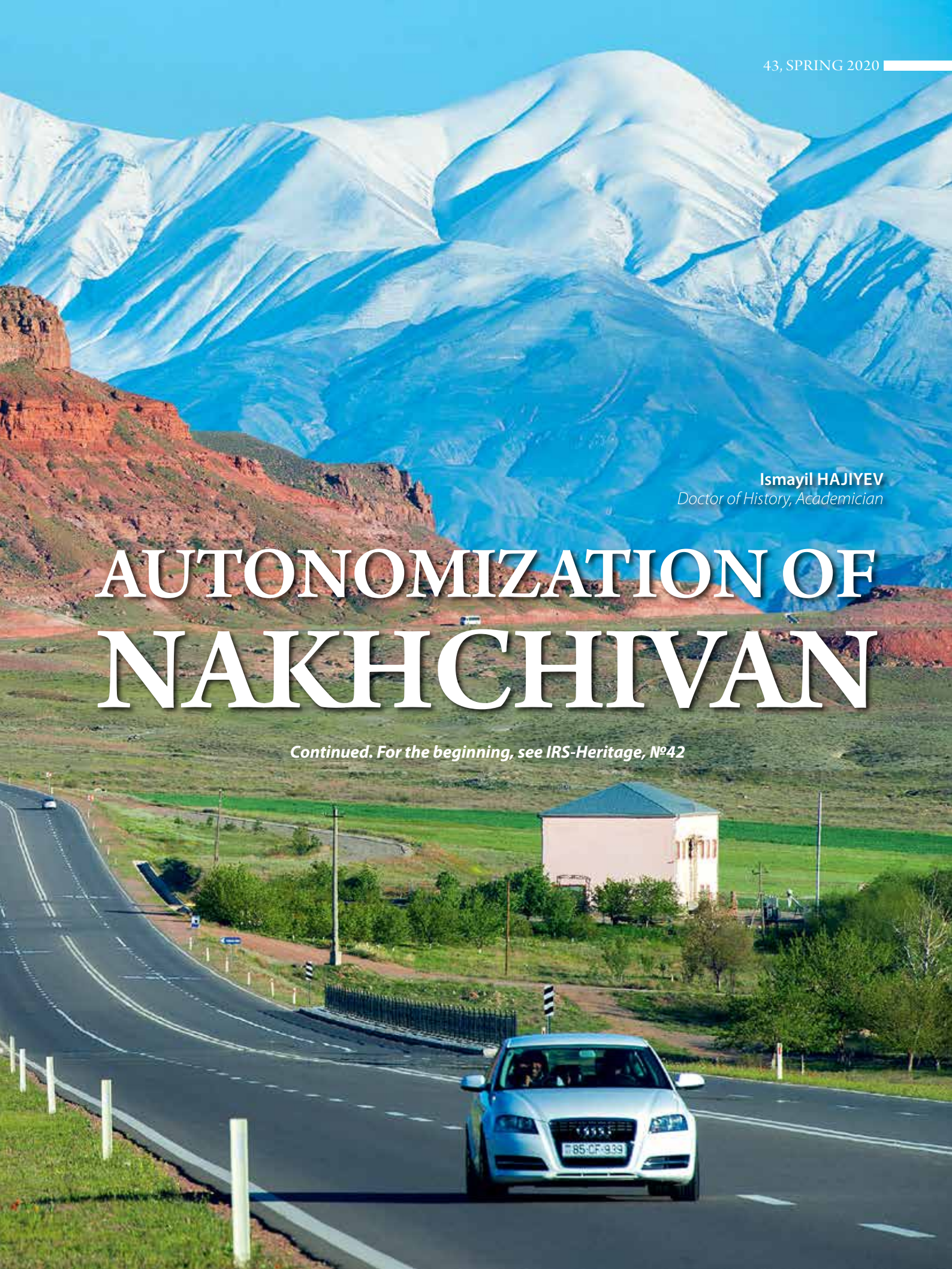


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AUTONOMIZATION OF NAKHCHIVAN

Continued. For the beginning, see IRS-Heritage, №42





The territory of Nakhchivan and its border were delineated according to the Treaty of Kars signed by the Azerbaijan SSR, the Armenian SSR, the Georgian SSR and Turkey with the participation of a representative of the RSFSR on October 13, 1921. Article 5 of the Treaty of Kars resolved the issue of Nakhchivan's territorial affiliation once and for all. It says: "The Turkish government and the Soviet governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan agree that the Nakhchivan province is an autonomous territory under Azerbaijani protectorate within the boundaries established in Appendix 3 to this Treaty." (4, v.9-19; 20, p.413).

As is seen from the article, it reflected a certain part of Article 3 of the Moscow Treaty, namely the fact that "Azerbaijan will never be able to cede its right of protection to a third state" (19, p.18). Appendix 3 titled "The Territory of Nakhchivan" defined the borders of the region as follows: "Urmia village, thence a straight line to the Araz station (keeping this station within the Armenian SSR), then a straight line to the western Mount Dash-Burun (3142) and then from Bulag to the south along the divide line to the eastern Mount Dash-Burun (4108) and passing through the Jahannamdarasi River, Mount Bagirsag (6607), (6587) passing through the 6625 height to Mount Komurlu (6839) along with the divide line and the administrative border of the former Iravan and Sharur-Daralayaz districts, (6930) and then to 3080 - Sayatdag summit (7868) to the village of Gurdgulag, Mount Hamasur (8160), summit 8022, Mount Kuku (10282) and

the eastern administrative border of the former Nakhchivan district" (11, v.114-115; 20, p.413-414).

One of the important aspects of the Treaty of Kars is the determination of the parties agreeing on the status of Nakhchivan. These were the governments of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia (16, p.17). With the Treaty of Kars, Armenia officially confirmed that Nakhchivan was an Azerbaijani territory. One of the most important aspects of the treaty was that it was open-ended.

However, unlike the Moscow Treaty, the Treaty of Kars contained no provision on the status of Nakhchivan and Azerbaijan's jurisdiction over it.

National leader Heydar Aliyev highly appreciated the role of the international Treaty of Kars in the history and said: "Since Nakhchivan is isolated from mainland Azerbaijan. The Treaty of Kars is a great and irreplaceable document for us to ensure the integrity, security, statehood and autonomy of Nakhchivan in the future..." (14, p.249).

Along with a number of factors, the Moscow and Kars international treaties play a great role in the historical fate of Nakhchivan and its preservation as part of Azerbaijan. Both international treaties were signed indefinitely and are still in force today. These treaties cannot be terminated unilaterally by the signatory states.

International negotiations around Nakhchivan and its results had a significant impact on socio-political processes in the region. An opinion poll conducted in the Nakhchivan Territory (1921) confirmed it as part of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic and its auto-



mous status. Thus, a legal basis was established for the autonomy of Nakhchivan within the Azerbaijan SSR. The main issue was the realization of this idea. It was in this direction that serious difficulties began to develop, and the legal recognition of Nakhchivan as an autonomous republic within the Azerbaijan SSR was delayed until February 1924.

Party, Soviet and economic bodies of the Azerbaijan SSR were engaged in public and economic issues in the Nakhchivan Republic and provided the population with comprehensive assistance in the creation of a new life. On April 13, 1921, to investigate the situation in Nakhchivan, the Political and Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P decided to send a commission to Nakhchivan (7, v.10). In the autumn of the same year, by the decision of the Caucasus Bureau of the Central Committee of the RC(b)P, 20,000 manats in gold and 10 carriages of grain were allocated for the restoration of agriculture in Nakhchivan (21, p. 47). At the same time, at the initiative of N. Narimanov, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Azerbaijan SSR, 5.5 billion roubles were allocated for economic and cultural development in Nakhchivan (p. 47). At the end of 1921, elections to Soviets were held in the Nakhchivan Republic. On January 25, 1922, the First Congress of Soviets of the Nakhchivan SSR was convened. The Congress adopted important decisions on Soviet, economic and cultural development in the



region. The Nakhchivan Revolutionary Committee was abolished, the Nakhchivan Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the Nakhchivan SSR were established.

The Congress of Soviets of the Nakhchivan SSR was the supreme state governing body in the country. The Nakhchivan Central Executive Committee performed this function between congresses. The Nakhchivan SSR Central Executive Committee formed the Council of People's Commissars. The Council of People's Commissars reported to both the CEC and the Congress of Soviets (32, p. 480).



On May 22, 1922, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P discussed the draft statute on the Nakhchivan Territory and the draft constitution of the Nakhchivan SSR. The statute on the Nakhchivan Territory said: “The Nakhchivan Territory is declared an autonomous republic under the auspices of the Azerbaijan SSR and shall be named the Nakhchivan Soviet Socialist Republic” (8, v.158). The statute said that the state power of the Nakhchivan Territory is organized in accordance with the constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR.

The draft constitution of the Nakhchivan SSR said: “The Nakhchivan SSR affirms that citizens have equal rights, regardless of religion, race or nationality, and states that establishing or allowing any privileges or benefits on these grounds, any oppression against national minorities or any restrictions on their rights are contrary to the basic law of the republic” (38, p.144).

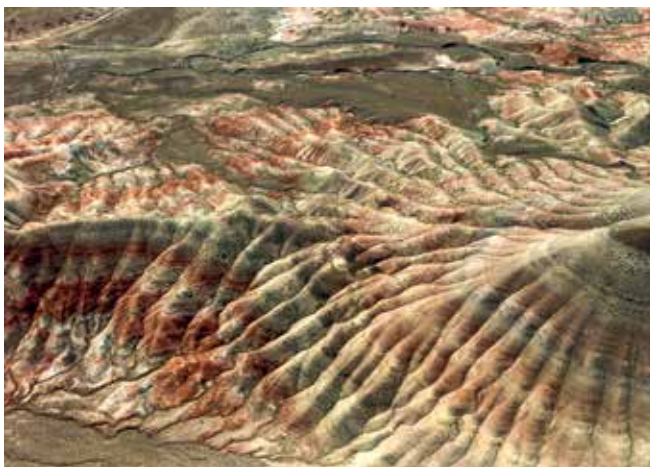
The draft statute on the Nakhchivan Territory and the draft constitution of the Nakhchivan Soviet Socialist Republic were discussed at the Presidium of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P. The final versions of the drafts, specifically, the autonomy of the Nakhchivan Territory were submitted to the Central Committee of the RC(b)P for discussion. In November 1922, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the RC(b)P chaired by V. I. Lenin made a decision on the need to establish

the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. On December 12, 1922, the first congress of Transcaucasian Soviets issued a decision on Nakhchivan as part of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic: “To consider the Nakhchivan Republic to be an integral part of Azerbaijan as an autonomous unit” (37, p. 98).

In December 1922, the Azerbaijan SSR, the Georgian SSR and the Armenian SSR merged into the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (ZSFSR). On December 30, all three republics joined the USSR as part of the ZSFSR. Thus, the sovereign rights of the Azerbaijan SSR were restricted. However, Nakhchivan’s autonomy within the Azerbaijan SSR was endorsed, albeit with a delay.

Based on the January 18, 1923 decision of the first congress of South Caucasus Soviets, the Presidium of the South Caucasus Country Committee of the Russian Communist (Bolsheviks) Party (RC(b)P) suggested “turning Nakhchivan into an autonomous republic and the Nakhchivan Council of People’s Commissars and the Nakhchivan CEC into the Executive Committee of the Nakhchivan Territory” (35, p.129).

Two days later, the Central Committee of the AC(b)P discussed that decision and decided to abolish the Nakhchivan CEC and CPC and to establish the Nakhchivan Territory Executive Committee. On January 22, the



Presidium of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Communist (Bolshevik) Party ordered that a party conference of the Territory be convened, the issue be discussed at the congress of Soviets in Nakhchivan and a declaration be prepared. The third congress of the Nakhchivan Territory Party Organization held on February 23, 1923 assessed the incorporation of Nakhchivan into the Azerbaijan SSR as important for the economic, political and cultural development of the region and adopted the following resolution: "To recognize the Nakhchivan Soviet Socialist Republic as an integral part of the Azerbaijan SSR..." (28, v.10).

On February 27, 1923, the Third Nakhchivan Congress of Soviets discussed the issue of incorporating the Nakhchivan SSR into Azerbaijan with rights of autonomy and issued a declaration describing the incorporation of the region into Azerbaijan as an integral part of it. The decision of the Congress stated that Nakhchivan SSR should be recognized as an integral part of the Azerbaijan SSR; the whole of the Nakhchivan Territory and its apparatus should be included in the Azerbaijan SSR as an autonomous territory (28, v.7). By another decision of the Congress, districts were abolished, and the entire territory of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Territory was divided into six areas: Tumbul, Jahri, Abrugunus, Shahtakhti, Norashen, and Ordubad. The third session of the Azerbaijani CEC held on July 16, 1923 approved the request of the Nakhchivan Congress of Soviets to incorporate Nakhchivan into the Azerbaijan SSR as an autonomous region (32, p. 382).

The Nakhchivan SSR was established as an autonomous territory with the statute of the Azerbaijan CEC on the Nakhchivan Autonomous Territory. In doing so, Nakhchivan's previous political rights were limited. For Nakhchivan, which lived in isolation from the rest of the

republic, this could not be considered satisfactory. But the autonomous territory did not last long. On December 11, 1923, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the AC(b)P discussed the issue of transforming the Nakhchivan Territory into the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and suggested that the Azerbaijani CEC raise the issue of establishing the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic with the South Caucasus CEC (21, p.54).

On December 31, 1923, the CEC of the Azerbaijan SSR made a final decision to transform the Nakhchivan Territory into the Nakhchivan ASSR as part of the Azerbaijan SSR and asked the South Caucasus CEC to approve this decision. The first plenary session of the South Caucasus CEC held on January 8, 1924 decided to transform the Nakhchivan Autonomous Territory into an autonomous republic (21, p.55). Accordingly, the first plenary session of the Nakhchivan CEC on January 18, 1924 discussed the transformation of the autonomous territory into the Nakhchivan ASSR. The CEC, CPC and Ministries of Agriculture, the Interior, Justice, Education, and Health of the Nakhchivan ASSR were established, and it was administratively divided into Sharur, Ordubad and Nakhchivan districts (27, v. 5).

By the February 4, 1924 decision of the Presidium of the AC(b)P, a charter on the Nakhchivan Republic began to be prepared. The February 9, 1924 decree of the Azerbaijani CEC endorsed the transformation of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Territory into the Nakhchivan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic.

Nakhchivan's autonomy played a special role in the building of the Soviet national state. If we compare Azerbaijan with other southern Soviet republics such as Georgia, which had autonomous entities, these entities (Abkhazia and Ajaria Soviet Socialist Republics) included the Abkhaz and the Ajars, who were ethnically different



from the titular people. Nakhchivan was an integral part of Azerbaijan's life and has an identical population. This was one of the features of Nakhchivan's autonomous status. Thus, the process of Nakhchivan's transformation into autonomy was completed. Of course, the most important issue thereafter was the establishment and implementation of the legal framework of Nakhchivan's autonomous status and identification of the role and place of these problems in Azerbaijan's statehood. 🌱

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