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Sevinj MAMMADOVA,

orcid.org/0000-0002-4562-6790

*Research Fellow at the Department of History and Economics of Iran
Institute of Oriental Studies after Acad. Z. M. Bunyadov of National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan
(Baku, Azerbaijan) sevinc.mammedova81@gmail.com*

SOCIO-POLITICAL PROCESSES IN THE NORTHERN AZERBAIJAN IN TIMES OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND IRAN'S POSITION ON THIS MATTER (FEBRUARY 1917 – MAY 1918)

The present article deals with the position of Iran's official circles on the political processes taking place in the Northern Azerbaijan on the eve of the declaration of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (May 28, 1918). The World War I and the revolutionary events of 1917 in Tsarist Russia had their impact on The Northern Azerbaijan. After the 1917 February Revolution, the "Musavat" party restored its activity, took the reins of the Azerbaijani national movement in its hands and began the fight for the creation of a democratic federal republic in the Russian Empire and for the granting to Azerbaijan of national-territorial autonomy within it. Since the "Musavat" party insisted on granting autonomy to Azerbaijan and also had a great influence among the Muslim population, the Bolsheviks considered this party their most dangerous and powerful opponent. In the mentioned period, the Iranian authorities carefully monitored the processes in the South Caucasus, including the Northern Azerbaijan, and made certain attempts to prevent the events circulating in the region from spreading to the South of Iran. The presence of thousands of Iranian citizens in the Northern Azerbaijan, especially in Baku, made it impossible for Iran to ignore the course of events in the neighboring state. Iran's position and activities related to Azerbaijan in the described period manifest themselves more in the attitude of the social and political circles and are clearly revealed in the press of this country. After the fall of tsarism, the rise of the national movement in the Northern Azerbaijan, the increase in social and political activity among Azerbaijani Turks and the creation of organizations claiming to lead the national movement were watched with great concern. The main issue that attracted neighbour's attention was the question of Azerbaijan's autonomy. The raising of the issue of "autonomy of Azerbaijan" by the Azerbaijani national democratic circles resonated in Iran from the very first day. The idea of Azerbaijan's autonomy was sharply criticized both in the correspondence of Iranian diplomats serving in the South Caucasus, and in various press organs of this country. Many of those related materials were used in this research.

Key words: *the Northern Azerbaijan, Iran, revolution, political situation, Iranian press.*

Севіндж МАМЕДОВА,

orcid.org/0000-0002-4562-6790

*науковий співробітник відділу історії та економіки Ірану
Інституту сходознавства імені академіка З. М. Буядова Національної академії наук Азербайджану
(Баку, Азербайджан) sevinc.mammedova81@gmail.com*

СОЦІАЛЬНО-ПОЛІТИЧНІ ПРОЦЕСИ В ПІВНІЧНОМУ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНІ ЗА ЧАС СТАНОВЛЕННЯ РЕСПУБЛІКИ ТА ПОЗИЦІЯ ІРАНУ З ЦЬОГО ПИТАННЯ (ЛЮТИЙ 1917 – ТРАВЕНЬ 1918 РР.)

У даній статті розглядається позиція офіційних кіл Ірану щодо політичних процесів, що відбувалися в Північному Азербайджані напередодні проголошення Азербайджанської Демократичної Республіки (28 травня 1918 р.). Перша світова війна і революційні події 1917 року в царській Росії мали свій вплив на Північний Азербайджан. Після Лютневої революції 1917 року партія «Мусават» відновила свою діяльність, взяла в свої руки кермо азербайджанським національним рухом і почала боротьбу за створення в Російській імперії демократичної федеративної республіки і за надання Азербайджану національного права. -територіальна автономія в її складі. Оскільки партія «Мусават» наполягала на наданні автономії Азербайджану, а також мала великий вплив серед мусульманського населення, більшовики вважали цю партію своїм найнебезпечнішим і найсильнішим противником. У зазначений період влада Ірану уважно стежила за процесами на Південному Кавказі, в тому числі в Північному Азербайджані, і робила певні спроби не допустити поширення подій, що відбуваються в регіоні, на південь Ірану. Присутність тисяч громадян Ірану в Північному Азербайджані, особливо в Баку, не дозволяла Ірану ігнорувати перебіг подій у сусідній державі. Позиція і діяльність Ірану, пов'язана з Азербайджаном в описуваний період, більше проявляється в настрої суспільно-політичних кіл і яскраво виявляється в пресі цієї країни. Після падіння царизму з великим занепокоєнням спостерігали підйом національного руху в Північному Азербайджані, зростання суспільно-політичної активності серед азербайджанських турків і створення організацій, які претендували на

керівництво національним рухом. Головним питанням, яке привернуло увагу сусідів, було питання автономії Азербайджану. Постановка азербайджанськими національно-демократичними колами питання про «автономію Азербайджану» з першого дня викликала резонанс в Ірані. Ідея автономії Азербайджану різко критикувалася як у листуванні іранських дипломатів, що служили на Південному Кавказі, так і в різних органах преси цієї країни. Багато з цих пов'язаних матеріалів були використані в цьому дослідженні.

Ключові слова: Північний Азербайджан, Іран, революція, політична ситуація, іранська преса.

Introduction. After the adoption of Turkmenchay Peace Treaty (1828), the southern lands of Azerbaijan were given to Iran, who, nevertheless, did not lose its interest in the course of events happening in the Northern Azerbaijan. The importance of these events for Iran was caused by its constant concern about possible national awakening. In the Northern Azerbaijan the national movements were inspired by the Russian Revolution of 1917 and it affected the political situation. As is known, socio-economic state in the Northern Azerbaijan, which came under Russian rule after the Peace of Turkmenchay, depended on socio-political processes in Russia. At the beginning of the 20th century, the colonial rule in Azerbaijan became stricter. The economic crisis at the beginning of the century deteriorated population's living. However, at the same time, the process of development of capitalist production and market relations in the economic life of the Northern Azerbaijan continued, what led to the strengthening of the economic power and social activity of the newly formed national bourgeoisie. In other words, despite Russian capitalism's subjugation of the provincial national economy and tsarism's policy of discrimination in the economical field, the national bourgeoisie continued to develop. At the beginning of the 20th century, such significant historical figures as Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev, Musa Naghiyev, Shamsi Asadullayev, Murtuza Mukhtarov and others can be cited as the most prominent representatives of the national bourgeoisie. The economically strengthened national bourgeoisie played a positive role in the social life of Azerbaijani proletariat. In order to improve the livelihood of the Azerbaijani workers, the national entrepreneurs employed them in their enterprises in the first place. At that time, being in a contact with Russian and other foreign workers inspired Azerbaijani laborers for a more active social life.

Study of the topic. Although the relations between the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, established in May 1918, and the Iranian Gajar state are sufficiently reflected in the world and Azerbaijan historiography, the researches on the position of Iran on the processes taking place in Northern Azerbaijan in the period from February 1917 to May 1918, which is regarded as the eve of the formation of the Republic, are very scarce. This question was superficially mentioned in

the works by Azerbaijani historians Sh. Taghiyeva, J. Hasanli, S. Rustamova-Tohidi, E. Madatli and others in the context of the foreign policy of Iran and Azerbaijan. The question can be also encountered in the works by Iranian researchers, however, an independent research on this issue cannot be found among those works.

Objectives. The main objective of the article is to learn the position of the Iran Gajar State's political, diplomatic circles and press on the processes taking place in the Northern Azerbaijan in 1917–1918.

The main provisions. To provide with a general analysis of the situation in the Northern Azerbaijan after the 1917 February revolution;

To show the stages and vectors of the development of the national movement in Azerbaijan;

To define the attitude of Iran's official circles and diplomatic bodies to the situation in the Northern Azerbaijan;

To study the articles in the press of the neighboring state related to the political situation in the Northern Azerbaijan;

To shed light on Iran's position on the national movement that is being formed in Azerbaijan.

Research methods. Special methods of historical cognition in writing the article include methods and principles such as analysis and synthesis, analogy and comparison, analysis of historical works and consideration of the general and special features in the works by their authors, consideration of historical conditions and historical traditions of Iranian foreign policy. The special and general scientific methods used in the research allowed reaching the objectives set for the research.

Main body. The strengthening of the national enlightenment movement in the researched period that began in the middle of the 19th century in the Northern Azerbaijan influenced the formation of the national bourgeoisie with a democratic spirit and the acceleration of the process of developing national consciousness among Azerbaijanis. The national bourgeoisie and intellectuals mostly cared about the problems of the people under tsarist colonization. The representatives of the high circles of the Azerbaijani society made a serious effort to abolish the restrictions imposed on the participation of the national bourgeoisie in administrative bodies (Azərbaycan tarixi, 2001, V: 103). Especially, these attempts increased

after the First Russian Revolution of 1905–1907. In order to prevent possible movements in time, on February 26, 1905, the Viceroyalty of the Caucasus was restored and Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov was assigned the task of establishing peace in the Caucasus without delay (Azərbaycan tarixi, 2001, V: 98). However, despite this, social mobilization in society was constantly increasing and the national movement in Azerbaijan began.

Socio-political situation in the Northern Azerbaijan at the beginning of the 20th century. The first social and political organizations in Azerbaijan appeared before the revolution. In 1902, M.A. Rasулzadeh founded the “Muslim Youth Organization”, and in 1904, the social-democratic organization “Hummat” was established. The social conditions created by the revolution strengthened the process of political organization of Azerbaijanis. Although the Azerbaijani intellectuals did not make very bold demands yet, they tried to achieve the provision of some rights of the people under colonial oppression. At the beginning of 1905, a declaration signed by A.M. Topchubashov was sent to the tsarist government. In accordance with the tsarist policy “divide and rule” in 1905–1906 a numerous massacres of the Muslim population in Baku, Karabakh, Nakhchivan, etc. were carried out by Armenians. It was then that new socio-political organizations were created. In 1905-1908, the “Geyrat” group was formed in Ganja, in October 1905, “Difai” organization appeared in Shusha, and in 1907, “Mudafiye” and “Ittifaq” organizations were formed. The formation of the “Musavat” party in 1911 can be considered the most significant event in the history of the Azerbaijani national movement. In this period, two main vectors of the movement-liberal and radical – were clearly manifested.

The development of national consciousness was also reflected in a constant care of the Azerbaijani intellectuals about the social and political processes taking place in South Azerbaijan. This was more evident during the Mashruta revolution in Iran. Azerbaijani intellectuals M.A. Sabir, N. Narimanov, U. Hajibeyov, H. Minasazov, M.A. Rasулzade and others sympathized with and defended the people’s movement led by Sattarkhan. M.A. Rasулzadeh, who immigrated to Iran in 1909, published the newspaper “Irane-nyoy” there. With the beginning of the 1905 Iranian revolution, the activities of the “Hummat” organization expanded and became even more popular.

The World War I had also had a serious impact on the social situation and the awakening of national consciousness in the Northern Azerbaijan. Although military operations did not take place here, the impact of the war was clearly felt. Pro-

gressive Azerbaijani intellectuals, outwardly maintaining their loyalty to the government, hoped to channel the results of this war into the most favorable course for their people.

Political situation in Azerbaijan after the February revolution. Important political changes in Azerbaijan are linked mainly to the February revolution of 1917 in Russia. The overthrow of tsarism in Russia gave impetus to the rise of the national-democratic movement in Azerbaijan. Due to the influence of the revolution, the tendency to autonomy among the peoples of the South Caucasus increased and the activities of national parties, organizations were legalized. The February revolution created wide opportunities for the activities of social and political organizations in Azerbaijan.

Straight after the revolution, various national political organizations, the union of oil industrialists and other groups were formed in Baku. Organizations operating secretly have switched to open activities. The Executive Committee of Baku Public Organizations was created to manage all these unions and organizations. M.A. Rasулzade and M.H. Hajinsky were elected as representatives of Azerbaijanis in the Executive Committee (Həsənli, 2009: 20). As in other parts of Russia, in Azerbaijan underground political parties and organizations became active and new ones were created. On March 27, 1917, political figures established the Temporary Executive Committee of the Muslim National Council in Baku on a democratic basis in order to manage the political parties and organizations operating in the regions of Azerbaijan along with those in Baku from a single center. M. Hajinsky was elected the chairman of the committee, and M.A. Rasулzade was elected the deputy chairman. All strata of the Muslim population of Azerbaijan, political parties and organizations were represented in the new organization (Həsənli, 2009: 21).

The “Musavat” party, which began to operate openly and included all strata regardless of social-class affiliation in the Azerbaijani society, soon became the strongest political party in the country. The party’s main demand was the creation of a democratic federal republic in Russia and the granting of national-territorial autonomy to Azerbaijan within it. On October 2, 1915 the official organ of the party – the “Achig soz” newspaper, edited by M.A. Rasулzade, became a flagman in the process of awakening of national self-awareness.

The idea of national-territorial autonomy in The Northern Azerbaijan was discussed for the first time at the congress of Muslims of the Caucasus held in Baku from April 15 to 20. It should be noted that the

congress played an important role in the political life of not only Azerbaijanis, but also Russian Muslims. The same idea was later voiced at the All-Russian Muslim Congress held in Moscow from May 1 to 11, 1917, and resulted in an adoption of a significant resolution. M.A. Rasulzade, who spoke at the congress, said: "The form of state structure that best provides the interests of the Muslim peoples of Russia is a democratic republic based on territorial-federal principles" (Əzizov, 1997: 101). The issues as the protection of national schools by the state, the establishment of a university in the mother language, the census of the Muslim population, etc. were also put forward by that congress.

The coming to power of the Bolsheviks in Russia in October 1917 had a serious impact on the events in the entire Caucasus, including Azerbaijan. The Bolsheviks' declaration of the right of nations to self-determination raised the people's hopes for national independence.

At that time, the leading force in the national-democratic movement of Azerbaijan was the "Musavat" party. The first congress of the party held in Baku at the end of October 1917, determined the tactical and strategic directions of the issue of granting national territorial autonomy to Azerbaijan (Həsənlı, 2009: 24). The party that wanted to achieve autonomy within Democratic Russia soon became the main opponent of the Bolsheviks in Baku. And it was the strengthening position of the "Musavat" party that began to worry Iranian political circles.

Iran's political position on the Northern Azerbaijan after the February Revolution. Since the signing of the Turkmenchay Treaty until 1917, The Northern Azerbaijan was considered a province of Russia within the Caucasus, so it is impossible to talk about Iran's state-level political relations with the Northern Azerbaijan. It is true that as the diplomatic organizations in the Caucasus with a relatively independent policy Iran had a consulate general in Tbilisi, consulates in Baku and Yerevan, as well as consulates in Vladikavkaz, Batum, and a number of separate representations in the regions of Baku, e.g. in Sabunchu. However, all these consulates and representations were subordinate to the politics of Tehran and Petrograd. After the Russian revolution of 1917, the situation changed drastically. With the change of power, the Iranian embassies in Petrograd and the Russian embassies in Tehran, which regulate political relations between the two countries, lost their former importance.

As mentioned, the political slogans of the Bolsheviks were attractive and encouraging to the Iranian authorities. During this period, the territory of

the Caucasus, where Bolshevik Russia had not been able to strengthen itself yet, was in the interest of all the main states of the region including Iran. There were ample opportunities for the creation of autonomous political institutions in the Caucasus, and this was an unstoppable process. Iranian diplomacy did not remain indifferent to the happenings, and like other states pursuing their own interests in the region, began to act in accordance with the newly created situation. In order to prepare for future events in the Caucasus, the Iranian government appointed Alimohammed Khan Sharif-ad-Dawla, who is considered one of the significant figures among the diplomats of the Iranian Foreign Ministry, to the post of Consul General of Tbilisi. Sharif al-Dawla was always aware of the events happening in the region from the time he worked as the head of the Azerbaijan department of the ministry until the end. For this reason, it can be considered that Iran's diplomatic organizations in the Caucasus were politically and diplomatically prepared to prevent possible events.

The new conditions, when the national democratic movement that started in The Northern Azerbaijan would spread to the south of Iran, undoubtedly made the Iranian authorities think. Correspondence of the Iranian authorities with official and authorized representatives in the Caucasus shows Iran's interest in the processes taking place in the region. In the report of the Consul General of Iran in Tbilisi to his government about the political situation in the Caucasus, it was noted: "Currently, the political situation in the Caucasus is stable and all affairs are under the control of the center. People are worried only about food shortage" (32 :1380, جمهوری آذربایجان). In general, by the end of the World War I, the Caucasus, especially the city of Baku, became important from a geostrategic point of view and attracted the attention of the countries that were part of the Entente and the Axis powers. This factor played a crucial role in the political events in the region, as well as Iran's position and political activities in the Caucasus.

In the studied period, Iran's position and activities towards Azerbaijan were mostly manifested in the attitude of Iranian public and political circles. It is well observed in the attitude of the Iranian authorities towards Azerbaijan from the perspective of the attitude of the Iranian citizens here towards the socio-political forces of Azerbaijan. During the unstable period that arose after the February revolution, the Iranian authorities had relations with the Caucasus and especially with the political and administrative authorities in Azerbaijan in regard with the problems of Iranian subjects. At that time, the Iranian subjects mostly lived in the city of Baku. The residence of

many thousands of Iranian citizens in Baku somehow connected Iranian social and political circles with Azerbaijan. Iranian subjects from different walks of life lived here.

Political activity of Iranians in the Northern Azerbaijan. Iranian workers were the first to organize a political party. At the beginning of the century, the emergence and development of the party and political atmosphere among the Muslims of the Caucasus was influenced by the activities of the Russian social-democratic organizations widely spread among oil industry workers of Baku. Iranian workers living here were also affected by this. As a result, the “Adalat” organization appeared. The “Adalat” organization, which was founded by Iranian immigrant workers working in the oil industry in Baku in 1916, began to operate openly in May 1917. The party was headed by Asadulla Gafarzade, originally from Ardabil. The organization, which took a Bolshevik course of policy, also had departments related to education and culture. The party office was located in the “Tamaddun” school owned by Iranians in the Sabunchu settlement of Baku. At the beginning of 1918, various local branches of the organization were established. The press organs of the party “Adalat” newspaper and “Beyraqi-Adalat” magazine were published in Azerbaijani and Persian languages. The editor of the weekly socio-political, economic and literary magazine was A. Gafarzade. “Beyraqi-adalat” magazine propagated the ideas of Bolshevism not only in Azerbaijan and Iran, but also in various parts of the South Caucasus, among the South Azerbaijani workers. The organization also had armed groups.

The relations of the “Adalat” organization, which witnessed the arbitrariness of the Iranian government representatives against the workers, and the Iranian consulate, were tense. Thus, in March 1917, even the local committee of the “Adalat” party expelled the deputy consul from the neighborhood where Iranian workers lived and with the help of A. Gafarzadeh took over the position of deputy consul. Although the consul had to accept it, the merchants demanded urgent action (Pişəvəri, 1984: 54). As a result, an armed clash took place at the meeting of Iranian organizations in the Ismailiya building. Finally, on May 17, 1917, Said-ol-Vezare was appointed deputy to the Iranian Consulate in Baku. No matter how many attempts were made to remove him from this position, Said-ol-Vezare relied on the protection of Iranians living in Baku and remained in his position for a long time. Liberal and intelligent Iranian immigrants created a local branch of IDP in Baku. Sh. Taghiyeva, an imminent researcher of the history of South Azerbaijan,

notes that the IDP created in Baku was the Baku committee of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party headed by Kheyabani and was created by the teachers of the “Ittihad-i Iraniyan” school (Tağiyeva, 1990: 43). Haji Mirza Taghi Jafarzade, Mirza Abdulla Abdullazade, Ajdar Alizade, Mirza Bagir were among its active members. It should be noted that this organization was seriously opposing the “Musavat” party in Baku.

In addition to the IDP and Adalat organization, a party called “Istiglali-Iran ve Ittihad-i Islam” was established by the consulate and big merchants. Although it had only few members, the financial power of this organization was great. The consulate accepted this party under its banner and used against “Adalat” (Pişəvəri, 1984: 50).

Iran’s attitude to the issue of “Azerbaijani autonomy” in the press. The main issue that attracted the attention of Iranian circles in the studied period was the question of Azerbaijan’s autonomy. After the February revolution, the issue of “Azerbaijani autonomy” put forward by the national democratic forces of Azerbaijan resonated in Iran. On April 2, 1917, during a rally organized in Ganja, N. Yusifbeyli shouted out such slogans as “Long live the autonomy of Azerbaijan!”, “Long live the Democratic Republic” (Rüstəmovə-Tohidi, 2018: 48). The question of autonomy was the first term of the program consisting of 9 terms adopted by the Turkic People’s Central Party established in Ganja by Nasib Bey Yusifbeyli. The question of “Azerbaijani autonomy” had already been brought to the agenda as the main slogan of the national liberation struggle at the congresses of the Muslims of Caucasus in Baku on April 10–15, 1917 and at All-Russian Muslim congresses held in Moscow on May 1–11, by the leader of the national movement M.A. Rasulzade. After the October coup in Russia, in “Achig soz” newspaper he often voiced the opinion that the territories inhabited by Azerbaijanis should be historically called “Azerbaijan”. The national-democratic movement started in Azerbaijan was an act of leading the people towards the realization of the idea of Azerbaijan’s autonomy. At that time, the first reaction to this issue came from Iran’s diplomatic missions in the Caucasus. At the beginning of November 1917, the Consul General of Iran in Tbilisi, Ali Mohammad Sharif al-Dawla, wrote in his telegram to the Iranian Foreign Ministry: “For a long time, Muslims of the Caucasus, like Armenians and Georgians, want to create a Turkic government maintaining their internal independence.

Currently, the issue of Azerbaijan’s autonomy is being discussed in some circles. The vector of this Turkic Muslim state will be similar to that of the Ottoman state in the future. Propagandists do not get

tired of campaigning about this” (جمهوری آذربایجان، 45 :1380). Of course, the issue of the establishment of a Turkish state similar to the Ottoman state in the southeast of the Caucasus in the future was at odds with the policy of the Iranian state. Sharif al-Dawla suggested the Iranian Foreign Ministry to protect Iranians and their parties in the Caucasus in order to prevent the spread of the ideas of the Musavat party. According to Sharif-ad-Dawla, it was necessary to take measures to establish close relations with a certain part of the Muslims of the Caucasus, to spread the Persian language all over Azerbaijan and the Caucasus.

From the very first day, Iranian official and unofficial press agencies started publishing a series of articles stating their position on this matter. One after the other, articles on this issue were published in “Rad”, “Iran”, “Sitareyi-Iran”, “Zaban-e azad”, “Jangal” newspapers. If “Rad” newspaper tried to investigate the issue and gave information to its readers that is more accurate, in other newspapers the accusing rhetoric was stronger. In these articles, both the name of “Azerbaijan” and the position of the national democrats of Azerbaijan turned into targets of serious criticism. These articles, full of prejudices and accusations, made it necessary for the other side to give a solid answer, which Azerbaijani intellectuals did on the pages of various other presses.

After the ideas that caused Iran’s concern about Azerbaijan were brought up by the leader of the “Musavat” party M.A. Rasulzadeh, the “Musavat” party and its leader turned into the main target of the Iranian media.

One of the articles published in “Irshad” newspaper touched on the territorial issue, what made it necessary for the Rasht branch of the “Musavat” to explain to the Iranian public the borders of the Northern Azerbaijan in detail. In the declaration adopted by the committee in 1917, it was stated that the borders of the Northern Azerbaijan are limited by the Caspian Sea on the east, Georgia on the west, and Dagestan Mountains on the north and the north of the Araz River on the south. In the declaration, the demand for independence for Baku, Ganja, Iravan and its surroundings was clearly shown without any territorial claims against South Azerbaijan or Iran (عد، ش).

However, after this declaration, the propaganda against the “Musavat” party in the Iranian press became stronger. The article published in the issue of “Novbahar” newspaper on the January 15, 1918 by Malikushshuara Bahar “What is the “Musavat” party and what does it say?” presents the assumption that the “Musavat” has an intention to unite with the Ottomans and create a Turkish state. It stated that

creating a great Turkish state would always remain an unfulfilled dream for the Turks. According to him, although Azerbaijanis speak Turkic, their blood is not Turkic and Azerbaijan has been the center of the Median state since ancient times. He imagined that one day the Azerbaijanis would give the government they created to Turkey. M. Bahar declared Azerbaijanis as Turks in terms of language and Persians in terms of ancestry and advised to use the term Muslims of the Caucasus instead of Azerbaijani Turks (Rüstəmov-Tohidi, 2018: 189).

The attitude of Iranian immigrants in Baku to the question is also worth a study. The local committee of the ADP there expressed strong opposition to the idea of “Azerbaijani autonomy” promoted by the “Musavat” party. S.J. Peshavari in his work writes that the organization opposing the Azerbaijan’s autonomy even gave the name “Azerbaijan-jozv-e layanfaki Iran” to its press organ (Pişəvəri, 1984: 50).

On January 16, 1918, Said ol-Vezera in the information to the Iranian MFA from Baku writes: “... taking into account the current situation in the Caucasus, especially Baku, the Iranians living here want to publish a newspaper. The name of the newspaper will be “Azerbaijan” and the phrase “Azerbaijan is an integral part of Iran” should be written below it. The main goal of publishing the newspaper is to prevent the realization of some goals of the Caucasus population and to spread the general opinion of Iranians. The newspaper should be published in Persian so that people can gradually get to know their ancestors and national language...” (مرکز اسناد، 52 :1380). At the end he asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to send a telegraph to the consulate with the official opinion on this newspaper and other concerning issues.

Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran welcomed the idea of establishing such a newspaper, it urged the consulate to be very careful in this matter, taking into account that there are certain ideas about Azerbaijan and some other issues mentioned in the program of several organizations and parties of the Caucasus (مرکز اسناد، 52 :1380). Although the name “Azerbaijan” and the phrase “Azerbaijan is an inseparable part of Iran” (Azerbaijan-jozv-e layinfak Iran) were not considered appropriate in the publication, the first issue of the newspaper was printed on February 10, 1918 in the Iranian-owned “Nowruz” printing house under that name.

Conclusion. After the February revolution of 1917 in Russia, social and political circles of Iran carefully followed the events in Azerbaijan. The presence of thousands of Iranian citizens in the Northern Azerbaijan, especially in Baku, made it necessary

for the Iranian state to observe this area. At that time, the idea of autonomy, which the national democratic movement of Azerbaijan tried to realize, seriously worried the Iranian authorities and nationalist circles. The fact that the Iranian press gave a lot of space to this issue was a significant indicator of this attitude. In this period, the Iranian consulate in Baku tried to

inform the Iranian authorities about the events in a timely manner. At the same time, Azerbaijani social and political figures, parties and organizations were sensitive to the events in Iran. This manifested itself both in the attitude towards the injustices against the Azerbaijanis there, as well as against the activities of the imperialist states in the Iranian state.

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