

MAMMAD EMIN RASULZADEH¹: THOUGHTS AND STRUGGLE FOR THE REPUBLIC

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Abstract: The Azerbaijani socio-political figure, head of Azerbaijan National Council and Musavat Party, Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh, has played a significant role in developing the national liberation movements and as well as realization of its concept in the South Caucasian region in the early 1900s. Especially during the First World War and after the collapse of the Tsarist Russian Empire, as a party leader and an editor of the newspaper, he did important work towards to be met the demands of the nations of the South Caucasus and the Muslims of Russia from the request of autonomy to the implementation of the independent state. After the Soviet Russian occupation of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh continued his activities in Europe and wrote his thoughts about republicanism ideology in his published books and articles. This article studies such ideas as republicanism, musavatism and solidarism in the activities and works of Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh.

Keywords: *Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh, The Republic of Azerbaijan, Republicanism, Musavatism, Solidarism, Azerbaijanism*

INTRODUCTION

Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh, the head of the Azerbaijan National Council, which announced the independence of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918 and the leader of the Musavat Party, established in 1911, was a political figure and an editor of newspaper, who played a crucial role in the gaining of independence in Azerbaijan and the development of the ideas of republicanism. Establishing various press agencies and political organizations in Azerbaijan, Iran, Turkey, and several European countries, Rasulzadeh provided a detailed description of ideas and values of republicanism in his works while he was in Azerbaijan, as well as during his political emigration period.

Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh was born in 1884 in Baku, Azerbaijan, in his very young age, in 1903 he established the Association of Azerbaijani Young Revolutionaries (*Azərbaycanlı Gənc İnkilabçılar Dərnəyi*). The same year his first article was published in the newspaper “*Şərqi-Rus*” (“Eastern Russia”) in Tbilisi. In 1904, Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh participated in the formation of the “Hummat” Social-Democratic Organization, a branch of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDFP), which

¹ There are several English transliterations of the name and surname Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh, such as Mamed Emin Rasulzade, Mammad Amin Rasulzade, Mehmet Emin Rasulzade, Muhammad Amin Rasulzade and etc.

was the first Turkic Party in the Caucasus. In parallel, Rasulzadeh founded the newspaper “Hummat” for this party. Interestingly, those years, he had a close relationship with Josef Stalin, who carried out political activity in the Caucasus. Expanding his activities in the press in 1906, Rasulzadeh cooperated with several newspapers such as “*Irshad*”, “*Tekamul*”, “*Devet-Qoch*”, “*Yoldash*”, and “*Tereqqi*”. He also took place in the public organizations, founded in Baku. In 1907, Rasulzadeh became head of the Cultural-Educational Society “*Nicat*”, members of which, were primarily famous public figures of the period. In 1909, due to socio-political activities, Rasulzadeh had to leave the country for Iran and in Tehran, where he published a newspaper named “*Irani-Nov*” (New Iran). In 1910, together with a group of Iranian intellectuals who studied in Europe, Rasulzadeh established Iranian Democratic Party. From that moment on, he maintained close relations with the Iranian revolutionaries. In 1911, fleeing persecution, Rasulzade left for Turkey. He built relations with Young Turks and cooperated with “*Turkish Hearths*” organization and its gazette “*Türk yurdu*” [Yaqublu (2013): 17-22].

Rasulzadeh closely followed the processes in the Caucasus. After establishment of the “*Musavat*”^{*} Party in 1911, soon he could return back to the country, as in 1913 the Tsar pardoned him. Rasulzadeh cooperated with various numbers of the press, and in 1914, he became chief editor of the “*İqbal*” newspaper. With the start of the First World War, Rasulzadeh became more active and struggled to get various freedoms for the nation, he belonged to. In 1915, he founded the leading press of the Muslims of the South Caucasus, the “*Açıq söz*” (Open Word) newspaper and became its chief editor. Rasulzadeh made a speech at the Congress of Caucasian Muslims in 1917, where he brought up the idea of giving territorial autonomy to the Muslims. The idea of territorial autonomy put forward by Rasulzadeh was accepted by a majority at the All-Russian Muslim Congress, held in Moscow in the same year.

After the collapse of the Russian Empire, Rasulzadeh was a leader of the Musavat fraction in the Transcaucasian Seim that was established in the South Caucasus, and he expressed the importance of the idea of liberation of the South Caucasus's nations from Russian Imperial colonialism. Following Georgian separation from the Transcaucasian Seim on 27th May 1918, the Muslim members of the Seim founded Azerbaijani National Council. Rasulzadeh was elected the head of this organization. The Azerbaijan National Council adopted the Declaration of Independence of Azerbaijan in six paragraphs on 28th May 1918. The Republic of Azerbaijan signed its first international agreement with the Ottoman Turkey on 4th June 1918. On behalf of the Republic of Azerbaijan, this agreement was signed by Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh and Mahammad Hasan Hajinsky. Azerbaijan National Council established the first parliament of the Muslim East on 7th December 1918. M.E. Rasulzadeh made the first speech in the parliament. The majority of the parliament consisted of the “*Musavat*” Party members, whose leader was Rasulzadeh [Swietochowski, (2010): 144-145].

During the first republic period, Rasulzadeh was the head of the National Council of Azerbaijan and the leader of the Musavat Party. The prominent members of the government were from his party.

* *Müsavat* means *equality* or *parity*.

Starting from 1920, after the Soviet Russian invasion of Azerbaijan, Rasulzadeh's life of emigration has begun. Until his death in 1955 in Turkey, he functioned in different political organizations and newspapers. During emigration, Rasulzadeh founded the Azerbaijan National Center. In addition, he continued to be the leader of the "Musavat" Party. Also, he participated in the Promethean movement supported by the Poland government. During his emigration life in Turkey, Poland, France, Germany, and Romania, Rasulzadeh had managed independent and anti-Bolshevik press, such as "*Yeni Qafqasya*", "*Odlu yurd*", "*İstiqlal*", "*Qurtuluş*", "*Azərbaycan*". [Bala, (1953): 4-10].

Socio-political, as well as ideological and theoretical views of Muhammad Emin Rasulzade were studied by Aydin Balayev and Faig Alekperov. In his work titled "Muhammad Emin Rasulzade's worldview" Faig Alekperov explored the socio-political and philosophical views of Rasulzade, the ideas of socialism and democracy [Ələkbərov, F. (2007)]. Studying Rasulzadeh's ideas of solidarity, he calls them the last period of his views on the social democratic principles. However, the author did not give a detailed explanation of the idea of solidarity presented by Rasulzade as his final point of view in his work, and did not conduct a comparative analysis. Aydin Balayev in his book, "Mamed Emin Rasulzade: 1884-1955", concerned Rasulzadeh's views on Azerbaijanism, commented on the period of transition from Turkism to Azerbaijanism [Aydin Balayev (2012)]. Aydin Balayev also touched the issues of national-state structure before the Russian revolution of 1917 and during the republic in the article "Mamed Emin Rasulzadeh and the establishment of the Azerbaijani state and nation in the early twentieth century" (Caucasus Survey, 2015). However, in my opinion, even though a republic was created in Azerbaijan during the period under study, we still cannot say that the stage of nationalization has been fully completed. Therefore, Rasulzade continued his work during exile, on the one hand, through the Musavat party, and on the other hand, strengthening the ideology of Azerbaijanism, he tried to accept a distinctive Azerbaijani identity among the already separated Turkic peoples. Therefore, this study is an attempt to give a special place to the Azerbaijanism issue.

Formation of the Freedom Ideas in Rasulzadeh's works

The national enlightenment period of Azerbaijan started with playwright and philosopher Mirza Fatali Akhundzade in the 19th century and began to take on a political nature after the Russian defeat by Japan in 1905. The revolution of 1905 in Russia had its effect on the South Caucasus as well. A lot of newspapers and public organizations were founded by the Azerbaijani intellectuals, who used moderation, created by the Tsar's October Manifesto of 1905. The newspapers, such as "Heyat" and "Irshad" were the leading power of this movement. In this period, along with Ahmad Bey Aghaoghlu, Ali Bey Huseynzade, and Alimardan Bey Topchubashov, young activists, such as Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh, started to come forward. Seized the opportunity of the moderation period Rasulzadeh gradually put forward his thoughts regarding freedom through the press.

In 1903, despite the censorship of the colonial rule Rasulzadeh published his first article in Tbilisi, where he emphasized the importance of the freedom of the press. In the article "Freedom of the Press" that Rasulzadeh penned in Iran in 1911, he stated that the cultural development of every country depends on the development of its literature, and the political situation of every nation depends on its freedom of the press. Therefore, if

the press of the nation and country is free and happy, then that nation and country are happy and free. [Rasulzadeh (2011): 69].

According to Rasulzadeh, the press is free when the presswork is about totally free for writing, distributing, and delivering human thoughts. Underlining significance of press freedom, he writes that freedom of the press is the main pillar of the freedom of the human, because it is a main power of the mind and thinking. Its existence is based on knowledge and patience. Exert pressure on the press or its eliminating is equal to removing the power of the knowledge. [Rasulzadeh (2001): 78-79].

For Rasulzadeh to go against freedom of the press is aggression against human freedom. In Rasulzadeh's opinion, censorship is the main factor in the emergence of doubts, implementation of political oppression and hiding essential cases [Rasulzadeh (2001): 80].

Living in the Caucasus, Iran and Ottoman Empire, Rasulzadeh mentioned lack of freedom of Eastern women and their life under various pressures. In the article "Women in Turkey", he wrote: "Nations constructed based on family slavery and family tyranny never can fight with nations which formed on family freedom and family happiness. If a woman is powerless and without rights, half of the nation will be paralyzed" [Rasulzadeh (2001): 247].

The start of constitutive movements in the Ottoman Empire and Iran, the victory of this idea in Turkey, and then the beginning of the First World War was a reason to put forward the idea of national independence by Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh. In 1914, Rasulzadeh, in a series of articles in the Journal "*Dirilik*" (Vivacity), openly wrote about the term "millet" (nation). According to Rasulzadeh nation is the structured product of the aggregate of common language, traditions and ethic codes, common shared history and religious belief. For him, the central pillar of the term nation is the language [Rasulzadeh (2001): 468].

Thus, until the revolution of 1917, Rasulzadeh defended fundamental human rights through the press.

The Revolution of February 1917. From Autonomy to the Nation-state

The liberation movements in the Russian Empire with the February Revolution of 1917 reached their logical conclusion. Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh did not mention national self-government (political self-identification) until this revolution; however, he wrote regarding various types of freedom. On the other hand, different thoughts prevailed among Muslims of the Russian Empire. While the opportune moment for demanding a nation-state appeared after the February Revolution, which resulted in the overthrow of the monarchy. In this case, Rasulzadeh played an essential role in Azerbaijan and other regions of Russia populated by Muslims. So, The First Congress of Caucasian Muslims was held on 15-20 April 1917 in Baku. Different political forces were represented at the Congress. Rasulzadeh, for the first time, put forward the demand for national territorial autonomy for Azerbaijanis guided by the right of nations to self-determination. Despite the opposition of the Islamists and different socialist groups, the large majority adopted Rasulzadeh's proposal. The final Resolution of the Congress stated: "establishment of a democratic republic on a federative basis is the most suitable form of the Russian state that ensures the interests of the Muslim nations" [Balayev (2015): 136-149].

Unlike the *federalists* represented by Rasulgadeh, the *unitarists* thought that the Muslim peoples should have national-cultural autonomy within the centralized Russian state. This dichotomy, which was the main agenda of Russian Muslim intellectuals, has found its logical solution. Thus, Rasulgadeh made a speech at the First All-Russian Congress of Muslims held in Moscow on 1-11 May 1917, and justified that it was a time for the demand for unity of the nation, not religion. Rejecting Islamic approach to the concept of nation, he stated that sometimes it is said that Islam is a nation itself. It is said that Islam makes Muslims a nation despite Christianity, because when you ask any Turk, "Who are you?" and "From which nation you are?" they will reply - Muslim. Noting this theory as wrong one, he continued and insisted that there is always a sense of nationality, which is equal to lineage. Like other religions, Islam also connects its followers. However, this connection is not a nationality but internationality. This internationality has created Islamic culture, as it created Christian culture. However, it does not mean that all Muslims are united in the nation. As there is no Christian nation, there is no Muslim nation as well" [Balayev (2015): 136–149].

At the plenary session of the Congress on 7 May 1917, the Resolution, prepared by Rasulgadeh, was adopted by the majority of votes (446 votes in favour, 271 votes against). [Swietochowski, (2010):92]

Mammad Emin Rasulgadeh detailed the characters of the period at a conference given to members of the Musavat Party in 1920. According to his writing, there were two ideas among Russian Muslims at the time: national-local autonomy and federation, a political entity based on cultural autonomy. Socialists and Islamists were among those who supported the idea of Russian Muslim political unity. Although they were willing to accept the concept of limited autonomy, they refused to mention the words nation and locality under any circumstances. The Islamists were pleased with Russia's political freedom and tied the country's 30 million Muslims under a single spiritual authority. They were also content with a single national assembly to deal with national and cultural issues. They believed that if the Turks, who remained in Russia carried out their national and cultural affairs through their assembly and administration, they would consolidate their national existence faster and develop further in their relations. According to them, the federation will separate them from each other and changes the ways of progress and development [Rasulgadeh (2022): 36-37].

From the Pan-Islamist point of view, it seems correct that all Muslims in Russia should be administrated from a single political centre. However, Rasulgadeh justified the impossibility of managing Muslims and Turks living in a wide geographical area in the Russian Empire from one centre. Therefore, according to him, Muslims in Russian Empire should acquire local autonomy in their regions and develop this way. Thus, in his essay, Rasulgadeh explaining the thoughts of the federalists wrote that according to them, great Russia had to reckon with nationality as the main idea of the time. Nevertheless, nationality cannot be ensured only by managing cultural issues. The nationality needed to manifest itself in the form of a government. For this, Russia should form national-local autonomies. The Turks of Russian Empire also should consist of various autonomies, not as a single entity. Azerbaijan, Turkestan, Bashkortostan, Kyrgyzstan, Crimea and others should be autonomous states. While these Turk autonomies remain free in their internal issues, they could form a federation and alliance in general issues with all Russian

autonomies in religious and national issues with the Turk and Muslim autonomies. This idea, which in a short time conquered all the Turks of Russia, arose firstly in the Caucasus. [Rasulzadeh (2022): 37-38].

At that time, the Musavat Party and the “Açıq söz” newspaper presented the concept of autonomy in Baku. At the same time, the *Türk Federalist Firqəsi* [Turk Federalists Group] supported it in Ganja, where national forces were concentrated. As a result, these two parties merged in 1917, and Rasulzadeh was elected the chairman of the united party. M.E. Rasulzadeh rightly considered the victory at the Moscow Congress his own and considered the Moscow Congress, as indeed a magnificent and historic meeting, where there were up to a thousand representatives. All people, all classes, and all genders of the Turks of Russia were represented here. He wrote that in this magnificent assembly, he was honoured to defend the theory of national-cultural autonomy, which constitutes the ideal of the Turkish people- independence” [Rasulzadehh (2022): 39].

At the Congress of the Musavat party held at the end of 1917, Rasulzadeh clearly expressed the demand for Azerbaijan's autonomy.

The victory of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, the capture of Baku by the Bolsheviks, the massacres done in and around Baku in March of 1918, and the failure of the Seim, legislative body, created by the peoples of the South Caucasus, has entirely changed the existing conditions. Due to this, at the 22nd meeting of the Transcaucasia Seim on 9 April 1918, Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh openly demanded freedom for all the South Caucasus, insisting that Transcaucasian democracy must defend itself, preserve all of the revolution's achievements, benefit from the blessings of the great Russian revolution and great democratic principles, and not sacrifice these achievements to Russia, which has only brought us retardation. Transcaucasia should be independent. This independence becomes a requirement. It is vital to declare independence for the peoples of Transcaucasia to live together and enjoy the benefits of freedom provided by the revolution. Transcaucasia is in a situation only comparable to childbirth. Transcaucasia goes through all of the pangs of childbirth, and now it gives birth, and we should not be afraid of this pain and suffering. Transcaucasia's independence must be accepted honestly, not fearfully, for the baby's health. Claiming the need for a declaration of independence, Rasulzade stated: ”Suppose we declare our independence honestly rather than fearfully. In that case, I believe it will be the best adhesive that unites the peoples of the Transcaucasia. In the conditions of friendly cooperation and friendly coexistence, the Transcaucasian democracy will receive blessings that will give it strength and energy to protect its freedom from all threats.” [Rasulzadeh (2014): 43-44].

As a result, the South Caucasus Federative Republic was established on 22 April 1918. However, this short-living republic soon ceased to exist. With Georgia leaving the Transcaucasian Seim on 26 May 1918, three independent republics in the South Caucasus declared their independence. The Azerbaijani members represented in the Sejm, founded the Azerbaijan National Council, and Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh was elected its chairman. On 28 May 1918, the National Council of Azerbaijan adopted the Declaration of Independence and created Azerbaijan Democratic Republic.

Describing this period, Aydin Balayev rightly wrote that at the beginning of the 20th century, the Azerbaijani Turks faced a difficult choice - to join the Ottoman-Turkish nation or embark on the path of forming a private national identity. In such a situation,

national forces, led by M.A. Rasolzadeh unambiguously preferred the second option. [Balaev (2015): 136–149]. It should be noted that these forces were united around the Musavat faction headed by Rasolzade. Although the annexationist movement “*ilhaqçılar*” tried to gain an advantage when the Ottoman army was in Azerbaijan, the concept of the nation state won thanks to the decisive position of people like Muhammad Amin Rasolzade, Nasib Bey Yusifbeyli (the second Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan).

Democratic Values and Their Interpretation by M.E. Rasolzadeh

The Declaration of Independence of Azerbaijan declared on 28 May 1918, was the final result of the Azerbaijan National Movement. This six-article Declaration outlines the most basic liberties and the underpinnings of republican thoughts. The fourth article of the Declaration is particularly significant: “the Azerbaijan People’s Republic guarantees political rights and citizenship to all citizens living within its borders, regardless of nationality, madhab, class, religion, or gender” [Huseynov (2014): 7].

M.E. Rasolzadeh raised the issue of citizenship and minorities in an opening speech to the Parliament of Azerbaijan on 7 December 1918, Rasolzadeh stated that the parliament represented all ethnic groups living in the country, since all nationalities, classes and members of various ideologies are introduced in it, this assembly can fully represent our Motherland. [Azərbaycan, Volume III (2021): 145]. That is why, in the continuation of his speech, Rasolzadeh noted that Azerbaijan was freed from Russian colonialism and do not have any problems with the Russian nation. He said that we have no hatred or enmity for the Russian people. The Russia that we are concerned about is the Russian Tsarism and Russian tyranny. Our hatred towards Russia does not imply hatred towards the Russian people, who are suffering under Russian oppression. Russia, in our perspective, is the official Russia that oppresses nations and refuses to give them their rights. A nation must be independent and free, and once freed, to create alliances with other nations as they wanted. [Azərbaycan, Volume III (2021): 145]

On 10 December 1918, at the second session of the Parliament, Mammad Emin Rasolzadeh touched the issue of citizenship and minorities in the country again. He said that other nations living within the country would also have all the rights. Azerbaijani Turks, who have tasted the pain of conviction, will not create a convicted nation. The Republic of Azerbaijan does not separate its children into stepchildren or one's own. Armenians, Russians, Jews, Georgians, Germans, Poles and other minority nationalities, along with remaining citizens of Azerbaijan, must have national-cultural autonomy and manage their life, religion, nationality and culture by themselves. [Azərbaycan, Volume III (2021): 145]

As the leader of the Musavat Party, Rasolzadeh met with representatives of ethnic groups living in the country. In 1919, Rasolzadeh visited Quba district of Azerbaijan, where he met with the religious leader of Jewish people, and told them that they have the same rights as Muslims in the newly established state: “Along with other nations, you (Jewish people), individually and as a nation may rest assured to live in peace, tranquillity and comfort in our Muslim and Turk state!” [Rasolzadeh (2014): 421].

The issue of class, gender, and religious equality was concerned in November 1918, by Rasolzadeh, in his appeal, entitled “To all people of Azerbaijan”, stated that,

regardless of madhabs or ethnic affiliation, all the citizens of Azerbaijan have the same rights: “All citizens of Azerbaijan, regardless of nationality or madhabs, are children of one motherland. Therefore, they must help each other to build their life in a common homeland and in reaching their happiness together” [Azerbaijan, Volume II (2021): 523].

In addition to Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Russians, Poles, Jews, and Germans were also represented in the Parliament of Azerbaijan, which was opened shortly after this appeal. Furthermore, the Musavat Party also played an essential role in implementing other freedoms in the parliament. The Parliament of Azerbaijan approved the “Statute of the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Azerbaijan” on 21 June 1919. According to the Statute, all citizens of Azerbaijan who reached their 20s, regardless of gender, race, nationality, and religion, have a right to vote. This Statute is the historical document that defined the most democratic election rights in Azerbaijan and all Muslim East regions. It clearly could be seen that women also had a right to vote in accordance with the Statute.

According to Rasulzadeh, the main principles of classic democracy were stated in the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan: “Great ideas such as authority belong to the people, the form of government will necessarily be a republic, the rule of class and groups will not be allowed by following of equality principle among citizens, and also thought, religious and philosophical life will have complete freedom are clearly and decisively mentioned here” [Rasulzade M.E. (1933): 2].

For Rasulzadeh, the formation of the Republic of Azerbaijan is the final stage of the Azerbaijani people in transition from the Umma period to a Nation-State. Announcing the Declaration on 28 May 1918 Azerbaijan National Council determined the political existence of the Azerbaijani nation. The word “Azerbaijan” developed from a geographical, ethnographic and linguistic word to a political existence. Rasulzadeh explained the main principles of the newly established state. The Republic of Azerbaijan as a state owes its existence to the nationality principles and freedom ideas that dominated our century and are inextricably linked with its history. The movement that declared Azerbaijan's independence was, above all, a democracy and freedom movement. In Azerbaijan, nationalism takes on a democratic essence. [Rasulzade (1933): 2].

Rasulzadeh believed that to build and establish a genuinely democratic government, people must be actively involved in governance issues. In his opinion, the existence of the National Council and the applicable situation in the Azerbaijani parliament was the accurate realization parliamentary system. Rasulzadeh describing the peculiarity in the Azerbaijani parliament he pointed out that all segments of the population were represented, regardless of class, stratum, nationality and religion. [Rasulzade (1933): 2].

Rasulzadeh's views on Musavatism, Republicanism and Azerbaijanism

Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh's perspective on republicanism is based on the Musavatism system of thought. Rasulzadeh named his party *Musavat*, which means “equality”, in accordance with his ideals. Rasulzadeh defined Musavatism in this way: “Musavatism is the national liberation struggle based on fundamentals of national democracy and republic with the principles of freedom, property and social solidarity” [Rasulzade (1933): 1].

In the conference speech, given by Rasulzadeh in 1920, he elucidated his ideology regarding the social situation in Azerbaijan he stated that Azerbaijan is a country of small estates. Because of this, the Azerbaijani people cannot follow the social trends denying

property principles. The movement of the Islamic Union that imagined all Islamic nations as one society and as Ummah and denied nationality cannot take root here. This thought is an out-dated ideology for Azerbaijan. According to Rasalzadeh, in the country, bidding farewell to the epoch of feudalism and entering an epoch of vast industry and commerce, the strongest party is the party that follows the national-democratic professional path. The name of this party may not be “Musavat”, but it is necessary to be a Musavatist party”. [Rasulzade (2022): 61].

Rasulzadeh accepted the party's new program in 1936, during the Musavat Congress in Warsaw, taking into account changing situations. In the same year, the Musavat party's 25th anniversary and conference took place, where the party adopted new program principles. In its statement, the party substantiated this by the fact that the program, adopted at the second conference, held in Baku in 1919, needed to be updated due to the impact of the extraordinary events that arose during this period in the national and international spheres, therefore, the foundation of the party program was changed. The new program was announced in 16 articles. [Yeni Program Esasları (1936): 9]. The most important issue here is that the party takes solidarity as its basis. The signing of the Caucasian Confederation Pact in 1934 was the main international event, which was signed on behalf of Azerbaijan by Muhammad Amin Rasulzade and Alimardan bey Topchubashi. [Kafkasya Konfederasyonu. Vesikalar ve Materyallar, (1937): 7]. Based on the new program, issues of confederation were also included. In fact, it can be unequivocally said that Rasulzadeh's support for the idea of a Caucasian Union came from the idea of solidarism.

The new program defines Musavatism, claiming that Musavatism is Azerbaijani patriotism connected to the great Turkic culture, embraces national, cultural, and humanitarian values, and is dedicated to the ideals of freedom, republic, and independence. Musavatism is based on national unity and solidarity and opposes all forms of class and clan rule. [Yeni Program Esasları (1936): 9].

Individuals in Musavatism, which accepts the principle of solidarism, are citizens with equal and full legal rights and will enjoy political, religious, and intellectual freedoms. The property right is the fundament of Musavatism. Rasulzadeh elaborated that liberalism and communism are not unique to Azerbaijani society. Neither individual liberty nor the tyranny of capitalist anarchy that formed from the absoluteness of private property, not communism's servitude, which transforms people from themselves into enslaved people and machines. Neither absolute liberalism nor absolute collectivism. In that case, solidarism compiles both. [Rasulzadeh M.E. (1937): 10].

Rasulzadeh proposed partial conditions regarding absolute freedom and property in the solidarism system. He stated that in solidarism, the principles of freedom, personal initiative and property are the basis of modern culture. However, at the same time, the state is not an assigned observer entity that is indifferent to the relationships and struggles among individuals, classes and groups, as in absolute liberalism. In this system, freedom and property are not absolute but conditional. The condition is for the common benefit and the health of the state and the nation. Individual, group, or class freedom is framed by the conditions of not breaching the highest interests and collective freedom. In solidarism, the state is the nation's representative and the regulator of societal relations. [Rasulzadeh M.E. (1937): 10].

According to the solidarism concept of Rasulzadeh, the state regulates ultra-liberal attacks that hurt common benefits without jeopardizing freedom and the development of liberty and property. In his opinion, liberalism, like communism, is immensely cosmopolitan, whereas solidarism is national. Liberalism finds the essence of culture in the creative egoism of the individual, whereas communism sees the soul of culture in the egoism of the class. However, solidarism says culture is a harmony between individual egoism and societal interests. Individuals of the nation that form moral unity with cultural and historical heritage should limit their ambitions and benefits to save the interest of the whole. Representative of all interests is a state. [Rasulzadeh M.E. (1937): 10-11].

According to Faig Alekperov, after a long political and ideological search, Rasulzadeh was able to find how to reconcile the social problem with the national one. At the same time, he completely united the national and public cause, and the idea of solidarity became the completion and the last stage of Rasulzadeh's worldview. [Ələkbərov, (2007): 178].

The idea of solidarism presented by Rasulzadeh arose as a result of the discussions that started in the West from the 19th century. There is no doubt that these on-going discussions in France and Germany have an impact on Azerbaijani musavatists. For example, it is possible to say that Rasulzadeh was inspired by the solidarist thoughts of Heinrich Pesch, one of the representatives of the German Catholic ethicist of the Solidarist School. Heinrich Pesch presented solidarism as a third way, different from liberalism and socialism, and showed the border between individual freedom and common welfare. The solidarism presented by Pesch is separated from both the principle of individual freedom and the principle of collectivization; its formula is based on moral, not violence.

Pesch viewed solidarism as a logical extension of Catholic social teaching. However, he used philosophical principles derived from natural law and believed that solidarism should be available to all people of good will. According to him, solidarism (solidarity) existed on four different levels. First, thanks to God, there should be solidarity among all people, second, solidarity among family members, thirdly, solidarity among the citizens of one state and finally, solidarity among the members of a common professional group (including management, workers, and various firms in the industry). [Pesch (1998): 69-70].

These thoughts were reflected in the above-mentioned New Program Principles adopted by the Musavat party in 1936. However the solidarism represented by Pesch developed social issues against the backdrop of the Catholic Church and in accordance with Catholic morality, so, it went through a different historical path, while the meaning of solidarism for the Musavat party has its own aspects. It is no coincidence that Karim Oder, the former chairman of the party, in his article "Solidarism in the Musavat Ideology" writes that the Musavatists were not satisfied with taking the idea of solidarism from the Western world, they strengthened this thesis with some principles arising from the peculiarities of Azerbaijan and the results of modern social law. [Oder (1966): 7] When we look at the "New Program", the concept of national solidarism (*milli təsaniid*) is taken to a higher level, and it is supposed to revive common institutions within the Caucasian Confederation, due to the commonality of geography. And the same collaboration with the Turkic peoples due to common culture and historical past. A kind of

solidarity was valued not within the borders of Azerbaijan, but within the framework of the concepts of common prosperity and unity in the region.

It is no coincidence that Rasulgade included the study of the Caucasus in the articles related to education in the "New Program Principles". It was noted that education in Azerbaijan, which will be freed from the Soviet occupation, will serve the national unity of citizens, and will be formed on the basis of modern sciences and human values along with national history and culture. The main theses of the program on education based on solidarity are:

- All citizens, male and female, have equal rights in education.
- The first education will be general, compulsory and free.
- Sufficient specialized schools will be opened.
- Art will be given importance.
- Neighboring Caucasian languages will be taught in certain schools along with Caucasian studies. [Yeni Program Esasları (1936): 11].

The program also includes important issues related to workers' rights. Some of them are as follows:

- working day up to 8 hours ;
- Social insurance;
- Freedom of trade unions;
- Mandatory arbitration to resolve disputes between employees and employers;
- Legal recognition of collective agreements;
- Presence of representatives on behalf of labor organizations in state enterprises dealing with labor protection and public insurance;
- Support for employees to educate themselves in the field of educational and cultural life. [Yeni Program Esasları (1936): 11].

Mammad Emin Rasulgadeh summarized and named the process of transition from geographical Azerbaijan to political Azerbaijan, where Musavatism was the main power, as Azerbaijanism. Rasulgadeh and the Musavat Party did not support the idea of the unity of Muslims and Turks of the Russian Empire nor merging with the Ottoman Empire, which had close historical and cultural ties with Azerbaijan. Instead, he supported the concept of creating Azerbaijan as a separate independent state in both periods: during the demand for autonomy and the thoughts of independence. Rasulgadeh explained Azerbaijanism in his works and affirm that Azerbaijanism means the struggle for independence. That struggle for independence means the triumphal procession of the nation to become a state, which is the most prominent institution in history; Azerbaijanism is a noble struggle for the liberation of a nation of the great Turkic race; Azerbaijanism, at the same time, a trend of freedom and culture, whose main essence is populism and national authority; The political representative of Azerbaijanism is the Musavat Party [Rasulgade (1934b): 68-69].

Mammad Emin Rasulgadeh linked Azerbaijan's national movement to local history and mentioned that it formed as a result of European liberation movements. He described the nature of the Azerbaijani national movement in this way: "In terms of ideological origin, the Azerbaijan national movement is a movement that combined the national liberation concepts of the East with the cultural and democratic tendencies of the West." [Rasulgade (1934a): 163]. In his opinion, thanks to the disclosure of social forces and the

accession of individuals to the social movement in the past, the national movement in Azerbaijan took on European outlines earlier than in any other Muslim country of the East. [Ibid: 163].

Rasulzadeh stated in his speech to Azerbaijan's Parliament that the newly established state is founded on the parliamentary system, despite the absence of a constitution. He said that although Azerbaijan's Constitution has not yet been drafted, we have embraced the parliamentary system as a fundamental component of our Constitution. And Azerbaijan can easily apply the laws of Britain and other countries that adopted a parliamentary system. A member of parliament represents a nation that requires being independent. If a member of parliament is a government officer, he can never talk freely. There is tyranny in a country without a parliament. [Azərbaycan, Volume IV (2022): 302-303].

CONCLUSION

Mammad Emin Rasulzadeh, both in socio-political and press activities, put against Tsarist colonialism and the thought of Bolshevism after the occupation, the concept of republicanism, Musavatism and a more generalized ideology, Azerbaijanism. Rasulzadeh, who supported the transition process from *Ummah* to the nation in the regions, where Muslims lived in Russia and the South Caucasus, understood that along with gaining independence, it is essential to rule emerging states based on modern values. As the leader of the Musavat Party and the chairman of the National Council of Azerbaijan, he, as a defender, continuously put forward the concept of republicanism and Musavatism, based on social justice, and a parliamentary system, which symbolizes unity among citizens of Azerbaijan. Also, he raised those issues in the organizations and the press he founded during his exile. Rasulzadeh understood the period of nationalization, which came to the South Caucasus somewhat late, in a broader context, and has rendered important services in establishing a united Azerbaijani nation and the geographical region in which this nation lives. During the short-living Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, he also worked hard to establish national and democratic authority in the country. Forming a parliament with evolving representatives of ethnic minorities and factions with opposing viewpoints, where discussions were entirely free, is directly tied to his name.

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