The First All-Caucasian Congress and the Peoples of the Caucasus National-Struggle for Freedom

Abstract

As a result of the February Revolution, which ended by the end of the First World War in Russia, the political situation in the Caucasus began to change. The national liberation struggle of the peoples of the Caucasus became even more active with the emergence of new political parties, some of which began to operate openly. During this period, in April 1917, the First All-Caucasian Muslim Congress was held in Baku, and in May - the First All-Russian Muslim Congress. One of the main issues discussed at the congresses was the idea of granting national autonomy to the Muslims of the Caucasus, in which both Muslims of the North and South Caucasus actively participated. These processes contributed to the formation of the foundations for the creation of independent republics, which further expanded the national liberation movement in the Caucasus.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the role and significance of the First All-Caucasian Congress and the Congress of the Peoples of the Caucasus in the context of the national liberation struggle in the Caucasus after the February Revolution.

The study revealed that these congresses have become an important stage in the political and historical life of the region, reflecting the desire of the Muslim peoples of the Caucasus for self-determination and national autonomy. The importance of these events lies in the fact that they contributed to the unification of national forces and stimulated the formation of independent state entities in the Caucasus.

Thus, the results of the study emphasize the importance of the First All-Caucasian Congress and the Congress of the Peoples of the Caucasus in the formation of the national liberation movement in the Caucasus and its influence on the subsequent political and historical course of events in the region.

Keywords: Caucasian peoples, I all-Caucasian Congress, North Caucasus, political parties, National Liberation Movement, national autonomy

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Introduction.

The February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 represents a turning point in the history of Russia, which had a significant impact on national movements in various regions of the country. In the context of the "prison of peoples", this revolution marked the beginning of a new stage in the struggle for national self-determination. Azerbaijan's reaction to the events of 1917, where the revolution served as an impetus for the formation of a mass and politically organized national movement, deserves special attention.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of the February Revolution of 1917 on the development of the national movement in Azerbaijan and the role of the established Provisional Committee of Muslim Public Organizations in this process. It is important to consider how the revolution stimulated the formation of political parties and organizations, as well as what specific demands were put forward by the national movement (Amrahov, 2019).

The relevance of this study is due not only to the historical significance of the February Revolution and its consequences for national movements, but also to the relevance of understanding this period for the modern political context. Understanding the processes of formation of national identity and aspirations for national self-determination is important for modern society.

The research methods will include the analysis of historical sources, official documents, as well as the interpretation of events and processes based on existing historical literature. The role and influence of key figures and organizations, such as the Interim Committee of Muslim Public Organizations, on the course of the national movement in Azerbaijan after the February Revolution will also be analyzed.

The study of this topic will allow a deeper understanding of the importance and influence of revolutionary processes on the formation of national identities and political structures during the transition from an authoritarian regime to a more democratic structure of society.

To study the topic "The First All-Caucasian Congress and the Congress of the Peoples of the Caucasus: the national liberation struggle" were used:

Archival sources: Analysis of archival documents, minutes of meetings of congresses, letters of participants, official declarations and resolutions can provide valuable historical data on the goals, strategies and results of the congresses.

Historical analysis: The study of historical documents, books, articles, memoirs and other sources concerning the role and significance of the First All-Caucasian Congress and the Congress of the Peoples of the Caucasus in the national liberation struggle will allow us to assess their contribution to the formation of national identities and the struggle for self-determination of the peoples of the Caucasus (Mustafaueva, 2022).

Comparative analysis: Comparing the activities and results of the First All-Caucasian Congress and the Congress of the Peoples of the Caucasus with similar events in other regions of Russia and the world will reveal the unique aspects and significance of these congresses in the context of national liberation movements.

Sociological methods: Conducting interviews with historians, analyzing sociological surveys and research among residents of the region, studying public opinion and ideas about the events of the past and their impact on modern society.

Content analysis: The analysis of the texts of reports, resolutions, transcripts and other documents related to the activities of the congresses will identify the main topics, problems and approaches stated by the participants of the congresses.

Main text.

In its first address in April, the Muslim Committee called on all Muslims to unite around the National-Political Council and support the Provisional Government. The Muslim Congress established its activities on the basis of democratic principles and gathered around all segments of the Muslim population, National parties and organizations. These principles were reflected in his first appeal titled "Nation-citizens": "unite nation-citizens, brothers join hands and become strong, discard personal prejudices between you, gather around national-political slogans that will unite you all, let the tainki Assembly to be established-state in a clear form the demands and desires, national-political ideals of all Russian Muslims and let our lawyers who will (Bocharnikov, 2013).

The commission was of great importance in convening and holding all-Caucasian Muslim meetings. The committee also commented on the national state structure in Russia. The above-mentioned appeal stated that the form of government for Muslims is a Democratic Republic. Muslim national councils also appeared in Ganja, Shusha, Shamakhi, Nuha, Lankaran, Guba, Nakhchivan and other places. At the same time, serious preparations began for the convening of the all-Caucasian Muslim Congress. Very important issues had to be discussed at the Congress. In particular, at the Congress, the issue of National Building of the country was to be the main topic of discussion. Because after the February bourgeois revolution, this issue became the subject of serious discussion among the Azerbaijani public.

The press of that time emphasized the issue of regaining the national-territorial autonomy of Transcaucasian Azerbaijanis, Dagestan, Turkménistan, Kyrgyzstan and Bashkortostan, provided that state power does not obey the center. Y. V. Chamanzaminli wrote about autonomy: "we, the Azerbaijani Turks, are one nation and we want to build an autonomy building because we have a vast territory. The border of our country stretched from the city of Derbent to the Ottoman country and from Batum to the Qibbla side of the Caspian Sea. Our capital would be Baku.
Because this city has always led and helped us. (Kaspi newspaper, 1917).

In 1917, on April 15, the all-Caucasian Muslim Congress was held in Baku. A. M. About 300 delegates from various public organizations took part in the Congress, where Topchubashov was elected chairman. The Congress was attended by representatives of Turkic-Muslim peoples living in Georgia, the North Caucasus and Azerbaijan.

First of all, the chairman of the Congress A. M. In his speech, Topchubashov congratulated the Muslims living in the Caucasus, “in the beautiful corner of the world, in the crown of Russia”, and repeatedly applauded, saying that the old political regime of Russia had politically separated Azerbaijanis and Armenians by colliding with them. And in the new conditions, the peoples of the Caucasus had to go together to the assembly of enterprises to the shchekis (The Open word newspaper of 1917).

Congratulating the Congress on behalf of the special Transcaucasian Committee, M. S. Jafarov also urged the Muslims of the Caucasus to unite both among themselves and with their neighbors, and advised them to refrain from party discord. M. S. Jafarov said in his speech, “Muslims, you, like all citizens of Russia, are full-fledged citizens, keep heraldry in your hands, and if heraldry goes away, we will die!” finished with his call (Kaspi newspaper, 1917).

Every political force from Azerbaijan took part in the meeting. From religious institutions and the Bolshevik party N. Narimanov and M. Azizbeyov also attended the Congress. N. Narimanov and M. Azizbeyov defended the thesis of a centralist people's Republic. They called on everyone to unite under the motto of proletarian Russia. N. Narimanov said that “the revolution in Russia means the beginning of the revolution in the whole world after the umumdiya imperialist war.” In his opinion, small peoples can exist only together with peasant-worker Russia (History of Azerbaijan, 2008).

M. A. According to rasulzadeh, the main problem was the political structure of the country, and he noted that each country has the right to clarify its own destiny. The Congress decided to create two temporary central bureaus to create Muslim National Committees in the Caucasus. One of them was supposed to be in the North Caucasus and Dagestan, and the other-in Transcaucasia. The center of the first was to be located in the city of Vladikavkaz. And the center of the latter was to be located only in Baku. Because the vast majority of the governing bodies, organizations and societies established in Baku were headed by representatives of either Russia or Armenia. From this point of view, the Congress was of great importance for the Muslims of the Caucasus as a whole, especially for Azerbaijan.

The Congress created 5 comedies to systematize reports: political (Chairman M. A. (For the fruit of light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), Topchubashov), religious (Chairman A.[Al-Bukhari, Ahmad, at-tirmithi, at-Tabarani and Abu Nu'amkochcharli), on the creation of the National Fund (Chairman A. Amirjanov). In addition, it was organized in the commission on peasant and workers’ issues, which also included X. Sultanov was in charge.

Education issues were also analyzed at the Congress. The National Fund was created with the aim of raising funds for political, cultural and social activities, as well as for school education. First, H. Z. Tagiyev donated 50,000 Manats to the fund. Two Azerbaijani women belong to Sh. Afandizade and Talyshkhanova's speech was respected by the members. M. A. At the initiative of rasulzad, the Congress adopted a new decision on women to grant women the right to vote.

The first Muslim Congress in all-Russian was held in Moscow in 1917 from May 1 to 11. A decisive role in the Congress was played by the Azerbaijani representatives who acted for the territorial autonomy of the Muslim peoples, the independent development of the Turkic regions of Azerbaijan and Russia, the federative structure of Russia, and the political autonomy of the National provinces. That is, the supporters of Unitarianism demanded that Muslims be given only cultural autonomy within the framework of a single bourgeois Republic with a centralized power in Russia. As we noted, the most ardent supporter of this tendency in the Caucasus, A. It was Salikov. He argued that the form of federalism would complicate the solution of the agrarian issue, and Muslim workers would not be able to benefit from the benefits of all-Russian social legislation, since under the conditions of this structure, the laws would have a different character in different regions. The draft resolution proposed by him said that territorial federalism would lead to a complete split of Muslims and would not solve the national issue (Mamulia, & Abutalybov, 2020).

Representative of Azerbaijan M. A. Rasulzade stated that he was against the report of Ahmad Salikov. A detailed examination of the political situation that took place on the eve after the February Revolution took place, M. A. Rasulzade opposed the idea of defending Russia as a single country at the Congress (ADR Encyclopedia, 2005, p. 310). Mammad amin performed here. The leader of Azerbaijani democracy preferred a Confederate state. After Mammad Amin's speech, the Unitarians spoke many times, but in the course of the Congress they could not make a turn on this topic. The discussions lasted 3 days, and 14 of the speakers preferred a unitary state, and 18-a federation type based on national-local principles. Of the 200 written records sent to the Presidium of the Congress, 150 included national autonomy, 34-a federation, and only 16-a unitary state (Matsaberidze, 2012). On May 7, M. A. The proposals of Rasulzade and Ahmad Salikov on the future structure of Russia were put to the vote. 446 people voted for Rasulzade's proposal, 271 against it, and thus this Congress, by a large majority, expressed a desire to see Russia as a democratic-federal state. The decision on the "form of government of the country" says:
«1. The most suitable regime for the realization of the interests of Muslim nations is a people's Republic based on national unity and territorial autonomy, providing national and cultural autonomy to nations that do not have defined lands;

2. In order to manage all religious and cultural affairs of Muslim nationalities living in Russia in accordance with the law and protect the Muslim community, the all-Russian Central Muslim organization has the right to adopt laws related to them».

The relevant articles of the 24-point resolution on the issue of Education adopted at the Congress were mainly noted:

1. Education and cultural affairs are at the disposal of every nation; 2. The use of the tribe's own native language as a language of education in primary schools, making the development of the common Turkic language compulsory in secondary schools, and making the language of instruction in higher education a common language for the Turkic-tatar tribes; 3. Compulsory and free primary education; 4. Unity of primary schools, division into religious and secular schools; 5. Teaching Russian only as a foreign language, etc. (History of Azerbaijan, 2008, p. 513). In the summer and autumn of 1917, the political situation in Azerbaijan began to change. In June, "Musavat" and "Turkish Federal party" approached. In September, the party "Ittihad" was founded. Despite the emergence of new political parties, the role of the Musavat Party in the political life of Azerbaijan began to grow. After news of the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks reached Baku in Petrograd, in 1917, on October 27, an expanded meeting of the Baku Council of workers ' and Soldiers' Deputies was held, in which three workers' parties took part-Socialist, Menshevik and Dashnaks (Goyushov, 2000, pp. 38-45). He stated that all power in the country should be transferred to the Constituent Assembly. The victory of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd inspired the Baku Bolsheviks. They began to join forces. Defended by members of the mining and factory committees, the Bolsheviks convened a new meeting of the Assembly on October 31, and under their pressure the conference declared itself a local revolutionary body. Although the Musavat members who attended the conference did not accept the Bolsheviks' proposals, they were forced to defend the Bolsheviks to resolve the conflict and submitted their own statements to the conference. In addition to the Musavat Party, the Bolsheviks managed to get help from the Caspian merchant fleet. So, on November 2, The Council was recognized by everyone as a political power in Baku and renamed the "Soviet of workers' and Soldiers' Deputies". But this was not real power. The Baku Council could not solve any of the tasks assigned to it. Relations between Musavat and the Baku Soviet began to escalate. On November 8-12, 1917, a conference of the National Committee of Muslims of the Caucasus was held in Baku. At the conference led by Musavat, it was decided to convene a national initiative Assembly. The Georgian Social Democratic Party, Mensheviks, Musavat, Dashnaktsutyun and rightists, who did not want to submit to the RSFSR, refused to recognize the Bolshevik government of Russia at a rally in Tbilisi (Georgia) in 1917 on November 11. It was decided to create an "independent Transcaucasian government". The Transcaucasian Committee was established on November 15. Its composition includes A from Georgia. Chkhenkeli, From Azerbaijan F. Khoyski, M. They included jafarorov, Ter-Gazaryan from Armenia.

In accordance with the changed electoral procedure in the context of aggravation of relations between Bolsheviks and musavatists, elections to the Baku Council were held on December 12-13, 1917. The Bolsheviks received 51 votes, the musavatists-21 votes. The Dashnaks, who received 41 votes, the left esers, who received 38 votes, and the right esers, who received 28 votes, were ahead of the musavatçilar. As a result, 6 Bolsheviks, 5 Dashnaks, 4 left-wing, 3 right-wing and 2 Musavat members were included in the new executive committee. On December 18, 1917, V. Lenin's appointed Shaumyan Commissioner for Transcaucasian Affairs. In such conditions, the musavatists moved their activity centers from Baku to Ganja.

The end of the first World War was marked by the fact that the Caucasus became one of the important geostrategic centers, which significantly influenced the military-political course. During this period, the political situation in all parts of Azerbaijan, especially in Baku, remained tense. This tension was exacerbated by the crisis of power in the Russian Empire, the class struggle of the Bolsheviks and calls for war, as well as the intense struggle of the parties. Also in Baku, the struggle of the parties (Musavat, Menshevik, "Eser", "Dashnaktsutyun", "Bolsheviks") for attracting the existing masses to their positions increased even more. On the other hand, the majority of Bolshevik Armenians and their hostility to the Turks, as well as the desire to create an Armenian state at the expense of Turkish and Azerbaijani lands and the policy of the Bolsheviks to restore Imperial territories were the main factors aggravating the situation not only in Baku, but also in many other regions. Another factor aggravating the situation was the growing economic difficulties in Baku (Yavuz, 2016). Finally, along with the above factors, a more important factor aggravating the situation in the region was the location of Azerbaijan in a very important military-strategic position, and the geostrategic significance of the Caspian region became the main arena of competition for the great powers.

The results of the elections to the Baku Soviet and the All-Russian Constituent Assembly confirmed the transformation of the Musavat Party into a major force in political life. On October 22, 1917, in the elections to the Baku Soviet, the Musavat Party won the first place with 40% of the votes. The votes were distributed as follows: Musavat-8147, Bolsheviks-3883, Eserler-6305,
Mensheviks-687, Dashnaksutyun-5289. Such a victory in Baku, an international city, confirmed that the Musavat Party was an influential force. Our intellectuals and political organizations, including the Musavat Party, considered it their civic duty to lead the people. The people believed in them. All these events especially S.Shaumyan was also concerned about the Armenian organizations. The main reason for this concern was that they hindered their plans to create an Armenian state at the expense of Azerbaijani lands and to include Azerbaijan in the territory of the Soviet empire as a whole. The Bolsheviks, who turned a blind eye to the presence of numerous Armenian armed groups in Baku, on S. Shaumyan's instructions, disarmed the Muslim officers and soldiers gathered on March 29 to return by ship to Lankaran. The organizers of this provocation tried to provoke the Azerbaijanis in retaliation and look for an excuse to start a real war against them. In 1918, on March 30, the Bolsheviks created the Revolutionary Defense Committee of Baku and the regions. The composition of this includes S. Shaumyan, A. Chaparidze, G. G. Korganov, I. Sukharsev, S. Saakyan, M. They included jeremyan. The Armenian Dashnaks, taking advantage of their favorable position under the Bolshevik flag, carried out a massacre against the Turkish people in Baku for three days from March 1918 to April 30, which resulted in the death of thousands of people. (Amrahov, 2009, p. 310).

Using the Armenian Armed Forces in March-July 1918, S. Shaumyan managed to establish the power of the Baku Soviet, albeit temporarily, in Baku, Shamakhi, Guba, Javad, Lankaran and other regions. Thousands of houses were destroyed, the civilian population was brutally massacred, their property was plundered, and cultural monuments were destroyed. But the life of the Soviet government established by S. Shaumyan in Baku lasted four months and collapsed on July 31, 1918. After the collapse of the Russian Empire, National Liberation trends began to rise in Northern Gazgaz (Akpinar, 2018), and even on the basis of this revival, the issue of rapprochement and even unification of the peoples of the North Caucasus with the South Caucasus, especially with Azerbaijan, was revealed. Immediately after the February Revolution of 1917, on March 5, in Vladikavkaz, in preparation for the convening of the All-Mountain intelligentsia Congress, the Balkar enlightener B. Under the chairmanship of shakhanov, a temporary Central Committee of the North Caucasian Highlanders was created. The committee sought to separate the mountainous regions of the North Caucasus and create an autonomous region within Russia. At the same time, national committees began to form. After the first all-Caucasian Congress held in Baku in April 1917, a special Bureau of Caucasian Muslims was established to coordinate the activities of the Muslims of the North and South Caucasus. This new organization would operate in Tbilisi. The organization was to consist of two representatives from the North Caucasus and Dagestan, and 4 from the South Caucasus. At the first Muslim Congress in Moscow in May 1917, one of the mountainous intellectuals of the North Caucasus, H. Bammat spoke out with a call for "the unification of the Muslim peoples of Russia under the banner of Islam." At this Congress, representatives of the North Caucasian mountain range M. A. They supported the Federalists led by Rasulzade (Ibrahimli, 2013).

At the same time, on May 4, 1917, the first mountain Congress of the mountainous peoples of the North Caucasus began its work in the city of Vladikavkaz. To the United Highlander Committee H. Z. Tagiyev 50 thousand rubles, Sh. Asadullayev and M. Mukhtarov transferred 5 thousand rubles each (Aliyeva, 2020, p. 68).

At this Congress, the organization "Union of Highlanders of the North Caucasus" was created. At first, Kabarda, Ossetia, Ingushetia, Circassia, Karachay and Dagestan entered the Union. On may 5, 1917, the Central Committee of the Union of the Highlanders of the North Caucasus and Dagestan was created (since November 1917, this body was declared the Provisional Government of the Highlanders of the Caucasus). The Central Committee included 17 people: 5 from each of Dagestan and Terek Region, 2 from each of Kuban region and Black Sea province, 1 from each of Zagatala district, Stavropol province and Abkhazia.

**Conclusions.**

The First All-Caucasian Congress and the Congress of the Peoples of the Caucasus highlights the key moments of the national liberation struggle in the Caucasus at the beginning of the XX century. Both congresses played a significant role in the formation of national identity and the struggle for the independence of the region.

The First All-Caucasian Congress, held in May-September 1917, gathered national representatives of the North Caucasus to discuss the current political situation and formulate a strategy for achieving independence. During the congress, it was decided to create a Union of Caucasian Mountaineers, which symbolized the desire to unite the Caucasian peoples in the struggle for their rights.

The Congress of the Peoples of the Caucasus was also an important event where issues of national liberation and self-determination were discussed. Various ethnic groups of the Caucasus advocated the establishment of independent State entities based on national self-determination and autonomy.

Both congresses demonstrated the importance of national identity and the desire for self-determination of the peoples of the Caucasus. The national liberation struggle in the Caucasus during this period was a complex mosaic process, including both peaceful political actions and armed conflicts.

Thus, the First All-Caucasian Congress and the Congress of the Peoples of the Caucasus became important stages in the struggle for national independence and self-
determination of the peoples of the Caucasus region at the beginning of the 20th century. These events highlight the importance of national identity and the pursuit of freedom and justice.

At a congress held between May and September 1917, national representatives of the peoples of the North Caucasus announced the creation of the Union of Caucasian Mountaineers. Their decision included several key points. The first was the definition of the borders of the new state, which covered the geographical boundaries of the provinces and regions of Dagestan, Terek, Stavropol, Kuban, as well as the adjacent water areas. The details of the borders in the south, including the borders with the South Caucasus, remained under further clarification.

The second important decision was to instruct the authorized representatives to officially convey this statement to all governments and announce the creation of an Independent Union of Mountaineers of the Caucasus. This action consolidated the formal legal recognition of the new organization.

The signing of this statement not only gave the official status to the Union, but also had important consequences for further relations in the Caucasus. The emergence of the independent union of the Caucasian peoples strengthened the rapprochement with the current governments of the South Caucasus, especially with Azerbaijan. The leaders of the North Caucasus attached special importance to the independence of the South Caucasus, seeing in this the linked destinies of both regions.

Thus, this decision not only formalized the status of independence for the Union of Mountaineers of the Caucasus, but also contributed to strengthening ties between various ethnic groups of the Caucasus, forming the basis for future cooperation and interaction.

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