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Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences

POLITICAL LEADERS AND THE PUBLIC-POLITICAL IDEALS OF MAMMAD AMIN RASULZADEH



Portrait of M. A. Rasulzadeh, Artist O. Sadigzadeh

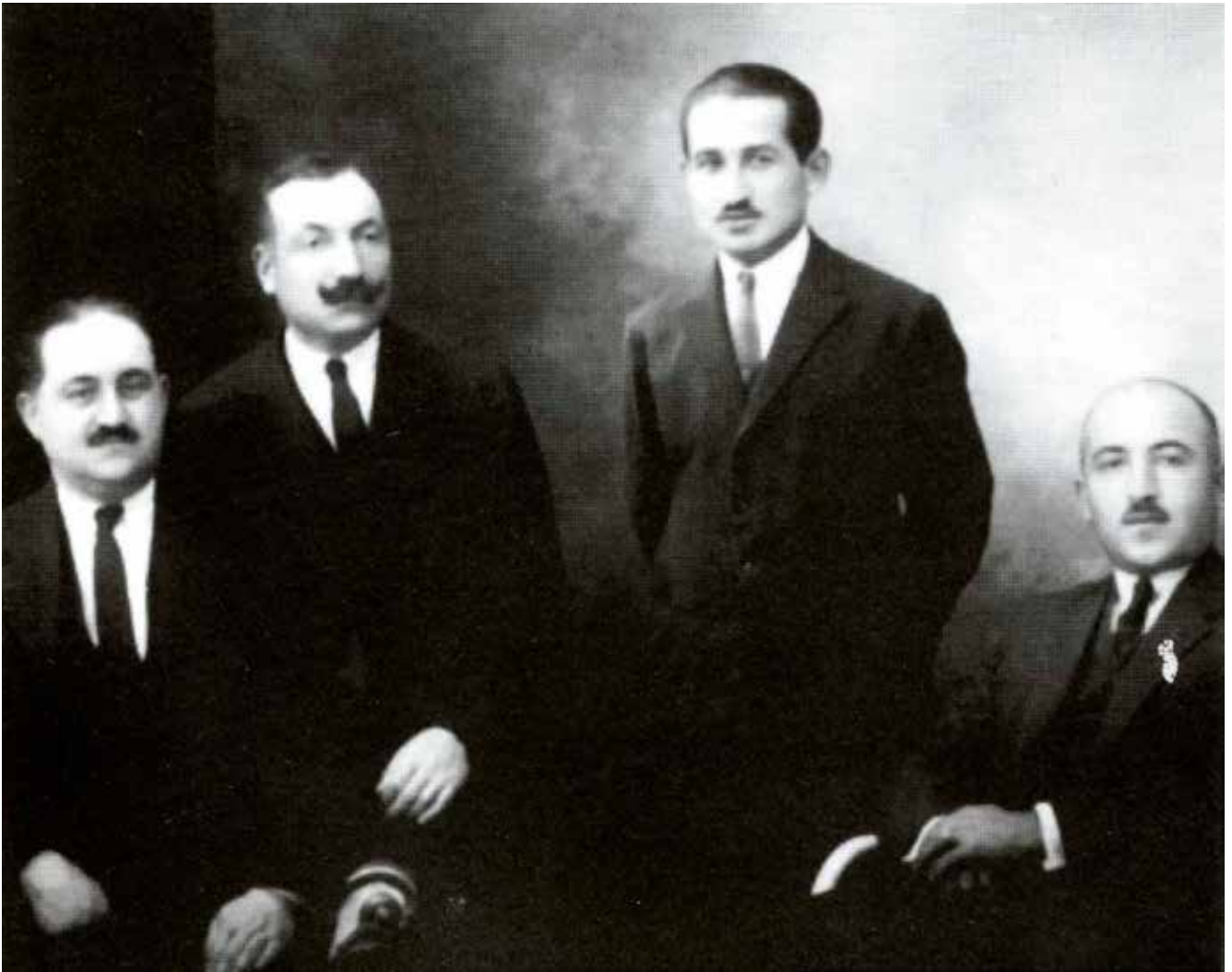
Mammad Amin Rasulzadeh (1884-1955) is a politician actively studied in recent years by historians and publicists of Azerbaijan, USA, Europe and Russia. In addition to general political activity, he is also a historian and author of numerous analytical reports on the history of the national liberation movement; publisher, editor, journalist, who worked in newspapers and magazines of Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey

and Europe; a literary critic, who authored original works of Azerbaijani and oriental literature; finally, he is a writer and translator.

The Big Five of public and political figures of Azerbaijan in the early 20th century - Ali Bay Huseynzadeh (1864-1940), Ahmad Agaoglu (1869-1939), Nariman Narimanov (1870-1925), Mammad Amin (Muhammad Amin) Rasulzadeh (1884-1955) and Alimardan Bay Topchubashov (1865-1934) - played a huge role in shaping the political climate and orienting public-political trends in the first quarter of the last century (without diminishing the role and activity of other prominent politicians). In addition, all of them, except for Narimanov, were active in the second quarter of the century too. The wave of political upheavals threw these prominent political leaders out of the country - during the Sovietization of Azerbaijan they were all forced to go abroad for various reasons, where they ended their days: Topchubashov in Paris, Huseynzadeh, Agaoglu and Rasulzadeh in Turkey and Narimanov in Moscow.

N. Vazirov, J. Mammadguluzadeh, M. Sabir, U. Hajibayov, A. Hagverdiyev and other established writers and artists exerted, of course, a significant influence on public-political life in the country, although they themselves, being writers and cultural figures, were not directly involved in politics except for certain cases. These exceptions include the activities of U. Hajibayov in the Ittihad (Union) party, as well as the activities of Y. V. Chamanzaminli and J. Jabbarli in Musavat (Equality). Narimanov equally successfully engaged in politics and writing activity.

Members of the Azerbaijani national center in Turkey M. A. Rasolzadeh, Abbasgulu Kazimzadeh, Ahmad Jafaroglu, Mustafa Vekili



What were the main topics discussed in public and political life in the early 20th century? It was Europeanization, which left a noticeable mark in the works of Abbasgulu Bakikhanov and was backed and promoted by Mirza Fatali Akhundov, zealously defended by Hasan Bay Zardabi; Islamization put forward by Jamaladdin Afgani, A. Huseynzadeh and young A. Agaoglu; Turkification prepared by the activity of M. F. Akhonzadeh and developed by A. Huseynzadeh, Z. Gokalp, A. Agaoglu and others. On the eve of the first Russian revolution, the social democratic movement, which was headed by N. Narimanov and M. Rasolzadeh, became the most popular. Simultaneously, sprouts of Azerbaijanism nurtured by writers, poets and essayists, primarily Jalil Mammadguluzadeh and Uzeyir Hajibayov, could be seen.

The enlightenment movement, which was initiated and supported by such thinkers as A. Bakikhanov, M. F. Akhundov, Hasan Bay Zardabi and became the highest

goal of the men of education mentioned and not mentioned above, is, of course, a special theme and requires special attention. When there was a search for ways to eliminate backwardness, enlightenment always came out on top.

Each of the abovementioned ideas and public-political ideals, except for educational ones, which were to determine the development of society, had its leaders, its most ardent supporters and vocal opponents. The fight for one's ideas, intelligence, talent, energy and organizational skills spent on proving the correctness of the path chosen to implement one's ideals - all this inspired faith and hope for progress. The competition and struggle that inspired and reinforced the political and literary-journalistic movement led the leaders to collision, and it was quite natural.

A researcher or writer, who looked at the historical past through the prism of his own political ideals in some cases, tried to exaggerate the struggle with new shades



M. A. Rasulzadeh. Ankara. 1950

or preferred to keep silent about certain facts in the name of "national unity" or in order to idealize a historical personality. The fight of those days, projected onto our time under different angles, is the cause of dispute between supporters of, for example, N. Narimanov and M. Rasulzadeh; usually the latter sharply attack, while the

M. A. Rasulzadeh. Ankara. 1950



former defend themselves and launch a counterattack only in some cases. To get closer to the truth from which it is almost never possible to remove its mysterious and misty veil, it is necessary to abandon the idea of creating idols and conduct systematic and long-term studies.

Mammad Amin Rasulzadeh, a junior member of the above five, dedicated over half a century of his life to the political struggle, the main idea of which shifted from autonomy to the full state independence of Azerbaijan. He was fated to end up in political exile, in which he spent more than half of his life. It should be noted that the difficulties and hardships of life in a foreign country did not undermine his political will, determination and commitment - on the contrary, over the years they strengthened even more while his pen acquired even greater poignancy and depth of coverage.

Rasulzadeh made a great contribution to the formation and development of the Azerbaijani press. Rasulzadeh, who had already started to believe in the need to create public organizations in his youth, was active in charitable and educational societies and, was the chairman and main ideologue of Azerbaijan's strongest political party of the time - Musavat, created political societies in Turkey and Europe later. Perhaps, no one in Azerbaijan can be compared to Rasulzadeh for the vastness of the geography of publishing activity - he edited and published newspapers and magazines in the Caucasus, Iran, Turkey and Europe. He and Ahmad Bay Agaoglu belong to authors who own the authorship of the largest number of political and journalistic articles and pamphlets in the history of Azerbaijan. Y. Akchura recalls the words spoken by Ahmad Bay in jest: "If you put together all the articles I have written, you can lay a wide road from Baku to Istanbul!"

Rasulzadeh got involved in political life at 18 and began to write on a variety of topics - politics, education, culture, economics, and literature from the same time. It was the time when socialist thought strengthened and nationalism awakened in politics. The beginning of the 20th century was marked by powerful social and political upheavals - the 1905 revolution in Russia, the Constitutional Revolution and the subsequent events in Iran, the rise of the Young Turks movement in Turkey, Armenian-Muslim clashes in the Caucasus and the formation of various Armenian political parties and movements, one of the activities of which was to conduct an anti-Turkish and anti-Azerbaijani policy. All these developments led to an unprecedented flowering of the political press, a growth in political consciousness in



M.A.Rasulzadeh (right) with social democrats M. Azizbayov (left) and N. Narimanov (stands).1904-05

Azerbaijan and the emergence of political parties. It was on this wave that parties such as Hummat (N. Narimanov, M. Rasulzadeh, M. Azizbayov and others), Difai (Nasib Bay Yusifbayli, A. Agaoglu and others), the All-Russian Union of Muslims (A. Topchubashov, Ismayil Gasprinski, Y. Akchura and others), and the press accompanying them emerged. During this period, intellectuals of Kazan and Crimean Tatars, Azerbaijanis in Russia maintained close ties with the Istanbul intellectual elite and exchanged ideas.

After the defeat of the Russian revolution in 1905, Rasulzadeh went to Iran, where he took an active part in the Constitutional Revolution, met with its leaders Sattarkhan, Bagirkhan, Sayyid Hasan Tagizadeh, published his "Iranian letters" in Taraqqi newspaper, which aroused interest, wrote a work devoted to criticism of parties - competitors of the Social Democrats. He was editor of the first European-type newspaper in Iran – the organ of the Iranian Social Democrats, Iran-e Nou, which had a huge impact on public-political life, the formation of political consciousness and the development of journalism in this country. The main content of the newspaper was international and regional news presented in an anti-imperialist and anti-Russian spirit, but at the same time, in the context of solidarity with the Russian Social Democrats, as well as national issues. Iran-e Nou tried to shape both political and literary tastes of its readers. The newspaper actively clarified the basic tenets of Marxism, made comments on such works as "The Communist Manifesto", "Capital" and "Critique of Political Economy". However, in May 1911, when the balance of forces changed, as a result of Russian pressure on the Iranian authorities, Rasulzadeh was forced to go to Istanbul, which served as a favorite refuge for Muslim political exiles from Russia and Iran.

The government's wrath caused by the social-democratic movement, which prepared a revolution in Russia, fell on all those who had their say in politics. They had to go underground or emigrate - there was no other way. Uzeyir Hajibayov, who regarded as vital the presence of educated leaders who can deal with the problems of the nation, wrote in another issue of Taraqqi newspaper on 27 August 1909: "... If someone stood up for us and defended our rights with the honor and dignity of a representative of the nation - it was Ahmad Bay. He was forced to leave the country ... After Ahmad Bay, there was Dr. Garabay Garabayov (doctor, journalist and public activist, 1874-1953) and he was forced to leave the country too. Besides them, there was Alimardanbay Topchubashov, and he was forced to flee the country too. There was also Nariman Narimanov; he was imprisoned and his family plunged into hunger."

At that time in Istanbul, the prevailing political trends were Turkism and Turanism developed in the articles and

M.A.Rasulzadeh. Ankara.1950





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journalistic works primarily of immigrants from Russia - Yusuf Akchura, Ali Bay Huseynzadeh and A. Agaoglu and representatives of Turkish political thought - Ziya Gokalp. Thus, a descendant of the Volga Tatars, Yusif Akchura, put forward the slogan of "Ottomanism, Islamism and Turkism" in 1904. Back in 1905-1906, Huseynzadeh formulated the basic provisions of political Turkism and Turanism and put forward his famous slogan "Turkify, Islamize, Europeanize". Rasulzadeh was the youngest of this cohort of politicians and ideologues, from whom he learned. He published the work "Iranian Turks" in Turk Yurdu journal.

In 1913, Rasulzadeh returned to Baku already as a mature politician and became the main ideologue of

the Musavat party, continuing active journalistic activities and writing articles on issues of national development. Rasulzadeh put forward a political program that combined social democratic and Islamic-Turkist provisions aimed at equality of Muslims in Russia. Through systematic hard work, Rasulzadeh managed to turn Musavat into a serious party with a broad and attractive program. Achig Yol newspaper which he published from 1915 served this purpose.

The February Revolution of 1917 in Russia deepened political confrontation in the country and led to the intensification of the struggle for power. The congress of Muslims of the Caucasus held in such conditions in Baku on 15-20 April and the Congress of Russian Muslims held in Moscow on 1-11 May spoke out in favor of the idea of building a new Russian state on the principle of territorial autonomies, which was actively promoted by Rasulzadeh. Thus, Rasulzadeh, along with Topchubashov, became a leader of the movement for territorial autonomy. During this period, all political forces in Russia, except the Bolsheviks, defended the unitary model of the Russian state. Thus, the situation prompted cooperation with the Bolsheviks, who had included a provision on the

M.A. Rasulzadeh, 1919



right of peoples to self-determination in their program. However, after the victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia in October 1917, the national parties of the South Caucasus - Musavat in Azerbaijan, the Mensheviks in Georgia and Dashnaksutyun in Armenia, in search of a region-wide state, created the Transcaucasian Seim, indicating the divergence of paths with the Bolsheviks. The March 1918 massacre of the Muslim population in Baku finally made the Bolsheviks and Musavat bitter enemies.

During this period, Rasolzadeh was elected chairman of the Azerbaijani National Council. After the proclamation of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic on 28 May 1918 and the formation of the parliament headed by the elder of Azerbaijani politicians Topchubashov by the end of the year, he became leader of the Musavat faction.

The rise of the national spirit, national policy, parliamentary and state governance experience and the strengthening of the idea of Azerbaijanism resulted in the 23 months of the existence of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic becoming a glorious page in the history of the Azerbaijani people.

In the future, when success in the civil war in Russia began to favor the Bolsheviks, Lenin and Ataturk strengthened allied relations necessary for both sides and the Red Army began to move steadily toward the borders of Azerbaijan, the number of supporters of finding a common language with the Bolsheviks began to multiply in the political elite of the country. By the end of 1919, the left wing of Musavat headed by Rasolzadeh and Hajinski no longer saw anything reprehensible in the rapprochement with the Bolsheviks. However, the uncompromisingly radical position of the right wing of the party headed by Fatali Khan Khoyski did not want this. Ultimately, the parliamentary commission accepted with a majority of votes the Bolsheviks' ultimatum to hand over power to them.

After the Bolshevik coup, Rasolzadeh spent some time hiding in Lahij, where he wrote one of the most original and romantic of his works - "The Siyavush of Our Century". This was the beginning of a series of works on the topic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijanism and Azerbaijan studies, the next of which he would later write in exile until his death tirelessly and enthusiastically.

Soon Rasolzadeh was captured and imprisoned in a Baku prison. However, Stalin, with whom he had a good relationship, rescued him and took him to Moscow, from where he managed to escape to Finland in 1922 and later to Turkey. From 1922 to 1931, Rasolzadeh worked on

uniting Azerbaijani émigrés in a single center, but failed to ensure the full implementation of this idea in Turkey or Europe. In 1923, he began to publish a clearly anti-Soviet magazine called *Yeni Kafkasya*, which was closed in 1927 under pressure from the Soviets. Rasolzadeh continued to fight, publishing press organs under other names. Finally, in 1931, he was deported from Turkey for damaging Turkish-Soviet relations though he considered Turkey his second home. However, fatigue, carefulness and adaptation to new conditions were alien to this restless and ebullient person. During this period of big emigration, Rasolzadeh's disagreements with Huseynzadeh and Agaoglu increased. While Rasolzadeh created problems for the Turkish government, Agaoglu and Akchura with their leftist views cooperated with the government and were even elected to parliament.

Later and until 1947, Rasolzadeh lived in various European countries - Poland, Germany, France, Switzerland and Romania, being forced to move from one country to another and building his activities in two main areas - organizing anti-Soviet work among émigrés and publishing newspapers and magazines, engaging in military and educational journalism and publishing research articles and pamphlets. In the society of political emigrants from the peoples of the USSR, the Promethean movement, and in the Agreement on the Caucasian Confederation, he was in the vanguard of the struggle together with Topchubashov. It is necessary to underline his activities associated with Azerbaijani POWs during and after World War II.

In 1947, Rasolzadeh returned to Turkey, where he continued to "fight for Azerbaijan". He was never tired of expressing protests in writing and in organizational form to Russian emigration, which nurtured the idea of building a unitary state in Russia after the possible collapse of the Soviets and tried to revive the idea of Caucasian unity in every possible way.

Mammad Amin Rasolzadeh, who wrote poems and plays in his youth, was much higher as a researcher and writer and was a prominent literary critic, culture expert and historian. He spent the last years of his life (1950-1955) writing books and articles in these areas, among which the monograph "Azerbaijani Poet Nizami" retains its value to this day and deserves special attention. 🌟