

**M. JAFAR**

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Азербайжан Республика  
КНИГАБХАНАСЫ

AZERBAIJAN  
STATE PUBLISHING  
HOUSE  
BAKU — 1966

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!  
"The sacred duty of the pen is to  
struggle for the happiness of the people...  
That must be the aspiration of every man  
of letter!"

*Jalil Mammadkulizade*

In October 1966 the Azerbaijan people together with all the fraternal peoples will celebrate the glorious 100th birthday of the great writer and thinker Jalil Mammadkulizade.

Jalil Mammadkulizade is known not only in his own country—Azerbaijan, but in all the cultured world: he is famous as a mouthpiece of progressive ideas, as one of the prolific men of letters.

Throughout his literary activity that embraced a period of 43 years and his journalistic activity that lasted 30 years he struggled against social injustice, mental and spiritual tyranny, colonial and national oppression, imperialistic intrigues, national fanaticism, against any kind of religious fanaticism and superstition. He defended the human rights of toilers of all nations longing for freedom and independence of the oppressed peoples. All these are the main factors that have won world fame for the great satirist.

The progressive literary society of the world recognized Jalil Mammadkulizade as one of the greatest, most influential and progressive writers of the awakened East. Even during his lifetime his service in strengthening revolutionary thought, in the development of democratic literature and press and his positive influence in the Near and Middle East especially were confirmed by the progressive literary world.

If his great fame was on one hand due to his literary works written with great skill and expressing progressive ideas of his age on the other hand it was due to the satirical magazine the "Molla Nasreddin" the editor of which he had been for 20 years.

The magazine "Molla Nasreddin" embraced not only the Azerbaijan life, and national problems but also covered all the international problems in the full meaning of the word. The struggle of all the oppressed peoples of Asia and Africa and also of the peoples of Eastern and western Europe: Persians, Turks, Afghans, Arabs, Chinese, Indians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians against the local reaction and colonial oppression and especially the first Russian revolution (1905 — 1907) and the other revolutions that broke out under the influence of this revolution in the East, in Iran, in China, and the revolts in different countries against the imperialistic plotting found their reflection in this magazine.

Being a journalist-fighter, a writer of high culture and a man of deep knowledge J. Mammadkulizade had thoroughly studied the way of life, the press and literature of the Islam world especially. His participation in the struggle of nations for freedom, his support

of the progressive writers and publishers of different countries, his active part in the discussions with reactionary writers and publishers attracted the attention of the progressive social forces of these countries and roused up the struggle between the old and the new thought.

That is why the magazine "Molla Nasreddin" was highly esteemed by the progressive people and met with hatred by reactionaries not only in Azerbaijan but also in Iran, Turkey, in the Middle East, in the Volga regions, in India and Egypt. The worshippers of the old regime wanted to suppress the magazine though it was beyond their power. The tsarist government in Russia, the shahdom in Iran, the Osman sultanate in Turkey and the fanatic religions of all moslem countries, all the exploiting classes of idlers became enemies of J. Mammadkulizade. Notwithstanding all their attacks, the great humanist, saying "one can die for the word of truth", relied on the respect of the defenders of justice, on toilers, and on the oppressed people. He never retreated from the fight, from saying the word of truth.

Open-hearted humanism, internationalism, friendship of thought between the nations, fraternity, the significance of the ideas of solidarity, the liquidation of national oppression and national fanaticism, were the main ideas expressed in his literary works. The development of education and culture were the main ideas of the creative activity of Jalil Mammadkulizade.

Jalil Mammadkulizade was born on the 22nd of February, 1866, in Nakhchevan, in one of the most ancient towns of Azerbaijan, in the family of a mer-

chant. When he was 7 years old he was sent to a Mollakhana\* where he studied for 4 years. Afterwards he attended a Russian school where he studied Russian, Persian and Arabic. Then he entered the Transcaucasian teachers seminary in the town of Gory in Georgia. Having graduated from the seminary in 1887 he worked as a teacher for three years in the village of Klukhanly near Erevan and in the town of Bash Norashen near Nakhchevan, then during 7 years he worked as a teacher in the village of Nehran.

He began his creative activity when he was 23 years old, being a teacher, in the years 1889 — 1894, he wrote his allegoric poems "The Tea-Service" (1889), "The Play of the Baisins" (1890), a story "The School in the village of Danabash" (1894).

The young writer could not publish these works which announced the beginning of a new stage in the contemporary Azerbaijan realistic literature both from the point of view of contents and literary form.

The reason of their suppression and the lack of opportunities may be read in his memoirs.

"To write was what I wanted. I was eager to write. But I didn't know why to write, for whom to write. Because I was not sure that the government would allow to publish and spread my writings"\*\*\*.

After having been a village teacher for ten years and after his literary activity which lasted for eight years but was known only to his closest friends, Jalil

\* An elementary school where the Arabic language and religion were taught.

\*\* Ч. Маммадуллузаде. Сечилмиш эсэрлери, Баку, Азербайжан, 1951, чилд I, сәһ. 430.

Mammadkulizade decided, as he himself said "to be an advocate of war" in order to have the possibility of helping the people. In 1897 he came with his family to Erevan and studied law there by himself; as he wrote "it was civil law and other books on law". But his hopes were not realized either. Though he had prepared with great enthusiasm to be a lawyer he couldn't find work in this field. He worked as a translator and a clerk in governmental offices for some time while he was looking for useful social work, his inclination for literary activity prevailed. He made some observations and plans for new literary works. "Whenever I worked I had to take a big sheet of paper and put down some story or novel..." he wrote.

During the first period of J. Mammadkulizade's activity which embraced the nineties of the last century there were created realistic novels of Azeri literature such as "Bahadur and Sona", "The Travel Book of Ibrahimbey", the first tragedies such as "The Tragedy of Fahraddin" "The Ruined Home" and some realistic comedies, plays, political and philosophical treatises, by such progressive writers—followers of Mirza Fatali Akhundov's realistic literary school, as Najafbey Vazirov (1854 — 1926), Abdurrahimbey Hagverdiyev (1870 — 1933), Nariman Narimanov (1870 — 1925), Zeynalabdin Maragali (1838 — 1910), Abdurrahim Talybov (1834 — 1910) who were well acquainted with Eastern, Western and Russian culture, literary, social and philosophical ideas.

Jalil Mammadkulizade stood out among his outstanding contemporaries for his style, manner of writing, rare talent of a satirist and for his unflinching merciless

attitude towards the old faith, the existing social political system and feudal patriarchal way of life. The satire in his works was free from artificial invention and was of high educational significance. That was an original literary phenomenon in literature and literary thought of his time.

In the above mentioned works in which the village life is described, the writer tries to depict the lawlessness created by landlords, oppression and common poverty created by private property, political lawlessness brought to the village by colonial aggression, mental slavery created by stagnation, religious despotism, violence and absence of civil rights, for women especially. Here is the "Events in the Danabash village". The master of the village is its chief "the Golova" his underling the village elder Kudayarbey, and their masters in the city are the governor and the police chief and the officials of the council. There is not any law for governing the people. The law consists of a whip and a stick made of cornel tree. Fear of being whipped, fear of the authorities, fear of being exiled and fear of the other world propagated by the fanatic mollahs, fear of hell had taken all the power from the people, had blunted their thoughts and shut their mouths.

Soon after becoming the village elder, Kudayarbey decided to take a second wife (as it is allowed by the islam religion, by the so-called marriage contract "siga"), a widow Zeynab, mother of three children, with the aim of taking possession of all the cattle left by her late husband. What could be easier in the country where the only law was the Kadi.

The judge of the city got a bribery and engaged them officially; the chief of the village certificated "the handwriting" of the Kadi. The chief of the village made Zeynab leave her own house and come to Kudayarbey. As soon as Kudayarbey felt that his first wife Sharaf was a little displeased with his act, he trampled her under his feet and threatened her with divorce. The woman was obliged to keep silent. Zeynab who hated Kudayarbey deeply was ready to give all her wealth to Kudayarbey in order to get the right to be divorced and come back to her children. But the village elder Kudayarbey allowed her to go to her children but did not divorce her. Zeynab's son Valiguly became a servant in Kudayarbey's house as well as her 7 years old daughter. Her younger daughter Fizza fell ill and died. Then Kudayarbey married a third wife who was only 15. His first wife Sharaf died from grief.

Zeynab's daughter Ziba, a girl of 7, who worked as a servant in Kudayarbey's house told him that her mother wanted to be divorced. Hearing this he beat her cruelly and sent her to her mother to tell her never to speak of divorce again.

"The Events of the village of Danabash" was a satirical novel. Mockery, bitter sneering sarcasm were the spirit of the novel. At the same time all these were followed by deep lyricism and sympathy for the unfortunate simple people, for the toilers deprived of any rights. The sarcasm of the young writer, shaking the world of iniquity, injustice very soon changed into a laughter full of tears: "Kudayarbey rushed at Ziba when the girl wanted to run out, she stumbled on the

threshold and fell down on her face. Kudayar came up to Ziba, struck her head and face with his fist and saw that she was blood-stained. He called Valiguly from the yard and ordered him to take his sister to their own house.

Valiguly and Ziba came back to their house in tears. In the room in which once we had seen Zeynab nothing was left. She was sitting on a torn carpet, with her arms round her knees, looking at the ceiling. Zeynab's dress was as wretched as her own position. Ziba threw herself into her mother's embrace. As it was dark in the house the blood on her face was not seen by her mother.

— Mother, Ziba's nose is bleeding, don't let your dress be stained. Zeynab embraced the girl and felt that her dress was wet. But she thought it was wet with tears. Valiguly warned her once more:

— Mother, Ziba has stained you with blood.

Zeynab did not reply. Valiguly went out. As it was evening, he had to water the cattle. Otherwise Kudayar-bey would rouse a row. After a short while Ziba fell asleep in her mother's arms.<sup>1</sup>

In "The Events of Danabash" dramatic scenes characterised by moving tragedy, gentle epical descriptions of the details of country customs and manners, deep lyricism, furious and keen satire are united and alternate with one another.

The humour in the young writer's allegoric poem "The Tea Service" and in his one act play "The Play of the Raisins" exposing the backwardness of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ч. Мәмәдгулузада. Сечилмиш әсәрләри, Бакы, Азәр-нәшр, 1951, сәһ. 91—95.*

landowner's way of life is even more characteristic. "The Play of the Raisins" was afterwards adapted into a story by the author. The humour in the story is as strong as in the play. Some tax collectors—"seyids" come to the village to gather the "seyid share". The villagers being tired of these rogues try to make fun of them and play "the Raisins farce". Some score of armed people pretend to rob a caravan coming from Iran and carrying raisins. The villagers go away several times and come back announcing they have brought some bales of raisins and the bodies of some men "killed" by them. At first the seyids are very glad hoping that they would get their share of the plunder. But one of the villagers demands to kill the seyids too, as they might go and inform the police and the government would exile all the villagers to Siberia. The seyids are terribly frightened and finding an opportunity they run away. Afterwards they understand that it was only a trick played on them by the villagers.

In the later years of his literary activity in accordance with the purpose of his criticism he sometimes used the ruthless satire and sometimes soft humour.

Jalil Mammadkulizade's two articles which were written in Russian and sent from Erevan were published in Baku in the Russian newspaper "Caspi" in 1902. In one of these articles the writer protested against the high rate of taxation imposed upon the "hard working men"—the peasants.

In the second article he protested against the indifferent attitude of the officials of the city council and their rejection of the requests written in applications

without considering them. These articles and his story "The Post-box" written shortly after show that the peasant problem was one of the most important problems which worried the great writer.

In his work "The Post-box", which is a good example of a short story, the writer created in the character of Novruzali a typical image of a peasant who owing to the secular slavery and dullness of political consciousness was a servant to the local feudal lord—the bey and considered it to be his duty to serve him. In this story the author described the village elders who were unable to take advantage of the opportunities presented to them.

Novruzali has come from the village to the city and has brought presents to his master: two sacks of flour, some hens and eggs, even corn for the hens:

"You, Novruzali! What trouble you have given yourself again!" Untying the sacks Novruzali replies: "What are you talking about, Khan! I am your slave till the end of my life".

The Khan gives a letter to Novruzali to be dropped into a post-box at once. How can Novruzali know what a post-office or a letter is. He only knows the office of the village chief.

"Novruzali, do you know what a post-office is?"

"Oh, Khan, I am a villager, where do I know that from?"

"But you know the office of the chief, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, khan, of course, I do. Last week I came to the chief to make complaints. Upon my word, Khan, the village elder torments us awfully".

"Stop it, you will tell these words afterwards. Now go and drop the letter into the box".

Novruzali dropped the letter into the box but when he saw that the post clerk was taking the letters out of the box he thought that he was stealing them, here they began fighting with their fists. The peasant was arrested. The Khan bailed him out but the illiterate peasant thought that the letter had been really stolen because of him.

"Forgive me, khan, for the sake of your children, not to mind Khan, if I live and do not die I will serve you".

The Khan laughed at Novruzali's illiteracy and took a great pleasure in the whole story. The Khan laughed much, he laughed boisterously, Novruzali put the empty flour sacks on his ass and started for the village.

In three days the Khan received a telegram informing him that his letter had been delivered...

...In a month and a half Novruzali was put into prison for three months for having offended the clerk that time.

As long as men like Novruzali make slaves and servants of themselves the enforced reign of masters, khans, beys, landlords and foreign masters will never shake. This was one of the true realities of life depicted by the young writer in his story.

In 1903 Jalil Mammadkulizade left Erevan for Baku where his wife had to undergo medical treatment. Here he met Mamadagha Shahtaktly, the publisher and editor of the only newspaper in the Azerbaijan language—"Shargi Rus" (the Eastern Russian). Shahtaktly was

an outstanding Azerbaijan philologist, enlightener, journalist and public man of his time. As he knew Russian, French, English, German, Persian, and Arabic well he regularly published scientific and publicistic articles in Azerbaijan and Russian magazines as well as in the magazines of Western countries. In 1903 he organized his own printing house in the city of Tbilisi and began publishing the newspaper "Shargi Rus".

Mammadagha Shahtakly, who had been acquainted with Jalil Mammadkulizade since 1894 and had heard about his unpublished works, offered him to work as a writer of feuilletons and journalist in his newspaper. Jalil Mammadkulizade accepted his offer. In the years 1903—1904 his stories "The Post-box", "The Play of the Raisins", his articles about the outstanding educator and poet M. Sidgi, his translations of Leo Tolstoy's stories and some articles on the peasant problem and absence of civil rights for women were published.

In January 1905 the newspaper "Shargi Rus" was stopped to be published. With the financial help of one of the merchants with progressive ideas from Nakchevan, Jalil Mammadkulizade bought the printing house of "Shargi Rus" with the aim of publishing another newspaper. Together with his friend, journalist Omar Faig Nemetzade (1872—1937) he organized the printing house "Geirat".

That same year he organized a special boarding-school called "Leily Maktab" and began to prepare the Azeri children for entering public schools and seminaries.

In the printing-house "Geirat" political proclamations, booklets, literary books and daily telegrams in

the form of leaflets were published. The publication of political proclamations and books of revolutionary contents such as "Why are we in need of free talk and meetings", "Estate, Class and Party", "How is the money of the nation accumulated and what is it spared for?", "Bread, Light and Freedom" gives ground for supposition that Jalil Mammadkulizade and his fellow-workers were in close connection with the Social Democratic Organization "Geirat" (Zeal) organized by the Azeri people in Tbilisi with the Fada'i-Organization of Iran revolutionaries and with the group "Hummet" in Baku.

In the months of August, October and November of 1905 Jalil Mammadkulizade published some articles in Russian in the newspapers "Kavkazsky Rabochi Listok" (the Caucasian Labour Paper), The "Vozrojdeniye" (the Resurrection), the "Tiflisky Listok" (the Tbilisi Paper). These articles differ from his former articles in their extraordinary political poignancy. The great democrat called for solving the problem of social freedom for workers and peasants, to put an end to the massacres organized by the Transcaucasian colonialists, to hold high the banner of internationalism.

In his article "Deprived of their share" he wrote that as the land in many countries of the world, especially in Iran, in both parts of Azerbaijan and in all the Transcaucasus, was in the hands of khans, beys, landowners, princes and higher clergy the mass of peasants lived like beggars.

In his article "The Blessings" addressing the people who had come from Western Azerbaijan to look for job in the Caucasus he wrote.

"You, poor Iranian workers, do not forget only one thing: when you return to your country call all the people together, all the ragged, tortured, hungry toiling people and tell them this happy news, tell them that here in Russia all the toiling people have risen to their feet... There, in your country, tell your native workers that if they want to act like their comrades here, if they want to get free from the yoke of the Iran savages, khans, aghas, mollas, the rich, princes, and others, if they want to defend their human rights and breathe freely, then their friends in Russia may hand them over their banner as a token of freedom and the sacred slogan in their banner. Let the unhappy Iran and its toiling people read this slogan;

"Workers of the World unite!" Let them read it and unite.<sup>1</sup> The articles "Deprived of their share" and "The blessings" show that the writer was seriously interested in the life of the working class and its struggle during the first Russian revolution.

The fighter among publicist kept up with the important international events, expressed his attitude towards the diplomatic acts at the Hague Peace Conference. He came to such a conclusion; that under the existing social and political circumstances in Europe there could be no peace. As long as the policy of strength and dispute for new colonies existed, all the diplomatic idle talk about peace and limitation of military expenditures was nothing but a means of deceiving nations used by grasping politicians fighting for colonies. He wrote "The names of the great powers

\* November, 24, 1905.

<sup>1</sup> Газета „Кавказский рабочий“ листок 4, 24 ноября, 1905.

will be mentioned with shame in the history of humanity. Future generations will inherit only loathsome features from the annals of nations."<sup>1</sup>

In his articles "The Azerbaijan language in the new primary school", "The useful imitation", and "What about the school of madam Asp'rova for moslem girls" the writer protested against the fact that the important task of teaching the mother tongue was entrusted to the "stagnant officials who were not even acquainted with the demands of life and people" and in general he protested against the obstacles set up by the Tsarist government on the way of the development of national culture under hundreds of pretexts.

■

"To tell the words of truth is courage"  
*Jalil Mammadkulizade.*

After the Manifesto of October 17, 1905, Jalil Mammadkulizade wanted to publish a newspaper under the name of "Novruz" (A new day) but the government did not permit it. He writes about this: "When the parties demanding freedom attacked the government of Nicholas II which had been shattered by the war, we also wanted to use this opportunity and find the ground for telling the grief of our heart.

In 1905 I wanted to get permission for issuing a newspaper called "Novruz" (A New Day), as people were given freedom, as a new era had begun, I hoped

<sup>2</sup> Газета „Возрождение“, 1905, № 9.

М. Ф. Ахундов адына  
Азербайжан Республикасы  
КИТАПХАНАСЫ

that, it was possible that our share would also be a new day, the government would possibly hear reason, would show pity,... would come to intercession and that would be the reason of permitting our new day "Novruz" to dawn on us. I want to say that though I asked permission from the government to publish the newspaper, on the other hand I was not sure that I would get that permission and it really happened so...<sup>1</sup>

In his memoirs the writer had clearly and precisely outlined the situation in the country after the October Manifesto.

"Though according to the October 17 Manifesto Russian citizens were granted different kinds of freedom, the people did not trust fine promises, as it became clear after a while, the Manifesto was entirely abolished and the absolute regime of the Tsar began to reign as before. The absolute monarchy of 300 years old Romanov dynasty was as firm as steel...

At the same time, when the Russian government was taken up with its own affairs, the freedom seeking nations and people who had expected mercy from the government were not slumbering and were all rising in revolt. ... general strikes of workers and employees did not cease. During this short interval there was an opportunity of breathing freely in the world of press."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Jalil Mammadkulizade*, Selected works, v. I, Baku, Azer-neshr, 1951, p. 429.

<sup>2</sup> *Ч. Маммадгулузаде*, Сечилмиш эсэрлери, I, чилд Баки, Азэр-нэшр, 1951, сэл. 423-435-435.

<sup>3</sup> *Ч. Маммадгулузаде*, Сечилмиш эсэрлери, I, чилд сэл. 427-431.

Availing himself of the opportunity of "this short respite" Jalil Mammadkulizade with great difficulty founded a new literary school in Azerbaijan and began publishing the magazine "Molla Nasreddin" the mouthpiece of revolutionary and democratic ideas.

The magazine "Molla Nasreddin" which had been published with some intervals for 25 years appeared in Tbilisi in 1906-1917, in 1921 in Tabriz, from 1922 to 1931 in Baku during the Soviet power. This magazine had always been considered a creation of its editor and publisher. J. Mammadkulizade. During those 25 years many outstanding poets of Azerbaijan such as M. A. Sabir, Ali Nazmi, Alliguli Gamkusar, A. Hagverdliyev M. S. Ordubady and some others contributed in this magazine. The writer himself said modestly that "Molla Nasreddin" was not the literary work of only one author but it was a collection of works of several of my fellows writers. And I am only their elder comrade."

What great ideas of his time had this great but modest elder comrade propagated himself in "Molla Nasreddin" which he had been regularly publishing for 25 years, how had he served his own people and humanity?

As it is seen from his first political publicistic articles, before beginning to publish "Molla Nasreddin" Jalil Mammadkulizade was a defender of sovereign republic based on the principles of peoples dictatorship. In his writings in "Molla Nasreddin" these views of governmental law became deeper and more developed. The republic and democracy propagated by Jalil Mammadkulizade was a democracy free from imperialist

intervention, colonial yoke, social oppression, it had to consist of the union of several revolutionary classes and would fulfill revolutionary duties. These republicanism and democracy were quite opposite to the old ideas of bourgeois dictatorship and bourgeois democracy. But it was not yet a new kind of democracy-the socialist democracy. Nationalization of private property, participation of people in government, peoples ownership on land were the main problems of this democracy. According to the definition of J. Mammadkulizade "Republic is not such a state where the government is in the hands of the people" but "the principle of freedom of conscience, freedom of meetings, freedom of union, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of organizing parties, freedom of personality, equality before the law, equality in voting, general equality, independence, secret voting are the main factors in the structure of Republic\*\*.

It was due to these principles that the writer criticized several times the Tsarist Duma and constitutions of Iran and Turkey. He wrote about the Iran constitution: "When the constitution was made up I was glad that Iran had also stepped on the right road, I hoped that at last the Iranians would breathe freely... But now I have understood what that constitution meant, that its result was a good for nothing parliament. That won't do. This constitution is to be abolished".

The great democrat said: "Landlords, beys and khans, kings and nobility profit by the labour of peasants and workers, they are parasites who suck the

\* Jumhuriyyat, Feuilletons articles, Azerbaijan State University Publishing House...

blood of the toilers, they are tyrants and they must be punished".

And just because of the existence of such regimes like the tsarist monarchy and the Eastern despotism the targets of his bitter satire were any kind of parliamentarism and solidarity of privileged classes, bitterly criticized in his political-publicistic articles.

Other objects of his criticism were religious despotism which held a reactionary position in any kind of society, and religious fanaticism which rose against education, modernization, political revival, religion had always stood on the way of using cultural achievements of progressive peoples and became obstacle to the development of national culture by following religious customs of the 7 th century. Besides these, he found some other objects for his criticism. He compared the social evils which he attacked to pernicious insects, which decaying themselves, caused the decay of the Islam peoples; he called them "Eastern darkness" and "Shariat\* obscurity" and numbered among them the roguery of the singers of religious elegies, the fraud of the Dervishes, the idleness of the Seyids\*\*, members of the religious order propagating stagnancy and renouncement from the world, he attacked Nickolas II, Tsar of Russia, as well as the despotic rulers of the East, defenders of religion who in reality defended not so much religion itself as their masters who thought of their pockets only.

\* Shariat is the Moslem religious law.

\*\* Men who were believed to be the descendants of one of the founders of Islam.

J. Mammadkulizade considered them to be not only defenders of religious fanatics but also defenders of despotism and slavery and therefore he wrote in his magazine: "My mind was not so much occupied with padishahs and sultans as it was with the priesthood".

J. Mammadkulizade was quite right when he emphasized the importance of the struggle against the propagators of the best world who led the toiling masses away from matters of this world. He wrote on this occasion "There must exist in this age either Molla Nasreddin or Molla Kasreddin".

As it is known Molla Nasreddin is a generalized character of the folklore created by the Eastern peoples. In the anecdotes that were the expression of the common sense of the Eastern peoples and were attributed to Molla Nasreddin, the toiling people expressed their protest against social injustice, mental and physical despotism, fatalism, class privileges and any kind of fraud. That was why J. Mammadkulizade called his magazine "Molla Nasreddin" as a symbol of closeness to the people's ideals and interests and genuine truth, he took Molla Nasreddin as his pen name. He meant the name of Molla Nasreddin to be the symbol of happy free life and real thought, while the name of Molla Kasreddin represented the reactionary religious fanatics propagating the next world.

Mocking at Molla Kasreddin the writer said: "I am a molla and so are you. But I say to my moslem brethren: 'You moslems, open your eyes and look at me', but you, molla, say: 'you moslems, shut your eyes and look at me'".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Молла Насрэддин", 1906, № 4.

The Molla Nasreddin of the new age telling people "Open your eyes and look at me" added "heed, workers, it is not the age of Saadi, nothing will come out of your praying to god. God will never come down to help you. It is necessary to struggle, struggle and struggle."<sup>1</sup>

Taking a left trend in his further struggle with the help of "Molla Nasreddin", J. Mammadkulizade propagated to burn down the books preaching old backward ideals. "One of the purifying things is fire... there is no way out but to throw them into the fire", he said. The main points of his struggle against religious fanaticism find their reflection in the following phrases: "Religion, sect, shariat, faith, superstition, paradise, hell, bishop, mulla, priest, ghosts and a number of words of this class must be entirely thrown out of the language, dictionaries, books and writings. The mosques, churches, cathedrals and other places of praying and sermonizing must be destroyed and changed into palaces of culture and education".<sup>2</sup>

Among many obstacles that stood on the path to liberation, development and evolution of the people J. Mammadkulizade pointed out the reactionary, imprudent "intellectuals", the officials-humble servants of exploiting classes and colonial robbers, the hypocritic "benefactors" of people and the falsely "educated persons"; he also bitterly criticized the illiterate "authors" who promised much in words, but deceived people in deeds, helping religion by devoting their

<sup>1</sup> "Молла Насрэддин", 1912, № 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ч. Маммадгулузаде. Фелетонлар, мегалелэр, Баки. АДУ нәширјаты, 1961, сәһ. 727.

pens to the freedom of polygamy, he was implacable to those who found "culture" in drinking and gambling in night clubs, those who pretended to be true lovers of the nation and patriots of their home but were monarchists and supporters of superstition in reality.

The writer called up the democratic layer of the educated people to fight against the idle and cosmopolitan "intellectuals" who had nothing in common with the working people, at the same time exposing the false actions of these idlers in his magazine. Such "pen-drivers" that boasted of being patriots were severely satirized by J. Mammadkulizade. He wrote: "... Good hand at writing", "patriots". Damn their "pens" and their "adoration of motherland". I hate their pronouncing these words. We want deeds, deeds, deeds!"<sup>1</sup>.

Jalil Mammadkulizade was not only a formal publisher of his magazine but he was a brave fighter in the ideological struggle. One of the hostile trends that he criticized throughout his literary activity was the idle cosmopolitan and unstable "intellectual".

Jalil Mammadkulizade wrote much of the hard and unbearable life of the workers and peasants and of the cruel capitalist exploitation in industrial centres and ruthless actions of feudal lords in villages, general poverty and deprivation of the toiling people of their human rights.

The hard life of poorly paid Baku oil-workers, long working-hours, unemployment, low salaries of the workers of education, school teachers and clerks, the ruin of the peasants by khans and beys and landowners on

<sup>1</sup> „Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1910, № 12.

the one hand, by priests and bribe-taking officials on the other hand were the the main points against which "Mulla Nasreddin" waged an unceasing struggle in the course of 1906—1917.

Seeing the main source of all troubles of the society in social inequality the great humanist wrote: "Think, one out of hundred families has chicken-plov for supper and enjoys sleeping in its cosy lodgings and ninety-nine of families starve and shiver with cold all night long—this is such an injustice and neglect of human rights that nothing can be more terrible".

It was quite impossible for him to see a really free nation and a prosperous country without putting an end to enslaving people by the privileged exploiting classes, and the policy of the internal enemies who declared to be "patriots" of the country.

The questions of nation, democracy and landownership were closely connected with his republican ideas which were directed against the existing social order. Just because of that the above mentioned "intellectuals", who were the true servants of the parasitic layer of the society, were always the targets of his satire.

"When you take any Mussulman newspaper, you can see only the following in them: Fine fellow is such-and-such khan, such-and-such hadji, such-and-such creature. But they never write about the groans of thousands of starving Moslems and thousands of roubles spent on the feasts, funeral banquets, presents, on their mistresses, I am sick and tired of these words..."<sup>1</sup>

In his magazine Jalil Mammadkulizade paid a great deal of attention to the national liberation movements

„Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1903, № 4.

and independence of peoples, to the struggle against the yoke of colonial powers which he considered to be the other great enemies of the nations. In such publicistic works as "Divar", (the Wall) "Politica alaminda", "Chuval", "Gizarar" he highly appreciated the struggle of the "Chinese brothers" in 1884—1908 against the French, English, Japanese and American imperialists, the fight of the Greeks, Bulgarians, Albanians against the Turkish yoke and that of the Finns and Poles against the tsarist oppression. He also pointed out the importance of the uprisings of the Afro-Asian nations against the colonial enslavement. Pointing to the future importance of these fights he wrote: "... the strong powers are now cruelly clutching and bending down the working people of the East. But they don't know that the people now being savagely hammered will gradually become red-hot till they are capable of burning down others.

The peoples of the East are being beaten and heated now, and one day they will turn into the flame which can burn not only the hammer of yoke but the hammersmith as well".<sup>1</sup>

The principle of a sovereign democratic republic was one of his republican views in the struggle against the colonial oppression.

Jalil Mammadkullzade repeatedly underlined the great influence of the Russian Revolution of 1905—1907 on the growing anti-colonial struggle and uprisings both in Afro-Asian and East European countries. He

<sup>1</sup> Чалил Маммадгулузаде, Фелъетонлар, мэгалэлэр, АДУ нэшријаты.

was challenging the peoples fighting for social freedom, democracy and national independence to get a good training from "the Russians, who were shedding their blood in Petersburg and Moscow—the capitals of Russia". He was inspired by his Russian penfriends who bitterly criticized the Russian oppression. The Russian social-democrats set a good example for him and he believed in convincing the peoples of the East that "it was quite possible to govern the country by means of the Soviets without any shahs and sultans".<sup>1</sup>

The struggle for the progressive culture, art, literature, press, school, for the emancipation of women and morals and manners were based on his progressive ideas of a great enlightener. He dreamed of seeing schools, the press, the art and all kinds of scientific and cultural institutions serving the younger generation the hope of its people and country. He wanted them to be brought up in the spirit of revolutionary and materialistic view-points. Concerning the present circumstances he justly said: "...you will never see desirable deeds, without good-will and conscience."<sup>2</sup>

"Nothing can be said about freedom without sounding the clarion to call them to life, without waking people from the superstition and dreaming and without telling them about the present situation. One can't solve the problem of the nation and the country without taking up pen on the political arena and ardently showing people their foes and friends without abolishing tolerance towards unbearable oppression of them,

<sup>1</sup> Ч. Маммадгулузаде. Сечилмиш эсарлери. Бакы. Азербайджан, 1951, 1 чилд. сәһ. 433.

<sup>2</sup> "Молла Насрәддин", 1907, № 36.

without putting an end to the mourning of the Moslems and to the enslavement of women.

The struggle for freedom must begin in its first form at school. Every nation can find its freedom by bringing up the younger generation at school. There can be no liberation, development and republic without education.<sup>1</sup>

Fighting against the coarseness, backwardness, political stupidity and illiteracy, in a broad sense of the word he fought for the freedom the main factors of which were education and schooling — very strong weapons to his opinion.

"Millions of bloodthirsty microbes have been sucking the blood of our nation for centuries. It is necessary to drive those microbes out of the body of the nation"<sup>2</sup>.

Using an artistic exaggeration which was a characteristic feature of his biting satire, the writer pointed out that the Moslem working people were being ruined by many: "Imagine, one hundred and thirteen prayer singers, seventy two million khans, beys and millowners, forty four million seyds, two hundred million darvishes (beggars), thirteen million fortune tellers, jugglers, different charmers and sheikhs..."<sup>3</sup>

It is backwardness and illiteracy that foster these bloodsucking microbes among the working people. And that is why the school, the press and literature must be directed to help in waking up the people from

<sup>1</sup> „Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1907, № 36.

<sup>2</sup> „Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1908, № 9.

<sup>3</sup> „Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1907, № 30.

their sound sleep because “the eyes can see nothing in sleep, but they can see many things when they are open.”<sup>1</sup>

Farseeing was one of the characteristic features in Jalil Mammadkulizade's progressive views. He said: “It is not enough to inform people of the present events, it is necessary to tell them something about the future”<sup>2</sup> “...We live in such a time when a nation having no regular education, national literature and economy and a certain social development is sooner or later doomed to death”<sup>3</sup>. It is necessary to build up a new life. “It is necessary to eliminate the old order from social life. In short, it is necessary to make a revolution in all the spheres of our life.”<sup>4</sup>

As a philosopher materialist and a public figure J. Mammadkulizade was also worried by the problems common to all mankind.

One of these problems that he always bore in mind was the abolition of religion and nationalistic psychology and chauvinism as means of keeping the peoples under oppression and yoke and also as grave sources of social injustice. To him “...people are kindred. We are related, we are human beings and human beings are apt to be in good relations.”<sup>5</sup> But religion and chauvinism are strong barriers on the way to humanism, good relationship and intercourse.

<sup>1</sup> „Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1908, № 14.

<sup>2</sup> „Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1908, № 44.

<sup>3</sup> „Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1906, № 23.

<sup>4</sup> Ч. Мәммәдгулузәдә, Фелјетонлар, мөгаләләр, АДУ нәш-ријаты, 1961, сәһ. 781.

<sup>5</sup> „Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1911, № 41.

In his view on the origin of religion and formation of nationalities; J. Mammadkulizade did not go far from the materialist philosophers of the XVIII century, but he advanced many progressive ideas based on the existing circumstances and events. He said that it is useless to criticize nationalism and chauvinism if we are indifferent or forget to criticize religion. Because:

„The first is religion,  
The second is nationalism.  
Religion was created first,  
Nationalism appeared after it“.

„Every nationalist is at the same time a supporter of religion. If you don't want Omar or Zeid to be believers you must try to keep them away from religion...“

It is quite natural that there can be no abolition of nationalism while religion exists on earth. Religion will disappear when people stop using it. And then you will see that nationalism will also gradually fade away.<sup>1</sup>

The writer internationalist was against all kinds of chauvinistic and religious tendencies. He raised the question of excluding lessons of religion from school. He severely criticized the ruling national policy of the tsarist monarchy and those who propagated pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism in the local press. Protesting against the national oppression he wrote: „All the nations want to take their destinies into their own hands, they don't want others to interfere with their own internal affairs“.<sup>2</sup>

Believing in the promises of the provisional government about freedom, given to people by the February

<sup>1</sup> Ч. Маммадгулузаде, „Дин və милләт“. Фелъетонлар, мәгаләләр. Баки, АДУ нәширјаты, 1961, сәһ. 789.

<sup>2</sup> „Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1907, № 14.

Revolution, in his articles „Congratulations“ (Mubarakbudlyk) and „Happiness“ (Khoshbaktlyk) at the beginning of March Jalil Mammadkulizade wrote with inspiration: „...The tsarist government has been overthrown. The representatives of the people have taken power into their own hands and have begun ruling the country. All the nationalities are free now... From this day on one of the free nationalities will be ours. Long live the free nationalities of our free Motherland!“ But several days later he heard Milukov's declaration about continuing the war and the suggestion of the provisional government about „Unexpediency of giving freedom to the Trans-Caucasian nationalities“. Jalil Mammadkulizade wrote that the provisional government „was leading the policy of reviving the age of the damnable minister Stolypin... What kind of freedom is it? It can't be called liberation!“<sup>1</sup>

The reactionary policy of the provisional government and of the big officials representing it, the policy of the capitalists and of the landlords did not conform to Jalil Mammadkulizade's views on the republic and democracy at all.

Mir Jafar Pichavary (1892 — 1947), a writer and one of the outstanding leaders of the revolutionary movement in the South Azerbaijan and Iran, said: „Molla Nasraddin has had a great influence on the Iranian revolution... Jalil Mammadkulizade's heart has always been with us.“<sup>2</sup> That was really so. The fate of the working people and the revolutionary movement in the

<sup>1</sup> „Молла Нәсрәддин“, 1917, № 6, 7, 8, 12, 17.

<sup>2</sup> „Ажир“ гәзети, Тегран, 1944, № 232.

South Azerbaijan had been worrying the great democrat since the revolution of 1905. In the course of social activity he published articles about the revolutionary movements for twenty five years in his "Molla Nasreddin" and did his best to support the revolution. The writer wrote: "Since the day of the appearance of "Molla Nasreddin" one of our greatest aspirations has been to abolish the oppression that stood like a rocky mountain on the way to freedom in Iran, as well as criticism of shahs and of actions of selfish and petty tyrants".<sup>1</sup>

His works written on social changes in the South Azerbaijan and Iran, the revolutionary movement headed by Sattar Khan, the works particularly written against the internal reactionary forces and the foreign aggression occupies a prominent place in his literary legacy.

The writer whose heart had always been with his brothers in the South began devoting himself to the socialist revolution, propagating it in the South. In his famous article "Azerbaijan" he wrote: "The world has changed. Our dream has come true... But what expects you, my poor Motherland?"<sup>2</sup> With these words he called up the working people of the South to derive a lesson from the Revolution, which shook the whole world.

As a result of the Socialist Revolution the revolutionary movement began to expand in Iran again. 1920 was

<sup>1</sup> Ч. Маммадгулузаде, "Хатиратим", Сечилимиш әсәрлери, Баки, Азернешр, 1951, I чилд, сәһ. 433.

<sup>2</sup> Ч. Маммадгулузаде, "Азербайжан", Фелјетонлар, мәгаләләр, АДУ нәшријјаты, Баки, 1961, сәһ. 580.

the year of Revolution in South Azerbaijan and Iran. Revolutionary governments were established in Tabris and Gilan. One of the active participants of this revolutionary movement was Jalil Mammadkulizade's brother Mirza Alekber who lived then in Tabris.

In June 1920 Jalil Mammadkulizade went to Tabris, hoping to help his brothers in the South. This extraordinary mission was not made fortuitously. Even in 1908—1909 at the tightest point of Sattar Khan's movement the writer called up all the progressive forces to support that movement: "...justice and oppression are fighting for their lives in Tabris... The honour and the rights of the people and the country of a great nation are in danger. Justice may be suppressed because of helplessness. But the groans of millions of poor people will become more and more terrific. Patriotism must rally into a fighting front in Azerbaijan today. Every man, having a bit of honour and love for his Motherland must fight! We can clearly see the heartbreaking mournful face of the South of our country! The true patriotism is to support it today"....<sup>1</sup>

Eleven years after the publication of this article, during the uprising of Khiyabani, the same scene could be observed in the South again. The great patriot, full of the sense of humanism, went there to defend the honour of his country. The national liberation movement had already won in Tabris when the writer arrived there in June. Tabris and many other towns of South Azerbaijan were in the hands of

<sup>1</sup> "Молла Нәсрәддин", 1909, № 2.

the rebels. The great patriot was a real witness of glorious events during two or three months in the South. The new national government consisting of the members of the democratic party established the republic "Azadstan". But those glorious days did not last very long. The national government and the republic were defeated by the British imperialists and the reactionary forces of Iran.

The freedom-loving people were suppressed. The leader of the national liberation movement Sheikh Mohammad Khlyabani was mercilessly executed in September, 1920.

But Jalil Mammadkulizade did not lose courage and decided to go on fighting against the reaction with his pen. He resumed the publication of "Molla Nasreddin" in February, 1921 in Tabris. He issued eight volumes of his magazine during 1921 in Tabris.

The writer was very angry with the "actions of the faithful servitors of the Shah in Tabris. He hated some Cossack officers, foreign reactionaries, savagely killing the freedom-loving leaders of South Azerbaijan.

The Tabris numbers of "Molla Nasreddin" echoed with general anger of the whole nation. The writer compared reaction to thick smoke in South Azerbaijan and called for help: "There is smoke everywhere... The nation is suffocating in that smoke and wants help".

"But who must help?"

"Every honest person, every patriot, every philanthropist."

"The nation is being suffocated. The dark smoke is attacking the nation on all sides. If you don't stretch

your hands to help the nation, then it is likely to disappear from the earth. We must hurry up. It is very urgent!"<sup>1</sup>

It becomes obvious from his memoirs that Jalil Mammadkulizade did not live in other towns of Iran. But the "faithful servitors of the Shah" always persecuted him in Tabris. After the publication of the first volume of "Molla Nasreddin" in Tabris "all the priests, monarchists, and fanatics gathered in mosques for "praying"<sup>2</sup> and demanded to punish the editor of the magazine. J. Mammadkulizade, the fellow-in-arms of democrats and the faithful friend of Khlyabani's supporters could no longer live in such conditions.

In 1921, on the invitation of the Soviet Government Jalil Mammadkulizade returned to Baku — Capital of Soviet Azerbaijan. Having returned from Tabris, in his article entitled "The needs of Revolution" he once again called for revolution in Iran and South Azerbaijan. He wrote: "The darkness is deep and endless. We must take up arms. I cannot tell whether we must open gunfire or light up fire of enlightenment, whether we need cultural evolution or a break up of revolution, or may be both of them: at any rate we need a revolution."<sup>3</sup>

In this article we can find the names of some people with whom the great democrat had contact while living in Tabris. Words of gratitude

<sup>1</sup> "Молла Насрэддин", Тэбриз, 1921, № 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ч. Маммадулузаде, "Хатирэлэрим", Сечилимиш эсэрлэри, Бакы, Азэрнэшр, 1951, I чилд, сэх. 422.

<sup>3</sup> Ч. Маммадулузаде, Фелжетонлар, мэгалэлэр. АДУ нэшријаты, Бакы, 1961, сэх. 622.

and warm recollections cited at the end of this article show that the writer was among good friends and patriots in Tabris. They had several times protected him from the infuriated reactionaries.

### III

"You, my dear and respected readers! I am writing these words to make you think! I am writing to make you think, think!..."

*J. Mammadkulizade*

Besides his topical, satiric, political, publicistic and scientific articles in the course of 1905—1920, J. Mammadkulizade wrote a number of works which played an important role in the development of the Azerbaijan prose and dramaturgy, as for instance his famous comedies "The Dead" (1909), "My Mother's Book" (1918—1919), the play "Camancha" the stories "Usta Zeinal" (1905), "Pirverdi's cock" (1906), "The Hairdresser" (1906), "Curbanali bey" (1907), "The Liberation Movement in Iran" (1908), "The Kid" (1914), "Anxiety" (1916) and others.

The comedy "The Dead" is considered to be one of the philosophical works of the world dramaturgy which was written with a masterly skill. It was staged for the first time in Baku in 1916. Shortly after its first performance it attracted the attention of the literary circles of the neighbouring countries. It was a great success on the stages of Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand, Orenburg, Kasan, Tbilisi, Erevan and other cities. For half a century it has been on the stage in Azerbaijan.

It has not left the stage even today. By writing this comedy the great playwright exposed the true nature of the representatives of religion who tried to keep the wide masses of Moslem countries in ignorance and thus distracted their attention from all kinds of social struggle, promising them paradise after death. In his opinion "while the Moslem masses live in piety they will not be able to open their eyes to see and understand human rights and make use of them".<sup>1</sup>

"The Dead" has a very clever composition: in the second half of the XIX century in one of the ancient fowns of Azerbaijan a teacher—Mirza Hussein by name, teaches to read passages from "Gulistan", a poem by a Persian poet of the XVI century Saadi, to respectable Hadji Hassan's ten years old son Jallal. The passage runs thus: "You will never learn anything about those who are already gone".

But just at this moment the news comes that in the birthplace of the great poet a priest Sheikh Nasrullah by name has appeared who is said to have the power of resurrecting the dead. One of the resurrected men is Karbalai Fatullah who died on the way to Najaf-ashraf. The latter wrote a letter to his countrymen asking them to meet Sheikh Nasrullah when he arrives there to return the dead to life.

On hearing such strange news from his father, Hadji Hassan's twenty-two years old son Iskandar who has received a higher education in France, asks in astonishment:

Iskandar: What strange news is that, father?

<sup>1</sup> Ч. Маммадулзаде. Сечилмиш эсэрлери, Баки, Азэрнэшр, 1961, I чилд, с. 434.

Hadji Hassan: They say that Karbalai Fatullah has returned to life.

Iskandar: (leaning towards his father in surprise): What?

Hadji Hassan: They say that Karbalai Fatullah has been raised from the dead.

Iskandar: (in astonishment): How has it happened that Karbalai Fatullah has become alive?

Hadji Hassan: I mean uncle Rustam's son Karbalai Fatullah.

Iskandar: But he died in Khorasan, didn't he?

Hadji Hassan: Yes, yes, that very Karbalai Fatullah!

Iskandar: How could it happen?

Hadji Hassan: Simply has risen from the dead. How can one rise?

Iskandar: Do you mean he has risen out of the grave?

Hadji Hassan: (impatiently) Yes, yes, he has! Iskandar turns his face away to suppress his laughter, but he cannot help it and quickly runs out...<sup>1</sup>

All the illiterate fanatics, fatalists, hadjis, mashadies, karbalais<sup>2</sup> of the town go out to make some arrangements to meet the sheikh. The "holy fathers" are in despair. They are anxious to know how many and whose deceased will be resurrected by the sheikh.

Accompanied by his friend-impostor sheikh Ahmed, "the swindler of Isfahan" Sheikh Nasrullah arrives at

last, Not only the illiterate but also the educated people of the town believe in the sheikh's power. Heidar agha—the telegraphist says: "What a clever scientist the sheikh is! He is simply an ocean of knowledge. I have never seen such a scientist. "His words are confirmed by the interpreter Alibly: "Clory to the science of the Sheikh! Well done!" As we see the sheikhs "obeying the command of God and the call of their sacred duty marry young girls for a short time". The swindler of Isfahan knows very well that nothing will come out of the "resurrection" as he is sure that there will be great argument in solving such a question. And it really turns out so: some people have inherited their brothers' wealth, some succeeded in appropriating the wealth of their friends, some have killed their wives and mothers, some have married young girls... They begin a great quarrel when writing the list of the dead to be resurrected. All begin to think the matter over...

Twenty two years old Iskandar who has got a higher education seems to be a sparkling star in the darkness. The spectators can hear him bitterly laughing at the brainless people, exposing those who make religion and God matters of speculation.

But Iskandar himself is also unhappy. He finds himself in the surroundings of "wise but not respected people and foolish but respected people".

He finds himself quite useless in such conditions. He can see only fanatics everywhere. He is clever, but he is not wanted there.

He asks his father ironically: "Daddy, ask the guest to make me alive first, because I myself am nothing more than a corpse..."

<sup>1</sup> Ч. Маммадгулузаде. Сечидмиш эсэрлэри, Бакы, Азэрнэшр, 1954, 11 чилд, сәһ. 9

<sup>2</sup> People who have visited holy places.

At the moment it becomes clear that the shells have run away Iskandar addresses the stupid people: "I know that I am good for nothing. But what are you? I am called Iskandar the drunkard and what are you called? The dead!."

By appearance, in the surroundings of the fanatics, Iskandar is alive, but his soul is dead. In order to dispel his gloom he begins to drink like a fish and people call him "Iskandar the drunkard".

The main personages of the comedy make the spectators laugh while the part that is played by Iskandar is very tragical. In most cases he pretends to be drunk to be able to express his thoughts in the form of jokes.

He hates the swindler of Isfahan and feels sorry for the common people who ardently believe in superstitions.

Thus the playwright has created a tragedy inside a comedy or heart-breaking sobbs inside loud laughter. "The Dead" is a deep philosophical and social drama. On the one hand it is directed against religious fanaticism and narrow-mindedness on the other hand it is against private ownership and political enslavement.

It is not only a protest of the writer but of all the progressive forces of the society. That is the main reason of its popularity.

In his comedy entitled the "Mother's Book" he puts forward such very important political problems as the nation, the country and the intellectuals of the first decade of the 20th century in Azerbaijan.

In those years most of the progressive intellectuals were closely connected with the people but at the

same time there were many of them who kept apart from the people.

Here, in the image of three brothers, the nurs'ings of one mother, the playwright has given the typical representatives of those intellectuals who kept away from the people.

One of them is Mirza Mammadali who has got the "trade" of writing prayers. He sows the seeds of religion among the people. The second brother Samed Vahid by name has got a slipshod education in Turkey and now considers himself to be a poet. He has no idea of the current world events. He thinks of an abstract culture which has nothing in common with life, the third Rustam bey by name has received an education in Petersburg. He is more or less aware of the modern sciences but has no idea of history, culture, language and aspirations of his people.

None of the common people can understand these "learned brothers". The brothers don't understand one another either. They make fun of their "sciences". Rustam bey despises Mirza Mammadali for his writing prayers, Mirza Mammadali in his turn cannot bear the foolish dictionaries written by Rustam bey, and Samed Vahid's verses are considered to be nonsense by the two other brothers.

Finally their mother Zahrabaim who is the symbol of the native land cannot understand the language her sons speak. She can't make out what purport her sons live for.

The brothers have got some friends who have characters and views similar to theirs. Each brother tries to make his friend marry his sister Gulbahar.

The main common features of the brothers and their friends are political stupidity, idleness and cosmopolitanism. They have never thought of such notions as the people, motherland, nation, freedom and politics.

It's very amusing that the state authorities and the tsarist security police take the brothers under suspicion. So the chief of the Transcaucasian Security Council is informed that the brothers think of national independence. They intend to form an independent state by reuniting Iranian and Russian Azerbaijan".<sup>1</sup>

But after the police search in the library of the brothers it becomes clear that these "scientists" have no idea of politics and that these pig-headed persons are not dangerous to the state at all. And Gulbahar who has been brought up by her mother cannot bear such an insult and burns up all her brothers' books.

But there is a book in the house which is kept in Mother's bosom. From here it gets the symbolic name of "The Mother's Book". It is read at the end of the play. It is an address to the intellectuals. It calls them up to come close to the people and their language and to understand the aspirations of humanity.

During the last act the book is read as follows: "The earth, the moon and the stars are all going round the sun because all of them were originally parts of one body. I believe, like the moon and the stars, my children will also go round their mother, Zahrabaim.

Woe betide the person who will try to violate

<sup>1</sup> Ч. Маммадгулузаде. Сечилмиш әсәрләри. Бақы. Азәр-нәшр, 1936, 1 чилд, сәһ. 216.

that law of nature! He will suffer from pricks of conscience all his life"<sup>1</sup>.

The play "The Mother's Book" is a biting satire against the intellectuals like Samed Vahid who uses a lot of unnecessary and incomprehensible words in his mother tongue.

The idea of a national state language had been the subject of a long historical struggle before Jalil Mammadkulizade. After M. F. Akhundov and H. Zardabi Jalil Mammadkulizade was of those who rendered very great historical services in bringing the literary language close to the living one.

In the first number of "Molla Nasreddin" he addressed the writers and readers saying: "...remember the days of having been lulled to sleep, by listening to the sweet mother tongue?"<sup>2</sup>

There was a literary trend in Azerbaijan, the representatives of which (the bourgeois magazines "Life" and "Tyusat") imitated numerous incomprehensible foreign words and expressions in their language. Nobody understood this language except the authors using it. Most of the pupils leaving Russian schools could neither speak nor write their mother tongue. The language used by those who had finished Arabian and Iranian schools was something of a mixture which was not clear both to educated and common people. This led the educated people away from their national culture.

Jalil Mammadkulizade knew well that the struggle for the national character of the literary language was one of the main points of the ideological arguments.

<sup>1</sup> Ч. Маммадгулузаде. Сечилмиш әсәрләри. Бақы. Азәр-нәшр, 1936, 1 чилд, сәһ. 236.

<sup>2</sup> "Молла Нәсрәддин", 1906, № 1.

The writer defended real freedom by supporting the national character in the realistic art and literature.

When criticizing some "poets" in the image of Samed Vah'id he said that "they were obliged to make a change in their minds, views, understanding and trends".<sup>1</sup>

At the same time he was against the imitators who were trying to divert people from the struggle by propagating an abstract culture who wrote nonsense about "love, sparkling-eyes, arched eyebrows, flowers, nightingales, angels, dreams and wishes. The sacred duty of the pen is to devote itself to the happiness of the nation".<sup>2</sup>

In short he was against the abstract and imaginary poetry. He said that nobody needed the pleasure of reading such poetry.

Expressing his indignation against such scholastic and imitative poetry the great realist said: "...if it were possible I should forbid the pleasure of reading poetry which is like smoking opium"<sup>3</sup>

Jalil Mammadkulizade liked both the western and the eastern music and he himself was a good kamancha—player. Reading his works it becomes clear that he liked folk songs, especially the mugams. At the same time Glinka, Mozart, Beethoven, Schuman, Gaidn, Schubert, Mendelson were his favourite composers.

<sup>1</sup> „Молла Насрэддин“. 1911, № 44.

<sup>2</sup> Ч. Маммадулузаде. Фелъетонлар, магалалэр. Бакы, АДУ нэшријаты, 1941, сэх. 648.

<sup>3</sup> Јенэ орада, сэх. 648 - 649

In his work entitled "The Science of Music" he considered it necessary to unite the professional music with folk songs; "The songs sung by Russian peasants have so wonderfully been set to music by Russian Glinkas that we don't know who is highly praised when being spoken about". The writer has several works on music and musicians. One of them is the short play "Kamancha" which tells us about the great power of music in finding intimate feelings common to different nationalities: when foreign invaders and the local chauvinists organize a slaughter between two fraternal peoples, an Armenian, Bakhish by name, appears among a group of armed muslimen with a kamancha in his hands...

The charming music that the old Armenian plays for them "reminds of the days when two fraternal peoples used to live in peace and friendship". Listening to the music the moslems put down their guns, saying "duce take it!" They follow old Bakhish with their eyes all in deep thought. Here the writer has given the original picture of friendship between the two nations. Jalil Mammadkulizade is considered to be a brilliant master of short stories. The social and philosophical problems put forward in his articles and satirical topics find their corroboration in his short stories.

"Usta Zeinal" is a good satirical story. In which the writer exposes religion, futile talks attracting people away from their struggle in life. Usta Zeinal is a skilled mason. But even at work it takes him much

<sup>1</sup> „Молла Насрэддин“, 1909, № 25.

time to think about the holy world, as a result of which he carries out an hourly work during whole several days. The priests have convinced him that "the wealth of this world will remain only for praying". He is convinced that there can be no country and nation without a monarch... Usta Zeinal has a deep confidence in such nonsense. His greatest "aspiration" is "to earn something for the other world, to obtain a ticket to paradise". He thinks that a poor cottage, an old blanket and daily bread and cheese will do for this world...

In his article "Democracy in Iran" the writer points out that there can be no freedom while the working people remain under the power of religion. The oil worker Karbalai Mammadali who has come to Baku from the South Azerbaijan hears the news about the revolutionary movement in Iran. Having heard about "Some democracy given to the Iranian people", he writes a letter to his mother asking her to send him his share of "that democracy". But they receive nothing from Iran, the result is that Karbalai Mammadali's wife Parry gets angry with her husband blaming his mother and former wife of having taken possession of "their share of democracy".

In his story "Anxiety" we can see the same motives of the above-mentioned comedy "The Mother's Book".

In "Gurbanali Bey" and "The Kid" the writer bitterly laughs at those khans and beys and other parasitic landowners who live a happy-go-lucky life at the expense of the working people. They are described as lions before the poor but lambs before the colonialists.

In some stories as "The Hairdresser" and "Pirverdi's cock" the writer protests against polygamy and illiteracy of the moslems.

#### IV

"We are writers, we need wide knowledge of the world, we need good experience"

*Jalil Mammadkulizade*

Jalil Mammadkulizade cordially welcomed the newly established power of workers and peasants in Azerbaijan. With great inspiration he joined the struggle for the cultural revolution of the young republic.

The writer was particularly glad to see the new national policy of the Soviet government and firm foundations of friendship between people of different nationalities.

Welcoming the new Soviet power he wrote: "Long live such government under the policy of which hostility among nationalities has changed into strong friendship and benevolence."

Having returned to Baku from Tabris he began to help the Azerbaijan theatre. He staged his story "A school in the village of Danabash" (1921) that he had written in the nineties of the last century. It was followed by a short play called "The Dumb".

He resumed the publication of "Molla Nasreddin" in October 1922 in Baku. He called up all the satirists

1. Ч. Маммадулузаде. Фелъетонлар, мәгаләләр, Бакы, АДУ нәшрияты, 1961, сәһ. 742.

to take an active part in the publication of the magazine.

A new age was born with Old Molla Nasreddin's literary activity. On one hand he was publishing his articles in different newspapers and magazines and working on his last comedy "A Mad Company", on the other hand he continued writing satirical topics on burning questions of the day and international events.

Besides his ten years activity in "Molla Nasreddin" in the Soviet Azerbaijan Jalil Mammadguluzade wrote more than thirty stories, two plays and a great number of articles, his famous memoirs "Recollections" and his biography.

The subject-matter of one part of his stories ("The Earthquake", "The Blowing Pipe", "Molla Faslali", "The Wedding", "The Russian Girl", "The Ice", "The Concul's Wife", "The Yellow", "Zyrrama", "Two Husbands", "The Dream", "The Hand Beads of the Khan" etc.) that he wrote between 1921-1931 was taken from the prerevolutionary (before 1920) period and that of the other part of his stories ("The Proletarian Poet", "The Porters", "The Eastern Faculty", "Grocer Mashadi Rahim", "Doctor of Crops", "The City and Village", "Wonderful", "The Nightingales of Poetry", "The Two Pillows", "The Two Apples", "Maybe They'll Return" etc.) he dedicated to the period of the Soviet power in Azerbaijan.

In the first part of his stories he criticized the prerevolutionary society. And it was quite natural as one of the main duties of the Soviet literature of the 20's was to criticize the revivals of the past.

Jalil Mammadguluzade was one of the greatest representatives of the Azerbaijan critical realism of the XX century. He always remained true to his style of creation. The main shooting marks of his criticism were the revivals of the past that hindered the normal development of the new Soviet society.

In his articles and satirical topics that he published in "Molla Nasreddin" from 1922 till 1931 he put forward some problems dealing with cultural revolution, schooling, libraries, reading-halls, courses of elementary education, bringing up girls, medical service etc. He was for the organization and development of a children's theatre and literature and tried to attract the attention of some of old-minded writers to these problems.

He paid a great deal of attention to the international affairs in the magazine. He wrote much about the struggle of the workers of the capitalist countries and the national-liberation movement of the peoples of the colonial countries.

In his satirical story "The Caliphs" he expressed his inspiration the cause of which was the strike of the London workers and his contempt for those who tried savagely to suppress the struggle of the workers. He wrote: "Workers of the world, when you see that the rich unite to suppress you then the only way out for you is to unite against them too!"

In his satirical article "A Flock of Crows and Eagles" Jalil Mammadguluzade exposed the savage nature of the American and English imperialists. The warmongers tried to suppress the Chinese Revolution. He

said: "War is a desirable thing for them. They want to stir up the world and get profits..."

Before his death Jalil Mammadgulizade gave two great works to the treasure of the Azerbaijan literature. One of them is the comedy "A Mad Company" which tells us about the activities of the foreign colonial robbers in the South Azerbaijan and their humble local survivors who lived at the expense of the working people.

The other work is his memoirs "Recollections" which embrace the period between 1885 and 1906. In this period he tells little about himself. He didn't write even the date and the place of his birth there.

The memoirs begin as follows: "On opening my eyes for the first time in my life I saw only darkness around."

Here he gives a vivid picture of the hard life of the working people.

In his memoirs one can see his ideas on social, political and philosophical questions and about schools, education and bringing up the young generation in a progressive way.

He didn't write anything about the historical period and conditions of the publication of the magazine "Molla Nasreddin" and generally about the press of that time, but he wrote much about his brothers-in-pen and ideological adversaries.

Such articles and letters as "Aligulu Najafov", "Mashadi Syzhimgulu", "M. F. Akhundov about religion", "Recollections of Sabir", "Aligulu Gamgusar" are supplementary material to his unfinished memoirs.

Thus Jalil Mammadgulizade was one of the great founders of the Azerbaijan realistic literature of 1894—1920. He was also one of the founders of the Azerbaijan Soviet literature and one of the teachers of the younger generation of writers.

He was a real people's writer who brought the national wisdom, genius, satire, humour to our literature and developed it.

The great writer died from heart failure in Baku in 1932.

*Мәммэд Чәфәр Чәфәров*

ЧӘЛИЛ МӘММӘДУЛУЗАДӘ

(Молла Нәсрәддин)

(инкилис дилиндә)

*Джафаров Мамед Джафар*

ДЖАЛИЛ МАМЕДКУЛИЗАДЕ

(Молла Нәсрәддин)

(на английском языке)

Рәссамы *А. Жаров*. Бәдии редактору *А. Козлов*. Техники редактору *Р. Әлијева*.

Җыгылмаға берилмиш 4/VIII-1966-чы ил. Чапа имзаланмиш 1/XI-1966-чы ил. Карыз форматы 70×108<sup>1/32</sup>. Физики чап вәрәги 1,625. Шәрти ч. в. 2,23. Учот нәшр. вәрәги 2,3. Сифариш № 852. Тиражы 1000. Гижәти 15 гәп.

Азәрбајҗан Дөвләт Нәшријаты, Баки, Нүсү һачыјев күчәси, № 4.

Азәрбајҗан ССР Назирләр Совети јанында Мәтбуат Комитәсинин 26 Баки комиссары адына мәтбәәси, Әли Бајрамов күчәси, № 3.

15 рән.

A-5910

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