



Ressort: Politik

First Democratic Republic?

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In this article, I will try to take readers back 106 years. I have no doubt that many of you will be surprised by what you will read in this article. When we talk about human rights, democracy, education, etc., western countries come to mind first, and that is understandable. Probably, many people do not know that for example, women were given the right to vote in the Eastern country, about which I will talk about a little later, even before many Western countries. Probably many people do not know that in the country I will talk about, for the first time in the East, the secular state, a state has been established where religion is separate from the state, and which gives the same rights to all religions and nationalities...

...At the beginning of the twentieth century, Russia was in a state of panic. Many of the peoples living on the territory of Russia wanted to use the existing situation to establish their own independent states and to be free from Russian occupation. The Caucasian peoples were also included in this list. Azerbaijanis, Armenians and Georgians united in the Caucasian Seim decided to establish their own state and succeeded in this in 1918. Three republics were established in the Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. In this article, I will tell you about the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (abbreviated ADR) that existed in 1918-1920. Because ADR was the first secular democratic and parliamentary republic in the entire Turkic and Muslim world.

During the two years of its existence, ADR has done so much that it is impossible to fit it into one article. On May 27, 1918, the Muslim faction of the former Transcaucasian Seim called an emergency meeting to discuss the political situation. After long discussions, it was decided to create a Provisional National Council. Mohammad Amin Rasulzade (Chairman of the Musavat Party) was elected to the position of Chairman of the Provisional National Council of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, and Fatali Khan Khoyski (neutral) was elected to the position of Chairman of the Executive Committee. The members of the Provisional National Council insisted on the independence of not only Azerbaijan, but also other Caucasian nations.

My personal opinion is that the members of the National Council, while making this decision, hoped that

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the three states to be created in the Caucasus would support each other in order not to be invaded by Russia or another state.

Azerbaijan declared its independence on May 28, 1918. The first capital of the republic with area of 113.9 thousand square kms, was the city of Ganja. Because at that time, the current capital, Baku, and many other areas were in the hands of the Armenian-Russian Bolshevik forces under the name of the Baku Council of People's Commissars (Azeris were a minority in the Baku Council of People's Commissars and they were pro-Russian).

). On June 4, a peace treaty was signed between the ADR and the Ottoman state, and the Caucasian Islamic Army led by Nuru Pasha, the brother of Ottoman Defense Minister Enver Pasha, came to the aid of Azerbaijan based on this treaty. Briefly, let me mention that after the full liberation of Baku from the occupying forces on September 15, 1918, the capital was moved to Baku. I wrote all this briefly, because, as I mentioned, the history of this state, which has existed for two years, cannot be fit into one article. Therefore, I decided intentionally not to write some facts.

ADR existed from May 18, 1918 to April 28, 2020. After that date, Russia, this time Soviet Russia, invaded Azerbaijan and also other Caucasian republics. During this short period of time, ADR made very important decisions related to the fields of language, education, culture, healthcare, media, etc. It may seem surprising to many readers that women were given the right to vote in Azerbaijan in 1918, before many other countries. Let me make a short note here and point out that this nation has signed many firsts in the East. For example, the first opera in the East was performed by the people of Azerbaijan for the first time.

The foundation of opera art in Azerbaijan was laid on January 12, 1908 with composer Uzeyir Hajibeyov's "Leyli and Majnun", which was staged in the theater of Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev, the then millionaire, oil millionaire, and which was the first opera of the Eastern-Muslim world.

The ADR government attached great importance to the development of the areas I mentioned above. For example, if we look at the field of education, we will see that on September 1, 1919, Baku State University was founded by the Parliament of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. The founders of the republic, who understood the importance of education, sent 100 young people to study in European countries in 1920.

Let me mention that after the fall of ADR, the life of these young people was very tragic. After the collapse of the ADR, these students had no funding, many of them decided to return to Soviet Azerbaijan, where they were arrested and subjected to severe punishments. The lives of those who stayed abroad were also very painful, and unfortunately, there is no information about the future fate of many of them.

During the short period of its existence, ADR made many important decisions. In a short time, Azerbaijan opened representative offices in several countries of the world. About 16 countries, as well as the United States of America, opened their representative offices in Azerbaijan.

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Many countries of the world recognized the independence of ADR. The delegation that participated in the Paris peace conference under the leadership of Alimardan Bey Topchubashov, the chairman of the parliament of ADR, had great contribution in all this. The delegation had a meeting with the then US President Wilson in Paris. In his memoirs, Wilson spoke highly of the Azerbaijani delegation. By the way, immediately after the occupation of Azerbaijan by Soviet Russia, most of the members of the delegation had to stay abroad (many of them in France) because they could not return.

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... On April 28, 1920, Soviet Russia invaded Azerbaijan again. Azerbaijan could not be freed from this occupation for 71 years. Azerbaijan was able to declare its independence only on October 18, 1991. Of course, this was not easy. Today, everyone in Azerbaijan is aware of the important role of the republic that existed in the years 1918-1920 in this regained independence.

As they say, the fire was rekindled from the spark hidden under the ashes. Mammad Amin Rasulzade, who was one of the founders of ADR, said - "A flag that rises once, will not fall ever" - and after many years, the tricolor flag, which was the state flag during the ADR period, still rose to the sky after many years and is the flag of today's independent Azerbaijan.

Vugar Abbasov

P.S. Considering that it will be interesting for the readers, I think of writing a series of articles about the Soviet Union, the people living there and the independence of the countries formed the USSR.

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