

MEMORANDUM

May 11, 1945

TO : Mr. Dulles

FROM : Mr. Watjen

Concerning Michael Kedia and his friends of the Caucasian National Committee.

KEDIA is 42 years old. He emigrated from Georgia, in the Caucasus to Paris. His family was involved in the fight of the national governments of Georgia and Azerbeidjan against soviet Russia in 1918. From 1923 until 1929 Kedia was closely connected with the Georgian national government, which had its seat in Paris. Since 1940 Kedia has worked in Berlin as president of the Caucasian National Committee, leaving his family in Paris.

On the 2,th April, 1945, the following members of the National Caucasian Committee (N.Co.C.) crossed the swiss border:

Michael Kedia	(Georgia)	Now in Geneva with Int.Red Cross Papers
Djamalian	(Armenia)	" " " " "
Alibegow	(Azerbeidjan)	" " " " "
Kantemir	(North Caucasus)	" " " " "
Dr. Givi Gablieni	(Georgia)	" " " " "
Alexander Zomaja) ")	Now in Swiss Red Cross Camp.
Michael Alchibaja	(")	in Hochst, Austria
Georg Mairivelli (Herr von Mende)	(German)	

The N. C. C. was composed of leading members of the peoples of:

Georgia	(Indo-Arian, 3 million inhabitants)
Azerbeidjan	(Turkish, 4 million inhabitants)
North Armenia	(Armenian, 2 million ")
North Caucasus	(Turko-Mongols, 1 million)

With the exception of North Caucasus, these peoples formed independent governments during the years 1917 to 1919, and fought at first together with the Germans and Turks, and later with the English armies against their ancient foe, Russia.

All four nations have only comparatively small numbers of inhabitants of Russian descent. The people of Azerbeidjan and North Caucasus are mostly Musulman, whereas the Georgians and Armenians belong to the orthodox Christian creed. As is well known, since their countries have been occupied by the Russians, the Caucasian people have always revolted against Tzarist Russia, and later Soviet Russia. The mountainous regions of the Caucasus have been almost constantly in turmoil.

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After Hitler started his war against Russia, the leading members of the four Caucasian nations (who in nearly all cases had already been living for a long time in exile) gathered in Berlin, hoping to gain independence by a German victory. At first the German army supported these ideas, but later Rosenberg and Schickedanz (Ost Ministerium) convinced Hitler that the independence of the Caucasian nations would be of no interest to Nazi German imperialism, as particularly the Caucasian oilfields, and the border zone towards Persia and Turkey should be entirely under German control. At this time Schickedanz became Governor of the Caucasus.

So in 1942 in N.C.C. found itself in a very difficult situation. On the one hand they saw their political aims frustrated, on the other they had been used by the German authorities, since August 1941, to build up a network of intelligence covering the Caucasus and the Kalmuck Steppes. At the same time the panturanian Turks had built up an intelligence connection in central Asia, and, which was still more important, had picked out Caucasians from German prison camps to build up a Caucasian Corps. These Caucasians had followed the call of the N.C.C. because its leaders, deceived by the Nazi authorities, had promised them the chance to fight against Russia for the independence of their countries. But they were not at all interested to support either Russia or Germany in a war at the end of which their nation would be dominated by either of the two. The N. C. C. (which was not liquidated by the Nazis, who still planned to use it eventually) now had the difficult task of disentangling their men from the German army, who were called to arms under false pretences.

The president of the N. C. C. was Kedia, who says that the only Germans who admitted the injustice done to them were Von Mende of the Ost Ministerium and the chief of the Eastern department of the S.D. Graefe (the latter was killed in a motor accident in 1944). Von Mende is half Russian, knows south Russia well and was German specialist for Caucasian questions. According to Kedia, from 1942 on Mende helped the members of the N. C. C. whenever he could, and exposed himself continually to grave dangers in working against the declared policy of his ministry and the Reichskanzlei. Count Schulenberg (chief of the South Russian department in the Foreign office, killed after July 20, 1944) helped him considerably. As the fight for their men brought Kedia and his committee into conflict with the army and Nazi authorities, Kedia assures us that only through Mende's very courageous handling of the matter were their lives and liberty saved, and those of many others with them. Among other incidents were the following:

1. Only through the help of Mende and his collaborators was Kedia able to save the lives of the Georgian and Persian Jewish community in Paris (250) people) for which Kedia received the attached letters of thanks from the Jewish authorities.

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2. In March 1945 it was again possible only through Kedia's help to save the life of an American agent, the Georgian Juri Skarjinski, now in touch with Mr. Jollis in Paris.

After managing to move the whole staff of the N. C. C. and the Caucasian Corps to North Italy and West Germany (and thereby out of the immediate danger of falling into the hands of the Russians) Kedia escaped in April 1945 together with the last remnants of the N.C.C. He took with him Kende, who had made this escape to Switzerland possible, out of the hands of the ever suspicious Gestapo. On April 27th they crossed the swiss border, Kende under the false name of George Metrinelli. On May 7th five of them were brought back to the prison camp at Hochst, near St. Margarethen on the Swiss border (in Germany), but according to what Mr. Marty of the International Red Cross told Kedia, are still under some control of the International Red Cross. Kedia was told that they could only be kept under this control until May 13, after which they are supposed to be delivered to the Allies, and consequently probably handed over to the Russians.

Kedia, who is in touch with Mr. Marty of the I.R.C. begs for help:

1. To save his friends at Hochst from being delivered to the Russians.
2. To save at least the elite of the Caucasian Corps now prisoners of the Western Allies in France and Northern Italy from being handed over to the Russians.

According to information Kedia has received from France, many members of the Caucasian Corps have voted to return to Russia, fearing that they will be handed over to the Russians in any case, and if they have voted for Russia they will then have a chance for survival. But at least 20,000 men of the Corps have voted against returning to Russia. It is for this group of men that Kedia asks for help. Kedia is convinced that deliverance to the Soviet of either his friends or the 20,000 men of the C.C. means for them certain death.

Kedia, Djamalien, Alibegow and Kantemir, who formed the N.C.C. and who are still in Geneva, have decided to leave Switzerland and deliver themselves up to the Russians if they do not succeed in their plan to help their friends, because "they prefer death to eternal shame".

Mr opinion;

1. Kedia, who proved to me to be a good friend of Nuri pasha in Istanbul, seems to be a person of great decency, strong character, sharp in elligence and trustworthiness. Knowing him, I think we should give his friends the benefit of the doubt. Knowing these Turkish and Caucasian people myself,

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I am convinced that we will not find many bad eggs among Kedia's leading men. Their work was dangerous and without any remuneration (Kedia assures me that he never received a cent from the Nazis, which I, knowing the standpoint of Nuri Pasha and his friends in these matters, believe to be the truth).

2. These Caucasians should not be regarded as quislings; they are more or less in the same position as the Poles, struggling for their independence from the Russians.

3. Kedia, especially if in contact with Nuri Pasha, should be in a position to build up the finest intelligence network in the Caucasus and central Asia, Persia, India and the near East, as their followers do not work as paid agents, but for purely patriotic reasons (details can be given in a special memo).

I propose, presuming there is an interest for this work, to get in touch with the other members of the N.C.C. in Geneva and/or at Hochst. Also to ask the Y.M.C.A. to take care as far as possible of the elite of the Caucasian prisoners in the prison camps in France and North Italy, and try to save them from being handed over to the Russians. The American and English churches, if one could interest them in the matter, could be of great help in putting this through in the political arena.

Concerning Mende, and referring to my earlier statement, it is quite possible that I committed a grave error (grave, because his life is at stake) in pointing him out as being unworthy of help. Perhaps, having already too much on his hands in helping the Caucasians, he shelved the Central Asian problems presented to him by Nuri Pasha and myself, thinking they would only increase the antagonism of the Ost Ministerium against which he already had to fight in the interests of his Caucasian friends. Not realizing my political views - which I did not and could not disclose to him, being an official of Rosenberg's - it is not improbable that he tried every means of getting me out of the way, even to asking his friends of the S.D. to intervene against me.

On the other hand one must take into account the possibility that my liaison man in the S.D. who informed me of Mende's steps against me, had exaggerated the case in order to prove the extent of his help.

Be that as it may, certainly Kedia seems to have no personal interest to endanger the case of his Caucasian friends by making Mende appear better than he really is.

I should like very much to talk the matter over with Mende myself.