

Western xenophobia demonstrated in Karabakh

The case of Karabakh has clearly demonstrated double standards of the Western civilization. Despite the conventional reasoning about the values of multiculturalism, the West sends the world an unambiguous message: Muslim sacred sites and cultural monuments can be destroyed, Christian ones – in no case!

In May 1988 [more than 90% of the 14,000 population of the city of Shusha](#) [1] were Azerbaijanis. The city had [184 registered architectural monuments](#) [2].

On May 8-9, 1992, Armenian militias captured the city of Shusha.

Hovik Vardumyan, who fought on the Armenian side has published in 2012 a book dedicated to the occupation of Shusha [3]. He used the memoirs of other participants in the hostilities from the Armenian side and documents of the Armenian militias' commanders. The tale of the events of May 8-9th, 1992 by Vardumyan includes the description of especially massive shelling of the city's 18th century fortress and battles, which were fought in the area of the mosque [4].

On May 11th, 1992, the interim president of Azerbaijan, Yagub Mammadov, sent a missive to Russian President Boris Yeltsin. It said that "the city of Shusha is practically destroyed" [5].

In the same month, the Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan, Polad Bulbuloglu, sent messages to UNESCO Director Frederic Mayor, to the Secretary General of the International Council of Museums Elisabeth de Port, as well as to the Ministers of Culture of European countries [6]. The message contained a request to protect cultural and historical monuments of

Shusha. The Azerbaijani minister indicated the following:

"In this once beautiful city – resort, rich in monuments of ancient architecture and art, museums of the history of the city and Karabakh, memorial museums of the founders of Azerbaijani professional music and vocal art Uzeyir Hajibeyov and Bul-Bul, a branch of the State Carpet Museum, Shusha art gallery were created. These museums have thousands of unique exhibits belonging to our people and at the same time – to the history of culture in general. Invaders, with the tanks and modern rocket weapons, destroy, barbarously erase from the face of the earth these valuables and commit acts of marauding, appropriate foreign land, appropriate foreign culture".

"In this addressing, we earnestly ask You to show concern for the fate of our people, the fate of unique cultural monuments created by them over the centuries... We ask you to use all your authority, to influence the governments, parliaments of your countries, to do everything possible to stop the bloodshed and vandalism", – Polad Bulbuloglu wrote in his address.

We have studied all publications of 12 leading print media in France, Germany, Britain and the United States from May 9 to June 30, 1992 [7]. None of them published even a short note about the destruction of the Azerbaijani cultural monuments in Shusha. There was no mention of the appeal of the Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan to the international community in those media outlets. The same goes for reports from the leading Western news agencies over the same period – France Press, Associated Press, Reuters UK, Reuters US, UK Press. The study



of the official press releases of UNESCO, the UN, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe revealed that they showed no interest in Shusha and didn't care about preserving the Azerbaijani cultural monuments (not a single mention).

In May-June 1992 the conflict zone was visited by special missions of the UN Security Council [8], Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe [9], the Red Cross [10], as well as a humanitarian delegation from France [11]. None of their representatives made any statements about the need to preserve Azerbaijani cultural monuments after the capturing of Shusha by Armenian militants.

On May 8th, 2019, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan issued a statement [in connection with the 27th anniversary of the occupation of the city of Shusha](#). It stated the following: *"Within the Armenia's targeted policy of destruction of material, cultural and religious monuments in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, their destruction, desecration, appropriation, only in Shusha by itself more than 170 residential buildings, considered an architectural monument, and about 160 historical and cultural monuments, prayer rooms and a mosque were destroyed. They were desecrated and vandalized, numerous rare handwritten exhibits were destroyed. Among them are the palace and library of Panakh Khan, the Khan's palace and the caravanserai, the "Ashagi Gevkaraga" and "Saatly" mosques, the mausoleum of Vagif, the Natavan house and other monuments".*

No response was received from the Western media and international organizations to the disclosure of this information.

On November 8th, 2020 Azerbaijani troops liberated the city of Shusha. On 10 November, an agreement was signed by the leaders of Russia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia, which put an end to

military operations in Karabakh. According to this document, the sovereignty of Azerbaijan was restored over 6 districts that had been under Armenian occupation since the early 1990s. [According to four UN Security Council resolutions](#) of 1993, all these districts have been accepted by the international community as an integral part of Azerbaijan.

Since November 17th deep concerns about the preservation of Christian monuments in Karabakh were voiced by [the UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay](#), [President of The Metropolitan Museum of Art Dan Weiss](#), [Secretary of the World Council of Churches Ioan Sauca](#).

On November 19th, [the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell](#), stated the importance of “preserving and restoring cultural and religious heritage in and around Nagorno-Karabakh”.

On the same day, [French President Emmanuel Macron](#) announced *“his willingness to take decisive action to protect the region’s religious and cultural heritage”*. The French Senate resolution, adopted on November 25th, pointed to the need to “preserve Armenian cultural and religious heritage” in Karabakh. [Chairman of the Commission on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Armed Forces of the Senate Christian Cambon](#) stated [\[19:44\]](#) that *“UNESCO’s headquarters in France should immediately ensure the integrity and integrity of all cultural and religious heritage in the region”*.

[Valerie Boyer](#), [Member of the National Assembly](#), added [\[20:36\]](#): *“...We must react here and there right now to preserve the wealth of humanity that is in the heart of Karabakh. “The heritage that belongs not only to Armenia but also to humanity as a whole is our common heritage, dear colleagues,”* [said Bruno Retailleau](#), [Chairman of the Republicans faction in the Senate](#) [\[19:34\]](#).

From November 15 to 30, the following Western publications

reported on the problem of preservation of Christian monuments in Karabakh: [The Wall Street Journal](#), [The New York Times](#), [Sky News](#), [Daily Mail](#), [Deutsche Welle](#), [Le Figaro](#), [Pro Oriente](#), [The Art Newspaper](#), [Ostkirchen](#), [Le Point](#), [La Croix](#), [Eurasia Review](#), [France Info](#), [Le Progress](#), [Geo Fr](#), [Smithsonian Magazine](#), [VOA News](#), [Kathpress](#).

The deafening silence of international organizations, Western governments, and the media in 1992 in the context of the need to preserve Azerbaijani cultural monuments in the city of Shusha, and their united actions in defense of Christian monuments in Karabakh in 2020 demonstrate the true spirit of Western “multiculturalism”.

Notes.

1. According to the city authorities, in the middle of 1988, the population of Shusha was about 14,000 [[“Bakinskiy rabochi” 28.07.1988, p.3](#)].
2. [“Bakinskiy rabochi” 29.05.1988, page 2](#).
3. Vardumian O. The liberation of Shushi. Edith-Print Publishing House, 2012.
4. Instructions on firing at monuments of architecture or directing military operations near them can be found in Vardumyan’s book on pages 38, 45, 46-48, 50.
5. The information about the report of the Acting President of Azerbaijan Yagub Mammadov to the President of Russia Boris Yeltsin is contained in the publication of the [Russian-speaking American edition “Novoye Russkoe Slovo” on 12.05.1992, p. 4. 5](#).
6. The text of the message of the Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan Polad Bulbuloglu was published in the [newspaper “Bakinskiy rabochi” 15.05.1992 on page 2](#). The September 1992 edition of “Armenian Bulletin” No 9 (44) states that this message was sent to UNESCO by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan on May 11th, 1992 (i.e. two days after the occupation of the city of

Shusha by Armenian armed groups).

7. We reviewed for any reference on cultural, religious and historical monuments in Shusha all the publications from 9 May to 30 June 1992 of the following media outlets: Le Monde, L'express, Le Figaro, Journal de Montreal, Les Echos, Sud Ouest, Church Times, The New York Times, Washington Post, The Telegraph, Frankfurter Rundschau, National Zeitung.
8. The decision of the UN Security Council to send a special mission to the Karabakh conflict zone, headed by F. Vendrell of the UN Secretariat, was reported by the Moscow newspaper "Izvestia" on 13.05.1992 [page 2]. The same newspaper reported on 25.05.1992 that this delegation arrived in Baku [page 2].
9. On May 9th, 1992, the Russian-speaking American edition of the newspaper "Novoye Russkoe Slovo" reported about the sending of a mission of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe headed by Mario Rafaelli to the Karabakh conflict zone [page 1].
10. The Moscow newspaper "Izvestia" reported about the visit of the International Red Cross delegation to Baku on 25.05.1992 [page 2].
11. The Moscow newspaper "Izvestia" reported on the visit of a humanitarian delegation from France to Baku on 25 May 1992 [page 2].