

# Idea of National Independence and Republic in Critical Realism of Azerbaijan

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**Abstract.** At the beginning of the 20th century, the achievement of national independence and the establishment of the Azerbaijan People's Republic was the beneficial result of the educational work of numerous national intellectuals, media outlets such as "Molla Nasreddin", "Fuyuzat" and the awakening mission of literary fronts. The primary literary mission of J. Mammadguluzade, O. F. Nemanzade, A. Hagverdiyev, M. A. Sabir, Y. V. Chamanzaminli, U. Hajibeyov and other Mollanesraddinist and critical-realist writers was the establishment of independence and republic. All literary and artistic creations of J. Mammadguluzade, especially "Jumhuriyyet (Republic)", "Vatandaşlar (Citizens)", "Azerbaijan" articles, O.F. Nemanzade's "Derdimiz ve dermanimiz (Our Pain and Medicine)", "Eshg ve mehebbet (Love)", Y.V. Chamanzaminli's "Azerbaijanin mukhtariyyeti. Ayilin, toplashin (The Autonomy of Azerbaijan. Wake up, gather)", "Biz kimik ve istediymiz nedir? (Who are we and what do we want?)" etc. In such articles and works, the issue of Azerbaijan's independence and state structure was explained to the people in detail.

**Keywords:** Republic idea; Turkic peoples union; critical-realist movement.

## INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the 20th century was a complex, contradictory, and nationally significant period for Azerbaijan's people regarding development and independence. This period is characterised as a period of "national awakening and renaissance" [12, p. 63], as expressed by our great intellectuals. It has been correctly summarised that: "The first two decades of the 20th century can be considered the most prosperous period in the history of Azerbaijan, which determined the formation of the national movement, economic and political development, socio-political, literary, cultural and educational thought at the renaissance level.

Just a few decades ago, a society that did not define its national identity reached the highest peak of its formation in terms of political thinking, and as a result of this national movement, a parliamentary state — the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic – was established for the first time in history" [4, p. 11].

The end of the 19th – and beginning of the 20th century in the history of Azerbaijan is a rich stage

with many essential and fateful events closely related to our people's social and political life. In general, the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century constitute a particular stage in the history of the concept of "Azerbaijan". During this period, that concept's ethnographic, socio-political, and ideological content begins to be taught on a large scale. The first independent state of Azerbaijan was created under the pressure of national thought" [2]. As reflected in the state document signed on the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Azerbaijan People's Republic, which constitutes the golden pages of the history of Azerbaijan: "The Azerbaijan People's Republic is the stage of the bright cultural rise of Azerbaijan at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, at the time when the political order of the world was being rebuilt appeared as a logical conclusion" [1].

It can be said that the achievement of national independence and the establishment of the Azerbaijan People's Republic at the beginning of the 20th century was the valuable fruit of the educational

work carried out by numerous national intellectuals, "Molla Nasreddin", "Fuyuzat" and other press agencies and literary fronts. The primary literary mission of J. Mammadguluzade, O. F. Nemanzade, A. Hagverdiyev, M. A. Sabir, Y. V. Chamanzaminli, U. Hajibeyov and other Mollanesraddinist and critical-realist writers was independence and the establishment of the republic. All the literary and artistic works of J. Mammadguluzade, significantly the articles "Jumhuriyyet (Republic)", "Vatandaşlar (Citizens)", "Azerbaijan", the play "Anamin kitabı (My Mother's Book)", O.F. Nemanzade's "Derdimiz ve dermanımız (Our Pain and Medicine)", "Eshg ve mehebbet (Love)", Y.V. Chamanzaminli's "Azerbaijanın mukhtariyyeti. Ayilin, toplashin (The Autonomy of Azerbaijan. Wake up, gather)", "Biz kimik ve istediymiz nedir? (Who are we and what do we want?)" etc. In such articles and works, the issue of Azerbaijan's independence and state structure was explained to the people in detail.

## METHODS

This study employs a combination of historical analysis, literary analysis, content analysis, and comparative analysis to examine the role of Azerbaijani intellectuals and writers in the national independence movement of the early 20th century, mainly focusing on their contributions through literary and journalistic works. By exploring the historical background, the study aims to understand how educational efforts and intellectual contributions facilitated the rise of national consciousness and the drive for independence.

Literary analysis involves a critical examination of the literary works and articles by crucial Azerbaijani intellectuals and writers, such as J. Mammadguluzade, O. Nemanzade, A. Hagverdiyev, M. Sabir, Y. Chamanzaminli, U. Hajibeyov. The study identifies and interprets themes related to independence, national identity, and statehood within these texts, highlighting how literature served as a vehicle for political and social ideas.

The primary sources for this study include original literary and journalistic works by J. Mammadguluzade, O. Nemanzade, A. Hagverdiyev, M. Sabir, Y. Chamanzaminli, U. Hajibeyov. Additionally, articles from early 20th-century Azerbaijani publications such as "Molla Nasreddin" and "Fuyuzat" are examined.

The study also utilises scholarly articles, books, and dissertations that analyse the sociopolitical

context of Azerbaijan in the early 20th century and the impact of Azerbaijani intellectuals and writers on the national independence movement.

By employing these methods and utilising these materials, the study aims to provide a thorough understanding of how Azerbaijani intellectuals and writers contributed to the national independence movement through their literary and journalistic efforts and how these efforts shaped national consciousness and the pursuit of independence in early 20th century Azerbaijan.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The definition of Azerbaijaniness is not only a nation but also a national idea, conceptual ideology, and social movement program connected with the name of the outstanding writer Jalil Mammadguluzade. It is an entirely correct conclusion: "The end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century are considered the renaissance period of the processes of national awakening, self-awareness, and independence thoughts in Azerbaijan's artistic-aesthetic and social thought. With the arrival of Mirza Jalil in the literary and social environment at that time, this process accelerated, and the national idea became increasingly popular and dominated the world of thought of thousands of people" [16, p. 41]. All creations of the powerful standard-bearer of Azerbaijani critical realism, outstanding writer Jalil Mammadguluzade, are the source of ideas for the ideology of Azerbaijanism, as well as the most reliable, perfect and exhausted program of the concept of independence and the republic. Because of all this, this outstanding Azerbaijani writer and public figure is praised as the "father of ideology and ideas, the leader" of the literature of the period of national awakening [5–9; 13; 16]. In general, the main essence, purpose, purpose and ideology of the "Mollanasreddinism" teaching, which is related to the name of this great ideologist and writer, was Azerbaijanism, national independence and republic [5; 7]. As in his separate journalistic writings, the issues related to Azerbaijanism find their interpretation in the play "Anamin kitabı (My Mother's Book)", the article "Azerbaijan", the articles "Vatandaşlar (Citizens)", "Jumhuriyyet (Republic)" are considered to be programmatic sources of Azerbaijanism, national independence and republic building. Professor Yashar Garayev wrote: "Jalil Mammadguluzade is the most ideologue of Azerbaijani writers before his time" [8, p. 234]. In the article "Azerbaijan", the

writer presented a concrete "map" of the homeland, nation and citizenship debt. "Standing in the forefront of the struggle for national independence, democracy and freedom of the Motherland in the history of literary and social thought of Azerbaijan, in the broadest sense of the word", "a school of education of independence, Azerbaijaniism, nationalism and patriotism for every new creative generation" [6], always creative. The great Azerbaijani poet Jalil Mammadguluzade, whose "praise is on Azerbaijan", said that "the world has changed, all things have changed and found their meaning" at a time when "motherland, motherland, motherland, nation, nation, nation, language, language, language. "There is no other salvation for mankind outside of these circles," he said to "poor brothers of the country" [12, p. 4] in the famous writer's article "Azerbaijan", mother tongue, motherland, statehood, territorial integrity, etc. The ideas he puts forward are found as a map of the national way of thinking and the ideology and tasks of Azerbaijanism that he defines. "Mirza Jalil, who took the struggle for national independence as an exercise and a struggle of ideas from the day he took the pen in his hand until the end of his life, clearly saw the existence of independent Azerbaijan, even from afar, in the light of his genius thinking" [16, p. 42].

Jalil Mammadguluzade was a supporter of freedom and democracy in his views. He saw the people's freedom in establishing a constitutional republic – a republican state in which "the administration of the country is under the responsibility and control of the people" [12, p. 191]. Because "according to the republican method, the country's administration is in the people's hands. The community is the owner of the country. No one has the right to call himself a king and interfere in the country's affairs outside the nation's opinion. Certain laws govern the country. The nation's ...lawyers write and approve those laws" [12, p. 191]. Apart from these, one of the republic's main conditions is giving its citizens various freedoms: "There is one beauty of the republic administration, which is complete freedom. How many parts is this freedom? ... freedom of religion, ...freedom of assembly, ...to unite, ...to print, ...to speak, ...to form political parties and ... to agree and co-organise.

These are the most essential foundations of a republic. Citizens! Have a look at these blessings, these beautiful blessings!

On the one hand, remember the brutality and oppression of the tyrant kings and their police!" [12, p. 193]. According to the writer, the only way to get rid of "the Tatars of the village centurions, the whipping of the strajniks, ... the tyranny of the ministers, the tyranny of the governors, the tyranny of the nachalnik and pristavs", "the tyranny of thousands of oppressors" [12, p. 194] is the national government with the unity and will of the people – is to create a republic, a constitutional republic. As it was said, "The type of national state structure that Mammadguluzade led and promoted was a democratic, sovereign republic structure based on the principles of people's power." He envisioned the prospective action program of this republic as "nationalism" that combines three main components – national state, people's power, land reform [8, p. 236].

The great Azerbaijani writer Jalil Mammadguluzade wrote in his famous Azerbaijani poem "My Mother's Book": "Earth, sky, moon and stars are watching in the sky and walking around from the beginning to the end of the day. I believe that even if my children wander around the world, they will always revolve around their mother, Zahran, for these are the moons and stars of their mother, as the moon and stars are parts of the sun. Woe to the person who wants to break that law of nature! His fairness and conscience will torment him forever: he will regret as long as he has breath" [11, p. 475]. In our opinion, Jalil Mammadguluzade is also one of the only artists who depicted the Bear and the Star in "My Mother's Book", which was a souvenir of his father, and pointed to the flag of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, with this work he expressed his sympathy for the first democratic state of Azerbaijan, and in the person of three brothers, their irreconcilable relations and disagreements and so on described the reasons for his downfall in his example [9].

The prominent critical realist and public figure Y. V. Chamanzaminli, included the idea of an independent Azerbaijan in the work "Historical, Geographical and Economic Azerbaijan" from the title to the article's content. His work "Historical, geographical and economic Azerbaijan" is a severe scientific-journalistic work that takes a scientific journey into the name Azerbaijan's origin and the people's ethnogenesis. Dedicating such a work to the geography and economy of historical Azerbaijan is remarkable as one of the giant steps taken to turn it into an idea while carrying and promoting the feelings of independence. The article "Azerbaijani autonomy: wake up, gather" can be

considered among the most magnificent works dedicated to the independence of Azerbaijan by this great thinker and public figure. If we take into account that the work was written in 1917, and if we compare it with the famous articles of Jalil Mammadguluzade, the great Azerbaijani writer and leader of independence literature, such as "Azerbaijan", "Jumhuriyyat (Republic)", "Vatandaşlar (Citizens)", the people who were questioned by the century with a thousand and one passions, with the task of great intellectualism, "for centuries" "It can be taken as a call to the people of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijanis with the idea of independence and republic, from the common people to the intellectuals, officials, mullahs, in a word, all their classes. "Written on the way back from the Council of Nations" [3, p. 209] it was written that "Each nation searches for its individual, finds it, joins hands and becomes a community. Because, apart from national courage, no one can defend the nation in this terrible time!" [3, p. 209], "Hamshari", "Kheyir-dua", "Azerbaijan" etc. by the great master Jalil Mammadguluzade. as voiced in his articles, he invited the people to solidarity and national unity. "Until now, we have neither a central slogan nor a national administration. Although there are more people in the Caucasus, we cannot organise a separate nation, we have property and a state, we cannot take our national affairs into our own hands" [3, p. 209], said Y.V. Chamanzaminli, national existence and the necessary, important demand of the 20th century. It discusses social and political existence, determining one's political fate and destiny. "O noble Turkish nation, wake up! Remember your brave cubs! Life should be lived with pride and joy. It is enough that you are trampled under the boots of the old Russian officials" [3, p. 209], – he called to end life under the Russian occupation, slavery, all kinds of slavery and occupation, and invited to national honour and dignity, to live in the form of independence and republic. The great writer and public figure, Y. V. Chamanzaminli pointed to the social conditions that arose in the first decade of the 20th century. In the conditions of the wave of revolutions in Russia and the collapse of the empire, the call for the Azerbaijani people to appreciate the opportunity and gain their freedom is in an important position. "... national assemblies will write laws of nations. Everyone's property, state, and happiness will be destroyed" [3, p. 210], – said the author, "So why don't you work for such a beautiful life? Why take the opportunity? Then you will regret it. This is not the time for

factionalism. ...Get together now and make a national government... If there is no autonomy, if the country is not saved from the scourge of headlessness, there will be no sectarian life there. This is not the time to have a bad-faith fight.

Centralism should be killed, and human centralism should be created in its place" [3, p. 210]; – at the time, all the people and citizens were addressed and called upon by evaluating the conditions, the importance and significance of the republic and state-building were explained as national administration. "Gather around the idea of human centrality... Wake up the sleepers. Illuminate them with the light of the federation! ... Dare, do business! ...It's not time to stop! If you have a little patience, our beautiful country will disappear! Autonomy is for him, so our honour does not fall under his feet. ...The time is the time of work. Gather" [3, p. 210-211] were given and addressed above the fate of the country and the nation, considering the interests of all classes. The eminent writer explains the concept of autonomy in detail under the headings "What is autonomy", "Local autonomy", "What autonomy will give us", "We deserve autonomy", "How can we get autonomy", and "The real basis of our autonomy". "Autonomy means being one's hand, one's head. ...Therefore, the true meaning of autonomy is that all affairs in the country should be created at the request of the people" [3, p. 212]. "What will autonomy give us?" while answering the question, the writer replied that "we should wait for the solution of all our issues from the National Assembly" [3, p. 214], and in general, he saw all kinds of benefits in autonomy and a parliamentary republic. According to Chamanzeminism, if salvation was in autonomy, then the way to get autonomy is to be "people of diverse ideas and occupations holding hands and being allies" [3, p. 216]. The critical-realist writer Y. V. Chamanzaminli's article, titled "Biz kimik ve istediymiz nedir? (Who are we and what do we want?)" also shows that the solution to the nation's happiness and development lies in autonomy – independence and independence, the entire content, goal of independence, the platform of republic or statehood, as well as the goal and purpose of the republic, all foreign and internal policy, economic policy and reforms, rural and urban policy, especially the duties of the workforce and the conditions, opportunities, etc. to be created for them is explained in detail, the people are invited to support this independence. Looking at the purpose and essence of achieving national independence and state independence, the writer very

effectively writes that: "The reason for the happy living of every nation in the world can only be its national government. The national administration can also be established in the national land, that is, in a certain country. Anyone who is deprived of a national country, ... will have a headache. Considering our situation, I found ourselves happy" [3, p. 219]. Great writer: "When the power of Azerbaijan falls into our hands, our homeland takes on an independent image. Three factors – nation, country and power are gathered together. To ensure the independence of Azerbaijan, we must show all our strength and power. We must show as much sacrifice as is necessary on this path. He said that we must strive to continue our independence and keep the country independent" [3, p. 220].

He continued his thoughts on grass-roots independence and national statehood and republic in his multi-titled article "Our Foreign Policy". He expressed the opinion that "Azerbaijan is an independent country because these three factors exist in Azerbaijan today" [3, p. 220].

In this period, Omar Faig Nemanzade also manifests himself as one of the ideologues who served and propagated the idea of independence. The writer, who revealed all the causes of social and moral backwardness in his article "Ne vakht geder (Until when)," considered socio-political independence and independence important as the first solution. O. Faig, who hoped for the independence of Azerbaijan, wrote under the signature "Umidvar": "How long will we be captives of others in politics and trade?" Why don't we bleed our politics, our national interest? With what evidence do we curse those who want freedom and equality among us? ...Therefore, it is necessary that ...for the sake of the health of our nation... we sincerely wish for the "right" body of freedom and equality, the proper organisation of the administration mashrutei-amiiyyun" [14, p. 92]. Nemanzade not only propagated the feelings of national freedom and independence but also investigated the obstacles and shortcomings that prevented independence and happy life and warned against internal publicism and weaknesses. In this regard, O.F.Nemanzade acted as an ideologue by the requirements of the period of national awakening, such as the 20th century, and called the people to understand their rights and to fight for this goal, to show unity and determination. The writer wrote firmly: "Enough of all this patience, enough of all the insults we suffered. It's time to unite and demand. ...Yes, it's time; let's move, let's try to

protect our rights, and let's not lie down like the helpless and the poor in such tumults, which reflect the bloodshed in the path of truth and justice and create artificial dawns" [14, p. 127]. Omar Faig's article entitled "How to keep the freedom that has been taken", written with an appeal to the "Iranian Mujahideen", is one of the most valuable works summarising excellent ideas about the idea of Azerbaijan's independence. In the background of the tremendous public speeches of the prominent literary Iranian mujahideen, the brother gave great ideas for the independence of Azerbaijan in general by experiencing and analysing the profound social and political events of Ottoman Turkey. "It is difficult to extinguish the hell of tyranny and replace it with a garden of freedom and a world paradise, but it is equally difficult to maintain and continue the freedom that has been gained" [14, p. 128], Nemanzade wrote. In his articles such as "Eshg ve mahabbat (Love)", "chokh utandig (We were humiliated)", "Fursat az, ehtiyaj boyuk (Opportunity is less, the need is more)", the great writer speaks with ideas that serve the idea of national independence. By giving a model for preparing the nation for this idea, he prepared citizens on the path of this sacred idea without class distinction. The prominent ideologue-writer O.F. Nemanzade, "at a time when many nations, large and small, made millions of sacrifices for the sake of justice and freedom" [14, p. 210], taught the idea of taking care of one another and showing solidarity with the citizens of their people. A writer who expressed an idea corresponding to the requirements of a crucial revolutionary epoch such as the 20th century said that "the destiny of a nation as loyal and great as ours should not be like this" [14, p. 217], saying, "It's time for us to recognise ourselves. It's time to realise our nation's existence is jeopardised because of injustice!" [14, p. 217], he invited his people to national awakening and independence to determine their national destiny and independence.

In general, in the work of critical realists, the national goal was the awakening of the people and the invitation to independence. Hence, the call for feelings of freedom occupied the central place. Apart from the ideologues-writers mentioned above J. Mammadguluzade, Y.V. Chamanzaminli, O. F. Nemanzade, M.A. Sabir, M.S. Ordubadi, A. Hagverdiyev, U. Hajibeyov, A. Gamkusar, A. Nazmi in the works of and others, the idea of independence occupied the primary place. It is important to mention only one fact: the entire "Molla Nasreddin" front took an active part in the revolutionary

movement that took place in Iran under the leadership of Sattarkhan, M.A. Sabir, M.S. Ordubadi, A. Nazmi, A. Gamkusal, M.A. Mojuz and b. poems were published. The call for independence was the central theme in each of these works. A. Hagverdiyev and M. S. Ordubadi made the issue of independence of Azerbaijan the main topic in their other large-scale works and contributed to the development of independence thought. In this sense, due to such educational, national awakening and public organising activities around ideological unity, Azerbaijan is creating the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, the first parliamentary republic of the East to restore state independence in the history of national statehood. It is a true statement that: "A nation that does not understand its Turkishness and Azerbaijaniness could not make such a declaration (Declaration of Independence – author)" [10]. Because of these achievements, the people of Azerbaijan, as the shining star of the Middle East and the Turkic world, set a great example of independence on the stage of history.

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the profound impact of Jalil Mammadguluzade on shaping Azerbaijaniness as a nation, national idea, ideological framework, and social movement program cannot be overstated. Through his writings and public stance, Mammadguluzade played a pivotal role in accelerating the processes of national awakening, self-awareness, and independence thoughts in

Azerbaijan during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Mammadguluzade's works, particularly his advocacy for Azerbaijanism, national independence, and republic building, served as a beacon for thousands of people, solidifying his position as the "father of ideology and ideas" during the period of national awakening. His emphasis on freedom, democracy, and establishing a constitutional republic resonated deeply with his fellow citizens, laying the groundwork for a democratic, sovereign republic structure based on the principles of people's power.

Furthermore, Mammadguluzade's vision for a united, independent Azerbaijan governed by the will of its people is encapsulated in his writing, where he championed autonomy, national unity, and the consolidation of power in the hands of the nation. His call for solidarity, national honour, and the pursuit of independence reverberated throughout his work, inspiring others like Y.V. Chamanzaminli and Omar Faig Nemanzade to further the cause of freedom and statehood.

Overall, Jalil Mammadguluzade's legacy as a writer, ideologist, and nationalist continues to shape Azerbaijan's cultural and political landscape, leaving an indelible mark on the nation's journey towards independence and self-determination. His commitment to freedom, democracy, and national sovereignty is a testament to the enduring power of ideas in pursuing a united, prosperous, and independent Azerbaijan.

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