

E16a Unesco Press

RAHEL

E1075-102
**Studies
and documents on
cultural policies**

Cultural policy in

dr. E. Boekmanstichting
Bibliotheek

Afghanistan

by Shafie Rahel



Studies and documents on cultural policies

F 6a
RAHEL
112.1
AFGANI
STAN

EF (1971.1073)

dr. E. Boekmansichting
Bibliotheek

In this series:

- Cultural policy: a preliminary study*
Cultural policy in the United States, by Charles C. Mark
Cultural rights as human rights
Cultural policy in Japan, by Nobuya Shikaumi
Some aspects of French cultural policy, by the Studies and Research Department of the French Ministry of Culture
Cultural policy in Tunisia, by Rafik Saïd
Cultural policy in Great Britain, by Michael Green and Michael Wilding, in consultation with Richard Hoggart
Cultural policy in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, by A. A. Zvorykin with the assistance of N. I. Golubtsova and E. I. Rabinovitch
Cultural policy in Czechoslovakia, by Miroslav Marek, Milan Hromádka and Josef Chroust
Cultural policy in Italy, a survey prepared under the auspices of the Italian National Commission for Unesco
Cultural policy in Yugoslavia, by Stefan Majstorović
Cultural policy in Bulgaria, by Kostadine Popov
Some aspects of cultural policies in India, by Kapila Malik Vatsyayan
Cultural policy in Cuba, by Lisandro Otero with the assistance of Francisco Martínez Hinojosa
Cultural policy in Egypt, by Magdi Wahba
Cultural policy in Finland, a study prepared under the auspices of the Finnish National Commission for Unesco
Cultural policy in Sri Lanka, by H. H. Bandara
Cultural policy in Nigeria, by T. A. Fasuyi
Cultural policy in Iran, by Djamchid Behnam
Cultural policy in Poland, by Stanisław Witold Balicki, Jerzy Kossak and Mirosław Żuławski
The role of culture in leisure time in New Zealand, by Bernard W. Smyth
Cultural policy in Israel, by Jozeph Michman
Cultural policy in Senegal, by Mamadou Seyni M'Bengue
Cultural policy in the Federal Republic of Germany, a study prepared under the auspices of the German Commission for Unesco
Cultural policy in Indonesia, a study prepared by the staff of the Directorate-General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia
Cultural policy in the Philippines, a study prepared under the auspices of the Unesco National Commission of the Philippines
Cultural policy in Liberia, by Kenneth Y. Best
Cultural policy in Hungary, a survey prepared under the auspices of the Hungarian National Commission for Unesco
The cultural policy of the United Republic of Tanzania, by L. A. Mbughuni
Cultural policy in Kenya, by Kivuto Ndeti
Cultural policy in Romania, by Ion Dodu Balan with the co-operation of the Directorates of the Council of Socialist Culture and Education
Cultural policy in Afghanistan, by Shafie Rahel

The serial numbering of titles in this series, the presentation of which has been modified, was discontinued with the volume *Cultural policy in Italy*

Cultural policy

in **Afghanistan**

Shafie Rahel

The Unesco Press
Paris 1975

**Published by The Unesco Press,
7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris
Printed by Imprimerie des
Presses Universitaires de France, Vendôme**

**ISBN 92-3-101298-3
French edition: 92-3-201298-7**

**© Unesco 1975
*Printed in France***

Preface

The purpose of this series is to show how cultural policies are planned and implemented in various Member States.

As cultures differ, so does the approach to them; it is for each Member State to determine its cultural policy and methods according to its own conception of culture, its socio-economic system, political ideology and technical development. However, the methods of cultural policy (like those of general development policy) have certain common problems; these are largely institutional, administrative and financial in nature, and the need has increasingly been stressed for exchanging experiences and information about them. This series, each issue of which follows as far as possible a similar pattern so as to make comparison easier, is mainly concerned with these technical aspects of cultural policy.

In general, the studies deal with the principles and methods of cultural policy, the evaluation of cultural needs, administrative structures and management, planning and financing, the organization of resources, legislation, budgeting, public and private institutions, cultural content in education, cultural autonomy and decentralization, the training of personnel, institutional infrastructures for meeting specific cultural needs, the safeguarding of the cultural heritage, institutions for the dissemination of the arts, international cultural co-operation and other related subjects.

The studies, which cover countries belonging to differing social and economic systems, geographical areas and levels of development, present therefore a wide variety of approaches and methods in cultural policy. Taken as a whole, they can provide guidelines to countries which have yet to establish cultural policies, while all countries, especially those seeking new formulations of such policies, can profit by the experience already gained.

This study was prepared for Unesco by Mr Shafie Rahel, scholar, journalist and author, who has represented Afghanistan at important inter-governmental conferences and who is engaged in research for forthcoming publications at the Ministry of Information and Culture, Kabul, where he was Deputy Minister in 1973. The opinions expressed are the author's and do not necessarily reflect the views of Unesco.

Contents

9	Foreword
11	Introduction
13	Historical background
19	Art
22	Cultural policy
25	Ministry of Information and Culture: Cultural Section
35	Ministry of Information and Culture: Information Section
44	Other cultural forces
47	Bilateral and international co-operation
48	Conclusion
49	Appendix: Organizational chart

Foreword

This monograph briefly describes Afghanistan's cultural policy in its cultural background. This policy attempts to satisfy the needs and demands of an ever-changing cultural situation that is peculiar to a developing nation; its guiding principle is faith in the creative energy of the Afghan people.

The monograph is principally concerned with the functions and duties of the Ministry of Information and Culture, which is mainly responsible for initiating and implementing cultural activities. Afghanistan, as a developing nation, receives foreign aid in developing its cultural and information services; continued aid will make it easier for the ministry to attain a higher level of cultural achievement.

We wish to thank the Unesco Division of Cultural Development for its interest and encouragement in the preparation and printing of this monograph. Our thanks also go to Mr Shafie Rahel for the selfless efforts that have led to the production of this comprehensive and valuable document.

Professor Dr Rahim Nevin
Minister
Ministry of Information and Culture

Introduction

Afghan culture is unique in many ways. For centuries, the country was host to dissimilar cultures, many of which took root and became a part of its way of life. Over the centuries, the mingling of historical influences has created a cultural blend which is universally recognized as being distinctively Afghan.

This study reviews past achievements, and analyses current policies and activities which can be included under the general term culture. Afghanistan is a developing nation which receives financial and technical assistance from abroad to help in carrying out its cultural programmes.

For help in writing the monograph, I am deeply indebted to several Afghan scholars and colleagues for their valuable suggestions, and to heads of departments in the Ministry of Information and Culture for supplying the relevant data. I would not have been able to undertake and complete the monograph had it not been for the attention of the Minister of Information and Culture, Professor Dr Rahim Nevin.

Historical background

For centuries life in Afghanistan has been affected by turbulent empires, expanding cultures and great world religions. The country has always been a cross-roads of civilizations, absorbing what it could, initiating some cultures, preserving others. The result is that, today, Afghanistan can take pride in its role of safeguarding the remnants of early cultures—prehistoric, classical, Buddhist, Islamic—that have left their abiding mark.

Excavations have identified remains dating back to Middle Palaeolithic, 30,000 to 50,000 years ago. Northern Afghanistan may have been one of the transitional zones where man developed physically and began to revolutionize Stone Age technology. Sites in southern Afghanistan have thrown light on rural and urban communities that arose five millenniums ago in major river valleys from the Nile to the Indus.

Ancient Afghanistan, then known as Bactria, is first mentioned in history in Rig Veda hymns (2000 B.C.) which make abundant geographic references to this area. Among the rivers mentioned are the Khuba (Kabul) and the Suvastu (Swat). Balkh and the Helmand river are mentioned in the sacred texts of the Avesta as being part of Aryana, whence came the Aryans, common ancestors of the Iranians and Indians.

Various world religions were nurtured on Afghan soil. Mazdaism involved the worship of Ahura Mazda as a supreme deity and a cosmic struggle between a spirit of good and a spirit of evil. Zoroaster, the great religious teacher of the sixth century B.C., is thought to have lived in northern Afghanistan. He transformed many of the Mazda beliefs into ethical precepts and made abstract entities of the autonomous gods of mythology, so approaching the concepts of a monotheistic religion.

Around the thirteenth century B.C., Aryan tribes poured into India through the Afghan passes, and subjugated and then slowly reorganized the structural character of the sub-continent. Even in the southern Deccan, Aryan India imposed its religion and social system and achieved linguistic dominance in the world of the Indus and the Ganges. Remnants of a

Historical background

pre-Dravidian language are still spoken today by some 20,000 Brahuis in the remote southern deserts of present-day Afghanistan.

Alexander passed through Central Asia and north-west India like a meteor (330-325 B.C.). He left behind in Bactria, between the Oxus and the Hindu Kush, tenacious Greek settlements whose customs, mythology, government and art influenced the culture of this Aryan region for over 200 years. Recent excavations reveal the extent to which Hellenistic culture had taken root in Afghanistan.

From Bactria Greek kings expanded their empire over the lands south of the Hindu Kush down to northern India, from Kapisa near Kabul to Taxila in the Punjab and further east. Hellenism moved east along the ancient roads which led into the heart of the Indian world. At the same time, Indian culture was moving west, and came face to face with Hellenism. Buddhism, the first universal religion which mankind has known, was carried north to the now declining Greek kingdoms, and produced an astounding new Indo-Greek culture that mingled Greek realism with Buddhist abstractionism.

In the middle of the third century B.C., the great Indian emperor Ashoka, returning sick at heart from the fighting and bloodshed in eastern India, was converted to Buddhism and henceforward renounced all conquest but spiritual. Some two centuries after the death of its founder, Buddhism discovered in the person of this remarkable Maurian king a most fervent propagandist. To every part of his empire, even to the Greek monarchs of the west, he sent messengers to explain the new faith and to establish moral order. Ashoka had the rules of Buddhism engraved on rock and stone pillars, two of which, inscribed in Aramaic and Greek, were found in Kandahar, south of Kabul. Another stone inscription in Aramaic which was found in Laghman mentions the old trade route from India to Tadmor (Palmyra) in present-day Syria.

The adoption of Buddhism in the Gandhara plain and the valleys of the Indus at the time of Ashoka and the Indo-Greeks was favoured by political circumstances. However, retarded in its progress by Scythian and Parthian invasions, it did not take hold in central Afghanistan until the second century A.D. It then still had a third stride to take northward in order to cross the Hindu Kush and establish itself in Bactria. All in all, Buddhism took nearly six hundred years to spread over the entire eastern part of Afghanistan.

Around the beginning of the first century A.D., Turkik or Scythian invaders drove down from the far eastern borders of the Oxus, reaching as far as Kabul. This energetic Kushan dynasty held power for some five hundred years, from the decline of the Indo-Greek empire to the invasion of the Ephthalites, or White Huns, in the fifth century A.D.

The Kushans united Bactria and Sogdiana, defeated the Parthians and Scythians in the west, extended their rule over the Kabul Valley and Kashmir to the east, and later expanded their domains as far as Benares.

Between the first and the third century A.D. the Kushans played an important role in the expansion of Buddhist culture. The great Kanishka himself was influential in establishing the reformed Mahayana doctrine of Buddhism which is today that of the major Buddhist sect.

The Kushan Empire traded with all neighbouring States, controlled the various arteries of the great Silk Route through the Middle East to Europe, and served as a transit point in commercial exchanges between Rome and India. During Kanishka's reign the Middle East continued to be open to the influence of Greek civilization and art, and to commercial relations with the Roman Empire. One of the capitals of the Kushan Empire was Kapisa, today's Begram, north of Kabul. Afghanistan thus provided a meeting-place for religious and artistic as well as commercial exchange.

Between the second and the seventh century, Afghanistan was a dynamic propagator of Buddhist literature and art in Chinese Turkestan and in China itself. Chinese annals tell of missionaries crossing the Gobi desert from oasis to oasis to found monasteries, or crossing the seas to reach Annam. There were monks whose point of departure was Balkh, Begram or present-day Jalalabad. From the valleys of Afghanistan the ideas and art-forms of the Indo-European world spread throughout the Far East. The influence of the frescos of Bamiyan reached to Kyzil and Turfan in Chinese Turkestan, and indeed as far as Korea and Japan.

In the seventh century, Arab invaders, carried on the tide of Islam, reached Afghanistan. Abu Bakr, the first Caliph after the Prophet Mohammad, and Omar, the second Caliph and the great architect of Moslem expansion, had completed the conquest of Persia only a few years after the Prophet's death.

Mass conversions took place, the simplicity and nobility of the Islamic faith contrasting favourably with the already decadent dogmatism of Zoroastrian priests in Persia and Buddhist monks in Afghanistan. No other religion has entered into the Afghan soul in so penetrating and permanent a fashion as has Islam.

In 712, while Tariq was invading Spain and Qotaiba was entering Transoxiana, a young Arab general, Mohammad Qasim, reversing Alexander's route but unconsciously following his style, undertook the conquest of the Indus Valley from its delta northward. The intrigues of the court and civil wars among the Arab dynasties—already beginning to forget the commandments of Islam—were among the causes which contributed to the foundering of this expedition, which menaced the domains of the Shah of Kabul.

Soon the Caliph's governors began to proclaim autonomy in the name of Islam for the different provinces of the Arab Empire. The first principality to be formed within the Abassid Empire was that of the Tahirids (814-973) in Khorasan in west Afghanistan. Yaqub-bin-Laith, a Safarid, made himself master of Seistan in the second half of the ninth century, wrested Khorasan from the Tahirid emirs, annexed Bamiyan and then

Kabul. The three cities which marked his route of conquest—Kandahar, Ghazni and Kabul—were destined to assume ever-increasing importance.

The emirs of the Samanid dynasty, who had received Transoxiana, Bukhara, and Samarkand from Caliph Ma'mun, became the guardians of the Realm of Islam and of Moslem civilization against invasions from Central Asia. They annexed the former Safarid emirate of Khorasan and Seistan, and soon had incorporated into their realm the most brilliant centres of Persian letters and science: Bukhara, Samarkand, Merv, Balkh, Nishapur.

The Ghaznavid dynasty, outstanding in Afghan history, was founded in Ghazni in 962. Mahmoud of Ghazni, one of the most inspiring epic figures in eastern history and the driving force of this new dynasty, came to the throne of Ghazni in 993. At that time the Samanid Empire had foundered. Mahmoud took Khorasan and then turned east, towards India. His main opponent, the Raj of Punjab, succumbed in the year 1000. Following that victory, he assumed the title of Sultan. A decade later he conquered a coalition of Hindu potentates of the Indo-Ganges world, and thereafter scarcely a year passed without a victorious expedition into the Indus Valley or the western basin of the Ganges. In 1021 he carried the torch of Islam into Kashmir and five years later the Temple of Shiva at Somanath, in Gujarat, fell into his hands.

To the north, the Sultan carried his arms into Transoxiana, which in 1024 recognized him as suzerain. Shortly afterwards he took the province of Rayy, near today's Teheran and Isfahan. Sultan Mahmoud found himself at the head of an immense empire, comprising the territories of present-day Iran and north-west India, with its capital in Afghanistan.

The Ghaznavid Empire survived for over a hundred years after Mahmoud's death. From the uncharted mountain heartland of Afghanistan came the people of Ghor, led by Jahan-Soz, the 'World Burner', avenging, sacking, and destroying the marble palaces of Ghazni. The Ghorids carried the faith of Islam to north India and made Delhi the capital of their empire until the thirteenth century.

All remaining splendours perished in the Mongol invasion of Genghis Khan, who exceeded even Jahan-Soz in his ability to reduce to rubble and wilderness the lands he entered. Bukhara, Samarkand, Balkh, Kabul, and Ghazni were obliterated. Over a million Heratis were massacred, and the great *karez* system of underground irrigation was destroyed, leaving barren and deserted the lushly cultivated southern provinces of Afghanistan. This single wave of destruction left the country depopulated for centuries, its economic and spiritual structure broken.

Two hundred years later Tamerlane swept across Afghanistan on his way to Delhi, sparing only one city, Samarkand, which he made his capital. He subjugated all of Central Asia, brutally decimating the various provincial dynasties which had sprung up after the disappearance of the Mongol Khans. His vast empire did not survive him—it was broken into fragments

by numerous offsprings all claiming the right of succession. Later, on the ruins of Herat, one of his sons built a city of beauty equal to his father's capital of Samarkand.

Shah-Rukh, founder of this Timurid dynasty of Herat, displayed exceptional capacity as a ruler. He made his son, Ulugh Beg, viceroy of Samarkand. Under their enlightened administration, Khorasan and Transoxiana attained a high degree of prosperity. Fifteenth-century Herat produced monuments of architectural, artistic, and intellectual grandeur that made this period one of the most brilliant in Afghan history.

In the north the Uzbeks had dethroned the last member of the Timurid dynasty. Babur, a young descendant of both Genghis Khan and Tamerlane, fled south to Balkh, capturing Kabul in 1504 and some twenty years later Delhi, thereby establishing himself as the first ruler of the great Moghul Empire in India.

While eastern Afghanistan became a distant province of the Moghul Empire, the Afghans, under the leadership of Mir Weis Hotaki, succeeded in liberating the western part of their country from the Safavids, whose empire in Iran was brought to an end in 1722 by Afghan occupation. The expansion of the Afghan State was temporarily stopped by Nadir Afshar, who ranged as far as Delhi and there received the submission of the Moghul court.

Nadir Afshar was assassinated by a Persian officer. Ahmad Shah of the Sadozai tribe was elected sovereign of the Afghans at a gathering of tribal chieftains, where a holy man crowned him with a wreath of wheat, one of the symbols displayed on today's Afghan flag. Ahmad Shah founded a powerful empire, stretching from the northern-most boundaries of Khorasan to the Ganges plain. He excelled in battle and politics and, by consolidating the fractious tribes around him, he laid the foundation of a unified State, with Kandahar the first capital of modern Afghanistan.

Following Ahmad Shah's death in 1773, his son Timur Shah tried to strengthen the centre, transferring the capital to Kabul. His efforts were unsuccessful, however, and in the following decades the outer provinces of Kashmir and the Punjab were lost, and the feudal potentates of northern Afghanistan proclaimed their independence, as did the Sinds in the south. The Sikhs, allied with the British since 1806, then took Peshawar in the east. Amir Dost Mohammad, chief of the powerful Mohammadzai tribe, finally re-established Afghan unity in 1834.

A few years later, the British Government sent Sir Alexander Burnes from India to Kabul to 'test the friendship the British might form in the region'. As a result of lagging and uncertain negotiations the British gathered their famous Army of India and, without great difficulty, captured Kabul, putting a pro-British puppet on the throne. Within a year tribal rebellion was galvanized into open revolt. The British envoys were assassinated, as was their figure-head ruler; 17,000 retreating British troops and camp-followers were annihilated in the mountain passes leading to

Jalalabad. Dost Mohammad returned to power and set out once again to unite his people.

The political unity achieved by Dost Mohammad was shattered after his death. Amir Sher Ali, an enlightened monarch, refused to agree to British ultimatums, and chose the only course left open: negotiation with czarist Russia. This led to the Second Anglo-Afghan war, with Afghanistan becoming virtually a British protectorate, acting as a buffer State between Russia and British India. The British arbitrarily established Afghanistan's borders and, with the Durand Line of 1893, cut the Pashtoon tribal areas literally in half.

Nationalist sentiments were effectively expressed at this time by Sayed Jamaluddin (1838-97), venerated under the name of al-Afghani, a prominent scholar of Islam and anti-colonialist. He clashed with Moslem leaders in his own country as well as in Turkey and Iran. In an exchange with the French scholar Ernest Renan he refuted the latter's views on the incompatibility of Islam with modern science and progress.

Modern Afghanistan took shape between 1884 and 1919. Consolidation of the central power was accomplished by the political genius of Amir Abdur Rahman, who reigned from 1880 to 1901. Amir Habibullah continued his father's efforts at reform and, during his reign, modern ideas began to enter the country. During the Third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919, Great Britain agreed officially to surrender its control of Afghan foreign policy and to recognize Afghanistan's complete independence.

Habibullah's son, Amanullah, who reigned for ten years, launched major and far-reaching reforms. He ordered the emancipation of women, established compulsory education for both sexes, and sent young Afghans to study abroad. With King Amanullah's social, economic and military reforms, the foundation of modern Afghanistan had been laid.

A brief but serious uprising interrupted this progress in 1928-29, and Amanullah was forced to abdicate. Mohammad Nadir Shah restored order and ruled from 1929-33. His son, Mohammad Zahir Shah, ruled until 17 July 1973, when Mohammad Daoud in a bloodless coup abolished the monarchy and proclaimed the first Republic in the history of Afghanistan.

During recent years, the government took serious measures to reform the administrative, fiscal, commercial and industrial sectors. Hospitals and schools were built, foreign advisers were brought in, programmes for the development of educational institutions were increased, and the women of Afghanistan began to assume a more active role in public life. During Mohammad Daoud's years as prime minister, the country's first five-year plan was initiated.

In the following pages, the cultural policy of Afghanistan is described and analysed. To a large extent, it is the logical product of Afghanistan's historical heritage.

Art

The following is a general chronology of Afghanistan's different cultural periods.

Prehistoric: from 50,000 years ago down to the Iron Age (2,000 years ago).

Bactrian and Indo-Greek: fourth to first centuries B.C.

Kushan: first to third centuries A.D.

Kushano-Sasanian and Ephthalite: third to eighth centuries.

Early Islamic: pre-1220.

Late Islamic and modern: post-1220.

Anthropologists have discovered in northern Afghanistan an oblong limestone pebble with barely recognizable human features, dating from the Upper Palaeolithic level of 20,000 years ago. It represents the oldest known sculpture found in Asia and is probably one of the oldest such specimens found anywhere. Further investigations may show that the foothills of northern Afghanistan were one of the earliest centres for the development of the wheat-barley-sheep-goat economy of the Neolithic revolution, which permitted man to control his food supply and ultimately led to the creation of urban civilization.

After Alexander the Great defeated the last Achaemenid kings in 331 B.C., he made his way through the southern deserts and central mountains of Afghanistan, and arrived in Bactria. Balkh, where he married the Princess Roxana, became his capital, and soon, one of the most splendid cities of the eastern world. At least five of today's Afghan cities at that time bore the name Alexandria.

On the eastern edge of Bactria, at Ai Khanoum, at the confluence of the Kokcha and Oxus rivers, a great city of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom has been discovered. Large halls, lined with stone columns that were crowned by beautiful floral capitals, stone sarcophagi, statues, and Greek inscriptions, bear witness to the existence of a refined civilization in which city life was developed to a high degree and where Hellenic religion and learning prevailed.

Greek and Indo-Greek satraps, who ruled this area for 200 years after Alexander's demise, continued to build cities and encourage art. Local talent, however, was not totally dominated by Greek art. It was a fateful moment in art history when Greek beauty met Buddhist piety somewhere in the Gandhara plain near Jalalabad. There indigenous Hellenized artists, converted to Buddhism, conceived the first anthropomorphic figure of the Buddha, depicting him with the features of Apollo. An entirely new Buddhist iconography came into existence. This meeting of the great Indian sage and the god of Greek poetry influenced the course of the Buddhist revival begun by the Kushan King Kanishka. Its art forms spread from India into Central Asia and eventually into China.

North of the Hindu Kush, 145 miles from Kabul, lies the site of Surkh Kotal, a large dynastic temple which flourished during the reign of Kanishka and his successors, around the second century A.D. Culturally, Surkh Kotal offers the first evidence of a native and sophisticated Graeco-Bactrian art, composed of local and Hellenistic elements which had mingled during the rule of the earlier Bactrian Greek kings. Four stone inscriptions written in the Bactrian language but in Greek letters were discovered at the site, and show links between the ancient Avesta and today's Dari and Pashto.

Another historic site is Hadda, one of the most sacred spots of the Buddhist world from the second to the fifth century A.D. The Jalalabad Valley is strewn with hundreds of Buddhist ruins, and those at Hadda have acquired great fame. Hadda art exhibits a blending of Bactrian, Graeco-Roman, and Indian. Here a representation of Buddha in human form was produced for the first time; previously he had been portrayed only through symbols.

Hsuan-Tsang, the noted seventh-century Chinese pilgrim, describes the vast monastic complex of Bamiyan and the two monumental standing Buddhas carved into the face of the cliff. Pilgrim and worshipper alike approached the statues with eyes lowered and backs bowed. As they gathered before the Buddhas, horns were blown and they were permitted to raise their eyes for the first time. The impression must have been overwhelming, for Hsuan-Tsang writes that many fainted.

He also describes a reclining statue of Buddha, some thousand feet long, which so far has not been found. This gigantic figure might have been destroyed by Moslem invaders or may still remain to be rediscovered. The eminent French archaeologist, Joseph Hackin, believes that, before the Moslem conquest, the statue was encased in mud and, through the centuries, slowly blended into the hilly landscape, waiting to be brought back to light and perhaps worshipped again by pious pilgrims.

In the late seventh century A.D. the Arabs had forced their way into Central Asia and conquered the great plains of Aryana. They did not come, however, as conquerors and rulers, but as guides and tutors.

Under the great Sultan Mahmoud, an ardent admirer of poetry and the

arts, Ghazni became a vigorous centre of learning and one of the most sumptuous capitals of the Islamic world. Four hundred poets were said to be in residence, and scholars and writers (including the famous al-Beruni and the equally renowned Firdusi) came from all over the world to seek and exchange knowledge. Philosophic and lyric poetry, architecture and fine arts reached extraordinary heights under the Ghaznavid Empire.

Ghazni, Central Asia's largest and most beautiful city, came to a violent end. In one week, it was reduced to ruin by the invading armies of the Ghorids. They destroyed everything, except two slim minarets which still give mute testimony to its former splendour.

The only extant monument to Ghorid art and culture is the minaret of Jam, located east of Herat in an isolated mountain gorge. This minaret, the second highest in the world, was discovered by chance in 1957; it is covered with a rich tapestry of brick and stucco ornamentation, Kufic script and luminous blue glazed ceramic tiles. It still remains a mystery why this unique architectural wonder was built in such a remote mountain wilderness and how it had so totally vanished from the sight of man.

After the devastation wrought by Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century, a renaissance of Islamic art and culture flowered in Afghanistan in fifteenth-century Herat under the patronage of the Timurid dynasty. Sultan Baiqara, who acceded to the throne of Herat in the late 1500s, was a fervent patron of the arts and sciences and built mosques and monuments of great beauty. He established the Academy of Arts where the world-famous school of miniature painting, under such masters as Behzad and Sultan Mohammad, flourished, and the great names of literature, such as the poet Jami, set the seal upon the era of Dari classical letters. The creative force of Herat lived on in the artistic world of Islam in Egypt, Turkey, and the India of the Moghuls.

Pashto literature made spectacular progress with the voluminous works of the post-warrior Kushal Khan Khatak in the seventeenth century. His poems on love, sport, philosophy, and religion are still on the lips of his people. His patriotism is inspired by his opposition to Moghul rule and his pride in Afghan honour. He is a pioneer of Afghan contemporary nationalism.

For the first time in its history, Afghanistan, under the leadership of the Republican régime, has developed a cultural policy in order to safeguard and cherish the past, and prepare a future that will be worthy of it.

Cultural policy

Realizing the importance of national culture, the Republic of Afghanistan, since its inception on 17 July 1973, has been paying keen attention to the preservation of the country's national heritage. By so doing, it has in fact pledged itself to preserving at the same time the heritage of several civilizations which share a common cultural past.

In his address to the nation on 23 August 1973, the founder and head of the Republic, Mohammad Daoud, declared:

The Republic of Afghanistan will review and modify educational programmes and will strive to eliminate illiteracy among the masses and bring about cultural changes in the land on the basis of national culture. It will also endeavour to train the young generations in accordance with the principles of morality, patriotism and service of the people.

The State will provide assistance in expanding the press and other publications, with the objective of involving the people, and it will strengthen and encourage national arts.

The Republic will provide general and free education for all male and female children by increasing the number of public schools. It will also pave the way for middle, secondary, and higher educational institutions to train a scientific cadre.

In order to develop scientific and historical research on the country's cultural past, the Government will take all necessary steps to protect and preserve historical monuments as well as furthering archaeological research and establishing national museums and libraries in different parts of the country.

In the autumn of 1973, the Republican régime presented its cultural policy, the main points of which are as follows:

Preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage of society with due consideration to positive cultural values, compatible with scientific and technological change.

Preparing the people for voluntary and uninhibited participation in the cultural life of society.

Creating the milieu conducive to popular acceptance of positive change and

- evolutionary trends; promoting the aesthetic standards of the people so that they can appreciate the artistic phenomena of cultural life.
- Encouraging the people to respect and uphold national traditions and cultural traits of other societies.
- Creating direct links between cultural life and socio-economic conditions; sustaining efforts for the popularization of functional literacy and for the greater understanding of the objectives and processes of national culture.
- Preparing the ground for intellectuals, artists, and writers so that they may enjoy the freedom to create and initiate and place their works at the service of the people.
- Making use of every possibility for advancing material well-being and bringing future development—the product of modern scientific and technological progress—closer to traditional spiritual values.
- Acquainting the people with the customs of different groups within the country in the light of common objectives, and in the spirit of national unity and identity.
- Preparing the ground for acceptance of the world cultural phenomenon, with the hope of fostering international unity and coexistence, and providing means to inform and enlighten the people, thereby persuading them to take an active part in cultural issues.
- Popularizing the performing and fine arts; training cadres to play an important role in solving youth problems and directing youth towards constructive pursuits.
- Struggling against superstition and a negative mentality detrimental to the acceptance of sound ideas regarding science, social and economic development, and health standards.
- Encouraging the people to participate in sports, recreation, and other forms of physical culture.
- Clearing the way for the development and popularization of the Pashto and Dari languages, as well as other local languages, by means of the press and education.
- Preserving genuine aspects of the cultural heritage, and preventing the infusion of negative aspects of alien cultures; encouraging academic research on the customs, traditions, and literature of the people and other aspects of folk culture.
- Preserving all historical monuments and examples of the cultural heritage of the nation; introducing Afghan culture to other societies by means of cultural relations, exhibitions, theatre, films, publications, tourism, conferences and seminars, and other cultural activities.
- Reviving and popularizing all indigenous Afghan handicrafts and crafts.
- The following points are of special note:
Afghan cultural policy includes both information and culture.
- It stresses the originality and ingenuity of the Afghan nation, and the determination of the Republican régime to protect and develop national cultural and informational institutions.

Cultural policy

It is compatible with the positive, active, non-aligned policy of Afghanistan in the political sphere.

And, it is an instrument that will facilitate the adoption of new trends and satisfy cultural requirements.

To implement the cultural policy outlined above, programmes prepared by the Ministry of Information and Culture pay due attention to the following factors:

The cross-cultural nature of Afghan society demands measures which will both preserve its originality and enable it to absorb new international cultural phenomena.

Afghanistan needs specialized agencies to implement its cultural policies.

The public authorities need to maintain a balanced approach to ensure that the cultural values of the population and the authenticity of Afghanistan's cultural heritage are reconciled with the introduction of the products of modern technology.

Cultural activities should enhance the cultural heritage and, through it, foster national integration.

As cultural development depends on special and economic conditions, it should keep pace with the national five-year development plans, and special budgets should be set aside for cultural programmes.

Cultural and information programmes should aim at informing, educating, entertaining, and guiding the public. The mass media, and theatrical and folklore activities should be geared to serve these same ends.

The cumulative effect of such diverse activities as tourism, physical culture, the collection of folklore literature, and the influence of the mass media should be evaluated at regular intervals to assess their utility, impact, and defects.

Mass public participation in cultural programmes should be encouraged in such a way as to increase environmental and national awareness, and a sense of belonging to the Afghan community. In this regard, the promotion of youth participation in cultural activities is a priority task.

The sensitivity and creativity of youth should be encouraged and enlisted as part of a living culture.

To satisfy these requirements, the Ministry of Information and Culture has two main departments: Information and Culture.



Buddha at Bamiyan. [*Photo: Isaac Mahmoud.*]



Buddha and worshippers, Hadda. [Photo: Isaac Mahmoud.]



Head of Buddha, from Hadda. [*Photo: Isaac Mahmoud.*]



Carved figure from Nuristan. [Photo: Isaac Mahmoud.]

Ministry of Information and Culture: Cultural Section

The Culture Section of the ministry is responsible for the National Museum of Afghanistan and other museums; the Institute of Archaeology; the Historical Society; the Department of Arts and Crafts; the Folklore Department; libraries and archives; film; theatre; and music.

Museums

The first museum in Afghanistan was instituted in 1919 at the Baghe Bala palace overlooking Kabul, and contained manuscripts, miniatures, weapons, and art objects belonging to the royal family. A few years later the collection was moved to the king's palace in the centre of the city. In 1931 it was officially installed in the present building, which had previously served as the municipality. The original collection was dramatically enriched in 1922 thanks to the first excavations of the French archaeological mission in Afghanistan. Through the years other archaeological missions have added their finds, so that today, the National Museum offers one of the world's major collections of antiquities. Objects spanning five millenniums cover the entire history of Greek and Indian influences on Afghanistan. Unlike most other museums the collection was not acquired by purchase but was built up solely from treasures recovered from the native soil. The museum has approximately 32,000 objects, of which some 2,000 major pieces are on display. An estimated 200,000 people visit the museum annually.

The Prehistoric Room contains Early Neolithic and Middle Paleolithic finds from northern Afghanistan, including the oldest known stone sculpture found in Asia, and items from the Iron Age. The principal collection of objects comes from Mundigak, in the desiccated region north-west of Kandahar, a Bronze Age site with remains of a civilization which linked Afghanistan, as early as 3000 B.C., with Iran and India along the proto-historic highway between the Indus Valley and Mesopotamia.

Excavations at Begram, forty miles north of Kabul, yielded one of the great treasures in the history of archaeology. Famous as the ancient city of Kapisa, last capital of Hellenistic Afghanistan and of the first of the Kushan rulers, it lay at the cross-roads of Central Asia and the western world along the vast transcontinental Silk Route. Objects were uncovered from literally every corner of the ancient world: Chinese lacquer, Graeco-Roman bronzes, Roman painted glassware from Alexandria, plaster casts of Greek metal work, and the largest collection of Indian ivory carvings in existence. This fabulous array of objects affirms the remarkable extent of artistic, cultural, and commercial activity of that period.

Surkh Kotal was the dynastic temple of the great Kushan kings of the second century A.D. The Kushan Empire, in the early Christian era, was one of the four powers (China, Parthia, the Roman Empire were the others) which ruled the civilized world. The hill-top complex of Surkh Kotal yielded highly significant inscriptions and limestone statues which revealed an already advanced 'Bactrian' style.

Not far from Begram lie the Buddhist monasteries of Shotorak and Paitava. From here come the narrative reliefs and images (c. third century A.D.) which movingly depict the major episodes of the Buddha's life. Although the earlier classical proportions are lacking, these pieces closely relate to the Gandhara school of art, but with distinctive traits such as Buddhist patrons wearing the long typical coat of the Kushans and the full trousers of Central Asian horsemen.

From the second to the seventh century A.D., Hadda was a centre of miracle-working relics and shrines, whose myriad gold stupas welcomed pilgrims from as far away as China. Excavations have uncovered thousands of sculptures in schist, limestone and, above all, stucco, representing the innumerable inhabitants of the divine and human world. These Graeco-Buddhist sculptures, of unexpected originality and realistic force, present Buddhas with Apollonian features, heads recalling Roman senators, Turkish and Mongol barbarians, monks, and demons—living portraits in a tumultuous variety of expressions. A bearded divinity and a series of grotesques evoke the fifteenth-century realism of Gothic cathedral art and a spiritual parallel of Mahayana Buddhism and mediaeval Christianity.

The Bamiyan Valley, in the heart of the massive Hindu Kush, had been a caravan stop since earliest times and, from the third to the seventh century A.D., the site of the greatest Buddhist monastic establishment in Central Asia. It offered the pious a vast network of cells, grottoes, and caves and the two colossal statues of Buddha carved out of the living rock cliffs. Fragments of wall paintings and clay and stucco carvings in the museum collection show a blend of the stolid Sasanian style of Iran and the graceful style of India's Gupta dynasty. The mystical circular diagrams of Esoteric Buddhism, found later in Nepal and Tibet, can be traced to Bamiyan.

In the remote Ghorband Valley the Buddhist monastery of Fondukistan, one of the most significant monuments in the history of Buddhist art, was discovered in 1937. The paintings and sculpture reflect a similarity to the Indian style and some of the pictorial characteristics of the Hadda stuccos, but in an entirely new mood, representing the final and most delicate flowering of Buddhist art in Afghanistan. The figures are of an exaggerated languid gracefulness and elegance, hauntingly sensuous and personal, yet distant and untouchable in their other-worldly contemplation of the divine.

The great Sultan Mahmoud, from his capital of Ghazni, ruled an empire stretching from eastern Iran to the limits of India. From the eleventh to the thirteenth century Ghazni was one of the most resplendent cultural centres of the Islamic world, and gave its name to an art illustrated by its magnificent bronzes, its metallic lustre ware and its heraldic marble reliefs. The museum collection presents an eclectic anthology of the finest forms and techniques of Islamic art during the span of Ghaznavid glory.

The Coin Room of the National Museum contains one of the country's greatest treasures. Notable are the Attic drachmas of the 'owl' type, attesting to a pre-Alexandrian penetration of Greece into Afghanistan; the Kunduz hoard discovered in 1946 of hundreds of Graeco-Bactrian tetradrachmas and many hitherto unknown types, and some extraordinary Bactrian coins struck by Indo-Greek kings, who had previously been known only in the Kabul Valley; the Mir Zakah treasure; the Greek and Achaemenid silver from the Kabul hoard; very rare double decadrachmas of Amyntas, the largest silver coins known in all of the Greek world; and, finally, Kushan and Islamic coins—the latter right up to the foundation of the Republic.

These, then, are the primary exhibits on display today at the museum. The plan for a new building to house the National Museum has been prepared, with Unesco assistance, and the government has allotted it a five-acre site in one of the best central locations in Kabul. Detailed engineering work is in progress, and as soon as financial means are available, construction will begin.

Apart from the National Museum in Kabul, there are seven provincial museums—at Ghazni, Jalalabad, Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, Gulbahar, Kandahar, and Khulm—where objects from local archaeological sites are housed. The museum at Khulm is a large converted palace of a former king. There are also on-site museums at Hadda and at Ai Khanoum.

Archaeology

The preservation of the cultural heritage, the elucidation of the more obscure areas of Afghan history, and the clarification of the cultural history of Afghanistan are tasks accorded top priority by the ministry. The Afghan

Ministry of Information and Culture:
Cultural Section

Institute of Archaeology was accordingly established in 1965, and has since been co-operating internationally in its work on these subjects.

The institute, which has forty members, undertakes excavations and the restoration of historical monuments and objects, and surveys promising new sites. It is at present excavating several sites, some with foreign collaboration, including archaeological missions from France, Italy, the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, India, and the Soviet Union.

The French archaeological mission was the first. It was established in 1922 and its first director was Prof. A. Foucher. He was followed by Prof. D. Schlumberger, a member of the French Academy of Science, who headed the mission until the end of the Second World War. Prof. P. Bernard is the present director.

The French mission has undertaken excavations at Nad-i-Ali and Mundigak (prehistoric); Ai Khanoum (Graeco-Bactrian); Balkh, Hadda, Bamiyan, Fondukistan, Tepe Maranjan, Khair Khana, Logar, Shotorak, Qol-i-Nader, Tepe Buddha, Begram, Zargaran, Guldara, Surkh Kotal, Samangan (Kushan and later Kushan); and Lashkargah-Bost, Sorkh Dak, Safid Dak, and Shahre Gholghola (Islamic).

In their fifty-four years of work in Afghanistan, the French experts have published twenty-one books and hundreds of scientific papers about Afghan history, culture, numismatics, and so on.

The Italian archaeological mission has been in Afghanistan since 1954, concentrating on Ghazni. It was for some time under the direction of Prof. G. Tucci; it is now headed by Prof. M. Taddei. It has been excavating at various sites in Ghazni and its environs (late Kushan and Islamic), and Samangan (Islamic Samanid). It will also repair the minarets of Ghazni, and the mausoleums of Mohammad Sharif and Sultan Masoud III. Recently a small museum was opened in Ghazni, in a Timurid building restored by the mission.

Three American missions are working in Afghanistan: University of Pennsylvania—Godaizaira desert; Museum of Natural History, New York—Aq Kupruk (prehistoric), under the direction of Prof. L. Dupree; Smithsonian Institute—Tarosar, under Prof. W. Truesdale.

The archaeological mission from the University of Bonn, headed by Prof. K. Fischer, has been in Afghanistan since 1969, working in the Seistan.

The British, through the British Institute of Afghan Studies, are digging experimentally in old Kandahar and will soon undertake repairs on the Chakari minaret near Kabul.

The Kyoto University mission from Japan, under Prof. Higuchi, has dug at the Hindu Shahi site of Tepe Sekander, and has signed an agreement for the restoration of various monuments.

The agreement recently concluded with India allows excavation at Begram and Farah, and the renovation of monuments in Balkh. The Indian

Ministry of Information and Culture:
Cultural Section

mission, under Prof. R. Sengupta, has just finished renovating one of the colossal Buddhas at Bamiyan.

Under the agreement with the Soviet Union, in force until 1977, the Soviet archaeological mission, headed by Mrs Kavijlikova, has been digging in Del Warzeen, Nerkh Qala, and various desert areas in northern Afghanistan.

The Afghan Institute of Archaeology has been carrying out independent excavations since 1964, mainly at Hadda, and experimental diggings in Khum Zargar and Tepe Wazirabad. It has also restored a number of monuments. The institute has a restoration laboratory and a photographic archive.

The Historical Society

In 1931 the Kabul Literary Association was founded to undertake research on literature and history. The members of the association, all of whom were Afghan scholars, began their studies on various periods of Afghan history and past literary achievements.

The association became the Historical Society in 1943 and was invited to concentrate on making a more detailed analysis of Afghan history.

Today, its main tasks are:

To compile and publish a full history of Afghanistan from ancient times to the present.

To undertake research in Afghan archaeology, geography, culture, literature, and prepare a *Who's Who in Afghanistan*.

To collect and distribute documents, manuscripts, and letters relating to Afghan history.

To undertake research in Afghan folklore.

To establish and maintain fruitful cultural and scientific contacts with its counterparts in other countries.

The Historical Society has two regular publications: *Ariana Magazine*—a quarterly established in 1943 and published in Pashto and Dari, carrying cultural, scientific, and literary articles on various aspects of life in Afghanistan and its past, and *Afghanistan Magazine*—a quarterly established in 1946 and published in English and French, carrying articles on Afghan history and archaeology. Since its inception, the Historical Society has published 107 books written by eminent Afghan scholars and writers. Its work on folklore has now become the responsibility of the ministry's Folklore Department.

An Encyclopaedia Section of the Historical Society was established in 1950 to publish the Ariana Encyclopaedias in the Pashto and Dari languages. It has published a set in each language so far, and is now revising each volume to include more titles.

Folklore Department

The Folklore Department is comparatively new, being established only in 1972. It collects folk tales, proverbs, poems, songs, costumes, and customs. Its publication, the *Folklore Quarterly*, treats all aspects of folklore in Afghanistan.

The department has also published four books on tales, dances, Pashtoon customs, and mountain songs. Mobile units are sent into the countryside to collect material.

It is now publishing books on the following: Panjsheer folklore; vernacular and colloquial accents of Rostaq; local dances; colloquialism in Herat during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; together with the following pamphlets: mat-making handicraft; silversmithing and goldsmithing; tribal traditions; superstitions; folklore of Parwan province.

Preparations are being made to establish the first folklore museum in Kabul and a folklore archive.

Libraries and archives

All public libraries in Afghanistan belong to and are managed by the Ministry of Information and Culture Public Libraries Department which was established in 1964.

The Public Libraries Department, with headquarters in Kabul, looks after twenty-nine libraries in the capital city and provincial centres, buys and collects books published abroad, supplies all branch libraries throughout the country with new titles, provides, against payment, micro-filmed copies of manuscripts to clients who order them, and runs a youth library for school children.

The department also has a new National Archives section. The building for it is being renovated and is due for inauguration in 1975.

KABUL PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Public Library of Kabul has seven sections.

Manuscripts. Here, many valuable old manuscripts, some with miniatures, are preserved. New acquisitions are continually being purchased by a committee of seven eminent scholars. The present collection consists of 4,000 manuscripts.

Reference.

National Archives. At present, 2,000 valuable documents have been collected and purchases continue. They will be housed in the new National Archives building.

Afghanistan. This section collects books (in any language) on Afghanistan.

Microfilms. Upon demand and receipt of payment, microfilms of any

Ministry of Information and Culture:
Cultural Section

document or manuscript will be supplied to cultural, educational, and scientific institutions abroad.

Newspapers and magazines. All Afghan daily newspapers, magazines, and periodicals, as well as some publications from abroad, are available in the library for the general public.

Distribution. This section lends books to anyone holding a membership card. The twenty-nine libraries in the provincial centres are small and many have just been established. Books and periodicals are regularly sent to them from Kabul.

Most of the public libraries are financed by donations. Municipalities, banks, and commercial and philanthropic organizations contribute. Government allocations, increasing annually, provide additional support.

YOUTH CLUB

In order to attract youth to libraries and increase their interest in reading, a small youth club was established at Kabul Public Library. It arranges weekly film shows, and one-act plays in which members of the club act. The club also has a library of 5,000 titles; membership usually rises sharply during the three-month winter vacation from school.

Arts and crafts

In addition to the independent fine arts and handicrafts schools, the ministry has its own department of arts and crafts, established in 1964.

It offers art courses to young people, provides artists with art materials, organizes exhibits, and helps in marketing the work of Afghan painters and sculptors.

The sculpture and painting courses, begun three years ago, have 120 students from high schools who study during their free afternoons. The instructors are two painters and two sculptors, all trained abroad and well known locally.

A building of architectural importance in the heart of Kabul, just acquired from the government, will become the first National Art Gallery.

The Arts and Crafts School of the Ministry of Education has hundreds of students who are trained in vocational subjects and the arts. The College of Letters of Kabul University has its own art department, where students can follow various courses.

Film

Film production in Afghanistan began only a decade ago, but the photographic arts in general have a fairly long history. Afghan Films was established by the government to look after the development, processing,

Ministry of Information and Culture:
Cultural Section

and import of films and photographic equipment. The government has done much to encourage the building of cinemas around the country. There are now forty-eight, of which fourteen, with a total seating capacity of 12,000, are in Kabul. The seating capacity of provincial cinemas varies between 500 and 750.

Afghan Films, a government enterprise with financial autonomy, has the following responsibilities: (a) to operate as an educational, cultural, and public information agency in the production, supply, import and distribution of newsreels, and documentary and feature films; (b) to dub and sub-title foreign films; (c) to produce, supply, process and present documentary and information films about governmental and private activities; (d) to act as a link between Afghan and foreign sources of supply, production, import and film exhibitions; (e) to develop a photographic department.

An annual programme is worked out in detail before the beginning of each year. In 1974, Afghan Films produced: fifty-two documentary ten-minute films, mostly about governmental activities, new projects, inaugurations and ground-breaking ceremonies, and people in public life; eight 1,000-foot films on subjects of general interest, such as family planning; ten advertising and public relations films for commercial and trade organizations; five educational 1,000-foot films for social service departments, at their own request; two feature films.

As the only central film organization, it plans to increase the number of feature films so as eventually to satisfy the demands of cinemas throughout Afghanistan.

Emphasis is first being laid on the production of feature films and increased co-operation with private producers. The first feature film has been financed and shot by a private firm on a commission basis. Agreements have been made with foreign countries for the joint production of additional feature films, e.g. with the Cinematography Institute of Bulgaria. Similar agreements are being negotiated with other countries.

Work on a new dubbing studio is in progress. It is hoped that by the end of 1975, at least one foreign film a month will be dubbed into either Pashto or Dari.

The foundation of the new coloured film processing laboratory has been laid. Preliminary work has been completed, and by the end of 1975 the laboratory, which is the first of its kind in Afghanistan, will become operational.

IMPORTS

Afghan Films is the sole purchase and distributing agency for all imported foreign films. Roughly two hundred films are imported annually from Italy, the United Kingdom, France, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, the Arab countries, India, Iran, the United States and other countries, and distributed to cinemas throughout Afghanistan. With the exception of two in Kabul, all

cinemas are owned privately and films are distributed on a first-come-first-served basis.

Afghan Films is also the only government agency for providing assistance to foreign film crews. Television crews from the United Kingdom, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, and Iran were offered technical and professional assistance during their work in Afghanistan in 1974.

TRAINING

The staff of Afghan Films has trained in India, the United States, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, and the Federal Republic of Germany. Under various agreements with foreign countries, Afghan Films has secured scholarships for training the professional personnel it requires.

Theatre

Afghanistan has a long tradition of story-telling and folk drama, but theatre, in the more formal definition, first appeared in Kabul during the 1930s. Recently it has become one of the most active components of the Afghan cultural scene. The National Theatre of Afghanistan (Afghan Nanderi) has performed thirteen plays to audiences totalling over 80,000 in 1973-74. The theatre, which employs 140 people, gives preference to original work by Afghan playwrights. Translations or adaptations of works from Turkey, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union have also been staged. Afghan Nanderi works in Dari and Pashto. Its training programme offers courses in dramatic art and ballet, and has attracted promising young actresses and actors.

Afghan Nanderi is the pace-setter for plays that are being performed throughout Afghanistan. The Municipal Theatre of Herat produced over eighty plays last year. The National Theatre has toured the provinces to bring drama to the people. Afghan playwrights are constantly adding to the repertoire, and the National Theatre performs Afghan plays in neighbouring countries. Enthusiasm and growing proficiency ensure a future of bright promise for the theatre in Afghanistan.

Music

The preservation of Afghan popular music, the teaching of both Eastern and Western music, the training of classical and modern instrumentalists and vocalists, and the production of traditional Afghan musical instruments are the concerns of the Music Department of the Ministry of Information and Culture. The department has separate sections for Eastern and Western music, which work independently under the guidance of experts in each

Ministry of Information and Culture:
Cultural Section

and train new talents in both. Each produces a half-hour programme for Radio Afghanistan every week.

In early 1974, twenty students—ten of Eastern and ten of Western music—were enrolled in training courses, which are offered free of charge. Small fees are paid for songs and scores accepted for the regular radio programmes. Courses are held in the evening three times a week, and last four years, with examinations at the end of each quarter. The department also trains musicians to develop the stamina and poise needed to perform in public.

The department has been able to popularize folk songs as national hits and thus give young people a genuine interest in folklore music.

RADIO MUSIC

Radio Afghanistan has its own department of music, with its own vocalists and instrumentalists, but only exceptionally talented amateurs are accepted. The radio has its own thirty-five-member folklore orchestra.

Both departments give occasional concerts.

INSTRUMENTS

Only a few experts were still capable of making musical instruments by hand when the Music Department was established in 1971. To revive this art and train young people, it has since paid special attention to these experts. New students of Eastern music now have their instruments made locally. Within a few years, apprentices should be able to take over instrument production in their own right from the experts.

Ministry of Information and Culture:

Information Section

The Information Section of the ministry includes: Radio Afghanistan, the Bakhtar News Agency, the Audio-Visual Department, the Social Guidance Department, the Afghan Advertising Agency, the Government Printing Press, the Baihagi Book Publishing Agency, and a Publications Department responsible for the Press and the ministry's cultural relations with foreign countries.

Radio Afghanistan

The groundwork of the present Radio Afghanistan broadcasting grid was laid in 1928, during the reign of King Amanullah, a leading reformer. It was then called Radio Kabul and had a small 200-watt transmitter, installed in Kabul and broadcasting on a 360-metre wave band. Because electric power existed only in Kabul, and also because radio sets were rare and expensive, only a few people could afford to receive the transmissions.

Radio Afghanistan's first big station was completed in 1930, when a 20-kw medium wave station was installed. For the first time the radio in Afghanistan acquired a national significance, and information, educational and entertainment programmes were broadcast.

This station too proved inadequate to meet public demand. Being a mountainous country, and surrounded by neighbours with powerful transmitters, reception was poor because of interference. In the first and second five-year social and economic development plans (1956 and 1961), provision was made for the purchase and installation of new equipment. Two medium stations, 25 kw and 100 kw each, and three short-wave stations, 10 kw, 50 kw and 100 kw each, became operational. The name was officially changed from Radio Kabul to Radio Afghanistan in 1965.

In a country where the illiteracy rate is high, radio is undoubtedly the most important medium of communication. Radio Afghanistan accordingly decided that its aims should be the following.

**Ministry of Information and Culture:
Information Section**

Assisting in all educational efforts.

Informing the general public of all major national and international news, views and current events.

Popularizing ideas and views on the emancipation of women.

Presenting programmes for mothers and housewives on child care and household concerns.

Presenting programmes for farmers in the use of chemical fertilizers, water, new varieties of wheat and grain seeds, soil improvement, double cropping, and so on.

Teaching foreign languages, including German, French, Russian and English.

Presenting sports programmes and events.

Giving advice on health, sanitation and medical problems.

Presenting teaching programmes for secondary and university students.

Providing entertainment of all kinds: music, stories, poetry, comedy and drama, and so on.

Broadcasting religious services and Islamic teaching.

Radio Afghanistan broadcasts sixty-five weekly and daily programmes, in Pashto and Dari on a fifty-fifty basis. The total domestic broadcasting time is 93 hours per week, plus 31.5 hours of foreign services.

Broadcasts are as follows:

	kHz	Metres
<i>Morning</i>		
Medium wave	1,280	234
Short wave	6,000	50
Short wave	3,390	88
<i>Afternoon</i>		
Medium wave	660	454
Short wave	6,000	50
Short wave	7,200	41
<i>Evening</i>		
Medium wave	1,280	234
Short wave	3,390	88

Foreign programmes are scheduled from 14.30 to 19.00 hours (add 4½ hours to local time for GMT) at the following times, on 19 metres, 15,195 kilocycles:

Programme	Hour
Arabic	14.30—15.00
Russian	15.00—15.30
German	15.30—16.00
English	16.00—16.30
Pashto-Dari	16.30—17.30
Urdu	17.30—18.30
English	18.30—19.00

Ministry of Information and Culture:
Information Section

A staff of approximately 700 prepare and produce the programmes. Virtually all the producers, announcers and programme directors hold at least a B.A. degree in journalism from Kabul University. Many of these, and most of the technicians, have also trained abroad, especially in the Federal Republic of Germany, with which Radio Afghanistan has a co-operation agreement. The radio is also financially and technically assisted by the Federal Republic of Germany.

Radio Afghanistan has a monthly magazine called *Pashtoon Zhagh*.

Television

The government is considering the financing of a national television station, designed by NHK of Japan. Television is to be introduced in three stages.

1. (a) Establishing an experimental television centre in Kabul, to begin the training of technical and professional personnel. (b) Once phase (a) is achieved, enlarging the same centre to become the first operational television network for Kabul and the five adjoining provinces. It is estimated that at least 60,000 television sets will be required during the first stage, which will cost an approximate U.S.\$1.5 million.
2. Establishing separate stations in five major towns to cover several other of the twenty-eight provinces of Afghanistan.
3. Covering the remaining provinces, especially Badakhshan in the Pamir plateau and Faryab in the northernmost part of the country.

The estimated cost (early 1974) for a national grid was U.S.\$11.5 million.

Programmes in black and white are to be broadcast to five different stations.

Bakhtar News Agency

The Bakhtar News Agency, the government's central news gathering and distribution organization, has the following responsibilities: collecting local, national and international news and its distribution to clients in Kabul and throughout Afghanistan; collecting of features, mainly from international agencies, and their distribution to the press and media; translating of news from foreign languages (mainly English) into Pashto and Dari; offering photographic coverage of all important national events; transmitting authorized government statements and official interviews; dealing with international agencies for the purchase of news and features.

The agency, founded in 1940, employs correspondents in all towns throughout Afghanistan. It receives copy twenty-one hours a day via radio-teletype from Tass, Reuters, Hsinhua, Ceteka, Tanjug, DPA, AFP and Antara news services. The agency has a well-equipped photographic service and an efficient monitoring department.

Audio-Visual Department

Public guidance on such matters as social affairs, law, democracy, national unity, education, public health, sanitation, agriculture and farming, and industry are centrally provided by the Audio-Visual Department which sends programmes into the villages to inform the public on these subjects and enlighten them on matters which have a direct bearing on their daily lives.

In 1974 the department showed films and staged sketches in 152 areas in twenty provinces. The following is a more detailed list of its objectives: promoting national integration and popularizing nationally sacred ideas; popularizing republicanism and democratic values; outlining the obligation of the public towards law and society in general; fostering active and positive participation in social, political and economic development; guiding the public in matters concerning family economics; campaigning against extreme elements which hinder social progress and social change; campaigning against restrictive elements and superstitions; broadening people's attitudes towards modernization, to bring them into line with the requirements of modern times; enlisting public co-operation in the execution of governmental social and economic development plans; enlisting public co-operation in the struggle against corruption; guiding the public in matters concerning health, sanitation, family planning, environmental hygiene and first aid; explaining new farming, agricultural and handicraft techniques; encouraging the public to take literacy courses.

The mobile units which go out to the villages provide education in the guise of entertainment, usually in the form of sketches; films are shown in the afternoon when farmers can be present.

The ministry has six such units, with the necessary tapes, film equipment and microphones. Posters and pamphlets, and sometimes newspapers and periodicals, are distributed to the audience.

The Ministry of Agriculture also has an Audio-Visual Department, to advise farmers on the use of techniques, seed varieties, and so on. In 1974 it arranged thirty-six round-table conferences between farmers and experts, produced eighteen programmes for farmers, wrote and produced seventy-one dialogues for broadcast over Radio Afghanistan for its special agricultural programme, organized four contests and printed, published and distributed numerous pamphlets and about 10,000 information sheets on the Agricultural Development Bank, co-operatives, chemical fertilizer, plant disease and other subjects.

The Ministry of Education has its own Audio-Visual Department also, and produces audio-visual aids for schools throughout the country.

Social Guidance Department

The Social Guidance Department issues religious publications, prepares religious texts for publication in the newspapers and over the radio, answers queries on religious matters as related to the press, sends *mullahs* to officiate at religious functions in the mosques, and assists the High Auqaf with the administration of endowments. Where necessary, the department also aids *mullahs* in the execution of their duties in the mosques.

A monthly magazine, *Pyame Haq* (the Message of God), has a circulation of 9,000, and caters for readers interested in Islamic religious issues. Regular programmes broadcast over Radio Afghanistan include recitations from the Holy Koran and their correct interpretation.

The department assists the ministry in arranging and producing programmes for religious occasions in accordance with the Islamic calendar. As 98 per cent of the people are Muslims, the functions of this department are considered significant.

Afghan Advertising Agency (AAA)

Established in 1965, this is one of the more profitable agencies of the ministry. Its staff of fifty are experienced in sales promotion, advertising, public relations, commercial art and market research.

Commercial firms and private enterprises can buy space in the press or time on the radio either directly or through the AAA; as advertising is new in Afghanistan, business and commercial organizations do not have their own advertising departments and rely largely on it.

Like other advertising agencies, it charges for its services (on a 15 per cent commission basis). The press and radio, like private companies, are legally obliged to pay this commission. Billboards and posters are charged in accordance with cost of production plus agency fees. The AAA also does business with foreign advertising agencies.

The Government Printing Press

The government has its own Government Printing Press (GPP). It was established in 1868, with two old-type stone printing presses. New machines were added from time to time to print the growing numbers of government publications. After a fire, the GPP was re-equipped with 103 Linotype and Monotype machines and offset presses.

In addition to printing over a million textbooks for the Ministry of Education the GPP prints all government newspapers, magazines and professional periodicals.

It has branches in the following provinces: Herat, Farah, Helmand,

Ministry of Information and Culture:
Information Section

Kandahar, Ghazni, Pakhtia, Nangarhar, Parwan, Baghlan, Mazar, Faryab, Jozjan, Badakhshan and Kunduz. Managers of these provincial presses are appointed by the GPP in Kabul, and they are responsible for returning annual balance sheets to the Kabul office. Raw materials and equipment required by the provincial presses are sent from Kabul, as well as any necessary trained personnel.

The GPP has a total of 969 employees. Of these 339 workers and 272 staff members are attached to the Kabul plant; the remainder are employed in the provinces.

Baihaqi Book Publishing Agency

The ministry's publishing agency, Baihaqi, publishes and markets books selected by a committee of scholars. The subjects include social, economic, cultural and political affairs and Afghan geography, history and art. Baihaqi also publishes books which are awarded State prizes in the annual competitions.

Baihaqi was reorganized in 1974. During the period 1970-74 it published eighty-five titles.

Publications Department

This department, which has a pivotal role, is responsible for supervising the publication of all newspapers, periodicals and magazines in Afghanistan, and the cultural contacts the ministry maintains with foreign countries.

PRESS HISTORY

The first newspaper in Afghanistan, *Shamsul Nahar*, appeared in 1868, during the enlightened reign of Amir Sher Ali Khan. It was not printed regularly and publication stopped after the death of the Amir.

The father of Afghan journalism, Mahmoud Tarzi, was editor of *Serajul Akhbar*, a daily which was published from 1912 to 1918. Mahmoud Tarzi focused its editorial policy on Afghan nationalism, on modernization and on the need to bring the country into closer contact with the modern world. His patriotic writings were in part responsible for the war of independence in 1919.

In 1918, *Etehad-i Mashreqi* (Unity of the East) was founded in Jelalabad by the late King Nadir Shah, who was the army commander in that province. It was a bi-weekly and became a daily in 1949.

In 1919, *Itefaq-i Islam* (Unity of Islam) was founded in Herat by Salahuddin Saljouki, one of Afghanistan's well-known writers. It became a daily in 1943. In 1920 *Itehad* (Unity) was founded in the northern town of Khanabad, changing in 1955 from a weekly to a daily.

Ministry of Information and Culture:
Information Section

Two more newspapers started in 1921: *Baidar* (Awake), edited by Hafiz Abdul Kayeum, in Mazar, and *Toloi Afghan* (Afghan Sunrise), edited by Salah Mohammad Khan, in Kandahar. Both were weeklies, becoming dailies in 1939 and 1947 respectively.

Anis Daily, one of the most important national newspapers, started publication in 1927, edited by Mahaiuddin Anis as a weekly. It became a daily within a year. *Islah* (Reform), the predecessor of *Jamhooriat* (Republic), was founded in 1929 in Pakhtia province, again by King Nadir Shah. It transferred to Kabul and became a daily the same year.

The *Herat Monthly* first appeared in 1932. Then, as now, it featured human interest stories, historical articles and humour.

NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS
AND PUBLICATIONS

Afghanistan has twenty-two general-interest newspapers and some fifty specialized and scholastic periodicals, with a total circulation of 300,000. Daily newspapers account for some 200,000 readers and the weeklies, monthlies, and quarterlies for the rest. There are altogether twelve morning dailies, four evening, two semi-weekly, one weekly and three monthly newspapers. It is estimated that each copy of every publication (newspaper or periodical) has an average of eight readers.

Table I gives additional information on the major publications.

The national press (i.e. papers which have most influence, readers and most closely reflect government policy) is concentrated in Kabul. It is widely read and has the two-way function in national life of conveying the official viewpoint to the public, and reflecting public reactions back to the government.

The three major dailies—the morning *Jamhooriat* and evening *Anis* and *Heywad*—each contain eight pages, and carry local and international news, editorials and advertisements.

Jamhooriat, established in July 1973, on the occasion of the proclamation of the Republic of Afghanistan, is the most widely read official newspaper. Its predecessor *Islah*, established in 1929, was abolished as soon as *Jamhooriat* appeared.

The more liberal *Anis* is more popularly presented. It carries local news, regular columns, humour, and has a more colloquial style. It also publishes a weekly children's magazine, with a circulation of 4,000.

Heywad, the Pashto language daily, tends in its editorial policy to reflect public and official views on the Pashtoonistan issue, the single most important item in Afghanistan's foreign policy.

These dailies circulate mainly in Kabul, but thousands of copies are also sent to Afghan students and nationals abroad and to foreign subscribers.

The *Kabul Times*, the only English-language paper in Afghanistan, is published every day except Friday, has four pages of special features on

Ministry of Information and Culture:
Information Section

TABLE 1. Major publications in Afghanistan

Location (city, province)	Publication	Estab- lished	Circulation	Language ¹	Frequency	Content ²	Columns	Page area ³	Pages
Kabul, Kabul	<i>Jamhooriat</i>	1973	15,000	D & P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	6	301	8
Kabul, Kabul	<i>Anis</i>	1927	12,000	D & P	Daily p.m.	L-N-I	6	290	8
Kabul, Kabul	<i>Heywad</i>	1955	10,000	P	Daily p.m.	L-N	6	290	8
Kabul, Kabul	<i>Kabul Times</i>	1962	5,000	English	Daily p.m.	N-I	6	301	4
Kabul, Kabul	<i>Zhouwandoon</i>	1948	10,000	D & P	Weekly	L-N-H	3	160	100
Kabul, Kabul	<i>Jamhooriat</i>	1973	5,000	D & P	Quarterly	L-N-H	4	150	50
Kabul, Kabul	<i>Nangarhar</i>	1957	3,000	P	Quarterly	L-N-H	4	150	50
Feizabad, Badakhshan	<i>Badakhshan</i>	1945	2,000	D & P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	4	135	4
Gardez, Paktia	<i>Wolanga</i>	1941	2,000	P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	5	156	4
Ghazni, Ghazni	<i>Sanaii</i>	1952	2,000	D & P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	5	136	4
Farah, Seistan	<i>Seistan</i>	1947	1,500	D & P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	5	156	4
Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh	<i>Baidar</i>	1921	3,000	D & P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	5	156	4
Baghlan, Baghlan	<i>Itihad</i>	1920	2,000	D & P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	5	156	4
Herat, Herat	<i>Itifaqe Islam</i>	1919	3,000	D & P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	5	156	4
Shibergban, Jozjan	<i>Daiwa</i>	1951	2,000	D & P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	5	136	4
Kandahar, Kandahar	<i>Tolo-i-Afghan</i>	1921	3,000	P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	5	156	4
Maimana, Fariab	<i>Storai</i>	1943	1,500	D & P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	5	150	4
Bost, Helmand	<i>Helmand</i>	1954	1,500	P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	5	157	4
Charikar, Parwan	<i>Parwan</i>	1951	2,000	D & P	Daily a.m.	L-N-I	4	148	4
Khulm, Samangan	<i>Khulm</i>	1973	1,000	D & P	Twice weekly	L-N-I	4	148	4

1. D = Dari; P = Pashto.

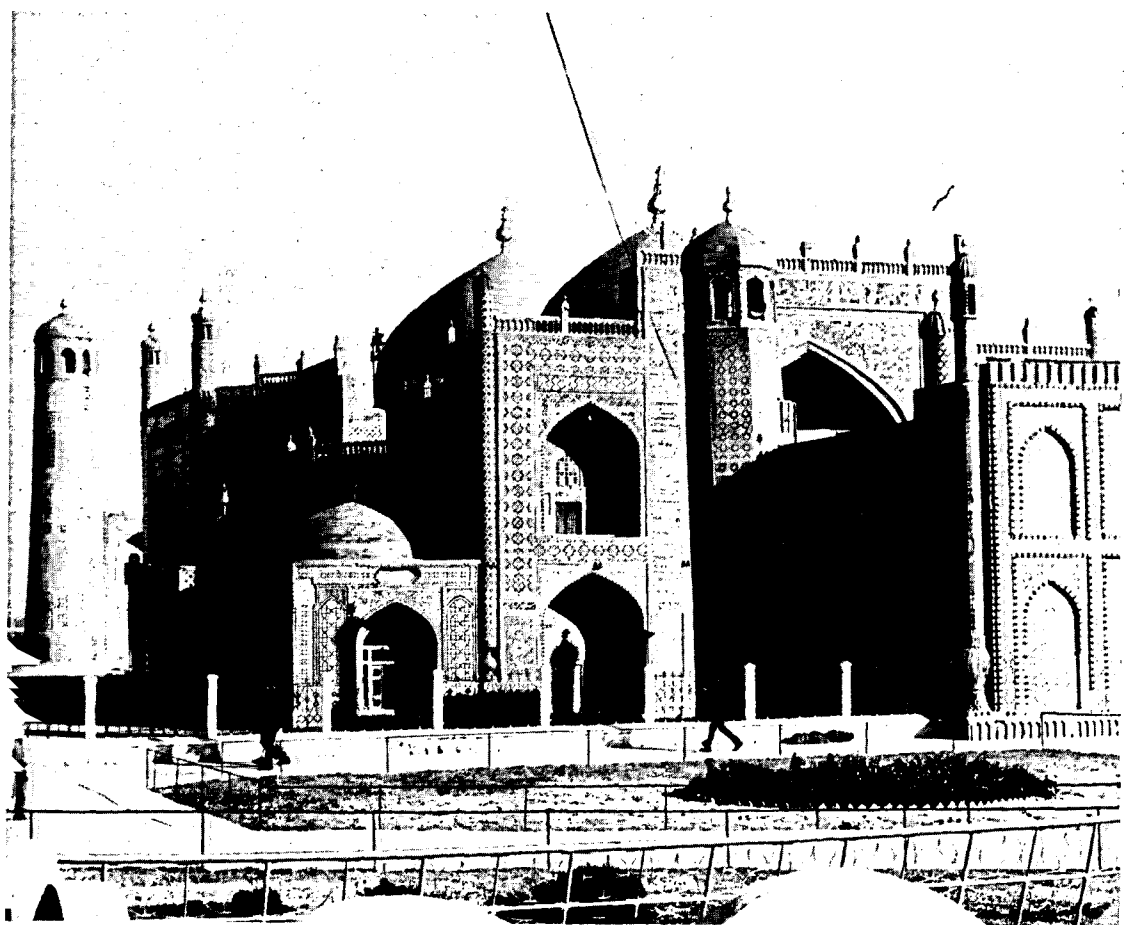
2. L = Local; N = National; I = International; H = Humor and human interest.

3. In square inches.

Source: Ministry of Information and Culture, Press Department.



The minaret of Jam. [*Photo: Isaac Mahmoud.*]



Mausoleum of Hazrat Ali in Mazar-i-Sherif. [Photo: Isaac Mahmoud.]



Members of the Afghan Institute
of Archaeology.
[Photo: P. M. Mustamandi.]

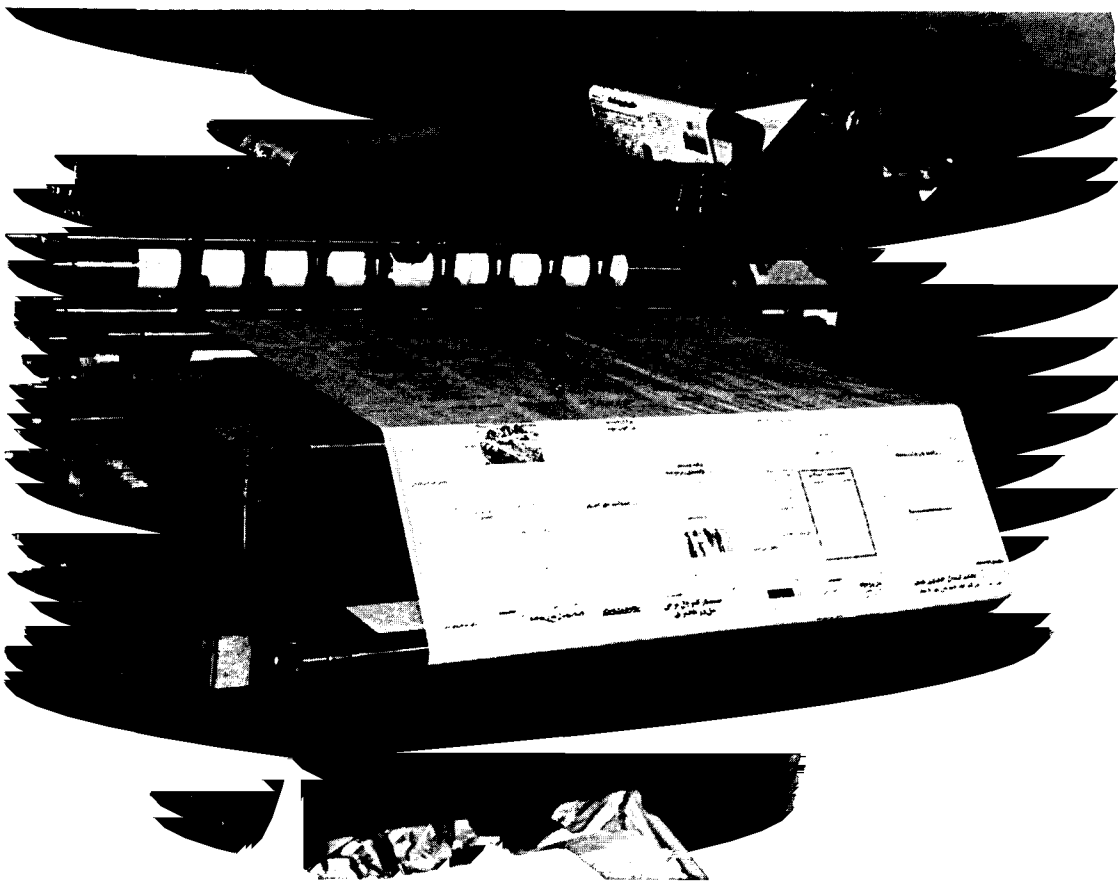


Young student in handicraft school. She wears
the typical Turkoman dress of carpet weavers.
[Photo: P. M. Mustamandi.]



Group of musicians.

Government printing press.



Ministry of Information and Culture:
Information Section

local life and prints excerpts from editorials in other Afghan papers. It also publishes the *Kabul Times Annual*, a collection of articles that concern Afghanistan.

Jamhooriat and *Zhowandoon* are the most widely read magazines. *Zhowandoon* carries human-interest stories, humour, and articles on the arts, law, politics, women and Islamic religion. *Jamhooriat* is more interested in political developments in Afghanistan.

One of the most widely circulated specialized magazines is *Pyame Haq*, which carries articles on Islam. It has a circulation of about 9,000. Most governmental and ministerial departments, commercial enterprises, social organizations, historical and literary societies and university colleges publish weekly, monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly scholastic and specialized reviews, covering a wide variety of subjects, including aviation, women, law, literature, economics, banking, and so on.

PROVINCIAL PRESS

Most of the provincial newspapers are small community papers, catering for local interests in specific regions. They are usually four-page tabloids of four, five or six columns, which may, on special occasions, be enlarged to eight pages.

They also print national and international news relayed by the Bakhtar News Agency through radio teletype and telephone from the international news agencies. Bakhtar gathers national news stories from provincial and metropolitan reporters.

Most newspapers and magazines are printed letterpress in government printing shops which also do government printing and commercial job work. In some cases, newspapers are a shop's primary occupation; in others, they represent merely part of its business.

In an effort to raise standards, the government, in co-operation with the University of Kabul, has encouraged training for professional journalists. The Ministry of Information and Culture employs many of the graduates of the Department of Journalism of Kabul University. As a result of this policy, most of the nation's editors, as well as reporters for the national and the provincial press, are graduates in journalism. Editors of provincial newspapers have an average of ten years of journalistic experience.

Other cultural forces

Cultural development is also affected by the Afghan tourist organization, the Pashto Development Programme, and State Prizes.

Afghan Tourist Organization

The government established an Afghan tourist organization, with a commercial branch, Afghantour, in 1958. Until then, the country had few facilities for the accommodation of foreign visitors. Originally under the auspices of the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Tourist Office was transferred in 1965 to the Afghan Air Authority, which subsequently became the Afghan Air and Tourism Authority, thereby giving tourism a greater official recognition.

Once the government had officially recognized its importance, tourism grew rapidly. Only 436 foreign tourists visited Afghanistan in 1958. By 1965, with the establishment of Ariana Afghan Airlines and the opening of Kabul International Airport, yearly arrivals had grown to 10,539. This proved to be the take-off point for the crucial first stage of tourism development—usually defined as the point at which tourism becomes a substantial contributor to a country's foreign currency earnings.

From 1969 to the end of the first six months of 1974, arrivals totalled 519,909. Of these, 380,517 entered at border posts on the western and eastern frontiers, while 139,392 came by air. Revenue from tourism for this period is estimated at about U.S.\$50 million. By 1973, tourist revenues amounted to no less than 10 per cent foreign currency earnings for that year.

Growth involves the development of infrastructures, and in this regard Afghanistan has made much progress in the past few years. Led by Kabul's Inter-Continental, many new hotels have opened since 1969. Handicraft, carpet and antique shops have proliferated. Paved roads now connect nearly all the major cities and towns, and work on additional roads is

Other cultural forces

continuing steadily. Bakhtar Afghan Airlines, the domestic carrier, now links Kabul with most provincial capitals.

The first plateau in tourist development has been reached and a degree of stability in the international tourist market attained. Without a doubt, tourism has begun to have a powerful impact on socio-economic progress in Afghanistan.

The second phase—long-range planning to develop the full potential and establish international standards in all tourist services—has begun. The public and private sectors both face the challenge of shaping the tourist industry to ensure a positive and beneficial socio-economic impact. Measures are being taken to protect historic monuments, national parks and wildlife sanctuaries from the ravages of over-rapid expansion. Legislation to provide regulatory powers over all establishments catering for tourists should contribute to making the tourist industry a vital part of the Afghan economy and an important progressive force for social and cultural development.

Pashto Development Programme

The development and enrichment of Pashto, the national language, and of Dari, the official language, is among the primary duties of the Ministry of Information and Culture. The Pashto Development Department publishes books in Pashto, and ensures that a reasonable balance is maintained between Dari and Pashto on a fifty-fifty basis in all of Kabul's newspapers. The department also ensures that provincial newspapers and publications in Dari-speaking regions use Pashto for one-quarter of their articles.

In conjunction with the Pashto Academy of the Ministry of Education, the department assists scholars and educators in the development and teaching of Pashto. A Pashto grammar has recently been assembled for example—the first definitive publication of this kind in Pashto.

State Prizes

One of the first acts of the Republican régime in Afghanistan was to revive annual State awards to writers, artists and craftsmen and other professionals. These awards often provide an important supplement to the incomes of persons holding full-time jobs not directly related to art, and offer one of the few ways in which a significant art contribution can be publicly recognized.

The total State allocation for the annual prize awards is 1.3 million Afs (approximately \$30,000). Although not fully distributed in 1974, the prize fund was to be increased to 1.5 million Afs in 1975.

A special State fund assists professional artists in times of need. The families of musicians, singers or artists in cases of death or incapacitating

Other cultural forces

illness are given monthly allowances without obligation for long periods of time, and ways are being sought of increasing this fund so that needs can be generously met.

In 1974, 311 prizes, for a total of 340,400 Afs (about \$7,000) were awarded as follows:

Number of persons	Subject	Amount
15	Natural sciences	28,500
16	Social sciences	28,500
35	Literature	42,500
15	Writing, journalism	20,000
3	Koran recitation	7,500
6	Vocal music	15,300
9	Instrumental music	15,500
4	Radio	11,000
14	Announcing, poetry recitation	26,900
9	Acting	19,500
1	Films	3,000
16	Photography	7,900
149	Painting, miniature painting, sculpture, engraving, tile making, handicraft designing	88,600
19	Calligraphy	23,000

Bilateral and international co-operation

To develop, modernize and enhance cultural effort, establish new facilities for the performing arts, and help train the necessary personnel, the Ministry of Information and Culture maintains cultural relations with several countries and international organizations. Twelve cultural and educational agreements were in force in 1974 and prospects for expanding such ties are promising.

Agreements with India, Poland, the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, Bulgaria, Egypt, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Japan, France, Kuwait and Turkey were either made in 1974 or continued from previous years. These agreements cover the following main items.

Afghanistan sends or receives artists who give public performances.

Afghanistan sends students abroad for further education in acting, film editing, scenario writing, archaeology and restoration, architecture, journalism, library science, archives, language training, broadcasting, photography, advertising, public relations, and so on. The terms of these scholarships vary, and the duration may be from one to six years.

Afghanistan receives experts to help in the design and supervision of projects in all activities which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Reciprocal exchanges of artists, musicians and journalists and of art and photography exhibitions.

Reciprocal publicity for the national anniversaries of partners to these agreements.

Technical and financial assistance from foreign countries for the restoration of historical monuments.

Since it joined Unesco in 1948 Afghanistan has been receiving financial and technical assistance for various cultural and information projects. A major part of this assistance is channelled through the Ministry of Education for such purposes as planning, the provision of science centres, and educational broadcasting. The Ministry of Information and Culture receives aid from Unesco mainly in the form of archaeology and museology experts.

Conclusion

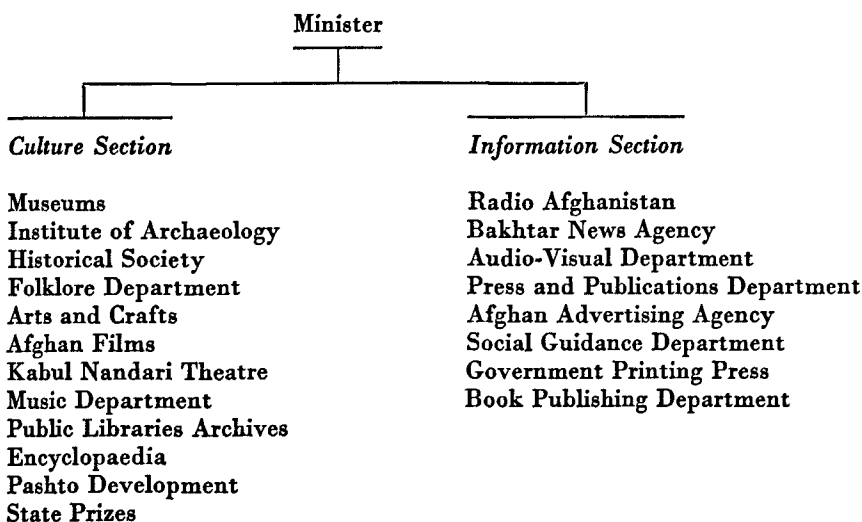
A developing nation, Afghanistan is making great strides towards modernizing and rationalizing its approach to cultural and information activities, with due regard to the factors which must be taken into consideration when development plans and programmes are being devised.

The preservation of monuments, remains, historical sites; making the country aware of new international trends in music and art; the collection of folklore, folk art, documents of national interest and manuscripts; the presentation of art from the past, films, photography and the work of contemporary artists; and the guidance and information of the public through radio, newspapers, libraries, audio-visual programmes and periodicals are the major purposes of the Ministry of Information and Culture.

In formulating its plans for the future, the ministry aims at fostering an environment favourable to cultural and artistic achievement. It realizes, however, that greater cultural development is not automatic and, as progress continues, that both patience and determination, as well as foreign assistance, will be required to promote further growth.

Appendix Organizational chart

Ministry of Information and Culture



[B.10] SHC.75/XIX.33/A

