

EKINCHI-150:

enlightenment seeds sown to Azerbaijani ground

This year, Azerbaijan celebrated a historic anniversary – the 150th anniversary of its national press. On July 22, 1875, the first Azerbaijani-language newspaper, “Ekinchi”, started being published in Baku. Its publisher was Azerbaijani publicist and educator Hassan bey Malikov-Zardabi. This served as a foundation for the Azerbaijani Renaissance of the latter half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The newspaper, which was published on and off for less than two and a half years and was eventually closed by the authorities, published materials that contributed to the dissemination of enlightenment ideas and broader public worldviews. So “The Ploughman” sowed the seeds of enlightenment in the ignorant ground of Muslim society at the time. Therefore, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of “Ekinchi” for the public development and history of the Azerbaijani people as a whole. This topic is the subject of an article published in this issue of IRS-Heritage.

But this isn’t the only important anniversary for the people of Azerbaijan this year. Year 2025 also marks the 120th anniversary of the birth of Rashid Behbudov, a figure holding a special place in the history of Azerbaijani vocal art. Hailing from Shusha, known as the Caucasian Conservatory, and the son of a Karabakh khanende, Behbudov, with his unique voice, range and outstanding talent, gained immense popularity not only in Azerbaijan but also worldwide. The landmark film “Arshin Mal Alan” (based on an operetta by Uzeyir Hajibayov), in which he played the lead role, has become a hallmark of Azerbaijani art, breaking box office records worldwide.

Another anniversary, albeit not quite Azerbaijani, is also celebrated in the magazine: the 80th anniversary of the UN.

Among other materials of this issue I would like to highlight an article on the Azerbaijani model of multiculturalism in the context of the role of women in Muslim society, as well as an article by Ian Peart about the famous Neft Dashlari, or the Oil Rocks.

As always, this issue also features materials on various aspects of Azerbaijani history and culture. Enjoy!

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