

TURKIC WORLD CONGRESS – a congress of integration

This year marks an important anniversary for Azerbaijan: the 100th anniversary of the First Turkological Congress, which was held in Baku in 1926 during a period of historic transformation, when the communist regime in Azerbaijan was consolidating its power following military aggression and occupation by Soviet Russia. The Bolshevik Kremlin attached special importance to this congress as a tool for strengthening its positions not only in Azerbaijan but also in other Turkic regions of the former Russian Empire.

One of the key objectives set before the congress was the transition to the Latin script. Although this measure was objectively progressive, it was also largely aimed at weakening ties with the cultural heritage that, for many Turkic peoples, had been shaped on the basis of the Arabic script. At the same time, the congress, attended by a number of prominent scholars, as well as political figures of the period, addressed numerous important issues concerning the integration of Turkic peoples across various spheres of life. These issues remain relevant to this day, and this largely explains the heightened attention to the anniversary at a time when deep integration within the Turkic world is gaining particular importance and momentum. The current issue of our magazine features an article dedicated to the Baku congress.

In recent years, Azerbaijan has become a significant venue for major international events of various kinds. Around the time this issue went to print, in mid-May, the 13th session of the World Urban Forum will be opened in Baku, which can be seen as evidence of international recognition of Azerbaijan's efforts in this field. Above all, this relates to the large-scale White City Baku project, which envisions the complete reconstruction, modernization, and environmental rehabilitation of the former industrial suburb known as Black City, established during the first oil boom in the late 19th century. This project, which has attracted considerable international attention and received several prestigious awards, is the subject of a feature article in this issue of IRS-Heritage.

Among the other materials in this issue is an article devoted to the activities of one of the greatest architects of the medieval East, Ajami Nakhchivani. Living and working primarily in the 12th century, during the era of the Eastern Renaissance, and serving as the chief architect of the Azerbaijani state of Eldiguzids, this master builder left a brilliant mark not only on Azerbaijani culture but on the cultural heritage of the broader Middle East as a whole. Readers may also find of interest an article on Azerbaijani music, written by an author who is not a professional musician. As always, the other articles in this issue will help you, dear readers, gain new insights into Azerbaijan.

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