Essad Essad Bey spent his childhood growing up in Baku as Lev Nussimbaum. When he died in 1942, Libyan-born Bello Vacca (pseudonym Giamil Vacca-Mazzara) wrote a lengthy tribute in an Italian journal Oriente Moderno. However, nearly every statement about Lev’s early life can be refuted by historical documents from the Azerbaijan Republic State History Archives.

Essad Bey was born in Baku.

BUT... his birth certificate gives the date of his birth and circumcision as the Jewish month of Muharram. His birth was registered in the synagogue in Kyiv. Lev’s school records in Baku indicate that his religion was Judaism, and his nationality, Hebrew.

Lev Nussimbaum was born a Shiite Muslim.

BUT... Lev’s birth certificate gives the date of his birth and circumcision in the Jewish month of Muharram. His birth was registered in the synagogue in Kyiv. Lev’s school records indicate that his religion was Judaism, and his nationality, Hebrew.

Lev was not a Jew because Jews were prohibited from living in Baku.

BUT... Lev and his father lived at one of the most prestigious addresses in town, the Ashumov House at 11 Mikhayilkaya Street (now Aziz Aliyev).

Lev was not a Jew because Jews could not own land in Baku.

BUT... Lev’s father owned the A.I. Nussimbaum & Binagadi Petroleum Pipeline Company, which he sold to the Nobel Brothers Petroleum Company in 1914 for 131,500 rubles. Nussimbaum’s office was in the Bunyadov House at Birjevaya Street 5 (now Uzeyir Hajibeyov Street). His office telephone number was 4-35.

Vacca’s Sensational Biographical Account of Essad Bey

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Lev was six years old when he started school.

BUT... documents show that he was nearly nine years old when his father first registered him for school on September 27, 1914, and that he officially started school on October 1, 1914.

Lev studied Persian at school.

BUT... Persian was not even offered in the curriculum at Men’s Gymnasium No. 3 in Baku. Both Persian and Azeri were officially written in a modified Arabic script in the early 20th century.