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Роль Гейдара Алиева в истории Южного Кавказа (1969-1982)

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Аннотация. Основной целью исследования является привлечение внимания к роли влияния личностного фактора на экономическое, социальное и культурное развитие Азербайджанской ССР среди 15 союзных республик Советского Союза в 60-80-е годы XX века. В статье всесторонне проанализирована суть целеустремленной политики общенационального лидера азербайджанского народа Гейдара Алиева, который возглавил республику в советские годы, и выявляются основные направления социально-экономического развития Южного Кавказа в тот период. Научная новизна: была определена роль фактора личности в трансформации Азербайджанской ССР в ведущую республику Южного Кавказа, наряду с лидерскими качествами общенационального лидера Гейдара Алиева, были выявлено влияние его личностных отношений с другими политическими деятелями, представленными в руководстве СССР, на общие процессы исторического развития. В результате отмечается, что период политической и государственной деятельности Гейдара Алиева, охватывающий 1969-1982 годы, можно охарактеризовать как период подлинного развития, прогресса, возрождения, возврата к национальному самосознанию. Этот этап стал ключевым для Азербайджана не только в советский период, но также оказал существенное воздействие на последующий постсоветский период. Умелая и дальновидная политика Гейдара Алиева превратила Азербайджан из самой отсталой республики, входившей в состав Советского Союза, в одну из самых быстроразвивающихся стран Южного Кавказа.

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The role of Heydar Aliyev in the history of the South Caucasus (1969-1982)

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Abstract. The main purpose of the study is to draw attention to the role of the personality factor in the economic, social and cultural development of the Azerbaijan SSR among the 15 republics of the Soviet Union from the 1960s to the 1980s. The article analyzes the essence of the purposeful policy of the national leader of the Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev, who led the country during the Soviet years, and identifies the main direction of the socio-economic development of the South Caucasus during that period. Scientific innovation: the role of the personality factor in the transformation of the Azerbaijan SSR into the leading republic of the South Caucasus was identified. The leadership characteristics of the national leader Heydar Aliyev, as well as the influence of his relations with other political figures represented in the government of the USSR on the overall processes of historical development were determined. As a result, it was noted that the period of Heydar Aliyev's political and statehood activities covering the years 1969-1982 can also be characterized as a period of true development, progress, revival, and return to national self-awareness after the Sovietization of Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliyev's policy transformed Azerbaijan from the most backward republic included in the Soviet Union into the most rapidly developing country of the South Caucasus.

Introduction

Problem statement. In 1920, the Bolsheviks, putting an end to the independence of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, declared the establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaijan. Abstaining from direct intervention in the attributes of independent statehood due to the international political conditions of that period, the Bolsheviks implemented the process of Sovietization of the South Caucasus republics gradually. The treaty on the establishment of the USSR was signed on December 29, 1922 (Договор об образовании Союза Советских Социалистических Республик. 1922 // Государственный архив Российской Федерации (ГАРФ), ф. Р-3316, оп. 1, д. 5, л. 1-3). Subsequently, the rights of the republics included in the Union became more restricted, but the situation in the Azerbaijan SSR was even worse. The main natural resources of Azerbaijan, including oil and other strategic products, were sent to other republics. The republic's economy was managed unilaterally for exploitative purposes. The alteration of the national

composition of the population in favor of other nationalities in the oil-rich areas, especially in Baku, and the oppression of Azerbaijanis were observed. Despite the fact that relative changes occurred after the end of World War II and the death of I. Stalin, the Azerbaijan SSR was significantly falling behind the other Union republics in terms of economic development. Notwithstanding the smaller territory and less population potential, the other two Union republics in the South Caucasus – Georgia and Armenia – were surpassing Azerbaijan. That situation changed in the 1970s. The Azerbaijan SSR became one of the most advanced republics of the Union, which occurred after Heydar Aliyev had come to power. Thus, the relevance of the research topic is seen in the fact that the results and scientific conclusions obtained from the study of the state activities of Heydar Aliyev, one of the prominent historical figures of the Caucasus, a politician who gained worldwide fame for his peacekeeping activities in the region, have immense scientific and theoretical significance in studying the history of the peoples of the Caucasus in the 20th century. The relevance of the question of the impact that historical personalities have on the formation of geopolitical realities in the Caucasus persists to this day and, according to the laws of objective historical development, will remain unchanged in the future.

The research task is to scientifically substantiate the fact that during the existence of the USSR, as a result of Heydar Aliyev's state activities in the position of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (CP) of Azerbaijan, the republic underwent a period of intensive development. Within the framework of this task, the article deliberately explores such issues as the political and economic initiatives undertaken by Heydar Aliyev during his Soviet-era leadership of Azerbaijan, the examination of implemented reforms and their impact on the socio-economic development of the republic, and the determination of specific indicators and achievements associated with economic growth and social progress in Azerbaijan during Heydar Aliyev's leadership. The article also includes a comparative analysis of the economic development of other South Caucasus Soviet republics of the USSR.

Methodology. When writing the article, the methods of comparative analysis and content analysis were mainly used. Meanwhile, to reflect on the circumstances of that period through statistical indicators, statistical methods were also used.

Theoretical background. Different aspects of the subject have been touched on in various works written so far. In particular, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor I. Huseynova drew attention to that issue in her works, as well as in her articles on the state-building of the country (Hüseynova, 2017, p. 43-55). The researcher, academician and Professor I. Huseynova, who laid the initial foundations for the scientific study of the national leader's political activities through her doctoral thesis titled "The role of Heydar Aliyev in the formation and strengthening of the independent Azerbaijan State" in Azerbaijan historiography, has also devoted special attention to the national leader's activities aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the region in her works (Hüseynova, 2008). B. Nəbiyev wrote a dissertation on the economic development of the Azerbaijan SSR during the period studied (Nəbiyev, 2007), V. Andriyanov, H. Miralamov in their work dedicated to Heydar Aliyev's life path (Andriyanov, Mirələmov, 2008) and H. Babaoglu in his monograph on the political aspects of the national leader's political legacy (Babaoglu, 2013) refer to numerous events and processes of that period. In addition to the above-mentioned authors, there are also references to the works of such authors as N. Zenkovich (Zenkoviç, 2007), E. Akhundova, Y. Akhundova (Axundova, Axundova, 2008) and M. Gasimli (Qasımlı, 2017, p. 20-29) in the article. In the work of Nikolay Zenkovich, considered one of the most renowned researchers in contemporary Russian historiography, the activities of Heydar Aliyev as a statesman during both the Soviet era and the period following the restoration of the Republic of Azerbaijan's state independence are addressed. The steps taken by Heydar Aliyev in defending the interests of the peoples of the Caucasus and the issue of his recognition as the leader of the entire South Caucasus, even during the years of the existence of the Soviet Union, are also discussed. Zenkovich's work should be evaluated in terms of researching Heydar Aliyev's political and state activities involving objective and credible sources (Zenkoviç, 2007, p. 608). Based on the information provided by the direct participants and the processes taking place in the republic at different times, as well as the archival sources, there are significant facts in the multi-volume work "Heydar Aliyev. Personality and time", prepared by E. Akhundova, Y. Akhundova for the study of the distinguished statesman's political activities in the historical context of the peoples of the Caucasus (Axundova, Axundova, 2008, p. 6-202). In one of M. Gasimli's works, the facts of preventing Armenia's unfounded claims to Azerbaijan lands and the activities of Armenian terrorist organizations during the Soviet period, as a result of Heydar Aliyev's state activities, are highlighted (Qasımlı, 2006, p. 608). These facts hold great significance for the research topic.

Research material. In the study, the multi-volume compilation "Our independence is eternal", statistical publications of the Presidential Library of the Republic of Azerbaijan and some archival documents were used as the main sources:

- Əliyev H. Ə. Minilliklərin qovuşağında. Bakı: XXI YNE, 2001.
- Əliyev H. Ə. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir: 46 cild. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 1998. C. 5.
- Əliyev H. Ə. Müstəqilliyimiz əbədidir: 46 cild. Bakı: Azərnəşr, 2010. C. 31.
- Əsrlər bərabər illər 1969-1999. Faktlar və rəqəmlər / Azərbaycan Respublikası Prezidentinin Katibliyinin nəşri. Bakı: Nurool nəşriyyatı, 1999.

- Кремлевские будни Гейдара Алиева / сост.: Э. Аскеров. Баку: Адильоглы, 2007.
- Qayıdış (1990-1993) / tərtibçi: Ə. Həsənov. Bakı: Azərbaycan, 2008.

The book "Return" (Qayıdış, 2008), which compiles various interviews and official documents, is dedicated to the study of Heydar Aliyev's statesmanship both during the Soviet era and in the years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, especially during the Nakhchivan period. The book serves as a research source that encapsulates numerous references for the examination of this period.

The practical significance of the research lies in the fact that its results and scientific conclusions can be applied in various directions: in scientific research on the contemporary history of the peoples of the Caucasus, including

the writing of textbooks and teaching materials on the history of the peoples of the Caucasus; in lectures and seminars on the history of the peoples of the Caucasus in specialized university departments; in the training of specialists in the field of Caucasus Studies who are involved in regulating relations of the Republic of Azerbaijan with other republics of the South Caucasus, the Russian Federation and federal subjects of the Russian Federation in the North Caucasus at the present stage and in the future.

Discussion and results

Since 1969, a new period in the history of Azerbaijan had begun. On July 14 of that year, at a plenum of the Central Committee of the CP of Azerbaijan chaired by Ivan Kapitonov, the secretary of the Central Committee of the CP of the Soviet Union, the question of electing Heydar Aliyev as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP of the Azerbaijan SSR was discussed (Andriyanov, Mirələmov, 2008, p. 97). Heydar Aliyev was elected as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP of Azerbaijan (Babaoğlu, 2013, p. 26). After that, Azerbaijan laid down a strong foundation for *building* the most advanced republic of the Caucasus.

Immediately after Heydar Aliyev was elected, he faced many problems and tasks that he had to address. In previous times, the government of the Soviet Union, striving to create a developed Soviet Azerbaijan as a model of a Soviet republic, attractive to countries in the Near and Middle East, ceased to attach significant importance to this matter after World War II. On the other hand, there was no doubt that the existence of a Muslim and Turkish republic in the Caucasus, economically developed and situated near countries such as Iran and Turkey, held significant importance for the Soviet Union's foreign policy influence itself. In this context, it can be unequivocally stated that until Heydar Aliyev took over the leadership of Soviet Azerbaijan, none of the leaders of the republic managed to persuade the Union government to abandon this idea.

In the years preceding Heydar Aliyev's coming to power in the Azerbaijan SSR, the growth rate of the overall product in Azerbaijan lagged behind the indicators of other republics of the USSR, including Georgia and Armenia. Paying attention to some facts helps to elucidate the economic picture of that period. For instance, in the year before Heydar Aliyev's leadership, 20 percent of the enterprises operating in the republic failed to fulfill their product sales plan. The labor productivity of the Ministries of Oil Extraction, Oil Refining and Petrochemical Industry, the Ministry of Construction Materials Producing Industry, the Ministries of Industrial Engineering and Agricultural Building Construction significantly decreased (Axundova, Axundova, 2008, p. 8). The level of unemployment in the republic was high. It was especially noticeable in big cities. In Baku, 19,000 school graduates could not get a job, and in Ganja, there were more than 15,000 unemployed.

Although Azerbaijan had agriculturally useful and fertile lands, the indicators in this field were not so good either. The yield of grain crops lagged behind the average for the USSR. The Azerbaijan SSR ranked last among all the Union republics for cotton yield and livestock breeding. Heydar Aliyev thoroughly analyzed the situation in the field of agriculture at the next plenum of the Central Committee of the CP of Azerbaijan on August 11, 1970. As the head of the republic, he announced the duties arising from the decision of the Central Committee of the CP of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the USSR dated July 23, 1970 "On measures for the development of agriculture in the Azerbaijan SSR" (Личность и эпоха, 2008, p. 23).

Despite the fact that, according to the indicators of the five-year plan adopted in the Azerbaijan SSR, the growth of gross product in 1968 was planned to be 24.7 percent compared to 1965, the actual growth was only 19.7 percent. The total product growth indicator was 29 percent in general for the USSR in that period (Axundova, Axundova, 2008, p. 12).

In 1970, it was the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaijan. This drew the center's attention to Azerbaijan. The visit of the First Secretary of the USSR Central Committee Leonid Brezhnev to Baku on September 30, 1970 was already a sign of such attention. In connection with the awarding of the Azerbaijan SSR with the order of the "October Revolution" on October 2, 1970, the leaders of two other South Caucasus Soviet republics, including the candidate for membership of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CP of the USSR, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP of Georgia Vasiliy Mjavanadze, and the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP of Armenia Anton Kochinyan, also visited Baku (Кремлевские будни..., 2007, p. 19-20). The announcement of awarding the Order of the October Revolution to the Azerbaijan SSR was made by Leonid Brezhnev, who was previously in Baku, and the corresponding decree was signed by the Chairman and the Secretary of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR N. Podgorny and M. Georgadze, respectively (Кремлевские будни..., 2007, p. 19-21).

At the end of October of that year, N. Podgorny, who participated in the opening of the Trans-Iranian gas pipeline constructed with the technical and economic support of the USSR, visited the Astara and Lankaran districts of the Azerbaijan SSR, where he familiarized himself with the agricultural activities in the region (Axundova, Axundova, 2008, p. 26).

The visits of Leonid Brezhnev and Nikolai Podgorny to the Azerbaijan SSR were highly significant in the sense that through numerous discussions Heydar Aliyev managed to persuade the leaders of the USSR of the necessity for special programs aimed at the socio-economic development of the Azerbaijan SSR. He also successfully argued the idea of achieving better economic performance by utilizing the immense potential of the Azerbaijan Republic. Thanks to the considerable efforts of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP of the Azerbaijan SSR Heydar Aliyev, from 1969 to 1982, the government of the USSR adopted five special programs, aimed at ensuring comprehensive progress in the republic's economy.

Consequently, in the years following the end of World War II, for the first time, the goals set for the development of the economy for the 9th and 10th five-year periods were achieved by the Azerbaijan SSR ahead of time. Afterwards, in his speeches, the national leader Heydar Aliyev repeatedly emphasized what the outcomes achieved at that time led to later. In one such speech, he stated that Azerbaijan's path to independence was determined at that time, and targeted activities were performed to establish state sovereignty. For this purpose, first of all, the task of providing economic independence has been fulfilled, and Azerbaijan's economic relations have been strengthened not only with the Union republics, but also with other foreign countries. In 1970-1985, there was observed a dynamic growth in the production of industrial and agricultural products (Əliyev, 2010, p. 289-290).

During Heydar Aliyev's tenure as the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP of Azerbaijan, the republic's role in the all-Union division of labor significantly increased. The republic began to occupy an important place in the foreign economic relations of the USSR. Labor productivity in the Azerbaijan SSR was much higher compared to other republics of the Caucasus.

During the tenure of Heydar Aliyev as the head of the republic, there were carried out structural reforms in the economy to ensure the dynamic development of the industry. In the period between 1969 and 1982, the industrial sector in Azerbaijan surpassed not only the Union republics, but also a number of foreign countries for development rates. The average annual growth of the industry reached 7.9 percent (Qasımlı, 2006, p. 26). Over the past 100 years, from 1869 to 1969, only 735 large industrial facilities were put into operation in Azerbaijan, while in 1969-1982, this number increased to 1048 (Əsrlərə bərabər..., 1999, p. 5).

Alongside many industries typical for Azerbaijan, focus on the development of new industries that could be profitable was also enhanced. Technical modernization and reconstruction processes were implemented in the republic's machine-building, chemical and petrochemical, and non-ferrous metallurgy industries. There were established new enterprises for the processing of hydrocarbon resources. In the 1960s-1970s, with the decisions made at the level of the USSR at the initiative of the national leader Heydar Aliyev, numerous significant works were carried out towards the development of the industrial potential in Azerbaijan and the improvement of the industrial structure of the republic. Large-scale enterprises for instrument manufacturing, radio engineering, electrical engineering, machine-tool building and automotive industrial enterprises were established. These initiatives played an important role in fundamentally improving the localization of industrial enterprises in the Azerbaijan SSR. The steps taken with the purpose of allocation of the industry in different cities and districts of the republic helped to use the labor resources effectively and improve the welfare of the people. During the years 1970-1985, there were put into operation 213 new large industrial enterprises (Əliyev, 2010, p. 291). Only in 1970-1982, about 250 new enterprises, workshops, and manufacturing facilities were created in other fields in the Azerbaijan SSR along with industry (Qayıdış, 2008, p. 21).

During the years when Heydar Aliyev headed the Azerbaijan SSR, the republic was ranked first among all Caucasus republics in the production of various oil products, equipment exploited in the oil industry, steel pipes, non-ferrous metals, synthetic rubber, electric motors, construction materials, household air conditioners, spare motor vehicle parts, mineral fertilizers, porcelain, pottery, carpets and rugs. If in 1969 the number of active industrial enterprises in the Azerbaijan SSR was 735, by 1982 this figure had reached 1048 (Əsrlərə bərabər..., 1999, p. 4). In the 1970s and 1980s, the Azerbaijan SSR actively participated in the foreign trade relations of the USSR. In just 1979, the republic's 110 industrial enterprises exported goods to 80 countries, totaling 350 types of products and amounting to 209,4 million manats (Heydər Əliyev, 2013, p. 192).

In 1969-1982, the agricultural production in the republic also enhanced rapidly. During that period, the total volume of production in the agricultural sector increased by 2.5 times (Əsrlərə bərabər..., 1999, p. 10). This was 1.5 times more than in the preceding 50 years. According to the main indicators of the major construction plan implementation, the Azerbaijan SSR ranked first among the South Caucasus republics in 1982. While the percentage of the capital construction completion in the South Caucasus was 92.1 percent in the Georgian SSR and 82 percent in the Armenian SSR, it reached 100,3 percent in the Azerbaijan SSR (Heydər Əliyev, 2013, p. 155).

For the high achievements in the republic's economy, especially in the field of agriculture, Heydar Aliyev was awarded the "Order of Lenin" in 1976. It should be noted that Heydar Aliyev had received the "Order of Lenin" for the first time on May 8, 1973 for his services to the CP and the Soviet state and in connection with the 50th anniversary of his birth (Кремлевские будни..., 2007, p. 48). On August 24, 1979, Heydar Aliyev was awarded the title of the Hero of Socialist Labor in connection with the development of the economy of Azerbaijan, the increase in the efficiency of social production, over-fulfillment of annual plans, as well as for his great organizational and political activity (Кремлевские будни..., 2007, p. 106). On February 28, 1980, L. Smirnov, the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, presented the Azerbaijan SSR with a temporary Red Banner for the victory in the socialist competition. The ceremony, which took place in the palace named after V. I. Lenin in Baku, was attended by Pavel Gilashvili and Babken Sarkisov, the chairmen of the Presidiums of the Supreme Soviets of Georgia and Armenia from the Caucasus republics (Axundova, Axundova, 2008, p. 70).

On March 10, 1982, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted a decision to award Heydar Aliyev with the "October Revolution" order for his great services in the development of the economy. The decision signed by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR L. Brezhnev and his secretary M. Georgadze stated that the production plans for 1981 were successfully implemented as a result of Heydar Aliyev's high organizational skills (О награждении кандидата в члены политбюро ЦК КПСС, первого секретаря ЦК КП Азербайджана, товарища Алиева Г. А. Орденом имени «Октябрьской революции» // ГАРФ, ф. 7523, оп. 135, д. 368, л. 168).

In 1969-1981, more than 250 large plants, factories and workshops were constructed and put into operation in Azerbaijan. There was launched the production processes in a number of new directions in the republic's economy.

During the years studied, the volume of oil extracted daily in the Azerbaijan SSR reached 41 thousand tons. Every day, 37 million cubic meters of gas were produced in Azerbaijan. Besides, 2,200 tons of steel were cast, 69,000 meters of pipes, 4,900 car tires, 2,700 tons of mineral fertilizers, 968 household air conditioners, and 734 refrigerators were manufactured in the factories of the republic. The size of fabric woven daily in the Azerbaijan SSR reached 546 thousand meters (Əliyev, 2001, p. 22-23).

For many years, the measures of the government of the Soviet Union to turn Armenia into the "Silicon Valley" of the USSR and increase the production of technological products there led to desolation of this industry in the Azerbaijan SSR. After Heydar Aliyev came to power, new progressive industries, such as electronic machine building, the radio industry, the manufacturing of machinery and equipment for the light and food industries were established and developed in the Azerbaijan SSR. The launch of the Baku factory of household air conditioners gave a push to the development of a prospective field such as electrical engineering in the republic. In particular, it should be noted that the establishment of the household air conditioners factory specifically in Azerbaijan, which had been considered one of the most advanced technological plants of the USSR at the time when it had been founded, took place thanks to Heydar Aliyev's long and intense struggle with many people in the leadership of the USSR. The idea of establishing such a production enterprise in the USSR was first expressed during Leonid Brezhnev's visit to one of the Central Asian countries, and then Heydar Aliyev, taking this opportunity, convinced the head of the Soviet Union to agree to establish the enterprise in Azerbaijan. At that time, there was no enterprise in the Soviet Union or in the countries of the Middle East manufacturing a similar product. After Heydar Aliyev proposed the idea of establishing a production enterprise in Azerbaijan, many representatives of the USSR government sought to prove its impossibility specifically in Azerbaijan. In particular, Alexey Antonov, the Minister of Electrotechnical Industry of the USSR, strongly opposed the construction of the enterprise in Azerbaijan. Finally, in 1973, Heydar Aliyev, after meeting with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR A. Kosygin and L. Brezhnev, once again substantiated his position. Despite a significant portion of the construction period having already passed, he managed to ensure that the plant was built and launched in a short period from 1973 to 1975. At that time, it was also possible to purchase a lot of equipment from "Toshiba" company in Japan upon the insistence of Heydar Aliyev. On December 25, 1975, the president of "Toshiba" Doko Toshio arrived in Baku for the opening of the plant. The president of the company, which was a manufacturer of machinery with a 100-year history, was surprised that such a plant was built and put into operation in Azerbaijan within two years and proposed to build a second such plant (Əliyev, 1998, p. 215). It should be noted that at that time, D. Toshio was considered one of the famous personalities of the technology industry not only in Japan but throughout the world. He was one of the main creators of the Japanese Economic Miracle, which occurred after World War II. He headed "Toshiba" Company and the Japan Business Federation from 1974 to 1980 (Doko Toshio // Encyclopedia Britannica. 2022, 31 July. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Doko-Toshio>).

The traditional fields of industry were also developed. Azerbaijan implemented fundamental reconstruction of refining enterprises for the first time in the history of the oil industry. The double processing of oil, which could be considered progressive for that time, was applicable thanks to the machines and equipment installed in such refining facilities. It is clear from the research of B. Nəbiyev that in the 1970s and 1980s, the oil refining enterprises of the Azerbaijan SSR were reconstructed. There occurred a major turnaround in the operations of the Baku Oil Refinery, the New Baku Oil Refinery named after V. I. Lenin and the Oil Refinery named after the XXII Congress of the CP of the Soviet Union (Nəbiyev, 2007, p. 38).

In the 1970s, there were fundamental changes in the power supply of the republic. Thanks to the consistent activity of Heydar Aliyev, there was created an independent and extensive system of electric power enterprises in Azerbaijan irrespective of other countries. As a result, an energy system with an electricity production capacity of 5000 MW was created (Əliyev, 2001, p. 23). In 1981, on the personal initiative of Heydar Aliyev, the works were accelerated in the direction of putting the Azerbaijan State District Power Station (DRES), the largest thermal power plant in the South Caucasus, into operation (Axundova, Axundova, 2008, p. 202).

The development of the transport system is considered a factor that significantly impacts the progress of both industry and agriculture. During the years when Heydar Aliyev ruled over the Azerbaijan SSR, the length of roads with an asphalt surface constructed and put into operation was about 21,000 kilometers (Əsrlərə bərabər..., 1999, p. 5). The expansion of the metro network (the Metropolitan Area Network) and the commissioning of new stations in the territory of Baku City are associated with the name of Heydar Aliyev. It should be mentioned that until 1969, the length of the metro line in Baku was only 10 kilometers, and the number of stations in use was only 5. In the period from 1969 to 1982, the length of the metro lines increased to 28 kilometers, and the number of stations reached 19 (Əsrlərə bərabər..., 1999, p. 7). For comparison, it can also be noted that from 1966 to 1969, in total 9 metro stations were built in Georgia, while in 1969-1982, only 7 stations were constructed and put into operation (Дубровская Л. Метро Тбилиси – первое на Кавказе и четвертое в СССР // Подземный эксперт. 2017. <https://undergroundexpert.info/metropoliteny-mira-i-rf/metro-mira/metro-tbilisi-2/>). In Armenia, it was only possible to start the construction of the metro in the city of Yerevan in 1981. Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, despite the huge amount of aid and subsidies allocated to Armenia by the USSR leadership, only 13.4 kilometers of the metro line were built, and the number of stations was 10 (Метро в Ереване. 2019. <https://armeniadiscovery.com/ru/articles/yerevan-metro>).

Heydar Aliyev knew that ensuring the sustainable development of the republic was directly related to raising the level of education of the population. In 1969-1982, as a result of Heydar Aliyev's purposeful policy, there were constructed

more than 700 school buildings in Azerbaijan, and the number of universities and institutes in the republic rose from 12 to 17. Approximately 100,000 students were enrolled in the republic's higher education institutions (Cəfərov, 2017, p. 7). Various measures were taken to increase the number of the Azerbaijani youth, not only in the higher education institutions of the republic but also in the prestigious education institutions of other republics of the Soviet Union. Statistic indicators manifest that during Heydar Aliyev's first leadership of the republic, the number of young people sent outside Azerbaijan to study in education institutions in other countries was more than 10,000.

In 1982, when Heydar Aliyev advanced from the position of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP of the Azerbaijan SSR to the position of the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, the Azerbaijan SSR ranked first among other republics of the Union, including the South Caucasus republics, regarding the rate of development of national income. In 1980, national income per capita in Azerbaijan reached 81 percent, and the average annual growth rate of national income per capita reached 5.8 percent. As a comparison, we can say that in 1960-1965, this indicator was 1.2 percent (Zenkoviç, 2007, p. 93).

In parallel with the economic development of the Azerbaijan SSR, Heydar Aliyev did his best to achieve the development of national thought and culture in the republic by all possible means. The number of Azerbaijanis increased rapidly in cities of great and strategic importance, especially in Baku. The works implemented, including the rapid changes in the development of Azerbaijan, caused the Azerbaijan SSR to rank first among other Caucasus republics, and in the meantime, Heydar Aliyev was accepted by the government of the USSR as the leader of the Transcaucasian republics in general. The Russian historian Nikolay Zenkovich emphasized in his work that Heydar Aliyev was not only the head of the Azerbaijan SSR in those years but also the leader of the entire Transcaucasia. N. Zenkovich writes that at that time, foreign observers called Heydar Aliyev a well-known leader of the South Caucasus – Transcaucasia. The leaders of other republics that were part of the Soviet Union tried to gain his sympathy and friendship (Zenkoviç, 2007, p. 93).

Talking about the period when Heydar Aliyev led the Azerbaijan SSR, Professor I. Huseynova writes that since the 1970s and 1980s, a reliable foundation and a social, economic, legal and spiritual intellectual environment was formed for regaining national independence in the future. Heydar Aliyev paved the way for Azerbaijanis to join the ideas of freedom, independence and sovereignty day-by-day with his practical activities (Hüseynova, 2008, p. 45).

A. Gasimov highlights a number of matters to indicate the level of development during Heydar Aliyev's leadership in the Azerbaijan SSR. He writes that in the 1970s and 1980s, the Azerbaijan SSR was awarded the orders of the "October Revolution" and the "Friendship of Peoples" for its achievements under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev and the "Order of Lenin" for the third time for implementing the 10th five-year plan ahead of schedule. The Azerbaijan SSR became the winner of the All-Union Socialism competition in the territory for 12 consecutive years and was awarded with Red banners (Qasımov, 2009, p. 30).

It is possible to mention numerous facts manifesting the high influence of Heydar Aliyev, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CP of Azerbaijan, in the USSR. For example, when the USSR delegation headed by L. Brezhnev visited the German Democratic Republic in 1971, that delegation included only Heydar Aliyev from the South Caucasus republics and Grigory Zolotukh, the First Secretary of the Krasnodar Regional Committee of the Central Committee of the CP of the USSR from the North Caucasus (Кремлевские будни..., 2007, p. 40). In the following years, Heydar Aliyev directly led the delegations of the USSR visiting many Middle Eastern and Eastern European countries.

Conclusion

As it is seen from the analyses conducted, the period of Heydar Aliyev's political and statehood activities covering the years 1969-1982 characterized as the first term of Heydar Aliyev's political leadership in Azerbaijan left a significant mark not only in the history of the republic but also in the overall history of the Caucasus region. During this time, amid intense economic and political competitions between the capitalist world and the USSR, the South Caucasus Soviet republics sought to achieve economic progress. Simultaneously, there was fierce competition among the USSR republics for attracting financial resources to national-state institutions.

The key factors that propelled the Azerbaijan SSR to the forefront in the studied years were the personality and wise, balanced, and forward-thinking policies of Heydar Aliyev. Before Heydar Aliyev came to political power in the Azerbaijan SSR, the republic, rich in natural resources, had ranked among the last in various economic indicators among all Union republics.

During this period, as a result of Heydar Aliyev's state activities, the Azerbaijan model of political management and economic development was formed in the South Caucasus, and the positive features of this model were later used in other Caucasus republics. In regulating relations with the republics and peoples of the Caucasus, Heydar Aliyev relied on historical experience, as well as his extraordinary personal qualities as a prominent statesman, exceptional oratorical skills, and diplomatic mastery, remarkable persuasive ability.

During the Soviet period of his state activities, Heydar Aliyev paid special attention to the development of good neighborly relations with the nearby Caucasus Soviet states, including the North Caucasus autonomous Soviet republics as part of Russia. It was evident that the construction of road and transportation infrastructure in the North Caucasus, in Georgia, was crucial for the development of the Azerbaijan SSR. Achievements in the economic sphere in the neighboring Caucasus republics and the autonomous entities of the RSFSR also benefited Azerbaijanis residing there. Therefore, Heydar Aliyev considered regional development as one of the essential conditions for ensuring the comprehensive development of all peoples of the Caucasus.

Research perspectives. This study provides a unique opportunity for a deeper understanding of the impact of the state activities of the leader of one of the South Caucasus republics, Heydar Aliyev, on the political and socio-economic development of the South Caucasus during the Soviet period. Analyzing Heydar Aliyev's state activities helps to identify the influence of his decisions and initiatives on interethnic relations in the region, fostering closer ties between the peoples of the Caucasus. Examining measures for the development of industry, agriculture, and other sectors of the economy under Heydar Aliyev's leadership allows for an assessment of his contribution to the overall economic development of the Caucasus.

On the other hand, if the study of the Soviet period of Heydar Aliyev's state activities contributes to forming a particular historical perspective of the interaction between peoples within the USSR, an examination of the post-Soviet period of his activities can provide insight into his legacy and influence on the contemporary political landscape of the region. Unveiling the beliefs and values underlying Heydar Aliyev's state activities contributes to a correct understanding and awareness of the national identity of the peoples of the Caucasus. This study can be a significant contribution to the historiography of the Caucasus and help to better comprehend the historical, political, and social processes of the modern era in the region.

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