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## RELATIONS BETWEEN GEORGIA AND AZERBAIJAN IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

**Abstract:** Today, as never before, the Caucasus occupies a key place on the world political map. Accordingly, the political, economic and cultural relations of the two geopolitically most important countries in the Caucasus - Azerbaijan and Georgia - are the main cornerstone of these processes. They were part of the same empire, where they had to co-exist in a common political-ideological system. The issue of occupation and the struggle for independence, political, economic and cultural challenges after independence are important. In 2010, the President of Azerbaijan - Ilhalm Aliyev wrote - "We are the continuation of each other, we are the end of each other, we are parts of one organism." Azerbaijan is a determinant of many processes on the world political map. Due to its geopolitical location and energy resources, Azerbaijan is a preferred partner for many countries of the world. Georgia is connected with it by historical, economic and cultural roots. However, the relations between these two countries are bilateral, both from the economic and political point of view, for centuries. The security line of global energy and trans-national transport projects pass through these two countries. Accordingly, the relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan fundamentally determine the common Caucasian geopolitical strategy.

**Key words:** Georgia, Azerbaijan, collapse of the USSR, geostrategy.

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### Introduction

Geographical proximity does not determine Georgia-Azerbaijan relations. Both states have a centuries-old history of relations. There have always been close political-economic and cultural relations between the Turkic-speaking kingdoms-kingdoms in the territory of Georgia and today's Republic of Azerbaijan or Iran-Azerbaijan, which were often strengthened by family ties. Sometimes Azerbaijanis are mistakenly referred to as "Tatars" in a negative context. This is because after the invasion of the Mongol-Tatars in Georgia, the word "Tatar" was completely associated with the Turkic-speaking people. Sometimes Azerbaijanis are mistakenly referred to as "Tatars" in a negative context. This is because after the invasion of the Mongol-Tatars in Georgia, the word "Tatar" was completely associated with the Turkic-speaking people. There used to be many khanates in the territory of modern Azerbaijan

(Nakhchevan, Shirvan, Shaki, Karabagh, Ganji), which were ruled by khans of Turkic-speaking Azerbaijani origin and were vassals of the Shah of Iran, before Russia dominated the Caucasus. As a result of the Russo-Iranian wars in the 19th century, Iran lost these territories forever and became part of the Russian Empire. As a result of the Russo-Iranian wars in the 19th century, Iran lost these territories forever and became part of the Russian Empire. After the overthrow of the Russian tsarism, the countries of the South Caucasus first established the Transcaucasian Special Committee (O3AKOM). The Provisional Government of Russia entrusted the management of Transcaucasia to the special committee of the regional government body - Transcaucasia. Regional government body "Ozacom" was staffed with Caucasian deputies of the Russian State Council. V. was appointed as the chairman of the committee. Kharlamov, members were: M.

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Papajanov, M. Jafarov, Ak. Chkhenkeli K. Abashidze. Ozakom began his work in Tbilisi in March 1917 and his authority was terminated in October 1917, when a coup d'état by the Bolsheviks took place in Russia and overthrew the two-government system.<sup>1</sup> Soon the Transcaucasian Commissariat was formed, which officially separated from Soviet Russia, although it was announced that the Transcaucasian Commissariat would act as a regional authority until the restoration of legal power in Russia, i.e. It was emphasized that Transcaucasia was not declared an independent state.<sup>2</sup> In 1918, the Transcaucasian Commissariat convened the Transcaucasian Seim, a representative government body of the Transcaucasian countries, where three factions were formed: the Muslim faction (Musavateli and non-partisans)— 50; Social Democrats (Mensheviks) — 32 members; Dashnak faction — 27; At the invitation of the Seim, the Transcaucasian Commissariat emphasized the separation of this region from Russia, although independence was not officially declared and all this was legally signed a little later. On March 3, 1918, in Brest-Litovsk, Soviet Russia signed a treaty with Germany and its allies, by virtue of which Kars, Ardagan and Batumi were handed over to Turkey. No one has agreed on this issue with the Transcaucasian Commissariat, so they protested with arguments from the point of view of international law. Turkey demanded the Transcaucasian Sejm to vacate the districts in order to ensure the right granted by the armistice, but the Transcaucasian Sejm and the Commissariat tried to resolve the conflict through negotiations, but without success. A crisis situation was created, one of the important decisions to avoid it was the declaration of independence of the Transcaucasian Federal Republic. On April 22, 1918, Transcaucasia was declared independent, but soon the issue of foreign-political orientation arose. It is impossible for Germanophile Georgia, Anglophile Armenia and Turkophile Azerbaijan to live in a united state.

At the same time, there was an acute border issue between Georgians, Armenians and Azerbaijanis.<sup>3</sup> The only way out was to create a constitution (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia). As long as the discussion on the constitutions was going on, the situation continued to change unfavorably. It was necessary to declare Georgia's independence. On May 26, 1918, the Transcaucasian Seim held its last session in the former residence of the Viceroy of the Caucasus, where the Transcaucasian Federal Republic was declared dissolved and Georgia's independence was declared on the same day. Azerbaijan also declared independence two days later in the same hall.

Relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan as democratic republics were first established in 1918. On June 16, 1919, a joint defense treaty was signed against General Denikin's volunteer army. The issue of belonging to the Zakatali District and Azerbaijan's support to the Republic of the South-West Caucasus remained a problem between these two countries, although it did not lead to an armed conflict. After the sovietization of Azerbaijan by the Bolsheviks in 1920, part of the political elite there moved to Tbilisi, but in February 1921, Soviet Russia conquered Georgia as well. Article 3 of the Russia-Georgia Treaty of May 7, 1920 defined the state border between Georgia and Russia, from the Black Sea along the Psou River to Mount Asakhchi. In the north - to Zakatali district and from there to the border of Armenia in the east.<sup>4</sup> Due to the conclusion of this agreement, Sovietized Azerbaijan protested the assignment of Zakatali to Georgia, since the majority of its population consisted of Muslims. The protest was followed by the placement of Georgian and Azerbaijani troops in Zakatala and a small escalation, which Russia used to its advantage and deployed its troops there. On May 12, 1920, Russia and Georgia signed a new agreement, which provided for the creation of a joint commission from the representatives of Georgia and Azerbaijan, where they would agree on the Zakatal issue.

On June 12, 1920, an agreement was signed between the Democratic Republic of Georgia and Soviet Azerbaijan in Agstafa, according to which the border between these two countries passed along the border of Borchalo and Kazakh Mazri. Several neutral zones were defined in the Kazakh Mazra, the governance of which remained in the hands of Azerbaijan. This became the last document between these two countries in the 20s of the 20th century, which was signed between Georgia and Azerbaijan. Here we should mention another important border dispute, which is related to the Davit-Gareji monastery complex, although it was put a little later on the agenda. Soon, Soviet Russia annexed the Republic of Georgia. It is no coincidence that after the occupation of Azerbaijan and Georgia by Russia, the diaspora of Azerbaijan and Georgia engaged in common coordinated activities in foreign countries in the direction of eliminating the occupation.

On December 30, 1922, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia became part of the Soviet Union. As part of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, which was abolished in 1936, the socialist republics of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia were created separately.

<sup>1</sup> History of Georgia XX century. Editorial group V. Guruli, M. Bakhtaze, M. Vachnadze, D. Shvelidze, Av. Tsotskolauri, N. Kirtadze, P. Firanishvili, TSU 2003, Ed. Artanuj p55-60

<sup>2</sup> A. Silagadze, Restoration of Georgia's state independence (1917-1918) ch. 1998. p. 56

<sup>3</sup> History of Georgia XX century, p.54

<sup>4</sup> M. Khvedelidze, The State Border of Georgia in Constitutions and International Agreements. Tbilisi 1999, p. 8

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In the 1930s, Stalinist repressions affected both countries, killing thousands of victims of the system. During the 1940s, Azerbaijan was the main supplier of oil to the Socialist Soviet Republic Union (especially during the war with Nazi Germany, it was an important strategic region). After the Second World War, both Georgia and Azerbaijan showed signs of crisis. Azerbaijan's oil lost its importance in the Soviet economy. This was partly due to the fact that oil production had shifted to other regions of the Soviet Union, and partly to the fact that all known oil-rich areas had been exhausted. Therefore, Azerbaijan became the least needed in terms of productivity and economic benefits among the other Soviet republics, excluding Tajikistan.<sup>5</sup>

The annexation of Georgia by Soviet Russia was followed by political repressions and inclusion in the country's socialist system. The wave of repressions passed over Georgia several times (1927, 1937, 1954). After the Second World War, writing, all branches of art came under severe ideological pressure, and censorship was tightened. The aspirants of the Soviet ideology fought against the manifestation of the bourgeois ideology everywhere. The aggressiveness of the Soviet ideology created unbearable conditions for writers and artists. It should be noted that the formation of autonomies in Georgia (which is the main concern of Georgian politics today and due to which important territories of the country have been lost) was a political goal of Soviet Russia. After the operation carried out in 1921, Abkhaz and Os separatists were protected by Soviet Russia. In March 1921, according to the instructions of Soviet Russia, Abkhazia was declared a Soviet Socialist Republic. After Moscow's coercion in May 1921, Revkom recognized the Soviet Republic of Abkhazia. In December 1921, an agreement was signed between the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia and the Soviet Socialist Republics of Abkhazia, by virtue of which Abkhazia became part of Georgia. Soviet Russia protected the OS separatists as well. In 1921, the Revkom of Georgia, again at the will of Moscow, created the South Ossetian Autonomous District within the territory of Shida Kartli as part of Georgia. Soviet Russia protected the OS separatists as well. In 1921, the Revkom of Georgia, again at the will of Moscow, created the South Ossetian Autonomous District within the territory of Shida Kartli as part of Georgia. At the time of the creation of the autonomous district, the majority of the population of Samachablo were Georgians, therefore the creation of an autonomous republic would not be justified. The South Ossetian Autonomous District was practically launched in 1922.<sup>6</sup>

On the initiative of the Soviet government, the number of Azerbaijani residents on the territory of Georgia increased especially since the second half of the 20th century. Their number is growing rapidly and is ahead of all other ethnic groups of the population of Georgia. During 20 years (1959-1979), the number of the entire population of Georgia increased by 24%, and the number of Azerbaijanis - by 66%, that is, their average annual growth was 2.66%. This is when the external migration processes among Azerbaijanis in the mentioned period, although weakly expressed, still had a negative balance. It should be noted that unlike Russians and Armenians assimilation of Azerbaijanis with other ethnic groups did not take place, most of the Azerbaijanis settled in Georgia live in rural areas. In 1970, 18.2% of their total number lived in the cities of the republic. In 1979, 12.9 thousand Azerbaijanis lived in Tbilisi, 7.4 thousand in Rustavi. Azerbaijanis made up the majority of the rural population of Kvemo Kartli (in the districts of Marneuli, Bolnisi, Gardabani, Dmanis). The second area of their settlement is Kakheti - the territory of Sagarejo, Lagodekhi, Telavi districts. There are Azerbaijani villages in Shida Kartli - in Kaspi, Mtskheta and Kareli districts, as well as in Trialeti and Tetrtskaro districts. The number of Azerbaijanis in the rest of the republic's regions is relatively insignificant. There are Azerbaijani villages in Shida Kartli - in Kaspi, Mtskheta and Kareli districts, as well as in Trialeti and Tetrtskaro districts. The number of Azerbaijanis in the rest of the republic's regions is relatively insignificant. As a result of living for a long time surrounded by Turks, this part of the Greeks, who were called Urumi and currently live in Trialeti, lost their language and acquired Azerbaijani. It is confirmed in the Azerbaijani scientific literature that even in 1873 there were 64 thousand inhabitants in Tbilisi province,<sup>7</sup> of course, this number is not true, because Muslim Georgians were also counted as Azerbaijanis.

During the USSR, the economic situation of Georgia and the Republic of Azerbaijan improved in the 60s of XX century, when V. Mzhavanadze was appointed, and in Azerbaijan - H. Aliyev. Aliyev temporarily improved the economic situation and promoted alternative branches of agriculture, including cotton farming. He also reinvigorated the republic's ruling elite, which was already largely composed of ethnic Azerbaijanis. In 1982, Aliyev became a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party - the highest position ever achieved by an Azerbaijani in the Soviet Union.

In 1987, when restructuring began, he was deposed by the leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, whose policies Aliyev opposed.<sup>8</sup> By the

<sup>5</sup> M. Matsaberidze, Political system of modern Azerbaijan, Tbilisi 2020. p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, Vol. Georgian SSR, Tb., 1981. — p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Azerbaijanis, Baku 1988 p.47

<sup>8</sup> M. Matsaberidze, approx. copy page 7

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end of the USSR in the late 1980s, during Gorbachev's rule, the problem of Nagorno-Karabakh emerged. In February 1988, the ethnic conflict was renewed, which was caused by Armenia's demand to join the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast, which is part of Azerbaijan. By March 1988, Armenians had expelled hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis from Karabakh, along with this Armenian population was being raided in Baku and Sumgait. Moscow was "establishing order" by using military force, but the unrest continued.

Moscow was "establishing order" by using military force, but the unrest continued. The ethnic conflict revealed the absence of the Communist Party as a leader of national interests. Independent publications and political organizations appeared in the background of "publicity". The most powerful of these organizations was the Azerbaijan People's Front (ASP), which in 1989 equaled power with the Communist Party. Moscow was "establishing order" by using military force, but the unrest continued. The ethnic conflict revealed the absence of the Communist Party as a leader of national interests. Independent publications and political organizations appeared in the background of "publicity". The most powerful of these organizations was the Azerbaijan People's Front (ASP), which in 1989 equaled power with the Communist Party. The ASF soon split into a conservative-Islamic and an opportunist wing, leading to violence against Armenians in Baku and the intervention of Soviet troops. The unrest culminated

on January 20, 1990, when Soviet troops killed 132 demonstrators in Baku, although Azerbaijan claims a much higher death toll.<sup>9</sup> Similar problems appeared in Georgia as well, which was carried out by Abkhazian and Ossetian separatists. During the period when the USSR was disintegrating, Azerbaijan and Georgia declared their independence, and these conflicts took on a regional character.

In the Soviet period, in 1965-70s. Georgia's economic situation has relatively improved, although the economic development was not aimed at fundamental, radical transformations. Reforms were started in agriculture, and planned management of the economy remained in industry. Although the reforms could not be implemented, this in turn hindered the growth of agricultural production, as for the industry in both Georgia and Azerbaijan, it went to the republics of the Soviet Union and foreign countries, and the income was subject to common-Union consumption.

The collapse of the Soviet Union brought independence to the countries of the South Caucasus. Georgia and Azerbaijan have embarked on their own path of development, the age-old relationship has become more active in political, economic and social aspects. The line of global energy security passes through these two countries and transnational transport projects are implemented. Accordingly, the relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan fundamentally determine the common Caucasian geopolitical strategy.

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<sup>9</sup> M. Matsaberidze, approx. Paper, pp. 7-8.

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