduated from the town's classical gymnasium.¹ A future prominent member of the Socialist-Federalist Party, Mdivani first heard the socialist ideology within the walls of the gymnasium and then became a loyal follower.

Mdivani spent the following years in Odessa, Ukraine. He studied at the Faculty of Natural Sciences at the Nov-

orossiya University and was a laboratory assistant of the renowned Georgian professor, chemist Vasil Petriashvili.² At the same time, he was actively involved in the revolutionary movement and was a member of the "Socialist Group of Students of Novorossiya University," which operated illegally, fighting against autocracy, and printing and distributing proclamations.

After graduating from the university, Simon Mdivani stayed in Odessa for a short time and served as a chemist in the city government. He returned to his homeland in 1905. The same year, he joined the Socialist-Federalist Party and became a member of its main committee. According to the testimony of Mikhako Tsereteli, during the first People's Revolution of Russia, Mdivani took active part in the reception and storage of weapons that the ship "Sirius" brought to Georgia from overseas. He also organized an armed fighting force in Khoni.³

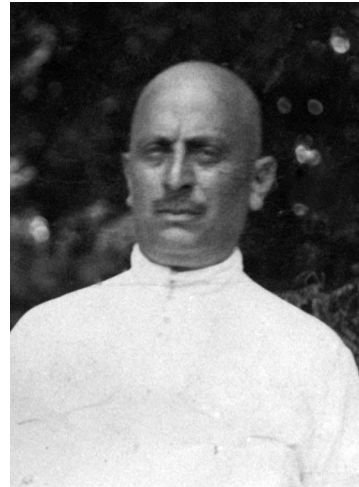
¹ Kutaisi Central Archives, Fund 94, no. 1, case 2315, f. 7-8.

² Newspaper *Tsnobis Purtseli* (Notice Sheet), 1902, April 14

³ Journal *Chveni Sakme* (Our Affairs), Buenos-Aires, 1952, p. 21



Giorgi Zhuruli



Ziabeg Abashidze

The worldview of the Socialist-Federalist Party was defined by two main principles: National and social liberty. Later, Simon Mdivani wrote: "The federalists established harmony between the two great eternal commandments - nationality and socialism - and put their efforts into their welding."⁴

In 1906, Mdivani settled in Batumi. He headed the "Social Trust Society," a Georgian bank. He was elected as the voice of the Batumi self-government⁵ as well as the chairman of the Batumi District Committee of the Federalist Party.

In the biography of Simon Mdivani, you will read that he was the editor of a daily newspaper in Batumi,⁶ but neither the name of the publication nor the years are indicated. A daily political and literary Georgian body called *Batomis Gazeti* (Batumi Newspaper) was published in Batumi in 1911-1912, yet Simon Mdivani was neither its editor nor an employee.⁷ Various kinds of Russian-language press were published at the time in Batumi, including daily newspapers *Batumski Listok* (1905-1906), *Chernomor* (1906-1907), *Batumski Golos* (1907-1909), *Batumskie Novosti* (1909), *Batumskie Vesti* (1909-1917), *Batumskie Izvestiya* (1909-1910), *Chernomorskaya Jisn* (1909-1910); *Batumskaya Pravda* (1911-1912), *Batumskaya Gazeta-kopeyka* (1913), and others. We do know, however, that in 1905, Simon Mdivani was the editor-publisher of Russian-language newspaper *Chernomorskie Novosti*. This socio-political and literary newspaper, which was published in Septem-

ber-November of 1906, was closed by the decree of the Governor-General of the city.⁸

On November 26 of the same year, Mdivani became the head of the newspaper *Chernomorskoe Echo*,⁹ but it was also closed after just a few editions. Due to one of the articles printed in the publication, the editor, Mdivani, was charged with a criminal law offense, and the publication of the newspaper was banned.¹⁰ Mdivani was released from prison in March of the following year.¹¹

Together with Giorgi Zhuruli and Ziabeg Abashidze, Simon Mdivani represented Batumi society at the funeral of Ilia Chavchavadze in 1907.¹²

The federalists actively supported the ongoing autocephalous movement in Georgia, which they considered part of the struggle for national liberty.¹³

Since the defeat of the first people's revolution of Russia and the so-called "reaction" period, the Federalist Party had chosen defensive tactics and had limited itself mainly to national-cultural activities. Party members were involved in the activities of national cultural-educational and public organizations operating in the country. Simon Mdivani was not an exception in this regard, being a member of the Society for Spreading Literacy Among Georgians¹⁴ and serving

⁴ Newspaper *Sakalkho Sakme* (Public Affairs), Paris, 1926, N 2, p. 27.

⁵ Newspaper *Isari* (Arrow), 1907, November 7.

⁶ *sakartvelos demokratiuli respublika (1918-1921)* (Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921)). Encyclopedia-lexicon, vol., 2018, p. 268; <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/bios/ka/00011846/>

⁷ <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/paperge/ka/browse/000843/>

⁸ <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/paperge/ka/browse/001704/>

⁹ Newspaper *Megobari* (Friend), 1906, November 30.

¹⁰ Газ. Черномор, 1906, 23 декабря; Г. Зерцалов, Библиография Русской Периодики Грузии, ч. 1, Тб., 1941; <http://archive.ge/ka/biography/171/documents>

¹¹ Newspaper *Isari*, 1907. March 10.

¹² Newspaper *Chveni Gza* (Our Way), 1907, September 8.

¹³ D. Shvelidze, "sotsialist-federalistta partia "revolutsiis likvidatsiis" periodshi (1907-1910)" (Party of Socialist-Federalists during the period of "Liquidation of the Revolution" (1907-1910)), *Proceedings of the Institute of Georgian History of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University*, II, vol, 2011, p. 344.

¹⁴ <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/ilia/ka/u4315/35/>



Giorgi Lashkhishvili



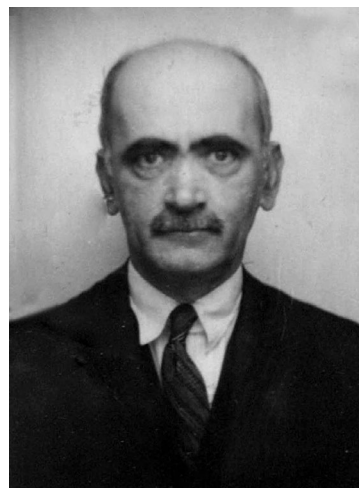
Akaki Chkhenkeli

on the committee of supporters of the organization's school in Batumi.¹⁵ He also participated in the anniversary events of Akaki Tsereteli (1908).¹⁶

There is suggestion that during the same period, Simon Mdivani edited the daily newspaper of the Federalist Party, though it is not possible to verify this information.

In late April of 1910, more than 30 members of the Tbilisi and other significant committees were detained by the gendarmerie after a raid on the Federalist Party's leadership structures. Among the arrested was Simon Mdivani.¹⁷ Four years later, in July 1913, the gendarmerie once again attacked the Federalists (in the words of Giorgi Lashkhishvili, it was "the second big raid on the party's central organs and editorial office").¹⁸ Simon Mdivani was again arrested, and was exiled from the Caucasus for a certain period of time.¹⁹

After the overthrowing of autocracy, the political forces of Georgia revived their work. In order to coordinate their activities, the social-democrats (Mensheviks), socialist-federalists, and national-democrats convened an inter-party meeting in April 1917. The Federalist Party was represented by Simon Mdivani and others.²⁰ In August of the same



Shalva Amirejibi

year, the assembly was transformed into the "National Interparty Council of Georgia."

In September 1917, Simon Mdivani, Akaki Chkhenkeli, and Shalva Amirejibi, under the auspices of the National Interparty Council of Georgia, participated in the events of the democratic conference held in Petrograd. The conference was called by the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies due to the political crisis facing the Provisional Government of Russia. Before the election of the Constituent Assembly, the meeting was to perform the function of the highest representative body.

The socialist-federalists believed that the delegation sent on behalf of the Georgian nation would help gain the goodwill of both public and political circles towards Georgia, and "lay the foundation for Georgia's concerns in the heart of Russian democracy."²¹ Simon Mdivani was elected to the

¹⁵ Newspaper *Chveni Gza*, 1907, October 12.

¹⁶ Newspaper *Droeba* (Time), 1908, December 12; Newspaper *Momavali* (Future), 1908, December 14.

¹⁷ National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, Fund 153, no. 1, case N1835, ff. 8-9.

¹⁸ G. Lashkhishvili, *Memuarebi* (Memoires), Tbilisi, 1928, p. 176.

¹⁹ National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, Fund 13, no. 27, case 3165, f. 14; D. Shvelidze, "sakartvelos sotsialist-federalista partia 'sisi omianobis' (pirveli msoplio omis) tslebshi" (Socialist-Federalist Party of Georgia during the "Great War" (World War I)), *Proceedings of the Georgian History Institute of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University*, X, issue, 2016, p. 309.

²⁰ National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, Fund 186, no. 1. In case 6, f. 1; O. Janelidze, *narkvevebi sakartvelos erovnul-demokratiuli pariis istoriidan* (Essays from the History of the National Democratic Party of Georgia), Tbilisi, 2002, p. 283.

²¹ National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive, Fund 186, no. 1. In case 6, f. 1; O. Janelidze, *narkvevebi sakartvelos erovnul-demokratiuli pariis istoriidan* (Essays from the history of the National Democratic Party of Georgia), p. 283.



Shalva Aleksii-Meskhisvili



Shalva Nutsubidze

Presidium of the conference²² and then²³ as a member of the Provisional Council of Russia, the Pre-Parliament.²⁴

In Petrograd, Mdivani, Shalva Aleksii-Meskhisvili, and Shalva Nutsubidze attended the conference of National Socialist parties.²⁵ As a result of the meetings held in the capital of an empire on its way to collapse, the view was strengthened between the returning Simon Mdivani and his fellow party members that “the time had come to keep our heads to ourselves and that it was necessary to restore the national right immediately.”²⁶

In November 1917, Mdivani was sent by the Federalist Party as a delegate to the National Convention of Georgia, where he was elected as a member of the National Council

by the decision of his own political organization. This circumstance gave the secretary the right to sign the Act of Independence of Georgia on May 26, 1918, and he became “one of the founders of the liberty of Georgia.”

Shortly after the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in October 1918, the National Council transformed into a parliament, continuing its activities until February 1919. Simon Mdivani was one of the representatives of the Socialist-Federalist Party in that parliament. He retained the deputy's mandate in the Constituent Assembly of Georgia, which was established in February 1919 through universal democratic elections. In this highest legislative body of the country, Mdivani was a member of the eight-member faction of the Socialist-Federalist Party. In addition, he was elected as a deputy chairman of the Assembly and a member of the Presidium, and also served as the secretary of the military, budget, and finance commissions and was included in the regulatory, public education, and road commissions.

According to the regulations, the Presidium was elected for one session, so in February 1920, re-elections were held. 44 deputies present at the session voted for the election of Simon Mdivani to the same position, while 4 abstained.²⁷

As one of Simon Mdivani's biographers noted, he was “loyal to all, kind, humble and courteous,” and it is because of these “high qualities” that he was chosen as a comrade of the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia.²⁸

In May 1919, the Foreign Affairs Commission was established in the Constituent Assembly, which was granted the status of a permanent commission that July. Simon Mdivani was elected as the Chairman of the Commission.²⁹ He believed that the existence of this commission was necessary to monitor and intervene “as appropriate commissions interfere in the matters of other agencies, the same should be done in the affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.” According to Mdivani, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs needed to have a connection with the parliamentary factions, so that the factions could promptly receive information on the state of the country's foreign policy.³⁰

On December 31, 1919, the Constituent Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Georgia issued the law “On

²² Newspaper *Sakhalkho Sakme*, 1917, September 17.

²³ The previous parliament was a body under the Provisional Government of Russia, which for a short time in 1917 existed from September 20 to October 25 of the same year (in old style).

²⁴ O. Janelidze, “sruliad rusetis 1917 tslis oktombri demokratiuli tatbiri da kartuli politikuri spektri” (All-Russian democratic debate of October 1917 and the Georgian political spectrum), *Gori State Educational University, Faculty of Humanities, Center of History and Archaeology, collection of works* 2018, №15, p. 456.

²⁵ National Archives of Georgia, Historical Central Archive, Fund 1836, 1, case 107, f. 35.

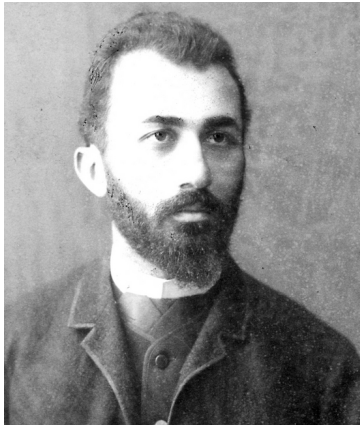
²⁶ Newspaper *Sakhalkho Sakme*, 1917, October 6.

²⁷ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. V, January 14, 1920 - March 16, Tbilisi, 2019, p. 477.

²⁸ Newspaper *Damoukidebeli Sakartvelo* (Independent Georgia), Paris, 1937, N 141, p. 2.

²⁹ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. I, March 12, 1919 - May 27, Tbilisi, 2019, p. 345.

³⁰ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. II, May 30 - July 25, 1919, Tbilisi, 2019, p. 354.



Iason Lortkipanidze

the Establishment of the State Bank.” Iason Lortkipanidze was elected as the chairman and manager of the board. In March 1920, the congregation formed the board, whose chairman’s comrade position was held by Simon Mdivani, chosen through elections.³¹

Simon Mdivani had to be the speaker of the plenary sessions of the Constituent Assembly on several occasions, a responsibility which he handled with dignity. He often appeared in sessions dealing with issues related to the budget and the allocation of funds for various state agencies.

Mdivani, as well as his fellow party members, and, in general, the Georgian political spectrum of 1918-1921, was in favor of mutually beneficial, close, and partnership-based cooperation with neighboring states.

“We are well aware that for every nation, no matter what it is, and above all for a small nation, it is necessary to take care of agreements with neighboring nations. For a small nation, we have no other way but to agree, so small nations should follow this path, then they will have the right to demand respect and recognition of their rights from big nations,” Mdivani said from the tribune of the Constituent Assembly.³² He could well see that the relationship between the newly emerging states of the South Caucasus was difficult: Sometimes there was tension and opposition between them. But he believed that disagreement was not as “valuable as the existence of these three republics – Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan” – and he called them to peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

On June 22, 1919, Simon Mdivani, on the instructions of the Foreign Affairs and Legal Commissions of the Constituent Assembly, submitted a proposition for the ratification of the military-defense agreement between the governments

of Azerbaijan and Georgia, which had been signed on June 19 of the same year.³³

In his report, Mdivani once again emphasized the peaceful aspirations of the Democratic Republic of Georgia and the desire for friendly relations with neighboring nations. He explained the essence of the agreement and indicated that the agreement signed with Azerbaijan was “the first step taken towards the goals that the Republic of Georgia has been serving since its foundation” and that “the principle of this agreement is to unite forces, preserve sovereignty, protect rights, – create one whole union that aims to protect the independence and integrity of its territory. Without secretive agreements, this is a sincere, friendly, fraternal, and democratic agreement between the two nations.”

Mdivani considered the agreement to be an “indicator of the maturity” of the Georgian state, and noted: “This agreement is an unmistakable witness that our democracy and the democracy of Azerbaijan can manage their affairs without asking others, and without the help of others.”³⁴

Along with the high evaluation of the agreement, Simon Mdivani outlined the perspective of the country’s foreign policy. In his words, they had to try “not to involve our country in any militaristic adventure. Let’s create a democratic union with all the nations that live next to us, and with whom we will need to move in the same path historically and in the future.”

On June 17, 1919, Mdivani, on behalf of the Socialist-Federalist faction, asked the government a question concerning Batumi and its county. He described the difficult situation created in the region, which was largely due to the fact that the jurisdiction of the Democratic Republic of Georgia could not be exercised over it. It is known that, with the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of March 3, 1918, the counties of Batumi, Ardaghan, and Kars belonged to the Ottoman Empire. After the defeat of Germany and its military camp in the First World War, the Ottoman army units left the city of Batumi and the Batumi district. In November 1918, British military forces took their place on behalf of the Allies. White Army, Bolshevik, and Ottoman security networks were operating with impunity in the region, trying to mobilize the local population against the Georgian state. The social and economic background was difficult; speculation and inflation were raging.

“What immediate measures does the republic take to consider the matter of reunifying Muslim Georgia with the country?” the federalists demanded of the government.

³¹ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. V, January 14, 1920 - March 16, p. 247; 483.

³² *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. IV, November 14, 1919 - December 31, Tb., 2019, p. 66.

³³ National Archives of Georgia, Historical Central Archive, Fund 1833, 1, case N 96, f. 2.

³⁴ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. II, May 30 - July 25, p. 217-221.

Simon Mdivani highlighted the importance of Batumi for Georgia, pointing out that: "Batumi is the only port from which you can use the sea. Batumi is such a place, such a door, from which we can have all economic and cultural relations with Western Europe." Therefore, "Georgia cannot give up Batumi county or the city of Batumi, since they are part of the entire territory of Georgia; the center of Muslim Georgia; the old cradle where Georgian culture was strong." "A government that does not take all the measures possible will not be able to stay in power; a Constituent Assembly that loses Batumi will not be a Constituent Assembly, it will be guilty before history, and that Constituent Assembly will be called out by force and whip," the distinguished member of parliament said at the conclusion of his speech.³⁵

Mdivani returned to the issues of Batumi once again when the issue of the departure of the troops of the allied powers from the city came up on the agenda. On March 2, 1920, for a thorough discussion on this topic, he even requested the convening of an extraordinary meeting of the Constituent Assembly. "The age of words is over, and the age of action is beginning," Mdivani said, adding that the action should be timely because a delay would pose a great danger to the vital interests of the Georgian state.³⁶

Simon Mdivani firmly stood guard over the independence of the Georgian state, and called on the government to be more active in this regard: "We must demand one thing from the government: Less volatility and more severity in the defense of freedom."³⁷

Mdivani was critical of the British command of Georgia and the allied troops stationed in the South Caucasus. He openly stated that "whenever the English intervened in our life, they always caused a disturbance" and that "the present policy of England in Transcaucasia is a historical method created by them, and the best executors of this method are, of course, themselves."³⁸

Simon Mdivani was a politician firmly standing on national principles in the affairs of the state, diplomacy or otherwise; he always put national interests in the foreground, but remained a socialist at heart. "I was a socialist-federalist, and I will die a socialist-federalist," Mdivani said.

Due to his socialist worldview, Simon Mdivani was sceptical

towards the Paris Peace Conference, which was convened by the victors of the First World War to develop and sign peace treaties with the defeated. In his words, "This conference cannot do anything until it is democratized, until the people who are in the conference today are replaced by other people who have more power, more influence."³⁹ As such, an authoritative body, according to Mdivani, was considered to be the socialist democracies of the world, but he worried that this force was not yet so closely linked and could not give a decisive word for the establishment of international peace.

Mdivani defended the left-wing views in relation to the ruling political power in Georgia, social democracy, to which his party stood in opposition. This is how the federalists understood the opposition's activities: They considered that the opposition was not obliged to "give plans of action" to the majority; drawing up and implementing plans and projects, in their opinion, belonged to the competence of the ruling force. The opposition should instead hold the "whip of criticism" in its hands and act in cases where the majority could not act accordingly.⁴⁰

An important page of Simon Mdivani's biography is his diplomatic activity. At different times, he represented the Georgian state, first in Armenia, and later in Turkey. After the republics of Georgia and Armenia de-jure recognized each other in March 1919, Simon Mdivani was entrusted with full-fledged representation of Georgia in Armenia.⁴¹ In November 1920, he was appointed Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of Georgia to the Government of the Great National Assembly of Turkey in Angora (Ankara). At the same time, his brother Budu was the diplomatic representative of Soviet Russia in Ankara.

In March 1921, after the overthrowing of the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, Simon Mdivani joined the exiled government of Noe Zhordania in Constantinople, although he did not follow him to France. He stayed in Constantinople for some time, serving as a member of the political commission of the exiled government and played an important role in coordinating the actions of the Georgian underground resistance movement and political emigration.

Simon Mdivani was included in the extended Presidium of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia (presidium

³⁵ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. II, May 30 - July 25, 1919, p. 157-158.

³⁶ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. V, January 14, 1920 - March 16, p. 382.

³⁷ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. II, May 30 - July 25, 1919, p. 411.

³⁸ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. I, March 12, 1919 - May 27, p. 406.

³⁹ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. II, May 30 - July 25, 1919, p. 186.

⁴⁰ *sakartvelos dampudznebeli kreba, skhdomis okmebi* (Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Records of the Session), vol. V, January 14, 1920 - March 16, p. 322.

⁴¹ O. Janelidze, *sakartvelos demokratiuli respublikis istoriis narkvebi* (Essays on the History of the Democratic Republic of Georgia), Tbilisi, 2018, p. 238.



Genoa Conference, 1922

of the Constituent Assembly plus representatives of factions) and in the Central Propaganda-Agitation Commission founded in Paris.

As a member of the Presidium of the Constituent Assembly, he had the right to attend government meetings. At one of these meetings, which was held in Paris on September 22, 1921, in which Simon Mdivani took part, it was planned to create an inter-party body to strengthen the anti-Bolshevik front. They also agreed that "the current government, which is abroad, is considered to be the only legitimate government before the formation of a new one by the Constituent Assembly" and that "the Constituent Assembly will establish a coalition government" after returning to Georgia.⁴²

Despite the agreement on the issue of the de-occupation of Georgia, there were still problems around which disputes between the different representatives of political parties continued even in emigration. One of these issues concerned the existence of the People's Guard. The national democrats demanded the abolition of the Guard, and were supported by the federalist Simon Mdivani.

Mdivani was the secretary of the Inter-Party Overseas Bureau of Georgian Political Organizations, and then a



Irakli Tsereteli

member of the Inter-Party Committee and the National Center. Under his initiative, a support committee for tuberculosis patients was formed in Paris, in whose work he took part until the end of his life.

In 1922, together with Akaki Chkhenkeli, Irakli Tsereteli, and others, he became a member of the delegation of the exiled government sent to Genoa, although the delegation was not allowed to participate in the conference.

The pinnacle of Simon Mdivani's career was the unification of the oppressed nations of Russia and, first of all, the union of the republics of the Caucasus. In 1926, with the active support of the Polish government, a union was

⁴² O. Janelidze, *narkvevebi sakartvelos erovnul-demokratiuli partiis istoriidan* (Essays from the history of the National Democratic Party of Georgia), Tbilisi, 2002, p. 414-415.



Simon Mdivani's spouse, Neli Nakashidze-Mdivani and daughter, Irine

formed between the emigrant governments and parties of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Mountaineers and Ukraine, and the "Committee for the Liberation of the Caucasus" was created. As a representative of the Georgian side, Simon Mdivani participated in the drafting process of the "Pact of the Confederation of the Caucasus."

There are reports that the Soviet security services were planning to assassinate Simon Mdivani in Turkey. For this purpose, in 1926, a Georgian Chekist was sent to Istanbul by order of Lavrenti Beria, the Chairman of the State Political Department of Georgia. The agent determined the location of Mdivani, and the route of his movements, preparing for the assassination, but the operation was called off by Moscow.⁴³

In 1928, at the request of the Soviet Union, Simon Mdivani was unofficially expelled from Istanbul by the Turkish government,⁴⁴ after which he settled in Paris and continued his political and social activities, including in Poland. He was at the head of the Georgian community in Warsaw ("Georgian Committee" of Warsaw), was one of the activists of the "Prometheus" movement, a member of the "Prometheus" club in Warsaw, and collaborated with the French edition of the Prometheus magazine. There are documentary sources confirming this, which have also been published as a

⁴³ А. Сульянов, *Берия. Арестовать в Кремле, Минск, 2004*, с. 553

⁴⁴ *Кавказская Конфедерация в официальных декларациях, тайной переписке и секретных документах движения «Прометей»*. Сборник документов. Сост., пред., пер., прим. Г. Мамулия. Москва, 2012, с. 22.

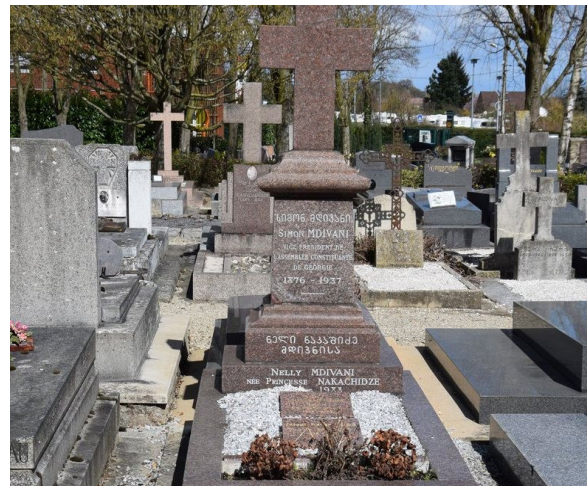
book.⁴⁵ According to one of those archival documents, in January-February 1935, Mdivani took part in the Conference of Caucasian Organizations of the Prometheus Front, which was held in Brussels. Despite such a burden, he did not cut ties with the Socialist-Federalist Party, and was involved in the work of its foreign organizational activities.

Simon Mdivani was optimistic, even in exile. "His tireless energy did not weaken even in the difficult physical conditions abroad as an immigrant. Neither extreme financial difficulties nor frequent illness could defeat his active nature, his thirst and enthusiasm for action on the national stage, and his astonishing optimism."⁴⁶ He also urged his associates: "Let's not bow down, let's not break our hearts, let's not change our attitude. There is no doubt that we will win."⁴⁷

In the last days of his life, Simon Mdivani was passionately involved in the preparation of the anniversary event dedicated to the 750th anniversary of Shota Rustaveli. Unfortunately, this celebration, which was celebrated by the French Georgian emigration at the Sorbonne University, passed without his presence. He died on December 13, 1937, in the town of Sochaux. He was buried at Leuville Cemetery.

In addition to the French Georgian emigre press, his death also resonated in the Polish newspapers: *Polska Zbrojna*, *Gazeta Polska*, *Kurier Poranny*, *Kurier Warszawski*, and others.⁴⁸

In the following years, the Georgian emigration repeatedly remembered and celebrated in various ways the round dates of the birth and death of Simon Mdivani.



The grave of Simon Mdivani and his wife in Lueville

⁴⁵ За свободу и независимость Кавказа. Прометеевское движение в секретных документах и материалах участников, наблюдателей и противников. Составители, предисловие, перевод и примечания Г. Мамулия и Р. Абуталыбов, Париж-Баку, 2020.

⁴⁶ Journal *Samshoblo* (Motherland), Paris, 1938, N 23-24, p. 22-23.

⁴⁷ Newspaper *Sakhalkho Sakme*, Paris, 1926, №2, p. 27.

⁴⁸ Newspaper *Damoukidebeli Sakartvelo*, Paris, 1938, №142, p. 13.