

Sustainable Path to Perfection: 100 Years of the National Library of Azerbaijan Named after M.F. Akhundzade

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Abstract

In this article, dedicated to the anniversary of the National Library of Azerbaijan named after M.F. Akhundzade, which is the main library of Azerbaijan, a brief historical excursus of the emergence and development of the library work in the country is first given, and the necessity of the main library (national library) for the country is discussed.

Then, the difficult path of creation of this library and its development are examined step by step, referring to facts and statistics. Here, special attention is paid to the importance of the Library for the development of library work in the country, to the modern era of its activity, and to its transformation into a library that will respond to the challenges of the time.

Scientific research activities also play an important role in the activity of the library. Many employees of the Library are also engaged in scientific research activities, conduct scientific researches on various interesting topics, publish articles, defend dissertations and receive academic degrees. Since 1980, collections of scientific works have been regularly published in the Library, where a large number of interesting scientific articles reflecting the results of the research of the Library's employees are published.

It should also be noted that in accordance with the world librarianship traditions, the Cabinet of Ministers of Republic of Azerbaijan decided on April 15, 2004 that the Republican State Library of Republic of Azerbaijan was given the status of "National library".

Keywords: Azerbaijan, history, Islamic culture, South Caucasus, state library, public library, national library, collection, acquisition, document, censorship, bibliographic activity, bibliographic index, obligatory copy, legal deposit, catalog, bibliographic file, library collector, methodical work, reference service, electronic catalog, digital library, automation system, software, international relations, on line collection

Сталий шлях до досконалості: 100 років Національній бібліотеці Азербайджану імені М.Ф. Ахундзаде

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Анотація

У статті, присвяченій ювілею Національної бібліотеки Азербайджану імені М. Ф. Ахундзаде, яка є головною бібліотекою Азербайджану, вперше дається короткий історичний екскурс виникнення і розвитку бібліотечної справи в країні, а також обговорюється необхідність створення головної бібліотеки (національної бібліотеки) для країни.

Далі крок за кроком розглядається непростий шлях створення цієї бібліотеки та її розвитку, посилаючись на факти та статистику. Тут особлива увага приділяється важливості бібліотеки для розвитку бібліотечної справи в країні, сучасній епосі її діяльності, її перетворенню на бібліотеку, яка відповідатиме на виклики часу.

Важливу роль у діяльності бібліотеки відіграє також науково-дослідна діяльність. Багато співробітників бібліотеки також займаються науково-дослідною діяльністю, проводять наукові дослідження на різні цікаві теми, публікують статті, захищають дисертації та отримують наукові ступені. З 1980 року в бібліотеці регулярно видаються збірники наукових праць, де публікується велика кількість цікавих наукових статей, що відображають результати досліджень співробітників бібліотеки.

Слід також зазначити, що відповідно до світових бібліотечних традицій Кабінет Міністрів Азербайджанської Республіки 15 квітня 2004 року прийняв рішення про надання Республіканській державній бібліотеці Азербайджанської Республіки статусу «Національної бібліотеки».

Ключові слова: Азербайджан, історія, ісламська культура, Південний Кавказ, державна бібліотека, публічна бібліотека, національна бібліотека, колекція, комплектування, документ, цензура, бібліографічна діяльність, бібліографічний покажчик, обов'язковий примірник, обов'язковий примірник, каталог, бібліографічна справа, бібліотечний колекціонер, методична робота, довідкова служба, електронний каталог, електронна бібліотека, система автоматизації, програмне забезпечення, міжнародні зв'язки, он-лайн колекція

Introduction.

Azerbaijan is one of the countries of the Middle East and South Caucasus with an ancient culture. Written monuments, archaeological excavations prove that this country has a rich cultural heritage. Libraries were an integral part of this cultural heritage. In the ancient states (Manna, Media-Atropatena, Caucasian Albania (Agvan) that existed in the territory of Azerbaijan starting from the 1st millennium BC, there was a culture of writing, clerical work, and religious books. Here, book collections were collected and used in palaces, temples, and schools. The south of modern Azerbaijan (in Media and Atropatena) was one of the main centers of fire worship. In the North – Agvan –Caucasian Albania was one of the oldest areas where Christianity spread with writing traditions. This facilitated the wide spread of religious literature in that area, the formation of temple libraries and school libraries under them.

Results.

In the 7th century, the occupation of Atropatena and Caucasian Albania by the Arab caliphate severely affected the book culture and libraries in these areas. Researcher of library work in Azerbaijan A.A. Khalafov pointed out, " In destroying the pre-Islamic writing and alphabet, books and libraries, the Arabs' goals were to unhindered Islamic ideology". (2) However, after some time, with the joint efforts of the peoples of the territory occupied by the Arabs, a new, common Islamic culture began to develop, and Azerbaijan became one of the areas where this common culture emerged and developed.. Dozens of scientists, thinkers, poets, and theologians of Azerbaijan made valuable contributions to this common Islamic culture. The process of development of that shared culture had a strong impact on the development of science, literacy, education, book culture and library work as well as many other areas of life. People who had graduated their widespread schools and madrasas were inclined to books and reading. There are many mosque, school, madrasah and palace libraries, as well as private libraries of individual people both in the south and in the north of the country. Bookmaking and librarianship in the country continued to develop even after the collapse of the Caliphate and the emergence of new, independent states in this area.

After the annexation of the northern part of Azerbaijan to the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 19th century, library work gradually began to acquire a new quality. In this period, in addition to the libraries organized on the basis of Eastern and Islamic traditions, different types of libraries were created based on the canons of European librarianship. In particular, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, were established schools providing purely secular education, other educational institutions, which were different from the madrasahs and schools on Islamic traditions and their libraries. Also were established scientific-technical and professional societies, trade unions, workers' clubs,

charitable societies and business companies with their own libraries.

However, the most important stage of the development of book culture and library work in Northern Azerbaijan began after 1920. At that time, according to the official state political statement of the Soviet government, the abolition of general illiteracy among all age groups of the population, the promotion of political knowledge, the involvement of children in compulsory education, the creation of a vocational education system of various levels and sectoral orientations, the cultural revolution, founding of a large number of newspapers, magazines, scientific and professional periodicals, publishing houses was impossible without reading on a large scale. Therefore, simultaneously with the implementation of all these works, networks of public, school, university, special, scientific, technical, medical, agricultural etc. libraries began to be created.

It should also be noted that, in different historical periods, there were libraries in different cities of Azerbaijan with a large and rich collection of documents and a large contingent of users, unfortunately, none of them survived to our time. Also, until the first quarter of the 20th century, the above-mentioned period of large-scale library construction in the country, there was no library in the country that corresponded to the national library in terms of its functions and status. In this period, one of the constituent parts of the state policy on the comprehensive development of the library system of the Soviet government was the creation of the main state libraries in the union Soviet republics, serving the entire population of that republic, with wide functions. Such a library in Azerbaijan became the Central State Public Library of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic, which was established in 1923 and is the predecessor -the National Library of Azerbaijan named after M. F. Akhundzade which is currently the main library of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

During the hundred years since its establishment, this library has undergone an interesting development and has become one of the most perfect libraries in the region.

Creation and development of the Library.

Discussions on the creation of the State Library of Azerbaijan SSR and subsequent preparatory work were started by the state institutions of the Azerbaijan SSR as early as 1920. Thus, on May 24, 1920, the board of the People's Commissariat of Education of the Azerbaijan SSR adopted a decision on the organization of the Central State Library of the Azerbaijan SSR (Ismayilov, & Khalafova, 2022).

However, the process of organizing the library took a long time. Because of its functions and tasks should be determined, the Statute should be drawn up a building, financial funding should be allocated for it, a staff, a document collection should be formed and other organizational issues should be resolved. At that time, the management of library activity in the country was carried

out by the People's Commissariat of Education, and this state institution repeatedly made various decisions regarding the creation of a new library and implemented organizational measures. Finally, all preparatory work was completed and the Central State Library of the Azerbaijan SSR was opened to the public on May 23, 1923.

When the library was opened, it had only two departments - European literature and Oriental literature and there were 20,441 copies of books in its collection. As for the library's collection, it was primarily composed of 5,000 books received from the collection of the libraries of the Baku branch of the Imperial Technical Society and the Baku Public Assembly, which existed in Baku during the tsarist era. After that, since 1923, obligatory issues (legal deposit) of all books published in Azerbaijan began to be given to the Library, which had a strong impact on the formation of the Library's collection. Later, this collection was significantly enriched by the purchase of books from the Central Library Collector, who also was under the Public Education Commissariat and deals with the acquisition of the collections of the Republic's libraries. In addition, the government of the republic allocated collections for the purchase of books from other cities of the Soviet Union, and books were brought in selectively. As a result of these measures, when the Library was opened, there were already 20,441 copies of books in its collection. It should be noted that only 13 librarians worked in the Library at that time. The library was public-was open to all citizens of the Republic.

In the following years, there were constant innovations in all directions of the Library's activity - its financial and technical base was improved, the amount of documents in its collection increased, the library's personnel resources were enriched, and the special weight of specialists with professional education in its volume increased, most importantly, the functions of the library expanded, the range of services provided by it expanded, and its quality of services was increasing. For example, since 1923, the Library began to buy obligatory copies of books published in Azerbaijan, and since 1924 in the USSR. The library's obligatory copies receiving ensured that its collection was completed consistently and according to plan. The collection of the library was also increased due to nationalization of some book collection and gifts of a number of book collections in the country. In this way, a considerable amount of valuable and rare books entered the Library collection, and a separate collection section was created to organize their storage and use. The state was also taking measures to increase the budget of the library. This is confirmed by the fact that its budget increased every year, reaching 21,680 manats in 1925-1926, 25,360 manats in 1926-1927, 3,544 manats in 1927-1928, 56,000 manats in 1930 and it was 89,763 manats 1931 (Ismayilov, & Khalafova, 2022).

The increase in the volume of the library's work required the development of its labor resources and

structure. Thus, five years after the Library's operation, the number of employees increased from 13 to 28 people.

As for the development of the Library's document collection, there were 20,441 books in 1923, 51,600 books in 1925, and more than 400,000 books in 1930. The Library collection increased 20 times in just 7 years.

The collection of the Library was enriched not only with books, but also with newspapers and magazines. The Library regularly received all central and regional newspapers published in the Republic and all central newspapers published in the USSR. The magazine collection of the Library was also quite rich. Magazines published not only in Azerbaijan, but also in the USSR and beyond were collected here (Mammadov, & Ismayilov, 2023).

As for the structure of the Library, its structure in 1928 was more complex than when it was created. The main factor taken into account during the formation of the structure was the composition of the collection. In the mentioned year, the structure of the Library was as follows:

1. Eastern department - documents in the languages of Azeri, Turkish, Tatar, Kazakh, Georgian, Jewish and other eastern peoples were stored in the department.
2. Russian department - Literature in Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian languages was collected in the department.
3. Department of Western Europe - Literature in German, French, English, and Polish languages was preserved in the department.
4. Users' service department - The department served users in the reading room, provided loan service to government and scientific departments for use outside the library, and provided reference-bibliography service to help users in searching for literature.
5. Bibliographic bureau - the bureau organized catalogs and compiled bibliographic indexes.
6. Special department - The department kept rare books, as well as books forbidden for the general usership by Soviet censorship. Publications and other documents collected here were used only with the permission of the library management.

Enrichment of the Library's collection, improvement of service quality led to an increase in the number of users using it. So, if in the first year of the Library's activity, 1000 users used it, in 1925 this number was 3193 users, and in 1930 it was 5638 users. Regarding the issue of books, which was the main indicator of the activity of the Library in the 1930s, in 1923, when the Library was established, the issue of books in 1930 was 1200 copies. Also book circulation increased more than 50 times and amounted to 60,954 copies.

The period in question was characterized by active methods of promoting education, books and reading in all educational and cultural institutions, including libraries. This trend was noticeable in the activities of the Library in the 1930s. Thus, book exhibitions, users' conferences,

meetings with writers, literary and artistic evenings, etc. are held in the reading room of the Library for different groups of users. For example, during the years 1929-1930, 30 exhibitions, 32 thematic exhibitions, 11 literary-artistic evenings were held in the Library. 48 book reviews were organized (Ismayilov, 2022).

The end of the 1930s was also characterized by the fact that the Library gradually became a scientific-methodical and bibliographic center for all libraries in the country. Examples of bibliographic materials compiled and published in the Library at that time are "Books on the East", "Peoples of the Caucasus", "Oriental Art", "Women's Movement in the East", etc. can be shown.

The expansion and improvement of all areas of the Library's activity continued in the 40s of the 20th century. If we pay attention to the increase in the number of users of the Library, we will see that in 1935, the Library served 6,585 people, and in 1940, it served 8,800 people. In addition to providing Library documents to users in subscription and reading rooms, the Library introduced innovations such as service through inter-library loan and by branches. In 1940, more than 800 users were served through Interlibrary loan. In the 1940s, the increase in the number of users in the Republican Library and effective service to users had a significant impact on the rapid increase in book charging. If in 1930, the Library gave 60,554 copies of books to users, in 1938, this indicator reached 77,173 copies, and in 1940, it reached 150,000 copies.

As for the number of employees of the Library during this period, in 1935 this number reached 37, in 1939 it reached 57 and in 1940 it reached 77 people. Of the last number, 57 people were library specialists and 20 people were technical workers. The library specialists consisted of chief librarians, bibliographers, senior librarians and ordinary librarians. (Tahirov, 2009). Attention was also paid to the professional training of library staff. Some of them were sent to advanced training courses in Moscow, and others in Baku.

At that time, the Library Council had a great role in the management of the Library. In addition to the Library's own experts, the staff of Azrtbaijan State University, People's Education Commissariat, other institutions, as well as the party organization were represented in the Library Council. The Council monitored all aspects of the Library's activity, gave recommendations for its improvement, elimination of the difficulties that arose, and the identified deficiencies.

In the 40s, the consistent and systematic increase of the Library's collection gave its positive result. Thus, in 1933, the Union-level state institutions made a decision that book chambers operating in the Union should send obligatory copies of all books published in the languages of the peoples of the USSR to the central state libraries (including the Azerbaijan State Library) of all union republics. In addition, other measures were taken to enrich

the Library's collection. As a result, during this period, the Library's collection increased significantly. So, if in 1933 the Library collection was 260 thousand copies, in 1935 there were 388 thousand copies, in 1937 540 600 copies, and in 1940 there were 612 207 copies. Due to the fact that the majority of this books and periodicals was published in various places of the USSR, the majority of the collection was made up of editions in the Russian language (Ismayilov, & Khalafova, 2022).

In the 1940s, the promotion of the library's activities, the development of all fields of economy, science and technology in the country led to an increase in the number of users of Library and an expansion of the range of services provided. For this reason, the process of increasing the number of users of the Library was observed in these years. For example, if in 1933 there were 5657 users of the Library, in 1935 this indicator reached 6526. At that time, one of the tasks facing the Library was to expand the range and quality of services provided to users.

In the 40s, the structure of the Library was improved, and at that time its structure was formed in the following way:

- Acquisition department;
- Cataloging and classification department;
- Service Department, Loan and reading room;
- KA A and doublet collection;
- Department of mass affairs;
- Inquiry-bibliography department;
- Administration, economic department and accounting.

During this period, the official institutions of the republic constantly monitored the activities of the Library, checked the state of its work and took necessary measures based on this. For example, in 1935, by the instruction of the Council of People's Commissars of Azerbaijan, the Education Commissariat made a decision to study the activities of the State Library, and a special Commission was created for this purpose. After some time, it finished its work and made some remarks about the work of the Library. For example, the management of the Library was weak, the building of the Library does not ensure its normal operation and it is urgently necessary to build a new building for the library, the personnel composition of the Library was unsatisfactory, the existence of bureaucratic obstacles in the structure of the Library, the considerable delay in the bibliographic processing of the new literature entered into the library and, as a result, the considerable delay in making the new literature available to readers, and therefore the amount of such literature reached 150 thousand copies, the Loan department does not function according to its duties, and that there were serious deficiencies in the arrangement of the book collection (Azərbaycan Respublikasının Dövlət Arxivi, f. 57. siy. 1, iş 23, 26). Following the comments of the commission, the work on elimination of the deficiencies indicated to the Library was started.

The invasion of the USSR by Hitler's Germany on June 22, 1941 had a strong impact on all spheres of life in the all Soviet Union, as well as in Azerbaijan. This influence did not escape the Library.

Another characteristic aspect of the Library's activity during that period was the organization of its branches in Baku city and provinces and providing services to the population living and working in that area. In addition to branches, the Library also organized mobile libraries and book distribution points for the population and wounded soldiers receiving treatment in hospitals in different parts of the country.

In the 1940s, another direction of the Library's activity that attracted attention was the intensification of its methodical activity and the improvement of its quality. In 1936, a new stage in the activity in this direction was the creation of the Library Sciences cabinet at the Library. With the creation of this cabinet, whose main task is methodical management of library work in the republic, the systematic study and generalization of the work experience of republican libraries, the dissemination of advanced work experience, the compilation of methodical letters on librarianship and bibliography and sending them to the libraries of our republic began.

After some time, Office further improved his work, and in a letter it sent to the libraries of the republic, it was indicated that the main directions of its activity were as follows:

1. Conducting scientific-methodical work, documents related to library work preparation;
2. Preparation of programs and textbooks for librarianship schools and courses;
3. Assisting libraries on various issues and bibliographic works;
4. Organization of reports and consultations on the methodology and techniques of library work;
5. Providing assistance to enterprises and organizations in the organization of new libraries and their improvement;
6. Instruction of library staff, provision libraries with methodical materials.

The letter appealed to all the library workers of the republic and asked them to contact the Office, and to contact the Office about the difficulties that have arisen in the work (M.F.Axundov adma Milli Kitabxananın 2006-cı il üçün hesabatı). The Office also organized various term courses for the employees of the republic's libraries.

On June 1, 1939, by the decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR, the Azerbaijan State Library was named after the outstanding thinker, philosopher and dramatist of azeri nation, Mirza Fatali Akhundov (Akhundzade), and from that time the library began to be called the Azerbaijan State Public Library named after M. F. Akhundov (Mammadov, & Ismayilov, 2023).

The consistent development of all aspects of the library's activity was disrupted by Hitler's Germany's

aggression against the USSR. The Azerbaijan SSR also participated closely in that bloody war. At that time, 681,000 citizens of the Republic, which had a population of 3.4 million, participated in the war, and about half of them died. Azerbaijani citizens working on the rear front worked with all their might for victory. If we take into account that approximately 80 percent of the Soviet Union's demand for fuel and technical oils is produced in Azerbaijan, it is possible to correctly assess Azerbaijan's contribution to the victory.

During the Great Patriotic War, the Library reorganized its activities in accordance with the requirements of the war period. People's patriotism education, calling everyone to contribute to the victory, promotion of military knowledge, organization and use of military and technical books and other publications, compilation and publication of military-related bibliographic materials came to the fore in the activities of the Library. The library created small branches, mobile book delivery points, organized exhibitions, bibliographic reviews, other public events, organized reading aloud from newspapers for the seriously wounded, in factories and factories, military commissariats, military schools, and military hospitals established in Baku. For example, during the years 1942-1943 alone, more than 200 traveling exhibitions were organized from the National Library to the military hospital (Mammadov, & Ismayilov, 2023).

As a result of the heroism and sacrifice of all the peoples living in the USSR, including the Azerbaijanis, after the defeat of the fascist invaders, restoration and peaceful construction began in the country. This process had a significant positive impact on library work in the country, the signs of which were also reflected in the activities of the Azerbaijan State Public Library.

At the beginning of the post-war period, the most important tasks faced by the Library were the intensification of development of the collection, the improvement of the catalog and bibliographic file system, methodical management of city, district and village libraries and, in general, the reconstruction of the Library's activities in accordance with the conditions of peaceful construction. During the war years, the considerable weakening of book publishing in the country, including in Azerbaijan, had a negative impact on the library's acquisition of Azerbaijani literature. Therefore, at the beginning of the period of peaceful construction, the main task of the Library was to fill the gaps created in the library's collection during the war years, to ensure that it was fully provided with new publications, as well as to improve the catalog-card index system, and to provide methodical guidance to the public libraries of the country. As a result of these works, the Library collection increased from 687,115 copies in 1946 to 920,125 copies in 1950. During 5 years, 176,487 copies of books, 564,904 copies of newspapers, 52,950 copies of magazines, 20,000 copies of clear maps, atlases, fine art materials, standard publications and other documents were received in the Library (Qardaşov, 2018,

p. 29). Among these publications, according to their share, socio-political literature took the first place, and fiction took the next place.

The death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 led to radical changes in the life of the USSR - mass repressions stopped, millions of people were released from prison camps, people who were innocently persecuted were acquitted, democratic freedoms were at least partially restored, censorship of literature and the press was greatly weakened. These processes had an impact on library work in the country, including the activities of the Azerbaijan State Public Library. Many publications stored in the closed collections of the Library by the decision of the censor were made available to users, the library environment became partly democratized.

During this period, the increase in book publishing in the country, the expansion of the publication of periodicals led to the enrichment of the Library collection. Thus, in 1960, the Library had 2,584,424 copies of books, magazines, newspapers, maps, atlases, fine art materials, as well as various types of technical documents. In this period, the volume of obligatory copies received from the Library Collector was observed to increase (Azərbaycan Respublikasının Dövlət Arxivi, f. 57. siy. 1, iş 23, 26). The Library was not satisfied with the enrichment of the collection only by means of obligatory (deposit) copies, and taking into account the needs of the users, it bought additional copies of a number of publications.

During this period, a certain stability is observed in the number of users of the Library. Statistics show that the Library served 5,612 users in 1946, 5,710 in 1947, 5,674 in 1948, 5,190 in 1949, and 5,480 in 1950 (İsmayilov, 2022). In that period, the bibliographic activity in the Library was quite intense. In 1949-1950, the Library provided users with 80,000 oral and 150,000 written bibliographic references, and compiled a bibliographic lists of 180 titles.

In 1948, an important event occurred in the bibliographic activity of the Library. From that year, it started compiling the information bulletin of the new arrived literature included in the collection (İsmayilov, 2022). In the next period, the process of increase in the number of users of the Library began. Thus, in 1952, this number increased to 6,627, in 1954 to 7,764, and in 1958 to 7,868. The analysis shows that the main position among the users was occupied by students of higher and secondary specialized schools, and then specialists working in production industry. As for the distribution of literature given to users by science and fields of activity, for example, in 1959, the most given to users in the Library was scientific-technical (35,210 copies), then social-political (31,773 copies) and natural sciences (30 610 copies) literature. (Tahirov, 2013).

At this point, it is necessary to pay some detailed attention to the issue of providing the Library with qualified personnel. So, in the first period of its activity, almost all of the Library employees were people who

received specialized education in other fields. Later, the staff of the Library included a small number of librarians educated in Russia. Starting from 1934, applicants began to be sent from Azerbaijan to study at the librarian education institutes located in the Russian cities of Moscow and Leningrad. The first educational institution where librarians were trained in the republic was the Baku Library Technicum, which started operating in 1938. Education here was 3 years. Along with this, a one-year professional development course for library workers was also started at the Technicum. (İsmayilov, 1998, p. 7; p. 20.)

In Azerbaijan, university-level higher professional education in the librarian-bibliographer specialty began at Azerbaijan State University (now Baku State University) in 1947 with the establishment of the Department of Librarianship under the School of Philology. Students studied here full time for 5 years. In 1955, a part-time Azerbaijani branch was established in this Department. In 1958, the Department was included in the School of Oriental Studies. In 1959, a part-time Russian department was created here. In August 1962, Librarianship became a independent school of the University (İsmayilov, 2005, p. 6.). Those educational institutions trained personnel for the State Library of Azerbaijan too, like other libraries of the country. It should be noted that every educational institution is still functioning.

From 2023, the School of Librarianship and Information of Baku State University will be called Document and Information Management School, and the former Library Technicum will be called Baku Humanitarian College. Currently, librarian specialists are trained in a number of other universities and colleges in Azerbaijan, apart from the mentioned educational institutions.

The development of the Library, the improvement of its work, the expansion of the types of services went in parallel with the improvement of its structure. In 1959, the structure of the Library consisted of the 14 departments. Among them are Service to Users (Loan), Mass Works, Acquisition, Processing and Cataloging of Literature, Group of Processing of Literature, Reference-bibliography, Library collection, Patents and standards, Azerbaijani collection, Foreign literature, Librarianship and recommended bibliography, etc. This structure allows to create a notion about the main directions of the Library's activity. For those who are not familiar with the organization of library activities in the Soviet era, let us explain that at that time, some of the literature stored in a number of scientific and special libraries was not given to general public users from the point of view of censorship and was kept closed in a separate department. For this purpose, there was a "Department of Special Protection of Literature" in the library. The literature in this department could only be used by specialists with particular permission.

It is known that in order for any library to function successfully, all directions of bibliographic activity must

be carried out systematically. From this point of view, the bibliographic activity carried out in the Library in the 60s and 70s can be considered quite perfect.

The most basic direction of the bibliographic activity carried out in the library is the creation of a catalog and bibliographic file system. At the time in question, the Library system of catalogs and bibliographic files included 23 catalogs, for example, alphabetical and systematic catalogs of books in Azerbaijani, Russian, Western European, Eastern languages, and alphabetical catalogs of magazines and serials in those languages, "Azerbaijani book» alphabetical, systematic and chronological catalogs of the archival collection, alphabetical catalog of journals of that collection, catalogs of patents and standards, catalog of musical records publications, catalog of maps, etc.

As components of the bibliographic file system, the general (main) bibliographic file, "Azerbaijan Studies" bibliographic file, bibliographic file of reviews, personal bibliographic file, and bibliographic file of autoabstract of dissertations of can be shown separately in Azerbaijani and Russian languages. In addition to the above, the Library's catalog- bibliographic file system includes subject bibliographic files dedicated to current issues, catalogs and bibliographic file of the auxiliary collection, accounting bibliographic file of newspapers and other materials, etc. were created, which were widely used both in the internal activities of the Library and in the service process (Azərbaycan Respublikasının Dövlət Arxivi, f. 57. siy. 1, iş 26, s.55-57).

Another important direction of the library's bibliographic activity was the compilation and publication of bibliographic indexes of various types, genres, intended for users. Some of them were recommendations for specialists working in various fields of the economy, mainly in agriculture, which aimed to familiarize the specialists of those fields with the literature on new work methods and technologies in that field. Other directional indexes recommended relevant literature to provide users with political knowledge, introduce them to the policies of the political party ruling the country, and assist in moral and political education. However, the most compiled in the Library were bibliographic indexes for fiction and literary studies. Here, users were recommended books on various topics, genres, works of individual poets and writers, and sources published in periodicals. Another reason for giving priority to the topics of fiction, literary studies and arts in the creation of bibliographic indexes in the library was that. republican libraries coordinated their work in the field of creating bibliographic indexes and specialization was carried out. Due to that specialization, the Republican State Library was considered the main library for creating bibliographic indexes on fiction, literary studies and arts. Another direction in the field of creating bibliographic indexes in the Library during the period we are talking about was the compilation and publication of materials that provide information about its

collection and the new literature arrived in this collection.

In this period, the most important aspects of the bibliographic activities of the Library were providing various types of bibliographic services to the users. The bibliographic service provided on the largest scale was the inquiry bibliography service, which was handled by a special Reference-bibliography department in the Library. Within the framework of this service, the users who come to the Library are mostly provided with subject bibliographic references (i.e., which documents are in the Library's collection on the topic of interest to the user), as well as address references (about which part of the library's collection, in which department stored the document, or in which library of the city stored the document needed by the user can be found if it is not available in the Library) bibliographic information) and bibliographic clarification references (identification of the exact name, title or other bibliographic element of the publication of interest to the user) were provided.

Methodical assistance to users, promotion of library and bibliographic knowledge, education, book promotion, etc. various users' conferences, literary and artistic evenings, literature exhibitions on topics, exhibitions of new books, book discussions and reports on various topics were organized.

Since its inception, the library has served as a methodical center for the public libraries of the country, and this activity continues even now. In order to fulfill this task, the Library prepares methodical publications for all public libraries of the republic, conducts trainings, sessions, seminars, consultations, meetings for the employees of those libraries, prepares answers to methodical questions from the libraries, and other works in this direction were carried out. The Library was the main institution in the republic where secondary and higher librarianship students had practical experience and acquired practical skills.

One of the most important events in the history of the Library took place in 1960. So, if the Library was located before in narrow buildings that were built for different purposes in earlier times and did not meet the requirements of the library, from the day of its operation until 1960. In this year, a new building specially designed and built for this Library was inaugurated in the city center. It should be noted that this was the first building built specifically for a large library in Azerbaijan. This magnificent building has a large number of general and specialized reading rooms, space for catalog system, staff offices, meeting hall, etc. By the way, the Library is still located in the same building.

The library successfully continued its intensive activity in the last quarter of the 20th century too. For example, if we refer to the results of 1974 as an example of the mid-eighties regarding the development of the Library's collection, we will see that at that time the Library's acquisition was carried out mainly on the basis of four sources. These consisted of paid mandatory copies,

control obligatory copies of republican publishers, additional acquisition of general union and republican publications and enrichment of the collection by means of exchange collection. Using these acquisition channels, 139,034 copies of documents were added to the Library's collection in 1974, and as a result, the total volume of the collection was 3,168,448 copies. During the year, the Library had 29,435 users, to whom 989,414 copies of documents were given. The mentioned parameters were 122 133 copies, 3 834 910 copies, 28 109 people and 1 340 634 copies in 1977, and 113 817 copies 3 311 510 copies, 32 516 people and 1 156 944 copies in 1980 (M.F.Axundov adma Milli Kitabxananın 1930-1935-ci illər üçün hesabatı).

The stable activity of the library in all directions continued until approximately 1987. But unfortunately, the socio-political and economic crisis created by M. S. Gorbachev throughout the USSR in the late 1980s, the collapse of the USSR and the disruption of economic relations, followed by the aggression of our separatist and nationalist neighbor against Azerbaijan, the arrival of about a million refugees and forced the emergence of the displaced has had a huge impact on many fields, including publishing, mass communication and library activity. Such negative factors did not escape the State Library of Azerbaijan. The traditional acquisition channels of the library were disrupted, the range of books issued by state publishing houses was reduced and the obligatory copy(legal deposit) discipline was broken, while private publishing houses and editors generally refused to submit their published books and periodicals to the Library. In addition, the crisis conditions had a strong negative effect on people's interest in books and reading, as a result, visits to the library and book delivery decreased. Such a crisis situation and stagnation continued until the late 1990s, and then the situation gradually stabilized, the economic situation began to improve, which had a positive effect on the work of the Library as well as in many areas of activity in republic. The acquisition process of the library collection came to order. The participation of the Central Library Collector for the acquisition was restored, publishers and authors began to more strictly fulfill the requirements of the law on obligatory copying, the amount of gifts to the Library increased, the international relations of the Library intensified, which increased the purchase of books and other publications through international exchange. The intensive use of all these acquisition channels made it possible for the library's collection to be steadily increased and renewed. which led to the intensification of the Library's activities.

Library activity in the new millennium.

The new millennium was a significant and productive period in the history of the Library. The revival of the library's activity was manifested in the enrichment of its document collection, as well as the number of users using the Library and the amount of documents provided to them (Ismayilov, & Khalafova, 2022).

For example, during the year 2000, 13,780 copies of literature were acquired in the library collection, and as a result, the total collection volume was 4,482,986 copies. The parameters mentioned are in 2002, 11,848 and 4,495,098 copies, in 2004, 14,230 copies and 4,513,244 copies, in 2006, 15,164 copies and 4,465,442 copies, in 2008, 25,672 copies and 4,508,626 copies, 25,672 copies and 4,508,626 copies in 2008, 25,672 copies and 4,508,626 copies in 2008, 25,672 in 2008 copies and 4,508,626 copies, 22,767 copies and 4,539,598 copies in 2010, 20,045 copies and 4,552,266 copies in 2012, 24,049 copies and 4,568,838 copies in 2014, 2016. There were 24,929 copies and 4,580,862 copies, 22,766 copies and 4,601,066 copies in 2018, 13,435 copies and 4,619,345 copies in 2020, and 13,572 copies and 4,629,442 copies in 2021.

As for the quantitative indicators of the Library's user contingent and the issuance of documents to them, during the year 2000, there were 28,067 users of the library, who were given 791,759 copies of books. The mentioned parameters were 30,487 people and 933,486 copies in 2002, 27,623 people and 713,714 copies in 2004, 34,083 people and 783,949 copies in 2006, 37,185 people and 694,017 copies in 2008, 37,686 people and 738,426 copies in 2010, 36,360 people and 771,023 copies in 2012. In 2014, there were 34,923 people and 874,947 copies, and in 2016, there were 30,058 people and 984,861 copies. In 2018, 21,421 people used the Library in a traditional way. These figures confirm that the Library continues to operate in accordance with its traditions. It should also be noted that after the introduction of the VIRTUA system, which enables the library processes to be automated, many requests of users are fulfilled through computer networks. in large quantities (M.F.Axundov adma Milli Kitabxananın 2000-2021-ci illər üçün hesabatları).

When talking about the activity of the library, it is necessary to pay special attention to the application of new technologies, informatization, automation of the library process, and the use of the Internet. Although such technologies are of great importance for modern libraries, unfortunately, these works started much later in the State Library of Azerbaijan. The first works in the field of application of new technologies in the Library started only in 1998. At that time, the Library was connected to the Internet on the basis of the project "Connecting the State Library to the international Internet network" with the financial assistance of the Eurasian Foundation and the USAID organization, using the technical support of the Information and Telecommunication Scientific Center of the Academy of Sciences. The project envisages not only connecting the Library to the Internet, but also organizing an Internet hall in the Library that can be used by both employees and users, equipping that hall with the necessary equipment and computers, conducting training on using the Internet, and using this hall to provide new types of services to users. After a number of organizational and other tasks were completed, the

project was put into use on July 18, 2000. According to that project, the Library received 1 server, 6 computers, 2 printers, 1 scanner and other equipment, various office equipment and necessary software was provided. In the created Internet room, users can work on computers and scanners, use the printer and the Internet, etc. and other opportunities were created (M.F.Axundov adma Milli Kitabxananın 2000-cı il üçün hesabatı).

Work in the field of application of new information technologies in the Library was continued in the following years. In September 2004, 25 computers, 4 printers, 25 computer desks, 30 reading tables, 80 chairs were given to the Library as part of the European Union aid program to Azerbaijan.

On December 26, 2004, in accordance with the intergovernmental agreement between the governments of Azerbaijan and Japan, this country donated a large number of computers and a number of necessary technical devices to the Library. This equipment allowed microfilms, old-style multimedia documents (gramophone rolls, tape recorders) to be read, used, converted to electronic form, and written to compact discs (M.F.Axundov adma Milli Kitabxananın 2004-cü il üçün hesabatı).

In 2006, another project that helped the technical improvement and computerization of the Library was implemented by NATO. According to the project, the Library was provided with 10 computers, printing and network devices and Library was equipped with a high-speed Internet channel (M.F.Axundov adma Milli Kitabxananın 2006-cı il üçün hesabatı).

The above-mentioned measures can be considered a technical ground for implementation of advanced library information technologies, computerization, informatization in the Library. However, it was clear that one of the main attributes of the modern library is the automation of operations and processes performed here, including the creation of main bibliographic information resource - electronic catalog. Therefore, after providing the Library with the Internet, the issue of creating an electronic catalog came to the agenda as the next logical step. For this, the Library's specialists consulted with the specialists of the Information Resource and Training Center for Libraries (IRTCL) created by the US Embassy in Azerbaijan. As a result, it was decided to purchase the software of the automation system VIRTUA, a product of VTLS Incorporated based in the USA, and a project called "Creation of a machine-readable electronic catalog" was developed for this work. In June 2002, the project was presented to Eurasia Foundation, Open Society Institute Aid Fund and IRTCL organization and received a positive response. Thus, in October 2002, grant agreements with those organizations were approved and practical work began. This system has a number of positive aspects and allows complex automation of many directions of the library's activity. In this system, the MARK 21 communicative format is used for the compilation of electronic bibliographic descriptions.

It took a lot of time and effort to get the VIRTUA system up and running. One of the important components of this work was the creation of a structure capable of performing these processes in order to automate the Library. For this reason, in 2006, a new organizational structure of the Library, capable of carrying out these processes, was developed, approved and the necessary reform was carried out.

After this new structural reform, the "Electronic information service", "Creation of electronic resources", "Automation of library-bibliography processes and information technologies" departments and "Text editing" department were created and started to operate. From February 2006, the "Support for the creation of the electronic catalog" department began to operate. These departments intensively solved the tasks before them and performed the necessary work on the automation of Library processes. At the same time, the website of the Library was created. Along with these works, various educational programs and courses were organized for the Library's specialists to master computer knowledge and learn new work methods (M.F.Axundov adma Milli Kitabxananın 2006-cı il üçün hesabatı).

When the preparations were finished, finally, on May 17, 2006, the official presentation ceremony of the Library's website and electronic catalog (VIRTUA system) was held. In a short period of time, the users of the library began to intensively use the library's bibliographic and full-text resources, order the necessary documents and references both from the Library building and from any geographical location through the Internet (M.F.Axundov adma Milli Kitabxananın 2006-cı il üçün hesabatı).

Using the technical capabilities of the implemented system, a number of public and university libraries of Baku, as well as a number of libraries located in other regions of the republic, included their bibliographic resources reflecting their collections into the system, and as a result, the first union electronic catalog was created in the republic.

The process of enlarging the volume of the Library's electronic catalog and expanding its search capabilities, as well as the introduction of new software, is ongoing. As of August 1, 2023, there are a total of 837,148 bibliographic records in the databases of the Library's electronic catalog. of these, 312,783 bibliographic records are monographic publications, 2,552 bibliographic records are separate periodic and continuous publications, 1,092 bibliographic records are documents in collections, etc. reflects. As for the analytical bibliographic records that describe the content of individual periodicals and serial editions in the library's collection, there are 519,739 such descriptions in the catalog. The main interface of the Library's electronic catalog allows users to search for documents separately by their publication years, format, content, language, place of publication, in which part of the library's collection the document is stored, and finally

by subject, and to determine how many descriptions there are in each category. In addition, the detailed search interface of the electronic catalog allows user to search the document by many parameters (M.F.Axundov adına Milli Kitabxanann 2000-2021-cı illər üçün hesabatları).

After finding the necessary documents through the catalog, users can come to the Library or use internet for order that document. If there is an electronic version of the document, a link to go to that version is placed in the bibliographic description through which user can download this file. If there is no electronic version of the document, the user can order it.

The electronic catalog greatly simplified the process of compiling current and retrospective monographic bibliographic indexes of various types, content and purpose. With the help of the electronic catalog current bibliographic indexes "New books" and "New books on art and culture" and other indexes are compiled and published. By the way, here it would be appropriate to pay attention to the preparation and publication of both bibliographic indexes and other publications of the Library and their representation in the Library's collection. Currently, there are 1,537 bibliographic editions in the Library collection. Among them, the indexes published by the Library itself occupy an important place. For example, in the bibliographic index reflecting its publishing activity during the first 70 years of the Library's existence (1923-1993), bibliographic information is given on 806 titles issued by the library, most of which consisted of bibliographic indexes (İsmayılov, & Sadiqova, 2008). According to our estimates, more than 300 different publications were published in the Library in 1994-2022. Most of them consist of bibliographic tools.

In the Library, intensive work is also being done in the area of compiling Electronic library by scanning and creating an electronic version of the documents in the collection and presenting them to the users through the website of the Library. The first works in this field in the Library started in 2000. In this year, the Baku branch of the Aid Foundation of the Open Society Institute offered republican libraries to create electronic books within the framework of the famous "Gutenberg project", and the State Library joined this work. For this, within the framework of this project, the library selected a small amount of books from the fund, which were later scanned by IRTLS and placed on the site of this organization. But then, from 2002 when the Library received the necessary scanners and software, this work was arranged in the library itself.

In the following years, intensive work in this direction was started after the technical possibility to perform these works was created in the Library, after the librarians acquired the necessary knowledge and skills to perform this work. In the Library, first of all, the books that users use more often, as well as books and other publications that are important for the national cultural heritage, are scanned and placed in the full-text database

of the Library. As a result of intense activity in this field, 11885 names of electronic resources are currently available on the Library's server (M.F.Axundov adına Milli Kitabxanann 2000-2021-cı illər üçün hesabatları).

The library process automation system, other useful software tools and internet technologies developed in the library allow to organize a number of traditional library work methods more efficiently, to apply new innovative work and service methods, and to increase the satisfaction of Library users by meeting their needs more fully.

Another innovative work carried out by the Library is the creation of ten online collections of documents on topics of interest to users, as well as on various historical days, anniversaries, and the lives and activities of famous people. These collections can also be called thematic or personal mini-sites. These collections are structured similar to themed websites. First, the main article on the topic is given here, and then books, articles, chronological information, in some cases, music records publications, photos, and sometimes multimedia files are placed on this topic. Usually, bibliographic lists of other materials related to the topic are also provided in these collections. So far, 79 such collections have been created in the Library. Examples of personal collections include the collection created in connection with the 100th anniversary of the national leader of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev, the collection on the activities of President Ilham Aliyev, the scientist and public figure Aziz Aliyev, the composers Gara Garayev, Fikret Amirova, Emin Sabitoglu and others, the writer and educator Mir Jalal, collections dedicated to scientists Professor Lutfizadey, Gazanfar Pashayev, Abuzar Khalafov, a number of well-known writers, poets, journalists, playwrights and other well-known persons of Azerbaijan can be shown. Thematic collections, such as collections dedicated to the State Independence Day of Azerbaijan, the 44-day war for the liberation of the occupied lands of Azerbaijan, the Khojaly genocide, the 140th anniversary of the Azerbaijani theater, etc., can be shown as examples of collections dedicated to current topics (M.F.Axundov adına Milli Kitabxanann arxiv: Kitabxana Şurasının iclaslarının protokolları, f.1, s.v.1.174). Statistics of the use of such information resources show that these collections are very popular among users.

The Library constantly improves its activities in accordance with the new achievements of the world librarianship practice. For this, close bilateral relations have been established with many national and other libraries of the world.

Conclusions.

Scientific research activities also play an important role in the activity of the library. Many employees of the Library are also engaged in scientific research activities, conduct scientific researches on various interesting topics, publish articles, defend dissertations and receive academic degrees. For example, the director of the Library Mr. Kerim Tahirov is a doctor of philosophy, professor in the

field of librarianship. Since 1980, collections of scientific works have been regularly published in the Library, where a large number of interesting scientific articles reflecting the results of the research of the Library's employees are published.

It should also be noted that in accordance with the world librarianship traditions, the Cabinet of Ministers of Republic of Azerbaijan decided on April 15, 2004 that the Republican State Library of Republic of Azerbaijan was given the status of "National library".

The Library maintains intensive relations with IFLA, the Conference of Directors of National Libraries and the

Conference of European National Libraries, the Eurasian Library Assembly and other organizations, participates in their events, exchanges ideas, and carries out mutually beneficial cooperation. All this allows the Library to further develop and modernize its activities, to fulfill its tasks more effectively.

At the end of the article, we would like to congratulate the employees of the Azerbaijan National Library named after M. F. Akhundzade, as well as all the librarians of the country, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of this admirable library, and wish this professional team new successes in their noble work.

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