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Cultural Policy in Azerbaijan

THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN NATIONAL REPORT ON CULTURAL POLICY

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PART I - Cultural Policy

Chapter 1. Background to cultural policy in Azerbaijan

State cultural policy is shaped by objective factors, which determine its success and are also, in a sense, its temporal and spatial extension and embodiment. This is why knowing something about a country's history, natural conditions and geography, and also the main features of its public and private life, is vital to an understanding of its cultural policy. Bearing this in mind, we shall briefly outline the following: natural resources, population structure, social situation and position in the world today – all of which condition our country's cultural policy.

Natural conditions – geography

Situated on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, the Republic of Azerbaijan is the largest state in the Southern Caucasus. Its location makes it a link between East and West, North and South, and the routes which have turned it into a strategic crossroad are instantly apparent on the map. Half the country's territory is occupied by mountains: the Greater Caucasus range in the north-east, and the Lesser Caucasus range and Talish mountains in the south and south-west. Between these ranges, in the centre of the country, lie the Kura-Araz (average height above sea-level, 200 meters) and other plains. Extensive, low-lying stretches of the eastern part of the country are washed by the Caspian. Two overland routes are obvious: one running north-south along the Caspian and linking two countries through the Caucasus, the other running east-west through the Kura-Araz plain (and further, Georgia) and linking two seas (the Caspian and Black Seas). Its position at the point where the most convenient routes in and through the Caucasus intersect gives Azerbaijan the potential to become one of the influential states of the region.

Azerbaijan has borders with the Russian Federation (390 km) in the north, Georgia (480 km) in the north-west, and Armenia (1007 km) in the south-west. In the south-west, it borders on Turkey (13 km), and in the south – partly along the river Araz, on Iran (756 km). Its Caspian coast in the east is 713 km long.

Azerbaijan has an area of 86.6 thousand square kilometers. Forests account for 11% of the territory, river basins for 1.6%, farmland for 50% (27% of this is pastureland), and other types for 36.9%. Height above sea-level ranges from 28 meters below (Caspian coast) to 4,466 meters above (Mount Bazarduzu).

The country is rich in minerals, and famously well-supplied with oil and natural gas (one meaning of the name "Azerbaijan" is "land of fires"). Oil and gas deposits have been found on the Absheron peninsula and the Kura-Araz plain, at Djejranchyel and Gobustan, in the far north-east, and also on the Caspian. There are also iron oxide, non-ferrous metals and other minerals.

Location and relief together make for a varied climate. In fact, Azerbaijan has nine distinct climatic zones, ranging from dry in the area close to the Absheron peninsula to subtropical in the south. The mean temperature in July ranges from +5C in the high mountains to +25 C in low-lying areas. In 1999, the mean annual temperature was +12.3 C (January average +1.1 C, July average +23.9 C). Mean annual rainfall was 478 mms. The unusually large number of sunny days every year has earned Azerbaijan the nickname "sunshine republic".

Concerning water resources, the first point to make is that Azerbaijan is situated on the shore of the world's largest lake – the Caspian Sea. There are approximately 250 other lakes in the country.

The Kura (1515 km.) and its tributary the Araz (1072 km.) are the longest rivers. There are also numerous small mountain rivers, mostly flowing into the Kura and belonging to the basin of the Caspian.

Azerbaijan has wide-ranging flora, with over 4,300 plant species. Hard-wood timber grows on the mountain slopes, while steppe and semi-desert vegetation typify the low-lying areas. There are over 12,000 animal species.

History

“Historical” Azerbaijan was far larger than its modern namesake. When the country was divided between Russia and Iran in the early 19th century as a result of Russian-Iranian war, people started to speak of Southern and Northern Azerbaijan. The modern Republic encompasses most of the old Northern Azerbaijan – nothing more.

The monuments and other remains plentifully scattered all over the territory of historical Azerbaijan show that the region was intensively settled from the late paleolithic era. The Southern Caucasus is well known as one of the earliest centres of human settlement, and Azerbaijan has unique stone age monuments. These include the world-famous Azikh cave (late paleolithic era), Taglar and Gazaka caves (early palaeolithic era), the mesolithic rock paintings at Gobustan (of which there are more than 10,000) and the rock paintings on the Absheron peninsula, and at Kelbadjar and Gamigaya in the Ordubad district of Nakhchivan. In southern and northern Azerbaijan, there are numerous early agricultural settlements of neolithic, late neolithic and early bronze-age origins. These have survived extensively in the form of tumuli, with stratified remains reaching many metres deep. Some (Yanigtape near Lake Urmia, Gyultepe in Nakhchivan, Syarkyartepe in Khachmas, etc.) have been studied and reflect a high level of early agricultural development.

Monuments, inscriptions and written sources suggest that a society divided on class lines started to emerge in southern areas of historical Azerbaijan in the late 4th and early 3rd millennium B.C. Lullubeys, which emerged in the second half of the 3rd millennium B.C., and Kutiyis, which fragmented into small provinces at the end of the 3rd millennium, were the earliest state-like entities.

The Manna empire, displaying a high level of economic and cultural development, was established on Lake Urmia at the start of the 1st millennium B.C. (9th-7th centuries B.C.).

Many tribes consolidated their positions in southern and northern Azerbaijan, laying the foundations of stable, independent states at the time of the Medean (770–550 B.C.) and Achaemenid (550–330 B.C.) empires.

The Atropatenes (end of 4th century B.C. – 1st century A.D.) in the south and the Caucasian Albanians (4th century B.C. – 8th century A.D.) in the north played a significant part in establishing independent states on the territory of Azerbaijan, warding off successive foreign invaders. Their economies were based on farming (crops and livestock), handicrafts and trade.

There were numerous well-appointed cities and elaborate irrigation systems. Zoroastrianism, chief religion of the populace and a major influence on world cultural development, had one of its main temples in the city of Gazaka, capital of the Atropatenes.

Christianity, which displaced paganism at an early stage in Albania, for a long time remained the dominant religion in northern Azerbaijan. Many early Christian monuments have been preserved, including the church at Kish in the Sheki administrative region, which is regarded as the “mother” of all Caucasian churches. The Albanian Christians had their own self-governing church for nearly fifteen centuries, until the Russian Government abolished it in 1836.

The introduction of the Albanian alphabet in the early 5th century did much to promote the spread of knowledge, making the extensive original literature, which - specialists believe - already existed in Albanian, more accessible. Excavations at Gazaka, the Atropatene capital, the Albanian centres at Gabala and Barda, other major cities (Mingechaur, Shemakha, etc.) and numerous settlements confirm that Atropatena and Caucasian Albania had highly developed cultures.

Around the year 320 A.D., the Sassanids conquered southern Azerbaijan. Only Albania held out, but it, too, occasionally came under Sassanid control.

In the first half of the 7th century, the Caliphate started to emerge as the dominant power in Azerbaijan. In the late 730s, following the defeat of the Sassanids, southern Azerbaijan became a separate emirate within the Caliphate. Northern Azerbaijan/Albania had already been absorbed in 705. Derbent marked Azerbaijan’s northern boundary, and Khamadan its southern one. Islam spread rapidly, becoming the region’s dominant religion by the start of the 8th century. Incorporation within a single state helped to forge economic and cultural ties between the various parts of the region. This indeed was Azerbaijan’s economic and cultural heyday – a time when it gave the world a series of brilliant scholars, poets and architects. Becoming part of the wider region and its highly developed culture, it played an active role in what came to be known as the “Muslim Renaissance”.

From the middle of the 8th century, there were rebellious stirrings against the Caliphate, notably the Khurramits movement which, starting in 816, made serious inroads on its power under Babek’s leadership, before being crushed in 837.

The Sadjid state (879-941), uniting the whole of Azerbaijan from Zendjan to Derbent, developed an extensive network of internal cultural and economic ties.

Following the defeat of the Sadjids by the Salarids, the territory fragmented into a number of smaller, independent states, including the Salarid state (941-981), the Ravvadid state (first half of the 10th century – 1116), which was added to Azerbaijan south of Araz in 988, and the Shaddadid state (971-1088), with its capital at Gyandja.

The Shirvanshakh state (9th century – 1538) contributed hugely to Azerbaijan’s cultural and artistic progress, and occupies a special place in the country’s history.

From the middle of the 11th century, the Seljuks powerfully influenced Azerbaijan’s destiny, as they did that of the Middle Eastern countries.

The Atabek/Eldanizid state (1136-1225), taking in much of Azerbaijan and strengthening its cultural and political identity, was one of the states which emerged when the Seljuk sultanate collapsed. The 12th century brought a major cultural revival, with the Shirvanshakh and Ildenizid courts attracting a whole series of luminaries. This was the age of the philosopher, Bakhmanyar, the outstanding Sufi thinker, Shikhabeddin Sukhraverdi, the scholar and encyclopaedist, Khatib Tebrizi, and poets like Khagani, Shirvani, Baylakani and Mekhseti Gyandjevi. Among them, Nizami Gyandjevi was particularly notable as poet, philosopher and humanist. This age also produced many architectural masterpieces, such as the mysterious "Giz Galasi" ("Maiden Tower")¹, the fifteen-span Khudaverin bridge, the mausoleums at Nakhchivan and the palace complex at Garabaglar.

The Mongol invasion in the early 13th century had dire consequences, disrupting the region's economic and cultural development, and leaving its cities in ruins and hundreds of thousands of its people dead. The armies of Djalaladdin, Tokhtamish and Timur followed in the Mongols' wake.

The Garagoyunlu (1410-1468) and Aggoyunlu (1468-1501) dynasties, which succeeded each other in the 15th century, extended their sway over southern Azerbaijan and parts of the Middle East as well. This was a time when culture, science and art overcame the destructive effects of the Mongol invasion and again started to develop. The cities were rebuilt in the 14th and 15th centuries, again becoming centres of art, trade and learning. One of the best-known observatories in the region was founded at Maraga (southern Azerbaijan) in the 13th century by Nasreddin Tusi, an outstanding mathematician, astronomer, philosopher and statesman. Unique mosques, madrasahs and public buildings, some of them still standing, were constructed at Tebriz, Ardebil, Urmiya and Maraga. Mosques, caravanserais and palaces were built at Shemakha, Baku, Gyandja and in other cities in northern Azerbaijan. Some of them, such as the Shirvanshakh Palace in Baku, the fortresses in Absheron and the mausoleum in Barda, are outstanding examples of medieval architecture in Azerbaijan.

The movement towards uniting the whole of Azerbaijan gathered momentum in the late 15th century, culminating in the founding of the Sefevid empire (1501-1736), which developed into an Azerbaijani state in the 16th century, with political power entirely concentrated in the hands of feudal aristocrats. Its founder, Shah Ismail Khatai, was remarkable not only as a statesman, but as a poet and thinker as well. No surprise, then, that this was a time of substantial cultural and scientific progress.

The 16th century's outstanding cultural figures included the philosopher and poet, Mukhammed Fizuli, and the miniaturist, Sadig bey Afshar, who distilled the aesthetic theories of the age into his treatise "Ganun as-savar" ("Canons of Invention"). Tebriz was the main centre for miniature-painting, with Sultan Mukhammed and Mirza Ali the leaders of the school.

In the early 18th century, the Sefevid state was plunged into social and political crisis, and Azerbaijan broke up into numerous independent or semi-independent khanates.

Russia's efforts to consolidate its position in the Southern Caucasus led, in 1804, to war with Iran over Azerbaijan. Hostilities ended in 1813 with the Gyulistan treaty, which divided the territories of historical Azerbaijan between the belligerents. A second war, launched by Iran in 1826, was

¹ According to some data "Giz Galasi" was built in 7-6 century B.C.

concluded by the Turkmenchay treaty of 1828. This marked the second stage in the dividing process of Azerbaijan people. As a result of this treaty, Azerbaijan was divided between Russia and Iran along the river Araz.

Northern Azerbaijan's economic development in the second half of the 19th century was spectacular. Baku became a major oil-producing centre, a kind of "industrial oasis" in the Caucasus, extracting up to 50% of world, and 95% of Russian, supplies. In this way, Azerbaijan was absorbed into the Russian and global markets. Economic growth had positive effects on culture too. A national theatre and publishing house were founded, a lively intellectual life developed, and many Azerbaijanis started going abroad to study. Poetry, drama and architecture made significant strides, and Baku rapidly became a European-type city - a business and cultural centre for the whole of the Southern Caucasus.

The eclipse of the Russian imperial monarchy, the October Revolution and the emergence in Azerbaijan of a national liberation movement, led by native intellectuals, all paved the way for the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, proclaimed as an independent state on 28 May 1918. This short, but dramatic episode is one of the brightest chapters in the history of the country and its people. The new state was a secular parliamentary republic on the European model. It was also short-lived: less than two years later, on 28 April 1920, the 11th Red Army of Bolsheviks invaded, and the Soviets took over in the country. Soon the Northern part of Azerbaijan became a constituent part of the state, created by Bolsheviks and named the USSR.

The new state was founded on the basis of new ideology and demanded creation of new culture. From then on, official policy sought, by means direct and less direct, to "Sovietise" the country by degrees, and artfully remodel its national identity and consciousness. Under the Soviets, the alphabet changed twice – from Arabic to Roman in 1929, from Roman to Cyrillic in 1939. Obviously, this made it very hard for young people to develop any sense of a continuous cultural heritage.

But this period also had its positive features. It saw the start of the drive to make literacy universal, and culture and art available to everyone. "Art for the masses" was not just a slogan, but a whole action programme, and culture was systematically funded by the state. It was another matter that art in all the Soviet republics was expected to be ideologically homogenised - a new state had been founded on a new philosophy, and it wanted a new culture to go with it.

In 1988, Azerbaijan was forcibly drawn into a military conflict with Armenia. As a result of the military actions in Nagorno-Garabagh and adjoining districts – Kelbadjar, Agdam, Lachin, Djabrayil, Gubadli, Zangilan and Fizuli – 20% of the national territory had been occupied, and the number of refugees and displaced persons had reached one million. As it was mentioned in the International Conference on refugees and displaced people in the South Caucasian (May 2001), organised by PACE Committee on refugees, migration and demography, each eighth inhabitant of our country is a refugee or displaced person. According to this index, Azerbaijan has no analogy. During the military conflict 20,000 persons have been killed, 8,500 persons have become disabled persons, more than 100,000 have been injured, about 900 settlements have been destroyed.

Alike dwelling houses, industrial and agricultural objects, there were numerous cultural institutions in the conquered zones: 927 libraries, 808 cultural centres, 85 music and art schools, 22 museums, 4 art galleries, 762 architectural and archeological monuments, among which 5

architectural and 7 archeological monuments of the world significance, as 11 and 15-arched Khudaferin bridges (VII-XII centuries), Ganzasar and Khudavend monasteries (both – XIII century) in Kelbadjar district, mausoleum in Dorbatli village of Agdam district (1314) and ancient city-reserve Shusha – a cradle of musical culture of Azerbaijan.

On the night of 20 January 1990, without declaring state of emergency, troops of former Soviet Union were poured into the city and some districts of Azerbaijan. Numerous victims among peaceful inhabitants are the results of this action. Totally, 133 persons have been killed. Women, children and old persons were among the victims. 611 persons have been injured.

In spite of all these repressive measures, however, the Soviet Union was doomed. On 18 October 1991, the Constitutional Act was passed, and Azerbaijan's independence was restored. Being in the ring of numerous internal and external problems, the Republic had to pass through a difficult period of state establishment. Due to rich political experience and personal qualities of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Haydar Alirza oglu Aliyev, returned to the leadership by the country in accordance with the request of Azerbaijan people in June 15, 1993, in a very short time internal political stability has been restored, and the strategy and main directions of further development of the country has been defined. The next stage in the progress of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijan cultural policy dates from this moment.

Population

During the 20th century, there was substantial population growth and urbanisation in Northern Azerbaijan. Between 1897 and 2000, the population more than quadrupled, from 1,806,700 to 8,016,200.

The population increased by a factor of 17 between 1869 and 1914. This was largely due to the oil boom and improved communications, with economic growth attracting immigrant labour on a massive scale.

Over the last twenty centuries, periods of population growth have been matched by occasional demographic crises.

Between 1914 and 1920, for example, the first World War, the Russian Revolution and ethnic cleansing combined to produce a 17% drop in population.

After a short period of post-war economic growth and demographic recovery, when the general Soviet policies of industrialisation and collectivisation, with all their good and bad sides, were applied, the second World War brought a further demographic crisis.

After 1945, the population again increased rapidly. The most recent stage in the country's demographic development began in 1988. Economic recession and consequences of Garabagh conflict led to a fall in the birth rate, an increase in the death-to-birth ratio, and substantial internal and external migration. Starting in the late 80s, the drift to the cities also slackened. The urban population accounted for 54.2% of the whole in 1989, and 51% in 2000.

Political stability, the cease-fire maintained since 1994 and planned economic growth are among the factors which have improved the demographic structure in the last few years. Between 1994 and 2000, life expectancy increased, and the death rates fell, both for adults and children.

Population	Start of 2000 (in thousands)
Total	8016.2
City	4085.5
Village	3930.7
As percentage of total population:	
City	51.0
Village	49.0
Of total population:	
Men	3913.8
Women	4102.4
As percentage of total population:	
Men	48.8
Women	51.2

Azerbaijan is notable for its high birth rate. In 1995, for example, 142.3 thousand children were born. In the last five years, however, the birth rate has fallen. Infant mortality stands at 34.8 per 1000 births.

Azerbaijan has a tradition of longevity (average life expectancy: women - 70.8, men - 67.0 years). For every 100,000 people, there are 80 aged 100 and over. The record for longevity is held by Shiraly Muslimov (161). But Azerbaijan is also a country of young people. Children below the age of 14 account for one-third of the total population. People between the ages of 14 and 64 account for 62.7%.

Age	2000
0-14	31.8%
15-64	62.7%
65+	5.5%

Azerbaijanis account for 90% of the population, and are racially south Europeans (Caspian branch). Azerbaijani belongs to the south-western family of Turkic languages. The country itself is multinational. Russians, who started arriving in the early 19th century, form a sizable minority. Other significant minorities include Lezghins, Avars, Tsakhurians and Udins and Talishians, Kurds and Tats, Armenians, Tatars, Georgians, Jews, etc.

The official language of the Republic of Azerbaijan is Azerbaijani.

Most of the population are Muslims. In addition to the Muslim mosques, there are 5 Orthodox churches, 4 Armenian-Gregorian churches, 3 Jewish synagogues, and 13 Molokanian, Georgian, Protestant and other churches.

The educational level of Azerbaijan's population for 2001 is 90,8%. 10,8% have higher education, 0,9% have uncompleted higher education, 12,2% have special secondary education, 51,1% have ordinary secondary education, 15,8% have primary schooling.

The following table gives a breakdown of the employment situation.

Sectors	1998	As % of total
Total number of people in employment	3701.5	100
Industry	251.1	6.8
Agriculture and forestry	1139.6	30.8
Building trades	154.3	4.2
Transport and communications	166.2	4.5
Food trades, supply, preparation and sale	701.7	18.9
	158.4	4.3
Health and welfare services	183.0	4.9
Education, culture, the arts	376.9	10.2
Science and scientific services	31.2	0.8
Banking, finance and insurance	10.5	0.3
Civil service	65.3	1.8
Other	463.3	12.5

As the following table shows, there has also been a pronounced shift from the state to the non-state sector.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
State sector	56.1%	51.0%	46.5%	46.2%	36.2%	33.5%
Non-state sector	43.9%	49.0%	53.5%	53.8%	63.8%	66.5%

The percentage figure for the non-state sector (66.5%) breaks down as follows: 38.5% private sector, 10% semi-state bodies, 0.8% agencies funded from abroad, 1% culture, 16.2% self-employed.

Political structure

Azerbaijan is a democratic, law-based, secular republic. The Constitution, approved by general referendum on 12 November 1995, provides for separation of parliament, government and judiciary, and for the holding of presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections.

In form, Azerbaijan is a "presidential republic". Policy decisions are initially taken, subject to the laws in force, by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and implemented by the Cabinet of Ministers and ministries. The Milli Mejlis (Parliament) has 125 members, elected for a five-year term under ... majority ... system. Judicial powers are vested in the Constitutional, Supreme and Economic Courts, and also in the ordinary and specialised lower-level courts.

The Referendum was held on 24 August 2002. In accordance with this referendum, some amendments and changes, creating the base for further promoting the country on the way of democratization, have been made to the Constitution of the country.

Civil society in Azerbaijan is in the first stages of its development. The Ministry of Justice has registered some 1,500 non-governmental organisations. There are also many unregistered organisations, although few of them can be described as really active. Most of NGOs suffer from a shortage of funds, organisational skills, research potential and members.

The economy

Azerbaijan has a mixed economy, essentially based on its extensive mineral resources. Natural population growth has given it substantial manpower reserves, and its extensive transport network helps to promote economic ties with other countries. On the international scene, it is notable for oil extraction and refining, chemical and electro-mechanical industries, petroleum and mechanical engineering, ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, building materials, and the milk and food industries.

The oil industry and its offshoots account for up to 50% of the country's industrial potential, and its rich oil reserves are one of its basic strategic assets. Scientists put its oil and gas reserves at over one billion tons, and 800 million cubic metres respectively.

Agriculture covers vegetables, fruit, wheat, cotton, tobacco, sub-tropical crops, silk and livestock. The common growth for 2001 has achieved 11%. Import of agricultural goods has achieved 16%. For example, in 1995 this index was 42%. Generally, these successes were linked with widening of private sector, privatization of land and conducting of reforms in the agricultural sphere.

On becoming independent, Azerbaijan opted for the market economy. Free enterprise is a central element in this, and a national privatisation programme is being implemented in two stages.

The establishment of a market economy in Azerbaijan made it necessary to rethink social security and introduce a wholly new welfare strategy. Within a short space of time, over ten laws were passed, extending social security to broad sections of the population.

Azerbaijan on the international scene

The Republic of Azerbaijan is a member of, or has ties with more than 30 world and regional organisations: OSCE (January 1992), the United Nations (March 1992), UNESCO (June 1992), OEC (Organisation for Economic Co-operation, 1992), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (1992), the World Bank (1992), the Organisation of Islamic Conferences (1992), the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (1992), TURKSOY (July 1993), the CIS (September 1993), UNICEF (1993), the World Health Organisation, INTERPOL (1993), the International Olympic Committee (1993), the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent (1993), GUAM (1997), the Council of Europe (January 2001), etc.

Besides, in 1996 the Republic of Azerbaijan signed the agreement on partnership and co-operation with the European Union. Our Republic has been participating in NATO Programme on "Partnership for Peace" from 1994.

Azerbaijan's foreign policy is designed to preserve and consolidate the country's independence and territorial integrity, and to develop friendly ties, based on equal rights and mutual advantage, with other countries throughout the world.

Azerbaijan's trans-regional characteristics, rooted in its geographical location, social and political aspirations, and historical and cultural traditions, give it every reason to develop and strengthen its independence, and should help it to pursue a modern cultural policy, both at home and outside.

Chapter 2. Cultural Policy

“The velvet revolution”

Azerbaijan’s cultural policy today is, first and foremost, the policy of a country which has been independent for the last ten years of its existence. Its political transformation, which brought radical organisational, economic and social changes, had an immediate impact on culture and cultural trends. It is true, of course, that culture reflects reality in ways which are intellectually and psychologically complex, and deeply rooted in the collective consciousness – and so changes in this area were neither so swift nor so obvious as in others. A smooth transition from the “Soviet” past to the “post-Soviet” present best expresses the process which the country’s cultural life has undergone in recent years. ... That process could also be called a “velvet revolution”, since the aim is not change for change’s sake, but gradual adjustment to a new reality. It should be noted that culture (unlike politics, economics, law-enforcement and education) was not officially named as a target for reform – and so did not qualify for special treatment by the state and financial aid from international organisations. Nonetheless, the changes, both at the top and at the grassroots, have been going on quietly.

What is the point of these changes? How are they being realised? Which levels of society are involved in making them? These are just some of the questions which anyone setting out to describe Azerbaijan’s cultural policy today must answer.

The greatest achievement of the last ten years has probably been the birth of a new social consciousness, gradually shaking off the intellectual inertia of the preceding period. A new cultural policy was not imposed “from the top”, but has emerged as a natural reflection of broader trends. Dramatic social and cultural changes, globalisation, new cultural priorities, the irruption onto the cultural scene of mass culture and the culture industries, the communications explosion, new approaches to preserving and transmitting the artistic heritage, and a new awareness of culture’s vital role in development – all of these factors have laid the basis for a fundamentally new conception of culture, and thus of cultural policy too. The fact is, any realistic cultural policy must allow for all the difficulties and contradictions of the transition period, and for all the realities of the past and present.

Can culture be administered?

Culture and the state have existed side-by-side for many centuries, but this question remains as relevant as ever. Indeed, the emergence of civil society has given it new meaning. Administering culture today is a matter of providing the necessary legal and financial support, and of working out an overall development strategy which is not unduly directive. In Azerbaijan, these functions are exercised on various levels by:

- The Standing Committee on Culture and the Social Legislation Department of the Milli Mejlis (parliament), which provide a legislative basis for culture;
- The Humanitarian Policies Department in the Office of the President, which devises cultural development strategies;
- The Department of Science, Culture, Education and Social Issues, which is the government body responsible for implementing state social programmes;

- The Ministry of Culture, which is the nexus where all these functions conjoin, where the cultural budget is drawn up and implemented, and where cultural policy is co-ordinated. In addition to the Minister of Culture, there are three Deputy Ministers, each with his own area of responsibility, and all four constitute the Board of Management.

The Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan, which is part of the Republic of Azerbaijan, has its own Parliament, Government and Ministry of Culture. Its constitution and laws must conform with those of Azerbaijan. This means that, in spite of its autonomous status, its cultural policy is essentially that of Azerbaijan.

- At national level, there are four departments of culture, located in the chief cities: Baku, Ganja, Sumgait and Khankendi.
- At local level, there are also departments of culture in 7 towns and 61 administrative districts.

In all respects, the structure is closest to that current in France and the former Soviet Union, with the state taking all the main decisions, providing financial support and a strong central impetus, and co-ordinating the activities of all the various partners involved in culture, and particularly regional and local authorities and professional organisations. All of this is largely a legacy from the Soviet past. It is also true, of course, that cultural policy-makers are, in many ways, the “hostages” of their country’s traditions and state system, of the current political and economic situation, of the national mentality, and of the balance of forces within the artistic elite. At the same time, cultural policy is a young science. It is developing rapidly, drawing ever more states into active co-operation and encouraging them to exchange information and ideas. This allows them to pool their experience, learn from one another, and generalise good practices. International organisations like UNESCO and the Council of Europe play a significant part in this process.

Culture in Azerbaijan is the direct responsibility of: the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Sport, Youth and Tourism, the State Committee on Television and Radio Broadcasting, and the State Archive. This division creates one major problem – the need to co-ordinate cultural policy through an elaborate system of horizontal links. One positive step has been taken in the last few years: incorporation of the State Committee on Preservation, Restoration and Use of Monuments, and the commercial association “AZERKINOVVIDEO”, which used to function independently, into the Ministry of Culture. As a result of restructuring, some of the functions of the Ministry of Information and the Press have also been transferred to the Ministry of Culture. These are undoubtedly positive changes, since they make it easier to plan and implement state cultural policy overall, and provide a common basis for it.

There are thus two main trends in our cultural policy today – centripetal and centrifugal. On the one hand, the day-to-day running of local cultural institutions is consistently entrusted to local bodies at town and village level; on the other, such important questions as monument conservation, publishing and the film industry are centralised within the Ministry of Culture.

The “three D” approach: decentralisation, demonopolisation and democratisation

Thanks to the progressive “three D” approach, decentralisation, demonopolisation and democratisation of cultural management are gathering momentum at European level. Caution is needed, however, in Azerbaijan. Democratic changes are easily made in big cities, but tend to be carried out half-heartedly in rural areas, where funds are not always spent wisely. In these circumstances, there is a need for transitional models, combining strong management at state level with flexibility in specific cases, and budget planning tailored to definite projects.

In formal terms, decentralisation of cultural activity is already a fact of daily life, and the proportional involvement of central and local authorities averages out at 20% and 80% respectively. But local management, and the way in which local authorities use their resources, need to be monitored more carefully. Many local projects, alas, are badly managed. Dispersal of resources and a shortage of qualified specialists at local level are among the causes.

Demonopolisation of cultural activity is being effected from the top and from the bottom. For example, the Presidential Decree of 4 October 1987 introduced a licensing system for independent (i.e. non-state) concerts and other performances. Non profit-making cultural projects have also been privatised.

The culture industries - publishing, press, audiovisual media, phonograms, entertainment and the new technologies – are also booming. With the exception of the film industry, they are all independent today, are not a part of national cultural policy, and are not funded or controlled by the state. At present, the Ministry of Culture and the Open Society Institute are working together on a project, “Culture industries in Azerbaijan: present situation and development prospects”. This marks the first attempt to define this market, study copyright problems and carry out sociological research in this area. At an early stage in this project, it was already clear that many significant figures were being carefully concealed by private businessmen, and no in-depth research is needed to show that there are serious problems with copyright and tax law in the audio, video and computer sectors. The state would be making an inexcusable mistake if it underestimated the significance of the culture industries and the mass culture they generate. Making things easier for legal businesses, improving the tax laws, and providing advice and technical assistance - these are the things the state can do to reach an understanding with this “enfant terrible” and tame it.

Private-sector services are also gathering momentum. New galleries, souvenir shops, design offices, etc. are springing up. Above all, such traditionally public aspects of culture as heritage conservation are facing “competition” from private museums.

The rise of civil society helps to democratise cultural life by opening the door to individual initiative and individual projects. Changes in the law have led to the establishment of numerous non-governmental organisations, working in the cultural and allied fields. Eighty such organisations have been registered by the Ministry of Justice. The range of their activities is extraordinarily wide. Not all of them, however, are equally active and effective. Some of them are the products of “grant fever”, appearing overnight and disappearing without achieving anything. Others have succeeded in establishing themselves and have maintained contacts with many international organisations in recent years. These include the Soros Open Society Institute and ISAR, which have focused on supporting and developing the service sector. Unfortunately, the state cannot afford to give NGOs financial backing, but the Ministry of Culture includes forging links with them and involving them in joint projects among its priorities.

Cultural diversity

Another, equally important aspect of Azerbaijan today is the multinational and multi-confessional nature of its population. Baku alone has over twenty cultural associations, including associations of: Russians, Ukrainians, Kurds, Lacks, Lezghins, Slavs, Tats, Tatars, Georgians, Inghiloyts, Talish, Avars, Akhiska Turks, European Jews, mountain Jews, Georgian Jews, Germans and Greeks. The number of such associations throughout the country is far higher; they exist in nearly all areas where ethnic minorities are concentrated. The basic ethos of national policy derives from the Constitution, which proclaims all citizens equal, regardless of ethnic or racial origin. Moreover, in the course of many centuries, historical, economic and cultural developments in Azerbaijan have conspired to make its people tolerant and disposed to respect the cultures of other ethnic groups and national minorities. The fact of having passed through three religions – Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam – is another factor which makes for harmonious intercultural relations at both national and international level. The project, “Cultural pluralism in Azerbaijan”, which the Ministry of Culture is implementing with the support of OSCE and the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Baku, is designed to highlight the country’s ethnic and cultural diversity. It involves the cultural associations of the various national minorities, and is helping the Ministry to realize one of its chief strategic aims – to develop and support intercultural dialogue.

Priorities of state cultural policy

At the end of 2001, the Ministry of Culture published its “State Programme for Cultural Development in Azerbaijan” in the next five years. The main priorities of state cultural policy, as embodied in this programme, are:

- to preserve the cultural and historic heritage
- to promote creativity
- to develop the law, research and information in this area
- to foster and support young talents
- to revive and develop the national film industry
- to establish and develop cultural tourism
- to develop publishing

One part of this is radical modernisation and reform of the library and museum system, which serves an important educational and informational function, helping to democratise the country and integrate it into the world community.

A significant role is played in the programme by new, democratic approaches to the management of culture, and by gradual privatisation of certain aspects of culture. Tax concessions are used to stimulate cultural endeavour and to attract new players into this area.

The dynamic development, and search for new forms and models, of international co-operation will play a major part in realisation of the programme. Multilateral co-operation with international organisations, such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe, will be particularly important, helping us to take stock and see how we fit into the process of cultural development world-wide. The basic thrust of Azerbaijan’s external cultural policy in the last few years can be seen as a move from contact to co-operation with other countries. One example of this is

STAGE, a regional project launched by the Council of Europe to promote a new cultural policy in the countries of the Southern Caucasus.

Simply put, the basic aim of Azerbaijan's cultural policy today is to preserve the past, make the most of the present and plan for the future. The democratisation of society, integration of the country within the world community, and a growing sense of culture's central role in human development – all of these are grounds for optimism. Vital, too, is the emergence of a new generation, untainted by the lethargy and inertia of the past.

Chapter 3. Legislating on culture

The Republic of Azerbaijan has made human values its priority, and has set out to build a democratic, secure and law-based state. This involves asserting and upholding the rule of law, which is the essential pre-condition for membership of the world community, and for the normal functioning of all the state's vital activities, including culture. Our society is agreed that a centralised command structure will not work for culture, either as a whole or in its separate phases – the creation, preservation, dissemination and assimilation of cultural values. It has recognised that culture itself and its use of resources – facilities, funds and information – must be regulated, and that laws which are balanced, carefully thought out and geared to modern requirements are needed for this purpose. This is why drafting, passing and enforcing effective legislation has such a vital bearing on cultural policy.

How are laws adopted in Azerbaijan? Under Articles 96 (“Legislative initiative”) and 19 of the Constitution, laws and resolutions are drafted and discussed by Standing Committees of the Milli Mejlis. Under the Rules of Procedure of the Milli Mejlis, members of the Milli Mejlis, the President, the Supreme Court and the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan may table bills and other questions for discussion in Parliament. (Milli Mejlis implements the function of the country's Parliament) Bills are discussed and voted on in the form submitted, and may be amended with Parliament's consent. Various authorities and legal entities, including the Ministry of Culture, are entitled to approach any one of the Milli Mejlis's 11 Standing Committees, asking it to draft a new law or amend an existing one. They may also submit bills themselves. If the Committee agrees that a bill is required, it sets up a working party of leading national experts to draft it. If several committees are involved, this working party may be a joint one. The next stage is to consult relevant laws from other countries, assess the home situation, and identify the problems and shortcomings which the projected bill is intended to remedy. The relevant international conventions are obviously consulted too.

Parliament's legislative activity in the cultural field was fairly intensive between 1995 and 2000 – a period which saw 15 major laws adopted in this area.

Following independence in 1991, 19 laws on various aspects of culture were passed:

	Title of law	No.	Date
1	on the re-introduction of Roman letters in the Azerbaijani alphabet	33	25 December 1991
2	on mass media	231	21 July 1992
3	on establishing a copyright agency in the Republic of Azerbaijan	488	10 September 1993
4	on the Industrial Union "Azerkinovideo"	599	13 December 1993
5	on author's and related rights	115 I G	5 June 1996
6	on advertising	376 120	3 October 1997
7	on culture	223	6 February 1998
8	on the protection of historic and cultural monuments	365	10 April 1998
9	on subsidies		17 April 1998
10	on freedom of information		19 June 1998
11	on the cinema	489	3 July 1998
12	on architecture	374	3 July 1998
13	on libraries	611 1-Q	29 December 1998
14	on tourism	674-1g	4 June 1999
15	on town-planning principles	684 1-Q	11 June 1999
16	on the National Archives	694 1-Q	22 June 1999
17	on mass media	277	8 February 2000
18	on museums		24 March 2000
19	on publishing	88731Q	30 May 2000

The Standing Committee on Culture and the Department of Social Legislation, which are jointly responsible for cultural legislation, set out to ensure that these laws were in line with the standards and practice of the developed countries, reflected the Council of Europe's cultural priorities, and matched the realities and special features of the situation in Azerbaijan. The main aim in all cases is effective legislation, shielding the rights and interests of all those involved in cultural activity, and satisfying national and international requirements today. All of these laws specify that, in the event of any conflict with inter-state agreements accepted by Azerbaijan, such agreements are to take precedence. This confirms that, for our country, international legal norms come first.

Bills, once drafted, are subjected to linguistic and legal scrutiny by the Secretary of the Milli Mejlis. Since joining the Council of Europe, Azerbaijan has also referred particularly important bills to that organisation. A case in point was the bill on television and radio broadcasting, which got a positive rating from the Council. Once the Standing Committee has finished working on a bill, the next stage is discussion in Parliament. Representatives of the working group which prepared the text, and invited experts from various departments and organisations, take part in the debate. Every bill passes three readings, and is introduced on each occasion by a rapporteur, who is a member of the Standing Committee. These readings have certain special features. In the first, the bill's utility is demonstrated, its substantive provisions are discussed, and its general conception is assessed. After the first reading, the Milli Mejlis may decide to publish the bill and throw it open for national discussion. In the second reading, the bill is discussed point by point. When it has passed its first and second readings, it is sent back to the Standing Committee for finalisation. All comments and suggestions are considered. In the third reading, it is put to the vote, and no further changes may be made at this stage. Once it has passed its third reading, it is submitted to the President for signing within 14 days, and is then published in the press.

Azerbaijani society is typified at present by cultural diversity, and so all laws on culture are geared to satisfying a broad range of cultural requirements.

Some laws are general (e.g. the Culture Act of 1998), others specific (e.g. the laws on cinematography, town planning, museums and publishing).

The Culture Act spells out the principles and aims of state policy, and lays down the duties of government and local authorities in this area.

It guarantees the right of individuals to engage in creative activity, promotes international contacts and co-operation, prevents the state from monopolising culture, and covers preservation and development of the cultural identity and heritage of Azerbaijan and ethnic minorities historically resident on its territory, measures to promote creativity, and public agencies and organisations working in the cultural sphere. State interference is limited to prohibiting any material which is pornographic or which encourages violence, racial, national or religious intolerance, or drug addiction. These prohibitions are backed by effective legal sanctions. All other forms of state interference with cultural activity are prohibited. Many aspects of the functioning and development of culture are also regulated by this law.

The laws "on preservation of historic and cultural monuments", "on museums", "on national archives" and "on libraries" have helped to solve one of the main problems facing the country's cultural policy – conservation of the cultural heritage.

The Constitution and the Culture Act both proclaim that every citizen has a duty to preserve the country's monumental heritage. More specifically, the Act on Conservation of Historic and Cultural Monuments regulates the listing, study, conservation and use of these monuments. It defines the issues, specifies the responsibilities of state and local authorities, and lays down principles for the use, study, conservation, restoration, reconstruction, renovation and safety of monuments. It also lays down criteria for classifying monuments as being of national or global significance, including them on the state register, mapping them and determining their ownership.

No changes affecting the appearance or aesthetics of monuments may be made, and repairs, building work, business uses and other works which damage or destroy them are prohibited. These provisions seem entirely reasonable, and are backed by sanctions.

The rules on conservation take account of the relevant international conventions – the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (The Hague, 1954), the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 1972), the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (Paris, 1972) – and of recommendations and other texts adopted by UNESCO and other international organisations (ICOM, ICOMOS, ICCROM).

The Museums Act was passed to facilitate the preservation and enlargement of museum collections established since 1919, improve museum activities, and promote the creation of new museums, including private ones. An effective text, it regulates relations between museums and the state, defines the duties, functions, privileges and powers of both sides, lays down detailed rules on museum activity, promotes the protection, conservation, development and enrichment of museum collections, and improves the social security position of museum workers.

New requirements concerning the keeping and use of national archives, the need to determine the ownership status of state and non-state archives and documents, and the absence of any legal basis for management and use of this immense intellectual resource were the main inspiration behind the National Archives Act, which regulates all aspects of their compilation, preservation and use, and improves the social security position of archive workers.

The purpose of the Libraries Act was to improve library organisation, make libraries more effective and useful, and extend library and information services to people living in rural areas. More generally, it sets out to develop the community's intellectual potential, and contribute to the progress of knowledge. It provides the legal basis which libraries need to do their job effectively, and to improve and up-date their working methods. The aim is not to tinker with principles, but to re-think them radically in terms of the new economic and political situation. The Act formulates the principles of state policy on libraries, provides a common basis for the library system, regulates the founding and running of libraries, and covers funding, the public's rights regarding use of libraries, and the principles of international co-operation in this area.

Negative building trends in the early years of independence had serious effects on the architectural and aesthetic quality of our cities, towns and settlements. This was the background to the Architecture Act and the Town Planning Act, both of which set out to arrest the downward slide caused by lack of proper control, to restore architectural harmony, and to preserve for future generations the architectural heritage which, over the centuries, has given our cities their unique character. To ensure that that character is enhanced and preserved, the Act allows foreigners or foreign legal entities to realise architectural projects only in co-operation with Azerbaijani nationals or legal entities. The Town Planning Act aims at optimum population distribution, lays down standards for building and for territorial and urban planning, and regulates the conservation of historic, cultural and natural monuments. Both texts make for consistent and harmonious architectural development, and for effective solutions to the problems of city management.

The Publishing Act was designed to remedy shortcomings in the publishing and printing industry, and supply the lack of comprehensive legislation in this sector. Its central aim is to revive the country's ailing publishing industry.

The Act lays down the main principles of state policy, specifies the state's duties, defines optimum approaches to the organisation and running of publishing and printing activities, and formulates principles to govern relations between operatives in this area. Geared to the economic realities of the country's situation, and practical in its whole approach, it holds promise for the future of publishing and printing in Azerbaijan.

The Cinema Act covers the main forms of state aid for the cinema. It provides a solid basis for the national film industry, regulates state funding, and covers measures to promote the distribution of Azerbaijani films and participation in international festivals. It offers legal solutions to the problems of regulating organisation of the film industry.

Important laws now at the drafting stage include the Act on Use and Protection of the Azerbaijani Language, which passed its first reading in the Milli Mejlis in 2000. Although Azerbaijani was recognised as the state language in the 1995 Constitution, and although the conditions for its widespread use in all areas of the nation's life have been created, such a law is still needed. The re-introduction of the Roman alphabet is also causing huge problems. President Heydar Aliyev's Decree on improved use of the state language (21 June 2001) was issued to help solve them. The main function of the State Committee on Language, which was established on 4 July 2001, will be to supervise implementation of this decree.

Although the Mass Media Act dates only from 2000, it is already being reviewed. The main reason for this is the constant concern to improve the legislative basis of media activity and bring it into line with European standards. In December 2001, the President signed an order on "Additional measures relating to increased state aid for the mass media". The measures envisaged include: the abolition of import duties on newsprint, long-term loans and preferential credit facilities for development of the mass media, measures to promote the extension of independent TV and radio broadcasting, regulation of broadcasting by foreign TV companies on the national territory, review of taxes levied on press concerns and private TV and radio companies, printing facilities for private newspapers in state printing houses.

The Standing Committee on Culture of the Milli Mejlis is currently preparing bills on theatre and theatre activity, arts unions and arts workers, and national reserves and national parks. Draft law "On protection of folklore against illicit utilization and other actions, damaging to its preservation" was submitted for consideration of Milli Mejlis.

Chapter 4. Copyright

The role of copyright today

Throughout human history, the creative work of scientists, scholars, writers and artists has been the driving force in cultural development, and protecting their rights has today become a major issue. It is also an important part of protecting the national heritage, cultural traditions and distinctive features of individual countries. Copyright laws are thus vital to the creation of a strong and autonomous culture industry.

Changes in the function of knowledge and culture in the late twentieth century, and the digital technologies of the twenty-first, have created a situation in which the products of the human mind

are consumed and exploited on a wholly new scale. Indeed, intellectual property is now one of the main commodities in circulation. In today's world, frontiers are meaningless, and copyright, too, has no boundaries. This is a vital aspect of the developing international trade in cultural assets, which demands this kind of security.

The importance of effective copyright becomes clearer with every passing year. This is an area where close links have been forged between personal and property rights, and this, in our view, has helped to turn copyright into an independent institution, closely tied in with the author's legal personality.

At the same time, the history of copyright law in the last three centuries illustrates the attempt to strike a reasonable balance between the author's interest in receiving fair remuneration for his work, and the public interest in free circulation of knowledge and ideas. Experience gained in the copyright sphere, national traditions and peculiarities, and the interests of both parties – all of these are relevant. In the last analysis, any decision taken in this area affects someone's interests, since a right on one side implies a duty on the other. What we are saying is that copyright, as it exists in Azerbaijan today, is the product both of compromise and of tradition.

Copyright in Azerbaijan – background

Copyright in Azerbaijan goes back a long way – to the time when named authors replaced their anonymous predecessors. The “Book of my Grandfather Korkoud” exemplifies the change: the 1300th anniversary of its appearance was recently celebrated, although some experts believe that the story Korkoud tells dates back to the first centuries of the current era.

It was around this time that works which were not mere anonymous folk-tales, but bore their authors' names, first started to appear. The ashugs (poet-singers, who improvised on traditional epic themes) in medieval Azerbaijan found an effective way of proclaiming their authorship, and this became current throughout the region. They did this by including their own name in the last verse of the poem/song (tapshirma) – an early, but effective, way of protecting what we now call personal rights.

The copying and changing of tapshirmas were governed by adat (customary law), and plagiarists exposed themselves to public contempt.

Today, authors and artists live on their rights – at an earlier stage, they lived on their patrons. Just as Vergil, Horace and Martial were supported by their patrons, so the great Azerbaijani architect, Adjemi Nakhichevanli, worked for the Atabeks of Azerbaijan and with their support. In the same way, the scientist-philosopher, Seyid-Yakhya Bakouvi, and the poets, Khagani and Feleki, lived on the bounty of the Azerbaijani Shirvanshakhs. The great Nizami, too, was specially rewarded by the ruler, Kizil-Arslan, for his poem “Khosrov and Shirin”.

As everyone knows, the origins of modern copyright are normally traced to Gutenberg's invention of printing.

The active contacts maintained by the Azerbaijani states, Ak-koyounlou and Sephevi, with the countries of Western Europe, and particularly the Venetian Republic, led to the appearance of the first printed book by an Azerbaijani author, which was produced in Rome by the Medici press in

1594. This was Nasreddin Tusi's "Takhriri-Oglidis", a geometry and algebra manual which had existed in manuscript since 1248, and remained the standard work in the countries of Asia and eastern Europe until the nineteenth century. It was later published in 1657 (when a Latin translation also appeared in London), and was used as a school textbook until modern times.

From the 17th century on, as printing developed, copyright in the modern sense came to be recognised in Azerbaijan, and was governed by customary law.

This, briefly, is how copyright came to Azerbaijan, and the country's rich literary tradition helped it to take root. Of course, copyright in Azerbaijan today also bears the mark of the Roman and Anglo-Saxon legal traditions, and the lessons learned from WIPO and the developed countries. As the French writer, Chateaubriand, put it: "a right did not create a duty, but a duty created a right". The debt which Azerbaijan owes its scholars, writers and cultural workers has crystallised in copyright, as we know it today.

Copyright law in Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan's Copyright and Related Rights Act – the first such law in its history - came into force on 8 October 1996. It satisfies the requirements of civilised societies and reflects the rule-of-law principles proclaimed by the founders of the new republic. It totally rejects the Soviet approach to copyright, which assumed an unequal relationship between authors and users – was, indeed, more concerned with "right of use".

As Friedrich von Hayek has noted: "The purpose of a right is to curb injustice and misconduct". The new copyright law discarded the old formula, "an author is the author, not the owner, of his works", which was based on "non-transferable property copyright" and "free use of published works with or without payment of royalties". This approach effectively deprived authors of their property rights, and eroded even their residual rights – the result being severe restriction of their interests.

It also turned its back on the second principle behind the old system, "the wishes of the parties (authors, users) are not autonomous, but limited". In practice, this meant that authors' contracts were strictly regulated by the state, which also fixed their royalties – a further intrusion on their copyright.

Clearly, in these circumstances, the intellectual property market was a state monopoly, the only "users" were state structures, and both "competition" and "piracy" were absent.

National independence and the social and economic changes of the last few years have radically changed this situation.

Copyright in Azerbaijan today is comprehensive, effective and territorial, and freedom of creative endeavour is its guiding principle. It also tries to strike a balance between the interests of authors and the public. This, indeed, is its strength. As the sage Kabousname once put it: "Do not look for justice in others – be just yourself". Since it has been in force, the new copyright law has shown how true this is.

The main principles of the Act are those current in European countries.

First of all, it follows the “continental” conception of copyright as a personal right, preferring this to the Anglo-Saxon vision, which stresses the commercial side of copyright. This is important, and reflects Azerbaijan’s acceptance of the unified European approach, shortly after joining the Council of Europe. It is also important that Azerbaijan protects the moral rights of authors, which is the cornerstone of the continental position.

Secondly, the term “author” is interpreted broadly, as it is in other countries with high standards of copyright protection.

Translations, anthologies and collective works are all protected, as are computer programmes and data-bases. In the audiovisual field, it should be noted that authorship is not restricted to directors, scriptwriters and composers, but extends to cameramen and set-designers too. The Act also recognises related rights, performers’ rights, and the rights of phonogram producers and broadcasting bodies (TV and radio). This is a highly positive development, extending copyright protection to the full range of “partners in creation”.

Inherited rights are also acknowledged, for a period of 50 years after an author’s death. Proportional payment, which is more profitable for authors and other rights-holders, is the only type expressly provided for. Only the minimum rate of payment is fixed by the state, and methods of payment are to be negotiated between rights-holders and the users of their works. State regulation of the minimum rate reflects, not just a determination to protect the economically weak, but also the radical changes in copyright law, and the absence of powerful authors’ associations. One important feature of the law is compensation for private copying, i.e. a levy on sales of blank audio and video cassettes or CDs, and of copying equipment. This follows the pattern set in European countries, where the state intervenes in the cultural sphere without seeking any profit for itself. Subject to the restrictions applying in this area, the Act gives the users of works protected by copyright and related rights considerable scope. As Voltaire put it: “Use, do not abuse – therein lies wisdom”. Of course, there are always exceptions to rules - but exceptions do not invalidate rules. To that extent, the restrictions on copyright, provided for in the Act, are still a part of copyright.

Present situation, prospects and problems

Azerbaijan has a rich and ancient culture, and is famed for its scientists, scholars, writers and composers. Today, it is determined to keep its intellectual traditions alive, and to support and stimulate creative achievement. This is why the young state is so concerned with the problems of intellectual property, which have received the careful, far-sighted attention of its leaders. "Every person shall have intellectual property rights. Copyright shall be protected by law", says Article 30 of the Constitution, emphasising the importance of those rights.

National copyright itself has three major components: a legislative and legal basis, an authority with power to enforce the state’s policy, and a system of measures to enforce protection and restore violated rights.

The growing importance of copyright and intellectual property, new developments in national and international law, problems resulting from technical progress – all of this obliges states to pay special attention to their legislative, regulatory, co-ordinating and supervisory functions in this area.

If politics is the art of the possible, then rights are the science of the necessary. State policy in the field of intellectual property must be conservative, yet open to improvement - mobile and stable at the same time. A copyright system cannot be conjured out of thin air, but it can be inherited, preserved and enriched by drawing on other traditions and other countries' experience.

The Copyright and Related Rights Act determines the main thrust of state policy in this area, and provides for:

- action to encourage and stimulate scientific, literary and artistic creativity, and increase the nation's cultural wealth;
- creation of a legislative basis for definition, enforcement and protection of copyright, drawing on the experience of the countries most advanced in this field;
- organisation of the state authorities responsible for copyright and related rights;
- protection of the copyright of national rights-holders in other countries, through the development of international relations.

Mickiewicz once said: "To make a country live, you must make rights live too". It is the state which ensures that the law does its job of enforcing rights effectively.

It is the state which provides a sound basis in law for solving all the problems raised by the creation and use of scholarly, literary and artistic works (copyright), and by performances, phonograms and broadcasts (related rights). Our taking of all these issues together reflects the fact that related rights derive from copyright, and also the desirability of regulating them in one text.

Azerbaijan traditionally makes a distinction between protection of rights (recognition of rights and the legal system applying to them) and defence of rights (action when they are violated or disputed). The new copyright law covers a wide range of enforcement measures, taking in the civil, criminal and administrative liability of violators. Protection of these rights is a state prerogative, and the state can use its full coercive machinery to enforce them.

International co-operation is another state prerogative, and allows the state to enforce the rights of national authors abroad, and the rights of foreign authors on its own territory.

However, the state's role today is not limited to drafting national laws on the protection and defence of intellectual property rights, and to international enforcement of those rights. A number of new functions have been added to these traditional ones.

The first is co-ordination of the various organisations which administer the copyright and related rights of their members collectively.

If the state refused to co-ordinate their activities, the law would be broken more often by organisations claiming to represent rights-holders and demanding payment from users of their works. The everyday work of organisations lawfully administering such rights would also be complicated. This co-ordinating role is actually provided for in the Copyright Act, and could be reinforced by introducing a licensing system for royalty collection agencies. This is the situation

in most developed countries (France, Germany, Spain, etc.), where a licence from the appropriate state body is required for the collective administration of property rights.

The state's important regulatory function is connected with its statutory task of administering public property, and can involve a policy of using special taxes and levies to promote cultural development, again through a special authority. Under this policy, assets made over to the state can be used as an extra-budgetary source of additional funds for culture.

This system is a good one, since it discourages the use of unprotected works, and promotes the creation and use of protected ones. It also serves the interest of the state, individuals and legal entities in ensuring compliance with copyright and related rights, and in supporting organisations which collectively administer them. Finally, it allows third parties to make use of public property.

Another important state function is organising the voluntary registration of works by the state body established for that purpose. Although works are legally protected as soon as they are produced, the law in many countries favours authors who take steps to protect their rights by registering them. The benefits of registration – starting with formal recognition of a right and a warning to third parties that unauthorised use is prohibited, and ending with higher compensation for registered rights-holders in the event of violation – have a very important bearing on effective copyright protection. Of course, registered works must also be listed, catalogued and entered on electronic data bases, so that rights can be effectively administered at home, and information exchanged with other countries.

The state's role in enforcing rights must also be mentioned. Although the protection of copyright and related rights is essentially based on personal rights (i.e. the rights-holder proceeds at his own discretion), state intervention in this area often contributes significantly to enforcement. The issue here is undoubtedly a reasonable combination of private and public action, and special attention should be paid to administrative measures and sanctions, which have the advantage of being quick and easy to use – particularly when there is a serious danger of piracy. Since enforcement is probably the most important aspect of copyright law (for holders of copyright and related rights, a system can seem perfect and still prove flawed, if it does not allow them to enforce their rights satisfactorily), the state's role in enforcement is subject to special requirements. Special programmes, covering anti-piracy measures, classification of offences, co-ordinated action by the relevant ministries and agencies under the aegis of the state authority, supervision of the market, and publication of the results of court proceedings, play a major role here.

The legal protection of the nation's folklore is another important state function. The study of folklore has rightly been called "archaeology of the human spirit", and this part of the heritage embodies a nation's cultural identity, and also has a universal human value which makes it a part of world culture. Although folklore lies outside copyright, it can be protected as a form of "public property". Action taken by WIPO and UNESCO in the last few years also suggests that international agreements and national laws to protect folklore per se may well be forthcoming in the near future.

The techniques and instruments used to enforce state policy on copyright and related rights in practice are obviously important. The State Copyright Agency is the main body responsible in Azerbaijan. The following section is taken from one of its documents, and shows how the

national copyright system operates, and how aims, functions, structures and specific measures connect and combine to implement state policy in this area.

The legislative and legal basis of protection

Azerbaijan was one of the first post-Soviet countries to establish a legislative basis for copyright protection. It did this in 1996, by passing the Copyright and Related Rights Act, recognised by international experts as matching the criteria applied by democratic, civilised societies, which regulates relations between the authors (rights-holders) and users of works.

A presidential decree of that same year regulated implementation of the Act and management of copyright, specified the main enforcement measures and detailed the powers of the authority responsible - the State Copyright Agency.

Government Decree No. 38 of May 2 1997, and the government decisions taken under it, determine minimum tariffs for various kinds of work, prescribe standard forms for copyright agreements, and regulate voluntary registration, the issuing of registration certificates and other questions with an important bearing on the implementation of copyright law. In consultation with the Ministry of Justice, the Copyright Agency has also issued a number of regulations and official instructions to help enforce the Act.

Some of the rules on copyright are reflected in other important laws, such as those on entrepreneurial activity, culture, the cinema, architecture, town-planning, advertising, publishing, etc. Like that of all developed countries, Azerbaijan's intellectual property law is essentially complex, and embodies regulations derived from state, administrative, financial, labour and even criminal law. Copyright may be an independent complex, but it achieves effectiveness by bringing together norms derived from various branches of the law. Traditionally, too, copyright and related rights are covered by civil law.

Azerbaijan takes an active part in international co-operation on intellectual property. It joined WIPO in 1996, and has accepted the Universal Copyright Convention (1997), the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (1998) and the Geneva Convention for the Protection of Producers of Phonograms (2001). Participation in the Rome Convention on Related Rights and in WIPO's agreements on copyright for phonograms and use on Internet is also being considered by the relevant national authorities. Azerbaijan is a party to agreements on copyright concluded within the CIS, and also has bilateral agreements with various states.

A table, giving an overview of Azerbaijan's laws and regulations on copyright and related rights, as well as its participation in international structures and agreements, is enclosed.

Activity in the copyright sphere

The Plan for Development of Copyright and Related Rights provides a basis for the implementation of state policy, and helps to generalise the lessons on copyright law and management learned at international level. There is also close co-operation with international experts. A network of authors and users has been set up, works of all kinds are being registered and computer-catalogued, and facilities for inspection of the registers have been provided. The Agency co-ordinates the activities of the public bodies and specialists working in the copyright field, advises them on methods and the law, and provides information for rights-holders, using

seminars, briefings and the media for this purpose, and also producing specialised guides to methods and practice.

Comparison with European copyright laws, and a study of the requirements embodied in the WIPO and TRIPS Internet agreements have resulted in proposals on improving national legislation and introducing various organisational measures in keeping with standard international practice. As part of the collective administration of property rights, the collection and distribution of authors' and rights-holders' royalties have been organised, and the range of registered users has been broadened, chiefly by adding certain commercial structures.

Over 19,000 works, and over 120 users (legal persons only), have been registered. The number of persons who have received royalties under the collective administration scheme now exceeds 2,500.

In 2001 alone, over 420 works by 70 authors were registered, some 130 registration certificates were issued to 150 owners of exclusive rights, approximately 80 authors' agreements on transfers of rights were registered, and over 500 musical works by 20 authors were lodged in the archives. Details of more than 4,200 musical works and 150 authors are now stored on a special data-base. The collective system covers the collection of royalties, totalling 220 million manats, for over 550 rights-holders.

Again in 2001, guidance was provided for over 200 owners of copyright and related rights, and their representatives.

Defense of violated rights

In accordance with world practice, copyright and related rights are enforced in Azerbaijan by the courts. The regulations on protection of rights embodied in Section V of the Copyright Act are reflected in the new Civil Code, Code of Civil Procedure and Criminal Code, which came into force on 1 September 2000, and also in the Code of Administrative Offences. It should be noted that that violation of intellectual property rights exposes the offender to civil, criminal and administrative sanctions.

The courts and the police have assumed responsibility for enforcement of the Act.

The State Copyright Agency has devised a complex anti-piracy programme, covering measures to protect works and improve co-operation between the copyright service and the police, as well as judicial defence procedures and customs arrangements. As part of this programme, the Agency is introducing ways of identifying lawfully produced phonograms and videos, and keeps a regular check on the market. Offences have been codified and entered on a data-base, with the information going to the relevant authorities.

All recent prosecutions for infringement of copyright and related rights have been initiated by the Agency.

In 2001, the claims of several dozen rights-holders, who had chosen to defend their rights through the administrative channels, were settled at the Agency by agreement between the parties.

Prosecutions brought by the Agency for violations of these rights also have an important deterrent effect. In 2001, its representatives were involved, either as prosecuting parties or as experts, in three cases in the courts of first instance, three in the Economic Court and one in the Court of Appeal.

Regular supervision of the market extended to over 3,500 audio cassettes, over 1,200 video cassettes, some 650 CDs, over 200 broadcasts and approximately 150 printed works. Five types of violation were identified:

- large-scale pirating of imported works (involving violation of the reproduction, import and distribution rights of mainly foreign rights-holders);
- pirating of the works of national authors and performers, normally involving the unauthorised recording of concerts, radio and TV programmes, films, etc.;
- use of pirated items in combination with lawfully used works;
- use which respects the rights of phonogram producers and performers, but violates those of authors;
- unauthorized “collections” or “compilations”, produced in small quantities on amateur equipment.

In 2001, on the basis of complaints lodged by rights-holders and their associations, Agency experts took part in six police raids and examined 271 confiscated video cassettes, 48 DVDs, 90 CDs and 166 books and magazines.

At the request of the police, the Agency submitted 4 expert reports to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1 to the Public Prosecutor’s Department, and 1 to the State Committee on Admission of Students.

Tables showing the involvement of the civil, criminal and administrative courts in enforcement, and giving a breakdown of the anti-piracy programme, are enclosed.

International co-operation

WIPO collaborates actively with the authorities in Azerbaijan. In 1998, it joined the State Copyright Agency in organising a national seminar on the implications of the new WIPO treaties (the Internet treaties) and the TRIPS agreement. In May 2000, the Agency and WIPO organised the first regional seminar in the Southern Caucasus on action against piracy, which was attended by representatives of copyright organisations, the police and customs authorities in Georgia and various Central Asian countries.

The celebration of World Intellectual Property Day, proclaimed by WIPO under the slogan, “Creating the future today”, on 26 April in the first year of the millennium, and the celebration, three years running, of World Book and Copyright Day on 23 April, attracted huge attention in Azerbaijan.

The Agency co-operated with the Ministry of Education in organising the intellectual property competition for students at national level, with the winner going on to compete in the international finals, organised by WIPO.

With a view to strengthening co-operation between WIPO and the Agency, WIPO experts visited Azerbaijan and helped to draw up a major plan, covering computer and office equipment for the Agency, and training and retraining for its experts. The Director General of WIPO, Mr. Kamil Idris, ratified a co-operation programme for 2001-2002 - a reflection both of the attention paid to Azerbaijan, and of the national leadership's wise internal and foreign policy. WIPO's 07 co-operation programme, under which it helps various transition countries in Europe and Asia to improve and develop their intellectual property systems, deserves general support.

WIPO's interest in Azerbaijan and its policy was also reflected in its decision to include Azerbaijan among the first five participants in the international computer network, WIPOnet – a decision backed by our Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This network will be used to exchange information on intellectual property rapidly at international level. The State Agency is the first copyright office in the world to join it, and WIPO is covering both its equipment costs and rental of the special data channels.

Azerbaijan is one of the four CIS countries involved in the European Union's "TACIS – Intellectual Property" programme, which has sponsored several sessions of the Steering Committee on Copyright and the Anti-Piracy Committee, and helped to equip the Agency and set up the local "authors" network. In co-operation with TACIS, three international and national seminars/symposiums have been organised by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Youth and Sport on the protection of audiovisual works, the defence of copyright, and youth problems and copyright, and several dozen meetings have been held with various categories of rights-holder.

With support from WIPO and the TACIS programme, Agency staff have attended courses at the WIPO Academy and received training in various European countries, and judges, police officers and customs officials have been retrained.

Further evidence of the regard in which Azerbaijan and its President's policy are held is provided by: the Agency representative's attendance at the WIPO Diplomatic Conference in December 2000 and his election as vice-chairman, the inclusion of Azerbaijan among WIPO co-ordinating countries in 2001-2002, and the Agency representative's election as a vice-chairman of the Berne Union. Welcoming the latter at the Diplomatic Conference, WIPO's Director General, Mr. Kamil Idris, spoke of the successes achieved by the young State, and paid special tribute to its President, Mr. Heydar Aliyev.

Chapter 5. Funding culture

Funding culture from the budget

Culture in Azerbaijan is mainly funded from the state budget, and this makes it possible to preserve the cultural heritage and appoint cultural staff at a time when the country is making the difficult transition to a market economy. Before looking in more detail at culture's share in the national budget, we should note that the total state budget for 2001 comes to approximately 1 billion US dollars.

Table 1. Expenditure on culture in the state budget, 1997-2001

Years	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Million manats	%	Million manats	%	Million manats	%	Million manats	%	Million manats	%
Budget of the Republic	3194369.0	100	3796847.3	100	3969040.8	100	3930934.5	100	4595000.0	100
Culture, arts and mass media, including:	89002.6	2.78	103114.8	2.71	89755.3	2.26	99810.4	2.53	111098.2	2.42
Culture, arts and restoration of monuments	48348.1	1.51	57808.9	1.52	51628.8	1.30	56762	1.44	61314.0	1.33

As the table shows, expenditure on culture accounts for about 2.5% of the total budget. Specific expenditure on culture, arts and the restoration of monuments comes, however, to approximately 1.5%. In other words, two figures can be given: one for total expenditure on culture, and one for expenditure directly covered by the Ministry of Culture. Table 2 below refines the picture.

Table 2. Expenditure on culture by spheres of activity, 1997-2001

Year	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Million manats	%	Million manats	%	Million manats	%	Million manats	%	Million manats	%
Republic budget for culture, arts, the media, including:	89002.6	100	103114.8	100	89755.3	100	99810.4	100	111098.2	100
Culture, arts and restoration of monuments	48348.1	54.3	57808.9	56.0	51628.8	57.5	56762	56.9	61314.0	55.2
Radio and TV	32828.9	36.9	38032.5	36.9	30223.9	33.7	34798.8	34.9	38739.1	34.9
Press and others	3675.7	4.1	5123.4	5.0	5902.6	6.6	6049.4	6.0	8045.1	7.2
Cinema	4150.0	4.7	2150.0	2.1	2000.0	2.2	2200.0	2.2	3000.0	2.7

Comparison of the percentage of the budget which goes to culture with the figure for other European countries is misleading, since the budgets themselves are incommensurable. It should also be remembered that, while culture in Azerbaijan is 95% state-funded, culture in other countries can draw on numerous alternative sources.

Budgetary funding of culture at central and regional level

Table 3 shows budgetary expenditure on culture and the arts at central and regional level in 1997-2001. It should be noted that, as a result of the recent decentralisation of budgetary expenditure on culture, 75-80% of funds are now distributed locally. Local authorities and the regions' cultural departments are now determining the patterns of cultural expenditure in ...the regions (districts) of the Republic. It should also be noted that subjective factors are very significant at

local and regional level, where a great deal depends on the people in charge and – as monitoring shows – attitudes to culture vary widely.

Centralised expenditure on culture is largely focused on the capital, Baku. With culture permanently short of funding, preference also goes to organisations of national importance, most of which operate from Baku.

Table 3. Expenditure on culture at central and local level in 1997-2001

Year	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Million manats	%	Million manats	%	Million manats	%	Million manats	%	Million manats	%
Culture, arts and restoration of monuments; total:	48348.1	100	57808.9	100	51628.8	100	56762.2	100	61314.0	100
Centralised expenditure	8202.9	17.0	11817.8	20.4	11584.8	22.4	12064.5	21.3	15364.1	25.0
Local expenditure	40145.2	83.0	45991.1	79.6	40044.0	77.6	44697.7	78.7	45949.9	75.0

As the table shows, centralised and regional expenditure both grew steadily (except in 1999), in accordance with the Culture Act. A high percentage of centralised expenditure went on four libraries and fifteen museums of national importance, subsidies to fourteen theatres, centralised events, theatrical and musical performances, and the visual arts, restoration of the cultural monuments, creation of new monuments, conduction of different events in foreign countries, etc. Table 4 below gives a clear break-down of this expenditure in the last three years.

Table 4.

Item / Year	1999	2000	2001
State budget for centralised expenditure in thousands of manats, total:	13.584.754	14.264.531	18.364.125
Including			
Libraries	819.691	866.901	1.022.028
Museums	1.225.820	1.270.125	1.437.536
Theatres, places of entertainment	4.776.000	6.185.000	7.388.000
Centralised events	3.966.954	2.934.000	4.256.500
Restoration works	500.000	500.000	900.000
Cinema	2 000.000	2 200.000	3 000.000
Other cultural institutions	296.289	308.502	360.061

Much of the Ministry of Culture's expenditure (Table 4) goes on subsidising theatres and places of entertainment. Some 25% goes on centralised events, including a wide range of cultural projects, theatrical, musical and arts events, etc.

As stated above, most centralised expenditure is committed in Baku. The following table shows the percentage of the city's budget (in thousands manats) spent on culture and gives a break-down.

Table 5

Item / Year	1999	2000	2001
Baku city budget	339.345.450	350.652.716	393.710.453
Cultural expenditure, in thousands of manats and as percentage of total Baku budget:	13.009.057 3.83%	12.307.632 3.51%	12.935.913 3.29%
Including			
Libraries	262.409	305.969	299.116
Museums	336.211	938.023	430.521
Theatres, places of entertainment	871.500	776.100	670.079
Centralised events	655.241	607.938	234.356
Music schools	10.735.785	9.582.985	11.197.064
Central office and other cultural institutions	147.911	96.617	104.777

In other words, culture accounts for about 3.5% of Baku's total budget. Music schools absorb the lion's share of the cultural budget – over 80%, while subsidies to theatres and places of entertainment account for 6-7%, and libraries and museums are in the same modest bracket.

Where the money goes

The actual distribution of funds is the most interesting part of this chapter. Since 1997, funds have been allocated on the basis of itemized estimates, which are approved by the Ministry of Finance and allow its local offices to keep a strict check on the use made of public funds. There are more than 30 of these items and sub-items, and their large number complicates the work of the accountants and leads to numerous complaints. Provisionally, these items can be divided into 3 groups: salaries, welfare and other payments; rent, repair and maintenance of premises and buildings; purchase or commissioning of works of art, grants to authors and restocking of museums and libraries, conduction of events, propagandizing Azerbaijani culture abroad, book-publishing, funding of different projects, etc.

Tables 6 and 7 below show percentage expenditure on these three groups at central and regional level in 2000.

Table 6. Percentage expenditure per group at central level in 2000

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Libraries	64.1	28.1	7.8	100
Museums	34.9	56.9	8.2	100
Other institutions	63.3	26.4	10.3	100

Table 7. Percentage expenditure per group at local level in 2000

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Total
Libraries	69.7	17.8	12.5	100
Museums	57.5	30.7	11.8	100
Cultural centres and associations	64.5	25.0	10.5	100
Other institutions	43.2	41.3	15.5	100

As the tables show, 90% of expenditure at central and regional level is devoted to groups 1 and 2. Analysis shows that the situation in previous years was the same. The main item of cultural

expenditure today is maintenance of cultural institutions and payment of their staff. Expenditure for group 3 is about 10%, sometimes less. Clearly, maintenance, not creativity, is the main focus. It is true that maintenance, i.e. preservation and enrichment of cultural assets, is important, but this tendency to spend as little as possible on purchasing and commissioning art works, subsidising creativity and restocking libraries will inevitably – if it continues – lead to a general worsening of the country's cultural situation.

In general, it must be said that funding of culture in the transition period is fraught with many problems. Low salaries and the brain-drain they provoke are two of them. For 2001 on average, culture workers earn 59.883 manats (about 13 US dollars) a month, culture/education workers 52.090 manats (about 11 US dollars), and theatre/entertainment workers 104.776 manats (about 22 US dollars).

As absolutely positive fact we should note the following decrees and orders of the President of the Republic, rendered towards improving of the social conditions of the cultural workers:

- “On measures to improve the activity of the Symphony Orchestra of Azerbaijan” (No. 701 of 02.12.97);
- “On pensions for persons engaged in creative activity in Azerbaijan” (No. 714 of 22.12.97);
- “On presidential stipends for talented young people included in the “Red Book”” (No. 662 of 13.09.97);
- “On improvement of social welfare provision for members of the ballet troupe at the Azerbaijan State Opera and Ballet Theatre” (No. 281 of 06.12.99);
- “On personal stipends to young writers of the Republic of Azerbaijan” (No. 277 of 06.12.99);
- “On improvement of social welfare provision of the Azerbaijan State choir chapel” (No. 432 of 02.06.2000);
- “On improved social welfare of the workers of the Azerbaijan State dance ensemble” (No. 819 of 15.10.2001);
- “On establishment of grants of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the figures of arts” (No. 707 of 08.05.2002);
- “On establishment of individual pensions of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan” (of 11.06.2002)

Important moral encouragement is offered by the system of government grants. By presidential decree, dated 22 May 1998, “On honorable ranks of the Republic of Azerbaijan” the outstanding figures in the sphere of culture are awarded honorable ranks (people's writer, people's poet, people's artist, people's painter, distinguished figure of arts, distinguished artist, distinguished painter, distinguished cultural worker).

Alternative sources of funding for culture

The first alternative source is sums earned outside their budgets by cultural organisations, e.g. fees charged for services provided by museums, exhibition halls and libraries. However, such receipts are insignificant, accounting for less than 1% of total expenditure on culture, the arts and monument conservation.

The authorities responsible for culture at national level have set up special funds in the hope of attracting further contributions. Such funds are also established by local authorities, associations, legal entities and individuals.

Privatisation is one answer to the problem of funding, and the periodical press, publishing, TV and radio, records, film production and distribution, concert organisation, etc. are the areas most affected. At the same time, privatization has slightly affected the cinema production and distribution industry, which requires significant capital contributions.

There are also restrictions on privatisation. The following, for example, may not be privatised: state museums, libraries, galleries, historic monuments, and cultural assets of international importance.

Attracting foreign capital is one way of developing the culture industries in the future. An example, we could show the “Azerbaijan International Cinema Company”, a joint venture launched by the Union of Cinematographers and a private British company, ITIL. Together, they have restored the “Azerbaijan” cinema in Baku and installed equipment according to the modern standards, and have taken joint charge of film distribution.

Another example of a successful attempt to attract outside funding is provided by the Azerbaijan State Opera and Ballet Theatre, which secured backing for its “Opera Trust Fund” from a number of large international companies, including AGIP, BP-AMOCO, ARCO, HSBC British Bank, MOBIL, SHELL, TEXACO and the Wicklow Group.

Various theatres have also found sponsors for new productions.

Grants represent a new approach to supporting culture workers. The Grants Act, which regulates economic and legal aspects of the award, acceptance and use of grants, was passed in 1998.

Bodies which provide real support for workers in the culture field include the Soros and Eurasia Foundations, which promote contacts between artists, musicians and arts specialists in different countries and offer travel grants for those wishing to attend seminars or conferences, take part in festivals, or undertake research - including research in the cultural and arts fields – abroad.

The Eurasia Foundation, for example, has funded international computer facilities and Internet connections at the Azerbaijan State Library, and supported the Regional Further Training Centre for information workers and librarians in the Southern Caucasus.

In 2002 the Japanese Government granted more than 300.000 US dollars for covering the purchase of new instruments for the State Symphony Orchestra.

Tax policy in the cultural sphere

Tax policy holds one of the main keys to attracting funds and investment into culture. The new Tax Code, the most progressive moment of which is the application of simplified tax rates, took effect on 1 January 2001. Article 219.2 of the new code states: “Firms paying taxes under the simplified system shall not be liable for VAT, income tax, land tax or property tax”. This applies to firms with a quarterly (three-monthly) turnover of less than 100 million manats, or about 21 thousand US dollars. They pay tax at 2% of total turnover.

As in all countries with the economy in transition, the tax legislature of Azerbaijan is in the period of establishment. Searches in this field not always and not at once bring to the positive results. So, about 100 changes and additions to the Code took effect on 1 January 2002, and one of them affected the taxes on simplified system. The three-monthly turnover figure under the simplified system was reduced to 30 million (6,300 USD). As a result of the changes, the number of cultural institutions liable for VAT and income tax has increased, with significantly negative effects on their situation.

But, due to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan from 10.09.2002 “On additional measures in the sphere of state provision of development of entrepreneurship in the Republic of Azerbaijan”, from the 1 January 2003 the following steps are foreseen:

- reduction of the taxes by types;
- differentiation of taxes for spheres and regions;
- enlargement of the sphere of application of the simplified tax system;
- reduction of the social provision taxes.

All these measures provide us with the basis for future development of tax policy in the field of culture.

Analysis and evaluation of culture funding

An analysis of data on the funding of culture in the last five years shows that:

1. Culture, the arts and monument conservation account for a very small proportion of the state budget (we have to remember the size of that budget);
2. The sums spent on purchasing art works and stocking libraries are minimal;
3. Very little is earned from paid services (extra-budgetary funding) in the capital, and nothing in the regions;
4. Cultural institutions have not done enough to attract investment and grants at central level, and have totally failed to do so at local level;
5. Tax policy in the cultural sphere is not as flexible as it should be.

As we see it, the best chance of solving the problem of funding culture lies in a series of inter-linked measures, including:

- A progressive increase, up to 5-6%, in culture’s share of the total state budget;
- An increase of expenditures on monuments restoration;
- An increase of expenditures on cultural projects;
- Inclusion in the estimated expenditures the paragraphs for the purchase of art works, and books for libraries (not less than 25% of total expenditure);
- Maintenance of budgetary funding, with increased funding from other sources, primarily targeting group 3 items;
- Efforts by cultural institutions at central and local level to attract investment and secure grants.

Various tax concessions – first of all, renewed VAT exemption - are needed to make all this possible.

Chapter 6. Education, training and research

Education in culture and the arts has a centuries-old tradition in Azerbaijan. Medieval sources already reflect the Azerbaijani people's high level of culture, scholarship and education. Poetry, music, architecture, painting, the decorative and applied arts, and carpet-making were all highly developed at an early stage. Theories of music were formulated in the 13th and 14th centuries by S. Urmevi and A. Maraghi, among others. Many of the larger towns had music and art schools with international reputations. In the 14th century, a small settlement specifically devoted to education, science and the arts was founded near Tebriz (southern Azerbaijan). Its library contained 60,000 volumes and, in workshops attached to it, the arts of miniature painting and book illustration were perfected. The music schools at Baku, Shemakha, Shusha and Nakhchivan, which relied on empirical teaching methods, played a major part in transmitting the Mugam and Ashug oral traditions from one generation to the next.

Interest in the west European approach to cultural and arts education developed in the mid-19th century. At that time, such education was essentially restricted to the well-off, being provided either in the home or in secondary schools. In the early 20th century, however, professional training for musicians and artists, based on European models, became a major issue.

Baku got its first private music school in 1896. In 1901, the Imperial Russian Music Society opened a branch in the city, and started to run music courses. In the early years of the 20th century, a number of other private music schools and a music studio started to operate.

The Azerbaijan State Conservatoire, which went on to play a leading role in the musical and cultural life of the country, was founded by U. Hadjibeyov in 1921. Also significant was the "Turkish Music School", which became a college of music, before merging with the Conservatoire in 1926.

A number of music schools were founded in Baku, and in other towns and administrative centres, in the twenties.

The first private art school opened in Baku in 1915, but survived for only two years. It was succeeded in 1920 by the Art Studio, which evolved into a series of workshops and became the School of Art. In addition to painting and sculpture, it had an applied arts department, which taught artistic embroidery. It was reorganised as a technical school in 1927, and became the College of Art in 1940.

The first ballet school was opened in 1922. A rhythm and expression studio was opened in Baku in 1923. In 1929, this became the State Ballet School and was attached to the Opera. Later, a college of dance was established on this basis.

A Drama School was opened in Baku in 1923, to provide the country's theatres with actors and producers. This included an opera class, and developed into a technical college, before becoming (in 1945) the Theatre Institute of Azerbaijan.

In 1928, a three-level pattern was adopted for training in music and the arts, and this still applies today.

First-level training

At present, Azerbaijan has 274 specialised schools, teaching music, dance and painting at primary level. Children attend for 4 to 7 years (art - 4 years, dance - 5 years, music - 7 years). Music schools are by far the most numerous: there are 227. They teach classical (piano, violin, cello, flute, clarinet, oboe, trumpet, tuba, bassoon, etc.) and folk (tar, kemancha, nagara, accordeon, canon, balaban, etc.) instruments, as well as classical and folk singing. Music and art schools are almost totally (99.4%) state-funded. Only 0.6% comes from parents, who pay 385 manats (approximately 0.8 USD) per child. In other words, a year's tuition in music or art costs families less than a dollar per child.

Second-level training

There are 16 specialised schools, providing education in culture and the arts at secondary level (11 music schools, 3 cultural technical schools, a college of art and a dance school).

Technical schools specialising in music (there are 8, including the State Music College of Azerbaijan) train performers on classical and folk instruments, and also teachers for children's music schools.

The Arts College at the Academy of Arts teaches painting, sculpture, carpet-making, ceramics, modeling, theatre design and the decorative and applied arts.

Technical schools specialising in culture provide training in the following fields: culture and arts management, museum management, monument conservation, decorative and applied arts, librarianship. They also have music departments, which train music teachers for preschool institutions and music schools.

The second-level course runs for three years, the first-level course for four. Some specialised schools offer both as a continuum. The Secondary Music School at Byulbyul, the Secondary Music School in the Baku Academy of Music, the Secondary Music School of the Ministry of National Security and the Baku College of Dance – the country's only training school for ballet and folk dancers – are among them.

Training in these institutions lasts 11-12 years.

Training at this level is provided free of charge, and students with good grades also receive scholarships.

Third-level training

The Baku Academy of Music, the Azerbaijan National Conservatoire, the State University of Culture and the Arts, and the State Academy of Art offer third-level courses in culture and the arts. Some universities also run courses for students intending to work in cultural institutions.

Composers, musicologists, choir-leaders, classical and folk instrumentalists, and singers receive their training at the Baku Academy of Music, whose graduates have won international recognition, both as teachers and performers.

The State University of Culture and the Arts runs courses in the following fields: theatre, cinema and TV (directing, acting, scriptwriting, camera operating, etc.), choreography, museum management, monument conservation, culture management, performing arts, decorative and applied arts (carpet design, industrial graphics, commercial art, fashion design, interior design, etc.).

The State Academy of Art offers courses on painting, graphics, sculpture, architecture, decorative and applied arts, theatre design, the history and theory of the performing arts, interior design, carpet design, advertising and modeling.

Architects are trained at the College of Architecture and Building Techniques.

The State University of Azerbaijan offers the only graduate course for librarians and bibliographers.

Some institutions of higher education (Azerbaijan Teacher Training College, Nakhchivan Teacher Training College, Ganja State University and Lenkaran State University) have arts departments, which train music and performing arts teachers. Nakhchivan Teacher Training College also trains music, history of music, piano and folk instrument teachers. Arts departments at some universities have commercial art departments, e.g. Western University (design, decorative and applied art) and “Khazar” University (design).

Some of the above courses are fee-paying, others not. Students who achieve good results qualify for scholarships.

Courses last 4-6 years, depending on level. The bachelor’s degree course lasts four years, the master’s degree course another two. Three years are needed for a doctorate.

This multi-level system produces highly-trained specialists for culture and the arts – but there are problems too.

For one thing, the country’s economic plight has also left its mark on education: low salaries force the best academics and specialists to work abroad or leave teaching for something which pays better – and this obviously affects quality of training in culture and the arts.

The level of training in the regions is also unsatisfactory. Although curricula, syllabuses and teaching methods are determined centrally, the cultural and arts training provided in outlying areas lags behind that provided in Baku. There are social and economic reasons for this.

The fact that the various institutions which train art and culture specialists are answerable to different authorities is a further source of problems. In other former Soviet republics, these institutions are all controlled by the Ministry of Culture, but this applies only to first-level centres - art and music schools for children, arts schools and the only technical school specialising in dance - in Azerbaijan. Second and third-level institutions - technical schools, colleges, academies and universities - are subject to the Ministry of Education.

The lack of a single, centralised administration makes it impossible to co-ordinate the work of all the institutions involved, and also prevents the Ministry of Culture from laying down curricula and teaching methods for the second and third-level institutions, which train specialists to work

in its system. Ignorance - of the problems which beset cultural activity in Azerbaijan, and of the special features of arts training in the broad sense – is the main obstacle to providing training which meets all the needs of specialists in all areas.

Training and further training courses for culture workers have been functioning since 1966. These help people working within the Ministry of Culture's system (directors of municipal cultural centres, theatre and concert hall managers and staff, librarians, and staff of museums, children's music and art schools, adult art schools, cultural associations and centres, picture galleries, etc.) to improve their skills. The number of students, and the range of categories from which they come, are increasing yearly.

Number of persons taking training and further training courses for culture workers

Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Students	501	663	681	696	673	889

The Institute of Architecture and the Arts of the National Academy of Sciences, originally based on researches in history and art's theory from antiquity to the present time, is the center of researches in the sphere of native art science. It completed this task in the mid-eighties, and the result was a three-volume "History of the Arts in Azerbaijan" – the fruit of long-term collective effort by numerous specialists, covering architecture, town-planning, the performing, decorative and applied arts, and classical and folk music.

Future research will strike out in two directions. On the one hand, a comprehensive history, covering all types and varieties of artistic creativity, is projected. On the other, there is a need for further research on the country's culture as such, identifying its specific features, and defining its place and role in the history of global civilisation. The Institute, given a co-ordinating role in the field of cultural research by the Government, is working on this today. Over the years, it has built up a strong team of specialists, and this helps it to conduct fundamental research effectively.

Fundamental research on the aims and methods of culture and arts education is also carried out at the Baku Academy of Music, the College of Culture and the Arts, the Academy of Art and the College of Architecture and Building Techniques.

The country's aims in the fields of cultural training and research are:

- to maintain and develop the network of training institutions, and the whole multi-level training system;
- to set up a state programme, "Children of Azerbaijan", to bring young talent to light and support it: this would cover competitions, festivals, exhibitions, grants for participation in international festivals, and scholarships for gifted children;
- to fund culture and arts training abroad for talented young people;
- to improve the training system and up-grade the skills of culture workers in various categories;
- to set up support programmes (grants, premiums) for young scholars working on various aspects of art and culture;
- to encourage research with the help of grants, premiums, conferences, seminars and sponsored publications.

Chapter 7. International cultural co-operation

The end of the “cold war”, the collapse of world socialism, the former Soviet republics’ emergence on the international scene as independent states with their own foreign policy priorities – all of this was directly reflected in new forms of cultural co-operation at international level.

Despite during the Soviet period, all international cultural relations were directly controlled, defined and regulated by the “central” authorities in Moscow, original Azerbaijan culture was able to find its appearance on the international arena as holding the Days of Azerbaijan Culture in such countries as Holland, Italy, Portugal, tours of Azerbaijan Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet in France, etc.

Once Azerbaijan had achieved independence, international cultural ties became one of its new foreign policy’s chief instruments. The main aims of that policy were to foster relations based on mutual understanding and trust with other countries, work with them on the basis of mutual benefit and equal rights, and give the world a clear, objective picture of our country. Culture played a major part in forming the young state’s image, and did quite as much as its political and economic achievements to create a strong and persuasive impression. Democratisation, decentralisation and participation in many areas of culture have also been reflected in our international relations. Ties have been formed with many countries at regional and city level, and artists’ associations and individual artists now operate autonomously. Indeed, finance is now the only brake on the further development of international relations. Not all the effects of liberalisation have been good, however. The “culture” exported by associations and artists has not always been top-quality – though the same can be said of the imports.

From international relations to international co-operation

The Ministry of Culture’s statistics for the last five years show a definite trend, illustrating the qualitative changes which are taking place in the cultural sphere. Cultural links tend to lead to cultural co-operation, while one-off activities and tours are frequently followed by long-term joint projects.

These trends are clear from Table 1 and from Figures 1 and 2 below, which show that the commonest types of cultural co-operation with other countries in 1996–2000 were: festivals – 66 (26.09%), international meetings – 43 (17%), working visits – 33 (13.04%), commemorative celebrations – 27 (10.67%) and tours – 25 (9.88%). These figures are based on Ministry of Culture data and probably do not give the full picture - but they do, we feel, reflect the general trends accurately.

Table 1. Types of international cultural co-operation engaged in by Azerbaijan in the period 1996–2000.

	Type of activity	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Total	%
1.	Tours (theatre, music)	5	4	8	6	2	25	9.88
2.	Participation in festivals	16	11	9	16	14	66	26.09
3.	Participation in international exhibitions	2	2	2	2	2	10	3.95
4.	Participation in international conferences	3	2	3	-	5	13	5.14
5.	Participation in commemorative celebrations	3	7	10	5	2	27	10.67
6.	Working visits	6	6	4	13	4	33	13.04
7.	Participation in competitions	1	2	1	1	-	5	1.98
8.	Participation in international meetings and gatherings	7	9	6	7	14	43	17.00
9.	Participation in international seminars and symposia	2	-	1	4	4	11	4.35
10.	Courses and training	-	-	-	2	2	4	1.58
11.	Interdepartmental agreements and protocols on cultural co-operation	4	5	3	1	2	15	5.93
12.	Participation in international programmes	-	-	-	-	1	1	0.39
	Total	49	48	47	57	52	253	100.00

Figure 1. Types of international cultural co-operation engaged in by Azerbaijan in the period 1996 – 2000.

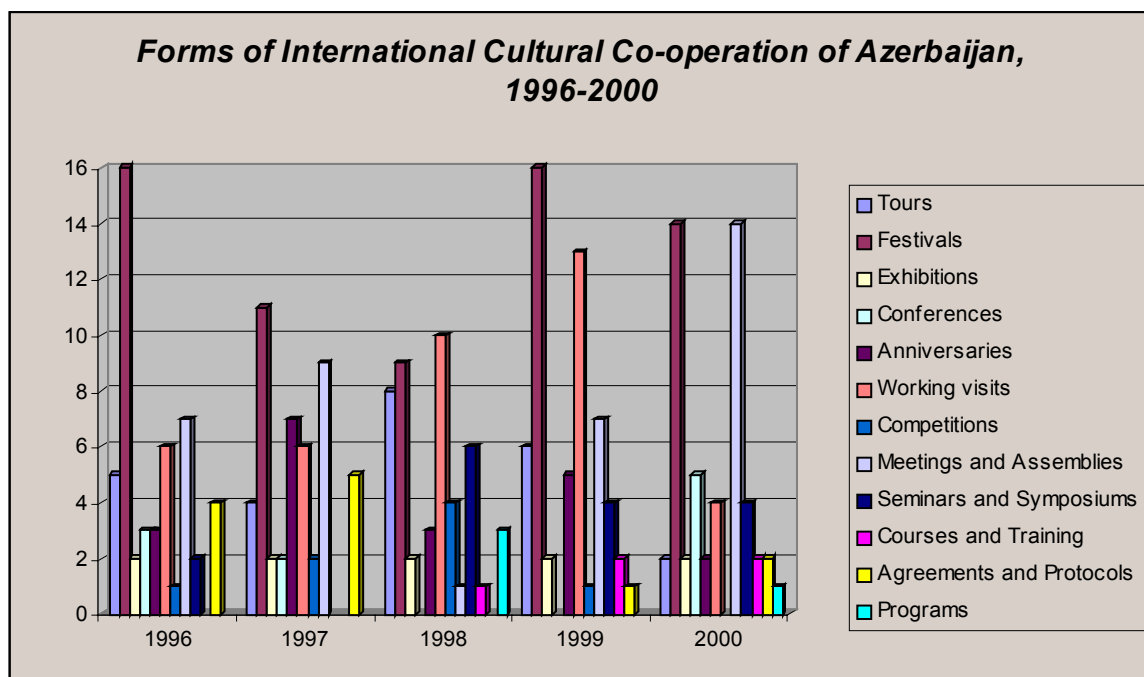
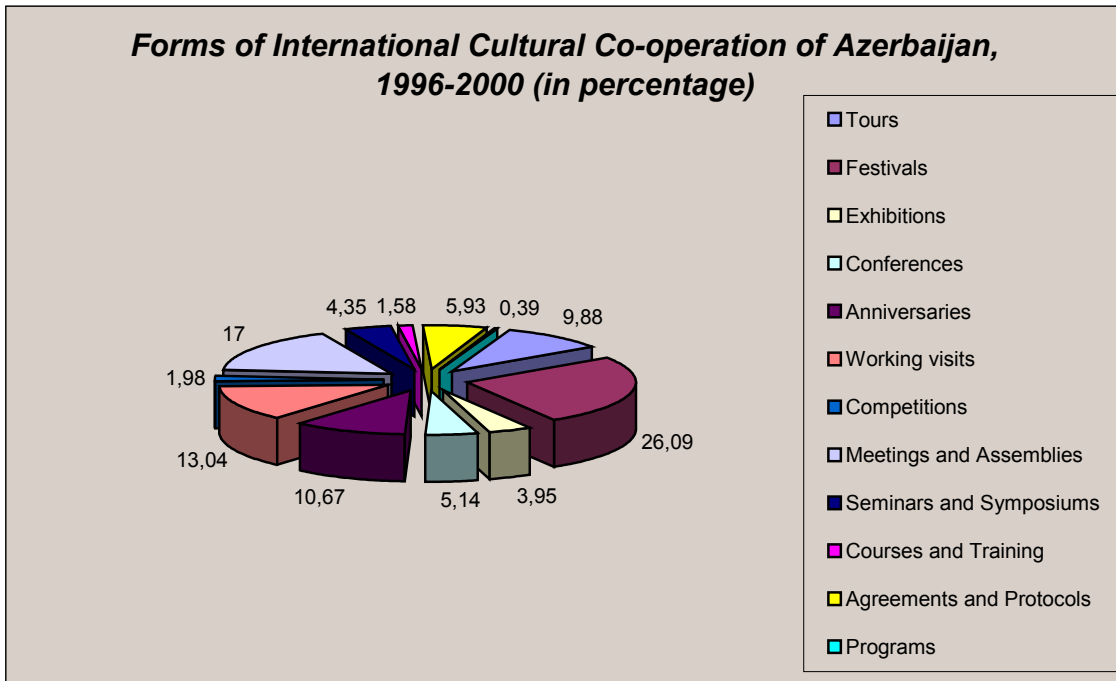


Figure 2. Types of international cultural co-operation engaged in by Azerbaijan in the period 1996–2000 (percentages).



Bilateral relations

Bilateral relations are one of the forms which international co-operation can take, and are nothing new for Azerbaijan. In the last few years alone, intergovernmental agreements on cultural co-operation have been concluded with China, Georgia, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Uzbekistan. Interdepartmental agreements and protocols have been concluded with Bashkiria, Belarus, China, Georgia, Iran, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, etc.

Multilateral relations

Multilateral co-operation is a new and promising development. Azerbaijan may not have been an independent state for long, but it has already established cultural contacts with various international bodies, including UNESCO, the Council of Europe, ISESCO, TURKSOY and the CIS Council on Cultural Co-operation, GUAM, etc.

Azerbaijan joined UNESCO in 1992. Since then, special celebrations have been organised at UNESCO headquarters in Paris to mark the 500th anniversary of the birth of the poet Fizuli, the 80th anniversary of the birth of the composer Gara Garayev, and the 1300th anniversary of our national epic, “Dede-Gorgud”. Azerbaijan has active links with UNESCO’s World Heritage Centre, Cultural Heritage Department and International Dialogue Department, regularly sends specialists to UNESCO conferences, seminars and symposia held in other countries, and hosts various UNESCO activities at home.

Cultural relations with the Council of Europe are one of the key elements in our international contacts. Azerbaijan did not join the Council till January 2001, but the Ministry of Culture had started working with the Committee on Culture in 1999, having signed the European Cultural Convention in 1997. In 2000, the Ministry of Culture of Azerbaijan took part in the project “Cultural policies in Europe: compendium of basic facts and trends”. In 2001, it signed up for the Cultural Policy Department’s three-year “STAGE” project, which sets out to support new cultural policies in the countries of the Southern Caucasus. Producing a national report on cultural policies is one of the main stages in this project, and Azerbaijani experts are working on this with European colleagues. The project also covers national discussion of cultural policies, staff training, etc. Another project to which Azerbaijan attaches great importance is the project on “Culture and Conflict”.

TURKSOY offers guidance and support in the culture and arts fields, without seeking to influence its member countries’ internal and external policies. The Ministers of Culture of the Turkish-speaking countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Turkmenistan) met in Istanbul and Baku in 1992 and agreed on a joint approach to managing cultural affairs. TURKSOY was founded at the Almati meeting on 12 July 1993, when its principles and activities were determined. Bashkiria, Gagauzia (autonomous district of Moldova), Khakasia, Tataristan, Tyva and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus joined as observers.

TURKSOY’s activities include: developing and strengthening relations between the Turkish-speaking countries in the culture and arts fields, and implementing joint programmes and projects; taking measures to identify, preserve, study, develop and propagate the shared spiritual values, heritage, culture, arts, traditional sports and national games of the Turkish-speaking countries; organising drama, music, opera and ballet festivals; organising exhibitions and similar events to promote the visual and plastic arts of the Turkish-speaking countries; establishing links with other international and national organisations, public bodies and movements active in culture, the arts, education, etc.

Numerous activities, which made significant contribution into the development of the culture of the Turkish-speaking countries, have been conducted under TURKSOY’s aegis.

The agreement on co-operation between TURKSOY and UNESCO, signed in Istanbul, sets out to co-ordinate activities in culture, the arts, education and science, with a view to preserving and enriching the historic and cultural heritage of the Turkish-speaking countries and nations, promoting their intellectual and spiritual values, and protecting human rights and freedoms.

The Agreement on cultural co-operation between the countries of GUAM was signed in July 2002.

International standard-setting activity in the cultural field

Azerbaijan regards the development and strengthening of international standard-setting activity as a matter of some importance. In the last 10 years alone, it has accordingly acceded to a number of international conventions with a vital bearing on secure and extensive cultural interchange with other countries – which demands compliance with up-to-date standards of international law. Table 2 gives details.

Table 2. Conventions on culture accepted by Azerbaijan

Title of Convention	Year concluded	Date when Azerbaijan joined
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	19 December 1966	21 July 1992
UNESCO Convention and Protocol for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict	14 May 1954	21 April 1993
UNESCO Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	16 November 1972	6 December 1993
European Cultural Convention	19 December 1954	1997
European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage	16 January 1992	20 October 1999
Convention on the means of prohibiting and preventing the illicit import, export and transfer of ownership of cultural property	1970	30 September 1997
European convention on joint cinema production	2 October 1992	28 October 1999

Work with the Diaspora

One new and particularly significant priority of our cultural policy abroad is maintaining links with cultural centres and associations run by Azerbaijanis living in other countries. According to the latest data, there are about 100 of these, in a broad range of countries - Australia, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United States and Uzbekistan. Many of them were represented at the First World Congress of Azerbaijanis, held in Baku in November 2001.

The State Committee on work with Azerbaijanians, living in foreign countries, was formed in accordance with Decree of President of the republic of Azerbaijan in 2002.

Prospects

Politics, economics and culture are today the three defining pillars of our external policy. The growing importance of culture calls for an overall plan, covering the aims, forms, trends, priorities and mechanisms of external cultural policy.

Chapter 8. Participation in culture

Introduction

Data on participation in culture are one of the most significant pointers to a country's living standards and political and economic situation. They are important in planning cultural development and drawing up the cultural budget. Although statistics are compiled regularly, sociological research in the cultural field has so far been limited. The Ministry of Culture accordingly commissioned, for the National Report, a survey on "Cultural Participation". This survey, which was carried out by SIAR, a social and marketing research centre, essentially focuses on the culture industries - television, cinema, radio, computers, newspapers and books.

Information submitted by the Ministry of Culture, and based on data supplied by the cultural institutions which it controls, has also been embodied in this chapter. Included, too, are data from the Central Statistics Board on public use of the main cultural centres.

Culture industries

(Information supplied by SIAR)

Television

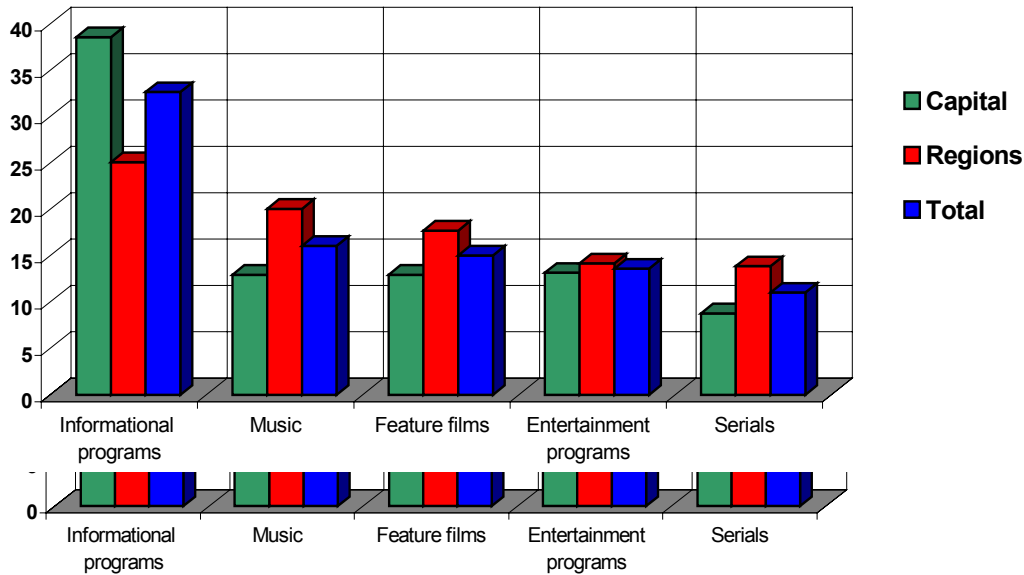
Television has become so deeply rooted a part of everyday life that modern society is unthinkable without it. There are various reasons for this: television is a vital source of information, helps to form public opinion, represents a huge commercial market and is, finally, the most accessible and probably the most acceptable leisure.

Thus, as expected, nearly all respondents (97%) say that they watch TV, approximately seven days a week.

Television in Azerbaijan began to change significantly when the USSR collapsed, and private channels started to appear in the newly independent country.

Azerbaijan now has about 18 channels, and cable and satellite TV are also available to subscribers.

The following chart gives data on the five most popular types of programme mentioned by respondents:



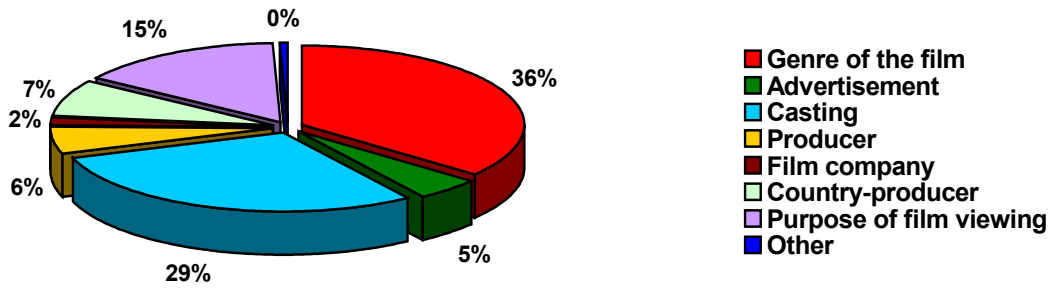
As the chart shows, information programmes are the most popular (33%). As for audience breakdown, it is worth noting that more men (39%) than women (27%) watch information programmes. Political news (36%) is the preferred type of information programme for both.

Cinema

The social, political and economic changes which have marked the last few years have affected all areas of public life - and the cinema is no exception.

Remarkably, the cinema has kept its significance in Azerbaijan. About half the country's population (46%) watch films on video regularly.

The following pie chart shows the relative importance of the various factors which influence the audience's choice of film.



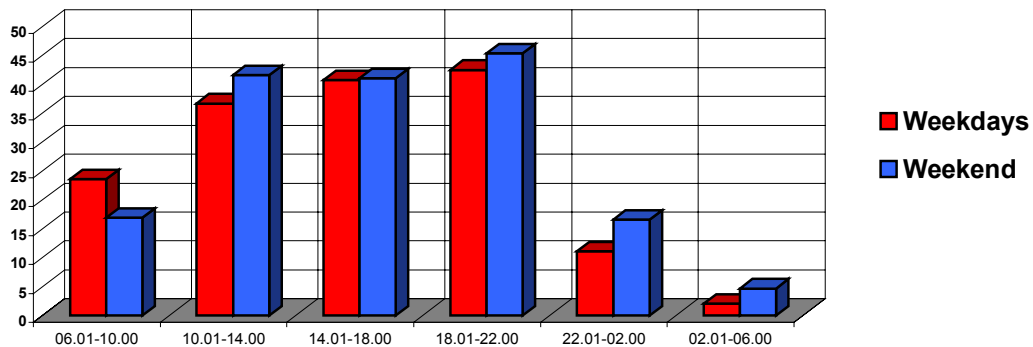
Type of film is the main determinant (36%). Nationally, the most popular types are comedies (24%) and historical dramas (18%). There is a slight difference in the capital, where action dramas have the greatest pulling power (17%).

Although most distributors deal in foreign films, it is interesting to see that a sizeable number of respondents (44%) prefer national films – which suggests that the national film industry’s future can be viewed optimistically.

Radio

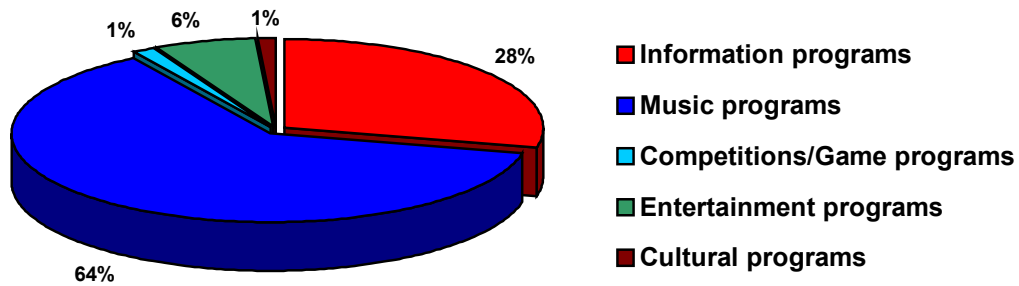
The survey findings show that radio is developing rapidly in Azerbaijan. 43% of the country’s population are regular listeners, and radio’s popularity is borne out by the fact that Azerbaijanis use their sets six days a week on average.

The following chart shows peak listening times.



During the week (42%) and at weekends (45%), the greatest number of listeners thus tune in between 6pm. and 10pm.

According to the survey, music programmes get the biggest audience, and national pop music is the type preferred. The following pie chart reflects this:

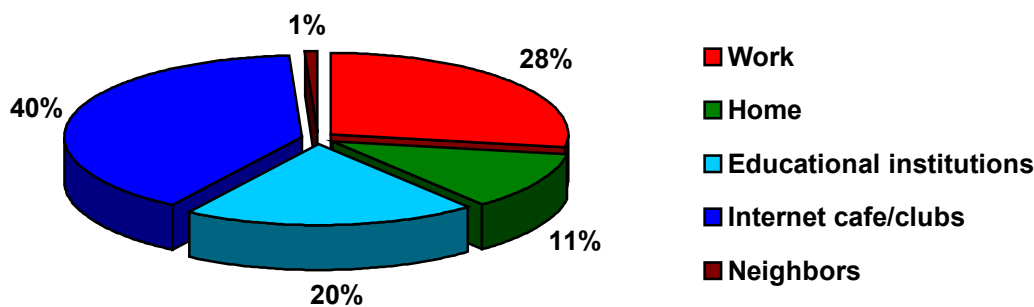


Computers

Computers have been in use in Azerbaijan since the mid-nineties and have, in the space of a few years, become an indispensable part of business and everyday life. The strong interest shown by young people in computers and the Internet has done much to bring this about.

The survey findings indicate that some 13% of the country's population now use computers regularly. Predictably, computer use is commoner in the capital (16%) than in the regions (9%). Young people are the most active users.

The following pie chart, which is based on the survey, shows where Azerbaijanis tend to use computers:



As the chart shows, Internet cafés and clubs are the main sites (40%).

The universal growth of interest in the Internet has not passed our country by. 59% of respondent computer users report that they use the Internet regularly. People in the 15-39 age-group are the ones most involved. Over half (56%) use it chiefly as an information source, communicational vehicle in chat (21%), mean of mail receiving and sending (23%).

Information technology is developing rapidly, and computers are certain to be an essential feature of life in Azerbaijan in the future.

Newspapers

Newspapers come second after television in the media popularity stakes. The survey shows that over half the country's population (52%) read newspapers regularly. People in the capital (69%) are again well ahead of people in rural areas (32%).

Over half the newspaper readers (53%) are reasonably satisfied with the range of newspapers available.

The newspapers on the market reflect a wide range of interests, goals, ideas and viewpoints. Their reporting of the news reflects the economic, social and political positions they defend, and different papers often tell different stories - which affects readers' trust in the press. Indeed, over 60% of respondents in the survey do not regard the information in the papers as reliable.

Books

Reading books is obviously not the same thing as reading newspapers and magazines, and it has its own special features.

During the Soviet period, when there was no “entertainment market” as such, reading was one of the preferred intellectual activities of all age groups. The so-called “thick magazines” were books in effect, since they regularly published interesting work by Azeri and foreign writers.

The social changes which occurred in the nineties were reflected in new reading habits, and books were overtaken by periodicals, which are now the main growth area.

Interest in classical and serious modern literature is increasingly restricted to intellectuals, the middle-aged and the old. The market is being swamped by paperback crime novels, thrillers, pulp fiction, etc.

Novels are the most popular genre (58% of readers), although history and popular science also have their following.

Many respondents (40%) said that they chose books for specific reasons.

Most of the readers surveyed (68%) have home libraries – more in the capital (77%) than in the regions (55%) – containing an average of 260 books.

Public libraries are mainly used by young people and students. 55% of library users in Baku and the regions declared themselves satisfied with the range of books carried.

Use of the main cultural facilities

(Information supplied by the Ministry of Culture’s Scientific Methods Centre, 2000).

Theatres

Azerbaijan currently has 27 theatres, four of them displaced from the occupied territories. Of the latter, the Agdam, Shusha and Fizuli theatres are still functioning in Baku and Sumgait, while the Khankendi theatre has practically closed down.

In the survey year, performances in all theatres totalled 4,258 (477 in rural areas), attracting a total audience of 925,400. There were 102 new productions and 7 revivals.

Museums

Azerbaijan now has 146 museums, and 138 of these are controlled by the Ministry of Culture. In the survey year, they attracted 597,676 individual and 644,697 group visitors. 29,903 group visits were organised, 3,140 lectures given and 1,285 exhibitions mounted.

Libraries

The Ministry of Culture’s 4,313 libraries recorded 804,070 reader visits. Regular users included 1,065 15 year-olds.

Club centres

There are 3,275 club centres, which are used for various activities by 8,236 associations and groups, totalling 107,517 people.

Visitor/audience/user figures for museums, theatres and libraries..., 1990-1999

(Information supplied by the Central Statistics Board)

	1990	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of museums	124	128	136	135	145	145	150	152	153
Visitors (thousands)	1154	2027	2290	1595	1543	1635	1502	1377	1235
Number of theatres (professional)	20	22	24	26	26	26	26	26	26
Audience (thousands)	1376	1372	1587	1459	1201	744	801	842	853
Number of libraries	4605	4909	4890	4872	4794	4644	4608	4522	4382
Readers (thousands)	4145	3246	3141	3107	3031	2962	2967	2881	2899

PART 2 - Heritage

Chapter 9. Cultural and natural heritage

The beginning of the history of protection of Azerbaijan's cultural heritage linked with adoption of Resolution of Azerbaijan Revolutionary Committee, dated 1921, on restoration of the Khans' Palaces in Shusha and Sheki. In 1924, by the Resolution of the Soviet People's Commissars, cultural monuments of national significance were taken into public ownership, and the state is now responsible for registering and protecting them.

In the first 20-25 years of the Republic's existence, the attitude to the monuments of national architecture from the side of Soviet authorities were blasphemously. Such unique monument of Baku City, as Islamic cultural-memorial Bibi-Eybat complex (7th-20th centuries), the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral (19th century) and the Roman Catholic Church (1900) were blown up, destroyed and razed in the 1930s.

In the early years of Soviet rule, restoration works have been carried out by the Central Monument Conservation Service, which had little in the way of resources and could rely only on the enthusiasm of its staff. Common Soviet laws on protection of cultural heritage have been used on the territory of Azerbaijan. Alike these laws another resolutions have been adopted.

On 14 October 1948, the Council of Ministers adopted a decision "on measures to improve the protection of cultural monuments", as a basis for action in this area.

In 1952, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan decided to set up a specialised restoration unit, which started work on some of the country's principal monuments. The monuments restored at that time now count, by reason of their uniqueness, as part of the world's heritage. However, the young architects employed by the unit had no experience of restoration work. ... During the restoration often were used inappropriate modern techniques and building materials.

The restoration department "Berpachi" was created in the beginning of eighties. The main purpose of this department was research and restoration of the monuments of Baku. The beginning of activity of the department was effectively affected on the restoration of monuments of Icheri Sheher and Apsheron.

Until 1992, the protection of cultural and historic monuments was the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture's Monument Conservation Department. The Government Committee on the Protection and Restoration of Historic and Cultural Monuments then took over until 2000. This Committee was responsible for protection, restoration and utilizations of monuments on the territory of the Republic. As the following events has shown that the decision was too wrong. A new organized structure, which had no sufficient experience in the field of restoration of monuments, couldn't expand its activity. When this Committee was abolished, responsibility was again transferred to the Ministry of Culture, which responded by setting up a special Chief Department for the Protection, Restoration and Use of Cultural and Historic Monuments.

All the country's urban and local authorities also have cultural services, which monitor the state of monuments. During the Soviet period the Voluntary Association for the Protection of Cultural and Historic Monuments was created, but this was more interested in propaganda than protection. In recent years the function of this society became weak because of a lack of funds.

Monument conservation today

The Government has reviewed the lists of state-protected monuments adopted in 1968, 1981 and 1988. A new list, based on the earlier ones, was adopted in August 2001, and has the same legal status as its predecessors. Monuments linked with revolutionary and communist ideology and leaders have been dropped. One of the aims of the list, which covers architecture, archaeology, formal gardens and parks, is to rank monuments according to their importance - world, national or local. Buildings of world or national value may not be privatised. Residential buildings of local value, or apartments located in such buildings, may be privatised only with the consent of the Ministry of Culture. When such buildings or apartments are already in private hands, protection contracts, prohibiting any perversion of the first look of a monument, are concluded with the owners. The following classification table is based on the latest approved list of state-protected monuments of history and culture.

Type of monument	Importance			Total
	World	National	Local	
Architectural	21	359	3480	3860
Archaeological	44	1616	384	2044
Formal gardens, parks	-	59	137	196
Decorative and applied arts (statues, etc.)	-	-	208	208
Total				6308

Without wishing to detract from the latest list's importance or belittle the efforts of the experts who prepared it, it must be said that extensive research is now needed to update it.

Some monuments are protected in reserves. At present, there are 15 historic/architectural, historic/archaeological, historic/cultural and historic/ethnographical reserves in Azerbaijan. Taking into account the significance of some monuments of archaeology, town planning and architecture, the Ministry of Culture has established 4 new reserves during 2002 year in order to protect and propagaanda these monuments:

- historical/archaeological reserve on the territory of destroyed medieval town Shabran, located on the Silk Road;
- historical/cultural reserve on the basis of Ilisu village (16-17 centuries) in Qakh district;
- historical/art reserve of ancient rock art Qemigaya in Ordubad district (Nakhchivan)
- territory of valley of Arpa river in Sharur district (Nakhchivan), where concentrated archaeological monuments

All the reserves are controlled both by the Ministry of Culture, which founds them, and by the local authority. Experience shows that this can create problems, since the efforts of the local authority are not always co-ordinated with those of the Ministry – and conservation sometimes suffers.

Big problems in the sphere of monuments' protection have been caused by absence of its protecting system, despite this system's necessity it determined by the Law. The Ministry of Culture deals with defining protecting monuments' zones, what is a very complicated issue due to local specific peculiarities. The Ministry of Culture has no enough responsibilities and wide structure of monuments' protection on the whole territory of the country. This circumstance does not allow to the Ministry to conduct oportune and periodic work in this sphere. Factually, a small staff of cultural centres at local authorities of executive authority carry out these functions.

The problem of using architectural monuments is still unsettled. Today, some monuments are not used in accordance with the first functional earmarking. They are used utilizably: for restaurants,

cafes, workshop studios, etc. Such using demands holding of necessary communications, sometimes it demands re-planning which, as a result, causes destroying of the monument.

Legislation, certification, education

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the protection, restoration and use of Azerbaijan's cultural and historic monuments are responsibilities of each citizen of Azerbaijan. The protection, restoration and use of Azerbaijan's cultural and historic monuments governed by the Culture Act (6 February 1998) and by the Act on the Protection of Historic and Cultural Monuments (10 April 1998), and also by the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 1972) and the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valetta, 1992).

The country's historic and cultural monuments were originally registered under the uniform system introduced by the Institute of Culture of the former USSR in 1969. Under this system, each monument had a "passport" and registration card, and detailed information on it was recorded. During the soviet period, some 1,500 monuments were registered in this way. At present, new national standards of certification and cataloguing are worked out.

Education. Science

Education and trainings of specialists in the sphere of preservation of monuments is provided by Architectural-Construction University and State University of Culture, where correspondingly are trained architects-specialist in restoration and specialists on preservation of the cultural monuments.

In the system of National Academy of Sciences there is functioning the Institute of Architecture and Arts, Institute of Archeology and Ethnography where there are conducted scientific researches on studying, discovering and history of cultural heritage. Under National Academy of Sciences there is functioning Scientific-Methodic Council on historical and cultural monuments.

International co-operation

Azerbaijan co-operates closely with UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, and Baku's historic centre, with the Shirvanshakh Palace and the Maiden's Tower, was included on the World Heritage List in 2000. Information on three further monuments (Temple of fire-faith adepts "Ateshgah", Cultural-Historical Reserve "Gobustan" and the Mausoleum in Nahchivan), which are on the preliminary list, has been sent to the Centre. Co-operation with international organizations is adjusted. Azerbaijani specialists in the field of preservation and restoration of historical and cultural monuments systematically participate in international conferences and sessions, conducted by UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICROM and other organizations.

Restoration and conservation works are conducted generally with financing from the state budget, budget of local authorities and donations of individuals, foreign and international organizations. For example, restoration of small German church ("Kapelhaus") in Baku was fully financed by the German Government. There have been conducted the archeological works and now there are being conducted restoration works in the Christian temple of V-VI centuries in the Kish village near of Sheki city, financed by non-governmental organizations of Norway.

In 1999 between the Government of Azerbaijan and the World Bank there was signed long-term Credit agreement on 7.5 million US dollars in frameworks of which there is foreseen reconstruction of the second floor of residence and conservation of Divankhana on the territory of the complex Shirvanshahs Palace (XIV-XV centuries), conservation of Mausoleum and two minarets of XIV

century in the Garabaglar village, conservation of the Mausoleum of Momina-khatun of XI century in Nakhchivan and restoration of Shekikhans Palace of XVIII century. Under the Ministry of Culture there was established group on realization of the “Project of Support of Cultural Heritage”, which conducted tenders, which revealed the firms for implementation of these works. Now the restoration works are conducted in all of above-mentioned objects and due to the conditions of the Contract the foreign specialists provide local specialists on restoration with training on progressive methods of conservation.

In the project there are also worked out Plans on development of above-mentioned monuments, which has the aim of organization of profitable infrastructure for local population by development of cultural tourism. These Plans, worked out by French specialists, intend a long-term program, consisted of three phases.

Further works

Improved conservation in the near future depends on:

- Reviewing monuments currently listed, and preparing a new, up-graded list matching international standards;
- Completing registration of historic and cultural monuments;
- Setting up a specialised conservation network;
- Working out program of utilization of monuments which ensure their preservation and protection;
- Developing a purposeful preservation and restoration plan;
- Providing better training in the field of heritage protection and restoration;
- Putting restoration on an effective national basis;
- Up-dating current legislation on heritage protection and restoration;
- Realising the plans of the objects’ development;
- Educating young specialists in European universities.

Chapter 10. Museums

Background

The first museum in Azerbaijan was a school museum, founded in the village of Nehram in the early 19th century.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Education Museum was set up at the Public Schools Authority in Baku. Around the same time, an in-house museum was also established at the Baku branch of the Russian Technical Association. This mounted exhibitions on various themes (“Oil”, “The Shamakhy Earthquake”, etc.).

Under the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920), the Museum of Independence was opened in the Parliament building in Baku on 7 December 1919.

The Azerbaijan State Museum was established in May 1921, initially with sections devoted to archaeology, history, ethnography and nature. An art department was added later. This expanded to become the State Museum of the Arts, and the State Theatrical Museum was founded on a similar basis in 1934. The State Museum itself was reorganised as the Azerbaijan Museum of History in 1936.

In the twenties, local museums were founded in many other cities and towns, such as Ganja, Nakhchivan, Sheki, Lankaran.

A Resolution of the Government paving the way for a literary museum, named after Nizami, the great Azeri poet, was passed in 1939, the 800th anniversary of his birth. The Nizami Museum was opened in 1945.

The Museum of National Education was founded in Baku in 1940.

The Musical Culture Museum and the Carpets and Applied Arts Museum (both in Baku) were established by government decree in 1967, as were local museums in Zagatala, Agdam and other places and a unique Museum of Bread in Agdam. The museum network continued to expand in the seventies, partly thanks to the personal efforts and commitment of H. Aliyev, the country's leader. In this and the following decade, memorial museums devoted to the life and work of a number of outstanding artists and writers were opened, e.g. the Samed Vurghun and Uzeyir Hadjibeyov Museums in 1975, and the Byul-Byul, Djafar Djabbarli and Nariman Narimanov Museums in 1982. The State Museums Office was founded in 1980, to advise museums on techniques and methods. It serves museums in the capital and in outlying areas.

In 1980, in accordance with the Government's Resolution, historical territorial museums, and also the Museum of Stone Sculpture in Zangelan, the Museum of long-living people in Lerik, etc. have been founded in almost all big administrative districts (Agjabedy, Geichay, Zardab, Shamkir, Udjar, etc.)

State Museum of Carpet and Applied Art was opened in Baku in 1972. Valuable historical exhibits: archeological monuments of Bronze Epoch, 12-century pottery crockery, carpets and 17-century carpet works, artistic needlework and national clothing of 19 century, etc. The exhibitions from the Museum's collections have been demonstrated in more than 50 countries, such as England, Holland, Israel, India, Iran, Spain, Turkey, Italy, Cuba, Portugal, Russia, France, etc. It's necessary to note that the Museum carries out huge work on propaganda of national cultural heritage by holding international symposia and conferences, etc.

The restoration unit, which had been operating at the Museum of Arts since 1957, became the Centre for the Scientific Restoration of Museum Exhibits and Relics in 1982. It offers museums and the public a wide range of restoration and conservation services.

The social, political and ideological changes of the nineties also led to changes on the museum front. Thus the Museum of Atheism became the Museum of Religious History, while museums devoted to various Soviet statesmen, such as the museums of Lenin, Phioletov, Kirov, etc., were closed. Conversely, a number of museums devoted to the history of the democratic movement in Azerbaijan and the struggle for peace have been created. In spite of the problems raised by the transition, the network is still growing. In the last decade alone, 21 new museums have been opened.

The State University of Culture and the Arts acquired a "Museum and Cultural Work Department" in 1991, and has started to run courses on museum management and monument conservation.

An ICOM National Committee was established in Azerbaijan in 1992, and has since played an active part in the life of the museum community. Its Chairman and members attend sessions of the ICOM Executive Committee, and present reports at ICOM international conferences. Several issues of an "ICOM – Azerbaijan" bulletin were published, but financial difficulties have now put a stop to this.

Azerbaijan has 146 museums² and 30 picture galleries. Of these, 138 museums (including 21 branches) are controlled by the Ministry of Culture, 4 are controlled by the National Academy of Sciences, and the remainder are controlled by other departments.

By type, these museums break down as follows:

Historical and local museums	82
Literary museums	25
Art museums	23
Museums of science and technology	6
Museums/architectural monuments	4
Museums of natural history	1
<u>Total</u>	146

The national museum collection contains 1,150,936 items.

The largest museums are:

- The State Museum of the Arts (the Mustafayev Museum), which houses 14,525 items;
- The State Carpets and Applied Arts Museum, which houses 9,823 items;
- The State Historical Museum ..., which houses 255,375 items;
- The Shirvanshakh Palace Complex, which houses 21,391 items;
- The State Theatrical Museum (the Djabbarli Museum), which houses 116,783 items;
- The State Museum of Musical Culture, which houses 31,284 items;
- The State Literary Museum (the Nizami Museum), which houses 59,275 items.

The country's museums employ a total of 2,228 people, of whom 900 are curators, scientific assistants and guides.

Concerning the fate of museums and museum collections in the occupied territories, the Ministry of Culture and the ICOM National Committee have repeatedly raised this issue with UNESCO. 2 Fact-finding missions were sent to Azerbaijan in 1994 and 1995. The result was an appeal by UNESCO, recognising that Armenia had seized Azerbaijani territories and calling on it to protect their cultural assets. With UNESCO backing and using its logo a leaflet carrying pictures and details of various seized items was also issued.

Although museums in the occupied territories have lost their buildings, almost all their collections, their catalogues and their display equipment, they have not been abolished in law, and their staff have not been dismissed. As "refugee museums", they still receive funds from the Ministry of Culture, maintain their activities, and have been assigned special premises. Their staff still receive salaries (which is why these museums appear in the figures kept by the Central Statistics Board and the Ministry of Culture).

² 15 reserve collections, which are controlled by the Ministry of Culture, and one open-air museum, the Gobustan Museum of History and the Arts, are not included in the list.

Work of the museums

The work of museums controlled by the Ministry of Culture is governed by the Museums Act and by the Directives on Registration and Conservation of Items in the Collections of the State Museums of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Baku, 1996), and relies on the recommendations and practical guidelines issued by the Museums Office.

All the items in the national museum collection are recorded in standard inventories, which are kept by each museum. A total of 1,151,000 items have been registered. No museum has a data-base at present, but the chief museums in the capital have started to create one. Because of the country's economic problems, museums are insufficiently funded, and so only some of those in the capital have (one or two) computers. Those which have computers tend to use them for administrative and stock-taking purposes – but not so far for exhibitions. Three of the main museums have Internet connections and websites - the Museum of Musical Culture, the Shirvanshakh Palace Complex and the Carpets and Applied Arts Museum.

Most museums have poor technical facilities, and lack temperature and humidity control, air-conditioning and special lighting, many of them don't have guarding and fire-fighting systems. They have no transport vehicles, and rarely have access to modern packaging materials. Their storerooms are often overcrowded, and they suffer from lack of equipment.

Not all museums produce their own publications and publicity material.

In market economy terms, our museums are discovering new ways of earning money (fund-raising). The range of services they provide (expert reports on works of art, souvenir sales, etc.) is expanding.

Museums can solve some of their problems by attracting sponsorships and grants. The main sponsors are foreign companies and embassies, the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute, and a number of home companies and businessmen (although economic problems and the government's failure to offer tax incentives are increasingly discouraging local sponsors). As a whole, this assistance is not significant and cannot make a positive affect on common development of museums.

The exhibitions mounted include: thematic displays of items selected from a single museum's collection, modular exhibitions of items drawn from various museums, exhibitions from Azeri museums abroad, and foreign exhibitions. ...The most important lately have been: an exhibition of works from the Tretyakov Gallery, which ran for 23 days during the 1997 Festival of Russian Culture and attracted 20,000 visitors, an exhibition of paintings by Nikas Safronov (1997), an exhibition of paintings by three Israeli painters (1999) and an exhibition of applied arts from Iran (2000). Home exhibitions cover a broad range of subjects. In recent years, for example, the Art Museum has staged exhibitions to mark anniversaries connected with many famous artists, an exhibition of young artists, a photo-exhibition "Azeri refugees - a self-portrait", an exhibition on Jews in Azerbaijan, an exhibition to mark the 1300th anniversary of the epic "Kitabi Dede-Gorgud", an exhibition of Russian avant-garde art from its own collection, etc.

The regional museums also mount exhibitions and are very active educationally. They arrange special events and displays to mark National Independence Day, Shekhid Memorial Day (20 January), anniversaries connected with well-known writers, scientists and artists, National Music Day, International Women's Day (8 March), National Language Day, etc.

The Museum of Musical Culture took a wholly new kind of initiative in 1996 by setting up a unique twelve-player ensemble, performing on reconstructed medieval instruments.

Prospects

Our museums' future priorities are:

- to create a centralised computer data-base, and use Internet to optimise access to information on museum collections and activity;
- to introduce an active acquisitions policy;
- to bring registration procedures up to modern standards;
- to speed up the introduction of new methods and practices;
- to increase museum workers' professionalism and improve services;
- to develop museum marketing;
- to pay more attention to people with disabilities;
- to focus attention on the general need to pay museum staff better, improve their social security and enhance their professional prestige;
- to give museums a bigger role in cultural tourism;
- to identify new types of work;
- to improve protective and security systems in museums;
- to set up an inter-museum council within the ICOM National Committee to foster communication between the country's museums.

By focusing on all aspects of the country's cultural heritage and mounting exhibitions which reflect and clarify its people's collective experience, museums can help to forge a sense of community, encourage the public to get involved, and promote a positive image of Azerbaijan.

Chapter 11. Libraries

Background

The first libraries on our country's territory date back to the earliest state institutions, and in the 5th century A.D., in the Caucasian Albania there was introduced a 52-letter alphabet. As a result, numerous books were translated into Albanian, and small libraries were established in churches and schools. In the 7th century, following the Arab conquest, libraries were established in mosques and madrasahs. In the middle ages, there were palace, religious, scientific and personal libraries. Significant palace libraries included the Shirvanshakh Palace Library (12th century), the Tebriz Palace Library (16th century) and the Ag-goyunlu, Gara-goyunlu and Sefevi Palace Libraries (14-16th centuries). The most important was the Tebriz Palace Library, founded in the 16th century by the great statesman and military leader, Shakh Ismayil Khatai, who promulgated a state decree on libraries in 1522. The most important of the religious libraries was the library at the Sheikh Safi Observatory in Ardebil. The library at the Maraga Observatory (13th century) contained over 400,000 volumes and occupied a special place among scientific libraries. Nizami, Khatai, Bakhmanyar, Khatib Tabrizi, Abu Vafa, Gatran Tabrizi and others are mentioned as having personal libraries in the middle ages.

Public libraries of a new type and also many outstanding personal libraries were created in Azerbaijan from the forties of the 19th century. The libraries of Abbasgulu Aga Bakikhanov and Mirza Fatali Akhundov are examples. Public libraries and reading rooms, as we know them, appeared in the second half of the 19th century. Public libraries were opened in Shusha in 1859, Gandja in 1868, and Baku in 1887. In 1887, Baku had three libraries. In the late 19th century, the

first technical libraries were opened in Baku, for workers in the petroleum industry. In 1905-1907, the country's intellectuals, seeking to foster national culture and fired with revolutionary idealism, set up charitable associations to promote publishing, and the opening of libraries and reading rooms.

The Sabir Library and the Baku State University Library were founded under the Democratic Republic (1918-1920). In 1920, the country had 965 school libraries. Baku and its outlying districts had about 50 libraries, and there were over 100 district and village libraries in other parts of the country.

The Soviet period

In spite of all the problems, serious efforts were directed towards culture, and particularly libraries, in the early years of Soviet rule. The Library Fund and Books Office, which played a major part in developing libraries, were founded between 1920 and 1925. From 1926 on, libraries were funded from the state budget. The Republic had 108 public libraries, with a total stock of 905,100 volumes. A general survey of libraries in the USSR was carried out in October 1934, and 2,037 libraries were recorded in Azerbaijan. University training for librarians became available in 1947, when the Language Faculty at Baku State University introduced a course in librarianship. A significant increase in library funding between 1950 and 1955 helped libraries to improve their stocks and facilities. Stocks, in particular, were substantially replenished. In 1950, there were 2,290 libraries, with a total stock of 4,230,100 volumes. In 1955, the figures had risen to 2,394 and 9,614,200 respectively. In 1958, they stood at 5,776 and over 20,000,000. Of the libraries, 2,583 were public libraries. ... The Akhundov State Library played an important role at this time, contributing hugely to methodology and to research on library and bibliographical science.

In the seventies, the centralised library system of the Ministry of Culture was created, and this process continued and was taken further in the eighties. Centralisation of the libraries controlled by the Academy of Sciences was another important development. Many serious problems were solved in the seventies and eighties. The improvements included: centralisation and regular up-grading of the public libraries network; significant expansion of the libraries' role, with a new emphasis on information functions; a radically improved approach to the building of library stocks; intensified research on library and bibliographical science; and linking of the activities of different types of library. By the end of the eighties, the country had 9,548 libraries, with a total stock of more than 114 millions volumes. The social, political and economic changes which occurred during this period forced libraries to operate in wholly new conditions.

The transition period

Azerbaijan regained its independence at the end of 1991. The change brought huge opportunities for serious reform - not just in the political and economic spheres, but also in those of culture, education and ideology.

The new economic conditions created an increased demand for information, and the number of library users rose accordingly - by 17% between 1997 and 1999. Gradually, libraries outside the capital evolved into cultural centres, and came to play a significant role in providing the public with information. Keeping libraries supplied with new books remained, however, the chief problem. State funding for libraries was minimal. All of this created a clear and pressing need for government action to promote basic changes in the library system. In 1999, the Milli Mejlis adopted the Libraries Act. This law - a milestone in the cultural life of the country - laid the foundations of state policy on libraries, and confirmed that organising and managing libraries was a vital state function. It has an essential bearing on the development and funding of libraries, and on the protection of book stocks in the new state of the economy and community. Its stipulation that state

funding for the completion of library stocks is to increase regularly is particularly significant. Equally important is its introduction of a statutory deposit system, entitling the central library fund to one free copy of every collective or individual publication produced in the country by state or private printing houses. This is vital to the building-up of publications archives.

On 1 January 2001, some 10,000 libraries, attached to various institutions and Ministries, were operating in Azerbaijan. Of these, 4,204 were part of the Ministry of Culture system. The country's largest libraries are the National Library and the specialised libraries at the National Academy of Sciences and Baku State University.

The Ministry of Culture's network of libraries is the largest. Today, it includes 4 libraries of national significance, 74 metropolitan and regional libraries, and 3,744 rural libraries. At present, the country has one library for every 700 people. The Central Library Fund, which is part of the Ministry's system, contains 35.9 million volumes.

However, funding for libraries from the state budget has so far been limited. In the eighties, 30-40% of the funds earmarked for culture went to libraries. From the mid-nineties on, this figure declined to 12-13%. It now stands at 15-18%. Library staff are among the lowest-paid workers. Owing to the very small sums allocated for acquisitions and the high price of books, most libraries have not up-dated their stocks. The National Library does not receive enough copies of new publications because of the assignment of small sums for purchase of new literature and high cost of new books. Weakness of material-technical base and staff shortages due to low wages are causing serious problems in library organisation.

Despite all difficulties, libraries are developing. New approaches are being tried, and new services offered. The Akhundov Library is already connected to Internet, allowing readers to search for information and consult material from the stocks and catalogues of the world's leading libraries. With backing from the Soros Foundation's Open Society Institute, information centres are being set up in seven central libraries – in Baku, Ali Bayramli, Gandja, Barda, Lenkaran, Shamakhi and Guba – all of which will be connected to Internet.

On the whole, Azerbaijan has an extensive network of libraries, which are playing a significant role in implementing social and economic change in outlying areas (this includes reform in the spheres of land-use, education and property). They help to raise the general educational level, train their staff, and promote democracy, civil society and the rule of law. Radical improvements are also needed, however. They include the following measures:

- registering all libraries;
- stocking libraries with books in the Roman alphabet;
- developing and improving libraries' technical and other facilities;
- introducing modern information technologies;
- setting up a central computer system, linking all the country's libraries;
- setting up a national library information system and a standard cataloguing system;
- funding restoration and preservation of book stocks throughout the country;
- funding new acquisitions;
- promoting international, inter-regional and inter-departmental co-operation between libraries;
- fully reactivating the State Book Chamber.

Chapter 12. Traditional arts

The historical development of ethnic culture is a highly complex process, and is governed by a whole series of material and spiritual factors. Looking back at the way in which traditional Azeri culture has developed in the last ten years, and trying to identify the main features of that process, we can see that there were two primary determinants. The first, hugely influential factor was the rise of the audiovisual media, inevitably making for “homogenisation” of Azeri folk culture, distinguished in the past by the rich variety of its styles and musical idioms. The second significant factor was migration – resulting, in this instance, from international conflicts.

Traditional music

Azeri traditional music embraces a wide range of genres and forms. Historically, it developed in two directions: songs and dances (solo and group) inspired by everyday life and work, and connected with folk theatre; and the professional, oral tradition, represented by the ashugs and singers-khanende, performing Mugams and folk songs.

Applied folk art

Most of the country’s centuries-old crafts have survived into modern times. They include carpet-making, stone-carving, silk-weaving, copper-working, jewellery-making, etc.

Industrial development obviously tended to erode these traditional crafts, but the continuing demand for certain craft items produced in Sheki, Baku, Gazakh, and other towns and regions, helps to ensure that there are still plenty of masters to keep the old skills alive.

Problems of inventorising and preserving the cultural heritage

These problems have always been of central importance for those who concern themselves with Azeri culture. A central role in identifying and studying folk-music trends was played by Uzeir Hajibeyov, who first put music in Azerbaijan on a fully professional footing. The founder of the Azeri Singing School, Professor Byulbyul, initiated the systematic collection and cataloguing of folk music, when he set up the Musical Research Office in 1932. The Office organised field trips throughout the country, and the result was a unique collection, comprising over 15,000 examples of folk music. A number of leading composers, including Asaf Zeynalli, Gara Garayev, Fikret Amirov, Seid Rustamov, Tofiq Guliyev have been inspired to take an interest in the collection and transcription of folk music, with undoubted effects on their own style.

One of the aims of research is to stop authentic folk art from being lost forever, and replaced by an urbanised and often spurious brand of folk culture. The first priority of state cultural policy in this area must thus be to collect and preserve examples of this heritage.

How much progress has Azerbaijan really made on this front? It is safe to say that a substantial amount of material has already been collected. A particularly important contribution has recently been made by the Dede Gorgud Cultural Research Centre, which is run by the Literary Institute of the National Academy of Sciences. Huge amounts of material of major historical and cultural importance are also in private collections. It is obviously vital to centralise all this precious and widely-scattered information on a single data-base, operated by one of the existing cultural institutions. The importance of doing this cannot be exaggerated. Unless we acquire a thorough knowledge of national folk art as it really is – i.e. free of synthetic modern overlays – we can do nothing to preserve and develop our cultural heritage effectively.

The Centre for Cultural Research

The Centre for Cultural Research (previously the House of Folk Creativity) has been responsible from the start for co-ordinating the regulations which govern the various types of traditional culture. The House of Folk Creativity was particularly active in the 1930s and 1940s, when it collected valuable examples of folk art from various parts of Azerbaijan and published this material. It went on to initiate and sponsor numerous festivals, exhibitions and competitions, both national and international. Although these events were sometimes designed to promote specific ideas and policies, they also helped, in a general sense, to stimulate folk culture, and offered a comprehensive picture of the situation regarding the traditional arts and carried out the contacts with throughout the country with folk music centres. They can turn to us for methodological guidance when they need it. The difficult economic situation in the regions has put an end to some of these associations, but many – such as the “Mahirler” folk ensemble (Salyan region), the “Avasor” folk ensemble (Astara region) and the “Adgun” folk ensemble (Saatli region), Geargian chorus (Gakh region), “Zopu-Zopu” folk ensemble (gabala region) - are still active, performing both in the Republic and abroad.

Lately, there has also been a definite trend towards decentralised administration of folk culture, and a slackening of government control. The folk music festivals, which local authorities have been funding in the Astara region in the last five years, are one clear sign of this.

The Azeri Union of Ashugs

The second organisation which we are considering – the Azeri Union of Ashugs – is a self-governing union of traditional epic poet-singers. A non-governmental organisation, it is carrying on the work of the Republican Union of Ashugs, which was established by the Ministry of Culture in 1984. A general review of its activity shows that it has proved remarkably adaptable in facing up to new conditions.

At its fifth meeting, held in September 2000, at a time when the Union was going through a serious crisis, various organisational changes were discussed and decided. Since then, and in spite of financial problems, the Union has organised numerous events, including evenings devoted to famous ashugs, past and present. It runs two ashug ensembles, and publishes “Ozan”, a journal dealing with folk culture. It also seeks to establish and develop contacts with epic poets in neighbouring countries (Iran, Turkey). Links with ashugs in Iran are particularly close.

Festivals and competitions

Since the early 1990s, there has been a sharp increase in the number of folk festivals and competitions. The first Khary Byulbyul Festival – of folk music – was held in 1989, and was followed by a second and third in 1990 and 1991 in which the representatives from Afghanistan, Austria, Germany, Holland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Russia, Turkey, USA, etc., took part.

They all gave a wide-ranging picture of folk music genres, styles and trends of peoples of the world. The Festival's holding was interrupted as a result of Garabagh conflict.

In the last ten years, the Ministry of Culture has paid special attention to the development of applied folk arts. This was most evident in its sponsoring of three national competitive exhibitions of traditional crafts (1998, 1999, 2000). The aim of these exhibitions was to provide a comprehensive picture of the full range of applied folk arts practised in Azerbaijan: carpets, jewellery, wood-work, metal-work, embroidery (tekalduz), traditional musical instruments, and many other craft items

from all parts of the country were included. All of this obviously had a powerful stimulating effect on the development of traditional crafts, some of which were in danger of being lost.

Azerbaijan has also been extensively represented at international folk festivals held in various countries in the last few years. It took part, for example, in the first and second World Folklore Festivals, held in Holland (1996) and Japan (2000).

PART 3 - Performing arts – support measures

Chapter 13. Music

Background

Musical activity on the territory of the present-day Azerbaijan is first reflected in cave-paintings of ceremonial dance scenes, found in Gobustan, and dating from the 8th-10th centuries B.C. The heroic epic, “Kitabi Dede-Gorgud”, gives us valuable indications concerning certain aspects of music and its role in early medieval Azeri society. The renowned medieval scholars, Safiaddin Urmavi and Abdulgadir Maragi, went on to explore the theoretical foundations of Azeri music.

Azeri music itself developed in two directions up to the beginning of the 20th century. On the one hand, there was the music of the professional musicians, who transmitted the mugam and ashug oral traditions. On the other, there was folk music, embodying a wide range of genres. A new era in the musical life of our country was ushered in by the brilliant composer and teacher, Uzeyir Hajibeyov(1885-1948), who laid the foundations of modern, professional Azeri music, essentially based on a fusion of the world and national musical traditions.

The 1920s and 1930s saw musical life in the country take off. The Conservatoire was founded in 1921, and many other colleges of music and music schools (including the ten-year school which opened at the Conservatoire in 1938) were established. The Opera and Ballet Theatre was founded in 1920, bringing together a number of existing troupes. At Uzeyir Hadjibeyov's initiative the following collectives were founded: a symphony orchestra in 1920, the national orchestra in 1931, the state choir in 1936. The Union of Composers of Azerbaijan was founded in 1934.

The national vocal tradition was founded by the outstanding singer, Byul-Byul, who successfully married the best of the national style with Italian “belle canto” and European professionalism and technique.

The national symphonic movement started in the 1940s with outstanding Azerbaijan composer Gara Garayev, whose music also fuses foreign styles and native traditions, as do many of the works of his pupils and successors. Around the same time, the other brightest Azerbaijan composer Fikret Amirov invented a new genre – the symphonic mugam – which made him famous.

A qualitatively new stage came in the 1960s, when Khrushchev’s “thaw” gave Azeri composers a measure of freedom and released their creative potential. The result was a number of innovative works, which took the latest compositional techniques and adapted them to fit the national lexicon.

Azerbaijan performing school represented by such laureates of international competitions as pianists Farkhad Badalbeyli, Vasif Hasanov, Elvina Zeynalova, Rauf Gasymov, opera singers Fidan Gasymova and Khuraman Gasymova, etc. have been achieving international recognition in sixties-seventies.

Quality and openness to the outside world have always been the hallmarks of Azeri culture, and Baku’s long-standing cosmopolitan tradition, and the country’s geographical situation, have both been major contributory factors.

Concerts, festivals, competitions

From the 1960s through the 1980s, these features were enhanced and illustrated by numerous concerts, festivals and competitions. There are countless types and styles of music, and different traditions – classical, jazz, the oral tradition and the avant-garde – can coexist happily. The festival movement peaked in the second half of the 1980s, when the various genres all got large-scale events – the Gara Garayev Festivals of 20th-Century Music (1986, 1988, 1990), the Khari Byulbyul International Folk Music Festival, and the Vagif Mustafazadeh Jazz Forums. The 12th Glinka competition for singers from all parts of the Soviet Union (1987) and the “Towards the Zenith” new music festival (1989) were both held in Baku.

International links

Independence (regained in 1991) helped Azeri music to make further progress towards finding its place on the world musical scene, and professional musicianship in Azerbaijan now operates in a more open international context. The old go-betweens and filters have gone: Azeri composers are now in direct, creative contact with foreign performers and music publishers, and young Azeri musicians go abroad to study and take part in international festivals and competitions.

Azerbaijan was one of the first CIS countries to join two prestigious international organisations – the ISCM (International Society for Contemporary Music) and the ACL (Asian Composers League). Music by such composers as Arif Melikov, Khayyam Mirzazadeh, Frangiz Ali-zadeh, Ismail Hadjibeyov, Djavanshir Guliyev have been performed on festivals of this organizations. Composer Farhang Huseynov is the owner of international competitions’ awards, held in Japan, USA and Paraguay. The composers, Frangiz Ali-zadeh, Rahila Hasanova and Elnara Dadasheva are active members of the International Alliance for Women in Music.

Azeri composers have been involved in a number of large-scale international projects, including the Silk Road Festival (Djavanshir Guliyev, Frangiz Ali-zadeh), and also the New Spiritual Music Festival and the Tokkelfestival (Rahila Hasanova, Faradj Garayev, Frangiz Ali-zadeh), launched respectively by the American cellist Yo-Yo Ma and the Nieuw Ensemble in Holland. Frangiz Ali-zadeh, who was appointed composer-in-residence at the Lucerne Festival and awarded a grant by the prestigious Berlin Academy of Arts, enjoys a very high international reputation.

Azeri composers have worked successfully with various well-known groups of performers – “Continuum”, “Cronos”, “The Hilliard Ensemble”, “Ta G”, etc.

It’s also worth to emphasize the fact that for the recent years many Azerbaijan musicians had received the invitations have been working by contract in musical collectives and educational institutions of Turkey. Such famous composers as Agshin Ali-zadeh, Emin Sabitoglu, conductors Rauf Abdullayev, Ramiz Melikaslanov, Elshad Bagirov, Nazim Rzayev, Elnara Kerimova, violinist Sarvar Ganiyev, pianist Namik Sultanov, etc.

Regular performances in Baku by outstanding performers, such as Mstislav Rostropovich, Bella Davidovich, and Dmitry Sitkovetski, have helped to revive concert-going in recent years, and master classes given at Baku Music Academy by distinguished foreign musicians have had an inspiring effect on young performers. Significant events in the last ten years have included the Byulbyul international competitions for singers (1997, 2000), the Silk Road Festival of classical music (1999), and the “New Music from the Old Century” Festival (2001), which attracted musicians from Norway, Germany, Denmark and Great Britain. Foreign embassies and consulates frequently sponsor concerts by musicians from their countries in Baku. A significant part of the

country's concert life is still concentrated in the capital, which has numerous concert halls, e.g. the Palace of the Republic, the Chamber and Organ Music Hall, the Baku Music Academy Hall, the Shakhriyar Palace and the Rashid Beybutov Vocal Music Centre. For the recent decade the Theatre of Music Comedy has been rebuilt. The main concert hall - the Philharmonia – has been fundamentally repaired. The State Symphony Orchestra still has interesting programmes. The State Symphonic Orchestra, the Gara Garayev State Chamber Orchestra and the State Choral Society have been performing with interesting programmes on a regular base. The modern music ensemble, "SoNoR", is becoming increasingly active and makes a strong impression at international festivals, such as "Young. Euro. Classic" (Berlin, 2001).

The Opera and Ballet Theatre has recently attracted huge interest with a number of new works – the one-act ballets, "Don Quixote" and "Leyli and Mejnun", with music by Gara Garayev, "Black and White" with music by Khayyam Mirza-zadeh, and Tofiq Bakikhanov's "Caspian Ballad". The State Theatre has fruitful creative contacts with leading theatres in other CIS countries, including the world-famous Bolshoi and leading theaters from CIS. By inviting outstanding singers, dancers and directors to Baku, it maintains a high level of performance and keeps its audience interested. So, for the recent years such international stars as Elena Obraztsova, Irina Arkhipova, Maya Plisetskaya, Nadejda Pavlova, Vacheslav Gordeev, Anastasia Volochkova, etc have toured to Baku. The famous Russian dance ensemble, led by Igor Moiseyev, has visited Baku for several times.

New performances, performed in original language of "Karmen", "Traviata", "Payatsy", have been included in the theater's repertoire alike Azerbaijan opera classic – "Leyli and Medjnun" by Uzeyir Hadjibeyov and "Sevil" by Fikret Amirov. The successes scored abroad by the national ballet company (it gave an acclaimed performances of two one-act ballets, with music by Gara Garayev, at the Bolshoi in Moscow in December 2001) and the high opinion of foreign experts and audience are sure signs that good creative work is being done.

Azerbaijan is famous by its wonderful jazz traditions. Beginning from the thirties of the 20th century, jazz has been actively involving into the musical life of Azerbaijan, becoming an integral part of national culture. Fame of Azerbaijan jazz is linked with the name of Vagif Mustafazadeh, which could combine Mugam intonation with jazz improvisation. The name of his daughter, jazz pianist and vocalist Aziza Mustafazadeh, who has been touring successfully all over the world, is well-known.

Jazz in Azerbaijan covers a broad range of styles (traditional, post-pop, fusion, free flexion). The main challenge for musicians today is finding ways of connecting the traditional and modern, while preserving the distinctive character of Azeri jazz.

Obviously, the market economy calls the tune. In the last ten years, pop-music has had by far the largest audience, and western-style show business has started to develop. At the same time, other directions are also being explored. Attempts are being made to synthesise pop and folk music, traditional songs are getting new arrangements, and rap techniques are being widely copied. Although there are several rock groups, this style has not really caught on.

The new artistic openness has exposed Azeri song to various influences, not all of them positive, threatening to detach it from its own distinctive traditions – the traditions embodied in the work of Seid Rustamov, Djakhagir Djakhangirov, Tofiq Guliyev, Rauf Hajiyev, Emin Sabitoglu and Polad Byulbyuloglu. There are signs of a boom in popular entertainment, but there are also some disturbing tendencies, and low production standards, coupled with increasing reliance on non-professional performers, may well compromise its development.

Infrastructure

The country's musical infrastructure underwent a number of changes in the nineties. The main organisations now responsible are:

The Ministry of Culture

The Ministry of Culture co-ordinates the arts in Azerbaijan. It supervises theatrical, entertainment and musical projects of national significance, acquires music and libretti for inclusion in libraries and in the repertoire of performing companies and ensembles, funds international festivals and competitions, awards grants and prizes, and organises concerts to mark significant events and anniversaries.

The Ministry co-operates actively with other countries, funds cultural festivals, and negotiates guest performances by foreign soloists and ensembles.

It systematically supports music, art and ballet schools, plans syllabuses and curricula, issues recommendations on methods, and publishes textbooks.

The Union of Composers of Azerbaijan

The Union has 164 members, and its sections include: opera and ballet music, symphonic music, chamber music, vocal music and music criticism.

The Union of Composers of Azerbaijan is mainly active now in collecting information on its members, and helping them to solve specific problems. Joining it is no longer essential to making a successful career.

The Union of Musicians of Azerbaijan

This organisation's main activities are: helping to organise concerts and recitals; arranging travel to international competitions and festivals for soloists and ensembles (it has sent Azeri musicians to festivals in Holland, France, and Germany); organising competitions (e.g. the young pianists' competition, the Aliverdibekov competition for young musicians); helping musicians to solve personal problems.

The "Yeni Musiqi" Contemporary Music Society

The society, founded in 1995, aims to build up wide-ranging international contacts and publicise Azeri music at world level. ... It represents Azerbaijan in the ISCL and ACL, organises modern music festivals, and liaises between well-known foreign performers, music publishers and Azeri musicians.

Funds and publications

There are no special funds for music in Azerbaijan, although there are associations which sometimes provide financial backing for specific cultural and musical projects. The Fund "Friends of Azeri Culture" has a special place. Such cultural activities, as Baku International Festival of Classical Music "Silk Road", tours of Russian ballet of Vasheslav Gordeev and Nadejda Pavlova, holdind of anniverasy celebration of Rashid Beybutov and Muslim Magomaev, Days of Japanese culture in Azerbaijan, have been carried out due o the assistance of this fund. Besides this, the Fund

publishes the magazine “Azerbaijan-Irs” and finances separate editions, and “National Musical Instruments of Azerbaijan” is the last one of these editions. The Open Society Institute, too, regularly funds some musical activities and realises different projects in co-operation with the Ministry of Culture.

Music and music theory publishing is in a difficult condition. Most of notes and musicologists’ works are published at their own expense – due to sponsors’ contributions. In spite of all the practical problems in the last decade, some authors have published (in small editions) the results of their research on Azeri music, and this has up-dated the existing literature usefully.

The publication of the country’s first music journal, “Musiqi dunyasi”, by the Union of Composers in 1999 was a notable event. This is a quarterly review, devoted to research, music teaching and criticism, and it discusses various aspects of Azeri music today, and puts its readers in touch with the latest work of scholars and specialists in various countries. A special website helps to maximise its readership.

The Baku Music Academy’s magazine, “Sharqi”, is another newcomer. This appears twice a year, and focuses on the concerns of music students, current music teaching issues, and the year’s chief musical events.

The number of recording studios has increased sharply in the last few years – though mainly in the field of pop. Although the country has skilled technicians, a general lack of equipment makes it hard to produce high-quality recordings of classical music. As a result, many CDs have been issued abroad. For example, a six-CD set, “Classical Music of Azerbaijan”, was produced in the USA with backing from the oil company, Amoco, and the magazine, “Azerbaijan International”. Similarly, CDs of the music of Faradj Garayev, Frangiz Ali-zadeh have been produced in Belgium and Switzerland.

Music in Azerbaijan faces serious problems today, and all the public and other institutions active in this field must unite to solve them. State policy on music should have the following priorities:

- preserving creative potential, attempting to stop musicians from changing their profession or leaving the country, ensuring that musician get reasonable salaries;
- stimulating composers’ creativity, promoting all genres equally, ensuring that commissions go to the most gifted;
- using state funds to foster talent (special grants for gifted children, creative exchange schemes, competitions, etc.);
- regulating the music market by appropriate legal means (tax policy, enforcement of copyright);
- setting up a state institute of music managers;
- introducing a special TV channel (the “Culture Channel”), devoted to the best of the world’s music;
- devising development programmes for music in the regions;
- setting up a specialised music publishing agency, with the latest technical facilities;
- setting up a state-of-the-art recording studio to record Azeri classical music, and remaster earlier recordings;
- giving the country’s musical life certain fixed focal points, in the form of regular international festivals (of modern music, jazz, mugam music, etc.) and competitions;
- setting up an open-access data bank to provide information on festivals, competitions and reviews, and help organisers to plan concerts and liaise with foreign counterparts;
- creating optimum conditions for composing and popularising good music for children.

Chapter 14. Visual arts

The visual arts have a very old tradition in Azerbaijan, stretching back through countless generations. Mesolithic and neolithic cave-paintings in Gobustan and on the Absheron peninsula are among the earliest examples. There are also richly decorated implements and household objects, superb carpets, exquisite jewellery and a host of other artefacts. Architecture should be mentioned too - mosques, mausoleums, palaces and ornamental tiles, all with a distinctive refinement and grace. Miniature painting, as exemplified in the work of great masters like Sultan Muhammad and Mirza Ali, is Azerbaijan's unique contribution to world art.

All of this constituted our people's artistic "gene pool" and gave them a remarkably rich heritage, which started to absorb new influences in the mid-19th century. At that time, the effects of forced contact between the Russian and Azeri artistic and cultural traditions started to make themselves felt, gradually bringing a new, realistic strain into Azeri art. Its main representatives were masters like Mirza Kadym Erivani, Mir Movsum Navvab, Natavan (poet and artist) and many others.

The visual arts underwent further changes in the early 20th century, when new forms and styles began to appear - satirical graphics and easel painting being two of the foremost. From 1910 on, exhibitions of Russian artists helped to give the visual arts a higher public profile, and the Baku Artists' Society was founded in 1912.

Contacts with Russian art and artists were the main determinants in the emergence of a native school of painting. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, many Russian artists of the realist school visited Azerbaijan, taking a huge interest in its national traditions and reflecting them – in accordance with their own ideas - in their work. Basically, these contacts did a great deal to modernise the local artists' vision. The Baku Art School, founded in the late twenties, gave them a new, professional ethos and produced a whole series of notable masters, including Tagi Tagiyev, Mikayil Abdullayev, Boyuk Aga Mirza-zade, Sattar Bahlulzade and many others. Essentially, they were realists, and concerned to produce truthful images of the world around them. This remained the dominant trend in Azeri art for many decades afterwards.

When the Soviet authorities took over in 1920, they at once began to "organise" the arts, and their efforts eventually led to the founding, in 1932, of the Union of Soviet Artists of Azerbaijan.

Azeri artists (like artists in Russia and other socialist countries) saw accurate portrayal of the lives of working people as their main artistic goal. However, the national tradition was rooted in arts and crafts which were not essentially realistic, and so new skills were needed to convey reality truthfully, both in painting and in sculpture. The "national" character of national art – which remained a key issue well into the nineties - was hotly discussed in this context.

In the mid-1930s, the training provided at the Azeri State Art School (ASAS) was reorganised, and many of its graduates were sent to study at art colleges in Moscow and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg).

Otherwise, the visual arts in Azerbaijan toed the Soviet line faithfully – stuck, in other words, to socialist realism, the only style accepted at the time. Essentially, this art was featureless. The only thing which made it different was its unswerving ideological alignment. Anything that failed to glorify the "socialist vision" of life was regarded as hostile and a threat to the system. This was the situation throughout Azerbaijan and in all the Soviet republics.

One cannot say, however, that this ideological pressure had totally negative effects on art in our

country. In the 70-year history of Azeri culture under the Soviets, there were many bright pages too. There were genuine artists – true masters of realism in art, who sincerely believed in a style which could, at its best, produce creative masterpieces. There is much to be proud of in Azeri art of this period, and some of the best examples are on display today in the State Art Museum. In addition to the artists we have listed already, we should mention figures like Salam Salamzade, Mahmud Tagiyev, Khalida Safarova, Eyyub Mamedov, Togrul Sadikh-zade and – among the bright stars of the sixties generation – Taghir Salakhov, Togrul Narimanbekov, Rasim Babayev, Asaf Jafarov and Nadir Abdurahmanov.

Of course, there were, among Azeri artists, some who were basically opposed to the dominant ideology, and so out of favour with the authorities. They inevitably forfeited the benefits which “socialist government” conferred on the yes-men, but their “non-ideological” stance brought them to the fore in the wake of the changes which occurred in the late eighties. The leading figures here were Ashraf Muradoglu, Javad Mirjavadov and Kamal Ahmedov.

The visual arts in Azerbaijan today are healthy, mature and diversified, and all the signs are that they have really found themselves, and have something distinctive to say. All the basic trends in world art are represented. Realism still exists, but has been purged of false pathos and steered into “healthy” channels. Many other styles – primitivism, expressionism, abstraction, etc. - coexist with it. The younger generation of artists, who started working in the late nineties, have been exploring various kinds of conceptual art, which require more financial and moral backing than the traditional forms. We are thinking here of land-art, installations, photo and video art, action painting, performance art, etc.

There can be no doubt that artists today are totally free to follow their own creative inclinations. There can be no doubt either (and this needs underlining!) that this moment, when it comes, is the most important – historically – in the development of any people’s art. But the changes in the life of the community, which this long-awaited, long-desired democratic freedom has brought us, are not all for the better.

One of the definite benefits of socialism was state support for artists and the arts. For artists, this meant rent-free studios, which were (and still are!) paid for by the Union of Artists, regular exhibitions, regular sales to the Ministry of Culture, state museums and the Arts Fund, regular travel within the country and (latterly) abroad, and state commissions for works concerned with themes of “state importance”. The price of all this was (as we have noted) strict censorship and a rigid insistence that art must always have an ideological message.

For over ten years now, the old “system”, which kept artists going, has been in abeyance, and the only guarantees of success are talent - and luck. In other words, natural selection has been operating in the art community: mediocrities and time-servers are gradually leaving this once prestigious field, and only real artists, with a real sense of mission, are left to create and shape the Azerbaijani school, and win it a reputation today.

The Union of Artists of Azerbaijan now has about 800 members. As before, it has sections devoted to painting, sculpture, arts and crafts, monumental art, drawing and criticism. As before, members may exhibit free of charge in its two galleries. However, additional costs are involved in organising high-grade exhibitions, e.g. the printing of posters, invitations and, ideally, catalogues.

Commemorative and other exhibitions are mounted free of charge in galleries controlled by the Ministry of Culture – primarily the Bahlulzade Gallery and the Mustafaev Gallery in the State Art Museum. The Museum is particularly active: this year alone, it has organised 22 exhibitions. The Ministry of Culture controls 28 galleries - 26 for pictures, and 2 for other exhibitions. In addition to

the Bahlulzade Gallery, these include the “Icheri Sheher” (“City Hall”) Gallery, the State Picture Gallery, and 25 galleries in regional centres like Ganja, Shamakhy and Lankaran.

The Ministry has used state funds to organise numerous exhibitions in other countries, both near (CIS) and distant. These have included exhibitions of the work of Azeri artists, mounted in connection with festivals of culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Russian Federation (Moscow), Ukraine (Kiev), the United States, Austria (Vienna). A similar exhibition was organised in Strasbourg, to mark our country’s joining the Council of Europe.

With the Ministry’s direct support, exhibitions of the work of various individual artists (Farhad Khalilov, Vidadi Narimanbekov, Teymur Mamedov, Adalat Gara, Namig Dadashev and Sakit Mamedov) have also been organised in France, Italy, Sweden, Turkey and Russia.

At home, the Ministry has sponsored and organised several exhibitions from Russia (e.g. an exhibition of Russian avant-garde painting from the Tretyakov Gallery, exhibitions of ornamental head-dresses and tapestries, forming part of the Russian Culture Festival in Azerbaijan, and, most recently, an exhibition of the work of Nikas Safronov) and other CIS countries (e.g. an exhibition of the work of the Georgian artist, Tengiz Djaparidze).

Under the support of the Ministry of Culture, the representatives of Azerbaijan repeatedly participated in creative workshops, organized by TURKSOY for young painters in Turkish-speaking countries. In 2001 a young Azerbaijani artist Rashad Mekhtiyev was awarded by International Grant of TURKSOY.

Our history, like that of any country, is full of memorable events – some tragic, some joyful. We have a sacred duty to remember them, and tell the young about them. Every year, the Ministry of Culture and the Union of Artists of Azerbaijan together organise exhibitions to commemorate the victims of 20 January, and to mark Novruz and Independence Day.

The Ministry does not forget the young artists either – they, after all, will determine the future of art in Azerbaijan. Exhibitions of the work of young Azeri artists have been organised in the USA, Sweden, Japan, Iran, Turkey and France. Many young artists have also taken part in international competitions, bringing home various prizes and awards. Thirteen-year-old Tamara Mamedova, for example, has won gold medals at exhibitions in the USA, Sweden and Japan.

The Ministry of Culture also backs certain private sector contacts. Baku has a number of private art galleries, and the Baku Arts Centre, and the “Absheron” and “Giz Galasy” (“Maiden’s Tower”) galleries are particularly active in organising exhibitions. The Baku Arts Centre, for example, has been running the annual “Azerbaijan Today” poster competition, sponsored by the “UNOCAL-Khazar” oil company and judged by a Ministry representative, since 1994.

The Union of Photographers of Azerbaijan, catering both for professionals and amateurs, was founded in Baku in 1998. It organises monthly exhibitions/competitions, works with well-known foreign photographers and takes part in joint projects. From the very beginning, it has done useful work. Examples include ten individual exhibitions, and two international seminars, led by the famous photographer, Joseph Kudelka. In 2000, 11 Azeri photographers took awards in the prestigious “World Press Photo” competition.

These and many other interesting visual arts projects are sponsored by various firms and foundations – the Open Society Institute prominent among them.

State support for the visual arts is not limited to exhibitions, but extends to art education. Where

children are concerned, the focal point here is undoubtedly the Children's Picture Gallery, which has been functioning for many years. The Academy of Art was founded in 2000, on the basis of the art departments at the State University of Culture and the Arts. This is now facing up to the problem of reorganising and up-dating the whole system of art education - urgently necessary in view of the national situation, and of world artistic practice today, which is increasingly marked by the use of non-traditional and sometimes startling techniques.

As well as training artists, the Ministry does all it can to assist them by continuing – in spite of the present economic situation – to purchase their works. So, in 2000, the Ministry of Culture purchased 44 works, and in 2001 – 49 works of Azerbaijani artists. Both artists of old and young generations were among them.

Development prospects:

- Setting up a museum of modern art is one essential aspect of developing and supporting the visual arts in Azerbaijan. The State Art Museum has a sizable twentieth-century collection (paintings, drawings, sculpture), much of it on show – but its academic emphasis may tend to give a distorted or incomplete picture of the modern art scene. Many of the best examples of contemporary Azeri art are actually dispersed in private collections (usually abroad) or in artists' studios. Worth noting is the use of unconventional exhibition venues, e.g. disused or functioning factories, etc.;
- There is a pressing need for an illustrated survey of modern Azeri art, which might help to make up for the lack of a museum and publicise the work of the country's best contemporary artists;
- Promoting balanced regional participation in the cultural life of the country should be one of the principal aims of state policy;
- To maintain high standards and encourage fruitful contacts, it is important that the training provided for Azeri artists should take constant account of that offered at the best foreign schools, both in CIS countries and further afield;
- With a view to helping artists and making art a part of daily life, a statutory levy (up to 1% of cost) should be imposed on new buildings, and used to cover art works and decorative elements;
- To educate children in the arts and develop their aesthetic taste, the school curriculum should include a compulsory module on world culture, design or national crafts.

Chapter 15. Theatre

The centuries-old tradition of national theatre preceded the origin of the professional theatre of Azerbaijan. The “square performances” being combination of pagan, religious, folklore-musical and literary, dancing motives determined its essence and major value. The national theatre with its active improvisation character, and in definite cases put into the frameworks of religious-ritual performances, allowed the educators of 19 century to pledge the basis of new theatre. The progressive tendencies in cultural life of Azerbaijani society, which sharply formed at this time, have exhibited themselves in many spheres, including theatric art. And, it is necessary to mark, that the undertakings of the Azerbaijan intellectuals of that period took place in conditions of traditional Islam, not too encouraging entrainment for scenic art.

The plays of ancestor of classic national dramatic art Mirza Fatali Akhundov have played main role in origin of secular theatre in Azerbaijan. His «Vazir of Lankaran's khan» and «Haji Gara», staged in Baku in 1873 under the initiative of well-known educators Hasan-bey Zardabi and Nadjaf-bey Vazirov, became first drama performances not only in Azerbaijan, but also on all Muslim East.

Basis of the genre of musical theatre in the East was pledged by opera «Leyli and Majnun» (1908) and operetta «Arshin mal alan » (1913) written by Uzeyir Hajibeyov.

The theatrical performances at once became the phenomenon of not only Baku – in that time the center of guberniya (region), but also country towns Guba, Sheki, Shusha, Nakhchivan and also neighbor guberniya - Tiflis (Tbilisi) and Irevan (Yerevan), where considerable Azerbaijan population lived. The theatrical repertoire was constantly benefited by the plays of the domestic writers, where the considerable problems of the time were encompassed. The youth obtaining education in Russia and Europe, actively translated works of foreign classics and staged the examples of world dramatic art. There was practiced adaptation under the Azerbaijani mentality of the known plays of European writers. Following to canons of that time, actors-men played female roles, the direction and decorations of performances were unpretentious, but at the same time in Azerbaijan there took place irreversible process of creation of theatre of a new type, incorporating European traditions and working out simultaneously the national originality.

The short period of existence of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920) invoked a rough surge of national self-consciousness. In all spheres of a life of society, including theatrical art, there were taking place considerable events. By joining of separate theatrical troupes, the government of the first democratic republic has established on October 24, 1919 the state theatre.

The creativity of such outstanding playwrights, as Jalil Mammadguluzade, Huseyn Javid, Jafar Jabbarli has given the impulse to further progress of professional theatre. Their dramatic art has stipulated the appearance of a brilliant actors' pleiad, among which there are names of Huseyn Arablinsky, Abbas Mirza Sharifzade, Sidgi Ruhulla and others.

In the Soviet period there took place prompt professional standing of the Azerbaijani theatre, which becomes an integral part of national culture and plays a considerable role in education of wide levels of the population, and at consequent stages – in forming of aesthetic views, propagation of universal values.

After finish of the Second World War the theatre becomes less interesting to the party's ideological machine in propaganda sense, it started to be forced out by the cinema, and then the television. Many provincial theatres were closed.

The recovery of state independence in 1991 opened broad prospects and new possibilities for development of national theatre. At the same time, the destructive processes, appropriate to the transition period, breaking of the resisted points of view of both social-public, and personal nature, have rendered negative affecting on progressing of this sphere of culture. Attempts of mechanical implementation of principles of self-management into the activity of theatres at the beginning of 90's could not completely stabilize the situation. Overcoming of these difficulties needs conducting of deep transformations in all social-cultural spheres, development and implementation of new mechanisms of management.

Now in the system of the Ministry of Culture 26 state theatres are functioning, among which there are the Academic State Theatre of Opera and Ballet, 13 drama theatres, Theatre of Musical Comedy, Musical-Drama Theatre, Theatre of Young Spectator, 5 doll theatres, Theatre of Poetry, Theatre of Pantomime.

Alongside with national theatres, reflecting the policy of cultural tolerance, in country there are functioning theatres staging performances in languages of the peoples living in Azerbaijan. To them first of all it is necessary to refer the Russian Drama Theatre after Samed Vurgun, established in

1923, Lezgin theatre (1992), Georgian National theatre functioning in the Alibeyli village of Gakh region

Together with the network of state theatres, during the recent years there started to function the municipal and private theatres, studios, private antrepriza and other types.

With the purpose of stabilizing of theatrical process, provision of systematic and fruitful activity of the theatrical network in the transition period the Ministry of Culture has mobilized accessible financial, organizational and creative possibilities. For the last years at the expense of the budgetary funds more than 120 new performances were staged, among which there are the examples of foreign and national dramatic art represented by the names of Shakespeare, Schiller, Moliere, Hugo, Bomshe, Eduardo de Filippo, and also Fizuli, Mirza Fatali Akhundov, Jalil Mamedguluzade, Huseyn Javid, Jabbar Jabbarly and others. For the same period the Ministry bought 213 original plays, 92 translated works, 9 operas (from them 5 for children), 12 musical comedies, 13 musicals and 2 ballet performances.

In the result of Garabagh conflict four state theatres are forced to function in the situation of forced resettlement. Irevan and Shusha theatres are temporarily placed in Baku, Fizuli theatre – in Sumgayit, and Agdam – in Barda. With the purposes of recovery of working regime of these theatres, which suffered from serious material loss, the Ministry of Culture systematically finances their performances by arranging state contracts.

State contracts represent the basic form of sponsorship of theatres. It means search of performance projects, among which the preference is rendered to most perspective works in the creative plan. With state contracts there are provided not only the theatres in capital, but practically each of theatrical institutions operating in country, annually has a possibility to stage performance financed by the state. As the practice demonstrates, this form of support today allows establishing most effective conditions for scenic implementation of creative ideas of the masters of theatre. The engaging for financing of performances of funds of the private sponsors is encouraged.

Under the recommendation and offers of theatres tens of works of new writers are annually purchased, the plays of foreign playwrights are translated into Azerbaijani language etc. It is necessary to underline the fact, that repertoire police remains the prerogative of theatrical collectives. The theatrical leaders (director, artistic director), working on a contract basis, in their turn also cooperate with creative and art-technical personnel of the theatres on contract basis.

The economical difficulties experienced by the state in the transition period, do not give opportunities of valuable supply of material and technical base for theatres. In this connection the Presidential Decree «On 125th anniversary of establishment in Azerbaijan of secular professional theatre» gains special importance, envisioning realization of wide range of restoration-repair works in series of theatres. The new building of one of the oldest theatrical institutions - Theatre of Musical Comedy have been constructed, there have been repaired National Drama and other theatres, the capital works on recovery of the building of a State Philharmonic are being carried on.

Despite of financial deficit, it is possible to maintain festival-tour activity. On the basis of the agreements with neighbors Russia, Turkey and Georgia there takes place the exchange of theatrical events. Only in 2001 theatrical collectives of Azerbaijan participated in international theatrical festivals in Ankara, St.-Petersburg and Izmir. The national theatrical festivals, and tours inside country are organized. The new form of international cooperation is the involvement of our directors in the activity of foreign theatres.

PART 4 - Culture industries

Chapter 16. Television, radio, press

Television

The history of television in Azerbaijan began in the mid-1950s, when central and national TV companies (then known as studios) started broadcasting throughout the USSR. Very few people had TV sets, and the homes of those who did at once became clubs where all the neighbours – well trained in Soviet collectivist ideals – gathered daily to marvel at this new technical wonder. The party leaders soon grasped its immense potential value as an ideological weapon, and Soviet TV threw itself wholeheartedly into its task of spreading the communist message and exposing the evils of bourgeois values and the capitalist lifestyle.

In 1992, there were 1.5 million TV sets in Azerbaijan, i.e. nearly every family owned one (usually Soviet-made). We have no real statistics for the period after that. Obviously, once the market opened up, foreign sets were imported in such quantities that keeping track became impossible, although simple observation shows that the number has increased immeasurably, and that many households now have two - if not three - sets.

Analysis of the TV (mass media) market in Azerbaijan is complicated by the fact that no serious sociological research has been done in this sector. The few local surveys carried out offer no basis for objective, general conclusions. The absence of data on the financial aspects of TV (advertising and other revenue) also makes it hard to pinpoint certain trends and preferences.

Four Turkish channels (TRT-1, TGRT, STV, D) and three Russian channels (ORT, RTR, NTV) are operating in Azerbaijan, in addition to the local state and private channels. Some Turkish and Russian channels transmit full-day programmes – which is resented in some quarters as being against the country's interests. Iranian, Georgian and Armenian channels are also received in the frontier regions concerned.

In the last 5-6 years, the number of households equipped to receive satellite TV has grown rapidly – to the same extent in the capital and the regions. Many villages, too, have satellite TV. This trend is conditioned by the poor picture quality (depending on distance) of programmes transmitted via relay from the main stations in Baku.

Cable TV is still not widespread. In the early nineties, local networks were set up in some cities, and especially micro-districts, but they soon stopped operating, when numerous local and foreign entertainment channels came on-air free of charge. Some high-class hotels in Baku still have cable. Foreign pay-channels, using satellite and individual decoders, are available in Baku and vicinity. There are three companies, with foreign shareholders (Canadian, Turkish and Russian) operating in this section of the market.

The activity of TV channels is regulated by Law “On Mass Media” dated 2000 and Decree of President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 2001 “On additional measures on strengthening state concern about mass media” (detailed in Chapter 3).

As part of a series of thoroughgoing administrative reforms, carried out in the middle of 2001, licensing arrangements for the mass media (including the electronic media) have been changed. Responsibility in this area has been transferred from the Ministry of Press and Information to the newly-established Public Council, which is directly answerable to the President. Its functions have

been defined in accordance with the recommendations made by the Council of Europe, whose experts have made a close study of the current state of the country's TV market.

The principal state channel, which covers the whole country, has existed for a long time. It specialises in news, information and rather heavyweight cultural and arts programmes, some of which it produces itself. The second state channel can be received only in Baku and vicinity.

Unlike its private counterparts, state TV does not rely entirely on western films to fill its schedules (although Latin-American serials are an entrenched part of its repertoire).

Within the state company, there are several units, which produce a small number of documentary films and TV dramas. State TV is entirely funded from the state budget. Advertising is handled by a commercial agency, with which an agreement has been concluded.

There is also a state channel which broadcasts to six administrative districts in the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic for short periods (1½ – 2 hours in the evening).

State TV lost its monopoly in 1991, when the first private channel started operating in Baku, and has not been able to keep its audience. This can only be regarded as the fruit of a natural process, which has affected the TV market, as it has affected all the others.

The main private companies operating in Baku are ANS, SPACE, Lider and ATV. There are also local companies in some of the large towns (Ganja, Sumgait, Lenkaran, Guba, Khachmaz, etc.) and in others too. Many have not been allocated official frequencies - but this does not seem to stop them.

For the last five years, the American company, INTERNEWS, which seeks to promote private TV in developing countries, has had an office in Azerbaijan. With its support, local companies are upgrading their technical facilities. INTERNEWS also supplies them with programmes, mainly of a humanitarian character. As part of a project which it ran in 1999-2000, INTERNEWS helped a sizable group of young Azerbaijani film-makers to shoot self-scripted documentaries, covering all their expenses.

INTERNEWS also has offices in a number of neighbouring Caucasian countries. It has used this network to produce and show joint programmes in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The private channels' main source of revenue is advertising. Some programmes are directly sponsored – although this, too, is a form of paid advertising.

The market is highly competitive at present, and so private channels in the capital have developed rapidly – in terms of quality, if not quantity. These trends have yet to reach outlying areas. The struggle for viewers (and advertising or, more accurately, advertising revenue) forces young TV moguls to innovate constantly, employ the best specialists and make the most of their technical opportunities. This can give them the edge over state TV in certain areas, e.g. rapid response, programme flexibility, design, etc. They are also exploring the possibilities of interactive TV.

The private channels owe part of their pulling power to the fact that they carry so many entertainment programmes. These, frankly, are not always high-quality, and often aimed at the least discriminating viewers – but, even here, there are signs of improvement.

The private entrepreneurs know (and the country's laws never let them forget) that they hold in their hands a powerful and unprecedented means of influencing public opinion – and so have

considerable social responsibility. It is encouraging to see that, in their efforts to attract a bigger audience, they take free speech seriously, and that most channels are deliberately pluralistic, reflecting the wide range of opinions and attitudes in the community.

Azerbaijan has no quotas for foreign films on TV, of the kind used by other countries to protect their national film industries. American films dominate the schedules. Private channels lack the funds to make their own feature films.

Most of the private channels in Baku belong to media groups, which own radio stations, newspapers and magazines as well – although TV remains the most important.

Radio

FM stations, with a range limited to Baku and environs, have also developed. In spite of their limited reach, these stations (not more than 10), which concentrate on music and entertainment, are becoming increasingly popular. The resultant advertising revenue gives them money they can then use to fund future activities.

State radio has two channels, which transmit for 17-18 hours a day. For very short periods, it also carries foreign-language programmes – in Arabic, Farsi, French, English, etc.

Marking a break with the Soviet era, foreign stations broadcasting in Azerbaijani and Russian (“Radio Freedom”, “Voice of America”, “BBC”, etc.) can now be freely received.

Press

The country’s press traditions, founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by newspapers like “Ekinchi” and reviews like “Molla Nasreddin”, have revived in the years since independence. Indeed, the last decade of the 20th century witnessed a press boom – in terms both of quantity and quality. The first independent (post-Soviet) papers appeared at the end of the eighties. The public’s craving for information – which the old, “official” press could not satisfy – helped to make them profitable from the start, in spite of the fact that they carried practically no advertising.

In 1994-1995, rocketing paper prices, higher printing costs and the new political conditions discouraged investors, and many newspapers found themselves facing an acute financial crisis. Print-runs were reduced, papers appeared less frequently, and many of them went out of business. All of this made owners and publishers look seriously at the need for structural changes and a new financial policy. Starting in the second half of the nineties, the press set out to study readers’ tastes and interests, and find its niche in the country’s information market. On the basis of marketing and sociological research, innovations were made – bigger formats, longer print-runs, more issues, new sections and local editions.

According to official data, 522 media concerns were registered in Azerbaijan at the beginning of April 2001. They included 374 newspapers, 114 magazines, 26 news agencies and 9 TV companies (some of them unlicensed). The country has 49 publishing houses and 65 printing firms. On the basis of status and affiliation, newspapers in Azerbaijan today can be classified as follows:

- government papers (departmental, national);
- party political papers (opposition, pro-government);
- Independent papers (information, comment, advertising, specialised, trashy).

Government newspapers differ from the others both in content and form. The best examples are “Azerbaijan” (founded in 1918)6 “Khalg gazetı” (founded in 1919) and “Republic” (founded in 1996). They are basically subsidised, although some of their costs are covered from advertising and subscriptions.

The best examples of party political papers are “Yeni Azerbaijan” (“New Azerbaijan”), which supports the government and was founded in 1993, and “Yeni Musavat” (“New Musavat”), an opposition paper, founded in 1989.

Azerbaijan’s increasing integration within the world community has strengthened the role of the independent press, which now dominates the journalistic scene. The advertising market has expanded, and a private distribution network has been established. This has allowed many papers to cover their own costs, and even make a profit. Now that ideological restrictions on content have disappeared, most of the independent papers carry a maximum amount of information. “Zerkalo” (founded in 1990), “Echo” (founded in 2001) and “525-dji gazet” (founded in 1992) have the biggest circulations and are considered best.

Until 1990, the state news agency, “Azerinform” (later renamed “AzerTADJ”), was the only one in the country. The first independent news agency, “Turan”, was founded by a group of journalists in October 1990. A second independent agency, “ASSA-Irada”, was founded early in 1991, and the information market really started to take off in 1992.

“AzerTADJ”, the state agency, has the strongest organisational and technical base. It services government media and foreign diplomatic missions. It has its own correspondents in the USA, Germany, France, Turkey, Iran, Russia and various ex-Soviet countries, and set up a website last year.

“Turan” is regarded as the country’s leading news agency today, and independent experts have rated it best, every year since 1996. It has political, economic, cultural and research departments, as well as a special structural division, “Turan-Energy”. It has its own website, with coded information available only to subscribers. Reuters, France-Presse, Associated Press, DPA, BBC, etc. use it. Media concerns, government agencies, diplomatic missions, international organisations, and domestic and foreign firms and companies are among subscribers to its electronic news service.

“Trend”, “Azerpress”, “Sharg”, “MPA” and “Azadinform” are other well-known agencies. They are all relative newcomers, but have well-established structures, professional reporters and reasonable technical facilities. Their subscribers include media concerns, government agencies, political organisations, foreign diplomatic missions, and various companies and firms. Besides providing up-to-date information on current events, they produce thematic and analytical bulletins on economic and social issues.

Finance is, perhaps, the independent agencies’ main problem. The threat of losing subscribers – who may no longer be able to pay for their services – constantly hangs over them. For this reason, only some ten of the agencies established in recent years could be approved.

In this context, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Additional measures for increasing the state concern about developing mass-media”, dated 5 October 2002, was especially opportune. In accordance with this Decree, it was foreseen to assign 3 billions manats for crediting the projects of mass-media development in order to strengthen a freedom of word and information, strengthen of material-technical base and provide free development of mass-media.

In recent years, a number of journalists' associations – including the Association of Journalists of Azerbaijan, the “Yeni Nesil” (“New Generation”) Journalists' Association, the Independent Journalists' Trade Union, the Press Fund of Azerbaijan, the “Rukh” Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Journalists and the Association of Women Journalists of Azerbaijan - have played (and are still playing) a major role in promoting free speech in Azerbaijan, and forging contacts between media concerns in different parts of the Southern Caucasus. The work of Azerbaijan journalists' association “Yeni Nesil”, deserves special attention. It played an active part in drafting the bill which became the Mass Media Act, founded the Baku Press Club, and has been involved in many international projects, e.g. in setting up the Association of Independent Journalists of the Southern Caucasus, and organising conferences, seminars, special events, etc.

For constant concern and support of mass-media, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan was awarded by the Prize “A Friend of Press” for 2002, which had been created by the Committee of Protection of Journalists' Rights.

Chapter 17. Cinema

Background

Azerbaijan is one of the few countries with a film-making history dating back to the 19th century. The Baku photographer, A. Mishon, shot documentary footage of several local scenes and a short humorous film, and showed them to an audience on 2 August 1898. This date is regarded as marking the start of cinema in Azerbaijan, and is celebrated every year, by presidential decree.

At the beginning of the last century, when the oil boom was at its height, a number of well-known foreign film companies (Pathé, Pirone, Filma, etc.) made feature films in Azerbaijan. In 1910, the country had 14 cinemas, some of them specially built. Mobile cinemas served outlying areas. Important in the history of national cinema was the feature film, “In the Kingdom of Oil and Millions”, based on I. Musabekov's novel and starring the outstanding Azerbaijani actor, G. Arablinsky.

The Soviets regarded the cinema as vital to the ideological education of the proletariat, and so all aspects of film-making were state-controlled. The state itself had firm views on what the cinema should be doing – and these dictated the thematic and ideological content of all the films produced. The same standards were applied in buying foreign films for distribution in the USSR. The few exceptions only confirmed the rule.

Film-makers in Azerbaijan were subject to all these ideological and artistic constraints, and their work inevitably followed the standard Soviet line. On a certain level, however, national cinema could assert itself, and there were some masters, with their own creative style, who managed to leave a distinctive mark on it. For example, “Arshin mal alan” and “O olmasin, bu olsun” became “cult” films, gave several generations of Azerbaijanis a new sense of national identity – and are still influential today.

Towards the end of the Soviet era, Azerbaijanfilm, the country's only studio, was turning out 7 or 8 films a year ... commissioned by the State Cinema and the Central Soviet Television Service. Its annual output also included 20-25 documentaries and 2-3 animated films. From the earliest days, some 240 full-length features, over 50 short features, over 1,200 documentaries and about 100 animated films were made in our country.

Until 1991, dubbing foreign films into Azerbaijani was the only way of giving locals, who knew little or no Russian, access to the full range of world cinema. Funds were earmarked in the budget

for the dubbing of 60 feature films a year. When the cinema turned commercial, we found out that the market was too small to make dubbing viable. As part of the present national programme to promote and extend the use of Azerbaijani, energetic efforts are being made to bring dubbing back. ...Dubbing of films into Azerbaijani on State TV and private channels started to practise.

Before, the state subsidised the purchase of foreign films for showing in cinemas throughout the USSR. It also covered the cost of building, repairing and equipping cinemas, and maintained the regional cinema network.

The post-Soviet period

Since 1991, film-makers and cinemas have been expected to cover their own costs.

The situation of Azerbaijan's cinema-industry today needs to be seen in terms of the country's general situation, which has been the same for over ten years, and is rooted in the transition from a planned to a market economy. Obviously, film production and film distribution are equally affected.

In 1990-1993, film production, which is a hugely costly business, lost all the backing it had previously received from the state - at that time, its only customer for feature, documentary and animated films.

Around the same time, various private structures, with money to put into film-making, started to appear. In the early 1990s, about 20 private studios – headed by directors who were setting out to make films with their own money – came into being. Rapid inflation in the first half of the decade quickly made a number of private banks, investment companies, etc. very rich, and some of them decided to invest in film production. With the help of these funds, 4-5 films were turned out annually in the early nineties.

However, the activity of private investors decreased, and the reason was that films fail to yield the expected returns.

Fifteen full-length feature films were made on private money between 1991 and 1993. Between 1994 and 1997, there were only 8. Since 1998, there have been none. At the moment, 3-4 short documentaries on film, and a few more on video, are spasmodically funded ever year from private sources.

Practically the only source of funding in Azerbaijan today is the state, which commissions films from the state studios: features from Azerbaijanfilm, documentaries from Salname and Yaddash, animated films from Azanfilm, Debut, etc.

Between 1995 and 2001, the state spent approximately 2,0-2,5 billion manats (0.4-0.6 million US dollars) a year on 1-2 full-length features, 4-5 documentaries, 1 animated film, 1 short film by a neophyte director, and newsreel footage for the national film archive.

Lack of funds (a feature film costs approximately 150-200 thousand US dollars) forces directors to cut back on everything - from scriptwriters' fees, through sets, down to make-up and costumes.

The Azerbaijani film industry may not have made many films in recent years, but it has made its mark internationally. In the last 5-6 years, a number of Azerbaijani films have been screened and taken prizes (including first prizes) at various international festivals. This is a tribute to the directors' professional skills, and an acknowledgement that they – and their country – have

something new to offer. The Baku International Film Festival, “East-West”, which is now an annual event, is also gathering momentum. It is organised by the Union of Cinematographers of Azerbaijan, a public organisation of creative cinema workers, which has been in existence for 50 years.

The Azerbaijani film industry has the professionals it needs to succeed - specialists, who trained as directors or scriptwriters at VGIK (one of the world’s best film schools) in Moscow. At the same time, it is ominous that, in the last ten years, only one Azerbaijani has graduated from VGIK, and none from any other foreign film school.

Training in main specialisms is also available in Azerbaijan itself. The Baku University of Culture and the Arts runs courses for directors, cameramen, scriptwriters, set-designers, actors, etc. But lack of equipment - the University has no cameras, and no editing or other technical facilities – makes it impossible for students to acquire high-grade skills, know-how and experience. The enthusiasm of students and teachers in these conditions, struggling to acquire at least the theoretical basics and a modicum of practical knowledge, deserves respect - but is not enough to convince us that the national film industry will actually get the qualified, creative specialists it needs.

We said something earlier about festival successes. Unfortunately, commercial successes lag a long way behind. Apart from episodic sales to foreign TV channels, and a limited demand for films on video from Azerbaijanis living abroad, our films fail to sell in other countries (we will discuss the home market below).

Apart from lack of funds (which affects their visual quality), another reason for Azerbaijani films’ failure to compete successfully on the market is the industry’s poor technical base, and inability to keep pace with modern picture-quality and sound.

Local film-processing facilities are designed to handle Russian and Ukrainian film stock, which, because of its poor quality, is no longer on the market. Our studios are not equipped to use and process the film-types now current - Kodak, Fuji, etc. As a result, a sizable part (up to 25%) of every film’s small budget goes on processing abroad (in Belarus, Georgia and Russia).

Our sound recording equipment is obsolete, dating back to the seventies and eighties. We have sophisticated Arriflex cameras, which were purchased in 1976, as well as Soviet cameras from the seventies and eighties. Our studio equipment also needs up-dating.

Looking at the present state of film in Azerbaijan, it is clear that we need to give private-sector production a new impetus. We have embarked on market reform, and we need to absorb and apply the lessons which other countries’ cinema industries can teach us.

The restructuring of state involvement in film-making has generated a new interest in co-production. Several films part-funded from Russian sources are now in the pipeline, and an intergovernmental agreement with Russia is being prepared for signing.

The audience

Having peaked in 1985 (66.1 million), cinema attendance in Azerbaijan declined in the years after that (see table). From 1990 on, this trend accelerated, and the figures today reflect a real collapse. The first reason for this is that films and funds are no longer supplied by Moscow. The second is that state subsidies for the construction, maintenance, repair and modernisation of cinemas have dried up. Stationary and mobile cinematographs have been stopping its functioning – chiefly in the provinces.

Number of cinematographs and attendance in Azerbaijan
(Data of State Statistical Committee)

Indicators	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of cinematographs	2164	956	906	790	696	677	671	632
of which: urban localities	661	352	346	315	301	296	293	271
rural localities	1503	604	560	475	395	381	378	361
Attendance (thsd)	30195	1607	583	293	221	193	122	140
of which: urban localities	13072	1296	383	167	123	125	102	91
rural localities	17123	311	200	126	98	68	20	49

It is worth noting that attendance figures were not always accurate under the Soviets. Usually, they were too high: for example, anyone who sat through two screenings was counted twice, and the same applied to double-feature programmes. Attendance figures for Western films were widely conflated with those for Soviet films (audience figures for home-produced or Soviet films were a vital ideological parameter, and were used both to justify awards and to encourage cinema workers, all the way up from humble technicians to studio bosses). Once the need to “massage” the figures was removed, they obviously fell – another reason for the statistical “collapse”.

The few films bought for distribution in the early nineties (including films made in Azerbaijan) were not enough to fill cinema programmes. Nobody, obviously, wanted the old films stocked by state distributors, and the distribution licences for foreign films had expired. A few private distributors set up shop, but lack of the money needed to buy good films and advertise them widely, coupled with the steady drop in attendance, soon forced them out of business. Because no new films in 35mm format are being imported, some cinemas today are reduced to projecting videos.

Low incomes mean that ticket prices – currently about 0.2-0.5 USD – cannot be increased. There is one exception – the “Azerbaijan” cinema in Baku, where seats cost about 2.5-4.2 USD. Some groups (servicemen, refugees, the disabled, etc.) are admitted free of charge. The money cinemas earn by showing films is not enough to cover their operating costs, which is why some of them also rent out their premises for other uses.

If the network is to be revived, significant sums must be spent on modernising cinemas, bringing them up to the levels of comfort and service which today’s film-goers expect, and equipping them with modern projectors and sound systems. Baku has just one cinema which is fully equipped up to the latest standards (the result of an Azerbaijani-British joint venture), but its success shows that money spent on cinemas can well bring profits later.

One aspect of cinema, which has no commercial potential, but is important solely from the film heritage standpoint, is the acquisition and storage of significant home-produced and foreign films. In 1993, the Government set up the State Film Archive for this purpose, giving it premises and a budget of its own. One of only two film archives in former Soviet countries, it joined the International Federation of Film Archives in 2000.

An Azerbaijani cinema encyclopaedia – a major work covering the home industry, and also film-making and film-makers world-wide – has been in preparation for several years.

Legislating on the cinema

The Cinema Act was passed by the Milli Mejlis in 1998. It guarantees state support for the national film industry, protects the creative freedom and copyright of film-makers, and regulates various other matters.

The Milli Mejlis ratified the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production in 1999. In 1996, it had already concluded an agreement on co-operation in the cinema field with other CIS countries.

Also relevant here is the 1997 Copyright and Related Rights Act, which embodies international standards and extends to the audiovisual media – those most affected by various types of copyright violation. It is generally accepted that Azerbaijan now has an adequate legislative basis for accession to the relevant intergovernmental conventions (e.g. on copyright, co-productions, etc.).

Although the legislation itself is impressive, copyright protection in the audiovisual sphere is plainly still inadequate. It is estimated that no less than 95% of the videos on the Azerbaijani market are pirated – and the situation is much the same for sound recordings. Moreover, local pirates are able to turn out copies which look very like the genuine article, even managing to imitate protective elements (holograms, etc.). Picture and sound quality are not, however, up to standard.

In the present “transitional” conditions, where stability and effectiveness are far from universal, many people still regard the protection of intellectual property as a side-line issue, on which administrative, legal and financial effort is essentially wasted. Public awareness, too, is in a transitional phase, and people are not yet ready to change their values. This is why many intellectual workers are insufficiently aware of their legal rights and the bodies established to protect them. This applies even more to the general public, the main users of audiovisual products, who are usually convinced that questions like this are a matter for the state which, until recently, had a monopoly of both production and distribution.

The fact that the video market is a game without rules has also contributed to the fall in cinema attendance. Most video shops deal in cheap, pirated videos, which are flooding the country.

TV piracy has been another contributory factor of debacle of the cinema-distribution. Up to a few years ago, this was almost universal. Practically every attempt to distribute a well-publicised western film failed, since TV managed to show it on the very day it was premiered. New, tougher laws have reduced the proportion of pirated films on TV, but no one can claim that the problem has been solved – in fact, foreign film-makers’ are still being violated.

In general, TV has made a good job of scooping up the cinemas’ lost audience in the last 5-6 years. Every day, each of the main channels shows 3-5 feature films. Remembering that there are 10 national channels – plus regional channels, which fill their schedules with mainly foreign films – one could even argue that the audience for films has not declined, but has actually risen steeply.

Proposals to improve the cinema industry’s situation

- compensate for shortage of funds by doing more to attract foreign capital for co-productions;
- extend the mainstream market reforms to the cinema, and increase the private sector’s stake throughout the industry - which will help to ensure that money invested in the cinema yields better profits;
- provide state subsidies and bank loans to up-date and improve the industry’s technical base, and fund promising projects;
- encourage private investors (including foreign ones) to invest in reviving moribund facilities by providing long-term loans or privatising individual concerns;
- make it possible for talented young people to study the main cinema specialisms abroad, thus ensuring that the national industry continues to get the professionals it needs;
- devise and implement measures to regulate the use of audiovisual products.

Chapter 18. Books

Book culture has a long tradition in Azerbaijan. The characters and alphabets used on our territory – the main element in book production – have changed repeatedly. Mikhey characters were the first employed. Our Turkish ancestors used Orkhon-Yenisey, Uigur and other characters in the first centuries A.D. Albanian characters made their appearance in the first half of the 5th century.

As in other countries, manuscripts are a precious part of our intellectual tradition. Their development in Azerbaijan was linked with the rise of paper-making. The founding of paper-making workshops in Tebriz - the country's cultural centre from the 8th to the 13th century – encouraged the copying of inscriptions from many ancient monuments and produced priceless masterpieces.

Unfortunately, for various reasons, the manuscripts produced before the Arab conquest (8th century) and under the caliphate have not survived.

The oldest manuscript we have – a copy of Tabarini's commentary on the Koran – dates from 1220-1225. It is currently preserved in the National Library in Paris. Among manuscripts copied in the 13th century, Nizami's "Iskendername" (1233) is in a private library in Tehran, the "Treasury of Secrets" (1239) is in the India Office Library in London, and Khatib Tebrizi's "Sharkhi-divan-khaman" (1256), Alaaddin Djuveyni's "Mongolian Story" and Ibn Behtushi's "Maafil al-kheyvan" (1297-1298) are in collections in other parts of the world.

Original versions, and also copies, of scholarly and literary works, written by Azerbaijani authors and later rewritten by different calligraphers, are among the greatest treasures of many precious book collections. We need only note that 792 copies of Nizami's "Khemse" and about 800 copies of Fizuli's works are currently owned by libraries and museums throughout the world. The earliest copies of "Kitabi Dede-Gorgud" - one of Azerbaijan's greatest cultural treasures and the subject of 1300th anniversary celebrations in 2000 - are in the Dresden and Vatican Libraries.

The first printed book was Nasreddin Tusi's "Takhriri Oglidis", which was produced by the Medici press in Rome in 1594. It was later translated into Latin and published in London in 1657.

The printing of Azerbaijani books abroad continued in the years after that. The 17th century historian Orudj Bek Bayat's "Book of the Iranian Don Juan" was printed in Valladolid, former capital of Spain, in 1604; I. Gutkasheli's novel, "Rashid Bek and Saadat Khanum" was printed (in French) in Warsaw in 1835; A. Bakikhanov's "Ganuni-Gudsi" was printed in Tbilisi in Farsi (1831) and Russian (1835); M. Kazimbek's "Grammar of the Turkish and Tatar Languages" was printed in Kazan (1839) and St. Petersburg (1846); N. Tusi's "Akhlagi-Nasiri" was published in Bombay in 1851, M. Sh. Vazeh's poems in Berlin in 1851.

Modern publishing methods reached Azerbaijan towards the end of the 19th century, and the country's first publishing house was founded around that time. Baku had only one publisher and one printer in 1889 – but 16 publishers in 1900.

The Communists saw books as one of the most powerful ideological weapons – and immediately nationalised everything connected with publishing. The Azerbaijani Press Centre was set up within the People's Commissariat of Education to take charge of this sector. A Literature and Publishing Committee was founded in 1923 to give the state an even stronger hold on publishing,

“Azerneshr” – the State Publishing House of Azerbaijan - was founded in 1924 and made totally responsible for publishing and selling books. During first years of its activity, this publishing house edited featured literature and books for children.

In the first years of Soviet rule (1920-1926), it published 779 titles, and produced over 4 million books.

Book publishing continued to expand dynamically in the years after that:

Year	Number of titles	Circulation (in thousands of copies)
1970	1,075	9,932.3
1975	1,180	11,290.1
1980	1,226	11,778.5
1985	1,428	15,518.9
1990	1,450	14,280.4

The situation today

Private publishers and printing firms started to appear in Azerbaijan after 1991. State control of these sectors was relaxed, and censorship was abolished in 1998. State involvement in publishing fell off sharply, although both the state and private sectors revived to start with.

A number of previously banned books were published in great quantity. The revival was short-lived, however. The problems associated with the switch to a market economy also negatively hit book-publishing. The public’s diminished purchasing power, shortages of paper and other printing materials, and also publishers’ inability to adapt flexibly to the market economy and loss of state subsidies, were the main causes of the down-turn of book-production in the country.

Year	Number of titles	Circulation (in thousands of copies)
1992	559	8,953.0
1993	585	9,443.1
1994	375	5,537.5
1995	498	3,592.2
1996	542	2,672.6
1997	500	2,669.4
1998	450	2,350.0

Today, books are published in Azerbaijan in three distinct ways:

1. Some books (e.g. textbooks, commemorative publications dealing with outstanding individuals or historic events) are published at the state’s expense. Apart from textbooks, there are not many of these.
2. Many – indeed most - books are published at their authors’ own expense.
3. Production of some books is sponsored by local sponsors, foreign companies and embassies.

Recently published books have had very small sales. From the sixties to the eighties, literary works used to sell some 20,000–30,000 copies, scientific ones 3,000-7,000 copies. The corresponding figures today are 500-1,000, and 300-500 copies.

The introduction of a new alphabet has also hit publishing and book sales. In the course of the 20th century, Azerbaijan changed its alphabet three times: from Arabic to Roman in 1929, from Roman

to Cyrillic in 1932, and back again to Roman in 1992 – always causing great problems for publishers.

There are three types of reader in Azerbaijan today:

1. Those who can read in both Roman and Cyrillic. Their number is not huge, but they include people in various age groups;
2. Those who can read only in Cyrillic. This group includes most over-30s.
3. Those who can read only in Roman. These are the young readers, who are still at school.

In accordance with the Presidential Decree “On improvement of application of the state language”, beginning from August 1, 2001 all editions, including periodical ones, were transferred into roman graphics.

The legal basis of publishing

Publishing is regulated by the Publishing Act and the relevant sections of other laws. Under the Act on State Registration of Legal Entities, anyone may set up in business as a publisher or printer, but a licence is required. This used to be issued, on payment of a fee, by the Ministry of Press and Information, but this no longer exists. The fee is determined by the volume of the business. Now the licensing of publishing production is completely abolished.

In Azerbaijan there are functioning 85 publishing houses and publishing-polygraphic firms. Most are in Baku, though there are two publishers in both Gandja and Nakhchivan, and one in Sumgayit and Gabala.

Range of publications

Political literature aimed at a mass readership was the main staple under the Soviets, although scientific and literary works, children’s books and other genres were also plentiful. Specialised publishers emerged in the seventies and eighties. For example, Maarif specialised in textbooks and education, Azerneshr and Yazichi in literature, Gandjlik in books for children and young people, Ishig in posters, photographic books and art books, and Elm in scientific publications.

Foreign works were also published on a massive scale. In the eighties, Gandjlik published 53 titles (40,000 volumes) in its “World Library of Children’s Literature”. Yazichi also started to publish its “Library of World Literature” in 100 volumes, and published more than 30 books of this series. But the recession put an end to this venture.

Cultural publications

In the Soviet period, there were four magazines and one newspaper devoted to culture and the arts. The magazines, “Azerbaijan” and “Ulduz”, and the newspaper, “Literature and the Arts”, were published by the Union of Writers of Azerbaijan. The “Gobustan” series was published by the Union of Theatre Workers, and the magazine “Cultural enlightenment” by the Ministry of Culture.

Soviet period

No.	Title of publication	Circulation	Appearing	Type
1.	“Literature and the Arts”	50,000	Weekly	Newspaper
2.	“Azerbaijan”	70,000	Monthly	Magazine
3.	“Ulduz”	40,000	Monthly	Magazine

4.	“Gobustan”	5,000	Quarterly	Series
5.	“Cultural education”	10,000	Quarterly	Magazine

Specialised cultural journals are now far more numerous than they were under the Soviets. Newcomers include the magazine, “Khazar”, the newspaper, “Culture”, and the “World of Music” and “Arts” series. Most of these are published by creative unions.

“Azerbaijan”, “Ulduz”, “Khazar”, “Gobustan” magazines and “Literature” newspaper are the editions of the Union of Writers, which supports them financially by budgetary funds. The magazine “World of Music” of the Union of Composers, and the “Arts” – of the Union of Artists are financed by the money, which come from sell.

Although the number of such journals has increased, circulations are vastly lower than in the Soviet era. At that time, specialised publications like “Teaching Culture” and the “Gobustan” series had circulations of 5-10 thousand, while their popular counterparts, “Azerbaijan”, “Ulduz” and “Literature and the Arts” sold 40-50 thousand copies. The figure for most of today’s publications is about 500 copies. The only exceptions are “Teaching Culture” and “Culture”. These are published by the Ministry of Culture, are sold to subscribers, and varies between 1,500-2,500 readers.

Today

No.	Title of publication	Circulation	Appearing	Type
1.	“Literature”	2000	Weekly	Newspaper
2.	“Culture”	2000	Weekly	Newspaper
3.	“Azerbaijan”	1000	Monthly	Magazine
4.	“Ulduz”	500	Monthly	Magazine
5.	“Khazar”	500	Bi-monthly	Magazine
6.	“Teaching Culture”	2000	Monthly	Magazine
7.	“Music World”	500	Quarterly	Series
8.	“Gobustan”	500	Quarterly	Series
9.	“XXI century”	500	Quarterly	Magazine

Book distribution

A comprehensive book distribution system was set up by the Soviets. “Azerkitab”, the book trade department in the Ministry of Press and Information, was responsible for sales in the towns. Sales in the country were handled by “Kendkoopkitab”, the book trade arm of “Azerittifag”. Rural libraries were stocked from the Central Fund. When the market economy arrived, this whole system broke down. Most of the “Azerkitab” shops have been privatised and now deal in other commodities.

At present, publishers and authors are themselves involved in distribution. Azerneshr and Gandjlik are the only publishers with their own bookshops. Marketing and advertisement are on very low level. There are not many private bookshops, and their links with publishers are tenuous.

Conclusion

Taking into account all above-mentioned problems, publishing in Azerbaijan has none the less made some progress.

First of all, private-sector publishers and printers are now working more – and better. Most of the firms which started out as publishers in 90’s now have a significant foothold in printing. These private concerns are sometimes more productive, better-equipped and better-staffed than their state-

run counterparts. Today, over one hundred firms have their own micro-publishing and printing facilities.

High quality of books is the most important consideration today. In the race to outdo their competitors, many publishers turn to printers in other countries.

From other point of view, appearance of high-quality published books makes local publishing-houses to function in accordance with the important demands of today. Locally produced books are not behind of foreign editions by their polygraph quality: books to mark the anniversary of “Kitabi Dede-Gorgud”, Ashig Alesker’s “Oguz poetry - 1500”, the anthology of Azerbaijani poetry, “One Hundred Poets of the Millennium”, and an Azerbaijani-English dictionary.

Today, various foreign companies and international support funds are doing a great deal to assist our publishing industry. They are, for example, sponsoring the publication of children’s books, textbooks and literature in translation. A case in point is the above-mentioned “Children’s Encyclopaedia”, published by Ayna with sponsorship from Exxon. The Soros Fund’s “Step by Step” and “Education” programmes, which sponsor books produced by various publishers, are two more examples.

Works of modern Azerbaijani authors – Anar, Elchin, Bakhtiyar Vaghabzade, Magsud Ibraghimbeyov, Rustam Ibraghimbeyov, Chingiz Abdullayev and others are translated into many world languages and published abroad.

Chapter 19. Multimedia and network projects in the cultural field

Starting in the early 1990s, the new technologies developed rapidly in Azerbaijan. This extended to the culture industries, where a real boom took place in 1999-2000. It was during this time that various projects were launched on the World Wide Web. A number of websites, devoted to the history and development of Azerbaijani culture, were inaugurated. One of the first - <http://www.culture.az>, carrying information on the Ministry of Culture and its subordinate agencies – was jointly created by the Ministry and the INTRANS Company.

Of course, the earliest sites responded directly to demand. Predictably, most were devoted to music by Azerbaijani performers, e.g. <http://www.azerimp3.com>, created by Azerinet and substantially updated in summer 2001, which carries pop, rap, classical music and jazz, as well as that quintessential element in our classical tradition, mugam. Azerinet has established several music archive sites, including <http://www.bakililar.az> and <http://www.azerimusics.com>.

The most visited sites are undoubtedly those which carry news on pop and provide music in MP3, Real Media, “yellow press” and similar formats. Most of them have chat and forum (guest book) functions, allowing visitors to exchange opinions, make suggestions on site design and content, and form small interest groups. Examples include Azerinet Team, Bakililar, 187 Family, etc., which mainly attract young people.

In addition to these, there have, since 1998, been a number of professionally designed sites – exploiting all the technical possibilities, fully functional, aesthetically pleasing and intellectually satisfying – which have attracted the interest and admiration of professionals in Azerbaijan and outside. The most successful are those created by “Musiqi dunyasi” (“World of Music”) magazine. Significantly, creation of these sites was supported by IATP (Internet Access and Training Programme), with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

They include: the “Musiqi dunyasi” site, <http://musiqi-dunya.aznet.org>; the on-line catalogues, <http://composers.aznet.org> and <http://diskografiya.aznet.org>; and memorial sites, such as those devoted to the celebrated Azerbaijani composer, Qara Qarayev, <http://qara-qarayev.aznet.org>, and the famous jazz composer and pianist, V. Mustafazadeh. <http://vagif.aznet.org>.

The following may also be mentioned: the performing arts site, <http://azeripaint.aznet.org>; the “Azerbaijan International” magazine site, <http://azer.com>; a site reproducing over 1,800 works by Azerbaijani painters, <http://azgallery.com>; a site devoted to Azeri language and literature <http://azeri.org>; the site of the State Museum of Musical Culture, <http://www.citisight.com/baku/musculture.html>; a tourist guide site (set up by the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism), <http://5c.azeri.com/travel/culture.html>, and several other informative and well-designed projects.

Also important are the personal web-pages devoted to well-known figures in culture and the arts. They include the following:

<http://www.azerijazz.com>

<http://www.azeri-stars.com>

<http://www.composereldarmansurov.8m.com> <http://www.azerinet.com/rast>

<http://www.faiqagayev.az>

<http://www.dayirman.com>

<http://www.hajibeyov.com>

and are generally notable for providing copious information, featuring music, photo and video-files, and attracting large numbers of visitors.

It is pleasant to report that a new joint project, the Azerbaijan Development Portal – of which questions relating to the development of culture and the arts on Internet are an important part - was set up in 2000. This is funded by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and is being implemented on the basis of close co-operation between the state, the private sector and civil society. The site can be accessed at <http://www.gateway.az>, and many specialists believe that it will soon become a kind of Azerbaijani “centre” on Internet. It carries general information, news on all aspects of life in our country and (this seems particularly important) comprehensive details of resources on “Azerinet”.

“Azerinet” is working on web-search systems, but with little success so far. Several projects are being developed, however, and gradually brought into line with international standards. They include:

<http://resources.net.az>

<http://www.saznet.org>

<http://www.search.az>

<http://www.azeriweb.com>, etc.

Gratifyingly, numerous high-quality sites have been launched on “Azerinet” in the last two years by various media concerns. They include the following:

Newspaper sites –

“Zerkalo”, <http://www.zerkalo.az>

“Ayna”, <http://www.ayna.az>

“Echo”, <http://www.echo-az.com>

“Sobytiya”, <http://www.sobitiya.az>

“525” <http://www.525ci.com>

“Yeni Musavat”, <http://www.yenimusavat.com>;

TV company sites –

Azerbaijan News Service (ANS) <http://www.ans-dx.com>

AZTV <http://www.aztv.az>

Lider TV, <http://www.lidertv.com>

Information Agency sites –

<http://www.azertag.com>

<http://www.xeber.net>

<http://www.top.az>

<http://www.news.azerinet.com>

all of them operative and well worth consulting.

Government structures are also actively involved in setting up and running Internet projects. The President of the Republic has a website, <http://www.president.az>. So do nearly all the Ministries, State Committees and Azerbaijani embassies abroad (the embassy websites in the USA, <http://www.azembassy.com>, and the Russian Federation, <http://www.azembassy.msk.ru>), are particularly highly developed. All of this reflects a trend towards democratic, transparent access to information on state structures and their activities.

As for technical aspects, we are happy to report that “Azerinet” sites are improving steadily, both in quality and ease of use. Content is being up-graded, not just in terms of popular themes and advertising, but also in terms of information, aimed at specialists, on specific social, economic, political and cultural issues.

There are growing opportunities for local access providers, web-hosts and site designers. Demand and supply are evolving together, with positive effects on the quality and price of the services provided. Significantly – and very usefully - some providers and hosts are also working free of charge with various cultural institutions. The Soros Foundation’s “Open Society Institute (OSI) – Azerbaijan” (www.aznet.org), for example, hosts a large number of well-stocked and varied sites.

In addition to Internet projects, various multimedia projects are taking shape in the cultural field. One striking example is the CD-Rom “Virtual Tour of the Shirvanshakh Palace”, which was produced in co-operation with the R.I.S.K. company, and issued in 2001 to great public acclaim. This contains information on the Palace complex, one of our greatest cultural treasures and allows users to “walk” through Divankhana, which forms part of it. The Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism has also produced a CD-Rom, “Welcome to Azerbaijan”, chiefly aimed at visitors, and covering the country’s cultural and natural assets and contemporary art-scene.

This is the situation in this area at present. Looking ahead, the Ministry of Culture – like other bodies concerned with the cultural potential of the new information technologies – sees these as one of the future’s main priorities. Using IT to preserve and enrich the heritage, promote Azerbaijani culture, and give Internet and multimedia users access to it – this is a central part of our country’s cultural policy. High-grade sites, covering various aspects of our culture, are important. But a balanced and fruitful policy on cultural tourism also calls for multimedia products, which give prospective visitors easy access to information on our heritage – and contribute, in so doing, to the development of our culture industries.

The most notable projects are the one we have mentioned, <http://www.gateway.az>, and “Digital Silk Roads”, a joint project devised and funded by UNESCO and the Japanese Government, which sets out to preserve and revive interest in traditional performing arts, and also ancient manuscripts, by

putting them on electronic media and later on Internet. OSI-Azerbaijan is also working on the use of new IT to produce a systematic catalogue of Azerbaijan's library heritage.

Alongside with the projects, developed in Azerbaijan, there are several international network projects in the field of culture, and as the most important of them is considered the joint project of the Council of Europe and the Institute of Comparative Researches in the field of culture ERICarts (Bonn, Germany) "Cultural Policies in Europe: Compendium of Basic Facts and Trends". The Ministry of Culture of Azerbaijan participates in this project from 1999. Under the leadership of the Minister of Culture Mr. Polad Byulbyuloglu there was prepared National Profile on Cultural Policy of Azerbaijan, which electron version together with the profiles of 29 other countries participating in the project, is replaced at the web-site <http://www.culturalpolicies.net>. At the moment this web-site is very popular. So, in the period from January till April 2002, approximate number of daily visitors was 2133. The project was awarded for "The Best Practice in the Sphere of Social Sciences" by the California University. Other positive moment is, that the European Cultural Foundation (ECF, Amsterdam, Netherlands) became the sponsor of the project and will grant 30 000 Euro for its development in 2002. Regular updates of information, provided by the Ministries of Culture or other responsible bodies of each participating countries, are conducted in the framework of the project. This project gives an opportunity to represent the cultural policy of Europe as a whole and of each particular country in the most modern and comprehensive variant.

But the most important factor, determining development of the field, still are the prices for equipment and services. Generally, we can note that the increase in the deal of promotion of new information technologies in the Republic is based, mainly, on the fact that the prices were sharply reduced during last years and it allows now even the individual users to create, support and regularly update web-sites, and for the legal entities now it's not the sphere of not-rentable risk to invest money into the sphere of application of multimedia technologies.

In conclusion, we can say that Azerbaijan's present cultural policy gives us reason to regard the prospects for development of the new information technologies and the culture industries in our country as very favorable. Thanks to this policy, Internet users world-wide can now see what our culture has to offer. The Ministry of Culture intends to set up a "cultural portal", providing access to a wide range of information on the cultural life of Azerbaijan. It is exploring the possibility of establishing a central server, giving cash-strapped cultural institutions access to Internet and hosting their sites on the Web. In future, "exporting" Azerbaijani culture on Internet will yield highly positive results by winning recognition for our people, their traditions and their culture, focusing the world community's attention on our country and also – a vital point – uniting Azerbaijanis throughout the world on the basis of shared attitudes and values.