

# Democratic Movement in Nakhchivan at the Beginning of the 20th Century

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## ABSTRACT

At the beginning of the 20th century, peasant uprisings and the national liberation movement against Tsarist rule in the Nakhchivan region gradually intensified. Fearing the general movement, the Tsarist government, along with its officials and agents, began to incite ethnic massacres among different nationalities. Their goal was to instigate conflicts while pretending to seek peace between the two nations. Democratic forces active in Nakhchivan sought to make the masses understand that these massacres were orchestrated by the Tsarist government and its supporting forces. Consequently, democratic forces demanded that ethnic conflicts be transformed into a broader class struggle against Tsarism and the landlords.

The democratic forces of Nakhchivan, including Mirzali bey Bektashov (Bektashi), Mirbagir Mirheyderzade, Nasrullah Sheykhov, Heydar Mammadov, Najafgulu and Rzagulu Najafov, Mashadi Ahmad Azimov, and others, operated secretly under the revolutionary committee of the "Hümmət" organization's Nakhchivan group, which they established in a tea house under the name "Ülfət" (Friendship). Between 1915 and 1916, the composition of the Nakhchivan "Hümmət" group changed significantly, including individuals with different ideological perspectives. One faction, led by M. Mirheyderzade, Mirzali bey Bektashi, and N. Sheykhov, continued the revolutionary traditions of "Hümmət" and fought fiercely against the autocratic regime and those responsible for bloodshed. Another group, which included Kerbalayi Gafar Agha Safaralibayov, Rauf bey Safaralibayov, Seyidali, and Alimammad Aliyev (nicknamed "Papish"), adopted a path of terrorism.

**Keywords:** Mirzali bey Bektashi, Mirbagir Mirheyderzade, "Hümmət" and "Mücahid" organizations, M.S. Ordubadi, Sattar Khan, Tabriz, Julfa  
**Açar sözlər:** Mizrəli bəy Bəktaşi, Mirbağır Mirheydərzadə, "Hümmət" və "Mücahid" təşkilatları, M.S. Ordubadi, Səttarxan, Təbriz, Culfa.

## INTRODUCTION

In Azerbaijan, including the Nakhchivan region, peasant uprisings and the national liberation movement against Tsarist rule gained momentum in the early 20th century. Fearing this widespread movement and aiming to distract Russia from the growing revolutionary activity, the authorities instigated ethnic massacres in several regions between 1905 and 1907, including the Transcaucasus. Democratic forces in Nakhchivan made efforts to enlighten the masses, explaining that these massacres were orchestrated by the Tsarist government and its supporting forces. Therefore, democratic forces demanded that these ethnic conflicts be transformed into a broader class struggle against Tsarism and the landlords.

During this period, under the influence of popular uprisings, the democratic movement began to expand. Prominent intellectuals such as Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, Mammad Said Ordubadi, Aligulu Gamkusal, and Eynali Sultanov conveyed the truth to the people through their literary works and articles. The democratic forces of Nakhchivan, including Mirzali bey Bektashov (Bektashi), Mirbagir Mirheyderzade, Nasrullah Sheykhov, Heydar Mammadov, Najafgulu and Rzagulu Najafov, Mashadi Ahmad Azimov, and others,

established the Nakhchivan branch of the "Hümmət" organization and engaged in a broader struggle against autocracy and its enforcers.

Mirzali bey Bektashi opened a tea house named "Ülfət" (Friendship) on Pushkin Street (now Inqilab Street) to protect the revolutionary committee of "Hümmət" from police surveillance. The tea house became a gathering place for revolutionaries affiliated with the "Hümmət" and "Mücahid" organizations, where they conducted anti-monarchical propaganda. This indicates that the organization fighting for freedom in Nakhchivan continued its activities from 1905 until the fall of Tsarist autocracy.

Additionally, the activities of the revolutionary organization among Nakhchivan railway workers are noteworthy. This organization was led by Mashadi Ahmad Azimov and Anton Belidze (Jafarov, 2008). The Nakhchivan city police intelligence service could not halt the activities of the organization led by Mirzali bey Bektashi. The underground anti-war activities at the tea house eventually came to the attention of the police intelligence service, leading to intensified persecution. A report sent by Colonel Vasilyev, head of the Erivan governorate police department, to the Caucasus Viceroyalty office stated that the members of the circle carried out their work using secret signals to recognize each other, as possessing any written material could lead to severe punishment under Tsarist law (2, v.1-9).

### DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN NAKHCHIVAN AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

The democratic forces in Nakhchivan, including Mirzali bey Bektashov (Bektashi), Mirbagir Mirheyderzade, Nesrullah Sheykhov, Heydar Mammadov, Najafgulu and Rzagulu Najafovs, Meshedi Ahmad Azimov, and others, established the revolutionary committee of the "Hümmət" organization's Nakhchivan group under the name "Ülfət" (Friendship) in a teahouse, where they operated secretly. In late 1907, the head of the Nakhchivan district police, Sorokin, conducted a search at M. Bektashi's "Ülfət" teahouse, arresting the well-known revolutionary Abbas Agha from Kars, along with Kerbalayi Mammad Agha, Heydar Mammadov, and Najafgulu Najafov, and exiling them from the Nakhchivan region. The teahouse was subsequently closed by order of the governor of Erivan.

Outraged by this incident, other members of "Ülfət" wrote insulting letters to secret police agents who were obstructing revolutionary activities and even planned assassinations against them. The Nakhchivan democrats living in Tbilisi sent a "gift" under the name of the former head of Nakhchivan district police, Slawaczynski (who later became the military governor of Kutaisi), to eliminate the most active police informants. This "gift," known as a "hell machine" (a box containing an explosive bomb), was an act of terrorism but also a revolutionary measure. Suspicious of the gift, the police agents dared not open it themselves, as they recalled that the reactionary governor of Marand, Haji Sultan Shujai Nizami, had also been assassinated in a similar manner. Consequently, they invited the first precinct chief Berdzinyov, his assistant Ternor, and the adjutant of the district security chief, yasavul Nefedyev, to inspect the package. When the so-called "gift" sent under Slawaczynski's name was targeted and shot at, it exploded, revealing itself as a "hell machine."

Following this incident, police surveillance and repression against the leaders of the democratic movement intensified. Despite this, brave democrats like Mirzali bey Bektashi and Mirheyder Mirbagirzade continued their secret activities without fear of police persecution.

One of the revolutionaries fighting against the absolutist regime was Mirbagir Mirheyder oglu Mirheyderzade, who was born in 1877 in the village of Nurgut, Ordubad district, into a poor clerical-peasant family. Because the village of Nurgut was owned by Abbas bey Jafarqulu bey oglu and Mammadhasan bey, the villagers lived under harsh conditions and were often forced to leave their native lands in search of a better life. Mirheyder also moved to Nakhchivan city with his family, where his father enrolled him in a religious school in 1887. After completing the religious school in 1896, Mirbagir Mirheyderzade was sent to a higher religious school. After studying there for three years, he returned to Nakhchivan but was unable to find employment in the religious field. As a result, he moved to Tbilisi, where he became increasingly involved in the democratic movement.

Mirheyderzade's work and public activities were not welcomed by the Sheikh-ul-Islam of the Caucasus, and in 1904 he was dismissed from his religious duties. In 1907, he was completely stripped of his clerical rights. In his autobiography, M. Mirheyderzade wrote:

"Eventually, my activities displeased the Sheikh-ul-Islam, and I was dismissed. At that time, the Russo-Japanese War began. I read newspapers and journals about the war and the revolutionary situation against the tsarist regime, explaining these matters to listeners. It was at this moment that I developed revolutionary sentiments and hostility toward the tsarist government and absolutism. As a result, I became acquainted with the revolutionaries in Tbilisi and attended their meetings." (3, v.11-14)

From that moment on, Mirheyderzade's revolutionary activities began. The slogan "What do we need? Armament, armament, and more armament!" shouted at a rally in the Alexandrov Garden in Tbilisi following the Bloody Sunday Massacre on January 9, 1905, had a profound impact on his political and social views, motivating him to intensify his propaganda and agitation against the absolutist regime.

On this revolutionary path, Mirheyderzade met Nariman Narimanov, the leader of the Azerbaijani Social Democratic Party's "Hümmət" organization, in 1905. At that time, Narimanov was conducting revolutionary activities among Azerbaijani Iranians, giving lectures on pressing political topics. Having met Narimanov in Tbilisi, Mirheyderzade frequently conversed with him and attended his lectures.

In the spring of 1905, Mirheyderzade joined the "Hümmət" organization, as well as the Iranian revolutionary Social Democratic "Mücahid" Party led by Narimanov and Azizbeyov. He received political guidance from figures such as Ashraf Yuzbashev, Ali Taghizadeh, Setrak, and Banovich. His primary task was to carry out propaganda among Azerbaijani workers at a tobacco factory in Tbilisi. Additionally, the Tbilisi "Hümmət" organization sent Mirheyderzade on assignments to Batumi, Baku, Petrovsk (Makhachkala), Vladikavkaz, Kars, Erivan, and Nakhchivan to conduct organizational and propaganda activities.

Having abandoned his religious career for the freedom of the working class, M. Mirheyderzade played a significant role in organizing revolutionary "Hümmət" groups and conducting propaganda among workers in the cities he was sent to. As a staunch opponent of the tsarist and Iranian monarchical regimes, he was constantly pursued by police spies, Iranian intelligence agents, and consular operatives. Knowing that Mirheyderzade was an enemy of the Iranian Shah's monarchy, the Iranian Consul in Tbilisi informed the Caucasus Viceroyalty's Ministry of Internal Affairs that in November 1905, Mirheyderzade had formed a committee of 10-12 people with the aim of spreading anti-government propaganda among Muslims (3, v.11-14).

According to the intelligence department, Mirheyderzade established the Tbilisi branch of the General Muslim Committee and issued a declaration in the Azerbaijani language. These declarations were distributed in Tbilisi by Qulu, a resident of Nakhchivan, and Kerim, a resident of Iravan. Following the instructions of the Tbilisi organization, M. Mirheyderzade traveled to cities such as Kars, Batumi, Iravan, Nakhchivan, Tabriz, Rasht, and others, actively promoting democratic governance.

Due to all these activities, intelligence agencies constantly monitored him. In a report presented to the Caucasus viceroyalty about M. Mirheyderzade, Viceroy Vorontsov-Dashkov wrote the following note: "To Colonel Zasiipkin—arrest all three" (4, v.12). Following the order of the Caucasus viceroy, M. Mirheyderzade, along with Qulu and Kerim, who distributed the declarations, were arrested by Police Colonel Zasiipkin in Tbilisi and imprisoned in Metekhi prison. Regarding this arrest, Mirheyderzade wrote: "Finally, in 1906, I was arrested and placed in Metekhi prison, where I shared a cell with Mamdjovidze" (3, v.11-12).

After spending several months in Metekhi prison, M. Mirheyderzade was released. He resumed his political activities, carrying out revolutionary propaganda among Iranian workers under the directives of the Baku Social Democratic Party and the Tbilisi "Hümmət" branch. Despite strict police surveillance, meetings of Iranian workers were frequently held in Tbilisi, new members were recruited into the "Mücahid" party, and information about the Tabriz revolution was disseminated.

According to intelligence reports from the Tbilisi intelligence department, M. Mirheyderzade was considered a suspicious individual and was arrested again on August 28, 1907, and sent back to Metekhi prison. However, the intelligence plot against Mirheyderzade failed, and he was released two months later, on October 2. At this time, he officially renounced his status as a religious cleric.

On January 15, 1908, M. Mirheyderzade, who was a member of the Azerbaijani Social Democratic Party's "Hümmət" organization, was arrested again. After a 20-day investigation, he was released. That same January, the Iravan governorate's intelligence department was informed that Mirheyderzade had sent a membership

receipt for the Caucasus Social Democratic Party "Hümmət" from the Tbilisi post office to Heydar Kerbalayi Ali oğlu Mammadov, a resident of Nakhchivan.

M. Mirheyderzade not only maintained connections with "Hümmət" in Nakhchivan but was also one of its organizers. During this period, open-minded individuals from Nakhchivan living in Tbilisi, such as Rzaqulu and Najafqulu Najafovs, Eynali bey Sultanov, M. Mirheyderzade, Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, and others, were known as democrats fighting against the autocratic regime and its oppressive national policies.

M. Mirheyderzade and the Najafovs, who maintained direct ties with Nakhchivan, played an essential role in establishing the "Hümmət" and "Mücahid" organizations in Nakhchivan and Julfa. As the police intelligence agencies became aware of the existence of revolutionary organizations in Nakhchivan, surveillance was intensified.

A police report dated November 30, 1907, stated that secret searches led to the discovery of a booklet depicting members of the "Mücahid" organization in a photograph in the possession of Nakhchivan resident Hüseyn Aliqulu oğlu (4, v.192-193). The same police document noted that during a secret search, a membership card for the Iranian "Mücahid" branch of the "Hümmət" party was found with Nakhchivan resident Kerbalayi Mammad Taghiyev.

Additionally, the Nakhchivan intelligence department confiscated a two-month membership fee receipt for the Nakhchivan branch of the "Mücahid" organization and a "Hümmət" party membership card from Heydar Mammadov Kerbalayi Ali oğlu (4, v.192-193). Acting on the instructions of the Tbilisi intelligence department, the Iravan governorate's intelligence department conducted searches in Nakhchivan. The search confirmed that Heydar Kerbalayi Ali oğlu Mammadov possessed a membership receipt for the Nakhchivan branch of the "Mücahid" organization, a booklet from the Tbilisi branch of the Social Democratic "Hümmət" organization, and a two-month membership fee receipt. Consequently, Mammadov was arrested.

The impact of the first Russian revolution, as well as the worker strikes and demonstrations in Baku and Tbilisi, led to the formation of revolutionary groups and organizations in Nakhchivan. The "Hümmət" group, led by Nasrullah Sheikhov, Mirzali bey Bektashi, and others, started operating in Nakhchivan.

In addition to the revolutionary Social Democratic Party organizations, there were also groups that pursued a path of terrorism. One such organization was led by Asadagha Kangarli. Under his command, the head of Nakhchivan city police, Mirza Sadiq Khalilov, was assassinated. Funds were extorted by force, and several wealthy individuals were threatened.

The "Hümmət" organization, led by M. Mirheyderzade and Mirzali bey Bektashi, also played a crucial role in distributing legal literature in Nakhchivan. In this endeavor, merchants based in Julfa, such as M.S. Ordubadi, M.N. Sheikhov, N. Najafov, and others, contributed significantly. Məşədi Əhməd Əzimov, a locksmith at the Nakhchivan railway station, Anton Balidze, and others also played essential roles.

According to a police report, activists of "Hümmət" living in Julfa smuggled legal literature from Iran and distributed it among their like-minded supporters and the general public (4, v.195).

Məşədi Əhməd Əzimov, who was from the village of Parağa in the Ordubad region, propagated revolutionary ideas and legal Marxist literature among railway workers. He maintained direct contact with the Tiflis "Hümmət" branch, received legal literature, and distributed it among workers. In 1908, 81 copies of legal booklets in Russian were sent under the name of Məşədi Əhməd Əzimov and a person named V. Osipov. On December 24, 1908, at 11 p.m., V. Osipov arrived at the Nakhchivan station but was arrested by the gendarmerie, who confiscated the booklets and a note addressed to Məşədi Əhməd. The note, written in pencil, indicated that the booklets were to be delivered from Nakhchivan station to depot locksmith Əhməd Əzimov and conductor Balidze. Upon the confiscation of the note, searches were conducted in the homes of Məşədi Əhməd and Balidze, but nothing suspicious was found. The 81 confiscated booklets included 10 copies of "Borba," the Bolshevik publication in Tiflis, and 10 copies of "Raboçaya biblioteka." The "Borba" booklet analyzed topics such as the Bolsheviks' struggle against Menshevik ideology, the independent actions and social-democratic demands of the proletariat, the overthrow of absolutism, and the proletariat's hegemony in the revolution (5, v.1-4, 15-17).

These facts demonstrate that the Nakhchivan "Hümmət" group, led by M. Mirheyderzade and Mirzali bey Bəktəşi, was directly connected to the Social Democratic Party's Tiflis committee. The importation of

democratic literature into Nakhchivan further proves that the Nakhchivan "Hümmət" group and its leaders were engaged in significant efforts to overthrow absolutism not only in Tsarist Russia but also in Iran.

At the beginning of 1908, under the instruction of the Baku committee, M. Mirheydərzadə was sent to Tabriz and Khoy to inspect the activities of the "Hümmət" and "Mücahid" organizations. During this time, the Iranian parliament was dissolved by the Shah, triggering unrest against his actions. In Tabriz, clashes erupted between revolutionary groups and government troops. By the second week of fighting, the revolutionaries faced difficulties due to a shortage of weapons and ammunition. As a result, the Tabriz Revolutionary Committee sent Mirheydərzadə, accompanied by five armed Mujahideen, to Nakhchivan Culfa to report on the revolutionary situation in Tabriz to the committees in Tiflis and Baku. Since the Marand road was under Shah's military control, Mirheydərzadə and his companions had to travel through Güney and Khoy to reach Culfa. While passing through Khoy, they encountered the mounted troops of Khoy Governor Heydar Khan and faced difficulties reaching Iranian Culfa.

To support the Tabriz revolution, a supply of ammunition, bombs, and pistols was prepared, and Mirheydərzadə was summoned to the Baku committee for further instructions. In his memoirs, Mirheydərzadə wrote:

"The Baku organization (Baku committee) decided to lead the revolutionary movement in Iran and send reinforcements... I and one of the leaders of the Iranian revolution, Heydar Əmioğlu, went to Baku for training. Sattar Khan's request to the Baku committee for assistance in the Iranian revolution was discussed. A few days after this meeting, the Baku organization summoned me... I was tasked with escorting around 60 Transcaucasian and Iranian revolutionaries, along with three suitcases of weapons, to the Iranian Revolutionary Committee in Tabriz. To achieve this, I departed for Yevlakh station to travel via the Karabakh route. Upon arrival at Yevlakh station, two of the suitcases filled with weapons were confiscated by the gendarmes from my comrades Mehdiqulu and Abbasəli. However, through the intervention of a Karabakh commission agent, we bribed the gendarme chief with 150 manats and retrieved the suitcases. We then set off for the city of Shusha in Karabakh. In Shusha, we stayed at a large teahouse resembling an inn owned by a man known as Rəhim Əmi. Through Rəhim Əmi, we met with a well-known smuggler named Cavad and arranged for the transport of weapons and the 60 revolutionaries to Iran. He was to receive 40 manats for delivering the group and suitcases to the village of Musa in the Karabakh region. The payment was to be made based on a document provided by Ələsgər and Mirzəməmməd confirming their safe arrival in Iran" (4, v.196-201).

Under the orders of M. Mirheydərzadə, Cavad led a group of about 60 revolutionaries toward Tabriz via the Karabakh-Tabriz route. Advancing along the Acı River towards Tabriz, the group engaged in a fierce bayonet battle with the cavalry forces of monarchist İzzətullah Khan Makuni. In the bloody clash, Shah's troops were defeated, and İzzətullah Khan was killed. As a result, the revolutionary group joined the Tabriz "Mücahid" forces, securing the strategically significant Acı Bridge under the control of Tabriz revolutionaries. This event remains a significant memory in the history of the Iranian Revolution.

Following this mission, Mirheydərzadə returned to the Baku committee. After receiving further instructions, he was sent to Tehran. At the same time, the Batumi and Kutaisi committees decided to send two specialists capable of manufacturing bombs to Tehran. Along with Mirheydərzadə, Sattar Khan, Moxi, and Mirzəli Məmməd Khan were sent to Gilan. Under the guise of teachers, they stayed at the house of Sərdar Moxi's uncle, Yusif Khan, where they engaged in the production of bombs and other explosives. As a result of their preparations, an uprising was launched in Rasht, leading to the capture of the city.

Following instructions from the Baku committee, Mirheydərzadə returned to Rasht, where he engaged in propaganda and organizational work. After working there for a month, he was summoned to Baku due to illness and sent for treatment. After recovering, he returned first to Rasht and later to Tehran. By this time, all Transcaucasian authorities were searching for Mirheydərzadə. Unaware of the surveillance conducted by intelligence agencies, he remained in Iran until 1912, actively engaged in revolutionary propaganda and organizational activities (Khalilov, Aliyev, Guliyeva & Babayeva, 2024).

A police intelligence report states that "Mirbaghir Mirheyderzade, a resident of Nakhchivan city, is an ideological, old social democrat who was held in Tbilisi prison during 1905-1907 and participated in the Iranian revolution... He is well known as a party worker, especially among Georgian democrats in the

Caucasus. Additionally, he participated in the Iranian revolution and gained recognition there. From this information, it becomes clear that Mirbaghir has significant party influence in both the Caucasus and Iran" (6, v.7-8).

According to the intelligence agents' report, in 1910, police captain Burkoseli conducted a search in the houses of M. Bektashi and M. Mirheyderzade. However, no documents of interest to the police administration were found. After this, repression intensified, and surveillance over secret organizations increased. The leader of the organization, Mirzali Bey, was arrested. Following the search of M. Bektashi's and M. Mirheyderzade's houses, organization members were required to act with greater caution. After this event, written documents were stored carefully, and discussions were often not documented. According to one piece of information, during the 1910 search, an important document that could not be hidden was chewed and swallowed by one of the organization's members.

To participate closely in the Tabriz revolution, M. Mirheyderzade was sent to Julfa, where he was assigned to run a hotel for conducting political revolutionary activities. The hotel owner, B. Mirheyderzade, immediately sent all information and literature received from Tabriz to Mirzali Bey, who was living in Nakhchivan. As is known, during the Tabriz revolution, Julfa and Nakhchivan were transit cities between Tabriz and Tbilisi. At that time, information obtained from Sattar Khan was transmitted to Transcaucasia via Julfa. In this work, Kerbalayi Nasrullah Sheykhov, Bakhshali Agha Shahtakhtinski, Mirbaghir Mirheyderzade, Mammad Said Ordubadi, and others played a crucial role, facilitating close connections between the Nakhchivan organization and the Tabriz Revolutionary Committee (Khalilov, 2022).

Due to such revolutionary activities, in 1913, they were arrested by order of Colonel Snarinokin, the head of the Tabriz detachment, and were administratively exiled from Julfa. After the exile of organization members from Julfa, Mirzali Bey changed the underground working system of the revolutionary committee and, to divert the attention of intelligence-police agents, reopened a teahouse in Elchiyev's house. As before, Mirzali Bey's teahouse became a center for propaganda and agitation. Those who gathered there—Mashadi Alekber Safarov, Mohsun Selimov, Mashadi Ahmed Azimov, and others (about 40-45 people)—discussed the political situation of the time, read revolutionary newspapers, and contemplated future methods of struggle.

A police report on the activities of the secret organization states that those who visited the teahouse read newspapers in the Tatar language (Azerbaijani) and engaged in discussions on various political topics. However, planned operations to arrest them were unsuccessful because meetings were disguised as tea-drinking gatherings, and as soon as police officers arrived, the discussion shifted to irrelevant topics. Thus, the police were unable to obtain valuable information. Consequently, the police department had to rely on intelligence agent reports (2, v. 4).

In 1913-1914, the "Hummet" group in Nakhchivan significantly expanded its activities, intensifying propaganda against Tsarism among the population. However, with the outbreak of World War I, the "Hummet" group transitioned to clandestine operations, and a significant portion of its members dispersed. Despite the harsh conditions of wartime and severe persecution, experienced revolutionaries such as M. Mirheyderzade and Mirzali Bey Bektashi adapted party activities to the existing circumstances and continued the work of the "Hummet" group.

Between 1915 and 1916, the composition of the Nakhchivan "Hummet" group changed significantly and included individuals with different ideological perspectives. One faction, led by M. Mirheyderzade, Mirzali Bey Bektashi, and N. Sheykhov, continued the revolutionary traditions of "Hummet," actively opposing the absolutist regime and the perpetrators of the bloody war. Another faction, which included Kerbalayi Gafar Agha Safaralibeyov, Rauf Bey Safaralibeyov, Seyidali, and Ali Mammad Aliyev (nicknamed "Papish"), adopted a path of terrorism.

The Caucasus Governorate's intelligence office placed strict surveillance over political organizations that had existed in Nakhchivan since 1905-1907, including the "Hummet" group, the "Mujahid" party, and later, democratic organizations with national liberation ideas. The oversight of this surveillance and the operations against them were assigned to Colonel Vasilyev, the head of the Erivan Governorate intelligence office (Taleh, 2021).

Based on the information he gathered, Colonel Vasilyev wrote in a report to the head of the Caucasus Police Department on September 24, 1916:

"Since the spring of this year, our department has received information about the establishment of a small pan-Islamist society in Nakhchivan city, whose aim is to promote unity among local Tatar (Azerbaijani) Muslims. The efforts of this society are also directed at awakening a sense of self-awareness among Muslims, fostering a sense of solidarity with Turkey, and encouraging assistance to the latter in every possible way (Aliyev, 1959).

The first intelligence reports regarding the existence of this society date back to when one of its current members, Nakhchivan resident Kerbalayi Gafar Agha Safaralibeyov, spoke in September 1915 about his emotions regarding the arrest of the Turkish ambassador (consul) by Russians in Rasht. The issue is that this consul held all information regarding the pan-Islamist movement in the Caucasus, and written reports about the situation were submitted to him. A few days before the consul's arrest, Zeynal Mammadov departed from Tbilisi to meet with him for a personal report on pan-Islamism, carrying business letters from several individuals, including Faig Nemanzade, a contributor to the 'Molla Nasreddin' magazine; Eynali Bey Sultanov, a resident of Tbilisi known by the alias 'Sultanov'; and Kerbalayi Gafar Agha Safaralibeyov, a resident of Nakhchivan.

Aware of this and fearing that their letters would fall into the hands of the Russian government, Kerbalayi Gafar Agha immediately left Nakhchivan for Baku and took his daughter there for her safety, enrolling her in one of Baku's schools. When leaving Tbilisi, the mentioned individual was visibly anxious and inquired with his comrades about what correspondence had been seized during the Turkish consul's arrest. In that conversation, Kerbalayi Gafar Agha Safaralibeyov stated that the pan-Islamist society in Nakhchivan was connected to a similar society in Khoy, Iran, and that letters were sent there through Kerbalayi Ali Babayev" (7, v. 59-86).

### CONCLUSION

As a result of the police and secret agent persecutions against the members of the revolutionary organization operating in Nakhchivan, members of the revolutionary movement were arrested. Under the leadership of the Irevan Governorate Secret Police Department, these operations were carried out in October 1916. Regarding the arrests of the secret organization members, M. Mirheydarzade wrote in his short biography:

*"Based on secret police information, after a search was conducted in my house in October 1916, I was arrested by the Irevan Governorate gendarmerie. Apart from me, my comrades Bektaşî, Safaraliyev, and others were also arrested. We were first imprisoned in Nakhchivan Prison and then sent to the Irevan Governorate Prison."* (4, v. 201-202)

As M. Mirheydarzade wrote in his biography, the secret organization against the government in Nakhchivan was exposed, leading to mass arrests among its members. Out of the 40 individuals listed by the Irevan Governorate Secret Police Department, 31 were arrested, while 9 managed to evade capture. The arrested individuals included:

- Mirzali Bey Bektashov (Bektaşî) – resident of Nakhchivan city
- Karbalayi Ali Babayev
- M. Mirheydarzade
- Haji Mehdi Bagirov
- Ismayil Bey Jamalbeyov
- Alakbar Babayev
- Haji Huseynali Gurbanov
- Mirza Jabbar Bektashev
- Seyid Rza Seyidov
- K. Alakbar – resident of Karachug village, Nakhchivan district
- K. Baba Oglu
- Mashadi Abbas Zal Oglu – resident of Jahri village



- Rauf Bey Safaralibeyov – resident of Julfa region, Nakhchivan district
- Mirali Abdullayev
- Jabbar Huseyn Oglu – resident of Yayji village
- Molla Mahmud Chakir
- Qasim Haji Ali Oglu
- K. Qasim Huseyn Oglu – resident of Zeynedin village, Nakhchivan district
- M. Huseyn Aliyev – resident of Paragha village, Nakhchivan district
- Mirza Mahmud Asgarov – resident of Nehram village

All were arrested and sent to the Irevan Governorate Prison. They remained there as political prisoners until the February Revolution of 1917. After their release, they returned to Nakhchivan and continued their activities. They arrested Nakhchivan district chief Mamulashvili and other police leaders, but due to their lack of power, they were unable to seize local authority.

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