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FATALI KHAN KHOYSKI - ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF THE AZERBAIJAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

The end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century were marked by processes of national awakening of the Azerbaijani people. Most of the public figures and intellectuals who contributed to this process were graduates of the leading universities of Russia and Europe, and already during the period of study, they were engaged in active public activities - from the establishment of communities to the publication of newspapers, theatrical productions, etc. On the other hand, many of them received primary education in theological schools, and as a result, Western higher education overlapped with oriental primary education in some way, forming a fruitful synthesis of national consciousness and European thinking.

One of the brightest representatives of this galaxy of public and political figures – Fatali Khan Khoyski (1875-1920) graduated from the first classical gymnasium, and then the law faculty of Moscow University. An important role in shaping his political views was played by the social environment of his native Ganja at the time with its traditions of enlightenment and charity and adherence to national ideals, and by the discriminatory attitude of the authorities towards non-Christian and non-Russian peoples, which he regularly faced in his professional work, including in the courts of Ganja (at that time Yelizavetpol), Kutaisi, Tiflis and Yekaterinodar. But, of course, a special place in his biography is occupied by his activity as a deputy of the State Duma of the second convocation.

In general, Khoyski's political biography can be divided into two stages: before the national liberation movement and the period of the movement. In the first stage, an important place is occupied by years of activity in the Duma. Khoyski was not a deputy for a long time, but this period is very important as a kind of foundation for

his subsequent career as a politician. In turn, his qualification and experience as a lawyer proved very useful on the deputy bench. Sharply speaking out against the government's resettlement and discriminatory policies, Khoyski, two weeks after receiving the deputy mandate, was given the authority to make statements on behalf of the Muslim faction (1, p. 79). On 2 April 1907, in his first extensive speech before the Duma deputies, he noted that Muslims "amounting to more than 20 million of the total population of the Russian state", were also eagerly awaiting a solution to the agrarian question. In revealing the essence of the government's resettlement policy, he said that it served the purposes of Russification of non-Russian peoples, demanded on behalf of the Muslim faction that the resettlement be suspended until the final settlement of the agrarian question, characterized the vital importance of the water problem "in the east of the Transcaucasus and in Turkestan" and stressed the importance of expanding land plots for cattle breeders (1, pp. 81-85).

On 29 May of the same year, four days before the dissolution of the Second State Duma, Khoyski sharply criticized the bill on the reorganization of local courts and came up with reasoned arguments against the point about the impossibility of holding magistrates' elections on the outskirts of the empire due to the lack of self-government bodies. He was among the 173 deputies who signed the draft law submitted to the Duma on the abolition of laws restricting political and civil rights on ethnic and religious grounds (2, p. 2, p. 24).

After the dissolution of the State Duma, Khoyski worked as a lawyer. He first worked in the Yelizavetpol District Court and then was elected as a juror to the Tiflis Court Chamber. In 1913, he became a juror of the Baku City Court and due to his clear civil position, as well

Fatali Khan Khoyski. 1905

as active participation in the public life of the city, he gained broad authority in a very short time. It is no accident that in 1917 Fatali Khan, being nonpartisan, was elected a member of the provisional executive committee of the Baku Muslim National Council and took an active part in the organization and work of the Baku Congress of Muslims of the Caucasus. A bright milestone in Khoyski's biography was his election as chairman of the Baku City Duma from the Muslim bloc with more than 10 thousand votes. Under him, the Baku City Duma was the only counterweight to the Baku Council, which, being a Bolshevik-Dashnak den, managed to seize power through mass bloody pogroms of peaceful Azerbaijanis. An eloquent testimony to the political weight and high authority of Fatali Khan Khoyski is the telegram from the chairman of the Baku Soviet People's Commissariat, Stepan Shaumyan, to Vladimir Lenin sent in March 1918. The telegram expressed the intention to conduct an armed struggle "against traitors like Khoyski" (3, p. 79).

Another notable page of Khoyski's political biography is his activity as a member of the Muslim faction of the Transcaucasian Seim. It is known that this body was one of the transitional stages from the collapsed Russian empire to independent republics in the Caucasus. In his speech at the Seim during the debate on the independence of the region, Khoyski analyzed the position of the Musavat faction and nonpartisan groups and then declared that proclaiming independence is the only sure way out of the crisis situation (1, p. 97). When the Seim decided to form a special joint commission of Transcaucasian Muslims and North Caucasus mountain people, Khoyski became one of the three Azerbaijanis in its composition (4, p. 76).

In April, the work of the Seim passed under the sign of massacres of the civilian Azeri population of Baku by the Dashnak-Bolshevik alliance. On 7 April, the Muslim factions called an urgent meeting in connection with a telegram about the defeat of Colonel Magalov's detachment at the Hajigabul station. In his speech Khoyski proposed a number of concrete measures and raised the question of proclaiming the independence of the Eastern Caucasus (4, p. 91). In general, during his work as a deputy of the Transcaucasian Seim, Fatali Khan proved himself to be a resolute, flexible and realistic politician. Any hesitation and indecision were alien to him, and he detested the inconsistency and changeable position of the Mensheviks.



On 26 April, the first government of the independent Transcaucasian Federative Republic was formed. Khoyski received the post of minister of national education in this cabinet. During his short time in this post, he put forward a proposal to open a European university in Baku. The first rector of the Azerbaijani university, Professor V. I. Razumovsky, later recalled: "The Caucasus separated from Russia as the Transcaucasian Republic, and a mixed government was organized from Georgians, Armenians and Turks. The minister of national education was Khan Khoyski from Baku. We proposed that this government take advantage of our work on organizing the "Russian university" in Tiflis. The minister (Khan Khoyski) listened to us and expressed his approval for the establishment of the Russian university in the Caucasus, but added: "Why in Tiflis? In Tiflis there is a polytechnic school, and now the Georgian university. Maybe it will be more correct to open a university in Baku?" He took our letter for consideration and promised to inform the Council of Ministers about our goal" (2, pp. 1, pp. 200-201).

However, the government of the Transcaucasian Federation did not get a chance to address this issue. On 6 May, a meeting of the Muslim faction discussed the further aggravation of the situation in the Baku and Yelizavetpol provinces. Khoyski participated in this

meeting not so much as a member of the Seim as a member of the Transcaucasian Central Muslim Council and made an extraordinary statement, calling the conditions about Baku put forward by representatives of the Dashnaktsutyun faction in the Seim “an impudent offer”, and in turn, proposed setting the following conditions to the Dashnaks: “To hand over power in Baku to Muslims, bring Muslim military units into Baku to protect this power and withdraw disarmed Armenian units from there.” This proposal by Khoyski was adopted unanimously (4, p. 104).

In the last week of May, meetings of the Muslim factions of the Transcaucasian Seim and National Councils were held, and Fatali Khan Khoyski stood out for his activity, playing an important role in making decisions that were crucial for the Azerbaijani people. He was entrusted to negotiate with the leadership of the Seim on the adoption of these decisions. On 25 May, Khoyski presided over the evening session of the Muslim faction and was supposed to talk with the chairman of the Seim, Chkheidze, on the agenda for next day’s meeting. He told Chkheidze and other Georgian leaders that if Georgia declared independence, the Azerbaijanis would take a similar step (4, p. 113). This was the last meeting of the Muslim faction of the Transcaucasian Seim. At the extraordinary session of the Seim on 27 May, Azerbaijani deputies declared themselves to be the Provisional National Muslim Council and unanimously elected Fatali Khan Khoyski its chairman. It should be noted that he took a rather reserved position on the issue of independence, considering it necessary to first prepare international grounds for this.

After extensive debates, the council members proclaimed the Independence Act and instructed Khoyski to form a government. And after an hour, Khoyski made a report on the formation of the government. In total, Fatali Khan led three government offices of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, making his significant contribution to the annals of this first modern democratic state in the Muslim East. Of these three offices, the first one, in which he also held the post of minister of internal affairs, operated under extreme conditions, when most of the country was occupied and there was no army, financial system or capital. Even the telegram about the proclamation of Azerbaijan’s independence could not be sent from Tiflis, and Khoyski sent the Russian and French texts of the telegram to Foreign Minister Hajinski in Batum so that he could notify Istanbul and other capitals on the radio (5, f. 970, d. 4, l. 1-2). On



Participants in a ceremony to mark de facto recognition of Azerbaijan by the Entente countries. January 1920

30 May, the chairman of the Council of Ministers Fatali Khan Khoyski sent a radiogram to the main capitals of the world about the proclamation of the independence of Azerbaijan.

The relocation of the government of the young republic from Tiflis to Ganja took place amid an acute crisis. On 17 June, at a closed meeting of the National Council, Khoyski announced the resignation of his government cabinet, but the members of the council instructed him to form the next government. In the second ADR government, Khoyski also held two posts - chairman of the Council of Ministers and minister of justice. Here is what the great Azerbaijani composer and prominent publicist Uzeyir Hajibayov wrote about this: “His Excellency Fatali Khan, who occupied an important place in the history of Azerbaijan as the first prime minister of the newly-created Azerbaijani state, compared the position of the new state with a sailboat made from pieces of wood, which risks to be thrown on the rocks by waves and smashed to smithereens in the stormy sea every minute, and relies only on the skill and experience of the helmsman. ... His Excellency Fatali Khan undertook this difficult task to safely navigate this fragile vessel in stormy weather among the rocks and reach the saving shore, having demonstrated remarkable sophistication and skill in this matter” (2, v. 2, p. 26). It should be noted that in fact both the executive and legislative branches of power in the country were concentrated in the hands of the government, and no later than in six months it was necessary to convene the Constituent Assembly.

The Cabinet headed by Khoyski had to deal with many issues, including the most urgent ones, and among them, a number of steps of strategic importance were undertaken. So, considering that Baku was under occupation, martial law was declared in the country on 19 June, a law on conscription was adopted and military development started. Along with this, the Turkic (i.e. Azerbaijani) language was declared a state language, the first steps were taken to restore historical names, and the law on the nationalization of educational institutions was adopted. The July 15 decree on the establishment of the Extraordinary Commission of Inquiry, which was set to investigate the atrocities against the civilian Muslim population of the Transcaucasian region during the First World War, was extremely important. Amid the acute shortage of financial resources, Khoyski, in his correspondence with the chairman of the Azerbaijani National Council, Mahammad Amin Rasulzadeh, who was in Istanbul, set the release of Azerbaijani currency in Turkey as an urgent task. This task was solved in a short time. Fatali Khan did not lose sight of any of the issues of state formation, but at the same time mobilized all forces to solve the primary task - the liberation of Baku from the Bolshevik-Dashnak alliance represented by the Baku Council. Among the significant steps of Khoyski's government it is necessary to note that prominent diplomat Alimardan Topchubashov was sent to Istanbul with extraordinary powers to protect ADR interests in the international arena and, if necessary, to participate in the probable international conference on the results of the First World War.

It should be noted that Fatali Khan Khoyski had a principled, uncompromising position on everything that concerned national interests. Thus, with all the close and vital nature of relations with the Ottoman Empire, which was traditionally regarded as the closest ally, he did not hesitate to strongly protest against the intervention of the Turkish military in the internal affairs of Azerbaijan. The following statement can be considered characteristic of his attitude to the fate of the nation: "We also have the right to live and live freely. Neither armored vehicles, seaplanes, gunboats, barbed wire, mines and other technical devices nor the British, their helpers and any other force could stop the natural course of history. Despite the fact that they had 50,000 troops and equipment, they could not withstand the impact of a small force and left Baku - a clear lesson to all those who are trying to build their own well-being and prosperity on another's grief and misfortune" (2, vol. 2, p. 26).



Draft medals of Azerbaijan to be approved on May 28, 1920

After the liberation of Baku on 15 September thanks to the joint efforts of the voluntary Caucasian Islamic army under the command of Nuru-pasha and newly-formed Azerbaijani military units, the government moved to Baku and started working with new energy. However, the international situation began to change in an unfavorable direction. The Ottoman state, as a country that lost in the First World War, was forced to withdraw its troops from the Caucasus under the terms of the Mudros Peace Treaty. Azerbaijan was declared a sphere of British interests, and a British expeditionary corps commanded by General Thomson entered Baku. At this critical moment, not least thanks to the diplomatic skills of Fatali Khan Khoyski, the government managed to establish cooperation with the British command, which was initially biased towards Azerbaijan. A number of steps were taken to confirm the legitimacy of the government in the international arena, in particular, a telegram was sent to US President Woodrow Wilson requesting assistance in recognizing Azerbaijan in the international arena.



Fatali Khan Khoyski among the deputies of the Muslim faction of the State Duma of Russia

Along with this, the government formed a commission to prepare for the convocation of the parliament. On 9 November, based on a report by Khoyski, a tricolor state flag was approved - this demonstrated to all that Azerbaijan did not appear as a "result of Turkish intrigue". The Azerbaijan National Council resumed its activities, and at its meeting on 16 November, Khoyski delivered a speech, describing the situation, and then added: "The government and we are sure that no matter how hard the independence and how much hard work and sacrifice it demands, all difficulties and obstacles can be overcome if we join forces" (4, p. 159).

To convene the parliament, Khoyski conducted active negotiations with the Russian National Committee, the Armenian National Council and General Thomson and reported the results to the meetings of the Azerbaijan National Council. At the same time, he proposed holding the first session of the parliament on 7 December (4, p. 176). Talking about the next meeting with General Thomson, Fatali Khan noted the positive attitude of the British commander towards the Azerbaijani government and his promise not to interfere in the internal affairs of the country. Thus, Thomson, who announced just a month earlier that he did not recognize a country called Azerbaijan, dramatically changed his position and recognized the government of Khoyski on 28 December as the only legitimate local authority in Azerbaijan.

At the opening of the parliament, Fatali Khan made a report on the work of the government: "During these six months, as long as the government ruled, as you can see, a lot was organized again. There was nothing but chaos in the country, there was not even a police force. Therefore, we paid most attention to this particular issue. Now, thank God, in all parts of Azerbaijan,

albeit not at the proper level, we have an organization capable of protecting the lives and property of people. You can say anything about this, but you should pay attention to the time and weigh what the government is like and when it all happened. A government with its past, military force and treasury, or a government without money and army formed in a couple of days? Given these moments, you will understand how much labor was required. The railways were dismantled and did not work, there were no wagons, and the welfare of the country depended on this. Therefore, the government spent a lot of time on this. True, even now there is still not much that could and should be available. But, anyway, thank God, the railways are established and operate all year round. There was no telegraph, and it was impossible to send a paper. Now, even if not in full, but in any case, in many places, as far as it was possible, post and telegraph offices are open, and you can send a letter or a telegram to any place. Another important issue is finance, you will not do anything without them. The government was created at a time when we did not even have 10 thousand rubles to send to representatives in Batum, and we began to beg for a loan in Tiflis ... Of course, little has been done, it is a miserable part of the task that is entrusted to us. But the big misfortune is that our government turned out to be helpless due to the fact that the parties operating under the motto of freedom, justice and equality took Baku away from us and left us without the capital and carried out a massacre of the Muslim population - the owners of the capital, the heart of Azerbaijan. The leaders dispersed around Dagestan, Iran, and so on, there was not a strong man in the city who could bring them together and do something. Was it possible to pay more attention to other issues in such conditions? ... I must say that at that time there were no schools or institutions of justice, the government had to deal with it. Without institutions of justice, only with the help of police the country cannot be governed, these institutions are two parts of one whole. The nationalization of schools began. Primary schools and some classes were nationalized. In addition, the government extended the institutions of justice that were out of order as much as possible. Now, thank God, if not everywhere, in many institutions of justice people are appointed who speak Turkic. Yes, we have not managed to accomplish a lot, but I can safely say that along

with the shortcomings of the government, its guiding star was the slogan: the rights, independence and freedom of the nation." Then Khoyski extended celebratory congratulations (1, p. 118): "Today is a great, significant and good day for Azerbaijan. We could not have dreamt of this, it could not come to our mind. This is the day when you found autonomous rule, and on behalf of the government, I congratulate you and, together with you, ourselves on this holiday" (1, p. 112).

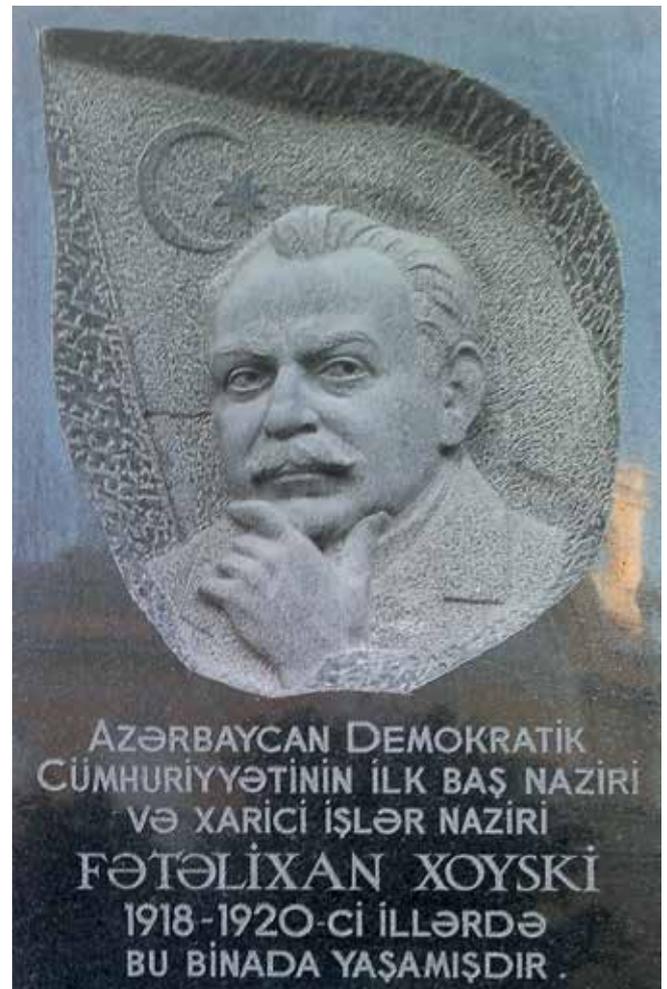
In his speech to the deputies, Khoyski resigned as head of government. He received an official proposal to form the next third government, which he declined. But on 18 December, the parliament addressed Khoyski again (1, p. 45). At the fifth meeting of the parliament, Fatali Khan delivered a broad program speech on the activities of the future cabinet. He reacted sharply to requests from opposition MPs, calling them "jabs" and "trip-ups": "The independence of Azerbaijan is under threat every minute. You know, today is the time when not only coarse calico and cotton, but under certain circumstances, our Azerbaijan itself may disappear, and we will lose independence" (1, pp. 132-135). In February 1919, in protest against the criticism of the government, Khoyski resigned. Later, he continued political activities as a member of parliament. In November, Khoyski led the Azerbaijani delegation to the conference on the settlement of border disputes with Armenia. Shortly thereafter, he became foreign minister in the next government cabinet formed on 22 December and defended Azerbaijan's interests against the arrogant, directive tone of notes from the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of Bolshevik Russia, Chicherin, with legally comprehensive arguments. This period was marked by such a significant event in the history of Azerbaijani statehood as recognition at the Paris Peace Conference. Informing the parliament about this, Khoyski remarked: "I consider myself extremely happy that I had the privilege of being at the head of the government when proclaiming independence and that today I am informing you of its recognition."

Unfortunately, with the wicked irony of historical destiny, the international recognition of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic turned out to be a harbinger of its collapse. Due to the inexorable logic of developments in the international arena, the first democratic state in the East ceased to exist on 28 April 1920, when the Russian 11th Red Army entered Baku. After that, Fatali Khan Khoyski moved to Tiflis, where he was assassinated by an Armenian terrorist on 19 June and was buried in the city's Mus-

lim cemetery. The name of this outstanding statesman and political figure, a remarkable son of the Azerbaijani people, went down in the history of Azerbaijan forever. ✨

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Memorial plaque on the house in Baku where Fatali Khan Khoyski lived