

USSR

AZERBAIJAN





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Republic

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Cover: Baku, capital of Azerbaijan

Азербайджан
на английском языке
Цена 52 коп.

BEYOND MAIN CAUCASIAN RANGE

The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic lies southwest of the Main Caucasian range, bordering on Turkey and Iran. On the east Azerbaijan is bounded by the Caspian Sea. Its territory is not large—86.7 thousand square kilometres. The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic includes the Nakhichevan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Region. The Republic has a population of 4.6 million. The capital is Baku.

More than half of Azerbaijan is a mountainous country. The Greater Caucasus in the north, the Lesser Caucasus in the west and the Talysh Mountains in the south hem in the Kura-Araks

lowland on three sides while the fourth, the eastern side, is washed by the sea.

There are 850 rivers in Azerbaijan, but only 67 of them are more than 50 kilometres long and no more than 21 are over 100 kilometres.

The climate is as varied as its relief map. While the sea at the windswept coast in the north is often frozen over, in the south, at Lenkoran, there is a realm of perennial green and humid subtropics. There are almost all thermal zones, with an annual mean temperature of from 15°C to 0° and colder, and there are eight varieties of climate on the small territory of Azerbaijan.

In the Greater and Lesser Caucasus zones, forests of beech, hornbeam and oak grow side by side with subalpine and alpine grassland. The woods are inhabited by bears, roes, wild boars, badgers, mountain goats, and Caucasian deer while the leopard and linx are to be found in Talysh mountain forests. The foothills and lowlands, including the Apsheron Peninsula, look altogether different, having semi-steppe and semi-desert vegetation, nut and fruit trees, grapes, saffron, figs and olives.

Azerbaijan possesses immense mineral riches, the principal one being oil. The latter is found in the Apsheron Peninsula, the Kura-Araks lowland and the Caspian bed. Not far away are deposits of natural gas. The largest Transcaucasian iron ore workings are situated in Azerbaijan. Major ore deposits are in the Lesser Caucasus Region, at Kedabek, Dashkasan, Zaglik and Chiragidzor. Other natural riches that are mined in Azerbaijan today are alunite, co-

balt, barite, copper ores, copper, marble, pyrite, manganese, pearl-stone, rock salt, to mention just a few.

Azerbaijan is famed for its mineral springs. In curative effect, the Istisu (Hot Water) springs approximate the well-known waters of Karlovy Vary (Czechoslovakia). Equally effective are the therapeutic mud and sulphur springs of Apshe-ron. In the foothills of the northeastern slope of the Lesser Caucasus there are unique deposits of curative oil (naphthalan).

Of Soviet Azerbaijan's 4.6 million inhabitants, 70 per cent are Azerbaijanians, 14 per cent are Russians and 12 per cent are Armenians. There are also Lezghians, Georgians, Tatars, Jews and other nationalities.

In ancient times, the peoples that inhabited the present territory of Azerbaijan spoke Azerbaijanian, Aran and other native languages. Long contact with Turkic-speaking tribes which settled on the territory of Azerbaijan in the course of military conquests caused a gradual obliteration of the native languages, many of whose elements became components of early medieval Azerbaijanian.

Today, most Azerbaijanians wear modern European clothes supplemented, however, by some national touches.

The national costume here was distinguished by a rich colour scheme, in which red and yellow predominated, and by gold and silver ornaments worn with it.

Female dress consisted of a very full skirt covering the ankles and made of brocade, velvet, silk or sateen, depending on the wearer's purse

and the purpose for which it was worn. The skirt was topped by a loose blouse, mostly silk, over which they wore an *arkhalyk*, a waist-hugging long jacket of brocade, velvet or broadcloth.

Shoes with pointed upturned toes and solid iron-shod heels matched the costume. Over everything they slipped the *yashmak*, a large piece of black or checkered fabric, covering the whole figure and leaving only the eyes visible.

Men wore a *chukha*—something like the long-waisted Circassian coat—with the sleeves worn over the arms or thrown back. The *chukha* was ornamented with *gazyri*, strips of cartridge-holders, sewn on both sides just below the collar-bones and trimmed with gold and silver braid. Men also wore an *arkhalyk* lined with satin, strong silk, broadcloth or sateen. It was tight-fitting on top, with ample gathers below the waist and was worn with a leather belt or sash.

Azerbaijani customs are no less individual than their national dress. Most of these customs, often accompanied with ceremonial rites, have come down from hoary antiquity.

Like all Caucasian peoples, Azerbaijanians are uncommonly hospitable.

Another characteristic feature inherited from the past is reverential regard for the elders. Before the Revolution, that took the form of unquestioning obedience. Today the young consult their elders and respect their opinion, but they do not follow it slavishly.

Private life, too, has undergone some radical changes. Despotic power of the male both in the family and society, the deprived position of

women and children had to give way to an entirely new mode of life, one of equality of all members of the new socialist family.

PROGRESS THROUGH AGES

Archaeological excavations on the territory of the Republic indicate that primitive man inhabited Azerbaijan as early as the Old Stone Age (Palaeolithic). Here, the Bronze Age set in approximately three thousand years before our era.

In the 9th-7th centuries B.C. two of the first slave-owning states developed on the present territory of Azerbaijan. They were Manna and Media.

The history of Azerbaijan since that remote time until the day it became part of Russia had been one of incessant struggle against foreign oppressors. Many times enemy hordes invaded the country destroying its cities, plundering its wealth and ruthlessly exploiting its people. Any attempts to resist were summarily crushed.

Assyrians, Romans, Persians, Arabs, Mongolians, Turks came down on the country, bringing death and ruin. To this was added the oppression of local rulers.

Land was in the hands of the nobility—the *khans, beks, sultans, agalars* and the higher clergy. Appropriating the fruits of the peasants' and artisans' labour, feudal lords and merchants carried on a lively trade with other countries.

Numerous sheep and cattle grazed on the grassy slopes of the Caucasus Mountains. Cul-

tivation of mulberry trees permitted intensive silkworm breeding. There was good reason why the famous "Shirvan" silk was so highly prized both in the East and in Europe. Expert craftsmen produced farming implements, grain mortars, crockery and copper tableware, carpets, cotton fabrics, weapons, silk-weaving looms, and very many other wares.

Azerbaijan's riches were a constant temptation for greedy eyes. The history of the Azerbaijan people is one of their struggle for independence.

The struggle against foreign oppressors and local feudal lords produced valiant popular heroes—Djavanshir, Babek, Ker-ogly and others. They lived in different epochs, centuries apart, but were all guided by a common aim, the freedom of their people, the independence of Azerbaijan.

The 17th-18th centuries were perhaps the most difficult for the people of Azerbaijan. The Turkish and then the Persian invasions, the incessant feudal strife, the shifting of world trade routes to the south all combined to imperil the economic and cultural progress of the country and all of Transcaucasia.

The threat of fresh foreign invasions at the beginning of the 19th century induced the Kuba, Talysh and Baku Khans to petition to become Russian subjects. In 1804-06, the Khanates of Karabakh, Sheka, Gyandja, Shirvan, Derbent, Kuba and Baku, and in 1809 also the Khanate of Talysh, were incorporated in Russia.

Azerbaijanians gave active support to Russian troops. Mounted troops formed at Kazakh,

Sheka, Shirvan, Karabakh and Shamkhor were entrusted by the Russian command with the defence of many strategic points.

During the Russo-Iranian and Russo-Turkish Wars of 1806-13 and 1826-29 Azerbaijani soldiers fighting together with Russian troops displayed great heroism, love of freedom and burning hatred for all those who would encroach on the freedom of their native land.

The famous Azerbaijani 19th-century poet and playwright Mirza Fatali Akhundov said this about the incorporation of Azerbaijan in Russia: "Thanks to the patronage of the Russian state we did away with the endless invasions and plunder by foreign hordes that we knew in the past and have finally achieved peace."

At the same time, tsarism with its militarist and colonialist tendencies sought to exploit the national outskirts and gave all possible support and protection to the feudal regime. Autocratic oppression of tsarism and ruthless exploitation of the peasants by feudal masters, the beks, caused wholesale impoverishment of the rural population. Thousands of ruined peasants left for Baku to try and make a living at the rapidly developing petroleum enterprises.

Towards the end of the 19th and early 20th century capitalism began to develop in Azerbaijan, too. Baku became a major world centre of oil extraction and refining exceeding the United States in the volume of oil extraction, and at that period accounted for over fifty per cent of world oil production. Soon dozens of foreign firms began operations in Baku. Oil-fields, kerosene and lubricant factories and

plant repair shops mushroomed on the rich soil of Apsheron. Oil reservoirs, the first pipelines, oil carriers and tanks were constructed. As the industry grew so did the population of Baku. While at the beginning of the 19th century its population was 5,000 at most, at the beginning of the 20th century it approximated 300,000.

To halt the inexorable advance of the oil enterprises on the city, municipal authorities reserved a vast area for the construction of oil refineries two kilometres off city bounds. That was the beginning of the famous Black Town, an industrial district of Baku. The name was an apt one. There was nothing but grimy walls of factories and forges, an endless succession of factory fences and the streets inundated with sticky black mud, with arabas carrying barrels of oil, or camels and donkeys loaded with sheepskin bags full of oil and kerosene stolidly plodding along. The oilfields looked no different.

Baku became the principal forge and school of the Azerbaijanian working class. The Baku proletariat was multinational at the very outset, made up of members of thirty nationalities even at that time.

The number of workers at the Kedabek copper ore mines and silk-spinning and weaving mills at Nukha and Yelizavetpol (Kirovabad) was also increasing.

The beginning of the 20th century was marked in Azerbaijan by strikes and demonstrations. During those hard years the Azerbaijanian proletariat showed that it had enough strength and stamina to fight tsarist oppression and capitalist exploitation shoulder to shoulder with the

working class of Russia. Workers' confidence in their strength grew with every strike and demonstration. The first general strike of Baku workers in the summer of 1903 was supported by the workers of Tiflis (Tbilisi), Batumi, Poti and other industrial centres of Transcaucasia. It swept the Ukraine and the south of Russia.

This courageous struggle was headed by Bolsheviks. The national programme of the Bolsheviks, their slogan of "the right of nations to self-determination up to and including secession" became a rallying cry of active revolutionary struggle in Azerbaijan.

On October 31, 1917, the Baku Soviet took the power, and the city became the first one in Transcaucasia to proclaim Soviet rule.

By the summer of 1918 when, after a strenuous struggle, Soviet rule was firmly established in Baku, it had spread to a considerable part of Azerbaijanian territory.

The Baku Council of People's Commissars chaired by Stepan Shaumyan became the chief executive body of Soviet government there. The Council included Meshadi Azizbekov, Prokofi Djaparidze, Nariman Narimanov, Ivan Fioletov and others.

The Baku Council immediately began to organise the socialist economy. They nationalised the banks, the oil industry and fisheries, the Caspian merchant marine, the bigger dwelling houses. Later on decrees were issued on socialisation of land in Transcaucasia and Daghestan and on separation of school from the church and introduction of universal free education. The eight-hour day was introduced at factories and

workers' wages were increased.

Meanwhile Azerbaijan was threatened with military intervention. On July 31, 1918, a counter-revolutionary bloc, which had enlisted the aid of British troops, seized power in Baku.

Though the Baku proletariat fought heroically, Soviet rule in Baku was temporarily overthrown. On the night of September 20, 1918, twenty-six Commissars, leaders of the Baku Commune, were shot in the vicinity of Krasnovodsk.

After the fall of Soviet government Azerbaijan was for some time ruled first by Turkish and then British interventionists and their stooges from the counter-revolutionary Mussavat bourgeois-landlord nationalist party, founded in 1911.

It was a grim, gloomy period in the history of Azerbaijan. It lasted until the spring of 1920. All socialist changes effected by the Baku Council of Commissars were annulled; the factories and oilfields were returned to the capitalists and land was returned to the landlords; the eight-hour working day was cancelled. Economic chaos reached unprecedented dimensions. The country was rent by famine and unemployment. During that period oil extraction was reduced by 61.5 per cent compared with 1913. Strikes flared up one after another. In the country-side, armed groups of peasants smashed up the estates, shared out the land and killed the hateful Mussavat officials.

On the night of April 28, 1920, armed detachments of Baku workers overthrew the counter-revolutionary Mussavat government and re-

stored Soviet power. They were aided by units of the 11th Red Army led by Kirov, Ordjonikidze and Mikoyan.

Lenin believed that in conditions of Soviet power the establishment of proper relations between the proletariat of the former sovereign nation and the working people of the national outskirts was the gist of the national question. On September 30, 1920, a treaty was concluded between the RSFSR and the Azerbaijan SSR, which envisaged the unification of defence and economic activities. The treaty of alliance was signed by Lenin and on behalf of the Soviet government of Azerbaijan by Shakhtakhtinsky, the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Minister of the Republic to the RSFSR.

The treaty was based on the recognition of complete equality and independence of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

With the nationalisation of basic industry, transport, the banks and land, the main means of production passed into the hands of the workers and peasants, of the socialist state. In May, 1921, the First Congress of the Soviets of Azerbaijan adopted the Republic's Constitution.

From the very first days of its existence the Azerbaijan SSR acted in close alliance with Soviet Russia and other Soviet Republics. The Transcaucasian Federation, uniting Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia, was formed in March, 1922. Later, the Federation joined the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, formed in December, 1922.

The working people of Azerbaijan restored the ruined economy. The oilfields, factories, mechanical shops were gradually rehabilitated. **In**

1921-25, oil production increased almost twofold. Restoration of agriculture also proceeded rapidly.

During the period of pre-war five-year plans (1928-40) Azerbaijan turned into an advanced socialist republic with a higher standard of living. Unemployment was eliminated, wages and salaries were increased along with the income of the peasants who joined collective farms.

In 1936, in accordance with the new Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the Azerbaijan SSR became a constituent part of the USSR.

During World War II the people of Azerbaijan took up arms to defend their socialist homeland from the fascist invaders.

The Azerbaijan Infantry Division stood like a rock at the gates of the Caucasus. It was called the Taganrog Division in token of its liberation of that city. The Division took part in the liberation of the Ukraine, Moldavia and Poland and in the storming of Berlin. Azerbaijanians fought heroically in Soviet partisan detachments and were members of the Resistance movement in European countries seized by fascists.

For the feats performed in the days of the Great Patriotic War, more than a hundred Azerbaijanians were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

During the period of Soviet rule, the Baku oil-workers acquitted themselves brilliantly supplying the Soviet Army with high-quality fuel. In those grave war years Baku was a veritable arsenal of the Soviet Army.

Azerbaijan has developed into a country with advanced industry and agriculture.

EQUAL AMONG EQUALS

The new Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR, which was adopted in 1937, reflects major changes in the social and economic structure of the Republic.

The political foundation of the Republic are the Soviets of Working People's Deputies while economically it is based on the socialist system of economy and socialist ownership of the means of production, which may take either the form of state ownership or that of cooperative-collective farm ownership.

Like the other fourteen Soviet Union Republics that make up the Soviet Union, Azerbaijan is a sovereign state with its own Constitution, which takes cognizance of the country's individual features. The Republic has the right to secede from the USSR; its territory cannot be altered without its consent; it has the right to enter into direct relations with foreign states, conclude agreements and exchange diplomatic and consular representatives with them; it has its own republican military formations; each of its citizens is a citizen of the USSR.

The organs of state power in villages, towns, districts, the whole of Azerbaijan, as throughout the Soviet Union, are Soviets of Working People's Deputies. They are elected by all citizens of the Republic 18 years of age and over, on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot.

The Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR guarantees the voters the right and opportunity of effective control over the deputies' activities.

Any deputy—regardless of whether he has been elected to the smallest village Soviet or the Supreme Soviet of the Republic—can be recalled by the voters if in their opinion he does not justify the trust they have placed in him. However the long and thorough pre-election discussion of each nominee by the voters makes such cases a rare occurrence.

The highest organ of state power in the Azerbaijan SSR is the Supreme Soviet of the Republic elected for a term of four years by the entire eligible electorate of the Republic. Deputies are elected on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot.

In the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan SSR elected in March, 1967, almost half the deputies—181 persons (47.63 per cent)—are workers and peasants, 123 persons (32.37 per cent) are women, 84 persons (22.11 per cent) are non-Party members. The Supreme Soviet includes deputies of all nationalities inhabiting the Republic.

The Supreme Soviet is the Republic's sole legislative body. It adopts the Constitution of the Republic and amends it; approves the economic plan and the Budget of the Republic; exercises the right of amnesty and pardon of citizens sentenced by the judicial bodies of the Azerbaijan SSR; decides upon the representation of the Republic in its international relations; determines the manner of organising the Republic's military formations.

The Supreme Soviet of the Republic elects its Presidium, which is composed of the Chairman of the Presidium and his deputies, a Secre-

tary and members of the Presidium to direct current work.

The Presidium is accountable for its actions to the Supreme Soviet of the Republic and functions in the period between sessions. The powers of the Presidium are defined by the Constitution of the Republic.

To conduct its sittings the Supreme Soviet of the Republic elects a Chairman and his deputies.

The Supreme Soviet of the Republic forms the supreme executive and administrative organ of state power in the Republic—the Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers is responsible to the Supreme Soviet of the Republic and accountable to it; between sessions it is responsible and accountable to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic.

The Council of Ministers, as formed by the Supreme Soviet, is composed of: the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Deputy Chairmen, Ministers, Chairmen of State Committees and Commissions and heads of other departments of the Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers issues decisions and orders on the basis and in pursuance of the laws in operation in the USSR and the Republic as well as of the decisions and orders of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, and verifies their execution. It coordinates and directs the work of all Republican Ministries and Departments, compiles the economic plan and the State Budget of the Republic and submits them to the Supreme Soviet of the Republic for ap-

proval, directs the work of the regional Soviets of Working People's Deputies, of the Supreme Soviet of the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic and the Regional Soviet of Working People's Deputies of Nagorny Karabakh.

Justice is administered by the Supreme Court of the Azerbaijan SSR and by Regional and People's Courts.

The Supreme Court is elected by the Supreme Soviet of the Republic for five years. Regional Courts are elected by Regional Soviets of Working People's Deputies for the same term.

People's Judges of District (City) People's Courts are elected by the citizens on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot also for five years.

People's Assessors (lay judges) of District or City People's Courts are elected at general meetings of industrial, office and professional workers, and peasants at their place of work or residence and in the case of military men at military units, for a term of two years.

Judges are independent and subject only to the law. The Constitution of Azerbaijan ensures the citizens of the Republic the right to work, rest and leisure, education, freedom of press, assembly and processions.

Radical changes have occurred in the position of Azerbaijanian women. Today they are fully equal and respected members of the family and society.

The Constitution of Azerbaijan—as everywhere in the USSR—accords women equal rights with men in every sphere of economic, public, cultural, social and political activity.

Such ignominious survivals of the past as temporary marriages, the custom forbidding the bride to speak in the presence of her male-in-laws, digging a woman's grave deeper than the grave of a man, regarding the birth of a daughter as a misfortune and buying a bride have been completely eliminated.

Under the Constitution, all citizens of Azerbaijan, like all Soviet citizens in general, are guaranteed full freedom of conscience and religious belief.

Azerbaijan has functioning mosques, Russian and Armenian churches, synagogues, and Molokan and Baptist houses of prayer. Visitors to Azerbaijan and its capital Baku attend worship at local mosques. The central Baku mosque, Gaza Pir, a monument of Moslem architecture, was recently restored and repaired at considerable expense. The funds were provided by the state. The Kirovobad Soviet expended a good deal of money on the restoration of the city's unique dome-topped mosques, also of historical interest.

Like every Soviet Republic, Azerbaijan has its state emblem, flag and anthem.

The emblem of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic is a hammer and sickle symbolising the fraternal unity of the workers and peasants and an oil derrick in the foreground as a token of the country's natural riches and potent industry. These symbols are placed against the background of the rising sun. The edges of the emblem are framed in a garland of cotton bolls and wheat-cars. The emblem is topped by the five-pointed star. The inscription—in Azerbaija-

nian and Russian—suns: "The Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic" and "Workers of All Countries, Unite!"

The two-coloured state flag of the Republic is rectangular in shape. The upper strip, which is three-quarters of the width of the flag, is red and the lower strip is blue. In the top corner near the staff there is a hammer and sickle in gold with a red star encircled in gold above it.

The anthem was composed by Uzeir Gadji-bekov, the well-known Azerbaijanian composer.

The USSR is a federal state. Therefore Union Republics, Azerbaijan among them, have voluntarily made certain activities concerning the country's general development and the common interests of all its peoples and national groups the responsibility of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The USSR protects the sovereign rights of Azerbaijan and all the other Union Republics. The sovereignty of the Union Republics is limited only insofar as stipulated in Article 14 of the Constitution of the USSR. Under this article the jurisdiction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as represented by its supreme organs of state power and administration include:

a) Representation of the USSR in international relations, conclusion, ratification and denunciation of treaties of the USSR with other states, establishment of general procedure governing the relations of the Union Republics with foreign states;

b) Questions of war and peace;

c) Admission of new Republics into the USSR;

d) Control over the observance of the Constitution of the USSR and ensuring conformity of the Constitutions of the Union Republics with the Constitution of the USSR;

e) Approval of changes to boundaries between Union Republics;

f) Approval of the formation of new Autonomous Republics and Autonomous Regions within Union Republics;

g) Organisation of the defence of the USSR, direction of all the Armed Forces of the USSR, formulation of principles guiding the organisation of the military formations of the Union Republics;

h) Foreign trade on the basis of state monopoly;

i) State security;

j) Approval of the economic plans of the USSR;

k) Approval of the consolidated state budget of the USSR and of the report on its implementation; fixing taxes and revenues that go to the Union, Republican and local budgets;

l) Administration of banks, and industrial, agricultural and trading enterprises and institutions under Union jurisdiction; general direction of industry and building under Union-Republican jurisdiction;

- m) Administration of transport and communications of all-Union importance;
- n) Direction of the monetary and credit system;
- o) Organisation of state insurance;
- p) Contracting and granting of loans;
- q) Definition of the basic principles of land tenure and of the use of mineral wealth, forests and waters;
- r) Definition of the basic principles in the sphere of education and public health;
- s) Organisation of a uniform system of economic statistics;
- t) Definition of the fundamentals of labour legislation;
- u) Definition of the fundamentals of legislation on the judicial system and judicial procedure and the fundamentals of civil and criminal legislation;
- v) Legislation on Union citizenship; legislation on rights of foreigners;
- w) Definition of the fundamentals of legislation on marriage and the family;
- x) Promulgation of all-Union acts of amnesty.

For the rest, each Union Republic exercises state power independently.

Equality of the Union Republics is guaranteed by the fact that they all equally take part in administering the affairs of the entire Federation. Each of them has equal representation in:

The Soviet of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR—32 deputies from each of the Union Republics;
The Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which is composed of a Chairman and 15 Deputy Chairmen—one from each Union Republic (traditionally the Chairmen of the Presidiums of the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics are elected to this office), a Secretary and 20 members;
The Council of Ministers of the USSR, which includes *ex officio* Chairmen of the Councils of Ministers of the Union Republics;
The Supreme Court of the USSR, which includes *ex officio* Chairmen of the Supreme Courts of the Union Republics.

Though the Union Republics differ considerably in the extent of their territory, the number and density of population, national composition and other features, none of them enjoys any privileges or exceptional rights with respect to another.

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The Azerbaijan SSR has a potent, highly-developed economy.

Its oil extracting and processing industry, one of the largest in the USSR, the engineering industry, fast developing mining and chemical industries are combined with light and food industries, fisheries and a highly-diversified agriculture.

INDUSTRIALISED REPUBLIC

Despite its singular mineral wealth and natural resources, pre-revolutionary Azerbaijan—with the exception of Baku—had no important industrial enterprises and was an economically backward agrarian colony of tsarist Russia.

Oil extracting and refining constituted 80 per cent of Azerbaijan's total industry.

The rich oil deposits and abundant cheap labour provided high returns on capital investments, as evident, for example, from the soaring profits of the Nobel Brothers Company before World War I. In 1899 the oilfields and refineries in Baku made a net profit of four million roubles, in 1900, it rose to six million and in 1907, reached about 15 million roubles.

Rapacious exploitation of Baku's mineral wealth yielded rocketing profits for other foreign oil magnates.

The years of the imperialist and civil war and Mussavat mismanagement completely undermined the industry of Azerbaijan, poorly developed as it was. By 1920, most mining enterprises had shut down. Cotton-ginning and silk-spinning factories, flour mills and machine shops experienced a shortage of raw material.

Less than three million tons of oil for the whole of 1920 was what the people of Azerbaijan had to start with when Soviet government took over there. In 1966, oil extraction in Azerbaijan reached 21.5 million tons, as against 7.7 million tons produced in 1913.

In recent years alone the production of "black gold" increased by five million tons. By

1970, oil-industry workers intend to increase it up to 23.5 million tons.

The situation in Soviet Russia after the ending of the Civil War was extremely difficult. Industry worked irregularly, there was not enough food, clothing, fuel, electric power; even bread was in short supply. There were no funds, no local specialists, no experience in managing production. The country was badly in need of fuel. Factories stood idle, ships were rusting at their moorings, petrol tanks were long dry, there was no engine oil to be had. But despite this the workers of Moscow, Petrograd, Sormovo worked incessantly to provide the oilfields and factories of Baku with everything needed.

Rotary drills and other drilling equipment kept arriving in Azerbaijan from all parts of the Soviet Union in ever increasing numbers. Well-known Russian scientists and specialists in oil extraction and processing, foremen and workers moved to Baku to help restore and reconstruct the oil industry and train local specialists.

The persevering effort of the Azerbaijan oilworkers combined with selfless daily aid from the working people of other Soviet Republics made for a speedy restoration of the oil industry.

Beginning with the second half of 1922, the oil production began to climb up steadily. In 1922, the first Soviet oilfield, named after Kirov, began producing in the Balakhany-Sabunchi District. Back in 1910, oilfield owners attempted to fill in Bibi Eibat Bay, but the work was stopped soon after commencement. Now it was done. The bay was filled in and a new Sovi-

et oilfield named Ilyich Bay began producing there in 1922-23.

In 1928-29, the oil industry of the Baku District was fully mechanised and equipped for use of electric power. Steam engines were replaced by electric motors and percussion drilling gave way to rotary drilling. The next step was the introduction of the Soviet-invented turbodrill, which sharply raised the efficiency of drilling.

During the period of pre-war five-year plans some 20 more oil deposits were worked. By 1939, newly-developed areas accounted for as much as 84.7 per cent of the aggregate oil production.

Even while the war was in progress Baku oil-workers laboured incessantly to improve extraction methods and refining techniques and ensure an uninterrupted supply of oil products to the front.

In the post-war period the oil extracting and processing industry of the Soviet Union has made mammoth strides. While until then Azerbaijan was one of the main oil sources, after the war the richest deposits of oil and gas were discovered in many other regions of the USSR, above all on the Volga, in Central Asia and in Siberia. Today Azerbaijan accounts for 9.5 per cent of the country's total oil production and 5.6 per cent of gas. The importance of Baku in the country's oil balance, however, is as great as ever. Baku oil is the best in the world. It yields high-octane petrols and almost forty kinds of excellent lubricants.

Here they often call Baku an "oil academy."

It has gained this reputation because of the extraordinary development of oil-extracting and oil-processing technology, which is fully up to world standards, its achievements in petroleum science, and certainly is a splendid school of scientists, engineers and workers, who are known far beyond the Soviet Union.

Baku is the birthplace of many technological innovations and progressive methods. The first turbodrill was developed here, and in 1939, Soviet engineers developed the multi-stage non-reducing turbodrill, introduced extensively in the post-war period. In 1940, the electric drill was first used in Baku.

The first sloping well was drilled in 1943 by the boring expert Aga Neimatulla, an Azerbaijani, who used powerful sectional turbodrills fitted with deflectors. In post-war years they started forced drilling of superdeep wells. The five-kilometre mark is past history for Baku oil-workers. Today they sink holes seven kilometres deep using powerful drilling rigs made in the Urals.

The scientific centres of Azerbaijan do intensive research on boring, oil extraction and processing and further automation and mechanisation of production.

In 1961, Azerbaijani scientists and engineers were awarded a Lenin Prize for the comprehensive development of maritime oil deposits in Azerbaijan. The award, the highest in the Soviet Union, fittingly crowned the almost 13-year effort of the Baku oil-workers, who have set up unique oilfields in the open sea.

It was long known that about a hundred ki-

lometres off the Baku shore, in the vicinity of the dangerous Black Rocks in the Caspian, there were indications of the presence of oil and gas. But probe drilling was only possible when powerful enough equipment had been obtained.

The drillers were lodged in a tiny wooden house, for which there was barely room on the largest of the rocks. The cold wind and waves ran riot. On stormy days, radio was the only means of communication with the mainland. But the drilling of the first hole under the supervision of Mikhail Kaverochkin, the well-known boring expert, went on without interruption. On the night of November 7, 1949, when the drill went a thousand metres deep, oil gushed from the well. The next hole was bored by Kaverochkin's pupil, Kurban Abbasov, a young Azerbaijanian.

Today, less than two decades later, a huge settlement on steel piles, called Neftyanie Kamni (Oil Rocks), has grown up around that first well in the sea.

All that time they built trestle bridges. On them were sited oil derricks, collecting and pumping stations and residential quarters. A special trestle-bridge building crane invented by Shikhmetov, a Baku engineer, enabled construction workers to sink oversize cylindrical piles into the sea bed for more and more trestle bridges and steel foundations—the little islands from which to bore fresh wells.

Today Neftyanie Kamni steel trestle bridges extend for nearly 160 kilometres. And that is not the only place in the Caspian where oil is extracted from the sea bed. The total length of

the trestle bridges equals nearly 250 kilometres.

Neftyanic Kamni is a modern town. The fact that it is suspended above the sea waves does not seem to bother its residents, who live, work, rest and study right there. It is not an easy matter to extract oil even on land, and even more difficult in the sea, especially when that sea is stormy for nearly 250 days a year as the Caspian is. The workers there know from experience how to put out a fire in an oilfield and fend off huge blocks of ice drifting in from the northern Caspian.

The Soviet government shows particular concern for the well-being of marine oil-workers. Their wages are 55 per cent higher than the rate paid to oil-workers on land.

Neftyanic Kamni has libraries, hospitals and out-patient clinics; its palace of culture, clubs, shops and cinemas are always crowded. The evening school and the local branch of the Petroleum Technical High School have hundreds of students. In summertime, the fragrant smell of oleander bushes and roses wafts over the squares and streets. The place looks especially beautiful at night, when the 160 kilometres of trestle bridges are lit up. One can see many people strolling along the streets. Meanwhile work goes on, without stopping.

A continuous stream of oil reaches the Baku factories through pipes laid on the sea bottom. This stream is steadily increasing. At present, nearly 40 per cent of oil extracted in Azerbaijan comes from the sea oilfields. Now they drill wells at a depth of 40 metres, but Azerbaijan's scientists are preparing the blueprints of steel

foundations for wells to be drilled to a depth of 60 metres. Then they will drill down 80-100 metres and more. Special drilling ships, powerful derricks and trestle-bridge building cranes are being designed for the purpose.

Baku and the Apsheron Peninsula are no longer the only place in Azerbaijan where oil and gas are extracted. "Black gold" is also extracted on the banks of the Kura, at Ali-Bairamly, and also near Siazan.

Besides oil, Azerbaijan is known to possess numerous deposits of other important industrial raw materials. But these, too, had remained practically untapped before the Revolution. At the time Soviet power was established in Azerbaijan the only industry it could boast of was a copper smelting plant in Kedabek, a small township, pyrite mines near the village of Chiragidzor, some silk-spinning mills at Nukha and Shusha plus small cotton-ginning, tobacco-processing and wine-making concerns, and modest mechanical shops and flour mills here and there. Azerbaijan had to import all its mechanical equipment and even such prime necessities as matches, glassware and nails.

Today Azerbaijan's twenty-odd industries have over 800 major enterprises.

Azerbaijan is the country's largest oil-engineering centre. The Republic makes boring machines, bore-hole pumps, bore bits and self-propelling boring plant. There is a great demand for Baku equipment both at home and abroad. Soviet turbodrills and electric drills are considered the best well-drilling equipment. Many countries, the United States included, buy them

or acquire the licences to make them.

As a result of overall industrial progress, a number of industries were launched while those already in existence received a powerful boost. The Republic now goes in for non-ferrous and ferrous metallurgy, generates power and produces chemicals, cotton, wool, silk, footwear, fish, tinned goods, wine, meat, oil, butter and confectionery.

Before the Revolution Azerbaijan mainly exported crude oil, kerosene, black oil, raw silk, raw cotton, fruit and fish. Today, there is a long list of exports including nearly 90 different oil products, machine-tools, 150 kinds of equipment for the petroleum industry, steel pipes, bearings, instruments, aluminium, styrene, oil additives, iodine, bromine, synthetic rubber, automobile tyres, cable, cement, mineral fertiliser, silk and woolen fabrics, TV sets, carpets, wines, caviar, and much more.

In Soviet times gross industrial production has increased 55-fold.

Azerbaijan has immense reserves of chemical raw materials such as oil, waste products of oil refineries and above all gas (the reserves are expected to run into trillions of cubic metres). At present high quality butyl rubber and ethyl alcohol are produced from oil gas at the synthetic rubber plant. The Baku tyre-making factory uses Azerbaijanian rubber. A superphosphate plant has been commissioned at Sumgait. Several oil-based chemical plants are going up. They will produce a number of synthetic goods, including fibres. Synthetic wool obtained from oil gases will equal the amount of wool clipped from

a million sheep during a year.

By 1970, the production of gas in Azerbaijan will reach eight thousand million cubic metres.

Intensified construction work required increasing amounts of building materials. Consequently, in 1951, the Karadag cement works, one of the largest in the Soviet Union, was commissioned not far from Baku.

* * *

Power production increased with the development of industry. Under the Lenin plan of electrification (GOELRO), the capacity of Baku power plants was to be raised to 90,000 kw. This target was exceeded back in 1928. Since the Revolution, power production in Azerbaijan has increased 85 times and now exceeds that of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan combined. In per capita power production, the Republic has outpaced such advanced capitalist countries as France, Japan and Italy.

The Kura—the biggest of all Caucasian rivers—rises in Turkey and flows into the Caspian Sea. It crosses Georgia and Azerbaijan. Not far from the village of Mingechaur, the Boz Dag range intersects the river. “Mingechaur” means “Turn back! End of the road.” Undaunted, the Kura cut through the mountain and rushing out on the other side flooded the villages and their fields and orchards, turning as much ground as it could reach into bog.

People built dikes and dams and canals to ward off the river. But, malicious and obstinate,

it went on rotting the soil, making it fit for nothing but mosquitoes.

Meanwhile, the Kura-Araks lowland, not so far away, was parched with thirst. The climate of the lowland, which is bounded on three sides by mountains and on the fourth by the warm Caspian Sea, is like that of the Nile Valley. But its rich soil lay idle for lack of water.

The river had to be subdued at any cost, and turned from being the farmer's enemy into his friend.

Presently, an over 1.5-kilometre long 87-metre high earth dam, one of the biggest in Europe, blocked the river's way through the Mingechar gorge.

Three hundred factories in all parts of the country contributed the equipment and building materials for the construction of the Mingechar hydroelectric station. Leningrad sent in generators and turbines, Zaporozhye and Moscow provided transformers, Krasnovodsk supplied cranes, motors and more transformers were delivered from Baku, cables and motors from Yerevan, and building materials from Georgia.

At the end of 1953, the Mingechar hydroelectric station began to produce current and shortly reached its designed capacity of 357,000 kw. The station is automated and only needs one engineer to run it. A number of enterprises using its electric power have been constructed in the vicinity.

The Mingechar water reservoir permitted irrigation of the arid Kura-Araks lowland; cheap electric power was supplied to the Baku oil di-

strict and other industrial centres, towns and villages in Azerbaijan and its neighbour, Georgia; the Kura became more navigable and could now be relied on, even in summertime, to carry ships all the way from Yevlakh to the Caspian. Dangerous flooding of fields and villages ceased and, last but not least, the boggy marshes, which had spread for nearly 300,000 hectares in the Kura Valley and provided an ideal breeding ground for the malarial mosquito since time immemorial, were drained.

The Ali-Bairamly heat-and-power station was the pilot outdoor electric plant in the USSR. The machinery was mounted in the open and safeguarded from weathering by a special rust-proof finish.

The station was to determine whether bulky, expensive buildings for stations could be dispensed with in the southern regions of the USSR. The project was launched in 1959, and produced its first current in 1961. Its powerful turbines are turned by natural gas from the Karadag deposits.

Despite their huge bulk, the machines of this plant are very easy to control. They are operated from central control panels while the fire-chamber torches and the water level in the boilers can be seen on a television screen.

Until recently the power grids of the three Transcaucasian Republics were separate. To set up a joint Transcaucasian power grid, it was necessary to install new high-voltage lines. The connecting mains were laid over high mountain ranges, down deep canyons, and across turbulent streams. Some of the heavy masts had to be

mounted in spots as high up as 7,500 ft and more above sea level.

The work was completed at the end of 1960. The power stations of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan were linked together, the stations of the Sevan-Rozdan cascade, the Mingechaur station, the Ali-Bairamly heat-and-power plant and the subterranean Ladzhanur hydroelectric station pooling their current. Control operators of the Transcaucasian power grid can channel the current from one Republic to another, to ensure rational utilisation of the power resources of the three Republics and provide enough electric power for industry of Transcaucasia. The joint Transcaucasian power grid has up-to-date high-speed relay protection, automatic equipment and push-button control. Through the Transcaucasia-Donbas power transmission line now underway, the Transcaucasian power grid will soon be joined to the integrated power system of the European part of the USSR.

* * *

The fishing industry occupies an important place in the Republic's economy. It has been practically set up anew in the Soviet period and includes fishing cooperatives as well as state and cooperative enterprises.

There are rich fisheries along the Caspian coast and in the basins of the Kura and other rivers. These contain about 30 kinds of marketable fish. A considerable proportion of the catch are some species of the carp family. Sturgeon is

the most valuable fish caught in the Kura. Azerbaijan produces 450,000 lbs. of sturgeon roe, which is made into caviar.

Like all Soviet Republics, Azerbaijan is intent on attaining the targets of the new, 1966-70 five-year plan, which calls for a still higher rate of development. While industrial production in the Republic increased by 41 per cent during the past five years, now it is to grow by 60 per cent. The chemical and non-ferrous metal industries, machine-building and consumer-goods production will develop at an especially rapid rate. Capital investments in the Republic's economy during the current five-year plan period will amount to nearly 4,000 million roubles, about 60 per cent more than in 1961-65.

Much more attention is to be paid to the industrial development of medium-sized and small towns where new enterprises—a large metallurgical plant, a plastics factory, cement works and light and food industry enterprises—will be built. Under the present five-year plan bigger sums will be spent on the extension and improvement of the Republic's irrigation and drainage systems, while investment in the textile, knitwear, footwear and canning industries will be 3.5 times more than in the previous five-year period.

Achievement of the planned targets will mean a fresh upsurge of industry and agriculture and higher cultural and living standards in the Republic.

NEW AND OLD TOWNS

After his visit to Baku, Henri Barbusse said that if he were asked what most impressed friends and even enemies of Soviet power, he would answer that nowhere was there such a vivid contrast between the happy present and the iniquity, oppression and misery of yesterday as in Baku.

Socialist Baku is a fast-developing modern city. Even before the Revolution it used to be called the industrial oasis of Transcaucasia. Today it is one of the largest industrial centres of the USSR, a centre of the oil-extracting and processing industry. It is the fourth largest city of the Soviet Union (next to Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev) with a population of over 1,200,000.

Air laden with oil gas and dust used to be the curse of Baku before the Revolution. A traveller describing the old Baku mentioned "big, thick flakes of soot falling on the town like black snow."

Now the air in Baku and its environs is so clear that it is hard to believe that oil has been extracted and processed here for decades on end.

It was no easy matter to achieve this. Practically every known method was employed to purify the air in the Apsheron Peninsula. The oil soot was trapped and used as primary raw material for chemical processing. Immaculately clean, cracking plants and tubular units do not pollute the air. The entire technological process is vacuum sealed. You cannot detect the smell even in the immediate vicinity of a plant—it is

as though it were all going on behind glass. Baku factories have been switched over to gas fuel, and there is no smoke even over the power plants. The air in the capital is fragrant with the smell of greenery and flowers.

Baku has become a major Soviet scientific and cultural centre. Among the best-known theatres and concert halls are the Akhundov State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Azizbekov Theatre of Azerbaijan Drama, the Samed Vurgun Theatre of Russian Drama, the Youth Theatre and the Philharmonic Society. There are numerous palaces of culture, clubs and libraries. Visitors throng museums and art shows. Thirteen science, literary and other magazines, 25 newspapers and a multitude of books on a wide range of political and scientific subjects and fiction are available to readers.

During the years of socialist industrialisation many new industrial centres have appeared in Azerbaijan. The number of towns has grown threefold—from 13 to 40. Some of the recently emerged industrial centres, like Mingechaur, Dashkesan and Sumgait, are fairly big.

Sumgait was founded 17 years ago, in the bare arid steppe on the Caspian shore, 40 kilometres from Baku.

The average age of its residents is 26, although life expectancy is by no means shorter here than anywhere else in the Soviet Union (70 years is the average). Educational standards are remarkably high: over fifty per cent of its citizens have either a secondary or higher education and half of the residents are studying.

The town is one of the biggest industrial cen-

tres of Transcaucasia. The Sumgait synthetic rubber plant was the first to start production of ethyl alcohol, the primary raw material for obtaining rubber, plastics and other goods made from oil gases. Sumgait chemists have been able to obtain divinyl directly from gas, skipping the ethyl alcohol stage.

Mineral fertiliser is produced at spacious shops completed in 1963. The annual output of superphosphates here has reached 620,000 tons.

Within the next few years it is planned to expand the production of mineral fertiliser, herbicides, pesticides and the like. Increasing amounts of synthetic fibre, artificial leather and lamsan will also be produced here.

Sumgait is also a metallurgical centre. Its tube rolling mill is one of the largest in the Soviet Union. There is also a large aluminium plant there.

Another new town is Mingeçhaur. It came into being in 1948, in connection with the power plant project. Prior to building the Mingeçhaur hydroelectric station archaeological excavations in the area unearthed numerous historical relics ranging from the Bronze Age (about 3500 B.C.) to the Middle Ages: ancient dwellings, kilns, farming implements, animal husbandry tools, huntsmen's weapons, ornaments, tableware, etc.

Present-day Mingeçhaur has textile mills, a farm machinery plant and a cable-making factory.

Dashkesan, too, is a recent addition. Its thoroughfares and tall buildings are situated at an altitude of 5,000-6,000 ft above sea level. At

first its chief wealth was iron ore. But now they have begun mining alunite here, the raw material from which aluminium is produced. When the Kirovabad aluminium plant is completed, Azerbaijan will produce more aluminium than some advanced European countries.

A visitor to Soviet Azerbaijan is bound to be impressed by the great number of building cranes and building sites he sees in every town and village. New residential quarters that have mushroomed all over the Republic often exceed the area of the old districts. In Soviet times dwelling space in the Republic has increased more than five times. Even so, despite the rapid rate of housing construction, a shortage of homes is still felt in fast-growing Azerbaijanian towns. The high birth-rate attendant rapid growth of population help account for it.

During the current five years (1966-70) another 6.5 million square metres of floor space will be added to the Republic's housing fund. This is 2.3 million square metres more than was built in the previous seven-year period (1959-65). During 1966 alone 322,000 square metres of floor space was constructed in Baku. Another 367,000 square metres will be built in the city during 1967, the anniversary year. The rate of housing construction will be stepped up not only in Baku but in all Azerbaijanian towns and villages.

All over the Republic, they are building modern homes fitted with up-to-date conveniences. Every family stands to receive from the local Soviet a separate flat of one to four rooms, depending on the number of people in the fa-

mily, with central heating, a modern kitchen and a bathroom. Flats are distributed free of charge. The monthly rent and services amount to three to five per cent of the monthly earnings of the head of the family.

In tsarist times, Azerbaijan lacked proper sewerage. The "exceptions" were Baku, Gyan-dja (now Kirovabad), Shemakha and Shusha where there were sewers, which emptied the sewage just as it was into the sea or cesspools. Water supply was no better. It involved a great deal of money and effort to install the necessary plumbing and clear out cesspools and other similar unsanitary arrangements. Proper sewerage was installed in scores of Azerbaijanian towns—in Baku, Kirovabad, Nakhichevan, Stepanakert, Sumgait, Mingechaur, Ali-Bairamly, etc.

Big sums were allotted as well for the construction of water supply systems in towns. In Soviet times 38 Azerbaijanian towns have received running water. Providing water for a large industrial centre like Baku was quite a problem, but it has been solved. While the city's population has quadrupled since 1917, it gets eleven times as much water now as it did then.

FIELDS AND ORCHARDS OF AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijanians have engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry for millennia. Even in remote antiquity, Azerbaijan was famed for its silks and coltons, woolen carpets, grapes, fruit and rice. But right up to the Revolution vestiges of patriarchal relations in agriculture survived.

Crop yields and animal-husbandry productivity were low and unstable. Not infrequently a farm would not make enough to pay the rent and taxes. As a result, farmers were reduced to semi-starvation.

The World War I, foreign intervention and Civil War brought Azerbaijanian agriculture to the brink of catastrophe. The peasants had been ruined and plundered by occupation troops and Mussavatists. During less than two years of their administration, nearly 200,000 hectares of irrigated land remained uncultivated. A large proportion of the cattle were destroyed.

All that was radically changed with the establishment of Soviet power. As one of its first important steps, the Soviet government of Azerbaijan decreed and implemented the confiscation of the land formerly owned by the beks and khans and handed it over to peasants without pay. Thus, 1.3 million hectares of land changed hands. Simultaneously the payment of about six million roubles in gold to the former landowners and the Treasury for plots of land the peasants had been using was cancelled, and rent payment in kind went with it, too.

The first collective farms in the Republic were set up in 1929. There are now 990 of them. Besides collective farms, the Republic has 285 state farms. The supply of agricultural machinery for collective and state farms increases every year. Towards the end of the seven-year plan period the Azerbaijanian country-side had 33,000 tractors.

Azerbaijan is the granary of Transcaucasia. The principal grain crops are wheat, maize, bar-

ley and rice. The main industrial crops are cotton and tobacco.

In the Soviet period, cotton production in the Republic has increased more than five times. Cotton yields here are higher than in such cotton-producing countries as Egypt, India, Turkey and Iran.

Much has been achieved with respect to mechanisation of cotton-picking. There were 2,000 cotton-picking machines in the fields in 1966.

Great changes have come about in other branches of agriculture, too. The production of meat, milk, eggs and wool has increased. Roughly 45,000 hectares of orchards and more than 50,000 hectares of vineyards have been laid out in the past 15 years. In 1966, nine thousand tons of tea-leaves were picked in Azerbaijan.

Irrigation has always been vitally important to Azerbaijanian agriculture. Before the Revolution, however, water, like land, was at the disposal of the landlords—the beks and khans—and was used as a means of ruthless exploitation of the peasants, who had no money to build large irrigation canals, wells, pump-houses or other similar facilities.

In the spring of 1921, Lenin wrote in a letter to the Communists of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Daghestan and the Gortsy Republic: "Irrigation, more than anything else, will transform the land, regenerate it, bury the past and facilitate transition to socialism." This prediction of the founder of the Soviet state has been translated into reality by the people of Azerbaijan with the

aid of the fraternal peoples of other Union Republics.

Before Hitler Germany attacked the USSR, several large canals had been built in Azerbaijan, including the 200-kilometre long Samur-Divichi Canal in the Caspian lowland. During 1920-53, 779 kilometres of embankments were built along the Kura and Araks banks to buttress them against the spring floods and mud flows of mountain rivers which used to be the cause of great distress.

After the war, the construction of irrigation systems was greatly stepped up. The problem of water for the arid steppes of Shirvan and Karabakh was solved by the construction of the Upper-Karabakh and Upper-Shirvan mains. Other major hydrotechnical installations worth mentioning are the Bagramtapa hydroelectric scheme on the Araks, the Mugan Steppe Main Canal, the second section of the Samur-Divichi Canal with the Djeiranbatan reservoir, which provides enough water for the Apsheron Peninsula, Baku and Sumgait. In 1966-70, another 600,000 hectares of irrigated land will become available in Azerbaijan.

But bringing life-giving water to the arid steppe is only one problem Azerbaijanians have to grapple with. Another equally important task is to fight the arch-enemy of farmers in these parts—salt. Rising with water to the upper layers of soil it stifles the plants and turns fertile land into dead steppe. To fight this menace, drainage systems for deflecting salt water have to be laid alongside the irrigation canals. A 4,700-kilometre collecting and drainage network

has been installed in the Kura-Araks lowland, for instance. Sixteen high-capacity pumping stations working round the clock pump out salt water from the fields and pour it out into the Caspian. Thousands of hectares are carefully flushed to rid the soil of excessive salt. Every 24 hours, land reclamation plants pump more than a million cubic metres of salt water into the sea.

The cleansed soil regains its fertility and begins to produce high yields of cotton, wheat and barley.

Much work is also being done to bring water to winter pastures. To supply watering places for the cattle and sheep, hundreds of deep-bored wells and irrigating systems have been provided. The following figures indicate the scope of the work: 37,000 kilometres of irrigation canals, including 7,000 kilometres of mains; 6,000 kilometres of collecting and drainage canals have been built in Soviet Azerbaijan.

Lenkoran, the moderately wide coastal strip of Azerbaijanian subtropics, stretches to the south of the Kura-Araks lowland. It is overgrown with forests and orchards, which thrive in the hot and humid climate. But until recently this bountiful land of pomegranates, figs and myrtle was infested with swamps and tropical malaria. Its marvellous natural wealth was hardly touched.

Lenkoran turned a new page in its history in the thirties when it began developing into another subtropical area of the Soviet Union, second to the Caucasian Black Sea coast. In 1934, the first 30 hectares of tea plantations

were started at the Kirov state farm. Citrus trees were planted at the same time. By 1941, tea, lemons, oranges, figs and pomegranates were established items of produce.

Cattle breeding has also undergone a radical change. While nomads made up approximately 15 per cent of the entire peasant population of the Republic in 1930 they owned three-fourths of the livestock. Every spring since time immemorial Azerbaijanian cattle breeders, taking their families, animals and modest belongings with them, would leave for alpine summer pastures, returning to their winter homes below late autumn. Pastures used to be the cause of much strife. Whenever an argument arose, the poor nomad had to give in to the rich *kulak*. As there was no veterinary service, pests spread like wildfire, affecting thousands of sheep, buffalo and cows, leaving their luckless owners destitute.

The only solution was to organise common work on a socialist basis. Establishment of collective economies enabled the cattle breeders to settle down and try their hand at farming, too. Animals were taken to their summer grazing grounds by teams of herdsmen and shepherds. Veterinary stations were set up at summer pastures and storing forage for wintertime became common practice. As a result of systematic work on stock improvement, livestock kept increasing and becoming far more productive.

Measures effected in the Azerbaijanian country-side under Soviet power have changed the peasant's life beyond recognition. At present, 165 thousand Azerbaijanian collective farmers draw old-age and disability pensions

from the state. Beneficial results of the reforms proposed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union at its 23rd Congress held in March 1966 are already obvious.

Now collective farms can get loans from the state to guarantee their members regular monthly payments for work performed. Every kilogramme of cotton, tea or other produce over and above the plan is paid for by the state at an increased rate.

State farm workers have the same opportunities for higher incomes and better living conditions.

Now peasants can enjoy all the benefits of civilisation right in the village. Such things as TV sets, refrigerators, washing machines, gas ranges and private cars are becoming ordinary possessions of a peasant family.

Every year the countryside consumes more electricity both for production and in the home. According to statistics, as of January 1, 1966, 90 per cent of the collective farms and 96 per cent of the state farms in Azerbaijan had electricity. About half of the 376 million kilowatt-hours consumed in the countryside was used for communal and private needs. The electrification of collective and state farms will be completed in Azerbaijan in 1967.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Azerbaijan has made great progress in Soviet times in rail, sea and road transport. Air transport was initiated in the Soviet period. The construction of the first railways here is

connected with the oil rush. The 549-kilometre-long railway between Baku and Tbilisi was built in 1883 but it was only in 1950 that it was connected at Derbent with the railways of the North Caucasus, thereby improving the Republic's economic links with the European part of the USSR.

According to pre-revolutionary statistics, the total extent of Azerbaijanian railways was about 840 kilometres in 1913. It has now increased to 1,730 kilometres. The first Soviet electric railway was constructed in Baku in 1926. It connected the centre of the city with the oil districts. Today the Apsheron Peninsula has a ramified network of electric railways.

The railways are being gradually switched to electric traction. Up-to-date diesel locomotives have replaced steam engines. Many junctions have automatic block systems.

Goods and passenger traffic is extremely heavy here. In 1965, railway freight turnover in the Republic exceeded 52.5 million tons, a fourfold increase over the 1940 figure.

Great changes have taken place in the sea and river fleets. The Caspian has long been the principal route connecting Azerbaijan with Central Russia, Central Asia and Iran. The rapid development of the Baku oil industry greatly spurred on Caspian shipping.

But the fleet at that time consisted mostly of small vessels. Port facilities were primitive and scattered. The Baku seaport included numerous light wooden landing stages, the property of sundry oilfield owners, shipowners and joint-stock societies. The storehouses were far

from the wharves, and dockers had to carry the cargoes there on their backs.

By the time Soviet power took over, not much was left of even those inadequate facilities. In the first years after the October Revolution the Baku seamen and dockers thoroughly repaired the ships and wharves and began to mechanise loading and unloading operations.

Baku port has been fully renovated; the wharves have been re-equipped. Scores of bridge cranes, railway and motor-car crawler cranes, mechanical conveyor belts, motor trucks and other machinery have done away with manual loading and unloading. Big ship-repair yards have taken the place of numerous small shops.

The Caspian shipping lines have a considerable fleet of tankers and bulk carriers of every possible description. They have cotton-and-wood-cargo vessels, shallow draught tankers and comfortable Soviet-made liners. The seamen of Azerbaijan are justly proud of the three ferry ships—the *Soviet Azerbaijan*, *Soviet Turkmenistan* and *Sultan Gamidov*—recently built at the Red Sormovo factory in Gorky and plying between Baku and Krasnovodsk. Each can carry a full-sized railway train and hundreds of passengers besides. In the near future, two more ferries of the latest design will make their appearance in the Caspian.

Before the Revolution there were very few motor vehicles in Azerbaijan, mostly cars used by private companies. Today the fleet of passenger cars, lorries and buses is constantly increasing and so is motor transport.

During 1940-65 motor transport haulage in Azerbaijan increased almost ten times. In 1965, 138.2 million tons was transported by road.

The development of motor transport requires the extensive construction of modern highways. At present all district centres in Azerbaijan are connected by well-built highways. Macadam roads link Baku with Yerevan, Tbilisi, the North Caucasus and other regions of the Russian Federation. Azerbaijan is way up on the list of Soviet Republics for the ratio of modern highways. While before the Revolution it had only 1,304 kilometres of mud and gravel roads, in 1940, it could boast 11,000 kilometres of modern highways. By 1965, this figure had grown to 18,300 kilometres.

Air transport has also become very popular. Besides transporting passengers and cargoes, Aeroflot's Azerbaijan section has for many years been flying air ambulances, performing an important public service. Azerbaijanian pilots are active fighters against the malarial mosquito and agricultural pests. The Baku airport is serviced by modern airplanes of Soviet make. The same is true of aerodromes in other towns of the Republic. From Baku, one can get to many Azerbaijanian towns by plane or helicopter. Comfortable *IL-18* turboprop liners, well known in many countries, fly between Baku and Moscow, Leningrad and Sverdlovsk. One can get to any republican capital by plane. In 1965, 750 thousand passengers travelled by air in Azerbaijan. In 1966, this figure increased to 837 thousand. And in 1967, Aeroflot expects to boost the figure to about one million passengers.

Rapid development of the economy is accompanied by improved postal, telegraph and radio communications. In 1913, there were 93 post-and-telegraph offices in all of Azerbaijan. At present the Republic has 1,098 postal, telegraph and telephone service offices, including 802 in the country-side.

The entire system of communications has been radically reconstructed during the Soviet period. The Baku trunk exchange can put you through to scores of the larger Soviet cities, let alone every district centre in the Republic.

OLD TRADITIONS AND NEW CULTURE

The numerous mausoleums, towers, fortresses and palaces in Azerbaijan speak of its people's ancient culture. The Maiden's Tower in Baku, the Nakhichevan and Karabaglar mausoleums, the Shirvanshakh Palace in Baku, the palace at Nukha are all samples of the superb craftsmanship of Azerbaijanian architects and builders.

The people of Azerbaijan have maintained close trade and cultural ties with other peoples throughout the ages. This explains the presence of many similarities in the cultural monuments of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Daghestan, Central Asia and some eastern countries. The temple of fire worshippers at Surakhany, not far from Baku, testifies to ancient ties between Azerbaijan and India.

At a distance of 60 kilometres from Baku there is a township called Kobystan. Today it

is known far and wide, for it was here that over two thousand pictures relating to ancient life were found on the surrounding rocky mountains and ridges. The oldest of them were made some three or even four thousand years ago. One of the rocks bears a Latin inscription of the first century A.D., denoting the sojourn of Roman troops.

The pictures—scenes of private life, hunting expeditions, human figures and animals long extinct—are remarkably expressive and spontaneous. They provide rich material for the study of the life, customs and beliefs of the ancient people who once inhabited these places. The dance scene depicted on one of the rocks closely follows the pattern of a traditional Azerbaijanian group dance, the *yally*.

Jewellery-making is one of the oldest industrial arts in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijanian goldsmiths were familiar with smithcraft wirework and fine soldering techniques centuries ago and produced open-work, hollow and stamped ornaments. Articles made of precious metals were decorated with fret work, chasing, filigree or niello. Gold amalgam—and not foil—was used for gilding.

Azerbaijanian goldsmiths ornamented their products with pearls and precious and semi-precious stones like rubies, garnets, turquoise, cornealian, rock crystal and so on, and knew how to cut, polish and fret them. They could also make fine threads of gold and silver, which were woven into fabrics.

Copper utensils of amazing shapes were decorated with rich floral or geometrical patterns

and some of them with animals and even human figures though that was strictly forbidden by the Moslem religion. Every detail of the attire and ornaments would be faithfully represented, like in a miniature. The ornamental pattern would often include quatrains by favourite poets or popular *bayati*.

Azerbaijan has long been famed for its carpets made of rich colours and fanciful floral patterns. A collection of old Azerbaijanian carpets is on view at the State History Museum in Baku. The art of carpet-making has been passed on from one generation to another. Today artists and art historians study carpet patterns and colours as well as new patterns based on national motifs. There are carpet-weaving shops using new methods of dyeing.

Decorative embroidery done by Azerbaijanian women in silk and gold thread can rival carpets in beauty. This art has also been passed down from one generation to another. Some samples of this embroidery—coverlets, cushions and women's national costume—have survived to this day.

The Azerbaijanian system of writing has an interesting history. The ancient forebears of the Azerbaijanians, had a system of writing of their own. The ruins of ancient temples still bear some inscriptions made in the period preceding the conquest of Azerbaijan by the Arabian Caliphate. The Arabic alphabet, which was forcibly imposed following the conquest, remained in use until the establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaijan. As the Arabic alphabet is greatly involved and extremely difficult to learn,

it hampered the elimination of illiteracy. Accordingly, there began a movement in Azerbaijan to introduce a new, Latinised alphabet. Such an alphabet was adopted in 1929 and followed in 1939 by a Russian-based alphabet.

Moslem schools established under the Caliphate on the Arabian pattern existed in Azerbaijan up to 1920. Pupils were taught to read and write Arabic letters, studied the Koran, and also learned how to keep accounts. Girls, who were reluctantly admitted, were not instructed in writing.

On the eve of World War I there were just 943 primary and 15 secondary schools in Azerbaijan, and they could take care of only a small fraction of children of school age. Most schools—secondary schools especially—were in towns. Almost all of them were in buildings hardly fit for the purpose. There were not enough teachers. Only three per cent of them had a secondary education themselves. In the fifty years before the establishment of Soviet power only 252 teachers of Azerbaijanian nationality were trained, and just a few of them were women.

Progressive-minded Russian cultural and scientific workers and such noted Azerbaijanian enlighteners as Zardabi, Mamedkuli-zade, Sabir and Narimanov did much to promote education among the people of Azerbaijan.

Some Azerbaijanians, children of well-to-do families, went to study at the schools of Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev and other big cities where they could mix among advanced Russian scientists, authors and artists. As a result of this fruit-

ful intercourse, there appeared in the 19th century such brilliant Azerbaijanian scholars, writers and philosophers as Bakikhanov, Akhundov, Zardabi, Topchibashev, Kazembek and many others. These highly-endowed people were also true progressives. In tsarist Russia, however, with national oppression added to economic and political subjugation, not many Azerbaijanians were able to acquit themselves in the field of education and science. The tsarist government purposely held back the education of the non-Russian peoples.

At the beginning of the 20th century Azerbaijan still was an extremely retarded and illiterate fringe of the tsarist empire, with 12 engineers and 20 doctors of Azerbaijanian nationality.

Senator Kuzminsky, after visiting Baku in 1905 on instructions of the tsarist government, wrote in his voluminous report that the streets in some of its districts were full of "sundry organic refuse, rotting and stinking in sultry weather. Slops and garbage were dumped into the street, where sheep were killed and dead cats and dogs and the entrails of slaughtered animals were lying around, with workers' children playing in the midst of all that."

The Senator wrote further: "The result of the lack of sanitary facilities in the oil-producing district I have referred to is that the soil here is extremely filthy and may well be unique in proportion of microorganisms such as never detected hitherto in any other spot of the globe."

However, what else could be expected with three doctors, three doctor's assistants and a

midwife constituting the entire medical force of the sprawling industrial district. There was just one hospital with thirty cots and an outpatient clinic in Balakhany. The city with its numerous suburbs was constantly threatened with epidemics. Cruel swamp fever and acute diarrhoea raged the year round among adults and children. For want of labour protection industrial injuries were a real scourge for Baku oil-workers.

After the Revolution the young Soviet Republic faced stupendous tasks in the sphere of education and health.

In Soviet times health service in Azerbaijan has made tremendous progress. Besides a wide network of hospitals, clinics and factory disease-prevention centres, unique health centres have been set up at Istisu, Naphthalan, in the Apshe-ron Peninsula, at Nabrani, Shusha, near the wonderful Gcg-Gel Lake and at many other places as well. Today there are more than 15 thousand doctors in Azerbaijan.

The young Azerbaijan Republic, with the support and generous assistance of the Russian Federation and other Union Republics, energetically tackled the task of radically transforming its education system.

By decrees of the Soviet government school was separated from the church, property qualifications and class privileges were abolished and universal compulsory free education was introduced. Immediately after the Revolution, courses for stamping out illiteracy were launched at factories, offices and villages throughout the Republic. Though funds were scarce at that time, the construction of general and specialised

schools and even colleges was begun without delay.

The following episode is an instance of this. Under Nicholas II they considered opening a lower-grade vocational school in Baku; the matter was hashed over in an exchange of letters between Baku and Petersburg which lasted no less than eight years.

The first polytechnical college was inaugurated in Azerbaijan eight months after Soviet power had been established there. Almost every year since, new colleges and technical and general education schools have been opened. By 1940, illiteracy was wiped out.

At present there is universal eight-year education, soon to be superseded by ten-year secondary education. Soviet Azerbaijan has had to overcome tremendous difficulties and spend a great deal of money to make public education truly popular.

Now among Azerbaijan's 4.6 million population there are 1,400,000 students attending schools, technical educational establishments, colleges, vocational training centres and refresher courses of all kinds. Practically every third citizen is a student. There are 5,491 general education schools in the Republic. Before the Revolution Azerbaijan did not have a single higher educational establishment. Today there are 13 colleges, the last of them, the Institute of Economic Management, was opened in 1966. There were only three technical schools in Azerbaijan before the Revolution compared with 78 now.

The system of day, evening and correspondence departments has made education acces-

sible to everybody. There are 133,000 college students in the Republic. The Meshadi Azizbekov Petroleum and Chemistry Institute—the largest of its kind in the Soviet Union—has graduated about 22,000 oil engineers, geologists, power engineers and economists during the Soviet period. In 1965 alone, 6,000 specialists graduated from Azerbaijan's higher educational establishments; 2,500 of them received a higher education while keeping on with their jobs.

In the proportion of college students Azerbaijan has outstripped not only its neighbours, Turkey and Iran, but also such advanced capitalist countries as Italy, France, the FRG, Britain and Sweden. Talented young specialists are given every opportunity to perfect their knowledge at post-graduate courses. Today Azerbaijan has enough native specialists. Out of the 204.6 thousand specialists with a secondary and higher education about 85,000 are women.

Also revealing is the fact that while there were no scientific centres on the territory of Azerbaijan before the Revolution, there are now 118 such centres, half of them being scientific research institutes. Their aggregate staffs include 12,000 scientists, which incidentally corresponds to the number of pupils at mosque schools in 1914-15. About 400 Doctors of Science and Professors and about 3,000 Masters of Science deliver lectures and do research at the university, colleges and research centres.

In the early post-revolutionary period eminent Russian scientists and well-known engineers came to Azerbaijan to organise the training of specialists. Academicians and Professors Gubkin,

Golubyatnikov, Meshchaninov, Bartold, Ashmarin took a prominent part in these activities. Thousands of Azerbaijanians, both men and women, studied and presented their theses at educational establishments in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. Now Azerbaijanian scientists and scholars themselves are contributing greatly to various sciences ranging from oilfield geology, oil-processing and advanced research on the synthesis of substances from oil gases, mathematics, physics, crystallography, cybernetics, etc. Much has been done to study the history of Azerbaijan, her natural resources, her flora and fauna. The Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences is in one of the finest Baku buildings. The Academy was inaugurated on March 31, 1945, while the war with fascist Germany was still in progress.

An Azerbaijanian disciple of prominent Russian chemists, Yusif Mamedaliev, is known for his valuable research in petroleum chemistry.

At the time of the war two Baku scientists, Mamedaliev and Gutyrya, and their fellow-workers discovered new methods of obtaining motor gasoline and proposed principles of production of methyl chloride sought by munition factories. As a result, it was possible to organise the production of cheap, high-quality benzines. The discovery won its authors the State Prize. In post-war years Academician Mamedaliev directed research on methods of obtaining chlorinated carbon and other chloro-organic hydrocarbons which are basic to the production of synthetic fibres.

The work of Academician Murtuza Nagiev, another prominent Azerbaijanian scientist, is

widely used to determine the most suitable methods of comprehensive chemical raw material processing. His suggestions for determining optimal processing-unit sizes permitting maximum intensification and acceleration of processes while sharply reducing the formation of by-products elicited much interested comment in many countries. His work "Chemistry, Technology and Calculation of Motor Oil Synthesis" was of great interest and has been published in many countries.

Crystallographers of the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Britain and Chile were greatly interested in the work of Khudu Mamedov, an Azerbaijanian scientist. On the invitation of Professor John Bernal, Mamedov visited Britain where he gave talks on his original research in crystallochemistry of calcium silicates.

Professor Isa Selimkhanov, D. Sc. (Chemistry), has developed an original method of using spectrum analysis to determine the age of archaeological ore excavations. Much interest in this method has been displayed in India, Czechoslovakia and France.

A great achievement for Azerbaijanian chemists, particularly Academician Dalin, was the technological development of the production of alcohols from oil gases, the alcohols being subsequently processed into divinyl and then into rubber.

Azerbaijanian scientists maintain extensive ties with fellow-scientists abroad. Their participation in international congresses and symposiums is increasing. For example, Professor Umnisa Musabekova of Azerbaijan represented the

Soviet Union at a congress of ophthalmologists in Ankara. Incidentally, she was the only lady delegate at that international forum.

Though Azerbaijani scientists have numerous important achievements to their credit, their plans for the future are still more fascinating. The current five-year plan envisages interesting research in the field of functional analysis and the development of computers for introducing automation in the oil-processing industry and the extraction and transportation of oil and gas. Research into the physical properties of semi-conductors and work on the chemical synthesis of biologically active and protein-vitamin substances from the hydrocarbons of oil with the help of microorganisms is ahead. Also to be studied are the problems of deep boring (to a depth of seven-ten kilometres). Extensive research is to be done in the sphere of natural and social sciences.

* * *

The art and literature of Azerbaijan have age-old traditions. Beginning with the 12th century, Azerbaijani poets have occupied a prominent place in world literature. The first to be mentioned is Nizami Gyandjevi, the author of *Khamse* (The Quintuplet) composed of five romantic poems. He was both a poet of great genius and prominent thinker of his time. Genuine humanism and profound confidence in the omnipotence of human reason are characteristic of his entire work. Many lyrical poems of Muhammed Fizuli, another famous Azerbaijani

poet and thinker, are very popular and beloved to this day. The richest gem in the poet's crown, however, is his romantic epic *Leili and Medj-nun*.

The most outstanding author and materialist philosopher of 19th-century Azerbaijan was Mirza Fatali Akhundov, the founder of realistic trend in literature, who is well known for his plays. His work had a tremendous impact on the progress of national culture.

At the beginning of the 20th century, under the influence of revolutionary ideas a democratic movement arose in Azerbaijan which carried on a fight against reactionary ideology. That period was remarkable for a great number of progressive writers.

New Azerbaijanian literature of the Soviet period has borrowed the best traditions of pre-revolutionary literature.

And while the pre-war period could be described as the formative years of Azerbaijanian Soviet literature, at present we can speak of its maturity.

This is apparent from its broad scope of vision and the unfolding of the creative individuality of various Azerbaijanian authors in the post-war period. The romantic and at times wildly passionate bard of Azerbaijan Samed Vurgun; Suleiman Rustam, who was able to breathe new life into classic oriental versification; Rasul Rza who boldly renovated the syllabic verse by giving it the Mayakovsky touch and introducing the colloquial element; Mamed Ragim, who combined the art of realistic description with poetic enthusiasm—each of these outstanding

Azerbaijani poets has his own creative individuality, his favourite expressive means, his vision of the world.

When the well-known French author Louis Aragon called Samed Vurgun the pride of Soviet and world literature, it was, in effect, a tribute paid to the creative work of modern Azerbaijani authors as a whole, for the poetry of Samed Vurgun is part of what we call Azerbaijani literature of today. It is not accidental that works by Azerbaijani writers and poets have been translated into twenty other languages.

Azerbaijani folk music has rich traditions of long standing. The great Nizami, who lived in the 12th century, mentions about 30 national musical instruments, *ashugs*, who improvise their songs about lovers, heroes and wise men and sing them to their own accompaniment on a *saz* or a *tar*, are very popular in villages. Townsfolk enjoy listening to the *mugam* song to the accompaniment of a small band. There are also songs that go with various rites, patriotic songs, and dance music. Azerbaijani folk music has stood the test of time. It is as vigorous as ever and is responsible for the national colouring that distinguishes modern Azerbaijani music.

Classic Azerbaijani music and folk music traditions are reflected differently in the works of contemporary Azerbaijani composers, including such outstanding composers as Lenin Prize winner Kara Karayev, Seid Rustamov, Fikret Amirov, Niyazi and Djangir Djangirov. Some years ago Fikret Amirov, People's Artist of the USSR, composed two symphonic *mugams*, *Shur*

and *Kurd Ovshary*, on traditional motifs. The result was surprising. *Mugams*, which were too specific to be easily accessible to European listeners, became suddenly popular everywhere. They are performed at concert halls in London, Paris, Damascus, Bucharest, Brussels, etc. Leopold Stokowski wrote to the author of the *mugams*, saying: "When we performed your Azerbaijani mugams at Houston, Texas, the public and orchestra were tremendously enthusiastic in their response."

Symphony No. 4 by Djevdet Gadjiev, a monumental production dedicated to Lenin's memory, is also enthusiastically appreciated by audiences. The songs of Tofik Kuliev, Suleiman Alesverov Andrei Babayev, Agabadji Rzaeva, Shafiga Akhundova and others are very popular. But music is not the only feather in the cap of Azerbaijan.

The recent review of Azerbaijani art and literature—one in a regular series—demonstrated achievements which compare favourably with the best international standards.

Before the Revolution there were two theatres in Azerbaijan. Now there are eight plus the State Philharmonic Society, the Drama Institute and the Conservatoire named after Uscir Gadjibekov.

The Meshadi Azizbekov Drama Theatre was established before the Revolution and has covered a long and glorious path. Its rich repertory, which includes the works of Mirza Fatali Akhundov, Djafar Djabarly, Samed Vurgun, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoi, Shakespeare, Moliere and modern Soviet and foreign authors, has earned

it the distinction of being called an Academic Theatre.

The Akhundov Opera and Ballet Theatre is the largest in the Republic. Its repertory includes many national operas and ballets. Just a quarter of a century ago there was no Azerbaijanian ballet in existence. Now the Akhundov Theatre has a considerable ballet company that stages very involved classic and modern choreographic pieces.

For the most part, national ballet music owes its existence to People's Artist of the USSR Kara Karayev. His symphony pieces, including the well-known *Don-Quixote* suite and music for the ballets *Seven Beauties* (after Nizami's poems) and *The Parth of Thunder* after the novel of the same name by Peter Abrahams are internationally famous. Kara Karayev's ballets are performed in many theatres throughout the world.

The ballet *Legend of Love* (libretto by Nazim Khikmet) by Kara Karayev's pupil Arif Melikov has been great success. Perhaps no ballet has ever been so quickly and widely acclaimed as this. In the space of five years it has been staged at Leningrad, Moscow, Novosibirsk, Baku, Prague, Bratislava, Helsinki, Weimar, Leipzig. The famous Soviet ballerina Maya Plisetskaya considers the part of the Princess Mehmene Banu the best in ballet repertory.

The successes of Azerbaijanian ballet are to be expected. The Azerbaijan School of Choreography conducts serious work training ballet performers and studying the rich heritage of Russian classic dance. The first Azerbaijanian ballerina and founder of the national school of

ballet, People's Artist of the USSR Shamer Almaszade, is a graduate of this school. Great success has been achieved by another Azerbaijani ballerina, Leila Vekilova, who has appeared in the parts of timid Aisha in *Seven Beauties*, heroic Gyulianik in the *Maiden's Tower*, a cotton picker in "Gyulshen" by Sultan Gadjibekov, Sarie in *The Parth of Thunder*, etc.

Azerbaijani ballet is in its prime. New ballets are staged, new choreographers and ballerinas appear. Not long ago Arif Melikov completed his new ballet called *Two on This Earth* (libretto by the well-known poet Robert Rozhdestvensky). It will be performed at the Bolshoi in Moscow.

Azerbaijani painting and sculpture are also flourishing.

Before the Revolution there was not a single sculptor in Azerbaijan. As to painters, there were two or three of them. Today there are about 200 artists and sculptors in the Republic. The productions of Azerbaijani artists are appealing to the spectator for their freshness, vigour and topicality. The leitmotif of genre canvases by Mikhail Abdullayev (*Builders of Happiness, Girl Friends, Joy*) is the beauty of man born of creative endeavour. The pictures by Sattar Bakhulu-zade, Azerbaijani landscape painter, are full of beauty. His *Evening at the Caspian, Mist in the Mountains, and Spring in Mugan* are particularly memorable. His pictures have something in common with French impressionists but at the same time they are profoundly national; the author's preference for bright but noble colours, decorativeness and pure tone are all

characteristic of Azerbaijani miniatures, carpets and pottery.

Tair Salakhov, on the other hand, has a laconic style and favours blacks, whites and blues. He likes to paint oil-workers. Their serious faces, their emphasised big hands and feet in heavy boots breathe such dignity and quiet courage that you cannot fail to feel the fascination of everyday work. Black reservoirs towering against the background of the sky made crimson by the setting sun is the way Salakhov sees the industrial landscape of Baku. But the portrait of composer Kara Karayev is perhaps his best work. The contrast between the black concert piano and Karayev's white attire, the horizontal surface of the piano and the vertical figure of the composer, the severely-limited colour combinations forcefully convey Karayev's temperament and the nature of his music, which is passionate and philosophic at the same time.

PRESS, RADIO AND SPORTS

It is impossible to imagine contemporary Azerbaijan without its many newspapers, magazines and books, factory and collective farm clubs and palaces of culture, libraries, cinemas and museums, or without radio and television.

The Republic has 82 newspapers issued in Azerbaijani, Russian, Armenian, Kurdish and Georgian, with a daily circulation of 1,070 thousand copies. In 1913, 85 thousand copies of books in Azerbaijani were published. The total number of books printed in Azerbaijan in 1966

amounted to 10.6 million copies and by 1970 it will reach 17.5 million. Every year more classics and works by modern Azerbaijanian writers and poets are published. Azerbaijanian readers can read the works of great authors of Russia and other fraternal peoples and masterpieces of world literature in their native language.

The United Periodicals Printing House built in 1964 is the largest of its kind in Transcaucasia. In total volume of printed matter Azerbaijan has surpassed all the countries of the Middle East and some West European countries, too.

Before the Revolution you could count the workers' clubs and people's houses on your fingers. Today the Republic has over 1,400 clubs and palaces of culture, of which 1,100 are in the country-side. Before the Revolution there were practically no cinemas in Azerbaijan. Now there are 1,719 film projectors, including 1,179 in the country-side.

In 1914, there were 25 libraries in Azerbaijan, none of them in the country-side. There was no need of that—the peasants were illiterate. At present Azerbaijan has about 2,500 libraries with a book fund of 18,459,000 copies and almost half of them are in the country-side. In the number of books per person Soviet Azerbaijan is ahead of the United States, Britain and Japan.

Radio and television service were instituted in the Republic under Soviet power. Azerbaijan now has 239 hours of broadcasting a day in Azerbaijanian, Russian and Armenian. Radio Azerbaijan is heard by many people outside the Soviet Union. Incidentally, there are 600,000

radio sets, 300,000 TVs, 255,000 radio outlets (115,000 of them in the village) for 4.6 million inhabitants of the Republic. In other words, almost every family has either a radio set or a TV.

Much attention is paid in Soviet Azerbaijan to physical culture. In the Soviet period numerous stadiums, swimming pools, gyms and other sports facilities have been built here. Baku has a special college—the Institute of Physical Culture—for training coaches and PT instructors. In some towns and districts there are sports schools for young enthusiasts.

The Lenin Stadium in Baku seats 50,000. The most recent major facility of this kind is the huge sports complex at Sumgait. A stadium, an indoor swimming pool and a wonderful children's pool on the Kura covering 2,400 square metres have been constructed at the new oil centre of Ali-Bairamly, which also has several well-equipped gyms, basketball and volleyball grounds and tennis courts built in the direct proximity of dwelling houses and factories.

During the current five-year period the extensive construction of sports facilities will continue. For example, Baku will have a sports palace for 12,000 spectators, a cycling track, an indoor rowing pool and a new building for the Institute of Physical Culture. Everything is being done to provide enough compact and convenient facilities for every neighbourhood. At present there are 825 thousand sportsmen and sportswomen in the Republic. Scores of Azerbaijanian sportsmen are members of various national sports teams of the Soviet Union. About forty athletes have been nominated for the So-

viet national team at the coming Olympics in Mexico.

ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL TIES

The economic and cultural ties between Azerbaijan and dozens of Asian, African, European and Latin American countries are expanding year by year. Today the factories and state and collective farms of Azerbaijan ship their products to 56 countries, which includes oilfield and plant equipment, oil products, bearings, steel framework, electric motors, electrical engineering goods, instruments, steel pipes, aluminium, synthetic rubber, chemicals, medicines, cement, cotton fibre, olives, wine, caviar, carpets and many other goods.

Today one can meet Azerbaijanian scientists, engineers, doctors, teachers, and skilled workers in various trades in many developing countries. They work shoulder to shoulder with the local specialists and workers there, prospecting for mineral wealth, building industrial projects, treating patients, teaching schoolchildren. Baku oil specialists and workers are greatly appreciated everywhere for their experience and knowledge. It was with their assistance, for example, that rich deposits of oil were found in India.

Sharif Fatkuliev, one of the better-known Baku boring experts, has related this: "When we came to India we became aware of the pessimism regarding prospects of oil extraction. We soon learned that was due to the abortive efforts

of foreign specialists, including some from the United States, who had spend a good deal of money trying to find oil in India. The Soviet oil-workers disproved their predictions and discovered rich deposits of oil in India. I was among those who used Soviet equipment to drill the holes in Combay, Ankleshvar, Assam and Gujerat. Everywhere the holes yielded. I remember how happy it made our Indian friends."

Sharif Fatkuliev doesn't tell the whole story. The Azerbaijanian specialists not only bored the well but also helped build mechanical shops, pipe stations and repair shops to take care of diesels and control and measuring instruments. While in India they also trained Indian oil-workers. Baku oil-workers who helped prospect for oil and gas in Cuba and other countries are kindly remembered there.

Those who engineered the famous marine oilfields in the Caspian are now assisting the Bulgarians to design and build similar installations in the Black Sea. They also helped discover large deposits of oil and natural gas in Northern Afghanistan. They also take part in the geological survey work conducted by the UAR in the Sinai Peninsula and on the Red Sea coast using the Soviet equipment. Azerbaijanian specialists are assisting its neighbour Iran to look for oil and gas in the Caspian Sea and the Syrian Arab Republic in prospecting for oil there. Among those who helped to tap oil in Brazil was Professor Ayub Tagiev, a well-known Azerbaijanian petroleum specialist. And it is not only the oil-workers who help out in numerous foreign countries. Azerbaijanian power engi-

neering experts helped the Democratic Republic of Vietnam to design and construct the Thak Ba hydroelectric station on the Chair River. They also designed the hydroelectric station building in Cambodia. Finally, they are authors of the well-known project of a large complex of hydro installations on the Araks, which runs along the Iranian border. These installations are to be constructed under an agreement between the Soviet and Iranian governments. As soon as the construction of the dam, reservoir and hydroelectric station now in progress is completed, the districts along the border of Azerbaijan and Iran will get enough electricity and water for their fields.

Not infrequently, Azerbaijanian doctors go to help their colleagues in Asian and African countries fight tenacious indigenous diseases that have persisted down through the ages. Not long ago, Dr. Bada of Algeria visited Azerbaijan. Commenting on his impressions, he mentioned Dr. Adelia Kurbanova, an Azerbaijanian woman who had worked for several years in Anaba (Algeria). Kurbanova is an excellent specialist in gynaecological surgery and a pupil of Professor Frenovsky (Moscow). Coming to Algeria, Adelia gave herself up body and soul to her work. Under no circumstances would she refuse to attend a patient and always managed to give relief.

Dr. Bada said, "Do you know what the women called her? They called her 'aziz doctor,' which means 'darling doctor'."

The same flattering remarks are made about other Azerbaijanian specialists working abroad.

Soviet Azerbaijan carries on an extensive exchange of know-how in various branches of science with numerous countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Azerbaijanian Academy of Sciences and other scientific institutions keep up contacts with their colleagues abroad, exchanging publications and post-graduates and arranging exchange visits to scientific institutions in more than 100 countries on all continents.

The following are a few examples of this: when Professor Malik Kureyshi (Kabul University) visited Azerbaijan he studied the research they were doing on the uses of solar energy; Olga Vernig, a Yugoslavian physicist, studied the experience of Azerbaijanian scientists in semi-conductors; Dornberg, a chemist from the GDR, was interested in the work on structural analysis.

Managers of some British firms visited Baku to see what was being done there in the field of chemical processes; a group of Australian scientists came to study the experience of Azerbaijanian scientists in the sphere of natural and social sciences; and Argentine specialists investigated turbodrill techniques.

Very often Azerbaijanian scientists give lectures abroad. Academician Murtuza Nagiyev gave a course of lectures in Britain on problems of chemical synthesis. Professors Sultan Mekhtiev and Azad Elfendi-zade also went to Britain for a similar purpose.

Azerbaijan higher schools have students from 24 Asian, African and Latin American countries. Post-graduate students from India, Afghanistan,

the DRV, Bulgaria and other countries do advanced work and present their theses in Baku.

The development of foreign trade and scientific contacts enables Soviet Azerbaijan to enjoy the advantages of the international division of labour and to utilise the achievements of other countries in industry, agriculture, science and engineering in her own economy. The Republic's industrial enterprises use machinery produced in Poland, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Hungary, France, Britain and other countries. Many Azerbaijanian hospitals have equipment made in Czechoslovakia.

The German Democratic Republic has delivered and mounted in Azerbaijan's Shemakha Observatory a unique telescope with a main lens that is two metres in diameter. The lens was made by the "Karl Zeiss" firm. The shops sell fine furniture and other consumer goods from Hungary, Yugoslavia, the DRV, and Poland.

Extensive ties are maintained in the sphere of art and literature. Azerbaijan and especially its capital, Baku, has become a popular place for meetings of Soviet and foreign writers, composers, artists and actors. Not a month passes without a conductor, singer or dancer from abroad giving a performance at the Baku Philharmonic Society or a Baku theatre. Recently there have been guest performances by French composers and singers Charles Aznavur, Jacques Brel and Francis Lemarque; Iranian and African singers and musicians; a folk dance group from Dahomey; singer Richard Verro and conductor Victor Feldbrili from Canada; Turkish conductor Ilkmet Shimshek and singer Aikhan

Boran; an American pianist, Sydney Foster, and many other foreign performers.

In turn, Azerbaijanian culture and art are of interest abroad. Thousands of Egyptians, Syrians and the Lebanese attended Azerbaijanian art shows held in their countries. Artists of sunny Azerbaijan are known in many countries. The pictures by Tair Salakhov shown at the famous "Bienalle" in Venice were quite a success.

Azerbaijanian music is especially popular. Contemporary Azerbaijanian composers are well known in many countries including the United States. Guest performances given by Azerbaijanian singers and musicians abroad are attended by great success.

Festivals of Hungarian, Czechoslovak, Greek, Polish, Arab, Indian and Italian films held in Baku were exciting events in the cultural life of the Republic.

Azerbaijanian athletes have visited every continent by now. In turn, Baku entertained athletes from Vietnam, Cuba, the GDR, France, Japan, Poland, Iran and many other countries with its customary hospitality.

There is yet another shining page in the life of Azerbaijan. It bespeaks of fraternal solidarity with all peoples of the world, with the progressives of every country working for peace, national independence and human rights. Years ago, in 1920, on Lenin's initiative, the First Congress of Oriental Peoples was held in Baku. Representatives of Asian and African people came to the capital of Azerbaijan to raise their voices against social and national oppression.

In 1964, the Second Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference took place in Baku and two years later a Meeting of the Soviet Committee for Relations with Asian and African Writers was convened also here. Both at the Solidarity Conference and at the writers' forum scores of delegations from Asian and African countries were present. Together with Soviet delegates, they discussed and adopted effective resolutions in support of fighting Vietnam and the Asian and African countries which are struggling to remove the vestiges of colonialism and capitalism, to improve their economies and safeguard peace.

Statesmen and public figures, religious dignitaries, scientists and actors are not the only ones who come to Azerbaijan. Year in and year out it is visited by thousands of tourists.

PLACES OF INTEREST AND TRAVEL ROUTES

Visitors to Azerbaijan naturally start by seeing the capital, Baku, which is the Persian for "windy town."

It has been unanimously pronounced one of the most attractive places in the Soviet Union. In appearance elements of national and modern architecture are organically blended. The old part of the town hidden by three-metre thick ramparts still has the aura of ages-old history. It is interesting to wander around the narrow intersecting streets of medieval Baku. Here one can see the "Synykh-Kala," the oldest minaret in Azerbaijan, which is almost a thousand

years old, or come upon a medieval caravan-serai; take a look at the legendary singularly-shaped Maiden's Tower or inspect the little courts and spacious rooms of the Palace of the Shahs of Shirvan erected in the first half of the 15th century. Or one may simply take a walk along the ramparts, which have been standing there for nearly 800 years and step in at the small restaurant on the premises and taste richly-spiced Azerbaijani dishes: shashlyk, lula-kebab or piti. But the moment you emerge beyond the ancient fortress gate you find yourself swept in the turmoil of a modern southern town with its populous streets. The town has transport conveniences of all kinds, including the recently commissioned underground. The smart buildings, numerous green squares and parks, monuments to great Azerbaijani poets and writers, the brilliant sunlight and the fresh pungent smell of the sea—all invest the Azerbaijani capital with a distinct individuality. The Baku beaches are superb. At night, flooded with a sea of electric lights, Baku is exceedingly beautiful. "Today I have seen fantasy translated into reality. No words can describe the wonderful achievements of Soviet people, who have been able to build this marvel of a town in the open sea. Neftyanie Kamni inspire and stagger one by the boldness of engineering execution and people's courage." These words were written by Paulino Mincarone, a Deputy of the National Congress of Brazil, when he visited the town of oilworkers in the Caspian.

There are many fascinating travel routes in Azerbaijan. One leads to Sumgait. Another,

which goes along the Caspian coast, leads north to the orchards and forests around the ancient towns of Kuba and Kusary. Here, in the wooded Caucasian foothills, one can hunt Caucasian mountain goat. About 40 hunters from Austria, Switzerland and the Federal Republic of Germany visited these places in 1966. Nearly every one of them took home an enviable trophy—the branching horns of the beau of the mountains. And there are many other places of interest such as the plantations and nurseries of state farm No. 12, a well-known horticultural concern. And there is Nabran, the gorgeous new sandy beach where a mixed wood runs down almost to the surf.

Those, on the other hand, who are interested in astronomy can choose the Baku-Shemakha route. Shemakha is an old Azerbaijanian town, now the seat of the recently-built Shemakha Observatory. On the way there you can stop off at the "Pravda" winery and sample the local Matrasa. But these are the shorter routes. If you are prepared to go farther away, take the road from Baku to Nukha, which looks like a speck on a spur of the Greater Caucasus. It goes through broad valleys and mountain rivers and the difficult Akhsuin Pass all overgrown with beautiful plane-trees. Nukha is the main centre of the silk industry of Azerbaijan. This ancient town has an irresistible oriental charm. Even a brief description like this must mention the splendid palace of the Sheki Khans (Sheki is the historical name of Nukha). The entire interior of this two-storey summer palace is covered with intricate ornamental designs. Its rooms

are done in all colours of the rainbow. Battle scenes, mountain goats, pheasants, deer and dragons are painted on the walls. The windows and partly the walls are open woodwork, with insets of coloured glass. It has cost the Soviet government hundreds of thousands of roubles to have the palace restored. But now this gem of Azerbaijanian architecture is again a sight to see.

A hundred kilometres along the highway sheltered by unbroken rows of nut-trees on both sides—and you are at picturesque Zakataly. Mountain air, endless orchards and the huge ridges of the Caucasus on the horizon have a bracing effect on the tired traveller.

One could go on describing the places of interest to the visitor and mention the Gek-Gel, a mountain lake with wooded shores in the vicinity of Kirovabad, and other spots which are sure to leave a lasting impression.

But we must wind up. It will not be amiss if we remind you once again that Azerbaijanians are born hosts, and anybody who visits Azerbaijan will not only have a chance to see its historical monuments and other places of interest but to enjoy the cordial hospitality of its people.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Oil derricks—symbol of Azerbaijan.
2. Azerbaijanians think there is nothing like their country.
- 3—5. Modern Baku—one of the largest industrial and cultural centres of the Soviet Union, a city of monuments, antiquities and magnificent new buildings.
- 6—8. The sea is the gateway to the great world and a veritable treasure trove.
- 9—12. Urban scenes. The towns are growing by leaps and bounds.
- 13—15. Sturgeon and herring catch.
- 16—20. Busy and noisy in the daytime, Baku is a quiet romantic spot at night.
21. All children in the Republic go to school.
- 22—23. Baku is a city of fountains and parks.
- 24—26. The best Azerbaijanian wines come from Lenkoran.
27. This Mausoleum of the great Azerbaijanian poet Nizami Gyandjevi was erected in Kirovabad (former Gyandja) in 1947 to commemorate the poet's 800th anniversary.
- 28—29. Baku sights.
- 30—31. The cathedral mosque Taza-Pyr—a place of religious worship in Azerbaijan and outstanding monument of Mohammedan architecture.
- 32—33. Oil is the past, present and future of the country.

- 34—36. Oil extracted from the sea bottom is transported along the 100-mile pipeline. Azerbaijan supplies many districts of the Soviet Union with oil and gas.
- 37—39. Besides extracting and processing oil, Azerbaijanians produce aluminium and fine rock-cutting machines.
- 40—45. The Republic produces thousands of yards of textiles, develops new types of equipment, and builds an underground and enormous industrial complexes.
46. The Ali-Bairamly electric station, one of the biggest in Azerbaijan, is the Soviet Union's first outdoor power plant.
- 47—48. Electricity is used throughout the Republic.
49. Night view of Baku.
- 50—53. Sumgait is a young city of young people—the average age is 26.
- 54—56. Azerbaijanian cotton is processed at Azerbaijanian textile mills.
- 57—58. Cablecars over the Dashkesan mines.
- 59—62. Azerbaijanian bounty: tea plantations, vast pastures, orchards and vineyards.
- 63—65. For centuries the land thirsted for water and now it produces lavishly.
- 66—68. Azerbaijan is a sunny country.
- 69—71. The first steps in life—and in science.
- 72—73. Exquisite patterns in renowned Azerbaijanian carpets and on the walls of architectural antiquities, e.g., the mausoleum in Karabaglar (14th century).
- 74—76. National song and dance ensembles are very popular in the Republic.
This oriental building is the Nizami Mu-

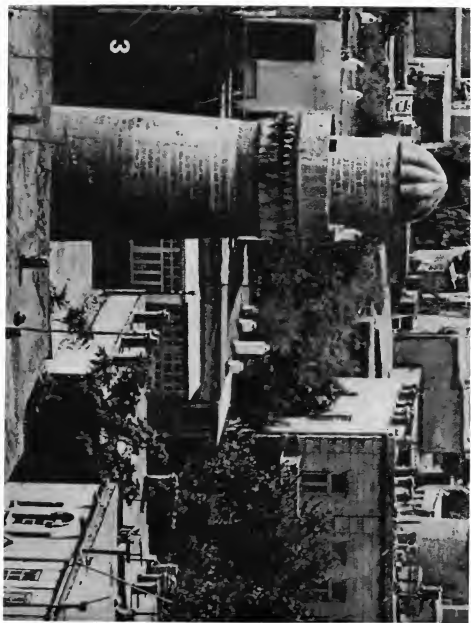
seum of Azerbaijanian literature. It possesses unique literary documents of different epochs.

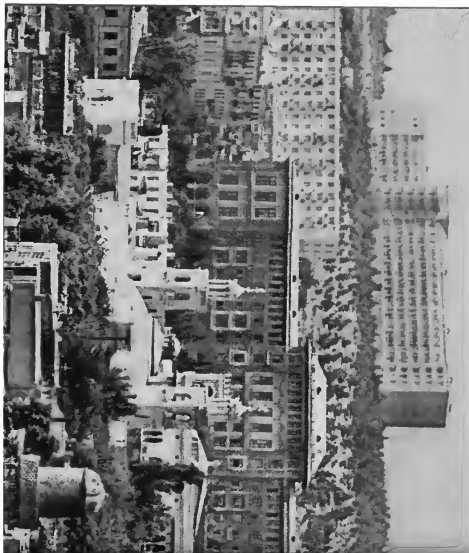
- 77—78. Murals on the upper terrace of Beyukdash Mountain and images of animals and inscriptions on stones recovered from the bottom of the Caspian Sea prove that Azerbaijanian culture dates from the remotest past.
- 79—81. Expression, buoyaney and rhythm characterise Azerbaijanian art.
82. On the Caspian.









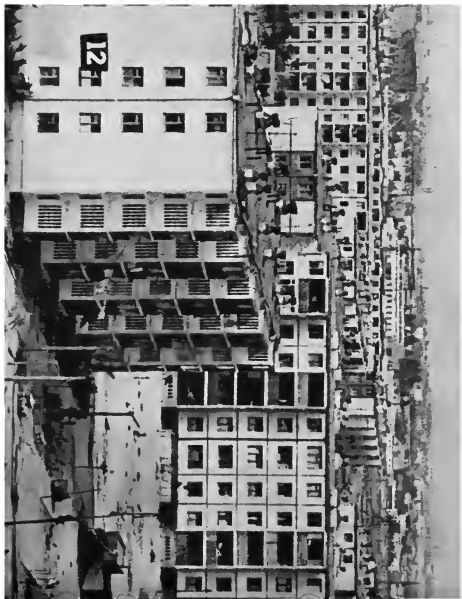


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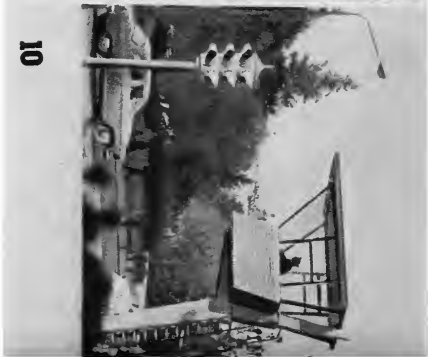




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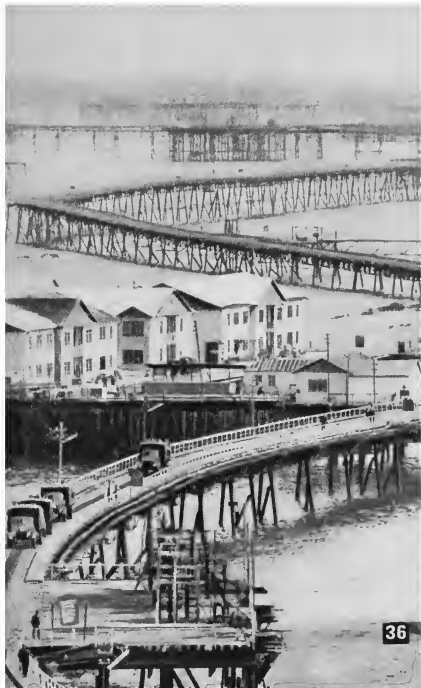


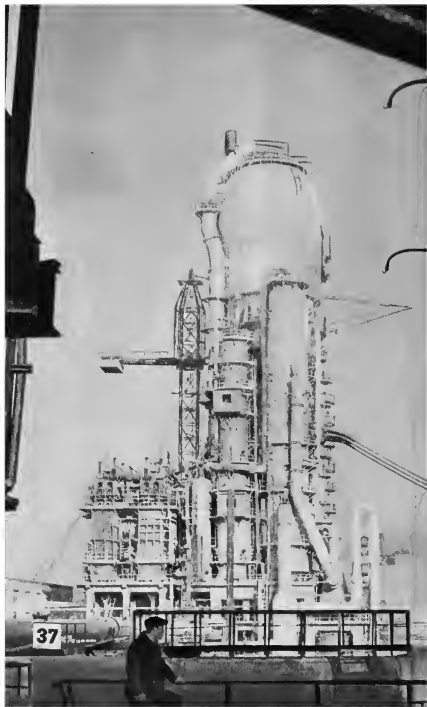
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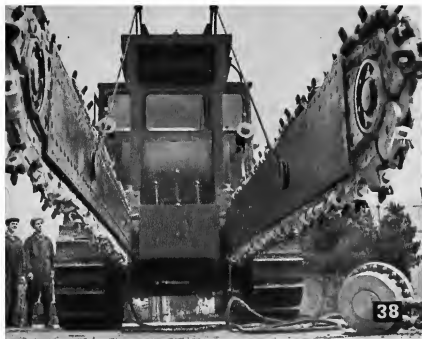
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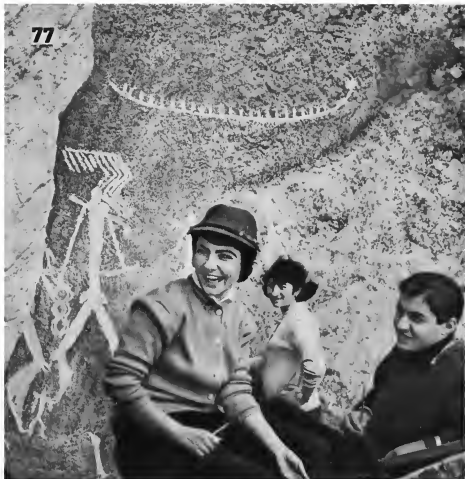














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