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The realities of events associated with the establishment and development of Khazar University have left indelible traces in my memory. I intend to pass these events to you in their entirety and in all sincerity. I hope I can relive together with you, readers, those days spent in 'search of "Khazar".

CHAPTER 1
BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH

For a number of years I was familiarizing myself with different universities all over the world, whilst gathering my thoughts on science and education in my own country, Azerbaijan. These ideas and comparisons were taking a distinctive shape in my imagination - the shape of a university.

Novel ideas and thoughts seemingly appear unexpectedly, but in reality they are a result of long and intensive subconscious efforts. The information that we absorb, accept and keep in our minds is explored and analyzed in invisible and imperceptible ways. According to some hypotheses, this way is simply called a harmonization, putting thoughts into a correct and beautiful order. In this process, suddenly everything falls into place and an idea appears as a patch of light.

The first place where I studied after Azerbaijan was Moscow State University. I spent long years there first studying and then researching mathematics. The university's extremely high scientific potential and pleasant and creative atmosphere seemed to be a new world to me. Later I traveled more and came across more varied systems at universities in Canada and in

Europe. I didn't content myself solely with giving lectures, presenting papers at different conferences, workshops, and conducting new research. These universities themselves slowly became my object of study and investigation. Later I also started practicing "distance learning" of the world's famous universities. With enthusiasm I studied histories of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (I was unable to visit those at the time) in order to understand their distinct features.

The crisis that has started in the higher education system in Azerbaijan was deepening further in the second part of the eighties. Historically, Azerbaijan has gained great successes in the art of music and other forms of art, and some fields of science had developed to the point that the foundations of certain scientific schools had been established. Meanwhile the moral values that the society was resting upon began to be reduced to dust, and the economic basis was about to be destroyed. These developments influenced every sphere of society including science and education. The habit of corruption, accepting bribes and falsifying the students' grades was spreading day by day from one university to another and from one lecturer to another. There was no control over corruption and it was becoming accepted as common practice. The scientists and intellectuals that were trying to maintain their integrity and distance themselves from the surrounding world were slowly becoming mere observers. The level and intensity of scientific research was sharply decreasing. The political and economic crisis in the Soviet Union started having an impact on universities and research institutes. Many claimed that the pitiful lecturer earnings forced them to take bribes, and this number was gradually increasing.

Lies and hypocrisy, dilettantism and protectionism were prospering.

In July 1990 I was invited to Great Britain as one of the keynote speakers at the 11th International Dundee Conference on Ordinary and Partial Differential Equations. There I met my old friends and some new faces, and refreshed in my memory the interesting pages of the history of Scotland and England.

On the return London to Moscow flight, as I habitually do, I was trying to make travel notes and write down some of my thoughts. I was thinking and comparing the East and the West. My thoughts were random. Strangely, I was feeling myself not on the plane but between the earth and sky, in a condition of weightlessness. For a moment I felt strange anxiety and excitement. "Would I be able to establish a small university?". This strange question was not leaving me, but was attracting my thoughts like a powerful magnet. I was really struggling with my mind trying to free it of this annoying question, to leave it unanswered, but all my efforts were futile. On one hand, my mind was busy drawing up plans for university. On the other hand, I was putting up a weak resistance, thinking that I am again taken away from the realities of the world by rebelling thoughts.

CHAPTER 2**IN THE BOTTOM OF THE WELL**

Having returned to Baku I had a little rest and then went back to work. At the time I was working at the Baku branch of the Voznesensky Institute of Finance and Economics of Leningrad.¹ This branch was established on the foundations of the Azerbaijan Institute of National Economy that lost its independent status because of serious flaws in its administration. Upon the decision of the Academic Council in Leningrad I had been elected the chairman of the department of mathematics of the branch. I had already been working there for two years.

Rahib Guliyev, the newly appointed director of the branch was trying to bring about sweeping reforms by replacing the old staff. However the situation was not so simple and in order to make real changes it was essential to make gradual, well thought through steps. Since his reforms were very closely associated with job losses they were not very popular. He faced strong resistance and the result was formation of power cliques. Guliyev wanted too much too soon, and his intolerance and the influence of the ongoing power struggle in the Government (this institute was always strongly associ-

ated with the governments) made him too vulnerable and he was forced to leave his position.

The newly appointed director, Fuad Alaskarov, was not a reformist, but rather a conformist. He brought back all those released by the previous director, tried to regain independence from Leningrad in order to lead a more calm and comfortable existence.

It seems that my independence and profile and the fact that I was staying out of all intrigues began to annoy Alaskarov. Although in our personal conversations he remained very respectful, various rumors starting spreading through the institute. One incident in particular served as a turning point from polite tension to badly hidden hostility. Only few days after I returned home from Scotland, voting for candidates into the Azerbaijani National Assembly (Parliament) was held at the Institute.² The deans of the faculties and chairmen of the various departments had nominated Alaskarov for election and were making speeches in his honor one after another. Then unexpectedly, a group of faculty members and students proposed my nomination. I was told that those who supported my candidacy were severely attacked and one of them was even beaten by Alaskarov's supporters. I went into the meeting hastily and thanked my supporters for giving me their support and confidence. At the same time I reminded them that I had no desire to be engaged in politics and I simply had too little time and withdrew my candidacy. After this incident the atmosphere around me became increasingly tense. Soon after I left for my summer holidays.

CHAPTER 3**AN ARTICLE ON EDUCATION**

I spent the summer of 1990 thinking continuously about education problems and the various new university models and I wrote an article entitled "Thoughts on Science and the Education System". I was intending to publish the article both in Azerbaijani and Russian to give everybody an opportunity to read it. Since I had serious doubts that this article would ever be published I gave the copy to some of my acquaintances and friends who knew about my activities and were expressing interest in my ideas. Among them was Saleh Mammadov, doctor of economics, who would become the Minister of Finance in the government of the Popular Front of Azerbaijan.³

Six years have passed since then and from today's point of view some facts and ideas in the article seem simplified, some vital problems have not even been touched upon.* But the main purpose of it was to draw

* The first time "In search of Khazar" has been published in "Khazar View" magazine (1996-1997, № 10-14, 19-27) in Azerbaijani and then in English in "Azerbaijani Studies" journal (1998, v.1, № 4). All facts refer to that time and changes have not been taken into account here.

the readers', and I also hoped officials', attention to the necessity of reforms in science and education. At that time I had but a slight hope of convincing them of the necessity and natural possibility of establishing new universities.

After about three to four months the article was published in Russian in the "Bakinskiy Rabochiy"⁴ newspaper in an abbreviated and simplified form. The article was entitled "To reform Education" and published under the headline of "Scholar's point of view" (January 25, 1991). The Azerbaijani version of the article was published in the newspaper "Communist"⁵ only in May 17, 1991 under the headline "Opinions, suggestions" entitled "Any education must be global". This belated version was also shortened but the expressions and sentences remained untouched. I have to mention with certain irony and pleasure that by the time the article was published in the newspaper "Communist", the university that I had been nurturing in my mind for a long time was about to become a reality. The Council of Ministers had already passed a decision to allow the setting up of the first private university and I had already begun working in this direction.

Before returning to other events in the fall of 1990 I'd like to introduce the article mentioned above in its entirety. Although the articles published in the newspapers "Communist" and "Bakinskiy Rabochiy" were not the same, the main messages were quite close. Since the style of the article published in "Communist" was more similar to my original manuscript, I present it to you with editorial abridgments distinguished by Italics.

CHAPTER 4

"THOUGHTS ON SCIENCE AND THE
EDUCATION SYSTEM"

We live in difficult, responsible and anxious times. Distortions hidden in the shadow of our fight for political and economic independence, previously unseen scale and tension of struggle for power, corruption penetrated in the blood, soul and brain of the entire republic, incurable ecological problems, political and military counteraction⁶ with our neighboring nation, flabbiness of science, education and culture - are all different signs of our crisis. Incompetence, superficiality and indifference are everywhere. Pure ideals are smiled at in the best of circumstances.

The future of our nation is determined by the cultural level of our society and the universal feature of our education and science. No rapid leap in the economy is possible without these two factors. *When intellectual energy starts to weaken and global thinking becomes a rarity, intolerance of other's opinions and pugnacious nepotism occur.*

Who could deny the obvious successes of our science, education and culture? At the same time it is crucial to consider the questions that trouble us. Why is the number of our world-renowned scholars next to noth-

ing? Which of our scientific institutions are famous for their important works and glorious traditions? Which universities can offer diplomas that are able to compete with European and American ones?

If today we do not think about the future of our science, education and culture, do not take serious measures, it is certain that our future will be bleak. It is in our nature to exaggerate and to be pleased with ourselves, thus stimulating our own and the public's imagination about our "successes."

Today when our international relations are becoming broader, the lack of highly skilled and competent specialists is even more obvious. The number of our compatriots familiar with the international world, modern science and economics, capable of dynamic and analytical thought and able to converse fluently in English (German, French...) with Western specialists can be easily counted on the fingers of one hand.

Up to now, *and at present*, the structure of education, science and culture and the ways in which they are developing have been under a tight centralized control and personal and small groups initiatives have not been taken into consideration. Everything has been defined, planned and governed from "above." This way of governing could only bring local and temporary successes, but has not been able to form long lasting and firm traditions. One of the most serious and distressing results has been the separation of science and education from each other. The Academy of Science⁷ was responsible only for the development of scientific research, whereas the universities were there to train the specialists and give them higher education. The two had insignificant influence on each other.

On the other hand, there existed, *and still exist*, monotony and inertness in the administration of education. Identical programs, methods and rules created similar requirements and responsibilities, reduced competitiveness and brought down the standards. *Slack personnel selection policies caused especially heavy damage to our education, science and culture. There are many lecturers with completely out-of-date knowledge at our universities and nobody questions them.*

There is no thought given to competitiveness in education. As a result of all of these, interest and curiosity for science is reducing, education and culture are evidently losing their role as indicators of our national esteem.

For the sake of the dignity and future of our nation, it is our duty to devote maximum attention to the development and administration of education and culture. The time now is right to bring about fundamental changes.

Is it possible to fundamentally renew the entire gigantic education system, science and culture? What, generally, is renovation in these complicated and diversified areas? It's not even easy to comprehend all aspects of our backwardness in these areas. It is going to be a long and hard work to analyze all the political, economic and historical aspects of our problems. Scientific, technical, moral and material resources must be laid bare, gigantic expenses must be incurred and efforts spent. So what is to be done immediately, today?

There are two possible roads leading to success. The first is to define a certain group of research and education centers and devote special attention to their all-round development, to try to reform them. *As mentioned before, hard and all encompassing work will*

have to be done in this direction. The second way, I believe, needs a special discussion. It is a completely new way for us and it is very important and urgent for us to go in this direction. The way is based on learning and applying West European and American education and science models while *taking into account our traditions and circumstances.*

If we long for a market economy and try to Westernize our political system, will it be possible to not follow Western models in our education system and science? Is it possible to develop our science, education and culture to the standards of tomorrow whilst using yesterday's methods? It is quite obvious that revolutionary changes in the economy demand the appropriate changes in science and education, make it inevitable to lay foundation of flexible and strong world-wide thought and train new breed of specialists. *Fundamental developments of modern areas of science in developed countries of Europe, America and Asia, and a well-governed education system as its organic unity, are indisputable arguments of the vitality of Western models in these spheres.*

Though Western universities have similarities in the organizational principles of education, they differ from each other from the viewpoint of the importance of research or education, budgets, financing from state, and different level of requirements for achieving degrees. *Private universities in the USA and some other countries are considered the most prestigious and influential science and education establishments.* One of the most obvious examples of this is the famous Harvard University, USA, that has been an object of pride, amazement and imitation for over 360 years. Among its alumni are

numerous specialists, scholars and statesmen of world-wide fame.

Today we have to think about the main characteristics of a new type of higher education and scientific institutions and to conduct certain investigations. These institutions must develop specialists qualified in exact, social-political sciences and humanities and with good command of foreign languages (especially English). They have to contribute to the development of science and culture, and establish themselves in the international arena. *In this case what principles must be taken as fundamental and why are these principles of great importance?*

If higher education is to be in conformity with modern standards it must consist of two stages. The initial stage is generally four years long, provides a general higher education in certain subjects and ends with the awarding of a baccalaureate degree. The second stage of higher education lasts approximately two years and usually ends with the narrow specialization and master's degree, in some cases, upon the defense of a thesis. The need for such organization of higher education is not for the sake of fashion and artificial Westernizing, but it is in order to shape a 'form' necessary to improve the quality, to give an effective push to our science and culture. We can make use and derive certain advantages from the programs and practices of the world-leading universities and from the knowledge and experience of visiting scholars. We will have a real chance to agree mutual recognition of academic achievements and diplomas and degrees with Western countries. Until now, an agreement on mutual recognition of diplomas has only been achieved with Finland from all the developed countries, and negotiations are currently being held with

Austria.⁸ Besides, if we have a higher education institution that awards bachelor and master's degrees that are accepted in the developed countries, we would have greater opportunities to teach foreign students.

It is very important to teach English and other foreign languages besides giving students a profession. Language should be taught not only as a means of interaction and an object of linguistics, but as a medium of instruction in a student's chosen field. Some graduates can receive the diploma of foreign language interpreter as well as their main degree. Then our students will be able to successfully continue part of their education abroad (they will not be strangers to the Western ways of education and fluent in English). And our graduates will be able to work in any country in their chosen field. The children of Azeris living abroad can also be educated here and return to their countries with a bachelor and master's degree.

It makes sense if the education at the new type of institutions (or at least in some of them) should be fee paying. At the beginning of every year a student has to pay a fixed tuition fee depending on the major he or she chooses. Paid education can stimulate not only the student's own responsible approach to education, but also help with funding successful research activities at the university. Of course, tuition fees can not only be paid by individuals but also by sponsor organizations that are, for example, in need of certain specialist skills.

It is advisable that at the end of each term the students are ranked according to their academic achievements and examination results, and the student is awarded a "success index." Every term the "success index" undergoes appropriate changes and upon completion of the education a final "success index" is calculated. The

level achieved by graduates (based on the final success index) will not only serve for the purposes of moral satisfaction but can also help in job search.

The unity of science and education and their mutual influence must be taken as a basis for education and be stimulated in every possible way. It is impossible to prepare highly qualified specialists at the universities where there is no respectable scientific research foundation. Top level universities function both as a source of education and as a research center. (There are not many examples of large bureaucratic and purely scientific research academies and institutions like ours in developed countries). *Some dedicated funds, perhaps in the form of annual grants, will be defined for scientific work that is interesting and contemporary. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis, thus encouraging research development. Attached to universities, special research centers and institutes can also function.*

Alongside the required courses, the students also can select a certain number of elective courses. This principle takes into account not only the student's wishes and inclinations, but also encourages competitiveness and development of scientific research in chosen fields. Socio-political sciences must not be devoted to ideology anymore but to analyzing current situation, our past and worldwide outlook. English language and information technology must be given special attention as a vital part of higher education.

It is essential that every subject has a specific "weight" attached to it (i.e. credit). Students will have to re-sit subjects for which they fail to obtain the necessary credit. Only those who obtain the defined number of credits from the required courses, and some courses of general knowledge can graduate from the University.

Cooperation with leading universities and close contact with well known foreign scholars should be helpful in preparing curricula, the teaching of some subjects, raising the level of research, preparing the exact indicators of degree requirements, in organizing conferences and symposiums, and many other areas.

It is essential to start educating specialists in those areas where there is a great demand. These can include management, marketing, law, commerce, international finance systems, computer and mathematical sciences, international relations and political sciences, environmental studies, and others.

Pluralism of the political system and different forms of economic properties are making their way into our country and are becoming part of everyday life. It is impossible to avoid these in higher education and science. Everyone would benefit from different types of universities functioning side by side. *To give the freedom of choice to humans is one of the necessary factors of progress.*

CHAPTER 5

ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE PALACE

It was September 1990. The academic year had already begun and everybody was greeting each other and exchanging news. Ever "essential" topics such as palace quarrels and difficulties of surviving were being discussed intensively. When the group numbers were down to two or three, money and love affairs would overcome other topics. When these hot topics were exhausted other issues were raised.

My unpublished article "Thoughts on scholarship and education system" had reached a group of scholars and become a lively subject of discussion. Various people were approaching me with different questions, suggesting that I publish the article in this or that newspaper, and also giving some ideas and plans. I was giving short answers, in some cases with a smile and a joke. I was thinking: "I wrote the article to create an interest and to be discussed - and that is exactly what is happening. So the main work is done and all that is left is to make it a reality. This is the principal task now."

One day Saleh Mammadov came to the department of mathematics, and told me that he had read my article attentively and enjoyed it.

- You have touched upon serious problems. What's next? - He addressed me with his usual slightly arrogant tone of voice.

- What *can* happen? - I answered a question with question, - I will try to publish it both in Azeri and Russian, enable more people to read it, maybe somebody will find it helpful.

- That's good. But there is another way. As you know I am a financial adviser to the Prime Minister Hasan Hasanov and as such I see him occasionally. I have to be at one of the meetings in his office soon and if you don't mind I'll give him the manuscript of your article. Most probably it will draw his attention. He is a man of progressive ideas and he is very attentive to new and unexpected ideas, especially if it's related to an important problem.

Prior to this conversation I'd met Hasan Hasanov only once. I took my friend from Canada, Yagoub Shafai, to see him. During one of my visits to Canada I lectured at Dalhousie University in Halifax, and became friends with two Azeri-scholars - a mathematician Heidar Rajavi, and a professor in management Yagoub Shafai. From then our friendship went from strength to strength. My article "A scholar from Canada in his homeland" published in the "Literature and Culture" (Adabiyyat va injasanat) newspaper was dedicated to Heidar Rajavi and our meetings with him. In April-May, 1990, Yagub Shafai visited Baku as well. After a TV program where Yagoub Shafai, Fuad Alaskarov and myself took part, Yagub-bey had become very popular. People would stop him on the streets of Baku, greet and communicate with him. Around that time I was told that the Prime Minister would like to meet Yagoub and we were invited to the Council of Ministers for an appointment.

Hasan Hasanov met us in a very friendly manner. First, he asked Yagoub a lot of questions, then turned to me and said:

- Aren't you the same mathematician Hamlet who was talking about his visits to Canada on the TV show "Dalga?"⁹

He didn't try to hide his pleasure to see our surprised faces.

The meeting lasted more than half an hour and was very interesting. We discussed Canada, Azerbaijan, Iran, Zanzan,¹⁰ economics, finance, management and other subjects and I think everybody enjoyed it.

Up to this I had neither met a Prime Minister before nor any other minister or top government official face to face. For some reason I couldn't take seriously a chat of two people living lives so different that we could have been living on different planets. I think for this reason our meeting remained in my memory as an exotic incident.

I had to reply to Saleh's suggestion of passing on the article, but frankly even if my article would reach the Prime Minister, I didn't pin my hopes on his interest in the problem. The most appropriate, real and modest thing for me to do was to publish the article in a newspaper and thus draw attention to my ideas. But after some hesitation, I agreed with Saleh.

- So do you think that we'll get what we want? Does the Prime Minister have nothing to do but read my scribbling? More probably he has already forgotten me. Oh well, life is unpredictable. Maybe this is the way. Let's go!

So, my letter was sent to the Palace.

CHAPTER 6**CHANGE**

When the Baku branch of the Leningrad Institute of Finance and Economics became independent again under the name of the Azerbaijan State Economic Institute, the program worked out by Leningrad specialists not only remained unrealized but disappeared completely. I have to remark here that this institute was famous for being the most corrupt among all higher learning institutions in Baku. Though there were still some respectable researchers and professors, as well as the hopeful youth, there wasn't an encouraging working atmosphere and no new staff members were brought in. In this condition I could not do anything useful even at the department of mathematics where I was chairman. The new mathematics curriculum worked out by me for three semesters was followed only by a small group of instructors. There was a group of teachers who made various excuses in order not to follow the program, arguing that the simple mathematical models of economics would be too complicated for students to understand. They claimed that economic terms and problems in mathematics are unnecessary. Then there would be no difference between the mathematics for economics, fi-

nance and management, on the one hand, and mathematics for engineering, on the other.

One day the assistant to the Prime Minister gave me a call. He told me that the Prime Minister would like to meet me and we arranged an appointment.

One fine fall evening together with Saleh Mammadov I went to the Cabinet of Ministers. On the way we decided that I'd do most of the talking to save time and explain convincingly our aim. Of course, we could never guess how long our talk would last. We thought the discussion would be of general character, as some kind of probing exercise.

Hasan Hasanov met us cheerfully and immediately went straight to the main point:

- I have heard about your ideas. Briefly tell me, what is your intention, what are you going to do?

I was not ready yet for such an open conversation without any introduction. That is why I did a quick, neutral move, as if playing speed chess, to give myself some time to think:

- Frankly, I only wrote down some of my ideas on education with the aim to initiate a discussion. I'm very honored to be asked about it on such a high-level.

- I have invited you to personally get information on what kind of university you are planning to establish - said the Prime Minister, and by making that move he increased the pressure. This question was very unexpected, but at the same time I felt that a perfect atmosphere was being created. It was impossible to continue in a vague manner, speaking the chess-players' language, tactics came into action now. I decided on a sharp move.

- Is it possible to establish a new university in Azerbaijan today? - Of course, I had revealed my surprise and suspicion with that question.

The Prime Minister smiled:

- Well, I've invited you here today in this connection. I want to understand how serious your plans are.

Suddenly, a wave of excitement raised inside of me. I realized how very important this meeting could be, and I felt a conviction that something beautiful is about to happen. This moment calmed me down, I felt that everything now depended on my faith in myself and on my ability to be convincing. I became encouraged in the way a chess-player who has an opportunity to demonstrate a good game would be. Of course, H. Hasanov's high spirits that day, his well-wishing attitude and ability to see a problem quickly inspired me. I took the initiative in my hands and relaxed, like if I was talking to a colleague, and not to the Prime Minister:

- A breath of fresh air, a new movement in the higher education system of Azerbaijan is as necessary as bread, as water. The deepening crisis of our education system is obvious, it doesn't need any special explanation. No measures are being taken to improve the situation. Yet it will not be possible to make substantial changes in the entire education system. I think, one of the ways is to establish a new type of private colleges and universities.

H. Hasanov stopped me:

- What do you mean by a new type? And what is wrong with the Soviet education?

I explained:

- Nobody denies the achievements of Soviet science and the Soviet institutes of higher learning are not bad either. But it's not the point. What I want to say is that the best times of our institutes are in the past, the level of education has descended and research has weakened. On one hand, it's very much connected with

the chaotic condition in society and government, on the other hand, it is the result of having no reforms and not feeling the pulse of the time. The education system must be taught and learnt just as any other kind of activity and as a subject, exposed to changes, be developed by making reforms. We do nothing in this direction. To establish a new and independent establishment for education does mean to make reforms in education...

- OK, OK, we all see the lagging in education and science, it's not your discovery. Look, what would be the main differences between the university you're going to establish and the existing universities and institutes?

I knew I found the right direction for the conversation and could foresee a favorable ending. But I could not forget that I was pressed for time to express my ideas. I tried to round off my thoughts:

- It is a university, where the students will pay for the education they receive. The teachers will be selected very attentively, their outlook, their research activity, teaching ability and their intellect will be taken into account. The tuition fee will increase the student's responsibility, and will enable us to increase the salaries, and the state expenses for education will be reduced. English language will be given a special importance. First it will be taught as a foreign language. Later, some courses and in future all courses, with a few exceptions, will be taught in English. In other words, a university with English as a medium of teaching will be established. One of the main characteristics of this university will be the application of education ideas tested in Europe and America, and all educational programs and curricula will be devised in order to meet today's needs.

H. Hasanov stopped me again. The Primer Minister often changed the direction of the conversation and didn't allow chattering and monotony.

- To choose English as the language of instruction is very important and interesting. How about the teachers? Are there Azerbaijani specialists able to teach different subjects in English?

- We have no problem with this in sciences. As to social-political sciences and humanities, of course, we have very few specialists. Although it's a small number, one can find scholars and teachers speaking English (even French) here. It should be sufficient to train a small group of students. On the other hand, if we don't have enough English speaking specialists, we can use Azerbaijani and Russian for the beginning. One of the main tasks is to enable students to read books and scholarly articles in English. And this will be possible at the university we are discussing now. At the same time such a university must establish broad foreign relations. Eventually, the visiting foreign scholars can speed up the English language education process.

- How will you manage to invite the foreign scholars? Do you have money?

I smiled, and decided to pass on this question in order not to wander away from the main subject (naturally, I could answer the question, to mention receiving grants and other ways). I tried to demonstrate yet again a sense of self-confidence:

- There are ways of inviting a small group of teachers. We have friends too and their help will be of great importance. Some foreign scholars, our friends, want to come to Azerbaijan to help us. They are aware of our present conditions and they will partially provide for expenses.

Hasanov said suddenly:

- I have recently organized a business congress, probably you've heard about it, we had a lot of foreign guests. Peculiarities of a market economy were being discussed. One could feel very strongly the insufficiency of English speaking specialists in our country. To teach subjects in English and to train specialists of different fields is a good idea, - and I immediately replied:

- Instruction in the English language will help us to integrate to the rest of the world, we can have visiting teachers and scholars and our students can successfully continue their education at the developed countries of America and Europe.

Pushing his armchair back H. Hasanov stood up, and so did we (Saleh and I).

Hasanov turned to me and said:

- You know the idea of establishing the university is a reasonable one, but it's only one side of the problem. What pleases me is that you have good workable plans. I have felt that you know what to do, you have turned this work over in your mind. Also I don't think there is any necessity to set-up a university or institute resembling our existing ones in any way. Your knowledge on the European - American education system is very important for this work.

- Thank you very much, - I replied.

- Come to my office once again. We will try to specify the subjects that are necessary for the beginning and identify problems that need to be solved and prepare some official proposal, - H. Hasanov said, smiled, then set the next appointment with us and we left.

Around the same time, my continued chairmanship of the mathematics department at Azerbaijan State

Institute of Economics was getting more and more on the nerves of the institute's managers. The department was one of the major ones, and they were eager to influence the entrance exam policies that I was in charge of. I began feeling more pressure and many conflicts were created in superficial ways. I started getting messages like "you have to leave your position or...", and there even were threats. The situation became such that this position no longer satisfied me as well.

First of all, as I mentioned before, there was no opportunity to do anything useful. Secondly, I knew that the young teachers I invited to the department would support me in any event of discord, some other teachers would not act against me and I didn't want them to be included on any "black list" because of me. Also, the gap between the image of university that I had conceived in my mind and the reality of my present job was so great that it led me to leave my position.

One day I went to the vice-chancellor's office and handed in my resignation. He immediately called the chancellor and told him about my resignation and everyone involved quickly agreed to accept it.

Now I could dedicate myself fully to my idea. I was preparing for a new meeting with the Prime Minister.

CHAPTER 7
LIGHT AND SHADOW

I was preparing for the discussion of specific and essential problems and issues during our next meeting with the Prime Minister. Among general issues to be discussed I was planning to place prime importance upon two issues: the building required for the university and financial support from the state budget. Also, as the Prime Minister mentioned himself, major departments and subjects needed to be defined. It was very difficult to plan in advance the direction that conversation would take and the content of the official document produced as a result.

I saw no problem in defining major subject areas and departments of the future university. I thought there was no need to explain to the Prime Minister the importance of training modern specialists in the field of management and economics. As a matter of fact he touched upon this problem himself during our last conversation. Law and social-political sciences could be considered as a second area of importance. Natural sciences could be represented by mathematics and computing. Setting up medical education would undoubtedly be a very difficult

task, but it would be necessary to solve this problem as well.

With all these thoughts I went to meet Hasanov again. I hurried but unfortunately when I arrived in his assistant's office I was 5 minutes late. Saleh Mammadov was waiting for me in the corridor. The assistant showed us through to Hasanov's office.

Hasanov looked displeased; he shook his head in response to our greeting and looked sourly at us:

- Why are you late?

I would normally never be late for a meeting, and I myself do not like those who are. The Prime Minister's comment has increased even more my feeling of discontent with myself. When Saleh wanted to answer I interrupted him and said:

- I'm so sorry, it's my fault. The traffic was appalling.

- When you are coming to the meeting with the Prime Minister everything must be taken into account. If you had left half an hour earlier you'd have never been late.

He was right, but his second comment hurt me. A quick thought passed through my mind "that is what happens when someone who is destined to sit at home and prove theorems instead attends meetings with the Prime Minister."

- All right, take your seats - Hasanov changed tone of his voice and smiled; - how are things getting on?

- Thank you very much, quite well, - answered Saleh.

I said nothing.

Hasanov turned to me:

- Where do you want to begin? You have probably prepared a plan about the departments and subjects.

- Undoubtedly, economics and management are the first ones to come to mind. The market economy and appropriate management systems are among the fields that require a new way of thinking. The present management education leaves much to be desired.

The Prime Minister asked:

- There is the Institute of National Economy Management (INEM) affiliated with the Council of Ministers. Don't they teach management?

Saleh responded quickly:

- They are holding retraining courses for administrators, and the market economy is not taught here.

I added:

- Our main goal is to teach modern economics, organization and management of business to high school graduates. The next advanced stages would be to prepare specialists in more specific areas. And we'll achieve it by learning from the American experience. Your Institute of National Economy Management is trying to "renew" the unwilling old school specialists in the shortest time.

I have a habit of always using some humor in my conversation or even in scientific papers. This style was formed over the years. It didn't always serve to my advantage - as an example, during the defense of my doctorate dissertation at the Steklov Institute of the Academy of Science of USSR in Moscow the main objection against my work brought by one of my opponents was "the language of the dissertation contains unacceptable level of emotion for the scientific work."

- Lately we couldn't find anyone to send to that institute for training courses anyway. There are some

problems with the institute, - Hasanov said as if he had completely forgotten about our presence.

I continued in a low voice:

- Besides economics and management we'd like to prepare specialists in law and diplomacy. The need in well-educated diplomats will be increasing, and specialists in this area are currently not being trained in Azerbaijan. Also our jurisdiction will be changed soon to accommodate changing times. There will be a special need for international law experts...

- It is also necessary to prepare well-educated politicians, - Hasanov declared his view of the problem and continued:

- So, we are choosing two main areas- economics and management and political sciences, - he said as if concluding.

- It would be useful if we teach international law side by side with political sciences, - I added carefully.

- Well! - Prime Minister sounded uncertain, but it was obvious that he didn't have strong objections.

I continued:

- Mathematics and computer sciences are also required.

The Prime Minister objected immediately, unexpectedly for me:

- Who needs mathematics? Who will want to dedicate themselves to mathematics and spend money on it?

I was annoyed a little. In order to understand my feelings, imagine the effect of an unpleasant opinion about the girl who you love and decide to marry. Moreover, there was some truth in difficulty of finding someone wanting to spend money in order to study mathematics.

Hasanov smiled:

- Of course, I had forgotten that you're a mathematician.

I had to convince the Prime Minister:

- We haven't set ourselves the task to prepare specialists in modern mathematics, although it would be an important task in itself. Modern economics and management are so close to computer sciences and mathematics, that sometimes it's impossible to distinguish them. From this viewpoint it's not possible even to consider the fundamental economics and business education and research without teaching applied mathematics, statistics, and computer sciences.

Saleh, as an economist and financier, also agreed with me:

- One of the main reasons of our lagging behind Europe and America is the lack of computerization in our economy, finance, banking and management.

- Well, I have no objection to it, - said Hasanov resting his hand against the edge of the table, - We defined major subjects. Let's discuss other issues.

I still carried on:

- It would be good to discuss the medical and biological sciences. Preparation of English-speaking medics and doctors will be of great importance in the near future if not today.

Oh, no, - he said, - let's leave this aside, it is an issue for the future. It seems you are not afraid of driving the State Institute of Medicine into a rage. Generally, don't expect that all will "applaud" and say "thank you" to you for setting up a new university.

I added in a low voice:

- Who will object as long as you give your consent to it? And if it serves the interests of the whole nation, why would anyone try to be an obstacle in its way?

Hasanov smiled and I thought that it is possible to interpret the expression of his face in two ways "You're a naive man and unaware of most things", or "Yes, in any case, my consent is the most significant in this matter."

- Well, tell me then, what will be the name of this university?" - asked Hasanov, - have you thought of a good name for it?

I think it was the only thing that I had never thought of - the name of the institution that I wanted to establish.

- Please allow us to think about it a little bit, - I wanted to gain more time, - In any case the name of this university will be connected to Azerbaijan, its nature, history or geography.

- Why university? Why not institute or college?

- There are at least two reasons why this higher education institution must be called a university. First, for the special attention that will be given to research, graduate studies, master and doctor programs. Second, we will not be limiting ourselves to only one or two areas of teaching and research. In general, we're thinking of taking most elements of the US university model as a basis.

- Well, what if we call it the "English Language Azerbaijan University", - said Hasanov, suddenly deciding solve the problem there and then, - It's a very good name. We have both "Azerbaijan" and "English" in it [That is, Azerbaijan University with English as a medium of instruction – *Ed.*]. What is your opinion?

This name seemed a little bit strange to me, more frankly I didn't really like it. But I didn't think it was appropriate to refuse the Prime Minister's offer, besides he already said, "it's a very good name."

- Yes, it's a very interesting name, - I said and set about to express my doubt in a 'peaceful' way, - But I have never heard of the university name that states the language of instruction in it.

Hasanov put an end to the problem:

- Let there be the name of the language in ours. And let the world see that there's a university in Azerbaijan where the language of teaching is English. Let them understand that we are not fundamentalists.¹¹ We are not a remote province of the USSR, but a country, a nation turning its face to Europe and America.

Then he continued jokingly:

- So, isn't it well thought through? None of you could think of it. OK, what's left? Oh, do you have a building? Where will the classes be taught?

These were still Soviet times. Though the Soviet Union had begun to collapse, there was inertness in the way of living, in thoughts. There was no private ownership. There were no people in Azerbaijan rich enough (at least, officially) who would care about education and science to an extent as to want to set up a university and spend money on its development. Those who knew about education and science and had new ideas could do something only with support of the government. For these reasons of course I could not have a building for a university and I thought it was a bit strange question to ask.

I said:

- We don't have a building and to tell the truth, we have not done any ground work since we didn't ex-

pect things to develop so fast. If for the beginning we could have with your help a small building or a part of any building and some financial support from the government we'll have enough time to prepare for the future.

- A building and money is not an easy thing to provide, in fact it is something we have a big shortage in, and not only for this exercise, - saying this Hasanov fell into thinking.

We were silent. I was hoping very much that the Prime Minister would be able to provide a building for us. Obviously things do not always go smoothly. It seemed we were not to be lucky in this aspect.

Hasanov suddenly said:

- Do you know the rector of the Institute of National Economy Management, Rahim Rahimov? I'm talking about the institute affiliated to the Council of Ministers. It has been mentioned in our conversation a little while ago.

We sat there, trying to understand which direction the problem was going to - better or worse.

The Premier with the help of his assistant gave a call to R. Rahimov. He spoke very gently to him:

- There is a very interesting idea. You'll like it. Come over here now. I'm waiting for you.

Then he told us in a satisfied voice:

- It seems I'll be able to solve your problem. I will reach an agreement with Rahimov and you will be placed at this institute. The rest will depend on you.

We left the Premier's cabinet and waited in the corridor for Rahimov to come.

Saleh looked very concerned. I wasn't in the highest of spirits either. It was only natural for us to want to work independently, without any obstacles since

the success of any work mostly depends on independence.

I happened to have met Rahimov before. When my friend from Canada Dr. J. Shafai, whom I mentioned previously, was in Baku, Rahimov had invited him to lecture at his institute and that is when our first acquaintance took place. He was a very resourceful and orderly person. His institute and its surroundings were neat and charming, not typical of Baku establishments. After that lecture he invited us to his birthday party. Since we had already planned to make a trip to Lankaran,¹² I promised to try to attend his party if at all possible. It happened that I kept my promise. For it he thanked me repeatedly: "Come to my institute if you have spare time, to have a chat, maybe discuss an idea or two", - saying this he didn't hide his interest to cooperate with me on something.

The number of participants was increasing...

CHAPTER 8**A TRIPLE BARRIER...
AND A RESOLUTION OF ESTABLISHMENT**

The Prime Minister's haste to find an accommodation for our university perplexed us and even confused our plans, however strange this may sound. We were thinking of leasing a small building or at least a part of it, which would enable us to set up an independent establishment and think through its policies. But now we were about to establish close relationship of some kind with the Institute of National Economy Management, which was attached to the Council of Ministers, and this was not an exciting prospect.

Hasanov not only invited the rector of INEM, Rahim Rahimov, but also the Head of the Department of Science and Education in the Council of Ministers, S.Aliyev, to meet Saleh and myself. When there had been three of us at meetings, I did most of the talking, with Hasanov directing the conversation with his questions and suggestions. Naturally, when two more participants who were unaware of the course of previous discussions became involved in the conversation, my role naturally decreased. The Prime Minister explained the matter in several sentences and explained the necessity of this university.

Then he turned to Rahimov and said:

- What do you think if we affiliate it to your Institute? Hamlet knows all about these things, he has planned what to do in the near future and then we'll see what happens. If the venture is successful, we can consider further development and financing.

- I don't mind, it seems to be a very useful step and I know Hamlet well, he will manage this, - answered Rahimov in a slightly hesitant manner. He was probably trying to understand what this all meant for him. Maybe he was trying to determine if there was any threat in this sudden offer, - But we have only four classrooms. How will we accommodate both the university students and those attending training courses? If we share the building, how will the relationship between these two institutions be regulated?

The Prime Minister seemed to understand R. Rahimov very well:

- This English-speaking university is just being set up, and for the time being it can function with a small group of students and remain attached to our institute. The number of those coming to training courses is decreasing day by day and you can use an alternating timetable - some classes could be in the first shift, others in the second shift.

I think the words "attached to your institute" calmed R. Rahimov down. So at least his organization and post remained untouched. On the other hand this "attachment" issue upset Saleh and myself greatly. It seemed with every word said our scope of activity was becoming more limited. It was too late to say "we have troubled you enough, thank you, we will look for a building elsewhere." But I decided to try anyway:

- Wouldn't it bring about some misunderstanding - to set up the university attached to the institute? What if we start to function at Rahim muallim's building for the moment, without using the phrase "attached to", and as soon as we are on more firm ground we'll find another accommodation?

S. Aliyev looked at me with expression of anxiety, bordering with disapproval. The Prime Minister has already made up his mind:

- To set up a new university attached to an established institute can only be helpful. You will be provided with accommodation and classrooms, there is nothing required from you, except to work out programs and start your classes.

Rahimov wanted to clear up one more question:

- What about the financial issue?

The Prime Minister answered immediately:

- This education will be paid for by students, it is a self-financing university.

I spoke again:

- It is absolutely correct, the financing of education will rely heavily on tuition fees paid by private individuals, but there is still a great need for financing from state budget. Paid education has not yet entered the public realm. People are not ready to accept it wholly, and the tuition fee probably will not be very high to start with. In general, the new private university will be in great need of state support. There are at least two ways of solving this problem - state can provide finance taking into account the number of students that are enrolled or a certain amount of finance can be given to the university as a one-off payment.

Rahimov agreed with me and also noted that the first option was more appropriate.

- It would be better if you wouldn't ask for money, - the Prime Minister changed the direction of the conversation:

- Some preparatory work should be completed before setting up the university. Let us prepare a resolution, and as to the subjects and departments, the number of the students and financial problems you will have to discuss these with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance yourselves. I think it would be reasonable to start with three groups of fifteen students in each. Our next meeting in my office will take place as soon as you get the necessary signatures for the draft resolution.

We left the Prime Minister's office. First I made an appointment with Rahimov since he wanted to talk to me about the issue in detail. Then S. Aliyev invited Saleh and me to his office and introduced us to his deputy, Qurban Amirov. We agreed that Qurban and I would prepare the draft resolution.

The time had come to meet various officials, people of certain power and influence and let them know about the ideas and to ask for their approval and support. I had no choice but to resign myself to this process. The only thing I could do was to try to be convincing and sincere.

My meeting with Rahim Rahimov was interesting and partially diplomatic. This man who knew intimately the Soviet bureaucratic machinery was not an ordinary person. He could grasp interesting ideas quickly, and he tried to bring people working with him to his own way of thinking.

He asked me to tell him the main point of our talks with the Prime Minister. He looked satisfied and fell into thought. I was trying to read his mind: "If this

idea of a university becomes a reality, and if my training courses become even less popular, what will happen to the National Economy Management Institute? Will the university swallow the institute?" I think the Prime Minister had the same reservations when he proposed to set up the university under this institute. And more probably he may have thought he was killing two birds with one stone. On one side he secured the fast formation of a new progressive higher institution, on the other he gave the aging institute a gasp of fresh air, stop it from being criticized. Arriving at this result in my inner analyses, I tried to explain to Rahim muallim in a diplomatic way that I had no intention to overtake his institute and his position, my only aim was to establish a small and modern university where the English language would be of great importance. I would always follow his advice and respect him. I never thought of fighting him for power, as it would be against my nature. I think he understood that I would never exhibit any control ambitions and start racing him for power whilst we were sharing the same building. In other words, I was here only for the sake of setting up the university and one day I would be looking for other accommodation to secure my independence and the development of the university.

I think we understood each other and agreed to work alongside with mutual respect and support. Later in the course of events some misunderstandings and different approaches to some issues did occur, but the rules of courtesy and good manners were always observed.

Together with Qurban Amirov I prepared the draft resolution and submitted it for the Prime Minister's approval (during the next months Qurban and I worked closely together on some more documents and it

was a very successful cooperation and partnership). Four different persons at the Council of Ministers had to sign the draft resolution and the Department of Science and Education was taking care of this. Saleh's and my duty was to get Rahimov, the rector of the Institute of National Economy Management, Feyzullayev, the Minister of Education, and Qarayev, the Minister of Finance, to sign the document. I should say that I did not meet Qarayev. Saleh took on the responsibility to get the Minister of Finance's approval since they were colleagues. But for some reason the Minister did not want to talk to Saleh. He refused to meet him several times. Finally we had to solve the financial issue directly with the Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Education.

On November 5th 1990 I met Rahimov and he signed the draft resolution. Now the only remaining problem was to meet Feyzullayev, because the Prime Minister demanded that we submit the list of majors and departments and all other education related issues to the Minister of Education for approval. Feyzullayev was the only person among all Azerbaijani ministers whom I knew before this affair. In fact, we were colleagues. When I graduated from Azerbaijan (now Baku) State University, my first appointment was at the Institute of Mathematics and Mechanics of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. At that time Feyzullayev was the academic secretary of this institute. He was a very lively, restless, fast spoken young man, a master of preparing all kinds of official documents very quickly and finding common language and understanding with those of high rank. He progressed very quickly changing his posts one after another. First he became the deputy director of this institute, then began moving forward in the party line (The Communist Party). Having worked a

little at the Party Committee of the Academy of Sciences he was appointed a deputy minister of the Ministry of Education and finally he became the Minister.

Feyzullayev met us in a very merry mood and embraced me warmly. He got acquainted with Saleh and began to talk. We discussed the world of mathematics, mathematicians, Moscow, our respective doctoral dissertations,¹³ and he spoke very highly of me to Saleh. Then I inquired after his work at the ministry and his personal affairs, and at last we came to the main point. He wanted me to give more information. He had already been given some details by Qurban Amirov over the telephone and his first and immediate objection was against the idea of setting up the university under the auspices of Institute of National Economy Management. I told him that I shared his view, but noted that it was the Prime Minister's suggestion and was connected with our accommodation problems. I explained that it would be very difficult to take a step back now. He quickly said, "Let it be so." Then he added:

- For the university to be under the Institute is not logical. It is necessary to establish it also under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. If it is a university, it would be better to have a formal connection with our ministry; in this case its status would be higher.

Of course, as I have mentioned many times before, to function independently was the main idea and main dream behind this university. But readers should understand that at that time there was no such notion as "private school" or 'private education' in our Law on Education.¹⁴ I was aiming to set up the university with its own constitution that would reflect the idea of private school. Now, we were offered to add yet one more "under" or "attached to" or "affiliated to" in addition to

the previous one. In my opinion it was already enough to be affiliated to the Institute of National Economy Management that is in turn affiliated to the Council of Ministers.

I replied smiling:

- It seems I will have to overcome a triple barrier to be able to have a Private University and independence. "By" one organization and "under" two others, really is a parody of independence and Privacy.

Feyzullayev answered quickly:

- First of all, I support your idea to set up an independent university. Secondly, I repeat once again, that to be affiliated to the Ministry of Education will only be beneficial in solving your financial problems, and any other problems you might have.

I had already understood that if I didn't make certain concessions, things would become impossible. The political situation in the country was unstable; there was tension among the highest ranked officials, new political groupings were being formed that I didn't have thorough information about. It was absolutely necessary to have all the resolutions and orders for setting up the university signed as fast as possible.

I said:

- I have nothing really to add, I agree with you. You are more experienced in these issues.

Feyzullayev laughed:

- My rector, I have no doubt that you'll establish a wonderful university. I will always be here to help you.

Then he hinted towards Saleh and said:

- Most probably Saleh will be...

I immediately explained:

- Saleh is my friend and colleague, we will work together.

Feyzullayev immediately distributed all the posts of the future university:

- And Saleh will be the deputy rector. My rector and deputy rector, what else there remains to be resolved? – Saying this he rubbed his hands together.

I asked him to concentrate on defining of subjects and departments for the university. In the version of the draft resolution that I had in my hand "Economics and Management", "Computer Science, Statistics and Mathematical Sciences" and "International Law and Political Sciences" were mentioned and I also wanted to add subjects related to Medicine or Ecology.

Feyzullayev expressed his opinion promptly:

- "International Law" is not needed. It will impede your work if you start competing with the Azerbaijan State University. "Muallim's" attitude to this problem will be negative (By the word "muallim"¹⁵ he meant the rector of Azerbaijan State University, a well-known mathematician Mirabbas Qasimov). Do you need to cause serious misunderstandings from the very beginning?

I didn't understand at the time why anyone would want to fight me. I did have a feeling that there would be a struggle but I couldn't reconcile myself with this idea because I couldn't see a logical explanation for it.

- Then, let's call it International Relations instead of International Law, - I wanted to demonstrate that I was not going to give up.

- Well, I don't mind, - he said, - but as far as I know the Azerbaijan State University is also going to offer this major. Anyway, let it be as you want. As for medicine, this is going to be very difficult. You do real-

ize, the "Mafia" could swallow you alive. You had better not get involved with medicine. Instead, ecology sounds like a very good idea, it's a new and exciting area, and it is a contemporary issue.

After further discussions in the Council of Ministers and Ministry of Education we included in the paperwork that medicine and other additional subjects could be started in a year. So, as a result of more meetings, all the groundwork for setting up the university was completed and agreed by everyone involved and on December 20, 1990 the Prime Minister signed the draft resolution.¹⁶

CHAPTER 9**THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY
AND MORE MEETINGS...**

The draft resolution of the Council of Ministers inspired me. I was beginning to live my dream. It could become reality any day. According to the staff of the Council of Ministers, "the main work was done - the draft resolution was signed" and now there were only two "simple" things remaining in order to obtain the final resolution: to actually set up the university and "to prepare a constitution and get it signed, and to meet and convince more people."

I didn't feel that all difficulties are now behind us: there were a lot of "draft resolutions" that never materialized. Particularly in such hard times - "the way forward is difficult, the world is dark", but I was not going "to remove my horse from the road!"¹⁷ I was ready to put up a fight - only political muddle could render me helpless.

To produce the constitution of the university was not really difficult. I was taking my article "Thoughts on science and education system" as a basis, and trying to understand the rules of the game and the ways of avoiding complications. First of all I was trying to minimize our dependence on the Ministry of Education and the Institute of National Economy Management. This de-

pendence is reflected only in two articles of the constitution: to create an annual report on the academic affairs and research, and to get consent of the Minister of Education and the Rector of INEM on solving the problems concerning financing from the state budget. I realized that receiving aid from the state budget would be an arduous and almost impossible task - from this viewpoint the dependence of the university on these two organizations was minimal. However life is unpredictable, so I still wanted just in case to try to include an article on financing coming from two sources in the final resolution.

"Personnel are hired on contractual basis, and the university can set its salaries independently" - these articles in the resolution were indeed signs of independence in those days. The article "the University can create international relations independently" was suggested to be completed with the phrase "and also through the cooperation of the department of international relations of the ME."

I also succeeded in including an article that showed the university's independence from the INEM, which stated "The Baku City Executive Committee is to provide the university with accommodation by the end of 1991."¹⁸

It was also very common at the time for all universities' curricula to be set by the Ministry of Education. I had included an article that enabled the students to choose at least some of their courses and it reduced the role of the curricula sent down from "above."

I also included an item about the Student's Union (which I really wanted to be active), about receiving grants for research, and about the right for the university to have a university press, which I considered very important.

The constitution that I worked out consisted of the following general 7 items:

1. General regulations, aims and purposes
2. University management
3. Organization of Academic Activity
4. Organization of Research Activity
5. International relations
6. Sources and Principles of financing
7. Legal Status

Later this constitution became the basis for the constitutions of a whole family of newly established universities (sometimes it was difficult to distinguish these constitutions from our original).

The draft constitution had to be approved by the Department of Science and Education of the Council of Ministers. Only one article, which stated "The activity of political parties is forbidden at the University", was rejected entirely. My desire not to give an opportunity to the Communist Party to function at the university was met unenthusiastically. I tried to maneuver and say that "I'm speaking about any kind of parties" but it was useless. I was made to exclude this item and I was even told that "the personal relations between the first secretary of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan Communist Party and the Prime Minister are not very good. Adding such a sentence to the constitution is barefaced hostility". "Don't try to include it in your constitution, in reality you can work as you wish" said Qurban Amirov trying to console me.

Meanwhile, the whole "world was falling apart."¹⁹ The Communist Party²⁰ was still functioning, but it was not as strong as it was before. The movement against the decision of the USSR Supreme Soviet announcing a state of emergency in Baku²¹ was strengthening. There

was a great confusion in people's minds - they couldn't get rid of the old way completely, but couldn't comprehend the changes, couldn't see the future entirely. On January 4, (1991) the destruction of the Kirov's²² grandiose monument in the park overlooking Baku had started. The official reason was subsidence in the upland areas in the Bayil region of Baku. In reality, the national day of mourning, January 20, was approaching. One year had passed since the Soviet Army had slaughtered part of the peaceful population in Baku. Kirov's monument, symbolizing the Soviet regime, was overlooking graves of the innocent dead.

My further meetings with the Minister of Education R. Feyzullayev regarding the constitution were not as friendly as the first one. Hasanov and Mutallibov's personal relationship was an issue, although Feyzullayev who was close to Mutallibov, was trying to accommodate both sides. He could see that the situation was not stable and it would not be very wise to take sides. He would postpone our meetings on various pretexts as if trying to obtain more time for thinking it over and over again. Finally, I got Feyzullayev's signature with the help of Hazrat Agabayli, Head of the International Relations office of the Ministry of Education.

I didn't have a lot of difficulties in obtaining signatures of the Baku city Executive Committee, State Planning Committee, Ministry of Finance, Ministries of Justice and Communication who all had to declare their agreement to the Resolution on the Formation of the University and its Constitution.

Now the Cabinet of Ministers had to issue a final resolution (the name of the Council of Ministers had been 'desovietized').²³

CHAPTER 10
SOME INTERNAL AFFAIRS

I was working on the constitution from home. But I would often go to the Institute of National Economy, mainly to meet my acquaintances and fellows who heard about my activities and the university. They were finding it very difficult to believe and really wanted to understand more. A few people were very enthusiastic and were offering support.

While discussing different parts of the constitution with the rector of INEM Rahimov, and exchanging views on different problems, we began to know each other very closely. He offered me to take part at the INEM's Academic Council meetings and at the same time said that he had given the order to prepare an office for me with my name on the door. I thanked him for his attention and said that an office would be of great help. But I refused to "officialise" it and have my name on the door, since I was not yet an official person at this Institute and the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers had yet to be issued. Taking this into consideration and also bringing my busyness as an excuse I asked him to postpone my participation at the Institute's Academic Council meetings. He liked this tactful objection and saying

"if any problems arise, please feel free to address them to me" - he patted me on the shoulder in a friendly manner.

The majority of my time was now spent on trying to understand and identify the ways of teaching and set major guidelines for developing a curriculum for four subjects outlined in the Council of Minister's draft resolution. I was not thinking about mathematics, the teaching of this subject was quite clear to me. It was regarding other subjects that I felt a need to learn more. I was either looking through different textbooks and articles, or studying the catalogs of well-known universities. I had to work especially hard on the program for Ecology department. Although I was sufficiently knowledgeable in ecology as a popular modern way of thinking, I had to discover the environmental studies for myself as a systematized and integral science.

From that time onwards I had to constantly study to be able to understand various areas of scholarship, their essence and various schools of thought closely, and project academic research into education. This pleasant duty was mobilizing my energy and refreshing my mind, keeping me "in a good shape" and as with my favorite speed chess, making me to come up with the quickest and most beneficial moves.

It seems that the first internal tension began during this time that I was working on the constitution. Saleh was talking to Rahim Rahimov one day and had mentioned that one office wouldn't be enough for us, to be able to function "normally" we needed at least two offices. He would not give up and became quite stubborn during the discussion. Rahimov took it badly and considered it an undue pressure upon himself and immodesty on Saleh's side, and expressed his dissatisfaction

tion. Saleh in his turn took Rahimov's objection as an injustice and could not help himself arguing with him. They both told me their side of the story and expressed their reproaches with each other. I was in quite an unpleasant situation, between fire and water. I was trying to calm them, explaining that there was no need to dramatize the situation and asked both to forget the resentment. But it appeared not to be an easy task.

I knew that if Saleh would go to Rahim muallim and apologize then we would be able to solve this conflict. But Saleh did not want reconciliation and was insisting that he never stepped beyond the boundaries of polite conversation. After this incident I noticed that Rahim muallim was colder in his relationship with me also. Perhaps he was thinking "one can expect anything from these people." Unfortunately, we never managed to erase this incident from our memories and hostility between Saleh and Rahim muallim persisted. Later it became a big obstacle in the way of the three of us working together.

CHAPTER 11**A SIGNATURE ENTERED HISTORY**

I was told that I would be invited to the Cabinet of Ministers to have the next - and this time probably the last - discussion. However it was not specified when this discussion was likely to take place. I could only wait. I used it as an opportunity to read, study history, to play chess and to try to rest as much as possible. My situation reminded me that of a soldier who is in a defensive position, who knows he will not be attacked just yet and so is given a chance to have a short and maybe his last rest.

The political situation in the country had descended into total uncertainty, there was a lot of anticipation in the air, everybody was waiting for, hoping for, expecting something very important to happen to the people and the country.

Once I met Fuad Alaskarov (my former rector) by chance.

- My congratulations to you, I was told that you are creating a new university - he said, sounding almost friendly.

I was not very pleased that he knew about the university. We had had quite a few major misunderstan-

dings, I knew he was close with Mutallibov, and the relationship between the Prime Minister Hasanov and Mutallibov was quite tense.

- Oh, yes, I have been discussing this idea with a few people but it is still very much in my mind - saying this I wanted to cover up the issue as much as possible.

As if understanding my concern, he just replied briefly:

- If I can be of any help, feel free to let me know. I thanked him.

Gorbachev was doing his best to preserve the Soviet Union. He announced a national referendum. The Heads of most of the Soviet Republics supported him. During 7 March 1991 session of the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet a decision to take part in the national referendum was also made, although there were a lot of people who were against it. The Republic's administration was inclined towards Russia, the Popular Front that was calling for an independent Azerbaijan (this organization was by no means free of contradictions either), was being prosecuted, Heydar Aliyev had reappeared again²⁴ and the intelligentsia of the republic was in uncertainty. Society was shaken and was looking for a way forward.

Hasan Hasanov invited me in. Together, we looked through the resolution and constitution texts, then he smiled at me:

- How are you?

- Thank you very much, not too bad.

- I have no doubt you are not "too bad." There is a university being created from nowhere and you are going to head it.

I knew Hasan Hasanov's way of saying things in a synthesis of seriousness and humor, which was similar to my own. So, I answered quickly:

- It's not being created from nowhere. You know yourself - "no pain, no gain", without your approval and our efforts, we could not have even set up a kindergarten, let alone university.

The Prime Minister first raised his head and looked at me attentively, then he drew the paper nearer, set his glasses right and took the pen. He continued in a friendly manner:

- All right, suppose I sign this now. You are going to make your life interesting by working on this project, and what's my gain in all this?

I have not had an opportunity yet to express my gratitude to the Prime Minister for his sincerity and great help (I admit I am not very good at this).

- Dear Prime Minister, I am sure that up to this day you have signed hundreds of different documents. There must have been very memorable ones among them, and perhaps some of them not quite so. I assure you that you are about to put your signature to something that has a big future. This is an historic signature.

I don't think Hasanov expected such an answer. But the surprised expression of his face was quickly replaced by a very pleased one:

- That was very well said! - And he signed the resolution.²⁵

CHAPTER 12**THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND A GAME OF RECTORSHIP**

The official announcement was made that a new higher education and research center named "The English Language Azerbaijan University" was established. But it was only an announcement, government permission, and the work was still ahead.

This was quite unique work, as there was nobody experienced enough to help. Although some of the state organizations were named as responsible parties in the resolution, none of them were actually going to help. In general, times were changing, nothing new was being created, responsibilities were reducing, political movement was strengthening and an atmosphere of anarchy was emerging. It was finally realized that the Nagorny Karabakh crisis will not be an easy one to solve, the influence of the center (Moscow) was weakening quite evidently. On March 17, a referendum on whether to preserve the USSR was held and in a week the results were announced. It was communicated that the citizens of the Azerbaijan Republic as well as others voted to preserve the USSR. As usual this so-called "democratic voting" represented interests of the ruling group, and not the desire of the entire nation.²⁶

Feyzullayev, Rahimov and I once met at the Ministry of Education and had a brief talk. The meeting was held in quite a sluggish mood and the main topic of discussion was how to go about appointing me Rector. The discussion was along the lines whose letterhead paper should be used for the appointment order, what the wording should be etc. A simple decision was taken - the order should be issued on ordinary blank paper, sealed and signed by both Feyzullayev and Rahimov (Minister of Education and Rector of the Institute of National Economy Management).

At the same time the news leaked to media. There was a brief information piece on the front page of the *Bakinskiy Rabochiy* ("Baku worker") newspaper. It briefly stated that a new university was set up in Baku, some of its characteristics were listed and it was also reported that I was the originator of idea of the university.

I was pleased that the news about the university would now reach wider audiences. I did not think that the mentioning of my name would create any negative feelings. Surprisingly after this article was published I felt a cold reaction from the "above."

Rahimov was studying my biography very carefully. He was very surprised having seen the phrase "not a member of the Party":

- I can not understand it. You are a doctor of science, a professor, have visited foreign countries, even capitalist countries, but you are not a member of the Party, how could it be possible?

He was speaking about the Communist Party and it made me recollect certain events of my life.

... While I was at school, then university, then working and teaching, I was never interested and never involved in such compulsory ideological activities as "social work" and various levels of "party school" such as *comsomol*²⁷ and professional and trade unions. I was studying and working hard, and in my spare time took much more pleasure in football, chess and arts, music, theatre, literature and history than ideological activities. I never even thought of becoming a member of the Communist Party, besides antitotalitarian spirits had always prevailed in my family history.²⁸ It served as an obstacle for my foreign trips for several years: despite having interesting contacts with foreign scientists and receiving numerous invitations to attend conferences and seminars, it was almost impossible for me to go abroad. Not being a member of the Party was closing all the doors in front of me. In Moscow and in other big scientific centers of Russia the Communist Party was less strict with scientists, but in the "provinces" such as Azerbaijan, non-membership of the Party was brought as an excuse to reject promotion, foreign trips and many other matters. It was made obvious to me that all my efforts to conduct joint research with foreign specialists would be wasted unless I became party member. It is worth mentioning that in the second half of 70s and early 80s I was intensively investigating the so-called "multiparameter spectral theory", and the well known specialists in this area were mainly working at the universities of US, Canada, UK and Federal Republic of Germany, and I was dreaming of working together with them. Because of this I joined the Communist Party in 1986, but then with great pleasure and very conveniently forgot the "Mother" Party the next day and continued my scientific work.

The Soviet military troops' terrible and unthinkable savagery in Baku in 1990, January 20 was met with wide spread protest in Azerbaijan. One of the ways to express the protest publicly was to quit the Communist Party membership. I was chairing a meeting in January 23 at the Institute of National economy, just 3 days after the tragedy, and people were ripping their Party membership cards in pieces demonstratively. I was one of those who quit my Party membership. Unfortunately, shortly after, the majority of those who threw their membership cards away, went back with apologies and re-instated themselves as the Party members. Without Party membership I was feeling quite relieved, so despite of the advice from various well-wishers, rumors, even threats, I bade farewell to the Party forever.

Grief and anger in the country gave a new direction, and new impetus to the political movement. Everybody, even those who never before engaged in politics, wanted to speak out and to be heard, to define his or her position in the society. We had long heated debates among friends, fellows and acquaintances and these discussions naturally led to thoughts about a new political party. I went along to two meetings of politicians and people interested in politics at the House of Political Enlightenment.²⁹ These meetings had quite the opposite effect on me from the intended - I decided not to ever enter politics. It just made me realize once more that I am a researcher, my vocation is science and education and it is more in my nature to keep as far from political activity as possible and live a creative life.

I was much more inclined to turn thoughts into motion from the scientific viewpoint. However, since I had been gathering thoughts on events happening in Azerbaijan, I decided not to waste them and worked on

an article entitled "Thoughts on National Liberation Movements." The analyses made in the article were comparable to the current state of affairs in Azerbaijan from the historical-geographical point of view. For the sake of publication of the article I did not use the word Azerbaijan anywhere, nevertheless due to censorship this article came out very late. Its shortened version was published in the magazine "Ganjlik", and almost six months later in the magazine "Ulduz" with some abridgments)...

When I told Rahim muallim that I left the Party because of January 20 events, he was very upset:

- What have you done! What a dangerous thing to do! I thought you were quiet person and have nothing to do with politics! What are we going to do now?

- Rahim muallim, this is not politics, this is a very natural form of protest. And I cannot see what kind of effect it can have on my situation? I'm not going to take an official government post, and I have no intention to be involved in politics. My life is devoted to reading, writing and education and I want to continue doing this and benefit others. There is no harm in the fact that I am not Communist.

Rahimov said with a concerned look:

- Don't you know that someone who is not a member of the Party can not be appointed to the high post? The post of a rector is one of the most prestigious and respectful posts in a country. There are not a lot of universities in Azerbaijan, are there? If you want to be rector you have to be approved from the Central Committee (of the Communist Party).

I did not lose my spirit:

- Rahim muallim, surely, times have changed. Now the Party is not what it used to be, it can not cont-

rol everything. Soon, there will be many new parties, everything is leading to that. When a multiparty system is in place, I am sure that no political organization will be interfering in appointment of rectors.

It seems I did not convince him. Rahimov seemed troubled about this problem. I realized that he was looking for some ways to avoid it:

- Well, I think we should appoint you the prorector (vice-rector) and you will still do all the work. You can be an acting rector.

I smiled:

- Rahim muallim, why is it possible to be a prorector without a party membership and not a rector? Besides, how can the university with no rector have a prorector?

Rahimov gave a call to the Minister of Education and went immediately to the point:

- Do you know that Hamlet quit the Communist Party because of January 20th events? What can we do now, will you take on the responsibility of appointing him a rector?

The way he put the question was already implying a negative answer. I can not say that I was enjoying the way he was orchestrating the events but I refrained from commenting. Feyzullayev was talking on the other end of the line and after a while Rahim muallim said "just a minute" and turned to me:

- If we help you, will you take back your Party membership?

- Never.

- No, he is obstinate, he does not want to, - and Rahimov carried on talking. Then he put the phone receiver back and said:

- The Central Committee gave instructions to the Regional Committees to seriously watch those who have given up their Party membership. You do not know what these people are like, you should have been more careful.

I decided to finally speak out:

- Rahim muallim, if you want you can nominate another person for the position... Or you can nominate yourself if you wish. I am ready take care all of all the educational aspects including curricula, academic programs, personnel issues and international relations. For me the main purpose is not to get a high position for myself but to give a life to this new university. I will do anything to make this happen. We will see what happens later.

I wanted to remind him of an anecdote by Mullah Nasraddin³⁰, but stopped myself in time.

I think Rahim muallim understood my meaning:

- What are you talking about? You are the only person who knows this work, who started it all and you will have to continue it. Nobody can prevent you from doing this! Let us appoint you a prorector both for research and educational affairs. It means that you will be completely independent in what you do, there will be no interference.

Rahim muallim had a look on his face like he had found the optimal solution and reached the best possible outcome for everybody involved.

My concern was not whether I was prorector or rector. I was more concerned that from its very first days the university would be taken over part by part. There was a danger that if I was appointed a prorector of the English Language Azerbaijan University and it was in direct jurisdiction of the rector of INEM, we would

eventually turn into a division of the INEM. As a result the implementation of any new ideas would become increasingly complicated. But it seems that the "glorious" Communist Party did not find me appropriate material for the Rector's position, but found the position of prorector more suitable (at least this was an impression I have been given).

On April 18 1991 the Ministry of Education and Institute of National Economy Management issued their joint resolution and I officially started work.³¹

The following day, on April 19, the prohibition hour and the state of emergency that had reigned in Baku over a year were lifted. On the same day there was an article published in Moscow in the "Rabochaya Tribuna" newspaper about newly set up new style university - our university.

Beautiful spring days had started in Baku.

CHAPTER 13

VOLUNTEERS

So, beginning from mid April 1991, an establishment with a very grand name and dwarf-like in size, The English Language Azerbaijan University affiliated with the Institute of National Economy Management of the Cabinet of Ministers and with the Ministry of Education, started its useful life. As prorector for research and educational affairs I was responsible for all the organizational work and I was also the acting rector. The uncertainties between the rector of INEM and the head of English Language Azerbaijan University existed from the first day. According to the constitution there were no common areas between us, but the reality was very different. The words "affiliated" and "attached to", my being "prorector" and not "rector", our co-location under the same roof, my being younger than Rahim muallim and my weak contacts among government officials were the factors for our increasing dependence upon INEM.

Our new address was Lenin avenue³² 66, Baku, Azerbaijan Republic, USSR, P/O number 370007. We occupied one room at the INEM, but a little later were given a second one.

As a matter of urgency I wanted to find a good English lecturer for the university. I liked Baylar Hajiyev's style of teaching whom I knew from the State Institute of Economics. He used to teach English-speaking economists wishing to improve their language skills. He accepted my invitation without any hesitation (nowadays he is the head of the department of International Students and Scholars).

Rahimov offered me use of the services of his accounting and personnel departments but I politely declined and so I had to hire three more people for accounting, personnel and registration offices.

Some of my old acquaintances and some enthusiastic young specialists started gathering around me, and volunteers continued arriving. My former Ph.D. students Afgan Aslanov and Tofiq Guliyev met our initial need for mathematics lecturers (nowadays Afgan is the dean of the School of Economics and Management and Tofiq lives in the USA). Shortly after these two, a computer specialist Bahtiyar Sirajov also joined us (he left Azerbaijan few years ago and if I am not mistaken, is in Austria now).

Two historians with Ph.D., namely, Eldar Namazov (currently an advisor of the President of the Azerbaijan Republic on Political Affairs) and Rosa Arazova (she is currently a chairperson of the Department of History at the University) were representing history and international relations faculty. Three specialists were teaching biology, biophysics, ecology and geography: Ismat Ahmadov (now the Chairman of the Biological Sciences Department), Asaf Asadov (later he became the Chairman of the Bio-medical Physics Department and Vice-chancellor, now he is an advisor to the Minister of Agriculture) and Shahin Panahov (later he became

the Dean at the School of Law and Social Sciences and currently he is a Chairman of the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies). Two persons were responsible for Economics and Management Department - Saleh Mammadov and Samir Valiyev with Ph.D. in Economics (he is now a Head of Department at the Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations).

Shortly after with Baylar Hajiyev's recommendation Husseinaga Rzayev became a member of our English specialists groups (later he headed the English Department, and was the Vice-chancellor and the Dean of the School of Humanities).

Our discussions usually would go in two topics. First of all, I used to encourage discussion about organizational structure of our university and about our future. I would talk a lot about the history and present days of the leading universities of Europe and America. I would get emotional and not restrain my feelings. I never concealed any plans, as I wanted to make everybody believe in our future. These discussions used to inspire and motivate us, we were all burning with desire to make our dreams to come true. There were some pessimists among us, for example Tofiq Guliyev was in doubts about our future, and there were those who were still unsure and hesitating. But most of the team was excited and happy. I understood a very important truth - we had to painstakingly work on the realization of our dreams, and we had to try to achieve our ideals step by step. If we would take it slowly and considerately we would have time to test and try all these new methods and learn by our mistakes. I knew my colleagues would only start to have complete faith in our future after we became more established (and that was still a long way ahead). My freethinking, intelligent "fellow travelers"

still had a lot to learn. If I would only have an opportunity to send these talented people to Western Europe, USA, Canada or Japan beforehand, it would have helped immensely and would give us some points of comparison. Unfortunately, it was not yet possible. Still, although we did not have enough ammunition and our armor was not very new and shiny, we were firmly on our way to conquer distant heights.

Secondly, on a more practical side, we had to prepare curricula for our first four majors. We did not have much time to do it so we had to work out a process. I would describe and define the main characteristics of the subject, and try to identify various educational and scientific approaches. I would attempt to view objectively the strong and weak sides of Soviet educational model in a specific subject and compare them with the universities of other countries. Within a week the specialists would present me with a first draft of the curriculum and after prolonged discussions we would choose the final version. We would remark that work is never final and a lot of development work would still need to be done, and move on to the next curriculum. We were trying to be creative, never complacent, and would attempt by all possible means to exclude monotony from our work.

I made a presentation to the Academic Council of INEM about the main purpose of the English Language Azerbaijan University, the initial organizational structures for the first academic year, staffing issues, curricula and their detailed composition.

Rahimov insisted that I had to send our new curricula to different universities for references. There was absolutely no necessity to do so, but we agreed to it.

The garden of the INEM, created by great efforts Rahim Rahimov himself, was full of beautiful plants and roses. It was the end of May and birds singing in the garden could be heard through widely open windows. The little birds had to build their nests on time before winds and rains begin. We had to build up the university before autumn as well. I was lovingly observing birds from my office window and wishing them every luck.

For the first time we celebrated the Day of Independence on May 28 – the day that was never mentioned adequately in the Soviet history books.³³

Our world was changing.

CHAPTER 14**THE WEATHER IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING**

One more article was published about our university - this time in the "Bakinskiy Rabochiy" on 30 May 1991. The article was entitled "Attention to every detail" and gave information about the new university. The correspondent was talking to me from the very early days and knew all along that I was the originator of the idea and was heading the affair. For some reason he introduced me as a Rector in this article - perhaps he got confused with the messy titles or simply did not pay attention to it.

Rahim muallim was very angry. He did not tell me the reason of his irritation but he mentioned that the minister Feyzullayev was also very offended.

I pretended to be naive:

- Rahim muallim, do you think that the people at the ministry were offended by me being introduced as a rector and not as a prorector?

- Of course, the Minister could not have liked that it is being mentioned over and over again that it is your idea, moreover you are also a rector of the establishment! How about all others involved in it? - He launched a real attack on me.

I answered:

- Rahim muallim, tell the minister for me that as a prorector for academic and research affairs of the English Speaking Azerbaijan University I am ready to bring my most sincere apologies to the rector of this university. If it's not possible now, I promise, I will apologize to him when he is appointed for a sin I have committed once and by aiming at his job while I was only an acting rector. What else can I do, who else shall I apologize to, is there someone else that was offended by this?

Rahim muallim expressed his attitude to my words by simply shaking his head.

The rectors of other universities started expressing interest in our work. It did not seem to me that this sudden interest occurred out of their feeling of benevolence or curiosity. On the contrary, I could tell that we were guaranteed to have cold relationships with four major institutions - Baku State University, Azerbaijan State Economic Institute, Institute of Foreign Languages and Azerbaijan State Institute of Medicine.

The main topic of my meeting with the then rector of Baku State University, the well-known mathematician Mirabbas Qasimov, was the perspectives of the new university and what we had on offer in our international relations department. I was answering Qasimov's questions thoroughly, trying to explain ideology behind the university, explaining how we would be going about establishing wide scope of international relations, marking the special role of English and other foreign languages. Mirabbas muallim seemed affected by this conversation to an extent that he offered our university to become part of the Baku State University and function as one of its schools. "This work needs to be indepen-

dent and flexible and it would also be very difficult to substantiate it legally" - I said trying to avoid this sudden suggestion.

Shortly after this meeting I got acquainted with Turan Yazgan from Istanbul University, who had come to Baku to organize management courses at INEM. Yazgan was a chairman of "The Turkish World Research Foundation." He had a very sharp personality. "Poor Azeri Turks, once they were obliged to study Russian, and now you are inciting them to study English" - he told me disapprovingly. I was quite upset by this remark. My purpose was misunderstood and wrongly interpreted. English and other foreign languages, to my mind, were a means of getting closer to the rest of the world. The knowledge of foreign languages would give a massive advantage for research and study. On the other hand the foreign languages would enable us to introduce our own culture to the world.

The other reason for my being upset was that my patriotism was hurt. My love for Azerbaijan, its culture, literature and music is endless. I have always strongly opposed various movements that were directed at weakening the Azerbaijani identity and language. I did realize that education received in English might cause certain coldness to our own language and culture. Even without endorsement of the English language, the invasion of the western culture in Azerbaijan was evident. One of the things that occupied my mind at that point in time was to teach and research Azerbaijani language, literature, history and culture at our university in a very intensive manner.

I was told that the rector of Azerbaijan State Institute of Medicine Dr. Yagub Mammadov (who later be-

came the head of Parliament and acting President of the country) would like to meet me.

I was at Mammadov's reception right on time. He was obviously waiting for me and started asking questions immediately:

- I was told that you have started a university. Tell me what it is all about?

One could feel from the tone of his voice that he was very much in the attacking spirit. Instead of answering his question I waited for the respectful rector to calm down first.

Yagub muallim slowed down a bit:

- Would you please explain to me what does this English Language University mean?

I gave him a brief description of the university as a whole, and spoke in some detail about the Economics and Management department, the methods of teaching, and talked about importance of new approach to this subject.

Yagub muallim replied:

- Well, I also have departments of political economy and foreign languages, which includes English as well. Couldn't I organize such a structure within my institute by simply uniting these departments?

I gave him more detailed information, talked about educational programs and curricula, explained to him the purpose of such approach and some peculiarities of it. Yagub muallim seemed more patient now. He asked me about my own education, when and where I got my doctorate degree and about the countries I had traveled to.

Just as our conversation was taking a peaceful turn, he suddenly changed its direction again:

- What is this medical-biological department that

you are setting up? Medicine? - He declared not only his surprise but also his objection.

I did not wish the situation to become further complicated and reminded him of the great need we have in specialists in ecology. I reminded him that our medical-biological department would only deal with this area for the time being. Yagub muallim did not agree with me:

- Who signed the resolution on establishment of this university? What rights did this person have?

I answered calmly:

- This is the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers and it was signed by the Prime Minister after the approval of certain Ministries and State Departments.

Yagub muallim continued in an angry but ever so slightly compromising tone of voice:

- What ecology is it that you want to teach?

I began to talk about ecology, its relations with biology, medicine, engineering, about mathematical models used in ecology etc. Yagub muallim gradually calmed down, a bit later he even became friendly and I thought that the conflict had been solved.

When I was leaving he told me that he would support me should an opportunity arise. Indeed later he had a chance to prove that he was a man of his word.

The weather was constantly changing, sky was covered with black and gray clouds and the direction of the wind would often change.

...This tightly tied knot of our affairs would be entangled one day. "The clouds full of rain will soon become empty, this is the law of nature."³⁴ The nature was not capricious, it was simply demonstrating its many colors, and teaching us that everything is obeying its laws.

CHAPTER 15
EARTHQUAKE

We were preparing for the first entrance exams to the university. All the documentation required was put in order and the examination questions were prepared. We were also intending to organize pre-examination consultation sessions and meetings with the potential students and their parents. At the beginning of June, we decided to take some steps to secure positive public opinion. I have mentioned above some articles in the newspapers informing the public about features and advantages of our university. Next, we placed advertisements about the rules of enrollment, necessary documentation and entrance exams.

The strongest medium to reach a wide public, to address the youth and their parents, to encourage them and to answer confidently the questions they were interested in was television. The program we appeared on was broadcast at a very suitable time of the day. The commentator introduced us and asked me to give some information about the university. All my previous television appearances were about mathematics, distant lands, visits and interesting events. This was another type, perhaps, the most responsible of my television ap-

pearances. We (Husseinaga Rzayev, Baylar Hajiyev and I) had to communicate with the audience in a very convincing and sincere manner, to present our university as a necessity for our present and future. I started talking in this direction, about the main values of our university and our plans for the near future. The conversation was flowing so freely and naturally that I even forgot about the presence of the journalist and myself involved Husseinaga muallim and Baylar muallim. Husseinaga muallim spoke about teaching English generally and for specific purposes and Baylar talked about main subjects and entrance exams. The commentator wished every success to this "very important and very timely university" at the end of the program. A group of people working on this program - journalists, producer, and cameramen - gathered around us after the program: "That was excellent", "we are all applauding you."

In matter of days we started receiving numerous telephone calls from Baku and different regions of Azerbaijan. They were all interested in the enrollment procedure for the university. The commentator from the TV program gave us a call and informed us that "We have had no peace from all the telephone calls we are receiving, the viewers are asking to repeat the program."

All this publicity we were doing created an enormous amount of interest and excitement. But as they say, "Man proposes, God disposes." A human being relaxing under a green tree and listening to the sounds of wind does not think that earthquake will soon take place and turn his world upside down. The blissful days we were having could not prepare me for the disaster that was about to strike.

The journalist of the television program came to see us few days later. He told us that he could sense that

the program was met "with dissatisfaction and disapproval by some high rank officials." He told us that the number of requests to repeat the program is so high that the decision was made to repeat it at certain time and date. On that day we sat in front of our television sets but the program was not repeated. The journalist came to apologize and informed us that the videotape with our program had mysteriously disappeared. "I really can not understand what harm could the university bring to anyone..." - he sounded very embarrassed.

In a few days I was visited by a young acquaintance of mine who had a close relationship with the Minister of Education Feyzullayev. He took enormous pleasure in gossiping and carrying various rumors around. He came to see me with news:

- Feyzullayev ordered his employees "to keep away from Hamlet." It seems there are strong forces acting against you. It seems to me, the Minister has been given an ultimatum from the Baku State University and some other institutes. They are demanding that you need to be taught a good lesson.

I took no notice of it. I did not see a great danger. I had doubts that there was any big and serious danger, and if there was a small danger there must be ways of defying it. The threat was so indefinite and uncertain that I did not want to analyze how I would be taught "a good lesson." As it is said in The Koran: (XVII, 36).

"And pursue not that
Of which thou hast
No knowledge; for
Surely the hearing
The sight, the heart
All of those shall be questioned of"³⁵

It would be fair to say that one of the weaknesses of my character is to be really uninterested in the face of unpleasant rumors, gossips and news, instead of trying to investigate them and establish their source and validity. I assume that I will be able to react when the danger is right beside me. When the danger is close the possibility of hitting the target is greater, but time is short and danger is much greater. In chess in similar situations the neutral move needs to be made on time. Of course it can lead to losing the tempo, but that was not the main reason behind my complacency. In order to investigate the danger I would have to go to meetings with various unpleasant people, and I think my subconscious was putting up a strong resistance to that.

One day Rahim muallim invited me to his office. He looked very thoughtful:

- There was a call from the Ministry of Education, you have to be here today, they have set up a special commission to inspect your work.

- What work? - I said impatiently and let him know how irritated I was, but I also wanted to receive more information.

- They are coming now, let us see what happens. No good will come of it.

Rahim muallim's reply did not sound very encouraging. I got an impression he did not know himself why this commission was coming.

The delegation of the Ministry of Education was headed by the first deputy Minister Fikrat Babayev. "How is business going?" - he asked me. I gave them some brief information on the current state of affairs and answered some of their insignificant questions. I could easily sense that my enthusiastic replies and the glorious state of affairs were not what they came to hear.

Fikrat muallim put two pages of paper with something printed on them onto the table and said without looking at me:

- It was decided at the ministry that you are not ready for student admission this year. Taking this into consideration we decided to stop your work.

A cold shiver passed through my entire body. I was furious:

- What do you mean we are not ready? Just a minute ago I have answered all your questions and demonstrated our complete readiness. Who is that at the ministry that can see from such a distance with telescope whether we are ready or not?

The other member of the delegation Khankishiyev tried to calm me:

- Hamlet muallim, the ministry has not come to this decision for no reason. Consultations were held and a resolution was prepared as a result, here it is. I think you have to get acquainted with this document first.

They began to read the statement and I felt myself to be a condemned man listening to the unjust but final decision of the court.³⁶

When they finished reading the statement, at least two issues became very clear to me:

First, it was obvious, that this statement was full of contradictions and had been worked out hastily, it was not objective and was a formal administrative document. The second issue was more terrifying - a terrible ending was awaiting us. An order has been issued to kill a newborn baby in its cradle, and it was unavoidable. Later it was confirmed in conversations that under the premises of our non-readiness to conduct the entrance exams they wanted to put an end to the entire venture.

The most ridiculous aspect of it all was my being

one of the authors of this statement - my signature was demanded under this death sentence. The other noticeable point was the distortion of the date of the statement. The statement was backdated and the date indicated was before any of our advertisements about entrance exams. It had to be demonstrated that they had taken all necessary steps on time. Indeed, this murder was thoroughly planned.

The statement was presented to us already signed by three representatives of the ministry. Fikrat muallim tried to show us that it is all done and dusted:

- You know yourself, and God is a witness, these kind of matters are not solved on my or your level. We have signed it, you should also sign it, one copy is for us and you have to keep the second one.

Rahim muallim also signed the document. Then it was handed over to me. "Farewell, my dream university." I had already pulled myself together after the initial shock and my anxiety has disappeared. My head started operating soberly again.

I took the document and stood thoughtfully with it in my hands. I was handed over a pen, but I refused to take it:

- It would be better to sign this document with my own pen. I do not have a pen with me at the moment, let me keep this document until tomorrow.

I do not think they could understand whether I was joking or being serious. Probably, they thought that I was shaken or did not want to be humiliated in presence of everybody. They let me keep the document but did not hide their dissatisfaction:

- Never mind, let it be tomorrow, sign it and send it to us, or we can come and collect it ourselves.

I came up to Fikrat muallim when he was about to

leave the room:

- Fikrat muallim, tell me the truth, what is going on here? What happened all of a sudden?

- Hamlet muallim, your so called friends and non-friends are attacking. The matter has already been agreed on, we are simply the messengers. Do not trouble yourself, it will not help.

I returned back to Rahim muallim. I wanted to know his personal opinion. It was obvious that he was upset about it. He had much more experience with high rank officials than me, and he accepted everything without question:

- Hamlet, son, if there was a slight opportunity to change the situation I would sense it and would have told you about it. You hurt those people's feelings without any reason. This statement would have never been issued if it had not been agreed on highest possible level. Did you see I had to sign it too? It's useless to isolate yourself; nobody will benefit from it, including yourself. Life will go on, you will still do a lot of things. Sign the paper and send it tomorrow. You should understand that they could easily solve this matter without your signature.

I said good-bye to Rahim muallim and decided to go home. But first I went for a walk at the shore of Khazar (Caspian Sea). I wanted to recover. When I am in high spirits I am strongly attracted to high mountain peaks covered in snow. In my despair I was longing for the sea. The sea is very mysterious. Every time I look at it, it brings out different feelings in me. Sometimes it is tranquil, its waves are kissing one another, its shades are emerald and blue, the sun rays and the moon light dance smoothly in its waters and give rise to the most beautiful dreams. Sometimes it is dark and unattainable, angry

and inconsistent and it makes me drunk with sadness and nostalgia, makes me feel powerless. Sometimes all these feelings unite and create a feeling close to anxiety. I spent a few hours looking at the sea. I left all my confused feelings, fears and dreams at the seaside and returned home.

CHAPTER 16**REVOLT**

June proved to be a very hot month for us. All our meaningful and exciting days full of newspaper and television advertisements, student and parent appeals suddenly were replaced by the order of the joint commission of the Ministry of Education and Institute of the National Economy Management to stop our activities. "After long consultations" it was decided to include five people into the commission: three officials from the Ministry of Education, the rector of the Institute of National Economy Management and myself, the head of the new university.

Four of those that had signed the document had no doubts that I would sign it too. The Soviet ways of believing that everybody always has the same opinion was applied in this situation. The Soviet society did not forgive those "who opposed the society."

But I was not going to give up my work or leave it incomplete. For some reason I had a firm belief in the future of this university. It was my vocation and my duty to make this idea become a reality. I could not leave it, it was in my blood and soul. There was only one way left - to rebel.

The revolt was inevitable. I would never sign this statement, no matter what the consequences were likely to be. I would not be satisfied with this situation and I would attack. A great politician said "to be always in defense will sooner or later bring you to defeat."³⁷ I had to be ready for anything. I spent the whole night thinking about it and putting some of my thoughts onto paper.

... I have hated lies and hypocrisy since my childhood. And now a false statement was prepared and I was asked to sign it and to hypocritically condemn my own work.

The decision of this commission would never be considered valid if I did not put my signature on it. If they set up a new commission without including me, it would be very difficult to work out another statement similar to the first one, and it would probably contradict the order of the Cabinet of Ministers. This judicial vacuum would enable me to continue my revolt.

Any kind of sensation caused would bring no gain to the officials. They would never want to demonstrate that they were opposing something that is right, modern and useful.

I was also convinced that those people who are in this commission must have some inner feeling of unease. They were committing wrong and they knew about it. Perhaps if the situation changed, they would be quite pleased and will have chance to wash away their sin (the longer my night long analysis lasted, the more I was getting into the psychological motivation of the people involved in this situation).

The Prime Minister must have been informed about all this. I knew that he had more important things on his mind rather than the destiny of the new univer-

sity. Political tension and palace intrigues were deepening. If his political opponents and their allies that happened to be heads of the various educational establishments could not accept the new university, the Prime Minister was not going to object to the removal of the "problem" by means of a single resolution.

The commission members would not make a step back, their self-esteem and importance would not allow it to happen. As a last resort I must offer at least one concession that would be acceptable for both sides. Assuming that my opponents and the officials were concerned with being able to settle the conflict peacefully, my alternative suggestion could be useful. It might even be accepted with some gratitude. The only sensible alternative I could come up with was to replace the enrollment that we had already announced by the enrollment of students for preparatory courses. To the government officials this could mean that they had achieved what they wanted with an insignificant concession and for us it would mean that although we had been thrown back, our activities were carrying on.

I had a clear plan of action. I would refuse to sign the statement prepared by the Ministry of Education. I would prepare a document that would demonstrate that I categorically disagree with this statement. If anyone would put together these two documents, one that is prepared by a person who knows the ins and outs of the problem and another one prepared by government officials, he or she would immediately see that the government statement is ill-intentioned.

I came to see Rahim muallim and said without any introduction:

- Rahim muallim, on no account I am going to sign this statement. It is based on injustice and false in-

formation. If there exists a commission that can make a decision about the university and if I am a member of it, I have right to express my opinion. Here is my opinion. I have prepared a supplement to this statement. I would like you to read it before I send it to the Ministry of Education.³⁸

Rahim Muallim read the document in silence. He did not utter a word after finishing it, just picked up a phone and called the Ministry of Education, the members of the commission came and picked up "the supplement to the statement."

I do not know what went on behind the closed doors. But I think I fired a very successful shot. The answer was unpredictable; it could even be an explosion of great strength.

CHAPTER 17

**"THE TAMING OF THE SHREW" OR
"WE LIVE AGAIN IN THIS WORLD" ³⁹**

My written objection to the statement of annulment prepared by the Ministry of Education could not have been left without response. Minister Feyzullayev was very prudent person. He would never give an official opinion on anything that could be potentially sensational or risky. He did not like to leave his traces anywhere. His name was not even mentioned in the statement of abolition.

The Minister's next step was to try to ensure that he had an official confirmation that the opinion of the great majority of people was that "the preparatory work was unsatisfactory and insufficient". It was necessary to isolate the capricious man to tame him. The Administrative and Academic Council of INEM was invited to discuss the matter. There was no doubt that the Council would agree with the principal points of "the act of abolition."

They also made sure that they defeated me morally. I received an anonymous call from the Ministry of Education. An authoritative voice ordered me to acknowledge my mistakes during the meeting of the Administrative and Academic Council and to accept the re-

solution of the commission. I was also told to admit that my response was written in a moment of weakness and that I was to take it back. Before I had any chance to reply, the caller hung up.

I only knew two or three members of the INEM Council. I had a good working relationship with the pro-rector of the institute, Doctor Vahid Akhundov. I was very keen to find a specialist who would be able to teach an Introduction to Economics course based on Samuelson's book, which was quite contrary to the way economics was taught in the Soviet universities.⁴⁰ Akhundov had offered his services and was looking forward to teaching the course. He had gained a lot of respect for his intellect and modesty (now he is the adviser to the President of Azerbaijan on Economic Affairs).

When Akhundov found out the agenda of the Council's session, he wanted to hear my side of the story. After a brief exchange of opinions he told me that he was supporting me fully.

Before the meeting Rahim muallim invited me to his office and warned me: "You will have to make a speech. Try to be reasonable and calm. Let us not make enemies with the Ministry."

The meeting began. After a brief discussion of some current issues Rahim muallim said: "The commission organized by the Ministry of Education, of which Hamlet and myself are members, have conducted an investigation on the preparedness of the university to enroll students. Now Hamlet will tell you about the decision at which we arrived."

I objected to the work of the commission in my speech and described our state of complete readiness to enroll students for the forthcoming educational year. Vahid Akhundov spoke after me and described how im-

portant this university was and that it was opening a new era in our educational system. He also said that the work conducted by us was sufficient to be able to enroll students.

Rahim muallim addressed the members of the council in a discontented way: "Who else has an opinion?" Jafar Valiyev (now the Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission) said that he did not know enough about the university to be able to judge, but on the other hand he had little faith in the work of the commission. Then people started speaking from their seats interrupting each other: "It's a new and interesting work", "they are doing exciting things, working day and night", "nobody is willing to help them, let us at least try not to build obstacles in their way." Quite frankly, I did not expect such a positive reaction from the members of the Council. At least it was clear that the act prepared by the commission would not be approved and I jumped at the chance to receive official support:

- Rahim muallim, I think we should ask Council to make an official statement by voting.

Rahim muallim looked very embarrassed. The council that he headed did not obey him. He was also very angry with me. If by sending the "supplement to the statement" to the Ministry of Education I expressed my objection and disrespect to the officials from "above", my victory here would be considered by some as a direct challenge to him and his prestige (although it was never my intention). Rahim muallim suddenly said: "That is enough, we have finished" and closed the meeting.

It was evident that the discussion was entirely in my favor, but I had a strong feeling of disappointment. It was obvious that there was no way for truce anymore and undoubtedly new measures would be taken to sup-

press my revolt. I could not even think what other actions they are going to undertake in order to teach me a lesson. Let Allah help us.

For a few days nothing happened. Then Rahimov told me that we were going to see the Prime Minister the next day. Since the resolution on the establishment of the university was issued I had not seen the Prime Minister. I had stopped meeting Feyzullayev too. The Minister was discussing all the university problems with Rahimov.

I was expecting that the next exchange of opinions would take place at the Ministry of Education. For some reason I was looking forward to the battle with Feyzullayev. But Feyzullayev seemed reluctant to have one. I suppose it was because he did not like the idea of two former rather friendly colleagues standing face to face in conflict. My 'supplement to the statement' was based on facts, he knew my nature quite well, and he also knew that I was going to stand my ground in the issue. I suppose all of these made him more reluctant to meet me.

On the eve of our meeting with Prime Minister Hasanov I was feeling restless. Somehow I knew that I would not be given a "hearty welcome".

Hasanov's assistant invited us into his office. As we were walking to the door, Rahimov suddenly said: "You wait here for a moment" - and entered Hasanov's office and shut the door after himself! I was confused and embarrassed. I had no doubt that the situation would be definitely against me now. I was trying to amuse myself by moving my fingers on my knees as if playing piano and my eyes were watching the arrows on my watch. Twenty-five minutes passed. Rahim muallim

came out at last and asked me to go in. He himself remained seated in the waiting room.

I wanted to hope that the Premier wished to see me because he had already received the official version of the story and now he wanted to listen to my side of the story. When I saw the expression on his face I knew that the situation was much darker and more unpleasant. He showered me with his anger:

- What is going on here? Why have you created havoc? You respect neither government, nor those who are elder than you. You can not find a common language with anyone and you never listen to any advice. Is this some kind of anarchy for you? I must have really mistaken when I thought I knew you.

I did not expect such a sharp condemnation and could not accept it.

- Let me...

- What else do you want? Everything is perfectly clear to me. You quit the Party, you do not get on with the Ministry, and you have offended and quarreled with Rahim muallim.

I realized that it was absolutely useless to wait for him to finish. The Prime Minister wanted to prove that I was unjust and a troublemaker. And he was using words and expressions that I could not possibly accept.

- Excuse me, but the situation is quite different from the way you describe it. Let me...

- Do you mean now that I am wrong too? According to you everybody is wrong! Couldn't you just concentrate on your own business? You should have told me in advance that you are not capable of getting on with people and this situation would have never occurred.

I became furious. The Prime Minister went on accusing me of all possible sins and would not allow me

to utter a word. This was complete injustice. I did not want to listen to this anymore, one who is already wet is not afraid of rain. I stood up and said:

- Respectable Prime Minister, why have you invited me here if you do not want to listen to me? You obviously believe everything you are told about me, but for some reason you do not want to hear what I have to say. May be what I will say is more believable and reasonable. Four or five months ago you considered me capable and resourceful, you signed the resolution and entrusted me with this work. And since then I have done all that I could in order to put your resolution into practice. Since then you have never expressed any interest in my work, in any problems that I had, and have believed all biased information you received about me. You can think what you want, but I can not accept these charges. Either give me opportunity to work or annul the resolution that you created, and let me get on with my life.

I think my words had some effect on Hasanov and he said in much calmer voice:

- Fine, we can listen to you too. I got a little angry, and so did you. Let us have a quiet conversation. So can you tell me about this agitation that you have caused?

I tried to describe him the situation briefly, covering only important facts. At times he asked me quick questions. At some point he asked me why I left the Party and then just waved his hand and said "never mind." Then he called his assistant and said:

- Bring here the statement of the Commission and Hamlet's answer to it.

My supplement to the statement was brought in but they could not find the statement itself. I have a feeling it was not accidental - putting these two documents

side by side would not be in favor of the authors of the statement.

I had brought both of the documents with me. I showed them to Hasanov. He said as though he was trying me (or may be that what he was really thinking):

- If all these people have signed it, it means that this was meant to be.

I said:

- If there is a Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers, it must be carried out. If I am charged with the task to fulfill it and if I am successful in implementing it, how can I possibly accept the statement that denies it? By signing it I would announce myself guilty. They will say that he had given him a task, and he had to admit his inability and had to walk away from it with shame. On the other hand, if indeed it is too early and we are not ready to set up such a university, then let the Cabinet of Ministers pass a new resolution in order to annul the university that was considered to be so important just three months ago!

I tried to direct the conversation from discussion of my personal 'inability to get on with people' to the main problem - the university. I think that those few monologues I managed to have in between our dialogues yielded some results. Hasanov had calmed down and the beginning of this story, our first conversations and enthusiasm were revived in his memory and the misinformation fed to him by my opponents started to lose its effect. He admitted after some debate and exchange of views that the statement prepared by the special commission was groundless. But it was obvious that there were some powerful forces behind this act of abolition. Although the Prime Minister did not specifically talk about these forces, it was obvious from his demeanor.

He was deliberating while responding to my suggestions and for me his hesitation meant that he was having to mentally consider others' opinions.

Hasanov felt particularly strongly about one issue and he mentioned it to me a few times:

- Why do not you get along with Rahim muallim? He is a wise, experienced man, he can be really helpful to you, why are you so impatient with him?

- I have a feeling of great respect towards Rahim muallim and I have never showed him or his age any disrespect. I simply want to be able to work independently...

The Prime Minister again flew into a rage:

- What freedom, what independence are you talking about? Do you know for example who I am? Yes, I am the Prime Minister, and I can not appoint a single Minister or the deputy Minister by myself.

I said:

- And do you really think, dear Premier, that this is right? Of course, not, it can not be right. Wouldn't it be so much better if everybody could take independent decision within the frameworks of their duty?

I think Hasanov's opinion of me as an excessively ambitious man only increased after my last words and he decided to show me that I was only an actor playing a supporting role in all this.

- You should understand that you are neither Gorbachev nor Pavlov⁴¹ in this particular work...

I did not even want to ask him who are then Gorbachev and Pavlov of this work. I just said:

- Probably my role in this corresponds to that of Yavlinsky.⁴²

- Exactly, you are absolutely right. You have given the ideas, you are looking for ways of realizing

them, but you are by no means first in administering them, although you have been given a sufficiently responsible position.

This statement did not satisfy or flatter me but I was quite excited by the strange game of comparisons we were playing:

- Maybe one of the reasons of perestroyka not becoming a success is that people like Yavlinsky, who prepared the programs on economic reforms, were kept as far away as possible from administering them? Believe me, dear Premier, I am not power mad and I am far from a careerist. But with your blessing we have started a very good work and my only aim is to take this work further. I am convinced that we are at the beginning of a very interesting, meaningful and distinct road.

After we said all we wanted to say to each other Hasanov invited Rahim muallim in and said that his recommendation would be that the university should begin its activity with the preparatory courses. He said it would be sufficient to agree this at the INEM Council meeting and pass appropriate resolution without referring the matter to the Ministry of Education.

So that is how the problem was solved. Even when it seemed that all possible routes to go forward were closed in front of us, we found a narrow alley to follow. I did not feel triumphant nor did I feel defeated. Whatever happens, "we were standing on our both feet again."⁴³

CHAPTER 18**MY TRIPS TO TURKEY AND OUR FIRST STUDENTS**

June was a month woven of patchy ornamental patterns of delight and sorrow, attack, defense and truce. In the last meeting with the Prime Minister "a minimal disturbance" option was chosen - to continue our activity by enrolling 15-20 students for the preparatory courses. (That was my last meeting with Hasan Hasanov as a Prime Minister, when the government of the Popular Front came into power he was appointed the UN's official representative from the Azerbaijan Republic, and later the Minister of Foreign Affairs).

I was resembling a man that barely had survived an earthquake, but was nevertheless happy to be able to live again. The following months from the university's viewpoint were months of quiet thoughts and the beginning of the "quiet" activity of our preparatory courses. In terms of politics, these months will forever stay in our memories as times of the greatest turbulence and change.

On June 4, I went to Turkey for two weeks on the invitation of Istanbul University. During the Soviet regime it was difficult for Azerbaijani citizens to visit Turkey and Iran. These countries are so close to Azer-

baijan from the viewpoint of language, history and culture that we were kept away from them by means of iron curtains. However this sense of mental proximity was maintained mainly through literature of these countries that we were able to read occasionally. It created a strange nostalgia for these countries in our souls, and this endless, deep and mysterious desire was making us travel to these countries mentally. Now the changes occurring in our country were so evident that there was no reason to dream anymore: the dream could become a reality.

After some interesting meetings at the Istanbul and Marmara Universities I went to Ankara. There I got closely acquainted with fellow mathematicians working at Orta Dogu Teknik Universitesi (Middle East Technical University) and met descendants of my family's relatives who were forced to leave Soviet Union for Turkey in 1930s.

My second trip to Turkey took place when I was invited to participate at the first Azerbaijan - Turkey conference in mathematics held on 12 September 1991 at Bogazichi University in Istanbul. During this trip my very pleasant relationships with the leadership of Marmara University developed further.

Between 19th and 21st of August a group of conservatives seized power in Moscow. They named themselves the "State Committee for Extraordinary Situation" and their aim was to keep the Soviet Union as an entity. I was in Quba⁴⁴ when these extraordinary developments were taking place and all I could do was listen to the radio and watch television. Society was trying to renovate itself - the probability of success of this attempt to stop the natural progression of society was low. Nevertheless some statesmen did not read the situation

correctly, "perhaps the Soviet Union can be returned after all", and supported this Committee. The leader of Azerbaijan at the time, Ayaz Mutallibov, was among them. The rebellion was ultimately unsuccessful and it opened the way to independence for the Soviet Republics.

During the last week in August Baku was boiling hot. "Lenin Square" was renamed "The Square of Freedom" and Lenin's monument in front of the Building of Government was dismantled. The crowded rallies and demonstrations had become an inseparable part of the country's political life. The state of emergency that was declared in Baku by Moscow's decree issued in January 19, 1990 was annulled by a decree issued in Baku on August 30, 1991. Moscow's direct and unlimited control had come to an end.

The Popular Front was gathering momentum and then... they stepped back unexpectedly during the presidential elections of the Azerbaijan Republic. Ayaz Mutallibov won the election easily with no competition present. But the political tension carried on.

We formed an examination commission consisting of eight people invited from various universities and the Academy of Science to hold the entrance exams for our preparatory courses. The worrying thing was whether people were going to believe in our advertisements since the Ministry of Education annulled those that we published in June.

We were prepared to admit 15-20 students to our preparatory courses. Within a few days 51 boys and girls submitted their documents to take part in the exams. We had sixteen submissions to study Economics and Management, and the same number for International Relations, ten wanted to study mathematics and

computer sciences, nine - medical ecology. Twenty-three of them had graduated from schools in Baku and twenty-eight were from various parts of the country (from 23 different regions). One of them graduated from school with a gold medal (highest possible result achieved), two with the silver medals (second best), five of them had never studied English at school. Everybody was examined on English, and all but those that were enrolling for international relations sat an examination in mathematics. Additionally, an exam on geography was organized for the future students of economics and management, on history – for the future students of international relations, and on biology – for medical ecology.

The entrance exams ended on October 17; and by decree of the examination commission twenty students were admitted to our preparatory courses. We have expelled one of them very soon afterwards for unsatisfactory attendance.

The majority of these first 19 students have now graduated from the university (6 of them with honors) while some of them continued their education in the USA and Europe on student exchange programs. At present leading companies in Azerbaijan and outside are employing them, and some of them are continuing their education as master students.

A day later, on October 18 two important events took place - one on a national scale, the other on the University level. The Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijan Republic adopted a constitutional statement on the "State Independence of the Azerbaijan Republic". Azerbaijani people declared their will to establish an independent State. At the same time I decided to set up an Academic-Administrative Council to govern the University. I issued an order that "the Academic-Administ-

rative Council with its present members will function from October 18, 1991 till September 10, 1992 with the purpose of making decisions on academic and administrative issues of the University, and also preparing for the 1992/93 academic year." Our University with its small number of students and teachers and its Academic-Administrative Council started making its first steps into the real life.

Around the same time we received our first foreign guests - a scholar from the University of California in Los Angeles, Naireh Tohidi, and the Rector of Marmara University Orhan Oguz.

Orhan Oguz had played a special role in the development of the Turkish education system (he was formerly a Rector of Anadolu University and the Minister of Education of Turkey). He came to Baku on my invitation and addressed our first students during the official opening ceremony of our university (October 29, 1991).

Orhan Oguz was a very wise and intelligent person and an excellent administrator (he is now the head of the Turkish State Radio and Television Company). Our acquaintance was turning into close friendship. He was greatly interested in the University and our plans, and would strongly disagree with my half-joking, half-serious phrase "our toy university." He would bring a lot of examples about the famous universities that began their lives just like us. His first advice to me was: "Try to separate yourself from the Institute of the National Economy Management as soon as possible, find a place for yourself and teach your students there." His other advice was to accept his invitation and even, if for a very short period of time, to go to work with him at Marmara University. This attentive man could see my

despair, he could see that I did not have any serious business to attend to in Baku for the next couple of months. He also understood our financial difficulties very well. Orhan Oguz was trying to convince me that it would be more useful for me to be in Istanbul during next 4 months than in Baku. Indeed I had taken on six lecturers, specialists in different subjects, to teach our 19 students and the classes began and were conducted in very disciplined manner. I signed an order increasing the salaries of our teachers from November the 1st. They were now paid 40% more than lecturers were at the state institutes. Then I left Baku with Orhan Oguz.

CHAPTER 19
BETWEEN MARMARA AND KHAZAR

The colorful days I spent in Turkey could make a good story line for a separate article. After making acquaintances with the leadership of the Marmara University I started teaching Calculus at the School of Economics and Management and Operations Research for graduate students at the School of Engineering. I would spend my days with the deans, heads of departments and faculty members, trying to understand the inner world of the Turkish University. My conversations with Professor Sami Ercan, Head of the Department of Industrial Engineering were very interesting and informative. He had worked in the USA for a long time and we would exchange our views on relationships between West and East, Turkey and Azerbaijan, science and education and it would enrich our knowledge.

On November 9 the Turkish Government passed a decision to officially recognize Azerbaijan as an independent state. Both Turkey and Azerbaijan were rejoicing at this news. The Azerbaijani people were longing to express their love and gratitude to Turkey and its people, being the first to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. A lot of sheep were sacrificed, taxi drivers in

Baku were not taking money from Turks, people were trying to invite any Turk that they would meet on the street to their houses for a celebration meal.

Orhan Oguz and Sami Ercan and some other new acquaintances were taking my concerns about our new university in Baku very seriously. They told me that they would try to help and support us. One of the things I succeeded in was obtaining a lot of Turkish textbooks for our library. Rectors of various universities and my friends at Anadolu University (in Eskishehir) were very helpful in this work. Meanwhile I was trying to buy books in English whenever possible. The transportation of the collected books to Baku could have been an issue but "Azerbaijan Hava Yollari" (Azerbaijan Airlines) kindly transported the books from Istanbul to Baku.

During this period some new punitive measures were taken against me in Baku. On November 19 the Rector of the Institute of National Economy and Management Rahim Rahimov appointed himself the rector of the English Language Azerbaijan University [that is, our University – *Ed.*]. He announced his own appointment and noted that he acted according with "the recommendations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic." Baylar gave me a very worried phone call from Baku: "There is talk around that Hamlet is not fit to be a rector, he has run away and left all his work incomplete, he has gone to Turkey to have some fun and will never come back. What shall we do? What is your advice? We must find a way out of this situation, and some kind of prompt action must be taken."

I took this news quite cold-bloodedly, indeed I saw no reason to be overly concerned. I advised Baylar to be patient: "Get on with your work, teach your classes with enthusiasm. Do not get pessimistic. Just let the

university live and function, nobody can take it away from us. Start looking for another place, look for anything, let it be very small, far from the city center, old, semi-destroyed - it makes no difference. I will take care of the rest, just wait for me to come back.

Thoughts about our university were the air and water of my everyday life. Sometimes I had some inconceivable ideas. I held on to reality with one hand and with the other one I wanted "to rip stars from the sky." That is when a word came to my mind - "Khazar." The name of our university will be "Khazar" (Caspian)! There are universities in Turkey named after various seas - "Kara Deniz", "Ak Deniz"⁴⁵, there are Aegean and Marmara Universities, why not name our university Khazar. My Khazar University will live "in my magnificent Baku on the Caspian Sea."⁴⁶ My Khazar University will be as beautiful as the mysterious Khazar created by nature - the Caspian Sea.

In December the Soviet Union had completed its life after 69 years. The agreement about the formation of the USSR signed on December 30, 1922 became obsolete on December 8, 1991. The New World set about revising its material and moral values, and the independent Azerbaijan Republic took its first stumbling steps. On December 25, a resolution was adopted in Azerbaijan to return to the Latin alphabet.⁴⁷ Indeed, this New Year was bringing us a completely new and distinct life.

Sami Ercan mentioned that there was a possibility for Azerbaijani students to do graduate studies at the school of Engineering at Marmara University, and he suggested that I could look into this opportunity. I discussed it with the Dean Ahmed Serpil and Rector Orhan Oguz and the decision was taken to allocate all existing five vacancies to Azerbaijani students. It was decided

that the Azerbaijani students would study for free at Marmara University and they would pay their tuition fee in Baku to our University. It would definitely help our financial situation.

Generally speaking I lead a very active life in Turkey. On the request of the School of Education I began to teach one more mathematics course. At the same time I reached an agreement with the chancellors of Marmara and Anadolu Universities and gave lectures on "The Essentials of Functional Analyses" for advanced undergraduates, graduate students and faculty members once a week in Eskişehir. I taught in English at Marmara University and in Turkish at Eskişehir. I made a lot of contacts and attended various meetings and conferences at different universities in Istanbul – Bogazici (Bosphorus), Istanbul and Yıldız – also, Bilkent University in Ankara, and Aegean University in Izmir. I also had a very close relationship with the Middle East Technical University in Ankara.

But one of the most interesting and useful things was my observation of Orhan Oguz's activity as a rector. He never failed to invite me along to all the meetings connected with university administration and educational issues, even when the meetings carried a very private character.

CHAPTER 20
ON THE WAY TO THE NEW HOME

In January 9, 1992 I returned to Baku and went to my office the next day. My meeting with Rahim Rahimov was very quiet and careful. He did not mention that he had appointed himself the rector of the English Language Azerbaijan University. Perhaps he was waiting for me to mention it first, to accept the situation as natural development, reconcile myself to it and get on with my work under his leadership. He told me: "I will not keep you for any longer, get back to your work, everything around here missed you." By this he somehow tried both to confirm my importance to the University, and maintain the status quo about the 'first violin'. And of course I went back to my work that I missed so much and called two subsequent meetings of the University Council. During the first meeting I analyzed the current situation at the University, portrayed our aims, emphasized that independence was the most vital question for us. I offered my colleagues to take two urgent measures: by taking the constitution of the University as a legal foundation to elect the rector for the University by voting and to move to a new building as soon as possible to begin a new life.

My colleagues were very inspired by my return and my desire to solve our problems rapidly. My absence caused some doubts and disbelief in the future of the University. My suggestions were met with great enthusiasm and during the second session of the Council on January 27, as a result of unanimous opinion of the 14 members of the council I was elected the rector of the University. My colleagues were very happy that we had cut the "Gordian knot"⁴⁸ and were expressing their delight.

No doubt that Rahim muallim was told about this election. At the beginning of our next meeting we sat there watching each other carefully. It was a very strange situation - a university had two rectors at the same time; one was appointed by "the recommendation of high rank officials" and by issuing his own order, the other one was elected following the University Constitution confirmed by the Cabinet of Ministers and relying on his own moral rights.

There is no question that Rahim muallim had turned over this situation in his mind many times, and felt that the moment had come to take a final decision about the entire situation. His relationship with Istanbul University and Turan Yazgan had branched out, his aspiration to organize a joint higher education for management was about to become a reality. Meanwhile the English Language University like a hedgehog was rolling into a ball and not allowing him to touch it. Was it really worth trying to keep this University under control?

I broke the silence: "Rahim muallim, we are looking for a new place for ourselves, we will soon relieve you of all these troubles." He listened to me calmly. He did not carry on the conversation and just said, "it is your business." The Rectorship game was over.

Around the same time I met Baylar's elder brother Tofiq Hajiyev. He was a construction engineer and he aided our University a lot and not only in his direct capacity. He has turned into a true friend of our University. He told me that Nana Kalantarova, the head of the education authority of the Khatayi region of Baku, could be able to help with our accommodation problem and introduced me to her. Nana khanum and I found a common language very quickly. She said: "I understand your problem. How about the Kindergarten №240, will it do?" Saying this she examined me from head to toe as if trying to define whether I was suited for the kindergarten or not. Then I went for a short meeting with the Executive Head of the same region Elmir Sharifov and that went well too: "You are doing a very important job, I will do my best to help you not only in this matter but in the future as well." Then we went together with Elmir muallim to examine the kindergarten and discussed the plans of "transition from kindergarten to university."

So we slowly started moving to our new home. My duty was to ask the Minister of Education Rafiq Feyzullayev for his consent on this matter. I was not very easy because for some reason he did not want to see me. I took an "effective" measure and asked the Deputy Minister Abdulla Mehrabov to tell the Minister to either answer my letter or I would use my legal right to seek a meeting with him and we would have to have a very serious conversation."

Soon we arranged a long-term lease of the half of Kindergarten №240 in the Ahmadli district. Six lecturers, nineteen students and some other employees moved to the new location. Around this time Husseinaga Rzayev went back to the State Institute of Foreign Lan-

guages and Firangiz Nasirova took his place. This very lively lady very quickly became one of the most favorite teachers at the University.

Independence often starts with poverty. Our new building was almost derelict and quite inappropriate. We had everything necessary for teaching at our previous location in the building of the Institute of National Economy Management - well equipped classrooms, all kind of educational equipment. Here we had to start from scratch.

With all its shortcomings this half of the kindergarten building had two very important advantages - we were independent, and there was enough room to accommodate the student intake for the forthcoming academic year. We were trying hard to clean the building, to make it appropriate for educational purposes and to equip all the classrooms.

This was not our only success in February. Forty-eight students applied for the post-graduate studies in Istanbul. Five young Azerbaijani men showed the best results in competitive exams in mathematics and English and face-to-face interviews. They paid us their tuition fees and went to Turkey.

An historian Farruh Bilici, Turk by origin but living in France for most of his life, whom I met at Marmara University, visited us. He read series of lectures on "French political and economic trends in relation to the Moslem East" for both our students and lecturers. The number of visitors from the USA and some European countries began to increase and it was very exciting for our preparatory students.

The life in our new home was slowly improving.

CHAPTER 21**THOUGHTS ON ADMINISTRATION AND
CREATIVITY**

If from the mid 1990 Khazar was an ephemeral dream, a desire, a distant aim, towards the end of the year it looked like the dream could become a reality. In the spring of 1991 the university was created on the paper. At the same time our life was "spiced up" with deception, jealousy and all sorts of obstacles. In the fall of 1991 we began teaching the preparatory courses with the "blessing" of the Ministry of Education and the Institute of National Economy Management. In mid February 1992 we moved to a new building – kindergarten № 240 at the Ahmadli district. Khazar University spent its infant years, its innocent days in this building. We lived moments of laughter and joy here.

Later Khazar University would move to various other locations, for some years it turned into a mobile university. But the most pleasant memories would be forever associated with this kindergarten university.

We accepted with great joy having to repair this half destroyed building, located far from downtown and designated for children. Enjoying our independence we were working days and nights with enthusiasm. Like Karamov⁴⁹ after crawling for the first six months, we

firmly stood on our feet and walked, we even planned to run and then to fly. In September 1992 approximately 200 students from different countries started their education at the university. The glorious inauguration of the University held at the National Opera and Ballet Theatre would let everybody know about our glorious existence and glorious ambitions.

Meanwhile I was looking for the answers to some important questions that were perhaps directed to the distant future. First of all, it was very important to fight by all possible means the wide spread system of "requests", "favors" and bribing deeply rooted in all our higher education institutions. We must veto any activity of this kind at Khazar, to declare bribes and cheating in the exams a punishable offense. We had to talk seriously from the very beginning to the teachers and students, and at the first opportunity to the parents to convince them of our seriousness in this matter, to warn them that nobody caught would be forgiven. We had to imprint in their brains that the entire existence of our university is about morals and purity.

Everybody who has intimate knowledge of Azerbaijan (or any other similar country) will know that the "knowledge is the only criterion" statement is not valid at the higher education institutions. Indeed it is beyond doubt that some parents (especially those who occupy high posts, or those who are rich) will try to get a higher education diploma for their children by all possible means. These parents are prepared to bribe, beg and even threaten in order to obtain satisfactory marks for their children who would not study and did not wish to learn. Would it be possible to stick to our principles and firmly say "no", "I can not do this" and ignore all requests, presents and threats? It is not a naive question

and the answer is not trivial. The bribery and corruption are penetrated in the backbone of the society and the relative poverty (and very badly paid teachers) is an obvious fact. There are significant changes going on in our economic and political life, but human minds still remain obsolete. There are no steps taken yet to radically reform the educational system. All of these together means that a university offering higher education without bribes is bound to be seen as a unique phenomenon.

In my opinion the most important thing for us is to start our lives honestly, to lay an honest foundation to our future work. All we need is to choose our students on the basis of competition, attract the best scholars and researchers, establish a productive, flexible and enriching work atmosphere. Later intelligent students and their parents and a naturally formed positive public opinion will be our main distinction. Opinions such as "Khazar is the best place to get a real, serious and high class education; the education it gives is comparable with that of the leading world universities" will be our best success indicators.

We were also searching for the appropriate model of education to be able to achieve our aims. The first very important step would be to intensify the system of testing knowledge. The students would be tested on all the subjects that they were taught, the subjects would not be divided into three categories as was done traditionally - subjects that lead to a graded exam, subjects for which only pass or fail mark is awarded and subjects in which students do not sit exams at all. Besides we would not be satisfied by just examining the students once, at the end of the term. There would be two or more examinations during each term. The exams would be mainly based on writing essays and occasionally

multiple choice testing. Later we would be able to consider as a part of the assessment process a student's interaction levels throughout the course and the lecturer's opinion.

The next step would be to alter significantly a student's transfer process from one year to another. The awkward system making the students who failed one or two courses to stay in the same year and study all the courses over again (even the courses he or she had previously passed) will be changed as it is a barely motivational approach. The number of credits earned would determine the level or the year of each student. This would save the student and parent from the psychological burden of having to re-sit a whole year. The flexible and fair method of allowing students to take new courses and register again for the courses they had failed would be applied. At the same time it would not create an incentive for concessions to be made to the students who are scared of having "failed the whole year." This regime must make lazy students (including some students sent to us by the State Student Admission Commission)⁵⁰ to understand that "without knowledge there will be no diploma."

It would be our best achievement to demonstrate that "weak students can not get a degree from Khazar University." We must do our best to deserve comments like "If he/she has got Khazar's degree, he/she must be a good specialist", "Khazar University graduates are offered the best jobs" and work hard to make these opinions to live long.

When I started putting into practice the principles of education and science at our University, I once again tried to analyze and compare specific features of the European Universities - Oxford, Cambridge, Moscow

State University, Sorbonne University and others, and also the legacy of the historically very mighty German Universities (Berlin, Göttingen, etc.). I was studying the special role that German Universities played in influencing the American higher education system. It was very interesting not only from the historical point of view, but was also helpful in trying to adopt the modern educational models in Azerbaijan.

I particularly loved American universities with their continuous competition and search for innovation. Among my favorite subjects of study were Harvard, Stanford, Yale, Cornell, Columbia, Princeton, Michigan, Berkley and Los-Angeles California Universities, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. On the other hand I did not want my brain to work under the influence of any of them. But the more I learned about their history and present eminence, the more difficult it was not to fall under their influence. One thing was certain - the realities of our existence and everyday problems, and the transitional period from the existing education system to a new one would keep me quite safe from being influenced by American universities. Even if an American University was organized in Baku (the university practicing education principles created for them in the USA) and most of the faculty members came from the US, I still have some doubts that it would become a leading higher education institute with deep research potential.

I strongly believe that the Khazar University type of higher education institute is more suitable to derive full benefits of local research traditions and scientific potential, to profit from the strong national culture and in its own turn to enrich it, to become a wonderful synthesis of international outlook and national values. The

above can be easily proved by comparing American universities spread all over the world with the best national universities of those countries.

I had a plan to set up a university that would give a priority to research. I understood very well the financial and organizational difficulties this could cause. I knew that it was necessary to invite the best scholars to the university, but would all colleagues around me approve and follow this advice unanimously? Would they be not be afraid of competition and rivalry, would they want to invite the scholars like them and perhaps better than them, or would they rather make themselves "comfortable" in their positions and recruit only those who would be of no threat?

It is only in competition that a human being demonstrates its full potential. Even socialism understood the importance of competition and rivalry, but they dressed it in a socialist terminology. Expressions such as "the socialistic competition" and "the healthy rivalry" were common. But there was a problem somewhere and there was no real rivalry permitted. Maybe because the word "socialistic" always prevailed over "competition", and word "healthy" over "rivalry." Perhaps the system of administration that did not allow for real competition was one of the main reasons that led to the breakdown of the Soviet Union and communist bloc.

To ensure rivalry, to give way to initiative, to make the education environment more interesting and colorful, I sincerely wished for private sector in education to be widespread and for many new universities to be set up. Of course, theoretically, any kind of new universities could have been set up - those that set low standards of education or took bribes. I naively believed at the time that this was an honorable way and those

who could join it would be capable, enthusiastic and honest, and that every new university would be a big step forward. Life would soon prove me wrong, and I would have to observe with regret the new universities carrying on in old and embarrassing ways. Unfortunately some private universities did all they could to damage the reputation of private higher education. But in any case there must be a green light for private universities and colleges.

From time to time I would convey messages about education systems of the world and various experiences via newspapers, magazines, television and radio, at conferences, in order to help the public to understand private education and to weaken the resistance of authorities. Then I was included in the group preparing the new Law on Education and tried to make private education to be officially accepted.

The occupation of Azerbaijani territories by Armenia was still continuing. Nagorny Karabakh was lost completely with the fall of towns Khojali and Shusha, later Lachin, Kalbajar and other territories neighboring with Nagorny Karabakh were seized by Armenians. During two years we saw various Presidents and governments come and go, and there was constant tension and instability in the country. At this tragic time, however strange it may sound, new higher education institutions were being created and the private education was achieving its first successes. The state education institutions were trying to avoid competing with the private sector and were demonstrating their anxiety. This "non-healthy" competition caused the biggest damage to our medical department that was going from strength to strength with every passing day.

I was not forgetting about issues that seemed to be so distant and unrealistic that I could easily be compared to Don Quixote. Ever since autumn 1991 I had an idea on my mind that would not leave me - Khazar University must have a territory for its own campus. I would address the government many times on this issue, I would even hire architects to prepare plans for the future campus in order to prove the seriousness of my intentions and speed up the solution of the problem. In the US many years ago the so-called "land grant" movement⁵¹ gave a great impetus to the development of the universities, so why could not our government do it?

From the very first days of our activity I discovered my weakest point - how can we charge students tuition fees? The government does not help the student, the people are generally poor, and it is embarrassing to ask them for money. Of course being brought up in socialism did not help - we all believe that it is not appropriate to ask money for services that you provide. I would much prefer to establish a foundation that would help students to pay their tuition fees and award grants for research. Another weakness of mine would constantly manifest itself - my inability to practice or understand the principle "if a problem can be solved by means of money then it is not a problem." There is also the need for constant networking and maintaining relationships with government officials - something that I am not very keen at. Perhaps I am bound to always be in trouble because of it. And is it really enough just to try to do the quality work and rely on public opinion in order to succeed?

There are an infinite number of problems awaiting their solutions. On our way forward we are encountering new problems every day and often it is impossi-

ble to move on without resolving them. It reminds me of the way scientific research is conducted – "if you try to resolve a complex problem, even if you are not able to complete it, the results you arrive at will still be useful". This approach seems to be very appropriate for the development of the university.

It is quite natural and essential to try to foresee the events and approach the development of the university as a highly creative work. Little by little I am increasingly pressed for time to do my mathematical research and I have to try to compensate this nostalgia by creativity in my new vocation - education. Just as in mathematics, in this work one can not avoid tackling the problem. It has to be analyzed, and if familiar and existing methods can not be applied to resolve it then new ones need to be invented. It is a pain, isn't it? But is creation possible without pain? Henri Poincare once wrote: "to try to have no pain is a negative ideal, this can only be achieved if the world come to an end."⁵² And, is the pain of creation a real suffering or hidden pleasure?

Will the days, months and years I spend in search of the perfect "Khazar" lead to the creation of a university "whose name will be known to nations, and the news of its fame passed from country to country?"⁵³ We will live and see.

Inshallah!⁵⁴

The traveler is on his way again.

NOTES

1. St. Petersburg was named Leningrad during the Soviet Period.
2. At that time candidates to the Supreme Soviet (National Assembly or Parliament) used to be nominated at special meetings by "people."
3. Popular Front of Azerbaijan played an important role in developing and heading national liberation movement in Azerbaijan when the Soviet Union was about to collapse. Later due to inner contradictions it was divided into several parties. In July 1992 it came into power and after a year resigned. Nowadays it is functioning under the name of Azerbaijan Popular Front Party (headed by Abulfaz Elchibay).
4. Bakinskiy Rabochiy ("Baku Worker") was a leading daily Russian newspaper published in Baku, Azerbaijan.
5. "Communist" - was a leading daily newspaper in Azerbaijani.
6. The military conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan on Azerbaijan's territory called Dagliq (Na-

- gorny – in Russian, Mountainous – in English) Karabakh is referred to here.
7. In the former Soviet Union and Azerbaijan as well, the Academy of Science was an Institution with a lot of research Institutes and a Presidium.
 8. The agreements were signed by the former Soviet Union with other countries.
 9. "Dalga" ("Wave") – was one of the most interesting and popular information and entertainment programs of Azerbaijan TV.
 10. Yagub Shafai was born in Iranian Azerbaijan. Hasan Hasanov said in this meeting that his grandparents were also natives of Zanjan, Iran.
 11. So called Islamic fundamentalism is referred to here (approximately 90% Azerbaijan citizens are Moslems). We consider Azerbaijan a cosmopolitan country, which is far from the extremism named Islam fundamentalism.
 12. Lankaran – a town situated on the coast of the Caspian Sea, near the borderline of Azerbaijan Republic with Iran. The sea, mountains, forests and subtropical climate make this area very beautiful.
 13. According to the Former Soviet Union system of education and scientific (research) degrees, the preliminary (undergraduate) university education would take five years. In the last, fifth year, usually a diploma (thesis) should be defended. Then to take the degree further, one has to continue studying at an *Aspirantura* (graduate studies) for three years. Those who completed their studies successfully and published the results of their research in scientific journals obtained a chance to get a scientific degree of candidate of sciences. In order to get this *Candidate of Science* degree corresponding to the

US-type Ph.D. degree (Doctor of Philosophy in special fields) in most cases one had to work on dissertation for four, five, even more years, instead of three. The highest scientific (research) degree "Doctor of Science" that doesn't correspond to any degree in the US was not often achieved. At that time Doctor of Sciences degree in some fields (for example mathematics) could only be attained at bigger scientific centers in central cities of the Soviet Union.

14. The possibility of establishing private universities and their legal status were stated in the Azerbaijan Republic Education Law worked out and adopted in 1992.
15. "Müəllim" is of Arabic origin, it means "teacher." In Azerbaijan it is used both in its direct meaning and as a form of polite address, following the first name. Normally an educated literate man would be referred to as Müəllim. For example: "Hasan müəllim" both indicates a person whose profession is teacher and is a form of address to a person whose name is Hasan. (Compare: Mister, Monsieur).

16. The following is the complete text of this document:

Azerbaijan SSR, Council of Ministers

RESOLUTION № 286

December 20, 1990

Baku

On the preparatory works for the establishment of English Language Azerbaijan University

During the business congress held in Azerbaijan SSR it became evident that we do not have sufficient number of specialists for developing a market economy. The insufficiency of qualified specialists proficient in foreign languages, including English was particularly distinctly felt. On the other hand, the Congress necessitates that Azerbaijani specialists obtain diplomas approved at international level, to enable both foreign and Azerbaijani citizens obtain world class education in our Republic.

Taking this into consideration:

1⁰. It is expedient to establish a many-profiled English Language Azerbaijan University under the Institute of National Economy Management by the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan SSR and the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan SSR. The education system in this University will be based on two level system* according to international standards.

2⁰. It is intended to organize the first enrollment to the University in the 1991-1992 academic year in four groups consisting of 15-20 students in each of the following areas:

- a) Economics and Management
- b) Computer, Statistics and Mathematical Sciences
- c) International Relations and Political Science
- d) Ecology.

It is advisable to train specialists in Medicine, Biology and other fields at the University in the future.

3⁰. To finance the University mainly from two sources: private tuition and the state budget providing average expenditure amount for each student.

* Bachelor's and master's degrees are meant here. The Ph.D. programs were deemed not to be necessary for the newly established university.

In order to enable the University to begin functioning in time:

a) In a month to prepare and to present to the Council of Ministers constitution of the University enlisting the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan SSR (comrade R.B. Feyzullayev) and the Institute of National Economy Management at the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan SSR (comrade R.K. Rahimov), Doctor of Physical-Mathematical Sciences, Prof. H.A. Isayev** and Doctor of Economics S.M. Mammadov.

b) In a month the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan SSR and Ministry of Finance of Azerbaijan SSR will consider the possibilities of financing the University from the state budget and present it to the Council of Ministers.

c) The Institute of National Economy Management at the Council of Ministers will solve the problems of accommodation, providing auditoriums and all the appropriate equipment and needs.

d) The Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan SSR is to render necessary assistance to the University in its establishment and functioning.

H. Hasanov
Chairman of the Council of
Ministers of Azerbaijan SSR.

** My official (passport) surname was Isayev. All my research papers on mathematics were published under the surname Isayev. But all my papers, articles and other works, devoted to other fields (as Education, History, Political Science, Language Studies) were published under the surname Isaxanli (pronounced as Issakhanly).

17. This rhyme is taken from the ghazal (a kind of eastern poem) by Nizami (1191-1209), the great Eastern thinker and poet, who was born in Ganja, Azerbaijan.
18. This article of the resolution (as well as the majority of all the articles) was never implemented by the appropriate organizations.
19. This phrase is a free translation of the name of the novel "Dunya Qopur" (The world is falling apart) by A.Abulhasan, an Azerbaijani writer in the XX century.
20. At that time the First Secretary of Azerbaijan Communist Party Central Committee was Ayaz Mutalibov.
21. On January 19 Mikhail Gorbachov signed the decree of the President of Supreme Soviet of the USSR declaring a state of emergency in Baku beginning January 20. During the night from January 19 to January 20 the armed forces of the USSR Defense Ministry, KGB and USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs entered Baku, inflicted reprisals on the peaceful population, killed about 200 people, wounded hundreds of people with many still missing. Gorbachov's decree was announced on radio in the morning of January 20 at approximately 6-7 a.m. (after the action had taken place).
22. S.M. Kirov (1886-1936) was one of the political leaders of the USSR, in 1921-1926 he headed Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic (being the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party).
23. "The Council of Ministers" (The Soviet of Ministers) was replaced by "The Cabinet of Ministers."

Everybody everywhere was getting rid of the word "Soviet."

24. He was a well-known statesman of the USSR. Now he is the President of the Azerbaijan Republic.

25.

Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic

RESOLUTION № 41

*March 18, 1991
Baku*

***On the Establishment of
English Language Azerbaijan University***

Taking into consideration the great need in the Republic of Azerbaijan for highly qualified, multiple-disciplined English speaking specialists, to carry the independent foreign economic relations and to transfer to the market economy, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Azerbaijan resolves:

1⁰. To establish a multiple-disciplined English Language Azerbaijan University affiliated to the Institute of National Economy Management at the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic and the Ministry of Education. The education system in this University will be based on two levels according to the world standards, where the graduates alongside with the Bachelor and Master's degrees will be given the diploma of an interpreter.

2⁰. To approve the Constitution of the English Language Azerbaijan University prepared by the Ministry of Education of the Azerbaijan Republic and by the Institute of National Economy Management at the Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic (enclosed). The

English Language Azerbaijan University is a juridical entity functioning in accordance with its own constitution.

3⁰. The English Language Azerbaijan University belongs to higher learning institutions of the first category.* To finance the University mainly from two sources: private tuition and the state budget providing average expenditure amount for each student. To give preferences in salaries to those faculty members who speak English.**

4⁰. To organize the first enrollment to the University in 1991 in four groups consisting of 15-20 students each in following subjects:

"Economics and Management", "International Relations and Political Science", "Computer, Statistics and Mathematical Sciences" and "Ecology."

It is advisable to train specialists in biology, medicine and other professions at the University in the future.

5⁰. The Institute of National Economy Management at the Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic and the Ministry of Education are to solve the problems of equipment, library, laboratory of oral speech and publishing. To accommodate the English Language Azerbaijan University at the building of the Institute of National Economy Management.

6⁰. State Planning Committee of the Azerbaijan Republic and the Ministry of Finance to solve all the problems of financing the University, buying furniture, all type of equipment and transportation.

* Some elements of the constitution (e.g. high salaries) made it a top education Institute according to rankings of the Ministry of Education.

** The regulations that guaranteed high salaries for English speaking employees in some organizations are implied here.

7⁰. The Ministry of Communication to provide the English Language Azerbaijan University with a governmental phone^{***} and other phones.

8⁰. Head Construction Company of Baku to make operational the hotel type hostel of the Institute of National Economy Management in 1992 for the English Language Azerbaijan University.

9⁰. City Executive Committee of Baku to solve the issue of the University building and provide five apartments for visiting teachers, until the end of 1991.

10⁰. Department of Science and Education of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic to take control of carrying out of this Resolution.

*The Prime Minister: H. Hasanov
Deputy business-manager: I. Hajiyev*

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26. Falsification of the election results is implied here.
27. Comsomol was the name of the youth organization supporting the Communist Party. It was made up from the phrase "Communisticheskiy Soyuz Molo-dyoji" (Union of Young Communists) - com-so-mol.
28. The author's grandfather - Isaxan Hacibayramli headed the uprising against the collectivization in the Central Transcaucasia. He caused serious losses in the Red Army and Soviet Militia. He died a heroic death in the fall of 1930 at the age of 33. His family and close friends were sent to exile to Kazakstan

*** Automatic telephone station providing special and direct communication with high rank officials and offices is meant here.

- and Kirgizstan, some of his brothers-in-arms, including cousins were forced to leave for Turkey.
29. It's a building near the walls of Ichari Shahar (Old Town) in Baku. Now the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is located in this building.
30. Mullah Nasreddin is very popular in some Eastern Countries (Azerbaijan, Turkey, Iran, Middle Asia Republics and others) with his anecdotes. He is also known by name Khoja Nasreddin in some countries. The anecdote that is being implied here is the following one:
Once Khan [ruler of the region – *Ed.*] gave Mullah a donkey and told him to teach donkey how to speak. Mullah was offered a great amount of money for this work. Mullah of course agreed with Khan and asked to be given 5 years to teach the donkey. When Mullah's wife heard about this impossible work she cried and begged him to explain why he had committed such a stupid action. His answer was: "My dear wife, God is merciful. In five years, either Khan or donkey will die. Both of them are guests in this world."

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31. ***Ministry of Education
Institute of the National Economy Management
by the Cabinet of
Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic***

RESOLUTION № 261/25*April 18, 1991**Baku***On the establishment of the English Language Azerbaijan University**

We confirm the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers issued on March 18, 1991, №41 on the Establishment of the English Language Azerbaijan University (the complete text of the resolution is given above, see note 25...).

For the implementation of the above resolution we order:

1. To appoint Doctor of Physical and Mathematical Sciences Professor Isayev Hamlet Abdulla oglu the Prorector for academic and research affairs of the English Language Azerbaijan University affiliated to the Institute of National Economy Management from April 15, 1991 with corresponding salary.

2. Prorector of the English Language Azerbaijan University H.A. Isayev is obliged:

2.1. To present the draft structures and staff plans of the English Language Azerbaijan University before May 1, 1991 to obtain confirmation.

2.2. Within two weeks to present plans of activities of the University affiliated with INEM pointed out in the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers.

2.3. Within a month to present to the Ministry of Education the curricula for all majors to be looked through and get confirmed. Provide with the programs and academic documents of the education process.

2.4. According to the "Rules for the admission to the higher education institutions in the USSR" and instruc-

tions of the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan to prepare and implement the plan of activity for student enrollment for the period of 1991/1992 academic year. To prepare the student enrollment plan defined in the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers.

3. Planning-Economy department of the Ministry of Education of the Azerbaijan Republic (comrade Khankishiyev B.A.), together with State Planning Committee of the Azerbaijan Republic and Ministry of Finance to solve the financial problems of the English Language Azerbaijan University in accordance with the resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers.

4. Rector of Azerbaijan State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages Prof. Verdiyeva Z.N. - to render assistance to the English Language University with technical equipment and organization of education processes using the audio center of the Institute.

5. Departments of the Ministry of Education of the Azerbaijan Republic and Rector and related divisions of the INEM by the Cabinet of Ministers are to assist in every way to the new university.

6. Prof. F.K. Babayev, first deputy minister of the Ministry of Education and M.A. Akhundov, prorector for academic affairs of the INEM are to control implementation of this resolution.

*Minister of Education**Prof. R.B. Feyzullayev**Rector of the Institute of**National Economy Management**Prof. R.K. Rahimov*

32. "Lenin" avenue is now named "Azadlig" (Liberty) avenue.

33. After the October Revolution, 1917 in Russia, Azerbaijan Democratic Republic was established on May 28, 1918. This Republic was recognized by some governments, but fell on April 28, 1920 after Soviet occupation.
34. It is taken from a well-known Azerbaijani poet Samed Vurgun's poem "A Negro's wish."
35. "The Meaning of The Glorious Koran", Translated by Marmaduke Pickthall.
Or see: (O man), follow not that where of thou hast no knowledge. Lo! The hearing and the sight and the heart – of each of these it will be asked" (The Holy Qur'an, Revised and Edited by the Presidency of Islamic Researches, IFTA).

36.

STATEMENT

On the accomplishment of the joint resolution dated April 18, 1991, № 261/25 of the Ministry of Education and Institute of National Economy Management by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic

June 14, 1991

Baku

We, Prof. R.Rahimov, Rector of the Institute of National Economy Management,

F.R. Babayev, First Deputy Minister of Education,

Prof. H.A. Isayev, Prorector of the English Language Azerbaijan University,

Prof. M.Y.Mardanov, Head of the Department of Higher Education at the Ministry of Education,

Assoc. Prof. B.A.Khankishiyev, Head of the Department of Planning and Economics, at the Ministry of Education *determined the following:*

1. Curricula and syllabus and other educational-methodical documents for the different subjects listed in the aforementioned joint resolution have not been prepared and affirmed correctly.

2. The members of the University Admission Commission have not been appointed yet.

3. Though the amount for the tuition fee was stated in the media, it has not been confirmed in accordance with existing rules.

4. The academic load for 1991/92 academic year has not been determined yet, and so the staffing issues, expenses estimate and the payment of wages and many other issues have not been resolved.

5. Student admission advertisements in the newspapers have not been submitted to the corresponding departments for approval.

6. Until today the University have not presented its proposals on the enrollment plans for different subjects to the Ministry of Education and therefore there is no affirmed admission plans.

7. Under the exemplary enrollment regulations affirmed by the USSR State Education Committee in 1991 the applications to the higher learning institutions must be submitted between June 25 and beginning of July, and the entrance exams must be held before August 5.

Taking into account the above mentioned we defined that English Language Azerbaijan University is not ready for 1991/92 academic year and so it is not possible to conduct the entrance exams at this Institute.

37. This statement belongs to Vladimir Lenin.

38.

REPORT

On the fulfillment of the Joint Resolution of Ministry of Education and Institute of National Economy Management by the Cabinet of Ministers dated April 18, 1991, by № 261/25 and Supplement to the Statement dated June 14, 1991, on the fulfillment of this resolution

In this Resolution № 261/25 I as a Prorector of the English Language Azerbaijan University was employed to fulfill four following tasks:

1. To present the structure and staffing plans. These documents were presented twice (the first and the re-written second versions).

2. To prepare the plans of activities of the Rector's office. This plan was worked out, discussed at the Academic Council of the Institute of National Economy Management and rewritten accordingly.

3. To work out the curricula and syllabus.

The original curricula for all majors were worked out. The practice of leading Western Universities, Soviet and Azerbaijan higher schools, research institutes and others was creatively taken into account in preparing these documents. The valuable ideas of the talented scholars of Azerbaijan, outstanding Soviet specialists, also the point of views of Western scholars were considered as well. Taking into consideration the importance and originality of these curricula more than once the round-table meetings with our scholars were organized and thorough discussions took place. We have recently got some positive reviews on our curricula and this process is continuing.

4. To organize the 1991/1992 academic year student enrollment at the English Language Azerbaijan University.

Advertisements in different newspapers in Russian and Azerbaijani were published in a standard format. Tests and writing materials for exams were prepared, 20 different blanks and documents were printed (most of them 500-1000-2000 copies). All works planned have been completed in order to receive the high school graduates' documents, the condition of classrooms and radio-TV systems has been re-checked. The schedules for entrance exams, pre-exam consultations have been prepared. It has been decided to invite examiners for different subjects from other universities and research institutes for entrance exams. It was expedient to form the enrollment commission consistent of three people - a representative from the English Language Azerbaijan University, Ministry of Education and Institute of National Economy Management.

This information on the fulfillment of the resolution dated 18 April 1991, by № 261/25 confirms that we are completely ready to hold entrance exams and have worked out our educational process.

In the notes above I provided answers to the most of the items of the statement dated June 14, 1991. The appropriate answers to other items could be found in the official documents. For example, it is mentioned in the Constitution of the English Language Azerbaijan University that the salaries for staff members are defined on the basis of contract, these contracts are supposed to be prepared in August. As to the enrollment plans on different specialties it is needless to wait for the suggestions from the English Language Azerbaijan University. The enrollment plan is defined in the resolution of the

Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan Republic dated March 18, 1991, by № 41 and it was repeated again in the joint resolution № 261/25.

All of above brings us to a fair conclusion:

There are no real reasons to hold student enrollment at the English Language Azerbaijan University in 1991/92 academic year. No doubt, there might still be some shortages, but all of them are easily rectifiable. On the other hand in the 5th article of the joint resolution № 261/25 it's noted that various institutions and organizations have to render all necessary assistance to the university. Probably rendering us this promised help will enable us to overcome the difficulties.

It is necessary to talk about other issues as well.

Whenever we hold the enrollment - this year or some years later, the first year students will still have the same classes in accordance with the standard program (intensive teaching of English and introductory courses on different subjects in their native language).

After the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Azerbaijan SSR dated December 20, by №286 p. we succeeded in gathering the English Speaking scholars and mobilized all their offerings for successful education. If the opening of the university is postponed it will bring about a lot of dissatisfaction and de-motivate this able group of people.

If some changes are required then certain concessions can be made. For example, we could hold the entrance exams now and begin classes on 1 October instead of 1 September, or to hold entrance exams at the end of July. The other option is to enroll students to the preparatory course and begin degree study a year later.

Taking into account the above information I feel obliged to mention once again that it is expedient to hold

the student enrollment at the English Language Azerbaijan University this year and begin its activity.

39. W. Shakespeare's play "The Taming of the Shrew" is referred to here. Second phrase is from Samed Vurgun's (1906-1956) poem "The Standard-bearer of the Time."
40. A well-known economist, Nobel Prize winner P. Samuelson is being implied.
41. The then Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR Boris Pavlov.
42. Grigoriy Yavlinskiy at that time was known as an economist reformer and he was the author of a program considered by the government for implementation.
43. A quotation from Samed Vurgun's poem "The Standard-bearer of the Time."
44. A town situated 165 km away from Baku (it is also a center of the region with the same name).
45. Gara Daniz = The Black Sea, Ak Deniz = The Mediterranean, Khazar = The Caspian.
46. This phrase is from the Khazar University hymn entitled "My Khazar University" (lyrics by Hamlet Isaxanli, music by well-known Azerbaijani composers Ramiz Mustafayev and Vasif Adigozalov).
47. In 1924 Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic issued a decree to transfer from Arabic alphabet to Latin and the new alphabet was effective until 1939 (it should be noted that the Latin alphabet in Turkey today was adopted in 1928 and was very close to Latin-based Azerbaijani alphabet). From 1939 to

- 1991 Cyrillic alphabet was used in Azerbaijan. Nowadays, both Cyrillic and Latin alphabets are used. There was an official resolution to transfer to Latin alphabet, but it will happen stage by stage. More than 20 million Azeris living in Iranian Azerbaijan use Arabic alphabet.
48. The belt of the legendary ruler Gordy was tied in a tight knot. A legend said that he who succeeded in untying this tight knot would conquer Asia. Alexander III of Macedonia (Alexander the Great) (BC 334/333) cut the knot with his sword and put an end to this matter.
49. Karamov is a personage from the musical comedy "Toy" ("Wedding Party") by Azerbaijani writer Sabit Rahman (1910-1970). Karamov is a liar. He insists that he was walking when he was six months old. When nobody believed his lie he was persistent: "Karamov can walk."
50. The secondary school graduates in the Azerbaijan Republic have to fill in the application forms and present them to the State Student Admission Commission. They have to indicate the subject they want to study and the university where they want to study at. The students are sent to different universities according to the results of the entrance exams.
51. Morrill Act signed in 1862 by Abraham Lincoln is being implied.
52. The scientific-philosophical treatises ("Science and Hypothesis", "The Value of Science", "Science and Method", "The Last View Points") by a well-known French mathematician and philosopher Henri Poincare (1854-1912) are implied here.
53. This phrase is taken from the hymn of Khazar University entitled "My Khazar University" (Lyrics by

Hamlet Isaxanli, music by Ramiz Mustafayev and Vasif Adigozalov).

54. Inshallah – a word of Arabic origin used in all Moslem languages. It means "if God pleases."

Translated from the Azeri

By

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and

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