

THE ROLE OF THE “AZERBAIJAN” JOURNAL IN PRESERVING NATIONAL AND MORAL VALUES

РОЛЬ ЖУРНАЛУ «АЗЕРБАЙДЖАН» У ЗБЕРЕЖЕННІ НАЦІОНАЛЬНИХ І МОРАЛЬНИХ ЦІННОСТЕЙ

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The history of the magazine “Azerbaijan” is, as a whole, the history of our 20th-century literature and culture. Although it was published under the titles “Education and Culture”, “Revolution and Culture”, and eventually “Azerbaijan” throughout the 70-year Soviet totalitarian regime, its contributions to the preservation of the national literature and language, as well as the ethno-cultural memory, are undeniable.

Regardless of the title under which it was published, the magazine “Azerbaijan” remains an important source to this day within the Soviet totalitarian ideological system from the perspective of preserving literature, the national language, culture, and, in a word, the memory. Despite its different names throughout the years, the magazine published by the Azerbaijan Writers’ Union has rendered exceptional service in promoting literature from its very first issue to the present day.

The magazine is not only an important source for studying the history of Azerbaijani literature and evaluating the contemporary literary process, as well as a publication that brings the finest examples of Azerbaijani artistic thought – including classical and contemporary literature, folklore, and translation examples to its readers, a custodian of cultural values, but it is also a significant cultural and socio-political phenomenon. The century-old “Azerbaijan” magazine itself has become a literary phenomenon and even a genre. One of the main objectives still facing the magazine today is to encourage the idea of striving for the development of society in a humanistic spirit, contributing to the strengthening of the moral values of its members, and promoting overall harmony and balance.

The fact that the magazine “Azerbaijan” is considered one of the significant sources for studying literary history is also determined by the fact that the creative searches, achievements, and even deviations of the literary generations of the 20th and 21st centuries have been covered in the journal in all their polyphony. It is these factors that have made it necessary to involve the activities of the magazine as a creative institution in academic research, to compile its bibliography, and to teach it as an elective course in the philology and journalism departments of universities.

Key words: the magazine “Azerbaijan”, the history of the magazine, national literature, literary and artistic idea.

Історія журналу «Азербайджан» є, загалом, історією азербайджанської літератури та культури ХХ століття. Незважаючи на те, що протягом 70 років радянського тоталітарного режиму журнал виходив під назвами «Освіта і культура», «Революція і культура», а згодом «Азербайджан», його внесок у збереження національної літератури, рідної мови та етнокультурної пам’яті є беззаперечним.

Незалежно від назви, під якою він видавався, журнал «Азербайджан» і сьогодні залишається важливим джерелом для дослідження процесів збереження літератури, національної мови, культури та, загалом, історичної пам’яті в умовах радянської тоталітарної ідеологічної системи. Попри зміну назв у різні роки, журнал, що видавався Спілкою письменників Азербайджану, від першого номера й до сьогодні зробив винятковий внесок у розвиток і популяризацію національної літератури.

Журнал є не лише важливим джерелом для вивчення історії азербайджанської літератури, оцінювання сучасного літературного процесу та ознайомлення читачів із найкращими зразками азербайджанської художньої думки – класичною й сучасною літературою, фольклором і перекладами, а й справжнім хранителем культурних цінностей та вагомим культурним і суспільно-політичним явищем. Столітній журнал «Азербайджан» сам по собі став літературним феноменом і навіть окремим жанром. Одним із головних завдань журналу й сьогодні залишається утвердження гуманістичних ідей, сприяння суспільному розвитку, зміцнення моральних цінностей його членів та підтримка загальної гармонії й суспільної рівноваги.

Те, що журнал «Азербайджан» вважається одним із найважливіших джерел для дослідження історії літератури, зумовлено також тим, що на його сторінках у всій поліфонії відображено творчі пошуки, досягнення й навіть суперечності літературних поколінь ХХ і ХХІ століть. Саме ці чинники зумовили необхідність залучення діяльності журналу як творчої інституції до академічних досліджень, укладання його бібліографії та викладання історії журналу як вибіркової дисципліни на факультетах філології та журналістики університетів.

Ключові слова: журнал «Азербайджан», історія журналу, національна література, літературно-художня думка.

Introduction. The role of the national press, which has played an exceptionally significant role in the history of Azerbaijani culture and literary-artistic thought, in preserving and developing moral, literary, and cultural values constitutes an important subject of scholarly research. Periodicals that provide an opportunity to trace the dynamics of the development of national literature began to emerge primarily at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is true that, beginning from the late nineteenth century, a number of press publications made a substantial contribution to the advancement of Enlightenment literature by publishing literary and artistic works as well as translations from examples of world literature.

The founders of the journals *Molla Nasreddin* and *Füyuzat*, which began publication in the early twentieth century, through their journalistic writings, literary works, and translation activities published in these periodicals, also developed the idea of creating a journal that would engage more systematically and consistently with the advancement of literature in the future. It was precisely due to the development of the national press that, from the beginning of the twentieth century onward, Azerbaijani society achieved significant progress in public thought, gained national and political independence, and secured its freedom.

The national press, which has played a pivotal role in the history of Azerbaijani culture and literary thought, constitutes a significant subject of scholarly inquiry with regard to its contribution to the preservation and development of the nation's moral, literary, and cultural values. Periodicals that make it possible to trace the dynamics of the development of Azerbaijani national literature began to emerge primarily in the early twentieth century. Admittedly, from the late nineteenth century onwards, a number of newspapers and magazines contributed substantially to the advancement of Enlightenment literature by publishing literary works and translations from world literature.

The founders of the journals *Molla Nasreddin* and *Füyuzat*, both of which began publication in the early twentieth century, not only published journalistic articles, original literary works, and translations in their respective periodicals but also developed the idea of establishing a literary journal that would engage more systematically and consistently with the promotion of literature. Owing to the development of the national press, Azerbaijani society achieved significant progress in public thought from the beginning of the twentieth century, eventually attaining national and political independence and securing its freedom.

Discussion. During the first decade of the twentieth century, Azerbaijani intellectuals, building upon

the traditions of the progressive press and inspired by advanced European intellectual thought, established a new literary and cultural school. Through both its form and content, the journal *Molla Nasreddin* made a substantial contribution to the development of modern realist poetry and prose. Its activities paved the way for the emergence of the literary schools associated with Jalil Mammadguluzadeh and Mirza Alakbar Sabir in Azerbaijani literature.

Within a short period, *Molla Nasreddin* became the foremost example of revolutionary-democratic journalism in Azerbaijan. Prominent representatives of the national intellectual elite took decisive steps toward the creation and consolidation of a national ideology. The journal not only laid the foundations of Azerbaijani satirical journalism but also, through its innovative form and content, made a significant contribution to the development of satirical literature and caricature, thereby establishing what later became known as the *Molla Nasreddin* literary school. It was through *Molla Nasreddin* that Mirza Alakbar Sabir gained recognition, leading to the formation of the Sabir literary school within Azerbaijani literature. While *Molla Nasreddin* introduced Sabir to a wider readership, Sabir, in turn, greatly enhanced the popularity and influence of the journal. Referring to this relationship, Abdurrahim Hagverdiyev wrote: "The poetic temperament belonged to Sabir, the poetic talent belonged to Sabir, but it was *Molla Nasreddin* and Jalil Mammadguluzadeh that provided the themes" [6].

At approximately the same time, the journal *Füyuzat* also began publication. In the final issue of the newspaper *Hayat*, published on 3 September 1906, Ali bey Huseynzade announced the establishment of the new journal as follows: "Since the newspaper *Hayat* is ceasing publication as of today, a weekly literary, scientific, and socio-political journal entitled *Füyuzat* will begin publication in its place" [3]. This announcement marked the first occasion in the history of the Azerbaijani national press when the literary mission of a periodical was explicitly foregrounded. By allocating extensive space to literary and artistic materials, the journal made an important contribution within a short time to the formation of literary taste and the development of the literary process.

The similarities and differences between these two literary schools have been aptly characterized by the literary scholar and People's Writer Elchin Efendiyev. According to his analogy, although one journal was more closely connected with everyday life while the other represented a more elitist intellectual orientation, both shared common views regarding the nation's future, the importance of edu-

cation and science, and the struggle against ignorance and backwardness. Their principal distinction lay in ideological emphasis: "The content of Molla Nasreddin reflects a somewhat left-oriented perspective, whereas the content of Füyuzat reflects a somewhat right-oriented perspective; however, the inner essence of their content is fundamentally the same" [4, pp. 145–165].

As the principal literary periodical of the Soviet era, the journal *Maarif va Madaniyyat* (Education and Culture) may be regarded, in terms of both its historical mission and editorial principles, as the successor to Molla Nasreddin and Füyuzat. Like its predecessors, it represented an expression of Azerbaijani national aesthetic consciousness. As has been observed, "Just as the founders of Molla Nasreddin rightly regarded the publication of their journal as a response to the demands of the age and the needs of society, the predecessor of Azerbaijan, the journal *Maarif va Madaniyyat*, was likewise established through the farsighted efforts of nationally minded intellectuals who sought to make proper use of a historic opportunity" [2, p. 168].

Committed to promoting education in Azerbaijan and preserving the purity of the Azerbaijani language, the journal relied heavily upon the country's literary community in fulfilling its mission. Its editorial statement declared:

"We hope that this journal, through the united efforts of Azerbaijani writers and intellectuals, will contribute to the study and development of our literature. Assisting us in this endeavour for the advancement of Azerbaijani education is the duty of every person devoted to the written word." [10, p. 3]

The first issue of the journal clearly reflected its literary policy through the diversity of its published materials. It included excerpts from Huseyn Javid's play *The Prophet*, the stories *Zirrama* by Jalil Mammadguluzadeh and *Deceived Hope* by Tagi Shahbazi Simurgh, Salman Mumtaz's extensive essay on Nasimi, Hanafi Zeynalli's study of Sheyda, Abbas Sahhat's translation of Alfred de Musset's poem *May Night*, Professor Presman's scholarly notes, Mustafa Guliyev's editorial article, and numerous other contributions. The stylistic and thematic diversity of these publications demonstrates that the journal was not originally conceived as a mere platform for political ideology. Rather, it sought to create an inclusive literary environment accommodating diverse artistic styles, literary movements, and intellectual tendencies. This orientation, however, would gradually change in subsequent years, when Soviet society entered a period in which governance came to be determined less by the rule of law than by directives

imposed "from above." This historical phase was later characterized as an era in which administrative decisions, rather than legal principles, became the dominant mechanism of state and social governance.

Literary scholar, critic, and translator Vilayat Guliyev observes that "the principled and well-conceived direction adopted by the journal from its very inception pleasantly surprised me." In making this assessment, he refers to M. Birgen's evaluation of a series of articles published in the journal between 1923 and 1924, which addressed such issues as Pan-Turkic literature, the common Turkic language, secularism, populism, national identity, democracy, humanism, and universal values in Azerbaijani Turkish literature. According to Birgen, these articles have retained their scholarly significance to the present day precisely because they remained free from artificial ideological constructs and meaningless ideological "isms." Guliyev further emphasizes that the journal *Azerbaijan* was built upon precisely such an intellectual foundation [11, pp. 59–60].

The activities and growing popularity of *Maarif va Madaniyyat* (Education and Culture) created the conditions for bringing together and institutionalizing Azerbaijan's literary community. Literary associations, originally conceived as instruments of ideological governance, ultimately failed to fulfill the expectations placed upon them. Nevertheless, by the time the First Congress of Soviet Writers convened, Azerbaijani delegates—including Jafar Jabbarli, M. K. Alakbarli, Samad Rustam, Mikayil Mushfig, Samad Vurgun, Salman Mumtaz, G. Gantamir, Mehdi Huseyn, Yusif Shirvan, Anvar Nazim, and others—had already united around the journal in pursuit of creating a new Soviet-oriented literature and organizing writers committed to promoting the Soviet political system. Published under the title *Inqilab va Madaniyyat* (Revolution and Culture) from 1927 onward, the journal was officially designated the organ of the Azerbaijan Writers' Union at the First Congress of Azerbaijani Writers on 13 June 1934.

Toward the end of the 1920s, the socio-pedagogical mission of *Maarif va Madaniyyat* gradually gave way to an integrative function, transforming the journal into one of the instruments of the Soviet administrative and ideological apparatus. This transformation was not unique to the journal itself but reflected a broader effort to adapt political, moral, and ethical values to the ideological technologies employed in promoting Soviet thought and the Soviet way of life. Such developments were hardly exceptional. Even today, humanitarian culture, including literature and the arts, often functions in support of official state policy, including in democratic societies. The fun-

damental issue, however, is education and enlightenment, a function explicitly embedded in the journal's title and one that consistently remained central to its activities. It should also be noted that creative intellectuals serving the mass dissemination of political ideology frequently internalized officially prescribed ideas as their own convictions and actively participated in promoting and consolidating them. At certain critical moments in a nation's history, however, the positions of political authorities and society not only converge but propaganda itself comes to precede politics in shaping public consciousness.

Following the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War in June 1941, the journal was published under the title *Vatan Uğrunda* (For the Motherland). Between June 1941 and Issue No. 4 of 1946, a total of twenty-eight issues appeared under this title. Beginning with Issue No. 5 of 1946 and continuing through all twelve issues of 1952, the journal resumed publication as *Inqilab va Madaniyyat* (Revolution and Culture). In 1953, upon the proposal of Samad Vurgun, it assumed its current title, *Azerbaijan*.

At this point, it is appropriate to provide brief information concerning other periodicals published under the title *Azerbaijan*. The first journal bearing this name appeared in Tabriz between 1906 and 1907 under the influence of Molla Nasreddin. Another journal entitled *Azerbaijan* began publication in Ankara in 1952 as the official publication of the Azerbaijan Cultural Association (*Azərbaycan Kültür Dərnəyi*). It was later renamed *Azerbaijan Turkish Cultural Review* (*Azərbaycan Türk Kültür Dərgisi*) and continues to be published today. In addition, the newspaper *Azerbaijan*, which served as the official organ of the Central Committee of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party, was edited by the poet Hokuma Billuri between 1956 and 1960.

As one memoir recalls:

"Early in the morning, aircraft flying at low altitude dropped fresh issues of a newspaper entitled *Azerbaijan*, printed in the Azerbaijani language using the Latin alphabet, into the trenches near Berlin. These newspapers published the programme of the Musavat Party—unknown to many of the soldiers—as well as the political platform proclaimed by the Government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1918. They also featured patriotic poems by Azerbaijani poets and articles by members of the Azerbaijani Legion exposing the shortcomings of Soviet society, discriminatory policies against non-Russian nationalities within the Soviet Army, acts of brutality, and other inhumane practices" [12, pp. 16–56].

Regardless of the titles under which it appeared throughout its history, the journal *Azerbaijan* remains

an indispensable source for understanding how literature, the national language, culture, and, more broadly, historical memory were preserved within the framework of the Soviet totalitarian ideological system. Despite its successive name changes, the journal, published by the Azerbaijan Writers' Union, has rendered outstanding service to the promotion and development of Azerbaijani literature from its first issue to the present day.

The journal is not merely an essential source for studying the history of Azerbaijani literature and assessing the contemporary literary process, nor is it only a publication that acquaints readers with the finest examples of Azerbaijani artistic thought—including classical and modern literature, folklore, and literary translations. It also constitutes a significant cultural, social, and political phenomenon. Over the course of its century-long existence, Azerbaijan has itself become a literary phenomenon and, in many respects, a distinctive genre. One of its enduring missions has been to cultivate humanistic ideals, contribute to the moral development of society, strengthen the ethical values of its citizens, and promote social harmony and cohesion.

Viewed through the lens of one of the central principles of President Ilham Aliyev's domestic policy—namely, that "the future and sustainable development of the country depend not on natural resources but on the humanitarian factor"—the century-long creative and intellectual trajectory of the journal *Azerbaijan* may be summarized within the following socio-political and socio-cultural framework:

The authors' commitment to the people and their high level of professionalism in relation to the national literary language have ensured the successful representation of national and moral values in the journal. The journal regards the optimal form of national self-expression and self-affirmation as the articulation of ideas rooted in national-cultural and moral content and as the creation of a communicative model capable of transmitting these values to a broader audience. In this position, it remains faithful to its highly democratic principles: "Not competition, but healthy, benevolent partnership and cooperation constitute the foundations upon which the authorial and textual policy of the journal *Azerbaijan* is based, as well as the realization of creative talent's opportunities for self-expression" [1, p. 158].

Initially established on the platform of directing cultural diversity toward humanitarian cooperation by utilizing existing opportunities and available mechanisms, the journal *Maarif va Madaniyyat* (Education and Culture) later underwent transformations reflected in the change of its title-energy

identity into *Inqilab va Madaniyyat* (Revolution and Culture) and *Revolusiya va Kultura* (Revolution and Culture). The well-known 1925 resolution that revealed the true nature of the Party's literary policy in this regard left profound consequences both on Azerbaijani society as a whole and on the fate of the journal itself. Five editors of the journal and dozens of its contributors became victims of political repression.

The second stage in the development of the journal *Azerbaijan* coincided with the aftermath of the policy of repression, the Great Patriotic War, the strengthening of the socialist bloc within the global political and ideological landscape, and the subsequent period when the era of personality cult was replaced by a period of relative "liberalization." The devastating consequences of repression did not remain confined to the 1930s; they left lasting damage to historical memory.

By the 1960s, as the effects of political "liberalization" became increasingly evident, humanitarian thought, art, and literature entered a period of reassessing moral and aesthetic values. Although the traditional socio-cultural environment continued to maintain its influence, the generation of the 1960s found a platform for self-expression in Azerbaijani literary history through the pages of the journal *Azerbaijan*. By introducing talented representatives of this generation in poetry—such as A. Karim, F. Sadig, F. Goca, A. Salahzadeh, V. Samadoghlu, I. Ismayilzadeh, and others—and in prose—including Y. Samadoghlu, M. Ibrahimbeyov, R. Ibrahimbeyov, Anar, Elchin, I. Malikzadeh, and many others—the journal, in essence, brought new literary challenges and aesthetic tendencies to the forefront.

As one scholar notes:

"With their arrival in literature and art, an entire new stage began; a new movement, a school of thought and intellectual perception emerged and established itself, generating new values, principles, perspectives, and aesthetic tastes in literature and artistic thought. Literature seemed to transform itself and be reborn anew" [13, p. 160].

By moving beyond the limitations imposed by the dominant principles of socialist realism and supporting creative literary freedom, the journal created space for independent intellectual tendencies. At this point, it is important to emphasize that in post-independence literary scholarship, particularly in literary criticism, the reassessment of the dominant literary system—socialist realism—has often been conducted through complete rejection, denying its role in the development of literary and cultural thought. It cannot be denied that certain aspects of this system were

distorted by confrontation, discrimination, and one-sided approaches, resulting in serious misinterpretations. However, it is equally true that although the dominance of a single literary method contributed to artistic and aesthetic uniformity, it was precisely during this period that the development of the literary language accelerated. Despite the political division of Azerbaijani geography, artistic thought succeeded in preserving its role as a unifying force. This is confirmed by such phenomena as Southern Azerbaijani poetry and the symbolic significance of the Araz River in Azerbaijani literature. Therefore:

"The damage inflicted by socialist realism on the development of twentieth-century Azerbaijani literature should never be overlooked; at the same time, we must be capable of appreciating the artistic and aesthetic values that were achieved" [4, pp. 145–165].

It would be inaccurate to claim that the literary generation of the 1960s engaged in direct political opposition to the ruling regime. In general, this generation did not present itself as a political opposition force. Rather, attempts to move away from the rigid principles of the established literary order expanded the possibilities of literary freedom. During that period, the journal became the only literary platform that encouraged spiritual revival and directed artistic thought toward the formation of national self-awareness.

The contribution of the journal *Azerbaijan* during the late 1970s and early 1980s deserves particular attention in terms of restoring historical memory, developing national consciousness, and strengthening national identity through examples of prose, drama, and publicistic writing. In various sections such as "Our Name, Our History, Our Destiny," "Literary Memory," "Literary Tragedies," "History: Facts and Assumptions," "Unopened Pages," "From Our Literary Heritage," "Voices from the South," "Our Turkic World," and others, the journal published materials not only by writers and poets but also by intellectuals, scholars, and representatives of various fields of science and culture. These contributors highlighted both global and regional issues and directed public attention toward matters of vital importance for society.

In the mid-1980s, the journal sought to utilize the opportunities created by perestroika and glasnost in the country, address pressing social and ethnocultural issues, and encourage new literary explorations. It was precisely during this period that the publication of a major literary work—writer Yusif Samadoghlu's novel *The Day of the Murder* (*Qətl günü*)—was regarded as a significant event in Azerbaijani literature. The novel demonstrated that Azerbaijani liter-

ature had entered a new qualitative stage of development and, indirectly, expressed a critical attitude toward the established literary order and the ideological foundations of the political system.

Having functioned within different systems of socio-political relations, the journal continues its mission of developing national literature not as a dogmatic principle, but through a creative and dynamic approach. Alongside serving the artistic and aesthetic understanding of its era, it also contributes to strengthening the position and significance of literary and artistic thought of the new millennium within the broader context of world culture. The activities of the journal *Azerbaijan* during the period of independence represent the most distinguished pages in the long and rich history of this literary institution. In the true sense of the word, the journal *Azerbaijan*, by providing extensive space for the finest works of the new historical era across all literary genres, has responsibly contributed to the formation and development of Azerbaijani literature during the independence period [7, pp. 5–8].

A defining characteristic of the independence-era stage in the journal's development has been its activity within an environment of competition among diverse literary and aesthetic platforms. The first years of this period, when society was liberated from socialism and literary-artistic thought moved beyond the boundaries of socialist realism, were largely characterized by a state of uncertainty and transformation. The destructive and negating claims emerging from this atmosphere of chaos became intertwined within society and literary discourse with debates over tradition versus innovation and with calls for the "elimination of the old generation" (R. Kamal). It should be noted that "the desire to critically assimilate and reconsider the values created throughout the entire history of humankind without simply accepting or rejecting them has emerged as one of the defining features of the newest postmodernist conception" [9, pp. 172–174].

Against the background of nihilistic attitudes that sought to establish alternative literary and cultural platforms, as well as intolerance toward previous literary generations, the position of the classical journal *Azerbaijan*—which advocated welcoming innovation within reasonable and intellectually justified limits—remained noteworthy both at that time and today. The journal did not hesitate to accept the label of "conservative" when defending national-cultural and literary-artistic values, particularly when confronted with nihilistic approaches toward classical literary heritage and especially toward significant periods of Azerbaijani literary history. Rather than focusing on

isolated moments, the journal has consistently followed a principle of preserving continuity and unity between different historical and cultural stages:

"Despite political pressures, we are conservative when the achievements of our writers—who made enormous efforts to preserve and sustain the national spirit of our people—are easily dismissed. We are conservative when our beautiful, pure, and refined Azerbaijani language, formed through years of development and refinement, is treated carelessly and when its structure is damaged..." [8, p. 12].

In 2003, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the journal *Azerbaijan*, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a great supporter and patron of literature, National Leader Heydar Aliyev, highly praised the journal's activities in his congratulatory letter marking "an important event for the history of our literature." Emphasizing the journal's dedication to modern and classical Azerbaijani literature, he also highlighted its role in regularly introducing Azerbaijani readers to distinguished representatives of world literature:

"Critical writings reflecting the literary process, scholarly research, publicistic works, and materials related to art have also occupied a significant place on its pages. All of this has transformed the journal *Azerbaijan* into a mirror of our literature since the very day of its establishment... Having fully reflected the literary problems of the Soviet period, which has now become history, the journal continues to function today as a mirror of the literary process" [5, p. 4].

It should once again be emphasized that the importance of the publication as a significant source for studying literary history is also determined by the fact that the creative searches, achievements, and even deviations of the literary generations of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been represented on its pages in all their diversity and polyphony. These factors have also determined the necessity of conducting scholarly research on the journal's activities as a creative institution, compiling its bibliography, and introducing it as an elective course in university programs in philology and journalism.

Conclusions. Thus, even a brief overview of the journal's history demonstrates that the history of *Azerbaijan* is, in its entirety, the history of Azerbaijani literature and culture of the twentieth century. Despite being published under different titles—*Maarif va Madaniyyat* (Education and Culture), *Inqilab va Madaniyyat* (Revolution and Culture), and eventually *Azerbaijan*—within the framework of the seventy-year Soviet totalitarian regime, its contribution to preserving national literature, the Azerbaijani language, and ethnocultural memory remains undeniable.

Throughout this period, Azerbaijan played an irreplaceable role in protecting the literary language and bringing together literary forces. Despite severe censorship, the destructive impact of repression, ideological restrictions, and prohibitions, the journal remained one of the principal spiritual “refuges” of Azerbaijani literature.

During the years of independence, the journal Azerbaijan has become an integral part of the history of national literature. It has sought to maintain

an objective scholarly approach toward Azerbaijani Soviet literature and its creators, the contradictions of socialist realism, and the analysis of these contradictions. By continuing to respond sensitively to innovations in Azerbaijani literature and by reflecting the development of the contemporary literary process, the journal remains an influential literary institution that documents, evaluates, and contributes to the ongoing evolution of Azerbaijani literary life.

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