

A Year of Liberated **SHUSHA**

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In early January of this year, by an order of the President of Azerbaijan, 2022 was declared a Year of Shusha, making the city the venue for various international and national events, including cultural. The step has been timed to coincide with the 270th anniversary of Shusha, a city that has a special place in the hearts and minds of the Azerbaijani people. For Azerbaijanis, Shusha is more than just a city, it is a symbol of Azerbaijani spirituality, the center of Azerbaijani culture and, in a sense, the whole of Azerbaijan. This small city has produced names that make up the very essence of Azerbaijani culture – literature, music and other areas of creative activity. The above circumstances are enough to give an idea of the imprint left in the minds of all Azerbaijanis by the occupation of Shusha by Armenian troops, which marked its 30th anniversary on 8 May this year. That is exactly why the liberation of Shusha was set as the paramount task during the second Karabakh war of 2020, and the successful operation in this city became the crowning achievement of the military campaign, a kind of quintessence of Azerbaijan's overall victory.

This issue of our magazine opens with a story by a Russian journalist who visited Karabakh. In it, the author shares his impressions of the liberated Shusha and provides information about the city's history, its economic opportunities, and the surrounding nature.

After the liberation of Azerbaijan's occupied territories, attention turned to the problem of the destruction of the historical and cultural heritage of the Azerbaijani people both in the liberated Karabakh and in the territory of neighboring Armenia. From this point of view, the article dedicated to the fate of Azerbaijani historical monuments in the capital of Armenia, Iravan, in particular the Iravan fortress, is worthy of attention. Quoting primary sources, including the works of Western scientists and travelers of the Middle Ages, the author shows that Iravan as a city was built by Azerbaijani-Turkic rulers and inhabited mainly by Azerbaijanis. The author also notes that since the beginning of the 20th century, a process of destruction of the Azerbaijani heritage and falsification of its history was deliberately and consistently carried out in the city.

A similar storyline can be traced in two other articles of the issue – one is dedicated to the musical dynasties of Shusha, a city known as the “conservatory of the Caucasus”, and the other, by famous Italian pianist Aldo Ragone, provides a succinct assessment of Azerbaijani musical culture. While this issue was being prepared for printing, Azerbaijan marked the National Day of the Press on 22 July. In this context, an article about the history of the Azerbaijani press may also be of interest.

This issue also contains articles on various aspects of Azerbaijan's history and culture. So anyone interested in Azerbaijan – do stay with us!