

**Maharram Zulfugarli***Azerbaijan Tourism and Management University (Baku, Azerbaijan)***Jewish Monuments in Baku, the Capital of Azerbaijan: History and Modern Times**

Azerbaijan has historically been a country where different peoples live freely and without any obstacles. Today, an atmosphere of multiculturalism and tolerance based on historical traditions has been formed in our country. Representatives of every nation living in Azerbaijan feel free and independent. Here, local people are kind, hospitable, peaceful and humane, so other nations can express themselves in a comprehensive way. Because the rights of minorities are always protected and all conditions are created for them to keep their mother tongue, culture and religion alive. One of the few peoples living in Azerbaijan is the Jews. Jews settled mainly in the north of Azerbaijan, in the Guba region. This article is about the history of Jews living in Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Jewish monuments in the city. From ancient times, Jews have lived in different parts of Azerbaijan. They also live in modern times. The Azerbaijani people and the Jewish people have always had friendly relations. Jews have played an important role in the history of Azerbaijan. Jewish representatives were among the ministers of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (1918-1920), the first democratic republic in the East. In the late twentieth century, Jews also played an important role in the struggle for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Albert Agarunov was awarded the title of National Hero of Azerbaijan. Jewish monuments in Azerbaijan, like other monuments, are protected by the state. The care and promotion of Jewish monuments plays an important role in the development of Azerbaijani-Israeli relations in modern times. A number of Azerbaijani cities and Israeli cities have signed a document on twinning. These relations are developing in modern times. Scientific articles and books on the history, culture and historical monuments of the Jews living in Azerbaijan contribute to the development of relations between the two peoples.

Keywords: Jewish monuments, Rothschilds family, Jewish people, History, Ashkenazi Jews, Azerbaijan

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Азербайджан історично був країною, де різні народи живуть вільно і без жодних перешкод. Сьогодні в нашій країні сформувалася атмосфера полікультурності та толерантності, заснованої на історичних традиціях. Представники кожної нації, які живуть в Азербайджані, почуваються вільними і незалежними. Тут місцеві люди добрі, гостинні, мирні та людяні, тому інші народи можуть всебічно висловитися. Тому що права меншин завжди захищені і створені всі умови для збереження рідної мови, культури та релігії. Одним з небагатьох народів, які живуть в Азербайджані, є євреї. Євреї селилися переважно на півночі Азербайджану, в Губинській області. Ця стаття про історію проживання євреїв у столиці Азербайджанської Республіки Баку та про єврейські пам'ятники в місті. З давніх часів євреї жили в різних частинах Азербайджану. Вони також живуть у сучасність. Азербайджанський народ і єврейський народ завжди мали дружні стосунки. Євреї відіграли важливу роль в історії Азербайджану. Єврейські представники були серед міністрів Азербайджанської Демократичної Республіки (1918-1920), першої демократичної республіки на Сході. Наприкінці ХХ століття євреї також відігравали важливу роль у боротьбі за територіальну цілісність Азербайджану. Альберту Агаруну присвоєно звання Національного Героя Азербайджану. Єврейські пам'ятники в Азербайджані, як і інші пам'ятники, охороняються державою. Догляд за єврейськими пам'ятниками та їх популяризація відіграє важливу роль у розвитку азербайджано-ізраїльських відносин у наш час. Ряд азербайджанських та ізраїльських міст підписали документ про побратимство. Ці відносини розвиваються в наш час. Розвиткові відносин між двома народами сприяють наукові статті та книги з історії, культури та історичних пам'яток євреїв, які проживають в Азербайджані.

Ключові слова: єврейські пам'ятники, родина Ротшильдів, єврейський народ, історія, євреї-ашкеназі, Азербайджан

Introduction:

Historically, Jewish people had densely lived in Baku, Red Town of Guba district, Oghuz (Vartashen) district, Shamakhi district, Muju and Muju-Haftaran villages of Ismayilli district in Azerbaijan and are currently living in most of those areas. Local authors, M. Valili (Baharli), Z. Bunyadov, K. Shukurov, H. Orujov, M. Gurbanli, N. Niftiyev, T. Nasirova, A. Ahadov, S. Huseynov, R. Huseynov, E. Karimov, A. Alikhanli, Y. Agarunov, M. Bekker and others have written many articles and books about Jewish people living Azerbaijan. (Bunyadov, 2007), (Ahadov, 1991), (Alikhanli, 2009), (Nasirova, 2019), (Niftiyev, 2015), (Orucov, 2012), (Gurbanli, 2017), (Shukurov, 2019), (Valili, 1993). Moreover, foreign authors such as I. Anisimov, V. Miller, I. Selvinsky, M. Bejanov, S. Gruzenberg, I. Cherniy, A. Vasilyev, M. Altshuller, F. Shapiro, A. Davidov and others have dedicated numerous works to Jewish people in Azerbaijan. (Agarunov, 1995), (Agarunov, 2000), (Anisimov, 1888), (Becker, 2000), (Vasiliev, 1889), (Gruzenberg, 1897]) (Davidov, 2004), (Dymshits, 1999), (Jewish encyclopedia), (Materials of the International Scientific Symposium), (Miller, 1892), (Semenov, 2001), (Semenov, 2002), (Semenov, 1992), (Slivitsky, 1853), (Black, 1870), (Black, 1884), (Shapiro, 1983). All of these writings were devoted to the Jewish people living in northern Azerbaijan. The facts prove that Jewish people had lived not only in northern Azerbaijan, but also in southern Azerbaijan (present-day Iran Azerbaijan). American orientalist Walter Fischner devoted an article titled “Azerbaijan in Jewish History” to Jewish people of southern Azerbaijan. (Fischel, 1953).

Jewish people have always actively involved in public-political life of Azerbaijan. Moisey Gukhman, Constantin Lisgar had represented the Jewish nation in the parliament of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, established in 28 May 1918, being the first ever parliamentary republic in the East. Yefsey Gindes was the Minister of Health and Constantin Lisgar was the Minister of Trade. During the World War II, approximately 200 thousand Jewish people were resettled from other soviet republics to Azerbaijan in order to be protected from Holocaust. Azerbaijan had become a homeland for them.

Azerbaijan is proud of its citizens of Jewish origin, such as famous physician and Nobel Prize laureate (1962) Lev Landau, National Hero of Azerbaijan Albert Agarunov, and others. Lev Landau School, Azerbaijan-Israel Friendship Community, “Sohnut” Jewish Agency, large Jewish charity organizations such as “Count” and “Vaad-L-Hetzola”, Humanitarian Association of Jewish Women in Azerbaijan, Jewish

religious schools (yeshivas), “Hava” women society and other Jewish organizations operate in Azerbaijan.

Discussion.

Every year the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan addresses a congratulation to the Jewish community in the country on the occasion of Jewish New Year “Rosh Hashanah”.

Within the project “Address of tolerance - Azerbaijan”, Heydar Aliyev Foundation and Or Avner Foundation constructed “Ohr Avner Chabad” Educational Complex for Jewish children living in Baku. Furthermore, Hebrew language is instructed for students and pupils of Jewish origin in the Faculty of Oriental Studies in Baku State University, as well as in Russian section in the secondary school №46 named after Aghabey Novruzbayli.

Currently, there are Jewish community consisting of 20 thousand people and 8 synagogues in Azerbaijan. With the support of Heydar Aliyev Foundation, sacred Torah has been translated into Azerbaijani for the first time. In Houston, brothered city with Baku, Azerbaijan Cultural Center made a financial assistance for the restoration of Beth Yeshurun Synagogue – the largest religious temple of Jewish community in the city, highlighting that Azerbaijan always stands up for its friends. (“Azerbaijan has helped restore a synagogue in the United States)

Israeli representation of Baku International Multiculturalism Center, “Azerbaijan House in Israel”, Azerbaijan-Israel International Association established by the Jewish people moved from Azerbaijan, and other organizations successfully promote Azerbaijani realities. The Jewish organizations based in different countries across the world defend Azerbaijan in the international arena. For instance, “Bnai Brith”, “Conference of Presidents of Jewish Organizations”, “American Jewish Congress”, “Anti-Defamation League”, “National Conference on Soviet Jewry”, etc. also defend Azerbaijan’s interests. Such a good condition





created for the Jewish population in Azerbaijan positively affects the development of friendship and cooperation between Azerbaijan and Israel. Thanks to the outcome of this friendship and cooperation, Israel always gives its support to Azerbaijan in the settlement of various matters. ("Judaism in Azerbaijan")

Our article is dedicated to the historical and cultural monuments of Jewish people living in Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Jewish monuments in Baku

Resettlement of Ashkenazi Jews in Azerbaijan coincides with the reign of Tsarist Russia. First Ashkenazis had resettled in Baku in 1832. Oil boom in Baku that took place at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century gave rise to the increase in the number of Jewish population, as well as Ashkenazis in Baku. In 1897, there were more than two thousand Jewish people, and most of them were Ashkenazis.

Moreover, as a result of massacres against Jewish people in Kishinev (1903), Odessa (1905), Belostok (1906), as well as other parts of the Russian Empire, numerous Ashkenazi Jews had sought shelter in Azerbaijan and resettled mainly in Baku.

The Rothschilds family was among the Jewish people coming to Azerbaijan at the end of 19th century. On 16 May 1883, Rothschild Brothers Banking House founded a new company called "Caspian-Black Sea Oil Industry and Trade Company" (shortened to "the Caspian-Black Sea Company"). 19 dessiatin land area rich with oil in Balakhani, Sabunchu, Ramana villages of Baku, as well as a kerosene factory were included in this company. The company immediately started to operate, extended its coverage area in a short period of time, and bought kerosene at available rates from 135 small and medium enterprises for sending to Russia's remote points and foreign countries.

The laws of the Russian Empire did not allow European population to reside in Baku. Regional authorities of the empire were making difficulties for Jewish people to purchase a land and build a synagogue. For this reason, in 1900, Baku City Duma allocated a land area for free of charge for the construction of synagogue. The Rothschilds were doing charity and construction works in Baku. Synagogue on Kaspiyskaya Street (now R. Behbudov Street) was built with the money allocated by the Rothschilds. There were art schools with free education for all and evening classes on Saturdays in the synagogue. Currently, the State Song Theatre is situated in this building.



Synagogue on Kaspiyskaya Street
(now R. Behbudov Street)
("Baku - Old synagogue, new theater")

The Rothschilds had spent a huge amount of money to the construction of school and beautiful buildings in Baku – White City and Bayil. At present, the National Art Museum of Azerbaijan is situated in one of those buildings. That building, which was built on the project of architect Nicholas von der Nonne, was called Palace of De Boure.



National Art Museum of Azerbaijan

The building of Main Kontora of "Caspian-Black Sea Company" in Baku was constructed by the civil engineer of polish origin Kazimir Brunovich Skurevich (1866-1960) in French gothic and new gothic style in 1898-1899. Currently, the Prosecutor General's Office is situated in that building. (Real Estate Jur.,2018).



Building of the Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Azerbaijan

On 5 April 2011, the opening ceremony was held for a new place of worship – a synagogue constructed for the religious community of Mountain Jews. The synagogue, which was founded on 2010, is situated on 72 Ali Mardan Topchubashov Street in Nasimi district. The opening ceremony was attended by Ambassador of Israel in Azerbaijan Michael Lavon-Lotem, Ambassador of the US Matthew Bryza, heads of foreign country embassies accredited in the country, Chair of “Red Town” Jewish religious community Boris Samanduyev, Ordinary of Roman Catholic Church in Baku Vladimir Fekete, representative of European Jews community in Baku Gennady Zelmanovich, head of European House Shaul Davidov, and heads of other Jewish organizations in Azerbaijan.



Bakı şəhərində Dağ yəhudilərinin sinaqoqu.

Synagogue of "Mountain Jews

Monuments in honor of Albert Agarunov, National Hero of Azerbaijan

Albert Agarunov, Azerbaijan's National Hero of Jewish origin was born on 25 April 1969 in Amirjan village of Baku to a Jewish family. He had voluntarily gone to the front in 1992. Appointed as a tank commander, Albert Agarunov had fought in Shusha front. He had destroyed many military personnel and armored vehicles during the fights in the directions of Khankendi, Dashalti, Cemilli. During Armenians' attack to Shusha, Albert Agarunov had destroyed enemy's 9 tanks, 7 armored personnel carriers and numerous vehicles. On 8 May 1992, during the fights for Shusha, he was targeted by the enemy sniper and died heroically on the battlefield. He was buried in Alley of Martyrs in Baku. Under the Order 833 by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan dated 7 June 1992, Agarunov Albert Agarunovich was awarded after his death the “National Hero of Azerbaijan” and in 2016, was awarded “Hazi Aslanov” medal. School №154 in Baku, where he had studied, and a street in Narimanov district were named after him. Sculpture portrait of National Hero is placed in front of the school. An article entitled “A Jewish Warrior in a Muslim Land” by American rabbi Israel Barouk published in 2015 on “The Times of Israel” was dedicated to Albert Agarunov. In 2017, an opening ceremony was held for a commemorative plaque attached to a building that he lived in Amirjan village of Surakhani district. In 2019, a statue was erected in honor of him. In 2010, “Salname” documentary film studio made a movie about him titled “Letter to My Friend” as part of the “Karabakh Heroes” series. Film director and author of scenario was Yefim Abramov. In 2017, Seadet Shukurova made a movie about Albert Agarunov titled “Land where I live”. (Sariyeva, 2019).



Statue of Albert Agarunov in Baku



The monument was sculptured by Zamik Rzayev and Rahib Qarayev, the teachers of the Department of Sculpture in Azerbaijan State Academy of Art under the leadership of Omar Eldarov. As an indication of respect to the Hero, the authors had rejected the fee granted to them.



Sculpture portrait of National Hero Albert Aqarunov in front of the School №154 named after him in Amirjan village of Baku



Cover of the book dedicated to the hero by young researcher Turan Nasirov



Conclusion:

Jewish monuments and historic buildings belonging to other nations in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan and other parts of the Republic are preserved by the state. State care to these monuments is a clear example of tolerance and friendship of nations existing in Azerbaijan for many years. One of the ancient peoples inhabiting the territory of Azerbaijan is the Jewish people. After the restoration of Azerbaijan's independence, all conditions were created for all minorities, including Jews, to preserve and develop their religion and culture. As in the parliament of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920), there are now deputies in the Azerbaijani parliament representing national minorities, including the Jewish people. In addition, the Jewish people take an active part in the economic, political and social life of Azerbaijan. In modern times, Jews who have left Azerbaijan for other countries play an important role in promoting the truth of Azerbaijan in the international arena. The positive work of the "Aziz" Israel-Azerbaijan International Association in this area should be especially noted. The expansion of political, military and economic cooperation between Israel and Azerbaijan is the result of centuries-old friendship between the two peoples. Israel's support for the struggle of the Republic of Azerbaijan for

the liberation of its lands in the autumn of 2020 further strengthened this friendship. It is noteworthy that when the people of Azerbaijan celebrated the anniversary of the victory this year, along with the flags of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the flag of Israel was waving in the streets. Israeli companies have

also been involved in the restoration of destroyed infrastructure and cultural monuments in the liberated areas. All this proves that the cooperation between the two countries and the friendly relations between the Azerbaijani and Jewish peoples have reached a new level.

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