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The implementation of Heydar Aliyev's National Policy Concept (1970s-1980s)

Abstract

The period of Heydar Aliyev's first leadership of Azerbaijan is remembered as a phase of political, socio-economic, and cultural development in the country's history, significantly contributing to the formation of national consciousness and the strengthening of independence ideals. During this period, the Azerbaijani people, known for their rich historical traditions, unique cultural heritage, and national-spiritual values, established a distinct place in world civilization through their universal ideas and national characteristics. The national policy concept of the national leader Heydar Aliyev was characterized by a precise and balanced political orientation, encompassing all aspects of socio-political, socio-economic, and scientific-cultural fields in a comprehensive manner. The dynamic development observed in Azerbaijan during that time, along with the extensive reforms implemented in economic, social, political, and cultural areas, was carried out based on Heydar Aliyev's national policy strategy. Heydar Aliyev viewed the promotion, preservation, and development of our national-spiritual values, such as the Azerbaijani language, literature, religion, and traditions, as a crucial direction in the national ideology. This article analyzes the key priorities and essence of the national policy concept of the national leader Heydar Aliyev. It also examines activities within the framework of this concept in socio-political, economic-social, scientific-cultural, ideological, and moral-ethical spheres.

Keywords: National leader, national policy concept, 1970s-1980s, renaissance period, national-spiritual values



Haydar Aliyev'in Ulusal Politika Konseptinin uygulanması (1970'ler-1980'ler)

Öz

Haydar Aliyev'in Azerbaycan'ın ilk liderliği dönemi, ülke tarihinde ulusal bilincin oluşmasına ve bağımsızlık ideallerinin güçlenmesine önemli katkıda bulunan siyasi, sosyo-ekonomik ve kültürel bir gelişme aşaması olarak hatırlanmaktadır. Bu dönemde zengin tarihi gelenekleri, eşsiz kültürel mirası ve milli-manevi değerleriyle tanınan Azerbaycan halkı, evrensel fikirleri ve milli özellikleriyle dünya medeniyetinde kendine özgü bir yer edinmiştir. Ulusal lider Haydar Aliyev'in ulusal politika konsepti, sosyo-politik, sosyo-ekonomik ve bilimsel-kültürel alanların tüm yönlerini kapsamlı bir şekilde kapsayan kesin ve dengeli bir siyasi yönelimle karakterize edildi. Bu dönemde Azerbaycan'da gözlemlenen dinamik gelişme ve ekonomik, sosyal, siyasi ve kültürel alanlarda gerçekleştirilen kapsamlı reformlar Haydar Aliyev'in milli politika stratejisi temelinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Haydar Aliyev, Azerbaycan dili, edebiyatı, dini ve gelenekleri gibi milli-manevi değerlerimizin desteklenmesi, korunması ve geliştirilmesini milli ideolojinin önemli bir yönü olarak görmüştür. Bu makale, ulusal lider Haydar Aliyev'in ulusal politika konseptinin temel önceliklerini ve özünü analiz etmektedir. Ayrıca, bu konsept çerçevesinde sosyo-politik, ekonomik-sosyal, bilimsel-kültürel, ideolojik ve ahlaki-etik alanlardaki faaliyetler incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ulusal Lider, Ulusal Politika Kavramı, 1970-1980'li Yıllar, Rönesans Dönemi, Milli-Manevi Değerler*

Introduction

During Heydar Aliyev's leadership of our republic from 1969 to 1982, he consistently upheld Azerbaijan's national interests. Thanks to the wise policies and well-thought-out, purposeful measures implemented by the National Leader Heydar Aliyev, the years 1969-1982 have gone down in history as Azerbaijan's renaissance period. The 1970s and 1980s were a significant period in Azerbaijan's socio-political, socio-economic, and cultural development, characterized by its uniqueness. During this time, achieving the goals of independence and freedom was prioritized by maximizing the opportunities of the era, realizing the most essential attributes of national state-building, and restoring historical precedence in the nation's mindset and values. During this period, National Leader Heydar Aliyev, as a skilled and highly experienced head of state and wise political figure, successfully tackled numerous complex tasks and took significant steps aimed at safeguarding Azerbaijan's national interests in all areas. All the achievements of this renaissance period were made possible under the leadership and principled stance of National Leader Heydar Aliyev.

1.The problems encountered in the implementation of the national policy course in the late 1960s and early 1970s

National policy is a broader concept that encompasses state policy. In the 1960s, when Heydar Aliyev began his activities, Azerbaijan was formally independent, but in reality, it was under colonial subjugation. Therefore, it was impossible to talk about the necessary national policy for an independent state at that time. Heydar Aliyev had enough experience to implement national policy. The concept of national policy put forward by the National Leader Heydar Aliyev was characterized not by space, but by time. An example of this is the gradual nationalization of the state security system, which indicated the necessity of nationalizing all the country's administrative structures, as well as all official and unofficial institutions operating within the state. If we compare the press from the 1920s to the 1960s with the press of the 1970s and 1980s, we can see that the change of signatures from ordinary to leadership positions was a direct result of the national policy of National Leader Heydar Aliyev. Unlike neighboring republics, Azerbaijan's personnel policy was strictly controlled, and during a period when decisions that were not in our favor were made, Heydar Aliyev's forward-thinking, wise national policy concept proved its significance once again.

The foundation of National Leader Heydar Aliyev's national policy concept was to prevent and restore the distortions in thinking, morality, and mentality. In the 19th century, the confusion of religious beliefs with national identity, and in the 20th century, the sharp imposition of the idea that enlightenment and culture came from the North, made it necessary to restore the people's self-awareness. The main objective of Heydar Aliyev's national policy concept was to form future generations by freeing them from the stereotypes created by these ideological provocations. This national policy concept, in addition to its precise political orientation, had a comprehensive character that covered all aspects of public-political, socio-economic, and scientific-cultural life, and it is essential to highlight two characteristic features. The strategic goal in Heydar Aliyev's national policy doctrine was to maximize the use of the opportunities of the time to achieve independence and freedom, realize the most crucial attributes of national state-building, and create a fundamental shift by returning the people's thinking and morality to national self-awareness. State-building and the concept of the national person were the priority directions of national policy, and all other directions were aimed at realizing these two directions (Orucov, 2003). These two priority directions of the national policy concept played a significant role in the historical victory of the struggle for freedom in our republic.

The national policy concept of the National Leader Heydar Aliyev covered state-building, public-political, socio-economic, scientific-cultural, ideological, moral-ethical, and military sectors. Significant work was done in the socio-economic sphere. The transformation of Azerbaijan, known as the "land of black gold," into an agrarian country was the main goal of Bolshevik ideologists, and consistent efforts were being made in this direction. While the development of agriculture in the country was a positive step, the sacrifice of industry for the benefit of the agrarian sector was a deliberate policy to exploit the country as a raw material source and to prevent scientific and cultural progress. Heydar Aliyev was well aware that such development would lead to disaster for the future of the country. First and foremost, practical efforts were made to gradually increase the weight of the industrial sector. Sumqayit became a major chemical center. Despite significant challenges, permission was granted for the construction of industrial facilities in Ganja, Nakhchivan, Mingachevir, Ali Bayramli, and other regional centers of the republic. A refrigerator factory was built in Baku, new roads were constructed, and strategically important railway lines such as Baku-Balakan and Baku-Khankendi were opened. As a result of increasing the weight of industry in Azerbaijan's economy, the social situation of the population improved, the social composition of the population changed, and strengthening the industrial sector had a significant impact on the development of culture, science, education, and mutual relations with the Soviet republics and many other countries. This played a major role in Azerbaijan's recognition as a republic (even if formally independent) in the world. The industrialization of Azerbaijan, remaining an agrarian country (except for the oil industry), became an irreplaceable foundation for the future independent and free Azerbaijan's economically non-dependent existence.

2. The national policy revival period in the Azerbaijan SSR

At the August Plenary of 1969, two key principles were emphasized: the implementation of the concept of indigenization and ensuring high professionalism. The correct personnel policy implemented in the 1970s led to the achievement of these important goals. The removal of Armenians from leadership positions caused serious discussions and dissatisfaction at the time, but the measures taken were implemented under Heydar Aliyev's firm support and leadership. With his visionary policy, Heydar Aliyev paid special attention to the development of national cadres and ensured the removal of Armenians from high positions. This was a strategic step aimed at both protecting national interests and strengthening the personnel potential. The national leader took all necessary steps to ensure the development of science in the republic. He understood that one of the main pillars of society's progress, as well as the

development of science and culture, was education. History proves that nations and their leaders who value science and education achieve rapid progress for their countries. Heydar Aliyev's genius was evident in his deep understanding of this truth and in his lifelong commitment to science and education. He consistently strived to form a highly educated, intellectual, and elite class. Heydar Aliyev once said, "No matter how many difficulties there are, we must always take care of science and education, and we must make full use of existing opportunities for the development of science" (Hüseynova, 2022). Until the 1970s, artificial barriers were imposed on Azerbaijanis to prevent them from studying at prestigious universities of the Soviet Union, and even certain restrictions were applied. Azerbaijani youth were mainly limited to studying literature, music, and other humanitarian fields. Heydar Aliyev spoke about this: "That year, at the end of August 1969, for the first time, I met with a group of young people, fewer than 50, in a small hall at my workplace, and gave them my advice. However, this was also a big signal for me that this work needed to be taken very seriously. This initiative was born solely from the desire to use the opportunities of our own, our country's, and the republic's higher educational institutions, as well as the central and more prestigious universities of the country we lived in, effectively, to train the necessary personnel for the future of Azerbaijan. The reason and goal behind this initiative were as follows... In 1969, we couldn't even send 50 people to study outside the republic, in 1970 we sent 60. After that, we gradually increased this number year by year. Finally, by 1975, we sent about 600 people, and by 1977-1978, every year, we sent 800-900 young people to universities outside the republic" (Əliyev, 2005). Starting from the 1970s, a significant shift took place in this area, and each year, hundreds of Azerbaijani students were sent to study at the most prestigious universities of the USSR in fields such as economics, law, international law, diplomacy, engineering, and other strategically important areas. During this period, broad opportunities were created for our youth to study at the major higher educational institutions of the former Union. This policy was one of Heydar Aliyev's farsighted and bold steps aimed at strengthening Azerbaijan's intellectual potential for statehood. Later, the significant role of this strategy in independent state building became clearly evident. As a result of Heydar Aliyev's personal initiative and the great influence he gained within the USSR leadership, a wide range of opportunities was created for Azerbaijani youth to be sent to leading universities in Moscow, Leningrad, Kyiv, Donetsk, Novosibirsk, and other cities. Between 1969 and 1982, over 15,000 Azerbaijani students had the opportunity to study at the most prestigious universities of the USSR (Pişnamazzadə, 2008). In a short period, a new type of national кадров base was created in Azerbaijan, and the foundation of many scientific schools

was laid. The education, science, and culture policies implemented by the national leader with great foresight during the 1970s and 1980s are reflected today in the rich intellectual potential of independent Azerbaijan and continue to serve the country's development. If, during that period, a wide network of educational institutions had not been established under Heydar Aliyev's initiative and leadership, if their solid material and technical base had not been ensured, if highly qualified specialists, especially national military personnel, had not been trained abroad, and if conditions had not been created for the development of fundamental science in research institutes, Azerbaijan's modern and national education system and its rich culture would not have been able to form. It should be noted that only during Heydar Aliyev's first leadership period, from 1969 to 1982, more than 350,000 students in various regions of the country were provided with education through the construction and commissioning of 849 general education schools (Əliyev, 1997). These achievements have created a strong foundation for the country's future intellectual and cultural development.

With in the framework of the national policy concept of the National Leader Heydar Aliyev, significant work was also carried out in the military field. In Heydar Aliyev's national policy doctrine, army building held an important place, considering two aspects: First, it was based primarily on the mentality of the people. Throughout history, our people have lived by the principle that "justice is powerful." However, this does not mean that military courage, struggle, and bravery have not been among the characteristic features of our nation. Our people, distinguished by their ability to fight and their bravery, were subjected to a purposeful policy to keep them away from military arts during times of foreign domination. In the 19th and 20th centuries, non-Christians, including Azerbaijanis, were not allowed to join the elite officer corps or even the rank-and-file soldier ranks. This policy of Tsarist Russia was continued by the Bolsheviks. Even in the 20th century, the followers of Azerbaijani generals like A. Shikhlyinski, S. Mehmandarov, and others, celebrated by Pushkin for their heroism, were excluded from military service (Orucov, 2003). All available means were used to prevent Azerbaijani youth from becoming professional military officers. It was claimed that Azerbaijanis supposedly did not know the Russian language. Azerbaijani soldiers rarely served in aviation or missile units; in fact, they were used as cheap labor. Such discrimination against Azerbaijanis was a logical consequence of a deliberate and targeted policy. As a result, the number of professional Azerbaijani officers in the former USSR armed forces was noticeably lower compared to the number of Georgian and Armenian officers (Orucov, 2003). Azerbaijani young men called up for military service were stationed in various geographic locations. Since

the geographical factor was not considered, our youth were placed in environments they were not familiar with. Those accustomed to the hot climate of the south often fell ill in the cold, snowy conditions of the north and sometimes returned home injured. These experiences caused a sense of alienation from the military profession and fostered doubts about their own military abilities. The most important issue was that Azerbaijan, both at that time and at any point in the future when it would gain independence, remained militarily dependent and could not ensure its own security. Because of his profound understanding of these issues, national leader Heydar Aliyev paid special attention to national security and military matters within the broader framework of national policy. It is also important to note that Heydar Aliyev, a great and heroic son of our people, was one of the first Azerbaijanis to rise to the rank of major general (Qurbani, 2002). During his time working in the State Security organs, Heydar Aliyev's main goal was to ensure a solid foundation for national security. Upon assuming leadership of the republic, he first continued the process of nationalizing the law enforcement system. By focusing on the officers and soldiers in the army, he created additional privileges for them. As a result, interest in the military profession grew among the youth. When Heydar Aliyev came to power in Azerbaijan in 1969, he skillfully pursued a policy aimed at developing the country and elevating its economy, science, and education within the framework of the harsh laws of the existing regime, in service of national interests. In particular, the initiation of military personnel training in Azerbaijan in the 1970s is notable. During the Soviet era, Azerbaijanis faced significant restrictions in military personnel training and representation in the Soviet military elite. Although several strategically important higher military educational institutions were located on Azerbaijani territory, the number of Azerbaijanis among the students of these institutions was very small. Despite the presence of these schools in the republic, the number of Azerbaijani graduates from these institutions was almost negligible. This situation could not fail to concern Heydar Aliyev, who was proud of his national identity and being Azerbaijani. As a result of his personal initiative and attention, from the 1970s onward, the number of Azerbaijani youth admitted to military academies in Baku began to significantly increase. According to statistical data from 1979, Azerbaijanis already made up 65% of the cadets. Nevertheless, Heydar Aliyev took another step to further develop the training of national military personnel. At Heydar Aliyev's personal initiative, the opening of the Nakhchivanski Military School in Baku in 1971 was a significant step for our republic. This step marked the beginning of the formation of a national army in Azerbaijan, which was already nurturing the ideas of independence, and laid the fundamental foundation for the future independent Azerbaijan's national security. By taking

this step, experience was gained in the teaching of military science. During the professional holiday of the employees of the National Security organs, it was said, as an expression of the general opinion of the professionals of this system:

"Today, the experience of Heydar Aliyev has become firmly established in the Ministry of National Security in the upbringing of loyalty to the homeland and people, and a sense of responsibility for the assigned field. The staff of the Ministry has set the goal of continuing and preserving all the wonderful traditions of the security organs. We are proud that these traditions were formed and developed during the periods when our esteemed President led the security organs. It was during that time that an entire generation working in these bodies went through the Heydar Aliyev school and was strengthened in difficult trials" (Orucov, 2003, p. 25).

On November 24, 1997, by the decree of Azerbaijan's National Leader Heydar Aliyev, the name of the school was changed to the Jamshid Nakhchivanski Military Lyceum. The graduates of the Military Lyceum have always been ready to contribute to the creation of the Azerbaijani army and to the struggle for the protection of our country's territorial integrity after Azerbaijan gained independence, and they continue to serve their homeland with honor. Over 1,000 graduates of the Jamshid Nakhchivanski Military Lyceum have been awarded orders and medals for their bravery, 11 have been honored with the title of National Hero of Azerbaijan, and 19 have been recognized as Heroes of the Patriotic War (Heyder Eliyev Adina Herbi Lisey, 2024). The National Leader always strived to ensure that any organization or structure aligned with national interests. Therefore, the greatest achievements in the creation of the national army are directly associated with the name of National Leader Heydar Aliyev.

Within the framework of the National Leader Heydar Aliyev's national policy concept, significant work was done in the socio-political field. In the 20s to 80s, the entire ideological propaganda machine and power of the Bolshevik-communist empire were directed towards the assimilation of other nations and peoples within the USSR. The concept of the "Soviet man" was implanted into the consciousness. A policy of aligning national values, customs, ways of life, thinking, and mentality with Soviet ideology was pursued to become a "Soviet man" (later known as the "Soviet people"). Azerbaijanis, living under standardized models, were completely isolated from political life and had lost their political activism. The prominent Kyrgyz writer Chinghiz Aitmatov introduced the concept of the "mankurt" in literature, not as a future curse, but as a tragic reality of our lives. The number of people who had lost their national memory and political activity was growing day by day. National identity was

systematically insulted. In 1994, Heydar Aliyev stated in one of his speeches that the "national feelings" in our people had been suppressed, crushed, and trampled, while the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, had said: "Nations without a national identity are prey to other nations" (Orucov, 2003). In order not to remain under the oppression of other nations, first and foremost, it was necessary to restore the people's confidence in themselves and revive the suppressed national feelings.

As a result of the practical activities of the National Leader, significant changes occurred in the socio-political and national structure, daily life, and welfare of the population of the republic during the 70s and 80s, which increased the cultural and intellectual potential of our people. The 1970s and 1980s marked a period of significant progress in Azerbaijan's socio-political, economic, cultural, and spiritual life. During these decades, higher education in Azerbaijan further developed, and new institutions of higher education were established. In 1971, based on the Pedagogical Languages Institute, the Departments of Russian Language and Literature (Baku Slavic University) and the Pedagogical Foreign Languages Institutes (Azerbaijan University of Languages) were created. In 1972, Pedagogical Institutes were established in Nakhchivan, and in 1973, in Khankendi (then Stepanakert), based on branches of the Azerbaijan State Pedagogical Institute. In 1976, the Institute of Construction Engineers was established, followed by the Ganja Technology Institute in 1981. By the late 1980s, there were 17 higher educational institutions in the republic (Zeynalov, 2004).

3. The main direction of the development of national values in the 1970s-1980s

In the 1970s and 1980s, alongside educational institutions, cultural and educational establishments and mass media played a significant role in raising people's knowledge and cultural level. 87 new museums and art galleries were established in the republic (Azərbaycan tarixi, 2008). In addition to the main exhibitions, thematic and traveling exhibitions dedicated to important events and significant days were organized every year. During the 1970s and 1980s, with the expansion of the democratic movement and pluralism in the country, new formal and informal publications emerged, which interpreted and evaluated events from the perspectives of various groups and movements in an unconventional way. Azerbaijani mass media widely promoted Soviet lifestyle and official ideology against the backdrop of universal and national values. Its influence on national awakening was growing. The publication of the first multi-volume "Azerbaijan Soviet Encyclopedia" between 1976 and 1988 was a remarkable event in the public, political, and cultural life of the republic. In the 1970s and 1980s, the works of classical Azerbaijani poets and writers were compiled, including the 20-volume "Azerbaijani

Literature Library", the 50-volume "World Children's Literature Library", the 100-volume "World Literature Library", and the first volume of the 12-volume collection of "Molla Nasreddin". These publications had a significant impact on the national awakening of the people (Azərbaycan tarixi, 2008). To increase the prestige of national literature and culture, literature and culture were deliberately and systematically promoted within the republic, in the former USSR, and globally. In the 1970s and 1980s, the artists and intellectuals who laid the foundation for national ideology and kept the people's energy from fading were provided with all necessary conditions to fulfill their missions. During these years, under the initiative of National Leader Heydar Aliyev, cultural figures of Azerbaijan were awarded honorary titles, orders, and medals from the USSR. For the first time in Azerbaijani history, the titles of Hero of Socialist Labor were given to Azerbaijan's composers, poets, and writers (Əliyev, 2023). National Leader Heydar Aliyev participated in the congresses of the Union of Azerbaijani Writers held between 1969 and 1982 and made significant contributions to the development of Azerbaijani literature. During this period, great attention was paid to the promotion of classical Azerbaijani literature, with valuable works of prominent scholars such as Nizami, Fuzuli, Nesimi, M. P. Vaqif, H. Cavid, M. S. Ordubadi, S. Rahimov, Ashiq Alasgar, S. Rustam, U. Hajibeyli, M. Magomayev, S. Vurgun, and others being translated into various foreign languages. The creative nights and anniversaries of Azerbaijani classical figures were celebrated in a grand manner. Special attention was given to musicians such as U. Hajibeyli, Q. Garayev, F. Amirov, A. Melikov, S. Hajibeyov and C. Jahangirov who made significant contributions to the development of Azerbaijani art, and their services were highly valued (Pişnamazzadə, 2008).

In the 1970s and 1980s, valuable artists such as Khan Shushinski, Bulbul, R. Behbudov, S. Qadimova, Sh. Alekberova, R. Muradova, and Z. Khanlarova made major contributions to the development of Soviet and Azerbaijani musical performance arts. During these years, numerous films reflecting the major and most relevant problems of the era, incorporating our national and spiritual values, and promoting our national culture were produced, and talented filmmakers were raised (Əliyev, 2023). In the 1970s and 1980s, under the initiative of National Leader Heydar Aliyev, the construction of monumental landmarks in Baku and throughout the republic had a significant impact on the development of Azerbaijan's national architecture.

In the broad political-ideological activity of the National Leader Heydar Aliyev, language policy held a very important place. Heydar Aliyev's language-building policy formed an integral part of his national state-building policy, creating a coherent system. During the years

of Heydar Aliyev's leadership of Azerbaijan (1969-1982), great attention was paid to the preservation and development of the national language, which is rooted in our national and spiritual values. More than 70% of the students studying in the republic's educational institutions were receiving education in the Azerbaijani (Zeynalov, 2022). The exceptional role of our national language in educating the younger generation in the spirit of nationalism and patriotism has been significant in mastering our national and spiritual values. At a time when the national language, culture, and national-spiritual values were on the verge of being lost, the adoption of the law on the Azerbaijani language was a courageous step. Throughout his career, Heydar Aliyev always stood guard over the preservation and development of the Azerbaijani people's language, identity, national consciousness, and mentality. At a time when it had become a tradition for leading figures to speak in Russian at official meetings and events, Heydar Aliyev made a remarkable statement in November 1969 during a meeting held on the 50th anniversary of Baku State University (BSU), delivering his speech in his mother tongue, Azerbaijani. In expressing his gratitude to those who congratulated him on the occasion, he said: "There is nothing unusual here, why are you surprised? This is my native language, and speaking in my native language is not a great act of heroism. Not knowing or appreciating your native language is undoubtedly a disgrace before the people". On October 7, 1977, when the new Constitution of the Soviet Union was adopted, under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev, the Constitutional Commission prepared the draft of the new Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR. On April 21, 1978, during the ninth convocation of the Azerbaijan SSR Supreme Soviet's extraordinary seventh session, Heydar Aliyev delivered a report on "The Draft of the Constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR (Fundamental Law) and the Results of Its Nationwide Discussion." Although this constitution was based on the new Constitution of the Soviet Union, it also took into account the national, economic, political, and historical characteristics of the republic. Thanks to the strong will of the National Leader Heydar Aliyev, the 1978 Constitution included a provision declaring Azerbaijani as the state language. Despite the totalitarian regime and Moscow's strong resistance, Article 73 of the constitution confirmed that "The state language of Azerbaijan is Azerbaijani." Heydar Aliyev's invaluable services in the development and recognition of the Azerbaijani language are noteworthy. He stated: "A scholar or teacher who develops their own language, writes their own history, reflects it, explores and analyzes their own spirituality, and conveys it to their people at a high level together, they all serve the development of their people's, nation's, national consciousness, and patriotic spirit." On October 31, 1995, during a meeting of the Constitutional Commission of the Republic of Azerbaijan,

Heydar Aliyev stated: "However, this article (referring to Article 73) was met with great opposition in Moscow. They argued that this was not needed, that other republics didn't have it... But at that time, I had very intense negotiations with the leadership of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party. I tried to prove that we must include in our constitution that the state language is Azerbaijani, and we will do so."

This policy has been successfully implemented during the period of independence as well. On November 12, 1995, through a national referendum, the first Constitution of the independent Republic of Azerbaijan was adopted, and Article 21 confirmed that "The state language of the Republic of Azerbaijan is Azerbaijani. The Republic of Azerbaijan ensures the development of the Azerbaijani language." The fact that the Azerbaijani language serves not only Azerbaijanis but also all the nations living in the territory of Azerbaijan with equal dedication is a significant step in preserving and developing our national and spiritual heritage. The inclusion of the Azerbaijani language as one of the symbols of our national statehood in the 1995 Constitution played a crucial role in the comprehensive development of our mother tongue, its preservation in its purest form, its transformation into a functional language, and its integration into the system of international relations. The decree signed on June 18, 2001, titled "On Improving the Implementation of the State Language," was also one of the steps taken to strengthen the political and legal status of the Azerbaijani language. The decree clarifies several sensitive aspects related to the history of our language and analyzes its developmental paths and stages. The creation of favorable conditions for the wide-scale application and comprehensive development of the Azerbaijani language, which is the official language of our independent state, and the implementation of several key measures for this purpose, were established as a responsibility. The Decree dated August 9, 2001, "On the Establishment of the Azerbaijani Alphabet and Azerbaijani Language Day" is a clear example of the state's care for the Azerbaijani language and its development. Thanks to the determination, political will, and principled stance of National Leader Heydar Aliyev, from that date, our republic fully switched to the new alphabet – the Latin-script Azerbaijani alphabet. The Decree of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On the State Language of the Republic of Azerbaijan" dated September 30, 2002, which addresses issues such as the functioning, development, preservation of the purity of the state language, adherence to the norms of literary language, the creation of the necessary conditions for the development of theoretical and applied linguistics in our country, reflects the comprehensive care of the independent Azerbaijani state for its mother tongue. The adoption and implementation of decisions aimed at the development of our mother tongue, a national

treasure of our people, is considered one of the great historical services of National Leader Heydar Aliyev.

Conclusion

In the 1970s and 1980s, within the framework of National Leader Heydar Aliyev's national policy concept, deep structural reforms in the economic and social sectors, along with the improvement of the people's material well-being, led to significant progress in the national and spiritual life. These years marked a turning point in Azerbaijan's economic and socio-political life. With the rise to power of National Leader Heydar Aliyev in 1969, the foundation for a turning point in Azerbaijan's modern history was laid (Hüseynova, 2004). The unmatched activity, initiative, and organizational skills of Heydar Aliyev, the First Secretary of the Azerbaijan Communist Party Central Committee, in developing complex programs for the dynamic development of our republic, were the foundation of successes throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The course of Azerbaijan's development history during 1969-1982 shows that the period that began with Heydar Aliyev's rise to leadership in 1969 was characterized by significant steps toward the establishment of an independent state. As a result of Heydar Aliyev's great efforts, the scale of the changes and the nature of the socio-economic reforms turned the 1970s and 1980s into one of the brightest periods in Azerbaijan's history. The economic growth, national-cultural revival, development of national consciousness, and strengthening of national spirit observed from that period onwards turned the long-held idea of statehood in the hearts of the people into the driving force of the national liberation struggle. This foundation created a strong basis for the rise of the struggle for independence at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s.

The independent Republic of Azerbaijan, continuing its rich cultural heritage and traditions, has become one of the world's developed cultures. These achievements are based on the successful implementation of Heydar Aliyev's domestic and foreign policies, the attention given to the nation's cultural heritage and intellectual potential, as well as his unparalleled dedication and organizational skills in the field of cultural construction. The successful policies in education, science, and culture carried out by National Leader Heydar Aliyev in the 1970s and 1980s are reflected in the high level of the rich, current potential of independent Azerbaijan today, and they bear fruit. Today, in independent Azerbaijan, the foundations of education, science, and culture have developed on the basis of the foundation established in those years.

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