

# ZARIFA ALIYEVA



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*Death and time reign supreme on earth,  
Do not call them the lords of the world;  
Everything, after scurrying about, disappears.  
Only the sun of love still shines on earth.*

**Poliksena Solovyova**

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## PRELUDE TO A DASTAN<sup>1</sup>

When Zarifa khanum met Heydar Aliyev, a young state security officer, she was twenty-five years old...

She was born on April 28, 1923 in the remote village of Shahtakhti, Nakhichevan - the day of Sovietisation of Azerbaijan (which may be interpreted as symbolic coincidence). She went on to study at the Azerbaijan Medical University named after Nariman Narimanov (once headed by her father) and the Moscow Institute for Advanced Medical Studies.

The acquaintance of the gifted doctor and the conspicuous future statesman, predetermined by fate, took place in 1948. It was then that the mutual attraction grew in these two young hearts, to evolve later into a great, legendary love... The most significant point about this affinity's clandestine "alchemy" is that it happened under the influence of the enormous charm they each fully possessed - the charm of intellect and moral purity. They weren't joined by convenience or material gain - theirs was a spiritual tie of loving kindness. They kept this alive throughout their lives and, I believe, are bound by it in heaven...

Leafing through the pages of the biography of this incredible woman, one unwittingly recalls the lines from the first chapter of Dostoyevsky's "Idiot", where Prince Mishkin reflects upon the portrait of Nastasia Philipovna, seeing her for the first time. Beauty is indeed a great power, able to lift the world off its axis, but with one condition, asserts the Prince: "Alas, I do not

know if she is good-hearted! Ah, if only she is. Then the world would be saved!" Our heroine harmonises her inner and outer beauty, manifested in every action and her attitude towards people and the world...

\* \* \*

At the end of his life, Heydar Aliyev confessed to his daughter, Sevil, that he would never have married had he not met her mother.

Falling in love at first sight is a popular storyline known since ancient times. Let's follow this storyline and enrich it with experiences and memories of our heroine's contemporaries, leaving the author the modest role of commentator of events.

Let's go back to the year 1948. Young counterintelligence officer Heydar Aliyev goes to study in Leningrad. Zarifa khanum is taking the medical extension course in Moscow. Aziz Aliyev, Zarifa's father and an acknowledged statesman, is studying at the Academy of Social Sciences and is a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. The future looked bright in glowing colours. The country was rejoicing in the Great Victory. The aging "vojd" (leader) spoke optimistic words at the next Communist Party Congress: "Life has become better, comrades! Life has become more enjoyable." Indeed, there was a natural enthusiasm from the people just returning from the battle fields after trampling on fascism in a deadly fight, longing for peaceful work and home, trying to heal the wounds of the war and revive the ruins of their cities and villages...

But the regime still showed its face. The nature of the system had not changed, neither by war nor victory. It would have an impact on the fate of young people, on the fate of Zarifa Aliyeva and the elected official, who would later leave his mark on the history of Azerbaijan. But all of this happens later...

In the meantime, a war is about to break out...

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<sup>1</sup> D a s t a n - a heroic or romantic script in the literature and folklore of the people of the east. It may be written as poetry or prose with poetry insertions. - *Hereinafter footnotes are by the author.*

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*Chapter One*

## **HIPPOCRATES AND OPHTHALMOLOGY**

...I shall devote my knowledge and powers to the protection, healing and curing of people and prevention of diseases; wherever I am, I shall work honestly and for the benefit of society;

...in cases where the interests of my patients demands it, I shall seek advice of my colleagues and be ready for counselling and rendering my help to colleagues...

### **From the Hippocratic Oath**

...The Nazi Germany attack on the Soviet Union ended the joys of a peaceful life and upset the dreams and plans of young Zarifa, as well as her contemporaries and friends. Almost all schools, universities and dormitories were turned into military hospitals. More than one million soldiers of the Soviet Army received treatment in the rear hospitals of Azerbaijan, of whom seventy percent returned to the military service.

**Doctor of Historical Sciences Professor Pustakhanum Azizbeyova** notes that during the war, she and Zarifa Aliyeva visited many wounded soldiers in the hospital housed in what was then the Azerbaijan State University on Communist street (today, this building is the main building of the University of Economy, and the street is renamed "Istiglaliyyat", which means "independence" in Azerbaijani).

"We took charge of one of patient rooms," remembers Pustakhanum Azizbeyova. "Zarifa quickly accustomed to the situation, new as it was. Only now do I understand how much strength and will a schoolgirl needs to nurse wounded soldiers, and not abandon even the most difficult tasks..."

I still remember the hospital room. A pilot lay in a bed by the window with a burned face and multiple broken bones. He refused to eat and barely opened his eyes. He was completely indifferent to the world around. Zarifa spent much time by his bed, asking about his family. He was the first person Zarifa would give good news to from the front. She learned that the pilot had a daughter the same age as mine. In fear of worrying his family, the pilot didn't inform them that he was in hospital. But after a while those thoughts thawed, and he dictated his first letter to Zarifa. We immediately posted it, and thus, Zarifa assumed another duty: writing letters dictated by wounded soldiers and sending them to their families.

Once on our way home, after descending along Communist Street and turning onto Zevin Street, we met a beautiful woman. She stood unnaturally straight, head thrown back, taking cautious steps along the wall. Zarifa stopped and gripped me with trembling hands: 'You see? You see? She is blind' ...and quietly added a little later: 'You know, I've been thinking of becoming a doctor. After all, my family - dad, mum, my elder sister and of course, Tamerlan - are doctors. I've decided to become an eye doctor. Now I think that life itself has dotted the "i"s of my decision: I want to bring back the indispensable commodity of light...' She spoke of this intent many times afterwards in my presence".

The state exams began and everyone was feeling stressed. It was a challenge for every student whatever their capability. Responding to questions, Zarifa saw Professor Umnisa Mussabeyova's face brighten. The young student talked so thoroughly and enthusiastically of various eye diseases, their treatment and prevention, it was as if she had the experience of a doctor who had practiced for years.

After the exams, the Professor told her: "A doctor's profession is a noble and distinguished one, but perhaps the noblest medical science is ophthalmology. I want you to become an ophthalmologist."

The Professor's wish coincided with her aspiration. Since she was young she had often thought what a blessing was to see the earth, sky and nature in all its glory. Closing her eyes, she tried to imagine the world as a blind person - life seemed unbearably depressing. She remembered the blind old man

who she saw every day on a street near her house: tapping with his stick, the old man fumbled laboriously. She was a little girl then and felt pity for the old man. Separating herself from the noisy company of her friends, she would follow him, giving sympathetic glances, and the carefree smile on her face would sink into an expression of sadness.

Influenced by those scenes in her early years, mercy grew in her young heart, with an ability to respond to the pain and misfortune of others. Later, when she put on a white coat and dedicated her life to the health of others, this inborn responsiveness helped to establish bridges of empathy with patients, without which it is inconceivable to become a true doctor. Patients would instantly sense the young girl's sympathy for their pain and become imbued with confidence, relying on her in the most critical moments.

Years went by. Her every success, every restored vision, was an invaluable reward and source of inspirational joy.

In the bustle of passing years, Zarifa khanum didn't forget her first operation. A middle-aged woman was in danger of complete blindness. An operation was the only hope of saving her vision. The woman was desperate. She shrank into herself, answering questions curtly and reluctantly. When Zarifa was called to perform the operation, she grew flustered. She often recalled her father words: "It is imperative that patients trust their doctors, as no doctor can heal even most common ailments..." But this was no simple ailment. It was a complex case requiring professional experience. Would the desperate, crest-fallen woman trust the young surgeon? Here, Zarifa khanum was helped by her ability to build connections and rapport. She managed to persuade the patient to have the operation.

Finally, the crucial moment came. The young female surgeon removed the patient's eye patch. Silence set in. The patient gazed into space.

"Can you not see?" The assumption of failure shocked Zarifa khanum so much that her legs buckled. Suddenly she heard a hesitant voice: "I... I think... I can see..." Then continuing happily: "Doctor, I can see!"

The doctor quickly left the room, unable to hide her tears.

She lived through so many exciting, difficult and unforgettable moments! Each time she saw a patient she felt anxious out of concern. She couldn't get used to human suffering and indeed, she didn't want to... Her first instinct always was to help.

Meanwhile, her medical practice moved on. Over time, Zarifa khanum accumulated experience and began to think about what was required to generalise it in order to improve the current problems of domestic medicine. Her chosen field of research was one of enormous importance to maintaining the Republic's public health care, and the subject of her thesis was relevant from a social aspect of ophthalmology - fighting trachoma. According to the World Health Organisation, at that time four hundred million people of world's population were suffering from the disease, and in eighty million it caused blindness. Trachoma, a widespread cause of blindness in Azerbaijan, was growing into a social disaster at the time. While working towards her thesis, Zarifa khanum restored the health of hundreds if not thousands of patients, and healed many orphans from orphanages.

**Doctor of Medical Science Hajar Nasrullayeva** remembers: "In the early sixties, the government of Azerbaijan launched a campaign to eliminate trachoma in the country. We toured the districts, staying there for ten to fifteen days, taking preventative measures, identifying patients with trachoma and treating them. On such journeys we usually spent the night in hospital. Once, we spent the whole day working in a village 70km away from the town centre and returned with empty stomachs. There was nothing edible in our room except for a few eggs. We filled a saucepan with water, added the eggs and put it on the stove. But fatigue took its toll - we fell asleep. It was only in the morning when we woke up that we found that all the water had boiled away and there was nothing left of the eggs, except some shell..."

"In the first few days of working at our institute, Zarifa khanum stood out due to her professional and humanly qualities," tells **the Director of the Azerbaijan Eye Diseases Research Institute Kerim Kerimov**. "In those years a dangerous illness, trachoma, burst out in regions of Azerbaijan. Many people in villages and towns - even whole

families - were losing their sight. Without hesitation, Zarifa khanum joined the ranks of the voluntary physicians team. Forgetting the risk of becoming infected, she treated patients, met with local people, and issued preventive measures... In that victory over trachoma in Azerbaijan, she played a worthy part."

Along with that, Zarifa khanum frequently visited various regions of Azerbaijan to issue preventive measures against glaucoma and myopia. For many years she performed serious diagnostic work in the industrial city Ali Bayramli (now Shirvan), detecting cases of glaucoma. For those at risk of being inflicted, Zarifa khanum created dispensary records and referred them to hospital for examination and treatment. In addition, she worked in city schools detecting myopia in children.

Zarifa khanum devoted herself to the faithful service of medical science. This service was both difficult and rewarding. As the famous cosmonaut Gherman Titov put it, "If a person learns a profession in life that is easy to him, work is a joy." Zarifa khanum was inspired by the achievements of science in her field of specialisation. Whilst even the smallest failure would cause concern, she never surrendered, and such failures only urged her to examine the problem more closely. She had great potential as a researcher and in developing solutions to theoretical problems, yet still devoted time and effort to the practical application of medicine. She seamlessly combined complete professionalism and depth of knowledge with tenderness for mankind. Such merits give reason to regard Zarifa khanum as a model of selfless service to humanistic professions. Despite all its difficulties, this was not just a job, but a continuous source of inspiration. Her presence alone created the atmosphere of trust and goodwill among colleagues and patients.

However, she never tried to stand out, never played to an audience, and kept her modest nature throughout the long, labourious, but glorious journey from intern to a recognised physician, scientist and academician.

...In 1962, something terrible happened to the family of an ordinary villager in a rural village of Azerbaijan: Nazila, a seventh grade student at a local school, lost her sight - she

became ill and blind in both eyes. Her mother refused to accept it and went to the Eye Diseases Research Institute in Baku. The doctor examined the girl and gave a hopeless gesture. The girl's mother, her eyes fixed on the doctor, broke into sobs and cried out: "For the love of Allah, please, help my daughter!"

The doctor stood up, shook his head and delivered his disappointing verdict: "Unfortunately, your daughter will be blind forever..." Those words pierced the mother's heart like a knife and she cried: "No! Doctor, this can't be true!" Fourteen-year-old Nazila got up and, hesitantly touching the walls, made for the door. She whispered, barely suppressing her tears: "Don't cry, ana jan (a hypocorism in Azerbaijani meaning mother), let's get out of here!"

Heartstruck by the dramatic scene, the doctor regretted what he'd said, but it was too late, and the mother and daughter left the room. In the corridor they both froze, arm-in-arm - a statue of sorrow.

A pretty woman in a white coat stepped out from a nearby room and stopped beside them. She touched Nazila's hair: "What is your name, dear?"

"Nazila," the girl hardly managed to reply.

"Come with me! Tell me about your troubles..."

The woman guided them to her room and began meticulously asking questions, examined the girl's eyes and bolstered some courage: "Drink some water, calm yourself! Don't give up hope..."

In the eyes of the mother she was an angel sent from Allah.

A little later the chief doctor Nazim Efendiyev ran in: "Zarifa khanum, what's happening here?"

"Professor, please examine the eyes of this girl. In my opinion, surgery is possible."

After examination, Efendiyev reported: "It is necessary to conduct preliminary therapy... Maybe for six months... Then surgical intervention will be possible. There is the chance that she will recover her sight."

Six long months passed... Zarifa khanum didn't leave them unattended for a single day. The mother and daughter, who had no friends in Baku, thanked their stars for meeting Zarifa khanum. Her presence had the effect of healing balm. Finally, the big day arrived. After the operation, when the blindfold

was taken off and Nazila opened her eyes, she could already see! The girl hesitantly looked for her saviour, and she recognised her.

"It was you... you have given me back the light!"

"Gozunuz aydin olsun!"<sup>2</sup> Everyone congratulated them.

Zarifa khanum didn't consider her mission complete. For a number of years she kept in touch with Nazila and her mother, providing all possible assistance.

There is a line in Homer's "Iliad", saying: "the life of a skilled healer is worth many other lives" ...but of course, a good doctor can give new life to many people.

**Farhad Mammadov** remembers: "It was the autumn of 1973 and I was nineteen years old. Still in my infancy, I suffered acute pneumonia. The treatment was very difficult and complications affected my eyes. At the slightest tension they turned red with sharp tormenting pain. I felt uncomfortable in public... People advised me to go to the Institute of Ophthalmology. So, I chose a day and went there. There was an old man in the doorway, a security guard. I told him my problem and explained why I had come. Then I saw a lady going downstairs. She smiled and, noticing my inflamed red eyes, asked about my vision. Her working hours were up and she was on her way home, but she took me back to her room and thoroughly examined my eyes, and inquired about earlier diseases. She listened carefully without interrupting. I was touched by her kindness and concern. She asked me where I was from. When I told her that was from Guba (a region located north-east of Azerbaijan), she said that she highly regarded Guban people. Her voice quivered when, in the middle of our conversation, she mentioned her father, Aziz Aliyev. But that was just for a moment, after which she steadied herself and attended to my care. She wrote out a prescription but strongly advised: 'Try not to use this medicine unless you cannot tolerate the pain.' Advising literally she said: 'Let your eyes become clear.' - an idiomatic expression to welcome a happy

<sup>2</sup> Literally: "May your windows be clear!" - an idiomatic phrase in Azerbaijani meaning congratulations in connection with a feast.

occasion... She also recommended wearing dark goggles and added with a smile: 'It'll be OK for your wedding day...'

Indeed, all my eyesight problems had disappeared by my thirties. A lot has happened since then, but I still manage without glasses and can read small fonts well. I will always remember this caring person and great woman with deep appreciation..."

As Mohammad Taghi Sidghi, an Azerbaijani writer and teacher, said: "There are four pillars of happiness: purity of race, purity of heart, purity of hands and purity of intent." These correlate with the personality of Zarifa khanum.

The great son of Turkish people and statesman Mustafa Kamal Ataturk left behind the following moral maxim: "Every man should strive for high, pure and sacred ideals." The heroine of our story demonstrated moral consciousness in medicine, and if you put the subject into a social context, we are talking about humanistic values for a healthy, civil society.

Zarifa Aliyeva wrote a paper concerning the problems and principles of medical ethics in the modern world called "High Confidence". In this paper, among other things, she states her professional yet humanistic credo: "Conscience is our chief judge. In difficulties times and joyful times, when you are face-to-face with it, it poses questions: Do you have the right to wear a white coat? Do your hands bring to those suffering not only your knowledge, but the warmth of your soul and passion of your heart? Truth be told, it is with great honour that you can pass through the stringent court of your own conscience without guilt. A true doctor shares the feelings and pains of his patient, as they are his feelings and pains as well. If a man regains his health, the doctor also takes a new lease of life." In this ethical view of the profession, N.A. Semashko wrote: "Practice of medicine is the noblest of all professions; your patients entrust you not only with their health, but with their entire life."

Zarifa khanum would often recall the old adage: "A sound mind in a sound body." - to say that all of us in one way or another, will have to deal with health care during our lives. When a doctor delivers a baby, he is delivering a future citizen, helping him to take the first steps, open the child's eyes to the world of many colours, with the care and ability to strengthen



his physical and mental health. The well-being of millions of people depends on the quality and effectiveness of the health service.

Back in the IX century B.C., Charaka, an ancient Indian physician, laid some guidelines of medical ethics in his treatise "Charaka-Supheta". It was the first moral code of professional duty of a doctor to his patient, with instructions on selfless medical practice. Charaka imposes the doctor's duty as the constant care of saving and improving the health of people and, if required, the readiness to sacrifice his own life to save a patient.

One of the prominent healers of ancient Greece, Hippocrates, also formulated a number of codes of conduct and moral stances which form the basis of professional medical ethics to this day. The code is known to the world as the "Hippocratic Oath". Hippocrates believed unselfishness, tenderness, rejection of vices and superstition, are mandatory qualities for any doctor.

Throughout her medical practice, Zarifa khanum was an example of selfless service, naturally combined with professionalism, generosity, sense of duty and patriotism.

She often referred to the commandments of the Great Russian writer and physician, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: "The medical profession is selfless. It requires genuine dedication, a broad mind and purity of intent. Not all are capable of it."

I would like to make a few remarks on purity of intent. According to Beirut newspaper, "An-Nida", an agent of the Israeli intelligence service, physician, massage therapist, and person with the name Uteifl, is linked with the death of former Egyptian President Jamal Abdel Nasser. That "therapist" used a special massage technique which gave the President a cardiac arrest. This was a criminal case, in which the medical title merely served as a cover for committing a crime.

Here is another example of the callousness of "servants" of medicine, deprived of a basic sense of mercy. According to a USA newspaper, two young boys injured in car accident were taken to a private clinic called Baton Rouge in Arizona. But doctors, in the absence of insurance, refused to accept the emergency patients. The owner of the clinic cynically

declared: "True, we have hearts of stone, but that's how it is. We are business men first."

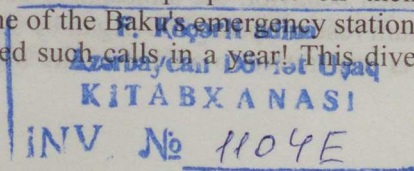
How does this comply with the Hippocratic Oath, with eternal values of charity and mercifulness laid as the foundation of medical practice?

Zarifa Aliyeva would often state: "The interests of the patient should be the utmost consideration of the doctor." As a natural psychologist, she knew that trust between a patient and his doctor is the best ally a doctor can have. Personal understanding and open-hearted talks prompts the body to resist illnesses, mobilises a patient's hidden resources and strengthens their will to heal. On the contrary, impetuous remarks, abrupt gesticulations, tactlessness, harsh and brash behavior is capable of deteriorating a patient's condition.

Abul Faradis, a Syrian physician of the XIII century would say to his patients: "There are three of us - you, your illness and me. If you join hands with your illness, I will be alone and you and your "ally" will overcome me. If, however, you side with me, our forces will double while the illness remains alone, so we win the field."

Usually, the treatment process involves a number of health professionals, but the primary responsibility lies with the doctor issuing the treatment. Limiting a doctor's care with restricted working hours should be considered a primitive and bureaucratic approach. Such excuses as: "There is only one of me for all of you" and other such arguments are immoral. It is quite possible that a word of encouragement or sitting for a few minutes by a patient's side would heal him just as well as pills or prescribed procedures.... Formalism ("I am busy, come later") is not acceptable and fraught with the most unpredictable and even harmful consequences.

Zarifa khanum attached high value to the emergency call service. "Emergency" means that every minute, maybe every second, counts. The key point is to be on time for help, take in the situation quickly, make the right diagnosis, and decide on the correct emergency treatment. Often someone's life is at stake. Unfortunately, there are and will always be, false or unfounded calls when people act on their emotions. For example, one of the Bakur's emergency stations receives nearly three hundred such calls in a year! This diverts medical staff



from serving these who really need emergency treatment... There also are drunken "jokers" who call the emergency service just for fun. Usually they call to report the fake stroke of an allegedly "raving mad" friend of theirs... Such pranksters should be punished as the worst offenders at human life.

It would be appropriate at this point to recall that wise Hippocrates spoke of the doctor's compulsory unselfishness. Alas, there are modern "aesculapians" (doctors) who approach every patient as another source of profit. It is hard to imagine a more scandalous and disgraceful approach. There is a huge difference between these money-grabbers and true physicians. A real physician is a stranger to selfish motives such as: "How can I get more?" He is compassionate towards his patients and shares their joy of healing. A true doctor primarily fights for his patient's life, for neither profit nor personal gain. Of course, as with any other work, a doctor also deserves remuneration. Nowadays there is a fee for medical services, which may be difficult for the older generation to get used to, having not forgotten the free Soviet health care. But, regardless of social changes, the old saying "man shall not live by bread alone" is not outdated, and no one has abandoned such eternal maxims. The highest vocation of man is to do good.

**Doctor of Medical Sciences, Colonel of Medical Service V. I. Vaynshteyin** respectfully remembers Zarifa Aliyeva: "She was a woman with an incredible nature. Public spirit and professional integrity were her distinctive characteristics. In both her statements and reports she emphasised the necessity of purity of a doctor's intent, and eagerly defended this approach, constantly reminding us that in the age of scientific progress, morality should not be ignored. On the contrary, it is more important. Lack of spirituality and moral deformity would enrage her...

I still remember a meeting with the Republican Society of Ophthalmologists. We were discussing the performance of one of our colleagues. That colleague liked to glamourise himself, although on numerous occasions his actions and recommendations were detrimental to the health of patients. After criticising such behavior, the atmosphere became rather tense. Zarifa khanum rose to speak. She began by stating that in all professions it is imperative to adhere to the highest moral

and ethical standards. But medical practice requires special qualities: honour, conscience, humility and selflessness. Furthermore, she scathingly criticised the performance of this colleague who compromised our profession. Immediately, the remaining participants began accusing with greater harsh, sharp words. Noticing this turn in discussion, Zarifa khanum paused; her smile lit up the room and she changed her tone. Expressing confidence that the colleague had drawn serious conclusions from such an authoritative collection of criticism, she closed the debate: 'I am convinced that additional measures will not be necessary.'

I remember another case. My wife and I were invited to the premiére of A. Safronov's play "Heart Operation". Heydar Aliyev, Zarifa khanum and the playwright were also there. The Russian Drama Theatre worked a miracle in front of the audience. They gave a spirited performance and convincingly recreated scenes of achievements of world-renowned surgeons who gave their lives to their patients. This night we were close enough to Zarifa khanum to observe her reaction to what was happening on stage. During the interval she spoke of the drama with approval, and admitted that the actors made her cry. She had a streak of exceptional emotionality."

**Professor A. N. Dobromislov** understands the recommendations of Zarifa khanum, based on a wealth of practical experience and wisdom. In this regard he emphasises the skilled doctor's ability to "heal" with words. In the Professor's judgment and in solidarity with Zarifa khanum, the foundation of a healthcare professional's values is formed of sincerity, ability to understand the patient, kindness, modesty, and selflessness. Dobromislov remembers how he once witnessed the way Zarifa khanum treated her patients. After examination and prescription, patients would leave Professor Aliyeva's smiling, inspired by hope, a sense of confidence and gratitude.

"Lessons from Zarifa Aliyeva," says Professor A.N.Dobromislov, "served me later in my medical practice. I wanted to convey to my colleagues and students her methods and approach. Thus, the vast experience of Zarifa Aliyeva was transferred, perhaps unbeknownst to her, like a "chain reaction" to other physicians."

**Doctor of Medical Science, Professor Mammad Sultanov:**

"Zarifa khanum heartily rejoiced at even the smallest successes of her colleagues. I personally experienced this when I was defending my doctoral dissertation. She used to organise tea parties in the laboratory. She would bring tea, chocolates and sweets. We would relax at the table, summarising the work done and developing plans for upcoming cases.

She is best remembered by her colleagues for her self-restraint. She never accused anyone of making a mistake, never allowed herself one provocative word. But she knew people well and was indispensable in recruitment."

**Head nurse Nigar Ismayilova:** "Zarifa khanum always treated patients kindly. She left no one without hope. A word of encouragement or simple conversation would alleviate a patient's condition. To her, helping people was a duty. We worked together for twenty-one years and there wasn't a single time when I heard her address people with words other than "gurban olum"<sup>3</sup>. Sometimes she got so involved with patients that there was no time for scientific research. When our department was rearranged, we were transferred to clinic No. 4 which was horribly cramped. Zarifa khanum did not complain despite the inconvenience, and continued her work flawlessly. She was the epitome of nobility."

A wonderful word used by nurse Nigar Ismayilova to describe how Zarifa khanum treated her patients, was: tenderly! This word is multidimensional: it indicates warmth, care, affection and benevolence. Such approach to people, especially ones who are suffering from disease, not only pours oil on troubles, but also helps doctors to gain detailed information on the cause of a patient's disease and establish the correct diagnosis.

Here is how **Professor T. Husseynova** remembers Zarifa khanum: "She was an extraordinarily disciplined woman. Being strict and demanding of herself she expected the same of others. She never lost her sense of moral obligation and responsibility. She kept her promises as a rule. Having a rather

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<sup>3</sup> "Gurban olum" (in Azerbaijani) Literally: May I be sacrificed for your sake - a traditional term of endearment in Azerbaijani.

authoritative personality and having won the respect of her colleagues and patients, Zarifa khanum nevertheless kept a very low profile. She appreciated others' time and tried to see only the positive in people."

This compassionate woman is etched in my memory thanks to her rare gift - the ability to lend a helping hand in hard times. When I asked her for help she listened carefully, offered valuable advice, reasoned away my worries and convinced me that the issue could easily be solved. She calmed and inspired me...

The thought of it reminds me of the saying: "Money can't buy respect, you have to earn it with generosity, kindness and compassion."

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Chapter Two

## AN IRREPLACEABLE MAN

*Education - a great thing. It decides  
the fate of Man.*

**Vissarion Belinskiy**

Freedom of spirit, dignity and will - all read in one look on the face of distinguished man of science, Doctor of Medical Science, Professor Aziz Aliyev. It's more than likely that the vocational choice made by our heroine was influenced by this man - her father.

Aziz Aliyev was among the founders of the public health service of Soviet Azerbaijan, continuing traditions of its predecessors - N.Narimanov, S.Efendiyev, H.Mussabeyov, M.Israfilbeyov, T.Shahbazi, M.Vekilov and others. Educated at universities of pre-revolutionary Russia, many of these prominent representatives of national intelligence went beyond their professional practice. The formation took place under the strong influence of liberation and revolution sweeping the Russian Empire. These were the ideas of progressive, democratically-minded Russian intellectuals and leaders of national culture, who rested their hopes in the revival of the nation, and resurgence of the people to reconstruct society's humanistic principles.

For example, Nariman Narimanov, a doctor by training, successful playwright and novelist who translated Gogol's "The Inspector General" into Azerbaijani, consciously joined the revolutionary movement and afterwards became one of the prominent Soviet statesmen. He, who genuinely believed in Bolshevik ideas, witnessed and became a victim of tragic and fatal social catastrophes brought by the revolutionary movement. Being in power in Sovietised Azerbaijan, he tried

to save Firudin Kocharli, a distinguished scholar and teacher, from unjust punishment.

Alas, the red bullet of his executioners out rode his telegram. Or perhaps the Chairman of Revolutionary Committee of Azerbaijan simply ignored it... Yet he succeeded in retracting death threats from the generals of Tsar's Army, Aliagha Shikhlinski and Samedbey Mehmandarov - legendary heroes of Port Arthur. He sent a letter to V. I. Lenin, insisting that he should take advantage of the vast experience and knowledge of these famous generals in building the Red Army.

Another episode depicting the noble behavior of this patriot and, at the same time, his ruthlessness in the fight against Fronde ("He who is not with us is against us."), is linked to the satirical novelist Djalil Mammadguluzadeh, founder and publisher of "Molla Nasraddin" magazine, famous throughout the East Muslim and Turkic world. N. Narimanov well-meaningly persuaded him to return to Baku from Tabriz. But the great satirist was not wanted in Soviet Azerbaijan. The magazine was issued having been signed off by puppet authorities, and later ceased to exist. Djalil Mammadguluzadeh wasn't even invited to the anniversary of the magazine in 1926.

This is the historical background which formed the growth of new intellectuals. He personally experienced the horrors of ethnic hatred and atrocities of the Dashnak bands, violating justice with impunity in the "troubled waters" of geopolitical scenarios of the time.

The first Azerbaijan Republic survived just two years before falling under the blows of Red Guard bayonets. A new government came into power. N. Narimanov was called to Moscow for a senior position in the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, and died in suspicious and mysterious circumstances.

But revolutionary euphoria and the Bolshevik myth-making machine took its toll, inflicting an enormous impact on collective consciousness. Great ideas of a bright future, equality, justice and internationalism, were "sewn" into class straggle and the phrase "expropriation of expropriators" became a utopian slogan on door plaques, hiding the real processes of social disintegration and the growing bloody and merciless confrontation that was about to break...

But let's go back to the beginning of the XIX Century. On January 1, 1897, in the village of Hamamli in the Echmiadzin district of the province of Erevan, Mammadkerim Aliyev's son was born, called Aziz.

Aziz's father, Mammadkerim Kerbalayi Gurbanali-oglu Aliyev, was a respected aghsaggal (meaning a respected old man in Azerbaijani). His mother, Zahra khanum, was the daughter of a distinguished man of the Erevan province, Ibrahim Bey Suleymanov.

According to Aziz's cousin, a resident of the Ushi village of Ashtarak, bee-keeper Oruj-kishi, Mammadkerim Aliyev owned three allotments in Hamamli, over twenty hectares each. Mammadkerim Bey also owned gardens with vineyards, mulberry and apricot trees, outside Erevan, in the urochishche (plot of land) Dalma.

In 1905 the family moved to Erevan. The old Erevan, like the pre-revolutionary cities of Tbilisi and Baku, as fate decreed, was a multiethnic cultural community and played a significant role in economic, cultural, educational and scientific life of the region. At the beginning of the XX century, Erevan was one of the cultural and trade centers of the Caucasus. Many prominent Azerbaijani individuals came from Erevan, including enlighteners, scientists, and merchants, in particular, Mirza Abbas Mammadzadeh and Ibadulla Mughanli. Many distinguished families such as the Mirbabayevs, Baghirbeyovs, Topchubashovs and Ibrahimbeyovs went to Erevan high school.

**Academics Mustafa Topchubashov**, Heydar Husseynov, Ahmad Rajabli, and prominent statesmen Magsud Mammadov, Hassan Seyidov, Mir Ibrahim Seyidov and composer Said Rustamov, graduated in Erevan.

According to the memoirs of well-known Erevanian merchant Mashadi Baghir's son, Kerbalayi Husseyn Ibrahimov, in those days Azerbaijani intellectuals of Erevan, including the Topchubashovs and Baghirbeyovs, used to gather in their house located near the mosque in the Armudlu quarter of the city. Member of the Academy of Sciences Jabbar Kerimov, and his family, visited this hospitable household many times. Mashadi Baghir left fond memories of himself as a philanthropist and patron of the arts. Up until 1919

he would freely help low-income families, contribute to the education of children, and solve everyday problems. His sons - Hassanagha and Kerbalayi Husseyn - were also educated in Erevan, graduating from high school and medical school.

From an early age, Aziz was distinguished by his thirst for knowledge. His parents sent him to Russian-Tatarian (read: Russian-Azerbaijani) school, which was considered an advanced educational institute at the time. Later he enrolled at high school.

With the First World War there was growing opposition in the community, and destruction...

Hard times affected the Mammadkerim family. Aziz Aliyev later recalled: "Thanks to excellent progress and performance, I was exempt from tuition fees. Actually, owing to the plight of our family, we could not afford to pay for tuition. As father's means of breadwinning became scarce, I worked alongside my studies, tutoring pupils."

Academic Mustafa Topchubashov, a boyhood friend and future colleague of Aziz Aliyev, notes in his memoirs that Aziz was a remarkable young man. He was second-to-none in study, behaviour, diligence, gentleness and kindness: "It appears as if the Father of medicine, Hippocrates, wrote the Physician's Oath with people like him in mind." Are these not true, important words?

Aziz Aliyev received an exemplary high school education. But at the same time, from his early years, Aziz knew what misfortune was. Maybe such an early acquaintance with everyday hardship was responsible for the acute compassion that became his moral creed. Young Aziz's life was filled with the highest, noblest ideas of serving others. Material hardship was not able to prevent his desire to devote himself to activity that benefited society.

In 1917, after graduating from high school with a gold medal, he thought of continuing his education in Russia, and wrote a letter to the famous oil baron of Baku, Haji Zeynalabdin, who had earned nationwide respect for his generous charity. Haji gave both moral and material help to the young man with three hundred roubles - a large sum of money in those days. Some of the funds, Aziz left with his mother, and he took the rest himself to St. Petersburg. Successfully passing

the difficult exams, he entered the Russian Military Medical Academy, famous even outside Russia.

Finally, student nurse Aziz Aliyev became part of the disinfection team combating typhus, a devastating infectious disease, which at those times literally "mowed down" thousands of people...

In 1918 he received the bitter news that his father was dead. Returning to Erevan, Aziz witnessed bloodcurdling persecutions and massacres of the Azerbaijani population. The Dashnak government was actually committing genocide. Such policies - essentially anti-Turk and anti-Azerbaijani - were protected and supported by certain circles, pursuing inhuman objectives accompanied by inconceivable brutality.

In the same year, student Aziz Aliyev and his family were among the outcasts and outlaws. Fleeing from the Dashnak thugs, the Aliyev family moved to the Sharur district of Nakhichevan. But after few years, Nakhichevan was also invaded, terrorised by an Armenian armed wing led by a "gentleman" of fortune called Andranik. These brutal armed groups purposefully annihilated the Muslim population of the area. Together, with their surviving countrymen, the Aliyevs found themselves in an asylum in the village of Arablar in south Azerbaijan - in Persia (Iran). Later, Aziz Aliyev calculated that the distance between Shahtakhti and Arablar was a mere three kilometres, so they had chosen the shortest distance for escape, crossing the border river Araz. At that time the danger of total annihilation was hanging over all Azerbaijani people.

Survivor and witness of those events, **member of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan Professor Abbas Zamanov** said: "People of Nakhichevan, including Sharur residents, lived in terror for their lives. Seeking salvation from Dashnak attacks, most of them fled to south Azerbaijan. In 1918, people of my village (Shahtakhti) were forced to move to Iran. My mother had died by that time. My father, my brother Ismail and I, took refuge in the city of Hoi An, Vietnam. Father became a butler. The living conditions were very difficult. My brother could not endure the hardship and died... Later we went back to our village."

In 1920, Aziz Aliyev's beloved mother Zahra khanum died in Persia. He was inconsolable at the loss. But, rather than

breaking him, the hardships and tribulations hardened his character, motivating him to act decisively in tough situations. Unfortunately, the tragic variables of fate didn't allow him to return to St. Petersburg and finish his education there. But he didn't part with medicine, and began deepening his professional knowledge, studying the leading textbooks and specialist literature. He worked in medical centers and drug stores. Beginning with lower positions, he started to provide medical care. Returning to his home village, Shakhtahti, in 1921, he worked until the spring of 1923. Later he moved to Baku and decided to continue his education.

By this time the State University of Azerbaijan was established, where young Aziz Aliyev studied. Finally, in 1927, he graduated in medicine and received a long-awaited diploma. The talented young man was retained in the Department of Internal Diseases. Aziz Aliyev quickly advanced in this field - resident, post-graduate student, assistant lecturer, assistant professor. He deeply immersed himself in social and academic life at the University.

In 1929 he became the Director of the Clinical Institute. Here his latent managerial and organisational skills were revealed. After a year he established a new medical college at the Azerbaijan Medical Institute. The appointment as head of this newly established academic institution speaks of the vast professional capacity of Aziz Aliyev. Meanwhile, the Medical Institute was facing difficult problems: the absence of text books and manuals in Azerbaijani and severe shortage of school teachers...

With energy of titanic proportions, in the first three years of the institute's existence, he assisted in preparing and publishing 45 textbooks and manuals! He made a significant success of his personal training.

Aziz Aliyev's work gradually gained national recognition. His achievements in the organisation and development of healthcare in the Republic peaked in the 1930s. He headed the department of the People's Commissariat for Healthcare, later, the Department of Healthcare Services of Baku City's Executive Power. He was appointed Deputy People's Commissar, then People's Commissar of Healthcare Services... Aziz Aliyev didn't like to sit in his study: he travelled all over

Azerbaijan, region by region, village by village. He studied health-related problems on-site and persistently solved them.

**The Academician Mustafa Topchubashov** recalls the outstanding and dedicated performance of the People's Commissar: "There was a panel session of the People's Commissariat of Healthcare Services. One question raised concerns about surgeons practicing out in the country. A pregnant woman had died of a hemorrhage in the middle of an operation.

The surgeon explained that the absence of blood supply was the main cause of death of his patient, and accused the Commissariat for the shortage. Aziz Aliyev admitted that many drugs are in short supply, including blood, and suddenly asked the surgeon: 'What about you? Any problems with your blood?'

'I can't tell, but I'm not complaining.'

'Well I have a complaint.'

'Sorry?'

'Yes. I have a complaint. Now tell me, how much of your blood did you donate in the blood donor centre up to this day?'

'How much blood?' The surgeon was too confused to reply.

The People's Commissar continued: 'You may well ask me how much of my blood did I donate. Well, let's go to the centre, you will to learn...'

We went to the blood donor centre. At the entrance, Aziz Aliyev pointed to a man in a white coat: 'Here, I brought another group of donors! Please, start the procedure!...'

That day he donated 100g more blood than we did. We found out that he really is a donor. Even I didn't know that he was giving at least a litre of his blood every year...

At the beginning of 1930, a cholera epidemic suddenly burst out in the Martuni region of Garabagh. This terrible disease was gradually spreading to neighbouring regions... Aziz Aliyev immediately mobilised all doctors.

The foremost authority in this field, academician Leon Aleksandrovich, was called on for help. But the epidemic was growing at an alarming rate. People started panicking. Sinister and illiterate men were spreading wild rumours among the population like: 'To go to Heaven, one should eat the liver of the dead,' or that, 'Eating a dead man's liver guards against

infection,' and other such nonsense. Simpletons, biting on the bait, contributed to the spread of the disease... Finally, despite protests and indignation of many confused people, we began to burn the corpses, guarded by soldiers. Only in this way could we terminate the epidemic."

Aziz Aliyev, nicknamed by colleagues as "emergency service" in his youth, invariably rushed to the critical areas and made every effort to rectify the situation.

His professional competence, innate sensitivity, emotional openness, initiative, organisational skills, devoid of all ostentatious bureaucratic "importance", won him the sympathy and love of the people. In 1934 he was appointed head of the Department of Healthcare Services of Baku City's Executive Power. After a year he was reappointed Rector of the Azerbaijan Medical Institute. In 1937 he was trusted to also take the position as Rector of the State University of Azerbaijan. This dual holding speaks for his colossal professional capabilities. Being the Rector of two academic institutions, from the year 1935 he also worked as the Senior Editor of the "Azerbaijan Medical Journal" published up to this day under the name of "Tabib" ("Medicine Man"). This widely-circulated journal of the Medical Institute was established by Aziz Aliyev (this initiative was called "For the medical staff").

Aziz Aliyev worked at the Medical Institute shoulder-to-shoulder with a cohort of remarkable scientists and leaders in medicine such as Mir Asadulla Mirgassimov (later the first President of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan), Mustafa Topchubashov, Jahanghir Husseynov, Kamil Balakishiyev, Abulfaz Garayev (later the Rector of the State University of Azerbaijan, and father of world famous composer Gara Garayev). Scientific works were published in those years including: "General Anatomy" by K. Balakishiyev, "Pathologic Anatomy" by J. Husseynov, "Eye Diseases" by Umnisa Mussabayeva, and many other books that may be considered milestones of Azerbaijani medical science. Of course, Aziz Aliyev's work is included in those books.

Not only was he a talented organiser and practicing physician, but also a deep theorist. Two years after graduating from university, Aziz Aliyev brilliantly defended his MPhil thesis, and eight years later, PhD thesis. The theories of Aziz

Aliyev are closely related to practical tasks. He is the author of many works on clinical and experimental medicine, among them: "Chlorides in the Blood During the Process of Digestion", "Experimental Nephritis", "Naftalan - its Past and Future", "Morphological and Some Purely Chemical Studies of Internal Organs and Eyes of Animals, used in Experiments, Preserved Under Circumstances with Various Iodine Concentrations", and others.

His "Textbook of Clinical Analysis" played a valuable part in the medical community of the Republic, and played an irreplaceable role in training young medical students. His thesis, "Nephritis Experiments", was one of the first doctoral works ever written by an Azerbaijani medical practitioner.

Aziz Aliyev's theory associated allergic diseases with the development of acute nephritis (inflammation of the kidneys) and suggested treatments. His thesis won a special theoretical development award at the USSR Academy of Medical Sciences and Central Committee of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League competition for young scientists.

Specialists note that Aziz Aliyev's work has not been equalled to this day. The scientist and statesman left behind eighty-seven theories, seventy of which are dedicated to various aspects of medicine, and the rest to history and politics.

Among those is his outstanding contribution to the elimination of malaria and trachoma, which was "on the loose" in the 1930s and 1940s. He established special clinics and hospitals, and in the same period was elected Chairman of the Republic's Extraordinary Anti-Epidemic Commission. In other words, he headed the fight against dangerous infectious diseases.

But fate ordained another fight - national war in the treacherous battle against the hordes of fascists.

He was a great patriot of his country and its people, divided by historical upheaval into two parts - north and south Azerbaijan. This passionate spirit of blood-belonging to the nation, its troubles, misfortunes of long-suffering people, its hopes and aspirations, would fully manifest itself later when he was instructed by the Soviet government to lead a large group of workers and political officers into Iran.

At the same time, Aziz Aliyev served the Soviet country in good faith and maintained the highest moral standards of civilian

behavior, under tough conditions of the communist regime. Besides that he was a humanist by the very nature of his world view, and always tried to understand national mentality and representatives of different countries. This true internationalism plainly expressed itself in the formidable days of the great fight against fascism, when Aziz Aliyev headed the Dagestan Regional Party...

While remaining a faithful son of Azerbaijan, he won great respect of all nations living in Dagestan, as well as our brothers and sisters living on the other side of Araz River. **Writer Imran Gassimov**, a close acquaintance of Aziz Aliyev, reported that he spent more than twenty years of his life outside Azerbaijan, carrying out various government missions. In all his actions he bore the title of great citizen, humanist and patriot...

In April 1941, Aziz Aliyev was appointed Secretary of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan (Bolsheviks).

The Second World War was already flaring in the West. There was very little time until the deathly dawn of June 22...

**Khosrov Aghayev**, a former manager of Baku's healthcare services, head of Bakzdravotdel (Healthcare Services Department of Baku City's Executive Power) and government bodies, recalls his contact with Aziz Aliyev in the days leading up to the storm. He remarks on the inexhaustible energy, integrity and fruitful work of the head of healthcare services of Azerbaijan. In 1941, Aghayev was transferred to Kirovabad (now Ganja), where he was in charge of the City Komsomol Committee, while also being in charge of Baku's healthcare services in the absence of a new appointee. In June, the war broke out.

"We switched to the emergency work regime," remembers Khosrov Aghayev, "and shortly after accepted the first casualties. Everything was mobilised for the needs of war. But even in such hard times we were still dealing with unscrupulous people..."

Aziz Aliyev arrived in Ganja. At a meeting with City authorities he emphasised some urgent problems related to public healthcare in the war. At the end of the meeting, Aziz Aliyev showed the desire to be placed on-site, to deal with numerous complaints written about by the medical practitioner with the surname, Zilberman..."



According to Kh. Aghayev, the abovementioned physician at the City hospital was accepting money from people and, under pretend treatment, was stuffing their medicine with unknown drugs. In the absence of any positive results of such "treatment", he would blame the patients, allegedly for not complying with his instructions. It turned out that this doctor was "specialising" in cardiovascular diseases. Most of his patients were from the City and neighbouring regions.

"We found out," continues Aghayev, "that his wife would leave from time to time for Moscow, Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), or Kiev, and buy various basic painkillers... Also, it turned out that a lodger in his house was recommending the therapist for a monthly bribe. People were coming to Zilberman on the recommendations of Zilberman's lodger. Later, the investigation revealed a rather large amount for those times - one hundred thousand roubles - in Zilberman's savings account. Aziz Aliyev was not satisfied with just a simple investigation. To confirm the facts he personally met most of Zilberman's victims and fully clarified any points, after which he instructed the City's Healthcare Services Department to treat those patients. Meanwhile, the investigation revealed the total incompetence of this appalling excuse for a doctor. Once this was clarified, Aziz Aliyev dismissed him from duty, while related case material was sent to the prosecutor's office for legal investigation."

**Fellow of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan and Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR, Hero of Socialist Labour, Topchubashov**, wrote: "I knew Aziz from Iravan. We attended the same school... Our families were on very friendly terms. His family was more close to us than most of our relatives. They were there for better or worse. My father was very fond of Aziz and loved him as an intelligent and capable boy. Aziz studied two years below me, but he understood my homework. He frequently explained lessons to other students. My father often used Aziz as an example of diligence: 'He is two years your junior, but two times as smart. Teachers sing his praises. The whole town talks of him. He teaches others too. He's going to make his mark some day...'"

M. Topchubashov remembers many interesting episodes from his friend's past, especially in later life: "In hard times we ran straight to him. I met people of various professions and

interests through Aziz and I admired the way he talked to them. Although no one would have questioned Aziz's high level of education, it was hard to determine which university he had graduated from, as he was well versed in all sciences...

I recall an episode from when he worked for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. There was a surgeons' conference being held in Baku, so I went to see him. The secretary knew me personally, so I entered his room straight away. Opening the door I found him in the middle of a conversation with three or four visitors. I was just about to leave when he called me. I went over and sat down. As I figured from the conversation, the visitors were construction engineers. I sensed an argument in the air. Aziz was speaking as if he was a specialist in their field and giving good advice. I asked jokingly: 'It appears, Aziz, that you are continuing your education in engineering?'

'No doctor, he replied without a hint of smile, I believe you are not in a hurry?' Then he answered his own question: 'Of course you are! It is not bad to hurry. But what I say is that it is not enough to hurry for the sake of medicine only... Hurry for a century for medicine, another century for engineering, another for philosophy, and one more century for agronomical science... But who, doctor, is given so many lives?'

Like all of us, Aziz was given not several, but just one life, and during his life he managed to familiarise himself with many branches of knowledge. But he was never satisfied with this..."

The Great Patriotic War revealed other qualities of Aziz Aliyev. He was a skillful military organiser and talented political leader.

On August 25, 1941, in accordance with the Soviet-Iran agreement to curb the activity of the fascist secret services and to enhance security of the border zone, the Transcaucasian Military District of the USSR crossed the border of Iran and entered Tabriz.

Colonel Aziz Aliyev was appointed political leader of the Soviet contingent's mission in Iran.

Those were dramatic and anxious days for the city of Tabriz. By acting upon the ancient principle "divide and rule", the Shah regime was sowing the seeds of discord between ethnic groups. Fractious massacres between the Azerbaijani

and Kurd populations sparked every other minute. On the other hand there were provocative rumors about the "Sovietisation" of Iran. Officers, who were descendants of Persian families on Khan's estates, did anything to provoke collisions between the Soviet army and Azerbaijani population.

The impact of Nazi propaganda was quite noticeable in Iran in those days. Under its impact, the nine thousand-strong Kurdish military approached the arrival of the Soviet troops. One of the tasks of the Soviets was to neutralise such forces, or better, establish trust-based relations with the Kurds. Such a difficult, risky and delicate task was imposed upon Aziz Aliyev.

In learning of the impending wedding of the younger brother of the Kurdish military leader, he prepared, in accordance with Kurd customs, gifts for the bride and groom, as well as for their close relatives. He also took into account how and at which moment to present the gifts. He went to the wedding and observed the rituals. His gesture of "raisi-shuravi" ("soviet chief") most impressed the Kurds and created the necessary political effect.

Tabriz - the stronghold of the national liberation movement and historical centre of Azerbaijan - was experiencing economic blockage. The City's food supplies were deliberately weakened, robbed by diversionists. As a political leader of the Soviet group in Iran, Aziz Aliyev continually faced dramatic scenes of enraged, hungry people crowded together, ready to go berserk. This rage regularly fell on the Soviet troops too. He fearlessly reached out to these people, appealed to them, convinced them of the humanistic and peaceful mission of the Soviet population; and he didn't forget to explain the situation to his subordinates: "We do not interfere in the internal affairs of Iran. However, in defending the stability of the country, we should not quarrel. We didn't come here for war. We must declare publicly that we have nothing to do with Khans, landowners, Tajirs (merchants)..."

The intellectuals of Soviet Azerbaijan, i.e. prominent literary masters and scientists including Suleyman Rustam, Mirza Ibrahimov, Ghilman Mussayev, Osman Sarivelli, Abbas Zamanov, Jabbar Majnunbeyov and others, played a key role in creating an atmosphere of trust and cooperation within the public, in building ethnic bridges, and most importantly, in the

revival and recovery of cultural life of Azerbaijani people living on the other side of the Araz river. They established education and humanitarian centers and the publication of newspapers in Azerbaijani, drawing the two divided parts of the nation closer. These people frequently visited the Azerbaijani regions of Iran, met people of Tabriz, Merend, Ardabil, Urmiya, etc...

As a political representative and leader, Colonel Aziz Aliyev directed such extensive work with inherent intuitiveness, delicacy and far sightedness, led by daily communication with various segments of the population. His genuine warmth, openness and sincerity when talking with people, aroused feelings of confidence, alleviated fear and prejudices, and restored trust between nationalities.

Meanwhile, the Tajirs and landowners fled from the concoction of anti-Soviet agent provocateurs, and returned to Tabriz. Life in the City adjusted.

Aziz Aliyev also met with leading members of the national liberation movement, "21 Azer" group; the leader of this movement, Seyid Jaffar Pishavari, held the "raisi-shuravi" Aziz Aliyev in high regard.

Aziz Aliyev established a hospital in Tabriz with free medical treatment, and the Theatre of Opera and Ballet of Baku arrived for a tour.

A participant at these events, outstanding **poet Suleyman Rustam**, heard the name Aziz Aliyev making the rounds in south Azerbaijan. The head of the Soviet military contingent in Iran, **Colonel-General N. Troufanov**, also commended on the work of Aziz Aliyev: "Being a member of the military council, Aziz Aliyev proved himself to be a skillful organiser with deep political awareness. To say the least, Aziz Aliyev was a man of true character and courage in the fullest sense of the words."

But, besides his great involvement in the socio-political and humanitarian activities in Iran, Aziz Aliyev continued his scientific research. He summarised his experience of being in those places in "Essay on the economic Geography of South Azerbaijan" published in 1942 (by a branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR).

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Chapter Three

## EIGHT YEARS IN THE LAND OF MOUNTAINS

*I will be grateful to the great son of my  
Dagestan and my Azerbaijan until death*

**Rassul Hamzatov (famous poet of Dagestan)**

In September, 1942, by order of the Chairman of State Defense Committee I. Stalin, Aziz Aliyev was appointed First Secretary of the Dagestan Regional Committee of the Communist Party, Chairman of the Makhachkala Defense Committee, and elected member of the Military Council of the 58th Army and Baku Air Defense Council.

Hitler's armada treacherously ambushed the Soviet Union and took the temporary advantage with surprise attacks. Despite heroic resistance, the Soviet Army units faced severe problems, and the armada reached the North Caucasus. Leningrad was dripping with blood within the steel walls of its blockade. Three-dozen kilometers remained between the advancing forces of Wehrmacht and Moscow... The Nazi's "Edelweiss" division hoisted the hated Swastika flag proudly on top of the Caucasian mountains. But Dagestan held the field. This Land of Mountains was the latest obstacle for Hitler's troops in rushing to Baku for Baku oil. Trophy newsreels kept footage of the Fhrer leaning over the map and pointing longingly at "Baku cake"...

German command intended to turn Makhachkala into a Nazi Caspian stronghold.

Dagestan was experiencing the harsh conditions of the front line. Some regions were evacuated. The threat of occupation was obvious. Yielding due praise on the brave sons and daughters of the Caucasus, valiantly fighting against the brutal enemy, you cannot ignore those faint-hearted, who reeled

back, gave in to panic, saving their own skin... The cases of desertion became more frequent.

A quote from the memoirs of Aziz Aliyev: "The Regional Party Committee meeting was very serious... It was imperative to rouse the local party and government agencies, increase management responsibility, and mobilise the masses. But how? With whose help? Where to begin? These were questions of enormous importance, requiring immediate answers.

Dagestan had an area of over fifty thousand square kilometers. It was divided into more than fifty administrative districts; there were several thousand villages and towns, many of which could only be reached on foot or horseback. It was necessary to study the Autonomous Republic zones environment, the location of communities, regions with a dense population of national and international groups, and weak points near the border between the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic and Dagestan, the mountain passes and main roads, and organise their defense.

There were more than thirty nationalities and ethnic groups in Dagestan, the largest being Avars, Lezghins, Dargins, Kumyks, Laks, Azerbaijanis, Tabasarans, Nogais, Rupuls and Tatars. It was important to unite them in one single family of many nationalities and ethnic groups - of different characters, traditions and customs - to mobilise them for the sake of victory..."

But where to begin? The newly appointed head of the regional party committee promptly met with the army commander. Members of Military Council, spoke with the leaders of the Council of Ministers and the representatives of ministries in last-minute midnight talks; but he was not satisfied with the information and acted on his own proven tactics. Visiting regions, villages and auls (small mountain villages), he found that some villagers, having heard of Nazi brutalities in occupied territories, had fled to the forests and hard-to-reach mountain terrain.

Not forgetting the main theme of our story, I still believe it's useful to consider excursions into history, related to the bright performance of Zarifa Aliyeva's father. Especially since the biography of Aziz Aliyev is inseparable from the history of many nations of the Soviet Union, from the momentous events in their lives, and a collective contribution to that historical

victory, the value of which certain forces are now trying try to diminish or distort. But, as said by Rassul Hamzatov, "If you shoot a rifle in the past, Future will fire a gun at you..."

In light of this, I will say a few words about the capital city of Dagestan. Few young readers will know that the official history of this city dates back to 1722, with the march of Peter I's fleet in Persia, when combat vessels discovered a comfortable harbour at the foot of Mount Anjiark. Here, a fortress called Peter's Fortress, was erected. Later, on October 24, 1857, the nearby settlement grew into a seaport town called Petrovsk. Soon, a port was built, and the Vladikavkaz railway.

If we delve deeper into history, we learn that the beautiful and convenient harbour had already been discovered by our ancestors. Around seven thousand years ago there stood a town called Tarnair, which later grew into the city of Samanda, the capital city of the Khazarian Empire. Mukaddasi, an Arabic chronicler of the X century, wrote about this city: "It was larger than the famous city of Itile on Volga (Itil is one of the ancient names of the Volga River. - Husseynbala Miralamov). There were continuing disastrous wars at its foot, and it was during these that the fate of people in the Caucasus and south-east Europe was determined."

Russian Petrovsk grew in leaps and bounds. By 1913 there were 15 factories. Two years earlier the first theatre had opened. In 1917, when the revolution burst out in Russia, a revolutionary committee was established. One member was Makhach Dadayev, killed later by the White Guards. In 1921, by decree issued on May 14, the Revolutionary Committee of Dagestan commemorated this freedom fighter and renamed the port of Petrovsk as the City of Makhachkala ("Fortress of Makhach").

...Aziz Aliyev came back from a trip late one evening. The guard, an old Lezghin (man), met him in front of the building of the regional committee. They started up a conversation. Then, rather suddenly, the old man gave him some advice: the highlanders who had left their villages and homes may be convinced to return with the help of village Aghsaggals (respected elderly people) and clergy members.

There are only two forces that highlanders respond to: Allah above and the Aghsaggals on earth.

Shortly after, the First Secretary organised a conference of Aghsaggals in Makhachkala, in which a Council of Elders was established. Meanwhile, in towns and other populated locations, groups of Aghsaggals were called together. Having won their hearts with such a trusting and respectful approach, the elders promised to persuade the highlanders to return home.

Day by day, people came back, and began to actively restore their households while persistent encouragement continued. Later, the witnesses in those days - Lezghins, Avars and representatives of other nationalities - would tell how Aziz Aliyev managed to, irrespective of time or fatigue, visit more than two thousand villages, meet and speak with to villagers, convincing them to return and engage on the home front, and join the ranks of defenders of the homeland. The First Secretary visited battle positions too. Often he would sleep in dug-outs, encounter snowstorms or stay overnight in cars, bundling himself up in a highlander cloak...

Under his supervision, community defense volunteer squads formed throughout the country. Mountain guides were appointed among villagers for guiding forces, positioned in the autonomous province. Groups were also formed for uncovering and neutralising deviants.

One can hardly imagine how much energy, positivity, diplomacy and intuitiveness is needed for empowering and unifying a multi-language, multi-national society, exposed to complex and conflicting feelings, surrounded by agent provocateurs and enemy propaganda. It's more than likely that the First Secretary thought to call upon traditional rules and honour codes of proud-hearted highlanders, in memory of their valiant ancestor warriors...

The war was dictating its strict, harsh laws. Any manifestation of panic or sabotage would be punished mercilessly. The Stalinist regime would think nothing of evicting whole ethnic groups on the smallest suspicion of disloyalty.

The people of Dagestan could not fail to hear about what happened to Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans, Balkarians, Chechens, Ingushes and other nations....

A quote from the memoirs of a member of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, Professor Haji Hamzatov: "It was the fourth year of the war. In those woeful days, when Aziz Aliyev

was in the charge of Regional Committee of the Communist Party, I was in the charge of the Department of Press of the Regional Committee. That year, the inhabitants of certain mountainous areas were relocated to lowlands. The emigrants could not adapt to the climate and got sick. Malaria and typhus was killing people. The government of the Autonomous Republic established a field headquarters of medical services, allocated food and medicine, and sent teams of medics...

The headquarters was situated in Binay-aul (presently Novolaksk). The Deputy People's Commissar of Healthcare of Dagestan, a childhood friend of mine, Jamal Abdurrahimovich Hajiyev, was appointed head of the headquarters. I was sent as a politician on an assignment to the same village... At this time the villagers had weak and depressed morale. Everyday, apart from condolence letters from the front, they would get news about more than fifty deaths from various illnesses... Throughout the few days when I was there, I didn't see even a hint of a smile on their faces. All of them were gloomy and tired with swollen eyes.

I racked my brains, searching for ways to cheer up the villagers. I relayed my concerns to Jamal Abdurrahimovich. He listened carefully and said decidedly: 'That's true! Morale is very important... A beautiful songstress lives in the village of Kishen (in 1944 the village was renamed Chapayev)... an emigrant from Gara-kend... I've known her since I was working in Kulin... But how appropriate would be it to disturb her under such circumstances? Nowadays people are on the breadline and it's uncomfortable to call at homes, even of close friends and relatives.'

'Let's take our chances,' I offered. 'After all, you have the power to help people where possible. Let's go ourselves with flour, butter, beans and a bottle of alcohol.'

Just to be on the safe side, he added, 'Let's call in on her family, and ask her to address villagers in the village hall...'

We did as he suggested, and such pleasure that performance gave to the villagers!

Here I cannot help but remember another episode. In those days I was carrying out the duty of executive secretary of the Dagestan Branch of the USRR Writers' Union, along with my direct job... Writers too were scrabbling along in the world

those days. Very few books were published, and not all writers received rations in kind.

By request of the Writers' Union, the government decided to give out rations to all its members. Then a strange situation arose: state employed writers could get double rations. The Supervisory Commission informed the government of the situation. Aziz Aliyev called me into his room and demanded an explanation. I reported the misery that writers were living in and informed him that their barefoot and undressed children were suffering from malnutrition and various diseases; those families weren't receiving any help from auls, as many other citizens did. Thus, depriving writers of this double ration may lead to pitiable results for their families. Among those who received double rations were such writers as Anvar Hajiyev, Abutalib Gafurov, Haji Zalov and many others. I admitted that I had to sell my only suit at the market, sewn for me by my mother, and added that I was lucky as other writers didn't have anything to sell...

A few days later, Aziz Aliyev asked all the writers to tea and invited them to the Regional Committee of the Communist Party. He listened carefully as they talked. Then they had a heart-to-heart chat, after which Aziz Aliyev issued an instruction to the government to assist writers and provide material help."

A simple Dagestani worker remembers another situation: "Once we left for a village located a rather long distance from Makhachkala. We were on foot. My aunt and her children were also with me. On the way we got caught in the pouring rain. Taking the children in our arms we tried to protect them from the downpour. Suddenly, a car came up and stopped alongside us. The driver asked: 'Where are you going?'

I named the village. Then a presentable man got out of the car and said: 'Get into the car.' Then he ordered the driver: 'Take them to the village and come back.' When we were down the road I asked the driver who that man was.

'The First Secretary of the Regional Committee Aziz Aliyev,' he replied."

Aziz Aliyev loved multinational Dagestan and its self-sacrificing and hospitable people with all his heart. After a while, the highlanders came to feel a deep compassion for Aziz Aliyev, and began assisting with all his endeavours.

His most important achievement was the consolidation of various nationalities and ethnic groups of Dagestan and the establishment of mutual trust between them. There were no incidents based on ethnic grounds in Dagestan during the war. Dagestan people conscientiously worked at the rear and gallantly fought on the front lines.

Aziz Aliyev established a squadron of Dagestanians named after the hero of the Civil War, Gara Garayev. Giving a send-off to soldiers and cavalymen, he presented them with a Red Flag inscribed with following words: "Extraordinary volunteer cavalry squadron."

Soldiers made an oath to carry this honorable mandate of the homeland, and hoist the flag in victory over a defeated Berlin.

They kept their vow. Beginning their combat records from the Isher railway station located south of the City of Mozdok, the squadron, as a part of the 416th Taganrog division, pushed as far as Berlin, successfully fulfilling the most important combat mission.

The commander of the 416th division wrote to the First Secretary of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party: "Dagestani soldiers, fighting with great bravery, inflicted a series of blows on the enemy of our homeland. Throughout the path of glory of our division, Dagestani cavalymen were distinguished by surprise assaults and sudden enemy raids..."

In Dagestan, another military unit was established: 91st Rifle Division, later honoured as the Melitopol Division. Aziz Aliyev took a personal interest in the battles and operational accomplishments of this Division. Soldiers of the Division reported in one of their letters to Aziz Aliyev: "We feel the daily concern of the Dagestani workers. This concern gives us more strength in our fight against the enemy. The close ties between our Division and workers of Dagestan make us stronger and unbeatable."

The First Secretary highly appreciated their patronage over the families of the soldiers. In 1944, Dagestan received twenty-five notes of acknowledgement from the Supreme Command for its exemplary service to families.

Here is a quote from soldier Penkol's letter dated March 14, 1944, addressed to Aziz Aliyev: "Today I received a letter written

by my little daughter. She rejoiced at the parcel I sent her, which of course was not sent by me. My wife told me in her letter that one of your workers visited my family and presented a gift on the Red Army's 26<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The children felt that this gift came from me and were very happy. Comrade Aliyev, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for your care to my family. I will never forget this kindness of yours..."

Aziz Aliyev continually concerned himself with the issues of housing, food supplies and healthcare. Under his direction and with the assistance of the People's Commissariat of Trade and Cooperative Unions of Transcaucasia Consumer Cooperative Societies, a relief fund was organised to supply the people evacuated from front line zones with clothes.

New military manufacturers were established in Makhachkala and other cities, to meet demands of the war. No incidence of death caused by starvation was recorded or reported in Dagestan during the war.

The fisheries sector was expanding with new fishing teams and divisions. Every tonne of each catch was registered with the State Defense Committee of USSR, and more than fifty or sixty tones of fishery products were distributed among military units every year.

The fishing season of spring, 1944, was very successful, and the catch surpassed the annual plan two-fold. Inspired by such tremendous success, the fishermen committed to fulfilling the annual plan for the third time in the autumn... They repaired their seine boats, prepared ledger tackles, nets... Alas, just before the season began, the Caspian Sea showed its temper - a storm blew up. For more than a month, the waves reached as high as five or ten metres. Naturally, it was impossible to go out to sea and the volume of catch was far less than intended... But, men on the front were waiting for what they'd been promised. The First Secretary of the Communist Party's Regional Committee had to answer to Moscow authorities. Documents submitted by the Union's Hydrometeorological Services confirmed Aziz Aliyev's case. In general, those in Moscow understood the situation and didn't lay any claims.

Utilising his medical experience, Aziz Aliyev spent much time organising hospitals. Party committees, at his recommendation, organised night duties for seriously

wounded soldiers and ensured the continuous flow of provisions to military hospitals.

One hundred and thirty thousand wounded military men were treated in Dagestan, and one hundred and two thousand returned to service.

In addition, twenty-eight thousand sheep, one thousand one hundred horses and one thousand two hundred cattle, worked in the liberated territories, with large volumes of fruits and vegetables.

When raised from the ruins of Stalingrad, Dagestan sent two hundred and fifty teenagers to reconstruct a tractor plant. The First Secretary was at the train station bidding farewell to those young people. There they established a relief fund to reconstruct the City of Sevastopol. Dagestanians collected a generous amount, nearly five million roubles; Sevastopol received twelve wagon-loads of construction materials and equipment from Dagestan.

For achievements of the Defense Fund, the Government of Dagestan received seventy-five letters of gratitude from the Supreme Command. The Azerbaijani division in Dagestan, along with the regiments consisting of Dagestan people and many other military units, fulfilled their military duties with great honour, creating a strong barrier against the enemy's approach as it rushed south. These units later became offensive parts of the front line units, heroically fighting for the liberation of the Rostov region, Taganrog... and finished their path of glory in Berlin. Fifty Dagestani soldiers were honored with the title of Dagestan Hero of the Soviet Union, while more than thirty-five thousand of them were awarded various orders and medals.

The strikingly empathic attitude of Aziz Aliyev to intellectuals, masters of the arts and the youth of Dagestan, deserves a special mention.

**National poet Hamzat Sadasa** remembered that he never heard a word which would cast doubt on this highly cultured man, his kindness and generosity. Aziz Aliyev was a great man indeed. In 1944, upon his initiative, Dagestan celebrated the artistic work of Hamzat Sadasa (this poet was previously awarded the Order of Lenin). His son, **Rassul Hamzatov**, remembers: "The first person who sent his congratulations was Aziz Aliyev... Aziz Aliyev said to me: 'Rassul, what if we sent

you to Moscow to study at the Literary Institute named after M. Gorkiy' "... Thus, thanks to Aziz Aliyev, the poet's glorified path in great literature began. The role played by young Rassul Hamzatov, the literary Alma Mater of Moscow, and his acquaintances and friendships with the masters of Russian literature in evolution, is well-known.

However, at that moment, Rassul responded reluctantly and expressed his uncertainty: "Is it necessary to go to Moscow to become a poet? Suleyman Stalskiy writes poetry without any higher education." But later the poet admitted that, 'As it happens, things turned out to be not what I thought.'

You are rather lucky if other people think and take care of you. This was especially valuable in the days of war, when anyone who is able to hold a rifle is fighting for their homeland...

But, what was the secret charm of Aziz Aliyev's personality and why did the people of Dagestan love him so much? Well, there was no secret: he simply gave selfless and generous experience and wisdom, earned throughout his life, to the people of Dagestan...

Teacher Jamal Abubakarov expressed the love of the Dagestan people for Aziz Aliyev through simple, but sincere and emotional lines:

You - the great friend of our nation,  
We remember all that you have done  
Such great services you rendered in Dagestan  
Our fate is cast with you forever.

You - the worthy son of the fraternal people,  
Your cradleland - Azerbaijan.  
You left on the earth a mark so deep,  
and your feat, Dagestan will remember forever.

You - the teacher, doctor and friend,  
You devoted all your strength to the Motherland  
Your life's journey was bright and flaming,  
You're the example for generations.

**M. Umakhanov, a notable statesman**, highlighted Aziz Aliyev's invaluable contribution to the education and training of young cadres: "Aziz Aliyev made a significant impact on

my path of life. I worked for one and a half years with this irreplaceable man."

An irreplaceable man! This is a strikingly profound definition and preempts famous sociologist and philosopher, E. Toffler, who suggested it in his work, "Metamorphosis of Power", published in the late twentieth century. Even in those times when the claim "we don't have any irreplaceable men" was widely used in Soviet society, the most perceptive minds thought that this was wrong, especially when they witnessed the work of individuals with such large-scale capacity as Aziz Aliyev. The concept of interchangeable personalities without prejudice to a common cause, associated with the initial stage of Industrial Revolution, underwent a transformation exactly in those fatal war years and in fact, was fundamentally realigned due to the complicacy of the issues of both industrial and social development of the USSR, as well as in the west. Knowledge, more than practical skills, became the essence of any action and formed the basis for improving the competence of cadres. Thus, senior officer and managerial positions - from doctors to engineers - became more individualised.

Names of the awards by which the country praised the actions of Aziz Aliyev, honouring his painstaking work, include: the Order of Lenin (twice), Order of the Great Patriotic War, Order of the Red Banner of Labour; and medals: "For the Defense of Caucasus", "For the Victory Over Germany" and "For Valorous Labor during the Great Patriotic War". But, certainly, the greatest prize for Aziz Aliyev was the grateful love of the people of Dagestan.

Post war until December 1948, he continued to perform his duties as the head of the Autonomous Republic with the same restless energy. His contribution to the establishment of material and technical facilities of the Academic Center (later the Dagestan branch of the Academy of Sciences of USSR), and development of higher education institutions, was invaluable. Bringing young highlander girls into education, training female specialists and engaging them in social and economic activities, establishing a women's teacher training institute and teacher training college in Makhachkala - these are also merits of the First Secretary of the Communist Party's Dagestan Committee...

In 1946, Aziz Aliyev was elected secretary of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from Dagestan and, a year later, Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of Dagestan. Despite being sent to study in Moscow in December, he continued to keep in close contact with Dagestan.

Highlanders still gratefully remember this remarkable and talented leader. "His character was not one that came from a template," **remembers Magomed Kurbanov**. "High integrity, selflessness in serving the state, yet kindness and interest in everyday human matters - Aziz Aliyev combined these qualities."

**Kh. Pirsaidova** adds to the words of Magomed Kurbanov: "Dagestanians will never forget the role that Aziz Aliyev played in the fate of our nation. For centuries, Dagestan and Azerbaijan have been living in peace and good neighbourliness. The relations between these two nations are deeply rooted in history and rely on universal human values, on the unity of our cultures, customs and traditions. We will always foster our friendship, develop economical, scientific and cultural relations for the sake of prosperity of Azerbaijan, Dagestan and Russia."



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Chapter Four

**SLANDER**

*Where there is envy there is slander*

Hippocrates

Aziz Aliyev was the head of a happy and close-knit family. His faithful partner, Leyla khanum, was the embodiment of goodness and femininity. This sociable, charming woman was the proud mother of six children: two boys - Tamerlan and Jamil, and four daughters - Lazifa, Zarifa, Dilara and Gulara. Four out of the six children followed in their father's footsteps and became doctors. Dilara chose to become a communications engineer, while the littlest of them, Gulara, became a talented and famous pianist.

...Glorious life in Dagestan was over by now. Aziz Aliyev attended the Academy of Social Sciences in Moscow and at the same time was a member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party. He ranked among the most nationally important cadres. In 1950 he was invited to Baku to be appointed in an important public post - First Deputy of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan.

In those times, the appointment procedure involved selecting officers from a list of candidates drawn up in advance. The list of candidates, considered to be of national standing, would be reviewed in Politburo and was considered a state secret.

Times were difficult and sensitive. The atmosphere both in the government and capital cities of union republics was charged with spying and whistleblowing, so one could easily lose his job, or his head. Here's an example: someone whispered to the terrible "master" of Azerbaijan, Mir Jafar Baghirov, that Aziz Aliyev was registered on the reserve list of

candidates for substituting the First Secretaries of Central Committees of Communist Parties of union republics and heads of government.

Mir Jafar Baghirov, being an old and jealous observer of the successful rise of Aziz Aliyev, considered him a competitor, and fostered an aggression towards his increasing authority. He took it upon himself to - at whatever price - chase Aziz Aliyev off the political stage. No one would say that Mir Jafar Baghirov was short of such experience. With wicked intent he sought the support of his old friend and protector, the almighty Lavrenti Pavlovich Beriya. Without him, Baghirov would not dare to encroach on the good name of such a brilliant and popular leader as Aziz Aliyev...

On June 12, 1951, Baghirov draw the first blood of the resolution of the Bureau of the Central Committee of Communist Party of Azerbaijan: "For deceiving the party, for hiding information on the true social position of his family members, relatives and friends as indicated in his statement of personal history and other documents, he shall be severely reprimanded."

As a result of this resolution, on June 24 that year, Aziz Aliyev was dismissed from the office of First Deputy of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Azerbaijan. The reasons were the same: "For committing offences which are not fit for a party member; for hiding the social status of his parents; for hiding the fact that he lived with his blood sister in Iran, for discrediting himself before the body of the Republic..."

For sure, those fabricated accusations had no grounds upon which they were based. The statement of personal history of Aziz Aliyev and other documents provided accurate and precise information of all his friends and relatives. But under such circumstances it was pointless to either prove or disprove anything: it would lead to fatal consequences.

Firstly, Aziz Aliyev was appointed as the Director of Research Studies Institute of Orthopaedics and Reconstructive Surgery. But the chain of repression didn't break there. Soon after, an instruction was issued to dismiss him from the office of the director, with reassignment to an office in the Sabunchu (a district of Baku) Hospital. This done, supposedly Baghirov began to feel that he had sufficiently humiliated his "rival". He was very wrong. Aziz Aliyev was not a man who valued those of

high rank. A true punishment would be only to prohibit him from doing any kind of work. Instead, his reassignments ended up with his appointment as a doctor. It was not a punishment for him, but a consolation - his beloved medicine! Everyday, in the crowd of hurrying workers, he left in a suburban electric train (elektrichka) for the workers' settlement (Sabunchu). The hostility of his "master" and cowardice of old "friends" who would turn away at the sight of him, quickly faded when he met his patients...

One day an old man came with a teenage boy: "Doctor, gadan alim (a form of respectful address in Azerbaijani, which means: may I take upon myself all your grief), you are our only hope..."

With a practiced eye, the doctor looked at the sick child. He was just about to call the chief of department for a consultation when the old man stopped him, grasping his arm: "Please, don't send us to anyone else. I know who I want to see."

Aziz Aliyev performed the examination, made the diagnosis, and put the child in a patient's room for treatment. When he visited the boy after a couple of days, he was feeling better. His illness was over.

The old man couldn't find how to thank the doctor: "May I be sacrificed to the wind that brought you here! You gave me back my son!"

This mention of the "wind" sent the doctor into peels of laughter. No one had ever heard the chief doctor laugh so heartily until that day.

Back home he amused his parents by telling how the old man thanked him. There was both pride and joy in his reaction to the old man's blessing, which silenced all former injustices and insults...

Moral fear didn't break his spirit. Even in those tense days he didn't lose his optimism and zest for life. Later his son, Tamerlan, remembered: "Despite being in a very troubled internal state, he would not show any signs of anxiety. In every possible way he tried to hide his deep-set worry and sorrowful feelings from us. Those very hard and harsh years, like it or not, impacted upon us and marked our lives. But his previous positivity and love of joking stayed with father..."

Here we turn back to the main topic which motivated us to take the pen in hand - the life history of a great man's great daughter, the tale of Zarifa Aliyeva.

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Chapter Five

## ZARIFA AND HEYDAR

In 1949 Zarifa Aliyeva returned to Baku. Heydar Aliyev returned a year later. Absence made their hearts grow fonder and he decided to marry her.

All should be fine, but there were problems with accommodation - the security officer lived with his brothers and mother in a basement room in Icheri Sheher<sup>4</sup>. Zarifa and Heydar met more frequently and realised with even more clarity that they had found happiness with each other. People of Azerbaijan use a figure of speech in such situations: "Their stars have reconciled."

The accommodation problems were solved in 1952: Heydar Aliyev got his long-awaited one-bedroom apartment. But... as the reader knows, the unfavourable "sword of Damocles" of M. J. Baghirov was still hanging over the family of Aziz Aliyev...

It is hard to imagine now, but those were the years when not only the official, creative or scientific career, but also personal life, even the very existence of a man, could be ruined in a single moment by an arbitrary government decision. Intending to link his destiny with that of Zarifa, Heydar Aliyev was challenging one of the mightiest and influential henchmen of the regime - M. J. Baghirov. Consequences of such a challenge one could easily foresee, but that didn't stop Heydar Aliyev, who decided to defend his right to be with his beloved.

"The piquancy of this situation was that," wrote famous **writer and deputy of Azerbaijan's Milli Mejlis (Parliament) Elmira Akhundova**, in the first book of her fundamental

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<sup>4</sup> Old Baku - Baku's Icheri Sheher (literally, Inner City), the historical core of Baku, built in the Middle Ages.

research into the biography of Heydar Aliyev, "the young officer was in the very institution which was tasked with releasing damaging information on his future father-in-law."

Initially, the excellent track record of Heydar Aliyev prevented his superiors from immediate action. He was simply advised not to meet the daughter of a state official who was out of favour with the "first" person of Azerbaijan.

However, "advised" is an understatement. In actual fact the question was put point blank: choose service and career, or love... But the young officer did not back down and heed the "advice" of his superiors. He continued to meet his sweetheart in secret. Although Heydar didn't involve her in these problems, sensitive Zarifa guessed everything, and her deep feelings flew out in bitter words on their next date: "You know we can't meet anymore, for my father is dismissed from the office and they are laying various charges against him. You are in the security services and meeting with me may harm you... It appears that fate decrees to separate us..."

Heydar protested, trying to calm his sweetheart, and they continued meeting in secret.

Meanwhile, Aziz Aliyev's family was kept under close observation as the authorities sought to devise a reason to arrest him. The Ministry of State Security of the time, General Yemelyanov, called Heydar Aliyev to his office and tried to convince him as follows: "You are a young and talented officer with a brilliant education from Leningrad. You have a future. But you have to cut all your connections with Aziz Aliyev's family, otherwise we will have to dismiss you from service."

Again, young Heydar was imperturbable. His career may be affected by his service record, but as for his private life, didn't he have all rights to choose his own destiny?

Aziz Aliyev questioned what he was guilty of, and was given a cynically frank response: "You are too young to understand that," grinned the Almighty General. "Comrade Mir Jafar Baghirov issued orders which we are obliged to fulfill..."

A year passed. The "illegal" dates continued. The conspiracy specialist defiantly threw down the gauntlet before his colleagues. He recalled a situation: "At that time Baku was not as well lit as it is today and there were many dark, secluded places. I found several places where no one could see us. Not

far from our house, on the avenue which is now called Azadlig, there was a park, where they eventually erected a monument of Japaridze. Opposite the park there was a bus stop. Everywhere was dark. We met there, near the bus stop. As an officer, I wasn't afraid of anyone. I was strong. But she, poor girl, was young and good-looking. Such girls always attract unwelcome attention. Therefore I would always wait to meet her right at the place where she would step off the bus. Then we would retire to the park..."

At the very beginning of 1953, Yemelyanov called his subordinate to the "carpet" again and warned: "Why didn't you obey my order? ...Be aware that your continuation in office is questionable from now on..."

From the tone of the conversation it was clear that Heydar Aliyev had no choice. The "perviy" (first person) was preparing for the final punishment of his competitor with obvious consequences. But, be it for better or worse, he couldn't imagine his future without Zarifa. Heydar Aliyev didn't hesitate even for a moment.

Later Heydar Aliyev admitted: "...you can imagine my thoughts. I was working for the KGB and I knew what was happening to her father, how he was shadowed. I also heard that they had plans to expel the family to Kazakhstan. I thought: if they will be evicted, I will go after her to Kazakhstan, and maybe even get a job."

The stars favoured the sweethearts... Man proposes and God disposes.

In March, 1953, Stalin died. Beriya, the almighty protector of Mir Jafar Baghirov and his assistants were arrested shortly after in June that year. In December, the Supreme Court of the USSR sentenced Beriya, Merkulov, Dekanozov, Kabulov, Goglidze, Meshik and Vlodayjudicates to death for grave crimes and treason.

Finally the day came when M. J. Baghirov - the satrap of Beriya in Azerbaijan - also sat in prisoners' dock. With numerous innocent victims on his conscience he was justly requited along with his closest assistants.

This is how Aziz Aliyev's family was freed from persecution and, along with many thousands of other families, was finally able to breathe freely. Rehabilitation of victims of unlawful

repression began, and large numbers of innocent prisoners and exiled families returned home...

Aziz Aliyev lived to see this triumph of justice. In 1956 in Baku he saw the trial of his former dreadful oppressor... Next to M. J. Baghirov in the prisoners' dock was general Stepan Yemelyanov. The degraded general was convicted and sentenced to twenty-five years' imprisonment.

In the seventies, after serving his sentence and returning to Baku, ex-general Yemelyanov applied to the First Secretary of the Central Committee of Communist Party of Azerbaijan - to Heydar Aliyev - requesting help in solving his ongoing problems... Such is the irony of fate... Or, maybe, this is the fair trial of history...

The love of Heydar and Zarifa passed the test of strength and radiated throughout their home. In November 1954, the newlyweds registered their marriage and celebrated with a quiet wedding in the apartment recently given to Heydar Aliyev by the KGB.

The appearance of the young, talented officer, Heydar Aliyev, in the family in whom Aziz Aliyev, at their first meeting saw not only a worthy son-in-law but also a brilliant statesman, was clearly a gift of fortune: "Oh, Leyla I am sure that some day Heydar will become a very important man..."

So, when Heydar Aliyev, a member of the KGB, became a welcome guest in the family, Aziz Aliyev, a man with broad experience and knowledge of people reiterated: "This oqlan<sup>5</sup> is an asset of true gold, a brilliant future is a waiting him."

Heydar and Zarifa knew that their encounter was a unique gift of destiny.

This love was praised in many poems and turned into films. Vaghif Mustafayev, a filmmaker, made an emotional drama about it entitled, "The story of true love". In this film we hear touching confessions by the lead character, Heydar Aliyev: "I adored her and felt her love too. I think we did not need not to prove how deep the roots of our love were for one another."

<sup>5</sup> Oqlan (Azerb.) - a young man

National poet Zelimkhan Yagub, in his poem, "Great Life in Dastan", devoted a whole chapter to the love between Heydar and Zarifa. Below is a passage from the poem:

They said to the enamoured one "don't dare to love"  
"You may ruin your career" - they said.  
"Should stay away from the disgraced  
father's daughter" - they said.

"Don't you dare to know and meet her,  
Don't even think of seeing her,  
Or you may regret the outcome.  
For her father is in their black book,  
You should part the road with her."

They wanted to break the flow of the spring.  
Tried to put shackles on the fire.  
"Forget it, resign yourself" - so severe was the sentence -  
"Or you will trouble your own fate"  
This was how their Love was forbidden.

But how do you tear a branch from the tree?  
Or order the sun: don't dare burn!  
Or tell the moon to hide from the sun  
And deprive her from shining in the dark?

It was the taboo of the evil time  
Which ruined so many fates  
The time which wanted to destroy  
High aspirations of the heart  
With new firey repression.

The poet found soulful words, uncovering the inhuman laws of time and the courage of the heroes, asserting their right to be happy and for individual freedom:

Why do they say the "heart wants what it wants"  
They say there is no way to put a river on the scent  
You can't order birds to sing, they say  
The nightingale flying to the rose is full of valour

They follow each other through thick and thin  
Met, acquainted and didn't leave

They stepped across the ghost of fear  
Following as their hearts dictated  
Relying on Allah's mercy.

Overcoming all stormy weather with honour  
With great power of belief and compassion  
So the song of their happiness was composed  
With two names - Heydar and Zarifa.

Through the battles with swords flashing overhead  
Through a stronghold of misfortune - engaged with hearts  
Like the spring of life bestowing the light  
Rose the love of Heydar and Zarifa.

The flower will fade without sun and warmth  
The soul will fade without affection and goodness  
So suddenly comes Love and becomes a dastan  
Love stirring the blood, the Love of Heydar and Zarifa.

A relative of our heroine who once worked as a doctor in a village hospital located in Nakhichevan, **Mohtarama** khanum, says: "Zarifa was a dainty flower of Aziz dayi's<sup>6</sup> family. Everyone called this genuine and merry girl "The Flower of our Home". Later she moved to Izzet khanum's<sup>7</sup> grounds and became a flower of Heydar Aliyev's family.

Izzet khanum, despite her elderly age, remained a hard-working and agile woman who could not sit idly for even a minute. In spite of her folks' protests, she would go on trips as far as the Aghamali spring to fetch water. Fortunately, she would not have to wait long for her turn: neighbours would fill her pails at once and see her back home. She was a fond mother and loved her family very much. Being a housewife, she cared about the education of her children very much. She cherished her son, Heydar. According to close relatives, he was her favourite. When Heydar got married and Izzet khanum was assured of the fidelity and nobility of her daughter-in-law, she felt like the happiest woman in the world: a blessed mother's dream come true.

<sup>6</sup> Dayi (in Azerbaijani) - an uncle

<sup>7</sup> Izzet khanum - mother of Heydar Aliyev.

There is an Azerbaijani proverb: "A good daughter-in-law is one who is a match for the family home." Zarifa worshipped her mother-in-law. Every time Izzet khanum felt unwell, Zarifa would not leave her side. She was not only a loving wife, but also an attentive daughter-in-law. Education, scientific ventures, medical service - nothing would distract her from taking care of Izzet khanum. Zarifa khanum used to say that a woman in her husband's family home is a daughter-in-law in the first instance, and therefore, one of her principle duties is maintaining a good atmosphere in the house." Izzet khanum also worshipped Zarifa and treated her with motherly affection. As soon as someone started talking about Zarifa, she would say: "She is exemplary, a true Azerbaijani daughter-in-law."

**Pustakhanum Azizbeyova** recalls: "I still remember Zarifa's half-niece Svetlana's wedding. She was the daughter of Lazifa and Aghaali and got married in the beginning of sixties. This was the first wedding of Leyla khanum and Aziz muallim's (Aziz Aliyev) granddaughters. Maybe that is why we couldn't stop dancing and rejoicing. That wedding, unlike today's, was a small ceremony with the participation of one or two hundred guests. Indeed, it was a modest one with relatives and close friends, with enough room for all of them in the old house where uncle Aghaali's family lived.

Zarifa and I, seizing the opportunity, retired to the mirror gallery. She'd got married not long ago and we still hadn't had the chance to talk properly. My first question was: 'Zarifa, are you happy with your marriage?' She admitted, full of joy: 'Yes I am. We love each other fondly.' She told me what a wonderful person her husband was. But what was most telling was that she would talk of her life partner, of herself and her family's happiness, with the same enthusiasm for many years after..."

Chapter Six

MEMORIES, MEMORIES...

Let's look at the past again, following in the footsteps of memory! Why should an author of the biography of such a remarkable woman make up her story, if her acquaintances themselves create it for us?

**Alima Aliyeva, a physician at the Republic's Clinical Hospital named after M. Mirgassimov**, tells with great pleasure of the close friendship between her family and that of Aziz Aliyev. She warmly remembers the head of the household, Aziz Aliyev, his wife Leyla khanum, and her happy days of friendship with daughters Lazifa, Dilara, Zarifa and Gulara.

It is interesting to discover how personal relationships interweave with professional ones: Tamerlan Aliyev's namesake Rustam Aliyev was Alima khanum's brother, the founder of pharmaceutical science in Azerbaijan, and also his academic adviser.

But let's listen to Alima khanum herself: "Zarifa, despite the age difference, was fond of me, and we established a trusting friendship... She used to share her secrets with me.

At that time we both had long plaits. She would often call me "sachli giz" ("girl with the plait") and give me coloured ribbons to wear. My mother, Zargalam khanum, was a descendant of one of the renowned and educated families of Shusha (a city in Garabagh). She was a beautiful, affectionate, generous and noble woman... She was also a culinary master of Azerbaijani cuisine, and would cook delicious dishes from the Garabagh. People, especially Aziz Aliyev's family, loved her greatly for this. Aziz Aliyev appreciated her cooking in an instant, and used to say that you could distinguish her pilaf by its aroma as soon as you entered the yard.

Many well-known intellectuals and statesmen of Azerbaijan were welcome guests at our house, where they met on Saturdays. Aziz Aliyev, Hasan Aliyev (an academician and older brother of Heydar Aliyev. - *H.M.*), academicians Yusuf Mammadaliyev, Mustafa Topchubashov and Abdulla Garayev, national poet of Azerbaijan Samed Vurghun, well-known writer Ilyas Efendiyev, People's Artist of the USSR singer Bulbul, famous composers Fikret Amirov and Suleyman Alasgharov, the Minister of Health Fakhri Vekilov, and Tamerlan Aliyev... were among the guests.

In particular, many people would come on September 1 for my birthday parties, and Zarifa khanum and her sisters would always be among them. We would play the piano, sing, dance and generally enjoy ourselves. In return, we went to the Aliyeva sisters' birthday parties, and in the summer our families holidayed together.

At one of our meetings, Zarifa khanum presented me with a small jewelled box, saying: 'Alima, when I finished school, mother presented me with an antique pocket watch. I like you so much that I'm giving it to you as a memento of me.' I still keep that watch as a most valuable object of mine.

...I will never forget an event from my childhood. We were on holiday in the country (*dacha*). It was a very hot summer's day. We all - that is, my family and our guests - went for a swim. Down the road, mother was bitten by a snake. This caused a terrible fuss. Mother was immediately taken to hospital for medical care before being taken home. Well, I must say that almost every doctor in the City of Baku who specialised in the field came to examine my mother. But she got worse and worse. I loved my mother very much and, frightened for her life, I would cry all the time. In those days all the Aliyevs frequently visited us to offer support. Aziz Muallim treated her himself and she recovered from the sickness largely in thanks to him..."

Here is another amusing episode from childhood, remembered by **Pustakhanum Azizbeyova**: "A government holiday house, belonging either to the MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs) or the Frontier Service Department, was on the other side of our yard's fence. Right at the foot of the fence, growing up canes, were early ripening grape vines. Our grapes would still be green when theirs were already ripe. Naturally,

as children, we would not stand by and watch when such tasty berries were within easy reach.

Some of the older children decided to pick one or two of the grapes. I tagged along with them, but the old guard saw us. The boys turned their tails and ran, flying over the fence, but I got caught. The man grabbed my hand. I cried and shouted for help. Then, Zarifa khanum appeared on the veranda and saw. She quickly realised what was happening and tried to persuade the watchman to let me go, but he didn't. She rushed indoors and returned with her father, uncle Aziz. After a few calming words of uncle Aziz, the watchman finally dragged me towards the fence. Zarifa was already there. She helped me to climb over, but I slipped out of her hands and ran off, and climbed to the top of a white mulberry tree to hide. They searched for me for ages, but without success. Later, I got hungry. In the middle of the night, I heard Zarifa whisper: 'Zina! (that's what she called me in our childhood), get down, I've brought you something to eat.' I was sure that she wouldn't tell on me so I came down. I still remember the hunger with which I wolfed down all she had brought from the kitchen. She watched me, smiling, and then asked: 'What you are afraid of? My father told yours everything. They are worried. Let's go home...'

Pustakhanum continues, recalling the memorable year of 1945: "Baku was jubilant in celebrating Victory Day. The rejoicing cannot be put into words. Happy shouts and smiles were everywhere in universal happiness. 'Zina, Zina!' I heard the merry voice of Zarifa ring from the balcony. 'Let's go to the boulevard! We won! You hear me? We won!' Holding hands we ran to the coastal boulevard. It seemed like everyone in Baku was there. Strangers hugged one another, congratulated each other, remembered their loved ones and relatives, and cried with joy. Then we reached our favourite tree. That tree still stands gallantly near the Puppet Theatre. There was a woman standing by it, her head covered with a mourning kelaghayi (head scarf). She was holding on to the tree with one hand, a handkerchief in the other. Usually too shy to talk to strangers, Zarifa approached her, hugged her and whispered: 'Anajan', take off the head scarf. It is a

<sup>8</sup> Anajan (Azerb.) hypocoristic form of noun "mother".

celebration today, a bayram.' The old woman broke into sobs. Zarifa hugged her even tighter: 'Your husband?...!' The woman couldn't stop her tears and said: 'No... sons. I have lost three of them...'

That evening on our way back home, Zarifa repeated with clenched fists: 'I hate the war. I hate it! I can't stand it when people suffer...' And at that moment I saw, for the first time since we met, her eyes swimming with tears...

Twice our parents took us to Moscow. The first time was in summer. I had just finished school and uncle Aziz was in the capital (Moscow - translator's note), for meetings with the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. We went with Leyla khanum, Zarifa and my father. The president of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences, academician Mirasadulla Mirgassimov, was also our fellow traveller. With three days on the road we had lots of time to talk about many things.

Zarifa asked me about my career aspirations. I answered that I wanted to be an electrical engineer, like my grandfather Mashadi.<sup>8</sup> Giving me a long look, Zarifa pondered this for a while and said: 'I think you are wrong. It is unnecessary to be an engineer because of your grandfather. I think you should be a historian and write about him, his friends, comrades, and about his life in general.' I was surprised: 'I would not be much of a historian, Zarifa! I was awarded a silver medal, not gold. I got a B for history in my General Certificate of Education (GCE)...'

But my father and academician Mirgassimov supported Zarifa's opinion. He said: 'Forget the B for history. The main thing is to love your profession and become a good specialist. You have a natural inclination for history. Zarifa is right. Apply to study history.'

On return from Moscow I followed their advice and applied to the history department at the state university.

I remember many happy days in Moscow. We socialised a lot, discussing what we had seen and read, telling each other

<sup>9</sup> Meshadi Azizbeyov - one of the leaders of the Commune of Baku and 26 Baku Commissioners.

what we'd discovered. We spent a lot of time visiting museums, art galleries, and the theatre.

It seemed that Zarifa was literally absorbing the beautiful world of the arts, not only with her eyes, but with her heart. Every manifestation of evil or injustice would stir up a deep resentment in her.<sup>10</sup> I remember how difficult it was for her to recover her senses after seeing the shocking painting of Repin in the Tretyakov Gallery, "Ivan the Terrible and his son Ivan on November 16, 1581". For days she repeated over and over again: 'How is it possible for a father to kill his own son, his own blood!'

Later I realised that it was the fore-senses of the holy motherly feelings awakening at the bottom of her heart...

Once we went to the Bolshoy Theatre to watch the opera "Carmen". Carmen was played by Davidova. We sat there in that splendid, magnificent auditorium of Bolshoi and held our breath in astonishment. When the first act finished, Zarifa murmured in my ear: 'Do you remember what I said to you once? I said that life is like a fairy tale. Today I feel like we are in a huge fairy tale.' I felt as if I'd grown older in an instant and asked in all seriousness: 'Do you remember dreaming of fairy tales when you were young?'

'I do remember,' she replied thoughtfully. 'We should live our lives like a fairy tale. I don't mean so that everything comes easily to us. I mean with passion in our hearts so that we are able to overcome negative forces with the good within us...'

...That summer we went on holiday to Kislovodsk. One day I was sitting on the balcony and suddenly heard the melody of Tofiq Guliyev's song "Uzuyumun gashi firuzedendir" ("My ring's turquoise gem").<sup>11</sup> Zarifa liked to play this song. Guessing that it was her, I went downstairs and towards the place where the music was coming from. I ran up to the sanatorium, leaped over the fence and into a grassy clearing with poplar trees. I wasn't mistaken: there, sitting on the grass,

<sup>10</sup> Apparently, what is meant here is the perception of certain episodes of art works.

<sup>11</sup> This song won popularity by the brilliant performance of Rashid Beybutov, the People's Artist of the USSR.

on a tablecloth, was Zarifa Leyla khanum's mother, her sister Lazifa and husband Aghaali, little sister Gulara and brother Tamerlan. Zarifa was playing the accordion. My sudden appearance distracted her and she stopped, but I encouraged: 'Go on, Zarifa! I miss your playing...'

Professor Doctor of Medical Science S. Imamaliyev remembers the days of his distant youth in the terrible year, 1942: "There were thirty guys in our group. The country was going through its second year of the devastating war. We, fellow students, were called the "Red Banner Group", as we were soon to be soldiers. It was the beginning of lessons. Student group leaders, stream leaders, and group organisers were selected...

Anatomy was the most difficult subject, and Zarifa and I ended up in the same group. In the evenings we often called at the Aliyevs' located on what was then Zevin Street. Aziz Muallim was a hospitable family man. His oldest son, Tamerlan, was a senior, and used to help us with our homework. Leyla khanum always welcomed us with open arms. She was a fair-faced and generous woman. It was early wartime, and often we would gaze at the saucepan. She would not let us leave without feeding us. Food was scarce. Many years after the war, Tamerlan and I would often think of old times. During one of those recollections it came back to me how once Leyla khanum delighted us, hungry students, with preserves - a wartime allowance. Hearing my words, Tamerlan gazed into the distance and after a long silence he uttered: 'Do you know that mother, after everyone left that evening, retired to a quiet corner, ate bread, dipping it in the juice at the bottom of the preserve tins...'

How generous this woman was, this mother! When I read "The Book of Dede Gorgud",<sup>12</sup> once again I was convinced of her tremendous force of love and devotion as a mother. This is exactly how I remember Leyla khanum, who brought up six beautiful children.

...Finally, we finished our first exams, after which we had to summarise the experience. We were lucky, not only in our

<sup>12</sup> The Book of Dede Gorgud - an ancient Turkic epos.



education, but we also with our group senior. We sought help from Zarifa in many difficult circumstances. I remember: some students in our group were misbehaving, truanting, and arriving late for lectures. We were going to solve the problem within the group when we heard that someone had "snitched" to the dean. After thorough discussion and investigation within the group, we discovered the snitch and decided to teach him a lesson. But, after consulting Zarifa, she said that she would talk to the boy herself. To this day no one knows what she said, but soon after the boy left our group.

Zarifa's influence and authority increased year by year - first within the group, then in university. As boys, we considered her our sister who would always come up with solutions in times of need.

Finally, the time came to leave university and part with friends and teachers. The graduates in our stream gained jobs across the country. Fate, once more, brought Aziz Muallim and me together. He was in charge of the Institute of Traumatology and Reconstructive Surgery. My dissertation on the treatment of intoxication of snake venom was submitted for defense, due to favourable feedback and the parting words of Aziz Muallim.

I prepared my dissertation on the basis of information related to Shamakhi District hospital. Zarifa's feedback - she worked in a metropolitan clinic at that time - was of great value and helped to clarify particular issues. Soon the head of the Ophthalmology Department of the State Medical Institute Umnisa khanum Mussabeyova, was admitted to our clinic for treatment. In my spare time, when I was off duty, I would talk with her. She used to tell me about her students and always led the conversation around to Zarifa khanum. Professor Mussabeyova called her a talented scientist and physician, kind friend and hard worker. She would say that Zarifa had a highly valuable quality: the ability to empathise with patients, the deepest sympathy for the grief of strangers. This would always come to the surface of our conversations.

Yet she didn't have the personality which cared for and liked each and every person. She was a good judge of character, and would make quick distinctions between what was good and bad.



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva, 1941



Zarifa khanum  
in her childhood, 1924



Zarifa khanum with her brother,  
1926

Zarifa khanum's parents, Aziz Aliyev and Leyla Aliyeva,  
1931



Aziz Aliyev's family. Zarifa khanum is in the second row, centre,  
1932

Aziz Aliyev's family. Zarifa khanum is in the second row,  
1936





Zarifa khanum (second from right) with her classmates,  
*January 6, 1937*

Zarifa khanum on vacation. Yalta, 1938



Aziz Aliyev  
with his son Tamerlan  
and daughter Zarifa,  
*1938*



Zarifa khanum  
Aliyeva with her  
classmates,  
*1941*





Leyla khanum -  
Zarifa khanum Aliyeva's  
mother,  
1945

Zarifa khanum  
(front row, fourth  
from left) with fellow  
students at the Azerbaijan  
Medical Institute,  
1943



Aziz Aliyev's family,  
1947

Gulara khanum, Leyla khanum, Zarifa khanum and Aziz Aliyev,  
1948





Zarifa khanum  
(third from left)  
with her relatives,  
1948

Zarifa and Heydar  
Aliyev at their  
country house,  
1955



Zarifa khanum,  
1948



Zarifa khanum  
(standing second  
from left)  
with colleagues,  
1951





Zarifa khanum Aliyeva,  
1952

Zarifa khanum  
(seated first  
from left)  
with members of the  
department,  
1951



Zarifa khanum  
Aliyeva (fifth  
from left)  
at the Institute of  
Ophthalmology,  
1957



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva  
with her family,  
1966



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva,  
1968

Zarifa khanum Aliyeva  
with her family,  
1968



Zarifa and Heydar  
Aliyev,  
1968



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva  
with her family,  
1968





Zarifa khanum  
and her father,  
1948



Professor-ophthalmologist  
Zarifa khanum Aliyeva  
in the operating room,  
1970



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva  
and Heydar Aliyev  
at the ophthalmology  
conference,  
October, 1977



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva  
with her family,  
1972





Zarifa khanum Aliyeva with the participants at the 100th anniversary of the Azerbaijan Drama Theatre, May 31, 1974

Zarifa khanum Aliyeva at the Exhibition of Achievements of National Economy (EANE). Moscow, May, 1977



She had no enemies, as she could always find the way to the heart of whoever she was speaking with, and who needed her help and support. Thanks to her character and deep moral impact on others, she attained great authority. But Zarifa never did anything to abuse this respect and didn't like parading her scholastic achievements, or imposing her opinion on others.

We can firmly say that she opposed indifference and laziness.

One female patient gave me a note from Zarifa khanum: 'If this woman doesn't need any surgical intervention, organise a consultation and let other specialists treat her. But keep an eye on her at all times...'

Zarifa khanum often said: 'You understand how much people need you when patients come in hope, relying on you.'

Zarifa Aliyeva was one of the most attentive and sensitive doctors I knew..."

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Chapter Seven

**A DO-GOODER...**

*One needs to be a bit kinder than remarkably kind  
If he wants to be a truly kind man.*

**Academician E.V. Tarle**

Poetry of Azerbaijan tells us about the courage, hard work and patriotism of our ancestors, including our great grandmothers who kept pace with men in hard times, fighting shoulder-to-shoulder against foreign invaders.

In 65 B.C. when the famous Pompey legions invaded Azerbaijan, women participated in the valiant resistance. Appian, an ancient Rome historian, witnessed: "There were women too among wounded soldiers."

In the history of the formation of our nation and national identity, are glorious stories associated with such distinguished fellow countrywomen as the legendary ruler Tomiris, mentioned by Herodotus; the brave and proud Burla-Khatun, Gazan-khan's wife from the poetry of wise Gorgud; Nushaba and Shirin, glorified by Nizami in his poems; charming Leyla, immortalised in the work "Wise Men from Ganja" (poem by Nizami); and Mahammad Fuzuli, incarnating the most tender feelings of love... There were many other heroic women in the history of Azerbaijan: Nigar, partner of the legendary Koroghlu; Hajar, an associate and wife of the popular hero Gachag Nabi, who fought against the tyranny of the powers that be... Sara-Khatun, leader of medieval Azerbaijan; Uzun Hassan (Hassan the Tall) and grandmother of Shah Ismayil Khatai... Sara-Khatun enjoyed great success as a politician and diplomat which was a surprise for the ambassadors of enlightened Europe; not to mention Natavan, the legendary ruler of Garabagh...

There are many examples of female self-sacrifice, heroism, loyalty and statesmanship in Russian history. Suffice to say, wives of Decemberists who were exiled to Siberia: Volkonskaya, Muravyova and other women, were immortalised by N. Nekrasov and Pushkin's Tatyana as heroines of Turghenev...

The Holy Quran states: "Those who you know who commit good deeds and avoid evil are the ones who shall find salvation."

When reading this, our thoughts turn to the heroine protagonist of our story. Her life and moral stature on religion, fully coincides with universal values and the concept of a worthy citizen, motivated to protect other people and society.

One of the sayings of the holy Prophet Muhammad is as follows: "There are two kinds of people who deserve to be envied: those whom Allah bestows with wealth and makes masters of their own death, and those whom Allah equips with wisdom and makes masters of their own life." The essence of these words is that divine preference is given not to the owners of earthly beauty (seemingly, "the ones worth envying"), but to the bearers of wisdom, as wisdom is a true gift for anyone in life.

Through Zarifa Aliyeva's social and professional climb we see an example of the imperishable value of worthy service for the sake of other people's health and intellectual progress.

**Professor Zahra Guliyeva**, Zarifa khanum's associate for many years, remembers that she was unmatched in many things and a remarkable person, wife, mother, doctor and scientist. "You know, it is possible to be a good doctor, but to be a good person at the same time is something entirely different. People who knew her and patients who referred to her for help, acknowledged what a big heart she had and what a modest person she was. I suppose many patients didn't even know that she was the wife of the man running the country, Heydar Aliyev. Indeed, she wasn't inclined make a show of it. All her patients loved and respected her, first and foremost, as her own person. Believe me, she probably was the most modest person in the world..."

A quote from memoirs of **Alima Aliyeva**: "Zarifa khanum was generous to a rare degree. She hated praise and brushed it aside in every way possible. She was incredibly delicate, and I never heard her raise her tone of voice at anybody. Tactful, smiling, open-hearted, modest and amiable, she was composed

even with those she didn't like, never expressing her dislike or being rude. She would advise me to behave like this as well. Scarcely hearing that somebody needed help, she would race to the rescue and offer her advice. Her office was never empty. No one left without help or hope and she never made distinctions between people. She was gifted with a social consciousness which descended from kind-heartedness, generosity and wisdom.

...Inherently a modest person, she never made anyone believe that she was the "First Lady" of the Republic. Gossiping, showing off and pompousness of any kind disgusted her. Regularly I witnessed how she turned down journalists' requests to write about her.

...Finishing school with distinction, I submitted my application for the Institute of Petroleum and Chemistry. I aspired to work in public service. This, in fact, explains my career choice: many graduates of this Institute were in the field I wanted to enter.

My family went on holiday to Kislovodsk, but I spent the whole summer in Baku, preparing for exams. Hearing of my plans, Zarifa came to talk and advised me to study medicine: 'I would like to see you wearing a white coat. You should go to the Medical Institute. A doctor's profession is a noble and distinguished one... You have grown up in a family of doctors, I am sure you will stay loyal to the Hippocratic Oath...'

I had such respect for her that I couldn't disobey and, changing my plans, in 1954 I attended the Medical and Preventive Department of the Medical Institute...

Zarifa khanum wanted me to marry one of her young relatives, but fate decreed otherwise and I married my aunt's son. Zarifa khanum knew him well and respected him, and my husband understood that.

When Leyla khanum, mother of Zarifa Aliyeva, died, my sister and I attended the funeral. I still remember how Zarifa khanum met us: Holding back tears with great difficulty, she sat me by her side, took my hands in hers, squeezed them and kissed my cheek... People began whispering to each other, trying to find out who we were. Finally Kubrakhnum Farajova, then the minister, asked Zarifa khanum about us.

After introducing us, she added 'Yagut is my sister, and Alimochka (she used to call me that) is my beloved daughter...'

As for the love between Heydar Aliyev and Zarifa khanum, I'm sure it was a pure and sacred feeling. I witnessed it. When they got married I was both glad and ... upset, thinking that my Zarifa had been taken from me and I would not be able to see her again... On the contrary, we often met in Baku at Aziz Aliyev's house: in times of happiness and sadness, for holidays and birthdays... Our friendship went on. In 1955 Zarifa khanum gave birth to her daughter Sevil. Six years later her son, Ilham, was born. Zarifa khanum proved to be a wonderful mother. She was devoted to her children and would give herself up for them. She found it especially hard when her children were sick. Her motherly love was an example to many mothers. We often went to the boulevard for a walk around the Puppet Theatre with Sevil and Ilham. They took a strong liking to me. Ilham was an honest boy, acting his age and intelligent. He didn't like being naughty or a nuisance to people.

The fresh air made the children hungry. We used to feed them fruit we'd brought from home. They were growing up quickly. Zarifa khanum wanted her daughter Sevil to become a doctor."

In these memoirs we are drawn to a particular moment: Zarifa Aliyeva recommended that her young friend change her career. If you remember, the same thing happened before when she advised Pustakhanum Azizbeyova to enroll in history. As before, she changed the girl's plans. Neither of the girls regretted following Zarifa khanum's advice. These facts speak for Zarifa khanum's authority, or her wish to build the fate of others in her own way. She, among other things, was notable for her rare shrewdness. She had a psychological mind and noticed people's unexpected qualities. As one of her colleagues once put, "she was indispensable in recruitment."

Years went by... The sudden death of Aziz Aliyev on July 27, 1962 made Azerbaijani's weep. The funeral was attended by many people from Dagestan: colleagues, intellectuals, party and state officials, men of culture, art and labourers... Veteran **journalist Aydin Velikhanov**, recalls the circumstances surrounding Aziz Aliyev's death: "There was a housemaid in Aziz dayi's (uncle Aziz) house - a lonely Russian woman. If I

am not mistaken, her name was Nina. She had to leave for Russia to visit her relatives. Aziz Dayi went to see her off. Of course he could have given others the job, but out of his inherent generosity and respect for others he went to the station himself. He has his own "Volga" (brand of Soviet motor car) with a very helpful driver, but Aziz Aliyev carried the housemaid's luggage to the train himself. They were short of time, so he hurried. It was a hot day and lifting the heavy luggage strained him, making him breathless... The train started off. Aziz Dayi was waving farewell when a sudden pain stabbed in his heart. Catching his breath, he slowly sat down on the railway platform... Nina, looking out of the carriage window, saw and knew that something was wrong with Aziz Aliyev, so she got off the train at Bilajary station and came back... to find the lifeless body of Aziz Dayi..."

When arranging the state funeral, office staff refused to allot a place in the Alley of Honor in which to bury Aziz Aliyev - a well-deserved place due to his great services to the country and its people. When the First Secretary of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan's Communist Party, undergoing medical treatment in the city of Truskavets, heard about this, he ordered that Aziz Aliyev's final resting place should indeed be in the First Alley of Honor. The ceremony of the remarkable son of Azerbaijan, brilliant scientist and statesman, was attended by an abundance of people.

On September 27, 1962, two months after his death, by declaration of the Republic's government, the Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners was named after Aziz Aliyev.

Approximately thirty years later, the Institute of Ophthalmology was named after his daughter, Zarifa Aliyeva, who worked there for many years. Later, a street in the centre of the capital city of independent Azerbaijan would also bear the name of Aziz Aliyev....

Let's turn back to the seventies and eighties and closely observe the heroine of our story through the eyes of close acquaintances. Let's hear again from "Alimochka" - **Alima Aliyeva**: "At this point I lived in Fuzuli. Having heard of my arrival in Baku, Zarifa khanum sent a "Volga" to take me to her flat. We chatted for hours. She invited me to several cultural

events. During celebrations held in the "Republic" Palace, she would detach herself from surrounding guests and hug me so earnestly that no one could help but look in our direction, wondering: who is that woman so warmly welcomed by Zarifa Aliyeva..."

Her friendship with the Dobromislov couple and her colleagues from St. Petersburg highlights the wide range of cultural enjoyment and also the responsible attitude of Zarifa Aliyeva towards moral values, education and the fundamental principles of family life. Professor O. Dobromislova spoke of their trusting relationship and discussions on scientific issues, work and music. It so happened that the children of both families left home at the same time: both Sevil and Dobromislov's daughter got married, the latter did so in spite of her parents' disapproval....

Zarifa khanum shared her innermost thoughts and worries about the young couple with Dobromislova, yet that family proved to be stable and happy. Later, when her granddaughter was born, they named her Zarifa, after her grandmother. But things were not so good for Dobromislova's daughter: in spite of her assurances of the true and mutual love between her and her husband, their marriage broke down. Zarifa khanum sympathised in her letter: "...I know your feelings about your daughter - it is disappointing. But I think she did the right thing. She needs to build a new family, but this time she should be more careful in choosing her partner, know him better and weigh up all the pros and cons before marriage so that she doesn't make the same mistake again." After a few years, having heard about the second marriage of her colleague's daughter, Zarifa khanum wrote another letter: "I am very glad about your daughter and I wish her joy and happiness with all my heart." Later, **Professor A. Dobromislov, head of the Eye Diseases Department of the Leningrad Institute of Hygiene**, remembered more of Zarifa Aliyeva's view point: "I witnessed that Zarifa Aliyeva, despite her uncompromising stance in discussions on parenting, always let others give their opinions."

**Doctor of Medical Sciences Professor Z. Skripchenko**, characterising our heroine, writes: "A family doctor, kind woman and caring mother! This is how I knew Zarifa Aliyeva." Skripchenko describes how once they stayed with a

colleague and how Zarifa khanum, with her zest for life, stood out from this highly intellectual crowd: she played the piano and performed popular tunes, creating a lively, happy atmosphere. On the way home she complained that daily duties and office work left little time for music...

Pustakhanum Azizbeyova (Zinochka, Zino), once saved by Zarifa and Aziz Aliyev from the indignant watchman of the sanatorium, became an eminent scientist and public figure. Their friendship, which started in childhood, continued. One day professor Azizbeyova, walking to work, stopped by the traffic lights at a crossroads. A car stopped next to her. Zarifa! She got out of the car and greeted her friend.

Recently an active feminist had got into trouble, but she received plenty of support and backing. Zina asked, was it not Zarifa who initiated such a good cause? Even though Zarifa avoided giving an answer, Pustakhanum Azizbeyova had no doubts as to who it was.

Somehow Zarifa khanum heard that her friend's diabetic mother was losing her sight. After two or three days, Pustakhanum's doorbell rang. Zarifa khanum was on the doorstep and said: "I was on my way to work and suddenly remembered what you said about your mother's health. I would like to examine Izzet khanum's eyes." Though Izzet khanum hadn't seen Zarifa for years, she recognised her voice and called out to her in the hallway: "My dear child, why are you here?" Izzet khala (aunt Izzet) didn't like seeing doctors, but when Zarifa said what she came for, she helpfully answered all her questions, alternating her replies with sighs, memories of the old days, and loved ones who had passed away.

Zarifa, hugging her friend goodbye, said reluctantly: "Zinulya, you are a brave woman and need to be strong. Things look bleak and I can't help Izzet khala. The diabetes is causing an irreversible process."

When Izzet Khala died, Zarifa khanum visited Pustakhanum. There were lots of people at the funeral. Zarifa khanum slid into a seat on the sofa near the door, but people recognised her and invited her to the head of the table. She politely declined and stayed where she was. Zina came and sat next to her and they sank into their own world, remembering their parents and distant childhood with affection...

**Professor T. Husseynova** underlines in his memoirs the distinct musical talent of the illustrious ophthalmologist (who knows, maybe the healing hands of Zarifa Aliyeva could have brought her fame as a pianist.): "She had piano lessons... I listened with a great pleasure to her performances of both classical and modern music. Playing the piano, Zarifa khanum conveyed her innermost feelings to the audience. Her performances were characterised by emotion. It was as if she enriched the composition with her own feelings. It was striking, not only how she played, but also how she listened to music. It was reflected in her expression. You could tell whether or not she enjoyed a performance just by looking at her face... Her eyes would admire, enjoy, complain or dislike... But she was never indifferent. She had "talking" eyes. Once we were at a variety concert. I could tell that neither the energetic bashing of the modern band accompanied by the noise from the audience, nor the loud soloist, were to her liking. But her inherent self-control didn't allow her to criticise the music or its performers. Instead, she confined herself to a remark about differences of tastes and added that maybe some people like this kind of music."

Zarifa khanum's kindness and humanistic intuition gave rise to many stories.

As a scientist, she left a rich heritage of scientific achievement and experience, which became the object of continuing study.

**V. Shmelyova, professor of the ophthalmology department of the Central Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners and winner of the Academician Filatov award**, said: "I consider myself a lucky man. Fate gave me the opportunity to meet such a remarkable woman. Until my final days I will remember Zarifa Aliyeva exactly as she was in real life - an exceptional person. First of all, she was distinguished by her enthusiasm and wide circle of interests. She was devoted to the ophthalmologist's profession and spent much time on scientific research. She studied new, difficult and unknown fields of ophthalmology and made considerable contribution to the prevention and treatment of eye diseases. In her both her personal life as well as in science, Zarifa Aliyeva always chose the road less travelled..."

Heading a department of the Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners, she actively participated in training young ophthalmologists and initiating pupils into the profession. She put a lot of effort in to this. I frequently heard from her students how caring and thoughtful, yet strict, Zarifa Aliyeva was with them, how she helped and supported them in their studies. She encouraged them to be honest, not only in science, but also in their personal lives. Among themselves, the pupils used to call her, "mother".

Those who had the fortune of meeting her know better than anyone how kind Zarifa Aliyeva was. As for me, I consider it my duty to express that, among the people who fate introduced me to, I haven't met anyone else who showed such attention and kindness toward everyone in his or her surroundings.

Even though Zarifa khanum was an academic, honoured scientist and award-winner, anyone who addressed her or asked for help was taken seriously - even when she busy she would help.

In my personal contact with the memorable and valuable Zarifa Aliyeva, we would touch upon various subjects related to our specialist field as well as everyday life, and she would show a keen interest in everything. To her family she was a trustworthy wife, fond mother and beloved grandmother, and she always had enough time for everyone...

Zarifa Aliyeva was strict and responsible in her approach to her duties. We worked together in the editorial office of the "Ophthalmology Journal" and no other member of the editorial staff was as serious and committed. All tasks and duties would be fulfilled and prepared by Zarifa Aliyeva to the highest level and without delay. She was never full of herself. Delegating work was one her main priorities. I saw how she didn't have a spare moment all day, yet she would find time to call friends, enquiring about their health, asking about their children. Moreover, she would manage to visit them. Such meetings always brought on a festive mood.

If I had to list all the qualities of Zarifa Aliyeva, I would like to emphasise that she possessed all virtues of a genuine person: simplicity, composure, diligence, care, patience and exceptional will power, which fully expressed itself in the last few months of her life... Never had she wanted to burden

anyone, even close relatives, with her problems or sorrow. Forgetting herself, she would take care of everyone else around."

It appears that the power of Zarifa Aliyeva's personality lies in her devotion to mankind, her attention to concerns and worries, thoughts and aspirations of others, as well as her self-forgetting and self-sacrificing love for people.

The surprising thing is that despite being busy and burdened by important service, professional and family duties, she would still rejoice over seemingly trivial things. She possessed, like a child, the ability to draw pleasure from ordinary everyday life. Birds singing, the colour of the sea, a flower by the road, the smile on the face of a passer-by - all this fed her irrepressible love for each day, finding joy in the worthiest gift to man - life.

**Zahra Guliyeva, Farida Nasrullayeva and Pusta Melikaslanova** animatedly remember the all-girl parties organised by Zarifa khanum. They would toss a coin to decide whose house they would meet at, but if Zarifa khanum was absent, the group lost its soul, bereft of her inexhaustible energy: she played, sang and recited poetry. She could sing songs in Russian, Tatar, Uzbek, Lezghin and Avar... Perhaps this was the result of her father's life moving the family the length and breadth of the country, bringing contact with cultures of different nationalities. But with all that, her inner world was built on the basis of her native Azerbaijani culture, music and literature...

On a par with her father and in addition to that, her mother Leyla khanum also played an invaluable role in formation of her character. To add to discussion in previous chapters, Leyla khanum was exceptionally modest in life, as well as in choosing clothes and jewellery, yet she had an heirloom wedding gift consisting of earrings and a ring. By eastern standards this was more than a "Spartan" simplicity.

She passed her cooking mastery onto Zarifa khanum as well as her strict attitude to dress, diligence, hard work, orderliness, and value of time. Equally she passed on the capability to live life to the full and admire the world with an appetite for words, poetry, music and beauty... all of this grew in her with patterns of influence from her parents in culture and thought.

They say that the eyes are the window to the soul. Perhaps this realisation of the irreplaceable role of eyes in comprehending the world's infinite variety, as well as their capacity to reflect inner personality, also played a role in her choice of profession.

The rich intellectual and spiritual work of our heroine suggests that her social and professional activity would not be limited to medical and academic fields, but could bear fruits on public and cultural levels. But fate decreed otherwise and she met a man whose destiny was to fulfill the great mission to be the nation's leader, and to become a powerful statesman and transform society. Becoming the beloved and loving partner of this man, aware of the scope of his mission, she was selflessly devoted to him as a duty, and her personal and creative self-fulfillment was accomplished within the framework of scientific work and family.

There is another important aspect worth mentioning. Let's ask ourselves a question: how much do we know about the professional life of partners of men in senior positions? An overwhelming majority of politicians' partners (not to mention women in eastern countries where their activity is traditionally limited to their families) appear in public only in connection with elections, charity events, or at best they perform representative services related to state duties of their husbands. In the USSR, the wives of the highest state officers, Central Committee secretaries, including the Secretary General and party secretaries of Union Republics, ministers and even wives of lower rank civil servants, remained behind the scenes of social life and, as a rule, didn't have a job. In this context, Zarifa Aliyeva was the exception. She balanced a natural harmony between service to her husband and family and service to the Hippocratic Oath and medical science. She didn't give up her job, even when Heydar Aliyev took the lead of the Republic, or later when he became one of the leaders of the USSR. This is the road paved by her social consciousness, love for her country, and will to make the world better, more beautiful and more worthy... Next to the achievements of her husband, with whom she linked her bright future, she had her own talents...

The world's greatest works of art are dedicated to maternity. The life of Zarifa Aliyeva is like a hymn with a holy feeling. She accepted children as God's grace, as heavenly light, and wonderful continuance of immortal life....

**Doctor of Medical Science Professor Opheliya Husseynova** was a fellow student of our heroine's brother, Professor Jamil Aliyev. They wrote their doctoral theses in the same institute. Opheliya khanum, familiar with other members of this family, remembers different episodes and details of their lives. In particular, she recalls a curious event at the anniversary of the Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners. It was held at the hotel "Intourist" where she found herself sharing a table with Zarifa Aliyeva. One of the participants was paying particular attention to Zarifa, expressed in the abundance of fruit platters sent over and over again. But the "object of desire", brought this somewhat intrusive attention back down to earth, passing the platters to other guests every time...

One day Opheliya Husseynova met Zarifa Aliyeva in Moscow, at a meeting at the Academy of Medical Sciences, where they had to deliver presentations before a rather respected and important audience and leaders of science. Opheliya khanum was very nervous and Zarifa Aliyeva, having noticed, offered encouragement and promised to help if anything went wrong... The audience acclaimed her report! Ophelia khanum noted that Zarifa Aliyeva gave all kinds of support, not only to her, but to many other colleagues and people in Moscow.

Napoleon said many years ago: "Of all the evils, ingratitude is the worst." **Professor A. Najafov** writes in an article dedicated to our heroine: "I would like to highlight that gratitude was a natural part of her character. This feeling may be called, without exaggeration, the barometer of every human heart... other elements of her personality were her sense of humour, modesty and rich imagination.

...She was one of those professors who not only teaches, but is a living example of professionalism and wisdom. In her conversations with students and young doctors, Zarifa khanum was keen and attentive. For them, those conversations were like lessons in maturity. I frequently listened to her speeches. She was always logical and sincere, and stood out for her knowledge of culture which delighted her listeners.

...With her expression of thought she would enrapture her audience and gave new novelty to trivial worldly facts..."

I believe that she had an inner harmony which caused her to recall the ideas of the perfect man and spiritual beauty of the Renaissance age.

Mevlana Jalaladdin Rumi imparted the phrase: "Be as you appear and appear as you are." Fazlullah Naimi, the mentor of great humanist poet Nassimi, wrote that the perfect man is mightier than the sun, moon and stars in one...

"...I knew Zarifa khanum from my youth. Her mother and I were undergoing treatment at Hospital No. 1. Our rooms were side by side. I would often call on her mother and chat with her. Her beautiful daughter Zarifa was constantly nursing her.

Once a handsome young man visited. Zarifa's mother introduced him: 'This is Zarifa's husband.' This young man was Heydar Aliyev.

...People often say about somebody or other: 'He is a good man.' This is not an isolated opinion of one person, but the opinion formed by hundreds and thousands of people familiar with that somebody.

I always heard these words about Zarifa khanum in my youth: 'She cares for us in her heart as if she is our mother.' One of her pupils once said that, 'She is not only an extraordinary woman, she is an angel...' The national poet Mirvarid Dilbazi remembers her in exactly this way."

Zarifa Aliyeva's colleague, **head of the department of the Central Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners, Honoured Science Worker N. Shulpina** wrote an article and poem about her. She wrote that Zarifa Aliyeva possessed a remarkable command of language. Her colloquial speech both in Azerbaijani and Russian, and the accuracy and clarity of her addresses on science, would engross her colleagues. She relied upon her retentive memory as a rule, and would speak without referring to notes, developing ideas with the aid of carefully prepared slides and tables.

N. Shulpina remembers the enviable knowledge and competence of her colleague, not only in medicine but also in politics and the arts... They went on a trip to the legendary Petroleum Stones and Zarifa khanum, after making a brilliant speech at the Centre of Culture of Offshore Oil Workers,

turned to her friend and asked, wanting to know the audience's reaction: "Well, how was it?" Words failed N. Shulpina, so deeply touched with tears in her eyes. She couldn't express her respect and pride for her friend and colleague.

Zarifa khanum sat down at the piano... Music played, merging with the rhythmic splashing of waves lashing the coast of this manmade island in the Caspian Sea... N. Shulpina said: "Those were melodies of soundtracks composed by Dunayev, loved by millions."

Oh! My heart, restless you are  
Oh! It is good to be alive  
My heart, it is good that you are restless,  
Thank you, my heart, for loving so much.

Zarifa khanum invited her colleague to the stage and they performed a duet... You can imagine the enthusiastic response... This happened on more than one occasion...

At the fifth Congress of Ophthalmologists held in Samarkand, after a series of presentations and speeches, Zarifa khanum pleasantly surprised delegates with her musical skills, appreciated even by the professionals.

Shulpina also notes the care and fondness of our heroine toward her family, children and grandchildren... When any of them got sick she gave a doctor's consultation, and oversaw their treatment and eating regime. Saying that, there were other occasions when she was required to offer the perceptive intervention of a mother or grandmother!

"I am not wrong to call Zarifa Aliyeva the genius of her family," writes Shulpina. "Fate introduced me to different people of various professions... I also witnessed many family quarrels. But with all sincerity I can say that I have never known any other woman who devoted herself entirely to her family and lived for the sake of her children.

Zarifa khanum helped anyone in hard times... This quality would surface even with strangers. This, of course, made her everybody's favourite person..."

Winning people's affection during one's lifetime and leaving an honored name in history after leaving this world - what blessing is higher than that!



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Chapter Eight

ROOTS

Some unwritten rules are more enforceable than those written

Quintus Horace Flaccus

The land of Nakhichevan... In his book "The light of science" **Nakhichevan University academician Isa Habibbeyli** wrote movingly about the spiritual ambiance of Nakhichevan, renowned for its cultural traditions, and which yielded a number of outstanding individuals. In ancient times there were many caravan routes through the village of Shahtakhti, located on the bank of the Araz river and connecting south with north and east with west. The great writer Jalil Mammadguluzadeh called this village, "the birthplace of intellectuals".

The enthusiasm of devotees, historic memory and the patriotism of the progressive youth, counteracted the sluggish and prejudiced people. Amateur theatre started the formation of the national opera, social and political journalism (including the fantastic Mammadagha Shahtakhtinskiy) gained momentum, and the brilliant journal "Molla Nasraddin" was sold throughout the Islamic East (Jalil Mammadguluzadeh was its founder)...

This spirit played its part in the formation of Aziz Aliyev's social consciousness. He was brought up with the highest moral standards which he could not help but pass on to his children - worthy successors of great traditions.

This is the source of the irrepressible energy of Zarifa Aliyeva, which sprung the beginnings of her path in science, the source of her medical service, maternal kindness and associations with the greatest revolutionary of Soviet Azerbaijan and creator of a new, independent homeland.

**Elmira Hajiyeva, lecturer in the department of Russian language and literature at Baku State University:** "Perhaps it was by happy coincidence that my mother, Leyla khanum Gaziyeva, was born in ancient Iravan. She was the cousin of the academician Aziz Aliyev. Leyla khanum would often start conversations about him and his daughter, Zarifa, telling interesting stories. Once mother got seriously sick. I turned to Professor Tamerlan Aliyev for help - he headed a hospital department in Tamerlan. Showing serious concern, he sent mother to hospital, examined her and took charge of her treatment. The department of eye diseases, where Zarifa khanum was working was on the third floor of that hospital. Hearing of my mother's complaints about her sight, she too got involved in the treatment, and checked her condition daily. That's when our close acquaintance began. I could tell you about her compassion and kindness for hours and hours. Such people come into the world probably only once a century.

This highly intelligent, tolerant woman loved fellow people and enjoyed socialising. She always dressed neatly and modestly, but daintily. Sometimes, noticing my clothes, she would praise: 'You look great! The way you dress sets an example to our students.' She would notice trivial things and attach special meanings. One holiday, I brought her a big bouquet of flowers. She handed them out to other doctors and assistants, leaving just the narcissus which I brought from mother's dacha: 'This floweret radiates homely warmth...! "

**Rafiga Akhundova, in the ophthalmology department of State Medical University,** knew our heroine since 1955 when she was in residence training. **A corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, Professor Umnisa Mussabeyova,** then the head of the same department, introduced Rafiga and said that he should study under the guidance of Lazifa Aliyeva (elder sister of Zarifa khanum). A beautiful woman with warm eyes came up and congratulated them. This woman was Zarifa khanum - the research scientist of the Research Studies Institute of Ophthalmology. At that time she was dealing with the Republic's challenge to combat trachoma.

In 1961 Rafiga Akhundova, by that time a Ph.D. student of the same research institute, was offered the opportunity to

work on incurable forms of trachoma. She met with Zarifa Aliyeva whose parting words were: "You will stand your people in good stead."

**Surgeon ophthalmologist Antiga Alekberova** remembers: "At the beginning I was working with Zarifa's older sister, Lazifa. After the training course at the Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners, Zarifa came to our Research Studies Institute. At the time she was not married, but there were enough eligible young men willing to take her hand. As a sociable and amiable girl, she soon fit in with colleagues. After a while we heard that her wedding would be taking place in a day or two. Among the colleagues she invited to her wedding ceremony were Umnisa khanum, Zahra khanum and me. The ceremony was held in her house, in private. Gulara khanum was in charge of music. The bride herself joined her occasionally and they played duets.

Zarifa khanum was the true guard of the home. She was ready to give up her soul for the sake of her children and husband.

Everyone would stop yawning and find new energy as soon as she entered a room. She liked joking. We made a deal: get together once a month - each time at one of our houses. We used to "order" the menu in advance. Zarifa khanum never shied away from these all-girl parties. Umnisa khanum would warn jokingly: 'Don't have a party without me!' If we were meeting at my place my husband would tactfully leave, leaving the house free for us. So did the husbands of the other girls. Zarifa was the life of these parties. You were never bored if she was near - she was always full of surprises...

Zarifa thought of everybody. There was a hardware store on the first floor of the building where she lived. She would remember which appliances we needed and buy them for us when they arrived in the store.

...One morning she called me at home: 'Antiga, do you have any raspberry jam left? The children have colds.' I answered: 'Yes. I will bring some to the office.' She couldn't help joking when I gave her the jar: 'Girls, if you want to ask Antiga for something, do it first thing in the morning. She is most kind in the mornings.'

She was devoted to her profession. In those days a dangerous illness - trachoma - was on the loose in Azerbaijan. She expelled this illness in Mashtagha (town)...

...A straightforward and modest woman, her modesty was unusual as a descendant from such a distinguished family and because her husband was such a renowned man!

We kept in touch after her transfer to the Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners. One day she rang: 'We are celebrating our son's birthday. Why don't you bake a cake and come.' I baked a cake and went to their house. By that time Heydar Aliyev had just taken charge of the KGB... Zarifa khanum suddenly turned to him, saying: 'I'd like Antiga to work with me. Work is not getting done without her. Can you help?' I was confused: 'But no! Heydar gardash ('brother Heydar'), don't! I am happy in my job and I wouldn't want to trouble you.'

...Not one of us - her colleagues - ever felt that we worked with a dignitary's wife. She was not a "First Lady", she was first a doctor. She would come into work like everyone else and work till the close of business. Her closest colleagues were Umnisa Mussabeyova, Zahra khanum and me. She was friendly with everyone and never looked down on anyone. Throughout her life she never laid down her professional duties for the sake of her family, and never sacrificed the interests of her family for the sake of service..."

Colleagues, scientists, specialists, and other staff remember her with gratitude and all have a kind word to say about her. **Maleyka Sadikhova**, who was a maid for years in the Republic's Clinical Hospital named after the academician Mirgassimov, says: "Fate issued many tests throughout my life. My husband was a soldier and died when he was just thirty-seven years old.. I am the mother of seven. It is true that Allah never leaves any of His creatures without mercy. But... the children were growing up. I make no secret of the fact that it was very difficult to live a hand-to-mouth existence. In those hard times the Lord sent me Zarifa khanum to help. Who was I? - an ordinary cleaning woman, while she was a famous, educated woman and doctor. But I was lucky. At that time she had just been transferred to our hospital. One day a friend of

mine asked: 'Do you know whose room you clean every day?' I shrugged, 'How should I know?'

Zarifa khanum proved to be a very soft-hearted woman. Once she called me to her room and sat me down. She was silent for a while, and I felt her gazing hard at me. Finally, she broke the silence: 'Thank you for cleaning, for your diligence. You are a neat, accurate woman...'

Then she fell silent again, thinking. Then I heard her say softly and tenderly: 'How is life?' I heard that you have seven children.

Words failed me. She pretended she was absorbed in reading the papers on her table, but I swear that I had all her attention. All I could afford was the occasional sideways glance.

'Maleyka Baji (Sister Maleyka),' she said, 'I instructed the cashier from the accounting department to give you my salary for this month...'

Indeed I was badly off. The children were little, and my salary was pittance, always falling short...

She would listen to, examine, and write prescriptions for every patient as if they were close relatives. I wish you knew how grateful her patients were! By God, she was a holy woman. She never offended or disappointed anyone, never refused to help. The Lord gave her a big heart... Again, she called me to her room and asked about life, etc. Then she gave me a brand new ironed white coat: 'It's a bit tight for me. You can have it.'

It was some time before she invited me to her room again. She put three parcels on the table containing clothes of different colors: 'I bought these for your little daughters. When I get my salary, I will give you some money for tailoring. Let your children dress up a little.' I have never seen such kindness in all my life. Familiar with my hard life she tried to ease my burden. What a generous spirit... I prayed for the creator in heaven and Zarifa khanum on earth. My children regularly felt her care. Later my daughter, a doctor already, moved to Khachmaz (north Azerbaijan). My other daughter moved to Yardimli (south Azerbaijan). My son-in-law had a cramped little flat, so I asked Zarifa khanum for help. Thanks to her

assistance, my daughter's family was placed in a town house in the capital.

Her good deeds are innumerable. Zarifa khanum kept in touch with us after she moved to Moscow with her family..."

It is characteristic of our heroine, with her restless and compassionate nature, to be part of history, even if not related to ophthalmology. This story is related to cinematography, to the fate of a historical and heroic movie "Babek".<sup>13</sup> It is a two-part movie with crowd battle and shooting scenes. Filming required an enormous amount of technical equipment and funding. The film was to be shot in the "Azerbaijanfilm" studio in cooperation with "Mosfilm". The director/producer was Eldar Guliyev, who had gained popularity with a movie called "In a South City" (screen version by Rustam Ibrahimbeyov).

A high-ranking official was appointed to deal with the technical and financial issues. He was a conscientious man, committed to the success of the movie. However, at times he would meddle in strictly creative matters, which caused friction and disputes between him and the film crew.

A few years later in Moscow, the final version of the movie was ready. The General Director of "Mosfilm" N. Sizov, Eldar Guliyev and Azad Sharifov (head of the department of culture of the Central Committee) wanted to show the film to Heydar Aliyev. At this, conflict with the official reached boiling point. Naturally, the film-makers were returning to Baku in not very high spirits. However, by chance, Azad Sharifov was on the same plane as Zarifa Aliyeva, flying from Moscow to Baku. They struck up conversation and Zarifa khanum, listening to the film's detailed story line, was keen to watch it. Then she asked: "I see that you are not very happy with the movie, even though it is finished. Are there any problems with it?"

Azad Sharifov, an old acquaintance of hers, set her straight. She smiled and tried to ease his anxiety: "Things will work out. Heydar Aliyev is aware of Eldar Guliyev's directing skills and he also knows you as one of his experienced officers."

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<sup>13</sup> Babek - the legendary leader of the struggle against the invasion of the caliphate armies.

The next morning the General Director of "Mosfilm" also arrived in Baku. That evening, the preview was screened at "Goskino" (state cinema studio). Heydar Aliyev warmly welcomed Sizov and thanked him for his work. Right after the preview, during discussions, the "official" took the floor and complained that his suggestions and comments were not considered. Without commenting on the "rejection" of the official, Heydar Aliyev listened to other participants' views and, summarising, extended his gratitude to the director for his work and thanked the General Director of "Mosfilm" again, expressing his hope for further cooperation...

Upon leaving the hall and passing Azad and Eldar, Zarifa Aliyeva stopped for a moment, smiled and said: "Well, you see, no need to worry..."

I should note that "Babek" is the best historical movie ever made in Azerbaijan and highly acclaimed in all-union cinemas.

**Head of the department of ophthalmology at the State Medical University, Professor Pasha Galbinur**, leading conversation towards Zarifa Aliyeva, remembers what was said by two respected lecturers, Professor Zahra Guliyeva and Doctor Lazifa Aliyeva. They noted that Zarifa khanum was a mother with a fanatical love for her children. When at work she would always call and ask the children about their lessons and how they were.

Pasha recalls a time at Lazifa Aliyeva's little grandchild's birthday party. When guests, sitting at the table, were discussing Heydar Aliyev's recent televised speech, Zarifa khanum drew their attention with her excitement: "I listened with baited breath," she admitted bashfully.

Here is another episode which characterises the extent of character of Aziz Aliyev - Zarifa khanum's father. Perhaps I should have told it when describing how the Republic's "Caesar" Mir Jafar Baghirov was jealous of Aziz Aliyev. So, in the days when Aziz Aliyev had to leave his family, his partner Leyla khanum (this is how she tells the story), with her eldest daughter, went to see M. J. Baghirov with a request: let the First Secretary of Central Committee return Aziz to Azerbaijan, to whatever position. But the "first" responded: "Leyla khanum, I don't have a position suitable for Aziz in Azerbaijan, the only such post would be mine, but

unfortunately for him, it is held by me." After that he said no more. At this unexpected and dreadful answer, a dazed Leyla khanum, with nothing to say, scurried out...

Pasha Galbinur remembers the conversation between his mother Ilduz khanum and Zarifa Aliyeva, that Zarifa khanum recalled seemingly trivial yet symbolic detail about her daughter, Sevil: since childhood that girl was sparing with bread (isn't this a reflection of national traditions, consecrating bread?). She would never throw away unfinished loaves, saying: "I will eat it later..." Such respectful attitude towards bread is a rare quality, even among adults...

Once, Zarifa Aliyeva cheered up her young colleague Pasha Galbinur, telling him that Heydar Aliyev kept track of his scientific progress, and after a while he was awarded the All-Union Komsomol upon the recommendation of the Science Research Institute of Ophthalmology.

Heydar Aliyev phoned from Moscow to congratulate him. Later, when Heydar Aliyev returned to Baku, they met at an event and Pasha gratefully remembered his telephone message: "You congratulated me by phone from Moscow while Kamran Baghirov (then the First Secretary of the Central Committee. - H.M.), who was here in Baku, didn't. Heydar Aliyev smiled: "Oh, forget it! Not everyone's the same..."

Perhaps you would also be interested in what **Hayat Efendiyeva - the doctor of the department of pediatric ophthalmology of the Research Institute of Eye Diseases** remembers about Zarifa khanum: "I worked with Zarifa Aliyeva for twenty years. She achieved great success in her medical practice and the scientific field. We met in 1964. At the time I was finishing residency training. Zarifa khanum took great care of me. I remember her saying that a person who has chosen this path ought to be intuitive, careful and responsible. Even the slightest inadvertency may shut off all a patient's hope. She was in the charge of laboratory experiments. She would wash glass vials herself, even though there was a sufficient number of technical staff and nurses to do it. I don't think there is a more modest person in the world..."

H. Efendiyeva also remembers the time when her husband, Nazim Efendiyev, headed the research institute: "Thanks to Zarifa Aliyeva's initiative, our institute worked with some of

the most acknowledged ophthalmologists of the USSR. At that time, there were many All-Union and international scientific debates in Baku. During one, we invited the guests to eat our national cuisine.

Nazim Muallim left us, women for the most part, free to prepare meals. We all felt like part of a united family. Zarifa Aliyeva, an adept hostess, was offering guests food to taste - a selection of Azerbaijani cuisine. For instance the homemade bread, lavash, and cheese made of sheep's milk, or tarragon delivered from Nakhichevan. She declared that such delicacies are hard to find elsewhere in the world, and added jokingly that she adores them because the same place gave her a faithful and caring partner and loving father of her children - Heydar...

The next similar meeting took place in Odessa after the official celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the academician Puchkova. Old friends got together, remembering the past, discussing their careers and their problems. During the feast I asked Zarifa khanum: 'How about we introduce the guests to the beauty of Azerbaijani music?' She went to the piano without any persuasion and began with some classical tunes, followed by rousing dance music. I assure you, everyone was captivated and got up to dance, led by the rhythm of the music. Everyone, literally everyone, regardless of nationality, was under the spell of Azerbaijani music. Zarifa khanum was the happiest person in the hall."

She was appealing to look at and charming to talk to. **N. Shulpina** notes that nature gave Zarifa Aliyeva a rare femininity. Her fine skin, oval face and black, dazzling eyes could do nothing but arouse appreciation. You could read her nature in her movements and gestures. "I have never seen her nervous or angry. She is always smiling and always tender. Her hands were especially captivating. They were hands of a surgeon that would pass their warmth to anything she touched. However, you could notice her motherly worries and hard woman's work too. Despite her belonging to an elite estate, she didn't shy away from household chores. This is exactly the character that Pushkin wrote about in his poems: 'The purest example of purest charms...'"

Like any other woman she wasn't detached from fashion trends. However, a woman of good taste, she knew where draw

the line. You would not find anything provocative in her wardrobe. As a rule, she preferred modern-style clothes, suitably and conveniently tailored. She wore moderate make-up, accessorising with diamond earrings, a ring and a handbag to match the colour of her dress. That's all there was to it, I guess. In her opinion, neither inner, nor outer beauty needed extra adornment.

She was a woman who you would never forget, even after just one meeting...

Heydar Aliyev said that in times of severe shortage of imported goods in Azerbaijan, as well as throughout the Soviet Union, someone called and informed him that a limited amount of French perfume was in the Republic, and that they would set aside any number he required. Aliyev called his wife and after discussion they decided to take two bottles. "When I told the distributor that we wanted two bottles, he gasped: 'They usually order ten or fifteen bottles each!'"

**Fakhriyya Khalafova, a well-known fashion designer** said: "Zarifa khanum will stay in my memory as the ideal Azerbaijani woman and mother. She could multi-task her enormous responsibilities - first her family, second public duties. Also relatives, friends and even strangers could ask her for help, safe in the knowledge that she would not refuse.

The life of Zarifa khanum demonstrates the course of self actualisation in modern women. Her work was deeply individual and the highest level of professionalism, while her business qualities were in tune with her personal magnetism. Inner harmony, spirituality and professional culture of this woman would manifest through everything - her behavior, the way she communicated with others, and the way she dressed."

**Asmatkhanum Mammadova, a lecturer in the department of oriental studies at Baku State University** (Sevil Heydarovna Aliyeva, daughter of Heydar Aliyev, was among her students) remembers: "Sevil khanum was studying in the Arabic department... She dressed simply but faultlessly, while her academic performance was an example to others. She established good relations with all fellow students and held teachers in high regard, never displaying that she was the daughter of a senior official.

The atmosphere at home and parenting of Zarifa khanum had a tremendous impact on the development of Sevil and her brother Ilham in their open-mindedness, the way they recognised their talents, their business acumen and energy."

So, what is the secret of Zarifa Aliyeva?... Indeed, she has a secret, and it is not fully disclosed by us... In this woman I see inner dedication, urge to live to the greatest extent, a drive for perfection in work and everyday life. That is, in everything she undertook.

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*Chapter Nine*

## **AIR CONDITIONERS AND... AN OPHTHALMOSCOPE**

Let's digress and talk about the construction plant in Baku for the production of domestic air conditioners, which later will be an object of interest for ophthalmologist, Zarifa Aliyeva.

In 1972, there was an All-Union conference of cotton growers held in Tashkent with the Republic's (Republic of Uzbekistan) first persons and the Secretary General of the USSR.

In the morning, Leonid Ilyich Brejnev was met at the Tashkent airport and taken to a residence where the leaders begin a discussion. Brejnev was seated in an armchair near to Sharaf Rashidov. Later, the Secretary General remembered humourously: "Sharaf Rashidovich took me to the residence and everything was in order. But I was exhausted and the heat was unbearable. Then I saw an air conditioner in the room, and in my joy, I turned it on. A mixture of hot air and dust flowed into the room. I asked: is this how you treat your guests, Sharaf Rashidovich?"

As the story goes, the "perviy" (First Secretary) of Uzbekistan pointed to his colleague from Azerbaijan: "They make those air conditioners in Baku, it is not my fault. Let Aliyev himself explain."

"Aha!" Lauged Brejnev, "Then I guess Aliyev is to blame..."

Heydar Aliyev explained: "There was a factory producing aircraft components. At the beginning of the 1970s they started producing air conditioners, but using old techniques. Those conditioners are used mainly within Azerbaijan, but somehow somebody managed to send them to Uzbekistan...."

Brejnev replied: "Well, comrades, then why don't we organise the production of domestic air conditioners in our country, where half of population lives in the southern republic where the climate is hot?"

All were in favour.

"When I get back to Moscow I will order the construction of the plant," the Secretary General promised.

Heydar Aliyev asked for permission to build the plant in Azerbaijan. "I promise that we will deliver it in a very short space of time."

"Alright, we will consider this later," concluded the Secretary General.

Soon after, Brejnev brought up the matter for discussion in Politburo. For the members of Politburo it was difficult to assign the task - there weren't any examples to follow, and nobody was familiar with the technology. All ministries, one by one, refused to have anything to do with this undesirable job. Hearing this, the Secretary General ordered the Ministry of Electrical Engineering Industries to construct the plant. The "electrotechnical" bureaucrats, on second thought, realised that they wouldn't manage it, and that it would be necessary to appeal to foreign technologies. "How much money do you need for this?" the Central Committee asked. "Twenty-five million US dollars."

The amount was accepted and allotted, then minister Antonov decided to build the plant in Dnepropetrovsk. Upon hearing this, Heydar Aliyev flew to Moscow, visited Antonov and then the Chairman Kosigin's Deputy Novikov, trying to find the reason for this decision. The motives were explained: the lack of technically-qualified personnel, and an unflattering reputation of Azerbaijani builders. Besides, the Secretary General ordered: in the shortest possible time...

Aliyev discovered for himself that these excuses just expressed the desire to draw a blanket over the centre, excluding the far off "marginal" republics of the union.

His appeal to Kosigin gave little hope. Now Brejnev remained the only possible solution. The Secretary General knew nothing about this "readdressing" and asked when they met: "So, Heydar, any progress with your air conditioning production plant?" Aliyev lifted his hands in dismay.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Your ministers outplayed us and have built it in Dnepropetrovsk."

"How so?" The Secretary General picked up the phone and called Novikov, addressing his unreasonable behavior. Novikov pointed to minister Antonov and despite mentioning the process's complexity and the allegedly technical inadequacy of the southern republic, he too was reprimanded. Brejnev says: "I've worked in Zaporozhia in the past and I know: this region is full of factories and there isn't the need to build a new one. Secondly, the southern republics need them more than any other region of the country. Why on earth would we want to transport air conditioners from Dnepropetrovsk to Baku, Tbilisi or Ashgabat? It would be cheaper from Baku."

One month passed, then a second. Moscow kept silent. Heydar Aliyev left for Moscow again. It transpired that the representatives of the Ministry of Electrical Engineering Industries were in negotiations with Americans, Italians and Germans, who charged very high prices: from about one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty million dollars, while the ministry was given just twenty-five million. Finally, the Japanese company "Toshiba" agreed to fulfill the order for ninety million dollars, and the Japanese workmanship was better than their European or American counterparts. All that remained was to obtain this amount from Politburo. But none of the government agencies had the courage to ask. Baybakov appealed to Kosigin, but the Prime Minister refused: "There aren't any additional reserves of foreign currency." Heydar Aliyev appealed once again to the Secretary General for help. The Secretary General, having learned that the construction hadn't moved forward an inch, grew annoyed and expressed his discontent. "I demand answers!" he ordered by phone, "and we have to come to a decision today, not a day later." In short, Heydar Aliyev received ninety million dollars...

In the second half 1973, construction of the air conditioning plant started in Azerbaijan and it was put into commission in December, 1975. More than three hundred specialists were sent to train in Japan - engineers, technicians, workers - and five hundred more on advanced vocational electrical courses in Moscow, Leningrad and Ukraine.

Heydar Aliyev delivered a speech at the plant's opening. Brejnev sent his compliments in a telegram.

After a few years, Heydar Aliyev visited Mozambique and saw the air conditioners produced in Azerbaijan. Later, they were in Korea, Vietnam, Angola...

You can imagine the pride felt by the leader of Azerbaijan. **Zahra Guliyeva** remembers the plant's opening event, which grew into a city-wide celebration... "As an ophthalmologist I visited many regions of the Soviet Union and experienced great joy in noticing that other cities' conferences, conventions, hospitals and surgery rooms had air conditioners produced in Baku. People frequently asked me to convey their gratitude to our plant workers."

The time has come for us to bridge this plant episode with the reason for the story. The point is that the scientific activities of our central character turned out to be closely connected to the health of the plant workers, many thousands occupying an area of more than 15.5 ha. If combating trachoma and developing its preventative measures was Zarifa Aliyeva's first nation-wide medical challenge (this was the main subject of her scientific articles and Ph.D. thesis), there now emerged a second. Baku is an industrial city and occupational illnesses are characteristic of such places. Therefore, at the beginning of the 1970s, Zarifa khanum did not choose the Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners, but decided to research the industrial enterprises of the city's chemical production. She spent months and years with workers of these enterprises. The new, gigantic construction - Baku domestic air conditioning plant - soon became a testing ground for new scientific studies and involvement in the community's healthcare.

Many workers, especially young ones, owing to banal human inertia and negligent attitude towards ophthalmoscopes, auscultoscopes and other medical devices, would not take Zarifa khanum seriously, nor the preventive measures, examinations, and doctor's recommendations. Hence, raising medical awareness, promotion of basic health and factory hygiene were of great importance. Zarifa's inherent modesty as a lecturer in a white coat, a straightforward and polite woman, would not allow them to see her as a representative of a

distinguished family, wife of the Republic's First Person. Some even refused to believe that a woman of such status would ever enter the dusty workshops and get involved in examining thousands of pairs of eyes.

She frequently visited chemical plants, the tyre plant (where a unique technology of synthetic rubber production was invented), aluminum smelting plant in the city of Sumgait, as well as "Neftechemautomat" (plant for the production of automatic equipment for the petroleum and chemical industries) and the superphosphate acidulation plant in the same city...

Zarifa Aliyeva spent six to seven years in this area of scientific study, and as a result she wrote a monograph which became a sensation in the field of ophthalmology - "State of visual organs of workers in certain industrial producers of chemical products of Azerbaijan". In the spring of 1977, this study was considered by the Moscow Institute of Eye Diseases and acknowledged to be the equivalent of a doctorate.

People sent their well-deserved compliments to Zarifa khanum.

"This is my first step in maintaining nation-wide healthcare, and I have a lot of ground to cover," she said.

She knew that the onrush of the hydrocarbon processing industry meant that the urgency of her work increased by the day. Zarifa khanum continued her studies and published many articles in Soviet and international periodicals, the results of which turned into the pages of new monographs.

She established an ad hoc scientific laboratory at the air conditioning plant. Tremendous work was carried out in studying the impact of the production environment on the visual organs, and the information collected there allowed her to practice effective preventive measures.

Thus, the monograph that won Zarifa khanum her doctorate also became a firm basis for new scientific discoveries, indicating the progress of national medicine in this field.

She herself considered her works as "continuance of father's life."

It is symbolic that the plant that existed thanks to Heydar Aliyev also became an important chapter in the life of his wife.



The laboratory where Zarifa khanum performed her research left its mark on her fate.

**Maharram Bakhshaliyev, working at that time as the deputy director of the plant,** remembers: "The director of the plant was in Moscow. Hasan Seidov, a member of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan, phoned me and said that the All-Union responded to Zarifa Aliyeva's doctorate on the prevention of eye diseases, and she was to continue her research in a laboratory which would be established within the plant.

In the morning at 8:45 a.m., a car stopped in front of the plant: it was Zarifa khanum. Approaching me, she asked gently: "Are you Bakhshaliyev?"

"Yes, it is me, Zarifa khanum."

"Which rooms did you allocate for the laboratory and on which floor?"

The first three floors were occupied by the plant's management. We reviewed next three. She chose the sixth floor. I showed her three or four rooms and she made suggestions. Then she added: "Tomorrow you will be told which rooms to paint and which colour to use. But, please, don't let them plan a luxurious renovation. No need to waste money on that."

I must admit that we expected - from the wife of such an important man as Heydar Aliyev - categorical instructions. Instead, we were captivated by her straightforward and friendly attitude, and we saw the simplicity of someone with an unassuming approach. This is what the faithful wife of Heydar Aliyev was like.

I set about furnishing the laboratory. There were all sorts of people among the eight and a half thousand workers at the plant. Main entrances and exits were often crowded and it wasn't possible to keep an eye on all of them. For this reason, I considered it wiser to allocate certain laboratory rooms on the first floor with a separate entrance. I gave the Central Committee my proposal and then phoned Moscow - Sanan Akhundov. He instructed me to leave any other issues and to focus on laboratory.

We also informed Zarifa Aliyeva of my decision and she visited with her brother, Tamerlan Aliyev. She inspected the

rooms and liked everything about them. After a small renovation, the laboratory started up."

A quote from memoirs of the **Doctor of Medical Science, Professor Nazim Taghizadeh:** "Zarifa Aliyeva played a great part in my fate. Our first meeting occurred in 1978 - I was working in the intensive care unit of the Republican Clinical Hospital after finishing my internship. One day the head of the unit sent for me: "The Head of the Eye Diseases Department, Zarifa khanum, wants to talk with you." Next morning, at the specified time, I went to the Director of the Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners, Academician M. Javadzadeh. I entered his room and he introduced me to Zarifa khanum. She said that she was establishing a scientific research laboratory for eye diseases and that I was invited to join. This offer was a surprise: I wanted to pursue emergency medicine. But Zarifa khanum said that she would keep my work on the same the track, and was sure that I would gravitate towards scientific research. However, she left me to think about the offer.

Soon we met again and I gave my consent, after which I was employed at the laboratory for physiology and occupational eye diseases. I began working in the laboratory within the Baku domestic air conditioning plant, a branch of the Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners named after Aziz Aliyev. On the same day, Doctor Talishinskaya was also contracted to work at the laboratory.

On our first visit to the plant, the management showed us several vacant rooms. In half a year the laboratory was already equipped with modern apparatus.

Zarifa Aliyeva also invited Doctor of Sciences M. Sultanov (senior research associate) and T. Mirzayev (junior research associate) to work in the laboratory. Along with them we hired two assistants, after which the systematic work began. Naturally, Zarifa Aliyeva coordinated it. I remember that there were many who doubted the effectivity, wondering how such advanced technologies could impact the workers' health. However, Zarifa khanum was convinced that, as in any production of chemical substance, the plant would inevitably exert negative effects on human health. This conviction of hers came from previous studies in other plants of Baku.

Initially, Zarifa khanum prepared test cards for the workers' health records and their complaints. The card also gave information on all advanced methods of eye disease diagnostics and results of scientific studies of other specialists in the same field.

Zarifa khanum paid special attention to our team formation and organised a specialist course for us. The lectures she delivered were distinguished by thoroughness of information and width of approach. Today, when I deliver lectures to my students, I always visualise the academic style of my tutor. The most advanced diagnostic techniques of the time were implemented in her laboratory. Zarifa khanum would, from time to time, send us to ophthalmology centers in Moscow, Leningrad (St. Petersburg), Odessa and other cities. During those work trips we absorbed the experience of our colleagues and put it into practice at the plant.

Zarifa khanum always analysed our work and helped to implement corrective measures as well as increase our efficiency. Over time, she established a special surgery department. Here we gave medical assistance, not only to our own workers, but also to workers of other plants. At that time, outpatient treatment was a novelty. Today, eye diseases are generally treated in such a way.

**Doctor of Medical Science Professor Rasim Hajiyev** tells us: "My first meeting with Zarifa khanum took place at the laboratory within the Baku domestic air conditioning plant. That day, she invited me to the laboratory for an interview. I guess I passed because she took me on. After a while, having noticed my interest in scientific studies, she offered me my own study theme: "Diabetic retinopathy of bulbus oculi" (eye damage linked to blood sugar levels). I was interested, and Zarifa khanum became my scientific supervisor. At that time our department was located in City Hospital No. 4. Zarifa khanum introduced me to experienced doctors who let me into the secrets of ophthalmology, while in the plant's laboratory I continued to practice diagnostics and gather data for my studies. Finally, my article written in association with Zarifa Aliyeva, was published in the medical journal of Azerbaijan, entitled: "The Role of Vitreous Body in the Inhibition of Diabetic Retinopathy Development in Myopia". I would like

to note that diabetic retinopathy is one of the main and pressing problems of ophthalmology. It leads to vascular disorders and eventually to loss of vision. Zarifa Aliyeva wrote a thesis dedicated to this theme. This work is the result of numerous tests and studies. Later, I had the honour to write as a co-author with Zarifa Aliyeva, many articles published in the Moscow periodical, "Bulletin of Ophthalmology", and the foreign press.

The ability to look ahead was of great help to her. This talented enthusiast of science vastly contributed to the training of professionals and the preparation of a new generation of scientists in the Republic. She spent a lot of effort in acquiring the high-technology equipment necessary for her colleagues to work.

Zarifa khanum would send cakes, pastries and fruit juices to our work rooms. She cared of us like a mother, and we shared our joys and sorrows with her. She always gave the benefit of her advice, not only to us, but to any other person asking for help. She did everything she could do."

**Maharram Bakhshaliyev** adds his words about Zarifa khanum: "Sometimes she would call and say: 'Bakshaliyev, do you have time to check for me?' That meant that she wanted information on the production process. Once I said to her: 'Why don't you give the job of calling me to someone else. I'll still arrive in less than no time.' She replied: 'You have piles of works and little time. Therefore I would like you to come at a time that is convenient to you.'

Once I heard of a curious occasion: a young worker called Mustafa waited his turn at the doctor's office. As soon as he learned that the doctor on duty was Zarifa khanum, the wife of Heydar Aliyev, he lost his courage to the extent that they could find no trace of him... That was of course a rare case, and all those who saw the doctor told the others that there was nothing to worry about: this khanum has a gentle soul.

Later, the director sent me to another plant. I came to say goodbye and she bid me farewell and wished me every success. Zarifa khanum also gave me her phone number: 'Don't hesitate to call me whenever you need.'

Some time after, we met again at Hospital No. 4. She recognised me at once and held out her hand to me: 'Comrade Bakhsaliyev, how you are you?'

I answered and we had a short conversation. Her memory was indelible.

She was an exemplar of a true, intelligent, generous, modest woman, worthy of aspiring to."

**Journalist Telman Gafar:** "I heard a lot about her. I even witnessed people, after regaining their vision, praying for her. As a journalist I hadn't had the chance to meet her in person until 1979. I had a job in the news room of Az TV (Azerbaijan state television channel) and Zarifa khanum Aliyeva had recently opened her laboratory in the domestic air conditioning plant in Baku. This was the first laboratory of this sort that had opened in the USSR. I visited the plant with my cameraman. We saw that, in addition to scientific research the laboratory was treating eye diseases. They even performed surgery there. The laboratory's head, Zarifa khanum, welcomed us as warmly as a sister welcomes her brother, mother or son. We told her about the purpose of our visit: to interview her about this innovation. She smiled: 'It's noon now. Eat something first and then we'll talk about the laboratory.' She called over someone to take us to the canteen. They didn't charge us for our meals and the canteen manager came up to us twice, asking if we needing anything else... Then we went back.

'We are ready to interview,' I said. But Zarifa khanum now had some urgent business to attend to: 'Let's postpone the interview for now...' We insisted, but alas, without any success. As a last resort I offered a somewhat sentimental argument: 'Zarifa khanum, your grandfather Mammadkarim-kishi, my grandfather's neighbour in the Dalma quarter of the old Irvan... What if...'

But she interrupted: 'No, let's do it another time...' Discouraged, I could do nothing but trust in the future. A short time later there was an International Ophthalmology Conference in Baku. I tried once more to interview her, but again, without success. The same went for the correspondents of the central television channel. Despite her ultimately delicate attitude towards TV men, she didn't like to appear on TV..."

**Svetlana Najafova, a well-known journalist,** writes in her article, "A touching journey down memory lane": "I was preparing material for the next issue of the magazine when the phone rang. I recognised her voice when I picked up the receiver.

'How are you?' I started, 'How are Sevil and Ilham?'

'Thank you for asking,' her replies were share. 'And how are your daughters?' After waiting for a moment, she added: 'I would like to ask you a favour. Don't over-praise me in your article. And, please, don't put my photo on the cover. I can't see the good of it!'

I objected, saying that her ophthalmology merits are well-known and as for the cover picture, well, there is nothing to be ashamed of in that. It is a long-standing tradition of the magazine to publish portrait photographs of well-known and famous women of our Republic.

A long silence ensued. I thought that I had succeeded in persuading her. But I was wrong. She insisted gently: 'Just take my advice.' Then added: 'Let's meet when you have time and choose photos together.'

She sent a car for me and we met at her office. She gave her consent to only two of the pictures taken by our press photographer, which were then prepared for publication. She took several photos of us among the employees of the department, and gave to me them as a keepsake.

It was my third and last meeting with Professor Zarifa Aliyeva.

We had met for the first time shortly before - in the eye department of Hospital No. 4...

Khalida Hassilova, the editor-in-chief of the magazine, "Azerbaijan Gadini" (Women of Azerbaijan), where I was working at that time, agreed the place and date of the interview. I know well how difficult it was for her to get Zarifa Aliyeva's consent for that interview.

...I didn't know where to begin. Sensing my agitation she came to the rescue and asked the first question herself: 'How long have you been working for the magazine?'

Then she displayed an interest in my family, asking how many children I had, how old they were, and about my husband's occupation. I didn't even notice how she established

such a warm, private connection. Our conversation on business matters alternated with talking of family, of how difficult it is to raise children, in brief, of anything two women may talk about! When I wanted to write a line or two about her personal life, about the difficulties of her family's early years, she put her hands on mine and said quietly: 'There is no point in doing that. Everyone has their hard times.'

I remember that her daughter Sevil was sick at the time and Zarifa khanum was worried about her.

'Young people don't look after their health,' she complained. Then, after excusing herself, she phoned Sevil at home and asked how she was. Having heard that she was in the way to recovery, Zarifa Aliyeva was somewhat calmer.

...She spoke of the laboratory (within the plant - *Husseynbala Miralamov*) with much enthusiasm. From my understanding, this laboratory was a labour of love - it was a source of pride for her. She invited me to visit and we agreed to visit together in a couple of days. We met and got in the car, the photographer in the driver's seat while Zarifa khanum and I sat in the back... I asked her about Sevil's health.

'Good... She scared me a lot,' she smiled. 'Actually, there was nothing to worry about, but I quake with fear every time they have a runny nose...'

'All mothers are like that.'

Zarifa khanum asked me who I trust to leave my children with when leaving for work. 'They are grown-ups now,' I said. 'It is far easier for me.'

...In the tidy laboratory furnished with state-of-the-art equipment, we were welcomed by research assistants Tahir Mirzayev and Nazim Taghizadeh.

While Zarifa khanum was talking to them, handing out duties, the junior research associate Svetlana Talishinskaya informed me about the laboratory's work, which was unique not only to Azerbaijan, but also to the USSR. The laboratory's staff was developing systematic medical services for the plant's workers. Nearly twelve hundred people were examined every year... Preventive treatment and on-site surgical intervention, in laboratory conditions...

My article was published in "Women of Azerbaijan" magazine. Zarifa khanum phoned and gave her thanks, adding

that she liked the essay very much. If I am being honest, I wasn't satisfied with it as an author. In my opinion it didn't express the sincerity and warmth of our communication, despite the interesting facts written in my notebook. It was a bit too official, too dry, and gave the image of a cold and authoritarian scientist, not of a sincere, warm and good-hearted woman as known to me after our three meetings. But what I could do? Zarifa khanum was very measured in her responses, not only in terms of her own work, but also in respect of the highest rank held by her husband. This is why she did not mention many facts or significant moments of her life in detail, not allowing herself to indulge the reader in confidential details..."

Chapter Ten

THE LEGEND OF LOVE

*If love rises from a heap of stones  
then those stones will turn into gems.*

Nizami

Love! Oh, Love! How many passionate songs and fabulous oratorios were created of its glory!

Love - the source of everything, the beginning of all beginnings, the principle of all living creatures.

All paths befallen on a man's fate pass through love.

An ordeal and a curse, it is. God's mercy and blessing, the light of our hearts and fate...

Old Turkic eposes and classical poetry see its magic as a sacred and divine spark from the agency of Providence. Let's remember Petrarch and Laura, Dante and Beatrice, Tristan and Isolde, Romeo and Juliet, Leyli and Majnun...

"Khosrov and Shirin", Nizami's first poem was dedicated to the eternal theme of love. The poet expresses his own conception of love, not only through relationships and affairs of his characters but also directly, with his own words:

No other calling do I have than [singing] love  
And may I not be engaged in anything else as long as I live.

No virtues would I have in this world without suffering love  
To be a servant of love - that is the way.

Only love and nothing else is for those with a heart!

This world is a world of love and anything else

is hypocrisy or deception,

Everything else is a game, love is the only way...

However, the society of medieval Islamic society worshipped material pleasures rather than love, and marriage

of convenience or "good" marriage was preferred to marriage of love as conceived by Nizami. Nizami's heroes, freely expressing their feelings, always conflicted with their society. The poet determinately expands the meaning of Love, its life-giving sufferings being the prime reason for living. Love is an art, it transfuses through nature. "If love rises from a heap of stones then those stones will turn into gems!" - this strikingly succinct image is suggested by great Nizami. To him, Love is the peak of a person's spiritual life and overcomes any obstacles between people. It is the path leading to true values inherent in Man and God, to moral enlightenment and.... to eternity.

Our time gave birth to another love story worthy of being listed among the legendary examples of selfless spiritual partnerships. It's already awoken an echo in art.

We mentioned earlier the circumstances that hindered the union of the equal hearts of two young people - a promising officer and the daughter of a politician disfavoured by the government. We have also mentioned the dreadful warnings of the officer's superiors, which made the young officer choose between love and his career.

One needs to have extraordinary courage - and love with his whole heart! - to be ready to relinquish the idea of a successful career, with the possibility of earning a reputation as a politically unreliable person...

Vaghif Mustafayev's film reconstructed the troubled and tragic atmosphere of that time, through the protagonist as well as eyewitness accounts of people who knew Aziz Aliyev personally - People's Artist Kamil Aliyev, Academician Jalal Aliyev (a brother of Heydar Aliyev) and a relative of Zarifa khanum - Sona Aleskerova.

**Kamil Aliyev:** "People who used to visit us almost every day, suddenly disappeared. Close friends stopped visiting Aziz Aliyev. Even relatives turned a cold shoulder, because they were afraid of spying, prosecution and arrest."

Documentary archive frames, giving a memorable account of the Stalin-Beria-Baghirov era, bring to life the era of mass "Zombification" and fear of the almighty "vojd" (Stalin) and his troops. As serious ordeals fell on the family, the wrath of Mir Jalal Baghirov is contained in this documentary while the

devastating and inhuman character of the totalitarian regime is fully exposed.

Kamal Aliyev, an ex-officer of the KGB, confirms that he was also put under surveillance.

Tactfully reproduced episodes of the "secret" meetings of the loving couple (these dates occurred against instructions of the authorities!) are dramatically outlined by the popular tango of those distant years - "Champagne splashes". Behind this romantic and lyrical story, one may feel the ominous will of "vojd" who would not show mercy, even toward his closest comrades...

In Azerbaijan, as elsewhere throughout the USSR, many prominent intellectuals were victims of terror. The great writer and playwright Husseyn Javid rotted in exile in Irkutsk. The talented poet Mikayil Mushfig was executed by a firing squad on an island not far from Baku...

It is the year 1952. The KGB General Yemelyanov, who tries to encourage Officer Heydar Aliyev to leave his sweetheart, hears from him: "I have a personal life in parallel with my job. I love my work and you appreciate me as an employee, but my family is the other part of my life, a completely necessary one... My future family! My private feelings... My love... I love this girl. And she loves me. How am I supposed to abandon her? What should I say to her? Saying, 'I am leaving you' is not only strange, but also very hard... I would have to give reasons... After all, I can't say her that I'm leaving her to stay with the security agency!"

It was a dramatic scene revealing the character of Heydar Aliyev, his loyalty to worldly sentiments (loyal in voicing his heart and love!) and courage, particularly when taking into account the strict subordination within this harsh institution.

But the higher justice of history sooner or later takes hold of its court. In a turn of events, the clouds over the future family rolled away. A family which can exemplify the striking harmony of relationships, fidelity, service to people, nation and homeland...

The names of two presidents of independent Azerbaijan, the name of an academic and ophthalmologist, and of an eminent orientalist, are connected to this family, fathered by the national leader who not only contributed to the development of Soviet

Azerbaijan, but also to the triumphant building of new, independent and sovereign Azerbaijan.

It was also a happy coincidence that the moral stance of the two families, fathered by two men with the same surname - Aziz Aliyev and Alirza Aliyev - overlapped. In our book<sup>14</sup> dedicated to Heydar Aliyev, we detailed the story of his parents, while readers learn about Aziz Aliyev and his family in this book dedicated to Zarifa Aliyeva.

In addition to the story, I would like to describe some more episodes related to this famous family: let's talk about the brother of Zarifa khanum - Doctor of Medical Science Tamerlan Aliyev.

Journalist Zarifa Bashirgizi remembers: "...He had just got back on his feet after a bad illness. We would talk for just five or ten minutes every time we met. 'He shouldn't be tired out too much,' warned his wife, Tamilla khanum. Indeed, I sensed how hard it was for Tamerlan muallim to speak.

When the article was ready, I stopped by their home to take photos related to his father. The room was full of flowers and there was a big cake on the table. That day was Tamerlan muallim's seventy-fifth birthday. Colleagues also visited to congratulate him. After returning to the editorial office I asked to put the article in tomorrow's issue of the journal - it was our gift to the birthday hero. He was very pleased with our "compliment" and moved to tears when he discovered that the article also discussed his father."

In that article Z. Bashirgizi outlines milestones of Tamerlan Aliyev's life and scientific ventures. Tamerlan Aziz oglu Aliyev was born in 1921 in the village Shahtakhti of Nakhichevan. Later his family moved to Baku. After graduating from the State Medical Institute of Azerbaijan he worked in a research studies institute, then in the State Medical Institute, rising from a resident physician to the rank of professor and head of the Department of Eye Diseases.

He trained twenty-five Candidates of Science, five Doctors of Science and earned the gratitude of hundreds of patients

<sup>14</sup> Andriyanov V.I., Miralamaov H.F. - Heydar Aliyev, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Moscow, publishing house "Molodaya Gvardiya."

who speak of his fruitful scientific endeavours. He is the author of more than two hundred scientific works and ten monographs. Tamerlan Aliyev was awarded many orders and medals and the State Prize of Azerbaijan. He was the Chairman of the Academic Council of the Medical Institute and Chief Therapeutic of the Ministry of Health...

Journalist Z. Bashirgizi marks the fine humanly qualities of Tamerlan Aliyev, his medical talent and professional competence, combined with empathy and precision.

**Alifaddin Abdullayev**, a colleague of Tamerlan Aliyev, characterises him concisely: "Tamerlan literally could not have allowed himself to step on an ant. He was a true man - a kind, attentive and selfless man."

In 1997, when Tamerlan Aliyev died, **the President Heydar Aliyev** said the following words at his funeral: "The death of Tamerlan is a severe loss for our family and for me. At the same time his death is a serious loss for medicine, academic development and the scientific world of Azerbaijan."

Tamerlan was a close friend of mine for many years. I met him fifty years ago and then we became relatives. Throughout those years he was loyal to me. He was a man of inherent talent... and at the same time a selfless and hard-working one. He always loved his profession, and with this love he served people, achieving a worthy place in society... He made his own contribution to the progress of medical science of Azerbaijan, healing tens of thousands of people, giving them a new lease of life.

Tamerlan was an eminent representative of Azerbaijani intelligentsia and an extraordinarily modest person. He stood out for his acumen, experience and composure... He always tried to establish good relations between people and did only good to others, trying to bring people together.

His other distinguishing characteristic was his self-forgetfulness.

He received distinguished titles, wrote many scientific works and carried out great services to his country. However, Tamerlan Aliyev never set his eyes on any government office, never thought of making that a career. Not only that, he rejected such offers on numerous occasions. That is what I remember. He wanted to work only in medicine, his specialty. I would like

to point out once more: he was offered a position in the Ministry of Health several times, but he dismissed all these proposals, because he was fond of his profession and didn't want to be transferred to other fields.

He took after his father, the late Aziz Aliyev, with his generosity, sophistication, intelligence, straightforwardness and love for mankind.

However, what I appreciated most was his loyalty. People go through hard times at different stage of their lives. I had such times during the fifty years of our friendship. Tamerlan always remained a courageous and faithful friend. In my opinion, the finest human attributes are sincerity and loyalty. Tamerlan possessed both. I would say that he was a great example of these qualities."

It is not hard to notice that in all characteristics and little touches, if you put the portraits of the representatives of two well-known families related to the central character of our narration beside each other, similar moral values are present - love for mankind, modesty, selflessness and loyalty, so that, in my opinion, we can talk of genetic inheritance and succession of highest moral foundations.

But let's revert to our central character and listen to new witnesses, memories of whom add the finishing touches to her image.

**Rafiq Gambarov** remembers how professional fortune brought Zarifa khanum Aliyeva and his cousin together. Nazim Taghizadeh was working as a doctor in the anesthesia and reanimation department. Zarifa khanum invited the young specialist to study eye physiology and occupational eye diseases within the domestic air conditioning plant laboratory. She chose him based on Nazim Taghizadeh's valuation of the scientific activity and research preferences, brilliantly demonstrated in his achievements. These achievements were possible thanks to professional support and personal concern of Zarifa khanum Aliyeva. Nazim Taghizadeh defended his candidate's dissertation, then doctoral thesis and became a professor. But, unfortunately, the young scientist departed life too early, when he was just forty-nine...

R. Gambarov remembers the respect and adoration with which Nazim would speak of his supervisor. His monograph

"Operative therapy and pathologies of visual pigments and optic canals" includes the inscription: "In loving memory of my dear tutor and scientific supervisor Zarifa Aliyeva."

R. Gambarov says: "At that time I was a professional cameraman and would visit Nazim in the laboratory (*Husseynbala Miralamov*) in my spare time, and ask him about his developments. There was an ad hoc surgery in the plant built by Zarifa khanum where workers would receive medical care. This was, in itself, a progressive innovation.

I have the honour of knowing Zarifa Aliyeva personally. In 1984 director Eldar Guliyev made a film called *The Legend of the Silver Lake*. I was the chief cameraman. Eldar muallim introduced me to Zarifa Aliyeva after the sneak preview. She was a straightforward and nice person and one could sense her honesty. Her eyes shone with sincerity. She expressed her gratitude for the film and said that she enjoyed it very much.

I would like to tell a story which is etched in my memory. It was the autumn of 1992. It was a terrible time. Well-known socio-political events of Azerbaijan's contemporary history were alternating like frames of a news reel. As in all other fields, the movie industry was stagnated. A friend of mine, Tofiq Ismayilov, informed me that, on commission of the Azenergo Industrial Group, he was shooting a full-length film dedicated to the anniversary of energy production in Azerbaijan, and invited me to help. At that time the movie industry was headed by Muslim Imanov and we would often go to his place to discuss filming. He recommended that we fly to Nakhichevan, saying that if there are only two people well-acquainted with energy production, one of them definitely would be Heydar Aliyev. It was the time when Heydar Aliyev had just returned from Moscow to Nakhichevan, and was elected Chairman of the Supreme Mejlis (Parliament) of the Autonomous Republic.

In those days, Nakhichevan lived in difficult conditions due to economic warfare implemented by Armenia. The population was experiencing fear and discouragement. There was a severe shortage of natural gas and electricity... We stayed in the Tabriz hotel... We met Heydar Aliyev in the late evening. He welcomed us affably and, hearing about the purpose of our visit, hesitated for a moment.

'They will trouble you if they learn that you are here', he said, not concealing his anxiety. But we insisted. Finally he agreed. We spent nearly three months over several visits in Nakhichevan. We filmed for fifteen days on every visit, returned to Baku, reviewed shootings and then went back to Nakhichevan. I would like to say that the film proved to be excellent. It remains in the state archive to this day.

During a break from shooting I said to the hero of our film: 'Heydar Aliyev, I had a cousin who was one of Zarifa khanum's best trainees...' He gave me a sharp look: 'Who?'

'Nazim Taghizadeh.'

Aliyev thought for a few seconds: 'Yes... Zarifa khanum used to praise him a lot. There were two of them, the other's name was Rasim... Yes, Rasim Hajiyev. I remember once she said that she had two Ph.D. students in her laboratory and they weren't allowed to defend their dissertations in Moscow, at the Institute of Eye Diseases. I phoned the Rector of the institute and the matter was settled immediately. They both defended their dissertations.'

I was amazed by his infallible memory. He'd remembered in great detail an episode that occurred fifteen years ago, knew the names and surnames of two young Ph.D. students whom he helped by request of Zarifa khanum.

Zarifa Aliyeva left her mark in the hearts of many people with her consideration, by helping in scientific endeavours, or by restoring vision ..."

**Hadi Rajabli, a deputy of Milli Mejlis (Parliament of Azerbaijan) and Chairman of the Committee on Social Policy**, remembers: "...In the city of Lankaran we lived in the same neighborhood as Asaf muallim's family. Asaf muallim was a descendant of the Talishkhanov family. A relative of my mother, Mirkhanum, was the wife of Asaf muallim. On a nice day in June, two cars stopped by our front door. A tall, well-built colonel and good-looking woman of a gentle nature got out of one of them. They were Heydar Aliyev, then holding an important position in the security service, and his wife Zarifa khanum. Other guests were the chief of the KGB's Lankaran branch, Gassimov, and his wife, sister of Heydar Aliyev, Shafiga khanum, the chemistry teacher at the No. 1 school of



Lankaran. Us local boys looked at the gallant officer with admiration.

Zarifa khanum was lively chatting to her husband, looking at him with pride. Doctor Mirkhanum came out in dressed in velvet (an expensive material back then) to welcome the guests.

It was 1963. The emotional warmth and sincerity of this beautiful couple's relationship is photographed in my memory. As a tenth-form 'country boy' I saw an ideal couple which I wanted to grow to be like...

The next time I saw Zarifa khanum was in Baku during my study at the Higher Party School, when we students were taken to the air conditioning plant to familiarise ourselves with the activity of its party's organisation. We were led by the Secretary of the Party Committee - Chinghiz muallim. The day included a discussion on the social security of the workers. Prevention of occupational illnesses was a matter of paramount importance for plant managers. Passing by one of the medical rooms I noticed the quiet and calm conduct of the people in there. Suddenly a door opened and I saw the very same nice-looking and fair-faced woman who I'd seen fourteen years ago. It was Zarifa khanum, with an incredible sense of familiarity. On impulse, she came up and greeted me with that respectful and equally warm welcome of hers.

Later I learnt that she was engaged there, at a scientific research unit related to eye diseases, and selflessly advocated better working conditions and preservation of the plant workers' health. Glancing at me, she said: 'I must have seen you somewhere before, your face is very familiar to me...' I relayed her visit to Lankaran and told her that I was helping the master of the house to host guests, as his neighbour... Zarifa khanum remembered that distant event with a kind smile.

I want to note that the honorable Heydar Aliyev and his family loved the land of Lankaran. The Republic's leader once visited Lankaran with his wife and son, Ilham. He wanted, like in the times before his appointment as the nation's leader, just to go for a walk around, meander along the streets, pass squares and parks, feast his eyes on forests and the picturesque scenery of the city, and delight in the captivating nature of those places. He especially enjoyed boat tours on the Khanbulanchay reservoir."

Nowadays we talk a lot about preserving our wealth of national heritage and analyse other country's methods. We look at our history, traditions and customs and think of the foundations of our ancestors... Yet, when looking at modern life and remembering the married couple, Heydar and Zarifa Aliyev, and the harmony of their relationship, looking at their children and relatives, considering their service to people and love for their homeland, we realise: such people, such families, serve as a shining examples that are worthy of aspiring to.

Family is a sanctuary, a fundamental part of life and a simple social unit. Its most secure foothold is the housekeeper, such as the wife, mother and symbol of love, Zarifa khanum.

As it has been said, she was not only the wife but also a fellow fighter of Heydar Aliyev. Below is a quote, characterising her values: "I had a very awkward and troublesome job, but a smooth and safe private life. My wife was a woman of the highest virtue. I loved her very much. Like her father, Zarifa Aliyeva studied medicine and became a professor of eye diseases. She was my strongest and wisest companion in life. She died in Moscow, in 1985. I was profoundly shocked by her death. Later I got a myocardial infection and was in hospital for a long time. Not long before her death, Zarifa insisted that our children should get married. 'I hope it will happen soon,' she would say, as if she felt her close departure. She herself selected our daughter-in-law. Shortly before her death she went to Baku, met with the present partner of Ilham and we celebrated the wedding in Moscow. We lived in a dacha allocated by Politburo, forty-five kilometers from Moscow. The Aliyev family was very happy..."

Here is how **Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan**, remembers those days and talks about his family: "We met twenty-five years ago in Baku, at a concert, and got married literally after a few months. We have been together since then. We have beautiful children and we are proud of them. We are a very close-knit family. I think that close relationships within his family is the greatest asset a man can ever have. Family is the most important thing; it is the pillar of society. The upbringing and nurturance of children within their families is something that cannot be substituted by education in a school or college. When children witness a good

relationship between their parents, when they see and feel love, mutual understanding and tenderness, they grow up to be good men and women. I have a very happy family life and have been living with my beloved wife for the last twenty-five years, though it seems to me as if we got married yesterday. But when I see that my daughters are now more than twenty years old, I begin to think that maybe I am not that young anymore. Nonetheless, when I see my ten-year-old son, I say to myself: 'No, I am still a young man if I have such little child!' A man's family is something very private for him and I don't wish to elaborate on this topic. When I am home after work and see the smiles on the faces of my family members and tenderness in their eyes, I forget all the problems, worries and complications related to my work and plunge into the world of the good and love."

The homely joys of her son, Ilham, always inspired Zarifa khanum with hope. The relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law was distinguished by a special warmth, care, sensitivity and sincerity. The newlywed Mehriban khanum, just starting family life, was apprenticing as the housekeeper and, in a manner of speaking, was going through a large school of experience. I believe that the words of Mehriban Aliyeva, said to Oleg Seganov, a correspondent of the newspaper *Izvestiya* on May 31, 2005, would be of great interest to readers:

- *You are an ophthalmologist by occupation. Tell me, please, did you unlearn your profession?*

- I haven't been working in my specialisation for a long time, so it is quite normal that I have forgotten a lot. Ophthalmology is a field of medicine that doesn't tolerate breaks at all. After one or two months of inactivity you have to make up for what you've missed.

- *What or who made you to choose this field?*

- My mother was an orientalist. But in her youth she dreamt of becoming a doctor and applied to the medical institute after school. For some reasons her parents were against her choice and succeeded in convincing mother to change her mind and she became a philologist. This unfulfilled wish of my mother determined my choice. Besides, my occupational choice was also made under the profound influence of Ilham's mother -

Zarifa khanum, who was a doctor and ophthalmologist. Unfortunately, my association with Zarifa khanum did not last long. We met, and in 1983 Zarifa khanum was gone. But I still live with the memories of this talented and beautiful woman.

An extract from the interview with the **President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, the Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO and ISESCO, Deputy of the Parliament Mehriban Aliyeva**, given to the newspaper 'Panorama' on April 27, 1996:

- *Tell me about yourself, about your childhood profession, and your parents?*

- My parents are scientists. Mother was a Professor of Philology. During the last years of her life she was in the charge of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. Father is a physical scientist and member of the Academy of Sciences... I finished school with a gold medal and entered the State Medical Institute of Azerbaijan. After a year, in connection with the family relocation to Moscow, I transferred to Moscow Medical Institute named after Sechenov. After graduating with an honours degree, I worked as a doctor in the Research Institute for Eye Diseases.

- *How did you get acquainted with your husband?*

- In those days Lili Ivanova, a Bulgarian singer, was on the tour in Baku and giving a concert at the 'Republic' Palace. We met at that concert.

- *Does your husband help you in household chores and in bringing up the children?*

- No, he doesn't help with household chores. As for upbringing and educating the children, well, we never particularly interfere and we try not to lecture them. In my opinion, the best attitude to upbringing is to create the right atmosphere within the family. Fortunately, our children are prudent and amenable.

- *And what about you? Do you help your husband in his work? Does he share his problems with you and does he listen to your advice?*

- Ilham gets very tired in his work and at home he tries to distract himself from problems. That is where I help him.

- *How do you spend your leisure time? Do you like going to concerts, going on visits or do you prefer to spend your spare time at home, in the heart of your family?*

- I like to rest with my family, although I try not to miss interesting concerts, fairs and presentations.

- *Which meals does your husband like?*

- In general, Ilham is not too fussy about his food, although he prefers ethnic dishes. He loves pilaff.

- *How would you like to see the future of your children?*

- First of all, I want them to be healthy and full of happiness. I wish them as many bright and happy days as possible. And when they grow up, I would like to see that they became worthy and brilliant people...

A quote from the narration of **Sevil Aliyeva** about her mother: "You know, she was an extraordinarily modest person. Even during official events held in the Palace named after Lenin (presently: the Palace named after Heydar Aliyev - *H.M.*), mum would enter the hall first when it was near-empty or, when the hall was full, we would go upstairs and descend to our seats from the upper rows.

She didn't like to present herself to an audience like minister's wives, deliberately making an entrance and sashaying from the lower rows upwards along the aisles. She would always ask the guards: 'Give a warning to the TV crew not to film us.' As for the joint visits of my mother and father to such events, this was due to his deep affection for her. He couldn't live without her...

My mother was committed to her children and family, and her family always stood first on her list of priorities. Father knew that mum possessed a great scientific potential and talent, therefore he always supported her career aspirations. I remember her sitting down to write her articles, monographs and scientific works.

On our trips to Moscow she always met with her colleagues and other ophthalmologists. She hadn't any tendency to gossip, nor did she possess any desire to be famous or stand head and shoulders above the rest. Her every achievement and success is the result of scientific study and hard work. Father, aware of her talents, wouldn't let her potential remain unrealised. You ask about discordance of opinions and disputes - they would

argue over that: father always said that she should not stop and continue her studies. He always encouraged her to do that."

**Mikhail Zabelin**, the parliamentary deputy who worked as the assistant of the First Secretary of the Central Committee at this time, once told the author: "Zarifa Aliyeva was an extraordinary person. Sometimes I would phone her five or six times a day. Heydar Aliyev phoned home infrequently; mostly it was Zarifa khanum who would call: 'Did Heydar Aliyev arrive?'

'Yes,' I would answer. 'He did.'

'How is he?'

'He's all right'

'Don't forget to give him his medicine and carrot juice.'

'I won't forget, Zarifa Aliyeva.' He would drink a cup of carrot juice and take his medicine at eleven o'clock. Zarifa Aliyeva would call again a bit later: 'Don't let him to have his dinner there. I made steamed cutlets and will serve them soon. Let him eat.' After a while she would call again for some other reason. In short, she always was anxious about his health. Most men of his ranking would be irritated by such deep concern, but not Heydar Aliyev. Indeed, he liked this solicitude, for he loved his wife very much."

**Lidiya Rassulova** remembers a funny story that Zarifa Aliyeva told her during the interval at the premiere of Rauf Hajiyev's operetta 'At the crossways', at the Theatre of Musical Comedy. All members of the Bureau of the Central Committee, headed by the First Secretary, came to watch the operetta. Zarifa khanum told her of a time when she visited her children in Moscow. When she was going to fly back to Baku, Tsvigun offered her a seat in his executive jet. As soon as the plane gained altitude, there was a breakdown: the plane's landing gear jammed and didn't retract. The pilot in command announced that there were problems. Landing with full fuel tanks would be risky. For a while they didn't inform passengers but, looking through windows, they knew that the plane was circling. Looking down, Zarifa khanum noticed a fire brigade and ambulance van near the landing strip and thought any second now something terrible might happen. She was most pained by the thought: 'How are they going to inform Heydar Aliyev of this, how he will pass on this news?'

Lidiya Rassulova comments: "In such a grave situation this woman thought not of herself, but of her husband, worrying how he will endure such a potential loss..."

**Heydar Aliyev's Chief Guard Aleksandr Ivanov** was also on that ill-fated plane and remembers, with admiration, the striking qualities of this woman: "The incident occurred when Heydar Aliyev was the First Secretary of the Central Committee. One morning we were on the way to our cottage from the swimming pool. Heydar Aliyev said: 'Sasha, fly to Moscow today and bring Zarifa Aliyeva back home.' Such instances require the relevant operational procedures: technical certification of the plane, pilots, etc. I called Moscow, booked a seat for myself and flew to Moscow in the afternoon. In Moscow I was welcomed by Yuri Kamayev. He put me in a hotel and booked our plane seats. That evening, Zarifa Aliyeva found me and said that 'papa' (meaning daddy - we used to call Heydar Aliyev this among ourselves) called and said she would fly to Baku in a charter flight with Tsvigun, who was flying from Moscow to attend a KGB meeting. As Lieutenant General, Tsvigun had the authority to use charter flights, but I had two tickets for an ordinary flight and the airliner's crew was certified against standards of our operative wing.

Heydar Aliyev, like other members of Politburo, did not have his own, personal plane. At that time there was a special '55th squadron' which served members and alternate members of the Political Bureau and heads of foreign states.

To be brief, 'papa' called in the evening to say that we had to leave with Tsvigun in a charter plane which was in the airport 'Vnukovo - 1'. Zarifa Aliyeva took her seat at Tsvigun's side and I stationed myself at a close distance to her, alongside two of Tsvigun's officer bodyguards. There were five passengers altogether on that plane. We got off the ground. A stewardess came up, handing out hard candies. Suddenly the chassis began to make strange sounds. I am an 'experienced' airline passenger, and did not like those sounds, though I preferred not to show my anxiety and kept quiet. I knew Tsvigun's bodyguards but was not on intimate terms with them. Out of the corner of my eye, I looked through the window and saw that we were circling in the air and couldn't gain altitude. When the plane completed its third circle, Tsvigun ordered:

'Go and find out what is wrong with the plane.' His bodyguard returned, his face ashen: 'Guys, something has happened, the stewardess is crying and the crew have locked the door of the flight deck. I couldn't make them open it.' Hearing this, Zarifa Aliyeva immediately sat at my side. I could feel her anxiety. 'What is going on?' she asked. 'Nothing to worry about. Everything is all right and we are going to rise in a moment...' I answered.

'When are we going to rise?'

The plane descended again. The aircraft rose up and descended five times. Later we learnt that by doing this they were burning the fuel. On the second loop of the plane, fire squads were already alongside the landing strip.

'An ambulance!' Zarifa Aliyeva took my hands and, can you imagine, said nothing about herself: 'If Heydar Aliyev and Ilham hear of this then what is going to happen? How will they endure this?' Zarifa Aliyeva always cared for herself last."

**Artist Tahir Salahov** is an old friend of the Aliyevs. Upon meeting him I asked what he could tell me about the relationship between Zarifa khanum and Heydar Aliyev. "They complemented each other in a remarkable manner," answered Tahir Salahov. "I have many memories... For example, I might talk about our meetings when Heydar Aliyev was in Moscow for study or practical training; Zarifa Aliyeva would call from Baku and say: 'Tahir, take care of him. Don't leave him alone. He is away from home and I worry.' She was a very attentive woman..."

**Social leader Svetlana Gassimova** remembers: "I witnessed how much love and respect people had for Zarifa Aliyeva, the wife of the First Secretary of the Union Republic who was in Baku celebrating the 60th anniversary of Soviet Azerbaijan.

I had the chance to talk closely with Zarifa Aliyeva when we were welcoming delegates at the anniversary. Voluntarily or not, we were comparing what the First Secretaries' wives were talking about. Zarifa Aliyeva was a woman of the highest sophistication, deepest knowledge and an open mind, and at the same time, was very sincere to others. There was an atmosphere of tenderness around her. Zarifa Aliyeva contributed to the formation of the great and worthy perception

of Azerbaijan and Azerbaijani women. She was a truly noble Azerbaijani khanum."

**People's Artist of USSR Muslim Magomayev remembers:**

"Once, at a classical music concert, Heydar Aliyev's wife Zarifa khanum saw a man on the back row fall asleep and said to her husband: 'Why do you force them to come here? You see that man there? He is asleep.' Heydar Aliyev answered: 'Don't mention it, tomorrow I will "wake" him up...' Some such 'victims' considered those symphony concerts severe 'torment', as if no one could think of more terrible punishment. This went on until Heydar Aliyev's departure to a new office in Moscow: they grumbled but still listened to classical music. Well, it is Heydar Aliyev's merit that many of them became fans of it.

...Heydar Aliyev also experienced personal sorrow - he lost Zarifa Aliyeva. She was a wonderful person: wise and full of mirth, blessed with musical talent and a good piano player. She liked to play to her husband while he sang - Heydar Aliyev had a pleasing tenor-baritone voice. In fact, he loved music. You could recognise his thirst for theatre and the stage. From his recently published memoirs, we learned that there was a time when he dreamt of becoming an artist. We didn't know this before.

Once he told me how small his wedding was. After registering the marriage in the Civil Registry Office, he bought a kilogram of the most expensive sweetmeats - this was all they could afford. Newlyweds didn't have the money for a rich feast...

Tamara and I were frequent guests of the Aliyevs both in Moscow and in Baku. We were especially close to Zarifa Aliyeva and we always had something to talk about. As usual, it was her who would call first, as we hate to remind ourselves. Then Zarifa Aliyeva was gone...

We were at their place shortly before her death. At the table, Heydar Aliyev proposed a toast to her. It was not the first time that he spoke warmly of her in our presence. However, he was always brief and preferred to conceal his feelings - apparently, Heydar Aliyev preferred it if others spoke of her - but this time he began to talk in detail about Zarifa Aliyeva and her life... Even though Heydar Aliyev mentioned love, I felt some grief in his words. The tone of his voice sounded unusual, as if he

was giving a farewell speech, although he didn't say a word related to Zarifa Aliyeva's well-being. She began to thank him - and was unable to stop her tears...

When Tamara and I recalled that evening later, we realised that we'd both felt as if there was something in the air, and we both guessed that it was to do with Zarifa Aliyeva, although we weren't able to guess exactly what it was. She kept on calling us, and appeared to be her usual self on the phone. Two months passed. She called us for the last time just a week before her departure, talking with her familiar kindness. And suddenly - the news lashed like a whip!

At the funeral, I saw Heydar Aliyev crying for the first time. I knew him as a strong, brave and restrained man, but now... When we approached him, we saw an entirely different man - he was like an abandoned child... I felt a pang in my chest at this sight... He got to his feet, kissed us and said: 'You can't think how much she loved you... as much as she loved her own children...'

A year passed and we went to the cemetery in memory of Zarifa Aliyeva. Heydar Aliyev asked me to sing at her grave. He arranged an accompanying record for me. I lowly mouthed the song of Uzeyir Hajibeyov 'Sensiz' ('Without you') which Zarifa Aliyeva adored. It was how we bade another farewell to her (afterwards, Heydar Aliyev moved her remains to Azerbaijan and reburied her).

I dedicated my song, 'Elegy', to Zarifa Aliyeva, composed from a poem by Nikolay Dobronravov. I remember that Heydar Aliyev called me when he heard me performing the song on television: 'What a song it was! I was crying.'

I composed it after Zarifa Aliyeva's death.

There is another song dedicated to her, composed by Sevil Aliyeva who is a musically-talented person. Apparently, she inherited this ability from her mother. Heydar Aliyev gave his daughter the name of the central character of Fikret Amirov's opera, 'Sevil'. Once, when Sevil was at our house, she sat at the piano and began to play something. I liked the music very much and asked: 'What are you playing? It sounds unfamiliar.'

'Oh, nothing, just a song composed by me.'

'So it is your music?'

'Yes, I dedicated it to my mother...'  
'With some minor reworks and it will turn into a very good song. I would like to sing it.'  
We worked on it and asked Nikolay Dobronravov to write a poem for the music. We got the soulful lyrics of 'Vozvratis, Lyubimaya' ('Come Back, My Beloved One') which I included in my repertoire. Afterwards, I sang several more songs of Sevil..."

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Chapter Eleven

## LAST RESPECTS

So quickly this transitory life is over  
Love and be loved - is what I may say

Ashig Alesger

Alexander Budberg, a Russian journalist who interviewed Heydar Aliyev once, couldn't conceal his astonishment upon learning about his large-scaled multifaceted activities: "What lies behind your achievements?" Heydar Aliyev's answer was a short one: "It requires being fond of one's work."

Alexander Budberg reflected on this concise explanation: "He was too modest to finish his thought, saying: '...being fond of one's work as I always was.' If that's the case, all problems would be solved."

Here is another characteristic dialogue between **Gennady Maltsev, the Chief Editor of 'Journalist' magazine, Secretary of Russian Union of Journalists** and Heydar Aliyev:

- *How many hours a day do you spend working?*
- Well, what day is it today?
- *Saturday.*

- If I am working on Saturday, then you can visit me tomorrow too and I will still be here. How do I work? For me, hours don't exist. No Saturdays or Sundays in my life. I am at work those days. I work even harder those days. Why do I work so much? Because I see questions which need to be answered, jobs to be completed. When I come home on Saturday and see that there are urgent matters to be settled before Monday then I work on Sunday too. And so it goes on.

I remember that when I was in Azerbaijan, my late wife would say at times: 'Listen, you are the head of the Republic,

no one is supervising you.' My wife was an eye doctor, professor and doctor of medical sciences. In her office there was a routine procedure to be performed: they confirm as their attendance by signing a logbook every morning. Naturally, every morning she would sign this logbook. She used to say: 'No one controls you. However, we are under control and if I'm late for work I feel bad.' Her colleagues treated her with great respect and also they knew that she was my wife... She would say: 'Why do you rush for work? You can leave a bit later. Why are you going to work today? No one works on Sundays.' I always would answer: 'This is customary; I can't do things in other ways.'

A quote from the interview of Heydar Aliyev, by **Irfan Ulku, a Turkish journalist**: "I don't know what tiredness is. I work eighteen or nineteen hours every day. It is in my nature, an inherent quality. In the past I tried to develop the socialist economy and socialist regime. Yes, it is true and I don't want to deny it. However, I always wanted the people of Azerbaijan to benefit from this regime and I did my best for this purpose. For fourteen years I was in the charge of the Republic."

**Elmira Akhundova, a well-known journalist and writer**, in her artistic-journalistic work dedicated to the life and activities of Heydar Aliyev and containing numerous memoirs and comments made by his close acquaintances, presents remarkable evidence of **Akram Salimzadeh** who was responsible for the safety at governmental ceremonies. The account, told by him, contains an example which touches on the appealing solicitude that Zarifa Aliyeva had for her husband, the head of the Republic: "In 1980 we were celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Soviet Azerbaijan; heads of other Union Republics gathered in Baku - Rashidov, Masherov, Shevardnadze and others with their ladies. Celebrations culminated in a banquet organised in 'Gulustan' Palace; guests arrived at the Palace in 'Tschaikas' (Seagull - a Soviet Union brand of car). Zarifa khanum Aliyeva also came. She approached the Chief of Security Vladimir Bantserov and informed him anxiously:

'Heydar Aliyev hasn't had a bite of food all morning... He didn't have even his breakfast. I am worried.'

'Don't worry about him,' said Volodya Bantserov, 'I suppose, he got a snack somewhere.'

'No. No, you don't know him. I am sure that he is hungry...'

**A. Salimzadeh** tells further about how women of the first secretaries stood: "Wife of Rashidov danced with other guests. Mrs. Shevardnadze 'emits light with her beauty', while Zarifa khanum languishes about, worrying and waiting for her husband. Finally Heydar Aliyev arrived in a 'Volga' (all four Tchaikas were placed at the disposal of distinguished guests).

'Where were you? How do you feel?'

He had no time to answer his wife: he was busy with guests, welcoming them all and inviting them to the hall... Zarifa khanum introduced Bantserov to guests: 'Do you know who this is? This man was sitting with Heydar Aliyev.' With that, she left the security officers and also headed towards the hall."

Heydar Aliyev liked to travel outside the Republic for holidays, though the chance would not often come, and it was even less frequent when he was in the charge of the KGB. His daughter, Sevil khanum, recalls the trip to beautiful Leningrad and from there, by train, to the Baltic Republic. This happened in 1966 when Heydar Aliyev was a student in the stages of executive development of the KGB, held in Moscow.

In her book, 'Heydar Aliyev. Personality and Time', **Elmira Akhundova** provides interesting details told by **Sevil khanum**, characterising the holidays and leisure times of the Aliyevs: "In the wintertime, on Sundays, we would go out of town, to Zaghulba... In the summer, we would move there for the whole season. Our family's social circle consisted only of our neighbours... Among the neighbours were family friends. I remember Vitaliy Sergeevich Krasilnikov and Nadejda Alekseyevna Krasilnikova (Krasilnikov was in the charge of Republic's KGB at the time). We would often gather together. My mum was on friendly terms with Nadejda Alekseyevna, and I with her daughter Anechka. Dad and mum liked to have fun, to joke, and they liked feasts. Mum would play the piano and dad liked singing a lot. We would all have a great time. Sometimes we would even have dinner on the beach.

Dad liked swimming. As for my brother and I, we could say that we grew up by the sea. I spent my childhood in the sanatorium of the KGB located in Bilgah. When father became

the First Secretary and we moved to Zaghulba, to his country residency, I missed my friends from the sanatorium....

We would go to Yalta on family breaks during every holiday dad took. There were government dachas in Yalta. After breakfast, we would go for a swim and come back for dinner. Dad would tinker with work papers and call Baku by the special phone line. In the evenings we would watch films. Dad and mum would sometimes visit Leonid Ilyich Brejnev's dacha. Mum was friends with Viktoriya Petrovna Brejneva."

From the conversations between the **Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Elmira Akhundova**, we learn about the particulars of everyday life of the country residency's inhabitants:

This dacha was previously known as 'the dacha of Teymur Guliyev', in the name of the Secretary of the Central Committee who held his office during the rule of M.J.Baghirov, and later became Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

This two-storey house was built on a large area of land with lots of fruit trees. One of our colleagues jokingly called this house a 'social prison', for we were working with people who were also our neighbours, and we would see our colleagues there too. It was a shared territory and fences did not separate the houses. We would get together to watch films in the guest house.

- *Have you seen Heydar Aliyev's family in an informal atmosphere? Have you ever celebrated any family occasions or birthday parties together? What kind of a person would your chief become outside work hours?*

- Actually, we would often meet at our homes, but not for feasting or birthday celebrations. They were not his favourite events.

- *Then why would you meeting?*

- We used to get together in the holidays: New Year celebrations, on November 7, May 1, etc., and not all holidays at that.

- *Could you tell us about your meetings? What course would they take? Would you organise parties or feasts?*

- Why not?... We had guest houses in both Baku and Zaghulba where we would gather - all five families. Heydar Aliyev would be in high spirits and we would laugh and joke.

- *What do you talk about? Everyday matters, work or any other themes?*

- We could not talk about work... Zarifa khanum would always interrupt us jokingly: 'Enough about work.' She was quite handy at the piano. In fact, her whole family was musical. Zarifa khanum's sister, Gulara, was the leader of the 'Dan ulduzu' ('Morning star') band. Zarifa khanum enjoyed festivities and would accompany her husband on the piano while Heydar Aliyev sang with great pleasure.

- *Which songs were in his repertoire?*

- He performed mainly Azerbaijani songs, but also knew some Russian songs. I remember that in the middle of the 1970s, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Todor Jivkov, arrived in Baku with his daughter and son-in-law. During the banquet they performed a Bulgarian song together. Then Heydar Aliyev said: 'Let us too give our guests a song.'

And we sang in chorus, 'Podmoskovny'e vechera' ('Moscow Suburban Nights' - a famous song of Soviet times).

If you'd seen how Heydar Aliyev danced... a true professional. He danced with the same professionalism in all ethnic dances, waltzes and Western dances...

Former **Commander-in-Chief of Baku's Military District Anatoly Konstantinov** has an occasion to share when at a table with Heydar Aliyev. Anatoly Ustinovich remembers: "At parties and banquets, Heydar Aliyev behaved not as a statesman, but freely and at ease as a simple citizen. At such festivities, he and Zarifa khanum understood each other perfectly - they were in harmony. Zarifa khanum would play the piano, while Heydar Aliyev would dance with all the ladies.

Most high-ranking officials don't like giving others any opportunity to speak once they begin talking. But he was something entirely different... My wife, many others and I would take the floor, name the pledge and tell stories.

Everyone would note that there existed a truly sensitive relationship between Heydar Aliyev and Zarifa khanum. Heydar Aliyev loved her very much.





Zarifa khanum Aliyeva  
delivers a speech  
at the ophthalmology  
conference,  
*October 18, 1977*



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva at the ophthalmology conference,  
*October 18, 1977*

Zarifa khanum Aliyeva with the participants at the ophthalmology  
conference, *October 18, 1977*





Professor-ophthalmologist Zarifa khanum Aliyeva  
at Moscow Book Fair, 1979

Zarifa khanum Aliyeva and her colleagues meet the employees  
of the magazine "Azerbaijan gadini" (Women of Azerbaijan), 1980



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva playing the piano. A photo portrait, 1981



Zarifa khanum  
Aliyeva at a polling  
station during  
elections for the  
Supreme Soviet  
of the USSR,  
1977



Zarifa and Heydar  
Aliyev,  
1981



Zarifa and Heydar Aliyev meet the figures of music culture  
of Azerbaijan in Russia, 1981

Zarifa and Heydar Aliyev with Azerbaijani scientists, 1982





Zarifa khanum Aliyeva  
at the anniversary  
of Aziz Aliyev at the  
Azerbaijan Doctors  
Improvement Institute,  
named after  
Aziz Aliyev,  
1982



Engagement of Ilham Aliyev and Mehriban khanum, 1982

Heydar Aliyev and his wife Zarifa khanum, Arif Pashayev and  
his wife Aida Imanguliyeva at the wedding of Ilham and Mehriban,  
January 22, 1983



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva,  
1981



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva with her family, 1983



Zarifa khanum Aliyeva with her family, 1983

Zarifa and Heydar Aliyev with family, 1983





Zarifa and Heydar Aliyev with their granddaughter Zarifa, 1984

Zarifa and Heydar Aliyev, 1984



Zarifa and Heydar Aliyev with their granddaughter Leyla, 1984



...Eighteen years later two loving hearts joined forever.  
Sculptor: Omar Eldarov, 1989

were not a doctor and politician's wife, she would have become a musician.

As indeed Heydar Aliyev would have been an excellent painter or actor. He would deliver his speeches in accordance with the skill and talent of true actors."

**Sevil khanum** said: "He would take Zarifa khanum and the children when he was going to Moscow for plenary meetings. He couldn't face being away from us and we would go everywhere, all four of us together. In 1976, when he was elected as an associate member of Politburo, we were with him too. We were so happy and so proud of him!"

Talking about the scrupulous attitude of her father toward his external appearance and dress, Sevil Aliyeva remembers that choosing a shirt for him was a big challenge, as he liked shirts with a certain kind of tailoring and he preferred the classic style, while the tie's knot had to fit the collar perfectly...

"Mum would buy ties and shirts for him. In general, he liked ties in bright colors and would say that they added a beautiful hue to his face. When selecting ties for him I would experience some difficulty: colour, patterns and knot of the tie - each had to catch his fancy. I remember bringing several light blue ties from London. He liked them so much that he wore a new one every day and said to me: 'You see, every day I wear another one.'"

**V. P. Nesterov** and **A. F. Brovkin** wrote that even in her final days, Zarifa Aliyeva didn't stop working. "Despite her illness, she called us from hospital and we talked about our families and work. Whilst Zarifa Aliyeva was in charge of the department and laboratory and was a talented scientist, doctor and teacher, she remained an attentive and tender woman, mother and grandmother.

We had worked at the clinic for more than thirty years and had seen many patients. Illnesses have an amazing property: they bring out a patient's true character more than ever. Some people withdraw into themselves and become unsociable, while others focus only on their illnesses and obsess about themselves, or there are patients who become capricious and exacting beyond measure.

But seriously ill Zarifa Aliyeva displayed dignity and strength of mind."

**M. M. Krasnov** also notes the courage of Zarifa Aliyeva: "How she fought against the disease! The treatment was severe and painful and exhausted her, not only physically but also psychologically. However, neither I nor my acquaintances ever heard her complain. Up until the final moments of her life, Zarifa Aliyeva loved making plans for the future. Did she feel the approaching dissolution? Well, it is hard to answer that question. The majority of patients who feel it lapse from life. They become desperate and draw an invisible line between themselves and life and others. In this case, none of the aforementioned is true. Perhaps Zarifa Aliyeva knew that she had an incurable disease, but she tried to conceal this from surrounding people.

In 1984, we marked the Day of Medical Workers. It was the time when Zarifa Aliyeva was fighting against her fatal disease and very few people knew that it was incurable. I was sitting with the other members of the presidium when I suddenly saw her sitting next to her colleague, a professor who she valued (who was also a talented and extraordinary woman). They were having a lively conversation. Where did Zarifa Aliyeva get this strength from, this zest for life? Two weeks before her death she planned a work trip to somewhere distant: "Postgraduate students need my help!"

A quote from the heartfelt memoirs of **Nariman Hassanli**: "The Novo-Dyevitchiye cemetery is the Caaba, Mecca and Medina of orthodox Christians. There lies the bodies of two eminent representatives of the Turkic world: great poet Nazim Hikmet... and Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor, Fellow of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, daughter of the great founder of healthcare services in Azerbaijan, Doctor of Medicine Aziz Aliyev Aliyev and wife of eminent political and social leader of modern Azerbaijan, Heydar Alirza oglu Aliyev.<sup>16</sup>

Every Thursday, at the grave of the unforgettable, beloved and honoured daughter of the Azerbaijani nation, you may see carnation flowers and red roses, brought there from Baku.

<sup>16</sup> Afterwards, remains of Zarifa khanum Aliyeva were reburied in Baku, in the Alley of Honor

I'll never forget that rainy, dull day. It seemed that all the flowers in Azerbaijan froze, as if standing guard in honour of our fellow citizen. To this well-known Moscow cemetery, came members of Azerbaijani intelligentsia, workers, peasants...

When lying in repose was nearing completion, an honourable Aghsaggal came up to Heydar Aliyev, not revealing his identity and with a wise sedateness so characteristic of our elders, said: 'Heydar, my son, keep your head up! You are the pride of a great nation, its incarnation! I lost four of my sons in the war and lived through so many other bereavements... So, as an Aghsaggal of our people, I want say: keep you head up like mountain peak, you are the beloved son of the Turkic worlds; People's poet Bakhtiyar Vahabzadeh saw how Turkish workers, working in Germany, went out to demonstrate in Magdeburg, Bonn and Frankfurt with banners: "Son of Turks - Leader of the Soviet Union'... A man must be able to go through his sorrow with fortitude. If such a globally-recognised and famous statesman like you, whose name is on the lips of his thankful nation, has friends, then he also may have many enemies. So, hold on tight! May Allah rest her soul in peace! May her grave be filled with the divine light! Look, all these people came to Moscow with you. I am one of the many thousands who worship you and are proud of your name...!"

A quote from the memoirs of the **Director of Oncological Center of Ministry of Health, Academician Jamil Aliyev**, brother of Zarifa Aliyeva: "I have never known such a sociable, responsive and kind person; such an attentive sister, merciful and affectionate mother, loyal and devoted wife like her. She was such a valiant, patriotic, dignified and righteous Turk woman... And I would like to see all Azerbaijani girls, as well as my daughters, aim for her height of absolute purity and sanctity..."

Recently, I even said to a correspondent of the newspaper 'Aydinlig', Dervish Javanshir, who wanted to write an article about my sister: 'I wish to God that my daughter-in-law was like her. The word 'jan' (my soul) is constantly on her tongue. To me she was not a sister, but my mother... and which of her other values should I talk about? Would it be possible to list here all of her good deeds, things distinguished by nobility and



generosity? My sister sincerely took care of people. She, like a legendary healer, a 'loghman', would always search for and find remedies...'

I underwent difficult surgery: after my appendix was removed there were complications. If it wasn't for Zarifa and Heydar Aliyev who brought me back to life, I would not be talking to you right now. At the time, getting no sleep or rest, my sister was always beside me - encouraging and consoling me. At last, thanks to her unquenchable solicitude, compassion and mercifulness, I tore myself from death's door.

She approached her family members, Sevil, Ilham, and grandchildren (Leyla, Azer), with tenderness. The dark days of her disease's recurrence leaped into life and floated before my eyes. She tried to soothe us: 'I feel great, don't worry. Ilham, Sevil and Mahmud - go and do your homework. Don't be unhappy about me...' She tried to convince close friends and relatives who visited her that she was fine and getting out of bed. As a doctor, I understood how hard this was for her to do. I will never forget... I still hear the last words of my sister, said under her breath in a weak voice, though not deprived of her delicacy....

She seemed to vanish away day by day, like a burning candle. My sister Zarifa was fading away like a silent star. She was born in springtime and closed her eyes thirteen days before her birthday, leaving behind near ones and dear ones who she loved so much...

We all felt that her time on earth was coming to an end and that she was living her final days, final hours. Being born in the spring, she was surrounded by the flowers she loved so much... I think that she came into this world from another one full of vernal fragrances of zillions of flowers - red roses, golden narcissus... And on that fateful day, April 15, 1985, my sister, buried in that at Moscow cemetery, returned to that kingdom of flowers, into the 'arms' of near and dear Azerbaijani flowers..."

That April, poets of Azerbaijan were also mourning her death. **Bakhtiyar Vahabzadeh, the People's Poet of Azerbaijan** who was in Moscow that day, wrote with explicit sorrow in his 'Marsiya - requiem':

...and people flocking to your mourning in sorrow.  
Umbrellas as flowers, swimming over the crowd.  
May be your grave be filled with divine light!  
You went to your rest in the Novo-Dyevitchiye...  
You won honour with your merits and by right.  
While evil deeds bring scandal upon their doers  
Good deeds speak of glory and honour.  
And Man will leave his mark on Earth.  
And it is not a coffin or an Ark swimming over the crowd  
Marking the last milestone of eternal path,  
But the throne of the soul's eminence and grandeur!  
The heaven is overshadowed this spring day,  
The rain pouring down in despair.  
And "Sensiz" hurts, streaming shrilly.  
So bemoans you Uzeyir's<sup>17</sup> romance

Another eminent poet, a patriarch of Azerbaijani literature, Suleyman Rustam, also responded to this bereavement. In his poem, dedicated to memory of Zarifa khanum, he refers to Heydar Aliyev with words of sympathy and consolation:

...This day you will hear sorrow of hearts everywhere,  
Our Dear Heydar, all of us condole with you and understand  
How hard and painful is it for you. But keep your head up, as  
you always did.

... I see how deep your heart's wound is,  
I feel and see it from afar.  
You, the noble, great and simple man.  
May you be consoled forever<sup>18</sup>

Alima Aliyeva remembers that day of the grievous loss: "That sudden and bad news coming down to us on April 15 was like a stroke of misfortune. The shocking news of my spiritual parent's death shot me down. It was as if the whole earth was deserted and I felt like an orphan. Beloved, dear,

<sup>17</sup> Uzeir Hajibeyov - great Azerbaijani composer.

<sup>18</sup> The quote from the poem was translated into Russian by Siyavush Mamedzadeh.

adored, uncomplicated, irreplaceable Zarifa khanum left me... I mourned her as if I was mourning my mother.

...My eldest son was in Moscow at the time. I myself could not go to the funeral as I'd had a serious disease and the doctors wouldn't let me fly. Up to this day, my mind and heart are sore with regret that I wasn't there. I sent her family and children a telegram expressing my deepest sympathy, and when the funeral was televised I watched it with tears in my eyes.

My son and his wife visited the Novo-Dyevitchiye cemetery and laid flowers on her grave on behalf of our family.

The sudden death of Zarifa khanum burned many hearts... Up until now, it is hard for me to realise that I will not see her again, hear her voice, her advice. However, if today she is not with me physically, then spiritually she will be with me until my last breath.

Once again I give my blessings to Heydar Aliyev for her reburial in the homeland where she will be at rest from toil.

I often visit the Alley of Honour, pay homage to her grave and pray for her.

Twenty-four years have now passed, but I still cannot get used to this painful loss.

...When I feel sad, I visit her memorial. Standing by the marble statue, I look at her for hours, as if talking and sharing my grievances with her. May you rest in peace! Hallowed be thy name! May the soil of your beloved homeland which shelters you keep you safe in paradise!"

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*Chapter Twelve*

## THE LIGHT LEFT FOR PEOPLE

Forever imperishable, burning with the flame of struggle are  
Love and happiness, truth and genius  
**Samed Vurghun**

**Telman Gafar**, a correspondent for the 'Iki Sahil' ('Two Shores') newspaper who worked in the newsroom of AzTV in the 1980s, is another eyewitness of the sorrowful minutes of the last respects paid to Zarifa Aliyeva in Moscow: "When we learned that her body would be set down in the House of Scientists for people to pay their respects, and at her funeral would take place in the Novo-Dyevitchiye cemetery, two cameraman teams were urgently sent to Moscow. I always carry the memory of those sorrowful camera frames shot in the minutes of the last respects to Zarifa Aliyeva and her funeral.

The wife of Gorbachov, Raisa Maksimovna Gorbachova, also attended the ceremony. Heydar Aliyev stood by the head of the coffin. Ilham and Sevil stood on his right and left. Hundreds of thousands of people paid their last tribute to her.

The impression was that Zarifa khanum just went off to sleep, sank into a sea of carnations and roses brought from Azerbaijan. All our country was mourning her, watching the TV screen.

Tens of thousands of our fellow citizens who were living in Moscow or came from Azerbaijan or other cities of the USSR, bore her on their shoulders on the way to the cemetery. They say that Moscow has never seen such a crowded funeral cortege. The last moments are seared in my mind with the view of Zarifa Aliyeva and the heartfelt melody of the romance 'Sensiz', sang by Muslim Magomayev."

**P. Melikaslanova** writes in her memoirs: "The academician and intelligentsia of Azerbaijan faced a grievous loss. The eminent ophthalmologist died prematurely, and we will feel her loss for a long time. It was not long ago that we complimented Zarifa Aliyeva as the honorary winner of the award named after M.I. Averbach. As we usually do in such cases, we wished her long years of a happy life, well-being and further success in her professional career... And Zarifa Aliyeva, our beloved one, with inherent modesty and respect, thanked us warmly. In no way did I think that we were seeing her for the last time and that she was going to leave us..."

Looking at the faces of her patients I could see how she consoled them and infused them with hope in healing, making them forget their suffering. Perhaps, many patients were healed not so much by therapy as due to the strong logic of her persuasion. She possessed a rare talent - she was a very accomplished speaker and would make her patients believe, even in the hardest moments, that they will get on their feet. I know this for sure as I experienced it myself...

People would often refer to her with their various requests. I remember how she would listen patiently to all of them and would never leave anyone unattended when there was a chance to help. There was an old cleaner in our clinic who was continually and cruelly insulted by her neighbours. Zarifa Aliyeva spoke to her neighbours and politely advised them to stop humiliating and taunting the old woman. I saw this woman later when she came to express her gratitude. Once exhausted by the continuous harassment, her spirits had lifted and she felt like somebody again.

...Zarifa khanum was always was in a hurry, as if she felt that fate was stingy in determining the length of her life, as though she still had a lot of things to do. She indeed achieved big results both in the field of science and her medical practice. Zarifa Aliyeva was a brilliant pedagogue who would generously share her knowledge and experience with colleagues and students. Her lectures on the pathology of visual organs were especially informative, and to which she would give much prominence, trying to make the teaching visually more realistic. Her personality was an embodiment of harmony between a great scientist, ophthalmologist and

wonderful person: principality, personal modesty, high culture, goodness of heart and availability. Her door was always wide open to anyone referred for consultation or her wise counsel, and she would share her knowledge and rich experience as a clinician with everyone. A highly erudite specialist, skilled researcher and intelligent company endowed with sense of humour and intellect - that is how Zarifa Aliyeva always seemed to me. Vast knowledge and experience, love for her profession and benevolence were qualities which won her well-deserved authority among colleagues and friends. This was a person whose white coat remained pure and bright, tainted with nothing."

**Doctor of Medicine Professor Z.M. Skripnichenko** who worked with Zarifa Aliyeva over many years of collaboration, recreates the charming image of an extraordinary woman, scientist and friend who would prevent close relatives from anxiety and confusion, even in most critical moments of their lives, then devastate them with an incurable disease...

"Zarifa Aliyeva invited me to Baku. At that time I felt her warm attitude, sincerity and breadth of vision. We exchanged opinions on the results of our scientific research and made plans for future research. We came up with the idea of performing comprehensive clinical and experimental research in studying the effects of conditions of agricultural workers in Azerbaijan on their visual organs. Heydar Aliyev himself participated in one of our related discussions, underlined the importance of such studies and gave valuable practical advices. Of course we couldn't ignore that occupational intoxication in visual organs wasn't properly touched on and reflected in medical literature before then. Therefore, we came to the conclusion to write a monograph on occupational ophthalmotoxicosis. Such scientific work would be of interest to both ophthalmologists and medical officers of chemical plants.

I was leaving Baku with new creative plans. This both pleased and excited me. It was great for me to meet with a scientist whose scientific interests coincided with mine. In addition, she was a benevolent, open and charming person and, with it, a modest one. For me as a specialist, it was wonderful to see the latest publications on various issues of healthcare services in Zarifa Aliyeva's bibliography.

Despite the pressures of work, she lived for the sake of her family. I worried that Ilham, her son, studying at that time in Moscow, was too far away from home, from family.

Zarifa Aliyeva always cherished the memory of her father, Professor of Medicine, and aspired to cultivate his best qualities in her children. The touching inscription, written by her in the book about Aziz Aliyev which she presented to her son, also speaks of it.

...The range of her scientific interests was vast. She kept an ideas notebook where she would write her thoughts on new books and theses of scientific works on toxic cataract and toxic glaucoma, and lectures designed for students and ophthalmologists.

At that time, we also completed our joint work - a report for the upcoming conference of ophthalmology in Ukraine. Zarifa Aliyeva wanted to participate in the conference and acquaint herself with Odessa at last. It occurred neither to me nor to other people surrounding her that she was seriously ill, for she was as smiling and business-like as always. The grave illness didn't tally with her face.

We met with Zarifa Aliyeva again in the winter of 1984 - at her dacha. I felt a pain in my chest when I saw her so seriously sick, but her mood and behaviour didn't indicate the oncoming tragic event: she, as before, was talking about research at the Baku domestic air conditioning plant and treatment of workers who had been exposed to influence of vinylbenzene and carbon dichloride vapours. As a true daughter of the homeland, she still lived for Azerbaijan, continuing her research in the field of occupational ophthalmology detected in core industries of the national economy.

During the interesting conversation that occurred between us that day, she introduced me to new members of her family. I would read in her words and facial expressions exceptional warmth and love. Sevil had given birth to her namesake - little Zarifa - and Ilham's wife had presented him with a daughter. Sevil, holding the little baby in her arms, was looking at her mother, trying to cover her anxiety. Little Zarifa didn't want to part with her grandmother. Ilham, just arriving from Moscow, tenderly greeted his mother. Although everyone could feel the anxiety and tension in the house, we all refused to think that

the situation was hopeless. This time Zarifa Aliyeva talked much of her family - her husband, children and grandchildren whom she loved dearly.

In the evening when we were leaving, she was surrounded by her daughter and grandchildren. I couldn't imagine that this would be the last I saw of her. Zarifa Aliyeva was supposed to leave for Moscow soon. Finally this 'soon' came: the telephone rang and I learned that she was in hospital again. We had several phone conversations that day and agreed that I would visit her as soon as doctors allowed. I was by the telephone long into the night waiting for news. In the morning, growing convinced that I wouldn't be able to see her in hospital, I went back to Odessa. The only answer I heard in response to my phone calls was: she is still in hospital...

In February 1985, in her last letter to me, Zarifa Aliyeva openly and seriously talked of her illness: 'It's easy to become sick, but it is hard to recover from the sickness!' Even though she was upset that her parents were distressed over her, she showed great interest in science as before, and her love for life and people continued to be at the very core of her being... In that letter she also informed me that the doctors, after being in hospital for such a long time, were letting her go home for a week.

Zarifa Aliyeva entrusted her father to work on our joint book with me and asked me to inform her in advance when the materials were ready, to set the date of our meeting in Moscow.

The shocking news of her death came. I heard it late and... I didn't believe... Alas, the published obituary confirmed this bitter fact.

At the cemetery, standing by her grave, I thought with deep sorrow: fate acquainted me with the most severe loss - the loss of a friend, very early during the war when I was on the lines. However, it is impossible to become accustomed to these losses in the coming years, you just feel them more painfully..."

No one can be left untouched by the extracts from the interview given by Ilham Aliyev to the newspaper 'Gunay' in October 1995, where he talks of the love and loss of his beloved mother:

*- You said that you went to school for the first time aged six. Who took you to school that day? Who was holding your hand?*

- Mother.

- *What do you best remember her for?*

- She was a dear person to me. Her death changed my life as well as the life the whole family's. I mean, I can't laugh like I used to anymore. Even now, ten years since her death, in my happiest days I can't but wish she was still here. When she died my eldest daughter was one year old. It is a huge misfortune that my children didn't see their grandmother, it is a great loss for their upbringing..."

**Eldar Ibrahimov, a parliamentarian of Milli Mejlis (Parliament of Azerbaijan) and the Chairman of the Agricultural Policy Committee** was a close acquaintance of the Aliyevs and always regarded the family with reverence. When Heydar Aliyev was in the charge of the Supreme Soviet of the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, this republic was taken under strict control by order of the central leadership of Azerbaijan. It was difficult to keep in touch with Baku. There was only one plane flying from Baku to Nakhichevan and its passengers were undergoing thorough checks and interrogations. Their phones were tapped.

As a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan, Eldar Ibrahimov avoided this. He would often leave for Baku in connection with the newly established party 'Yeni Azerbaijan' ('New Azerbaijan'), to convey certain instructions of the autonomous Republic's authorities to relevant organisations and to participate in the Supreme Soviet's meetings...

At the end of April of 1993 while reading the 'Ses' ('Voice') newspaper en route from Baku to Nakhichevan, Eldar Ibrahimov's attention was caught by an interview dedicated to the 70th anniversary of Zarifa Aliyeva. He said that he had great difficulty holding back his tears after reading the words of Tamerlan and Jamil Aliyevs about their memorable sister.

This interview portrayed the charm of a great and brilliant personality who devoted her life to the noble service of people - a life which was so tragically and early interrupted by a severe disease...

Upon arriving in Nakhichevan, Eldar Ibrahimov visited Heydar Aliyev and relayed the instructions from Baku and the interview in 'Ses'. Heydar Aliyev asked him to read the text aloud. Eldar muallim confessed that he could hardly stop

himself from crying when he read it on the plane and apologised, saying that he couldn't read it again... Heydar Aliyev began to read the interview himself and Eldar Ibrahimov, having seen that he too became deeply moved, delicately left the room.

After a while he invited me in again and upon asking why I left, said: 'What an understanding heart you have! This interview plunged me into sorrow too, and made me remember the old days...' 'I explained that I left the room to leave him alone with memories of Zarifa khanum...'

Impressed by the interview, Heydar Aliyev said many kind and respectful words about his wife, about their love and her touching solicitude at times when he was the head of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan. He also recalled that she would give plenty of good advice, and told of hard Moscow times when Zarifa khanum was his support and backstop."

Eldar Ibrahimov continued: "After what had been said... I came to the opinion that the family life of Heydar Aliyev and Zarifa khanum is a high example to us all, for every Azerbaijani family."

**A. Brovkina** shares her memories of Zarifa Aliyeva: "I was an old acquaintance of Zarifa Aliyeva. Our scientific studies didn't coincide but we were connected by a purely personal relationship. For me she is still alive, although many years have passed since her death. She was a remarkable mother who brought up two wonderful children. I've hardly ever seen a mother and daughter as friends, but in the Aliyev family it was exactly that. Zarifa Aliyeva fully devoted herself to the path she chose and worked to turn her objectives into reality until her final days. A brilliant organiser, she channelled the efforts of her team in the necessary direction.

With her behavior, hard-working attitude and pure spirit, she was an example to everyone around her. She always held in high esteem talent, honesty and fairness in people. From this standpoint the life of Zarifa Aliyeva was an archetype of nobility."

**N. Shulpina** testifies what we have already brought to your attention and complements the view of her Russian colleagues on this remarkable scientist and brilliant person: "Zarifa

Aliyeva was the light in our eyes, a multi-skilled scientist and one of the most talented medical practitioners of Azerbaijan... The happiness of her nation, acknowledgment and gratitude of students and patients were her true assets. We loved her and will love her till our dying days."

...In June 1993, Heydar Aliyev was invited to Baku at the nation's request, returned by the will of its people to restore power - this time to lead the independent Republic of Azerbaijan.

After one more year, the remains of Zarifa Aliyeva were returned from Moscow to Baku. The 'Elegiya' ('Elegy') sculpture, made of white marble and bronze by the famous sculptor Omar Eldarov, crowns Zarifa Aliyeva's terminal home on her native soil, recreates the image of this remarkable daughter of Azerbaijan for future generations - the image of a mother, scientist, soul mate and a beautiful Azerbaijani woman...

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Chapter Thirteen

**THE UNFORGETTABLE**

*Women rendered more services  
to the education of mankind than  
philosophers did*

**Tofiq Fikret**

It was April 28, 1995.

The day of birth and commemoration of Zarifa khanum.

Heydar Aliyev delivered a speech at the ceremony. It was the tenth year since Zarifa khanum - his faithful partner and associate had passed away.

And what a decade it was!

Earth-shattering, tragic and heroic... Heydar Aliyev was riding the very crest of these waves when a superpower fell to the ground, crushing under its wreckage many millions of lives. The seething lava of passion and ardour splashed out from the crater of the volcano of history: the euphoria of freedom and patriotic enthusiasm, criminal demagogue of timeservers and bout of claims to territories in other countries, direct aggression of neighbours against Azerbaijan resulting in a war, heavy casualties and refugees... Finally, a ceasefire was agreed thanks to the efforts of Heydar Aliyev, and the tricolour of independence flew first in Nakhichevan, then in the capital city of the independent Republic.

All this got through to the heart of Heydar Aliyev. Through the heart that still housed the unalleviated pain of his grievous loss.

His words said on that April day sounded shrill and confessional, touching the most sensitive chords of memory - his own personal memory which was also the memory of the nation: "You know, since I was young my life has been in

public service. I dedicated myself to this service and still work in this field. I think that my family played a major role in my success. I was happy to have such a partner as Zarifa khanum who created and maintained the highest moral aura in my family.

As I was always too busy with work, I didn't have enough time to pay attention to family issues. All such work fell to Zarifa khanum and she performed this duty honorably, faithfully and with exceptional mastery.

Zarifa khanum was a great scientist. When I was just at the beginning of my married life, she had already gained a foothold in this field.

Her scientific activities are well-known. She was a talented, kind and very straightforward person. I could say many words about her; today I bow my head respectfully before the grave of Zarifa khanum. I do this for her irreplaceable contribution to my family's life - to all that my family has accomplished up to this day and to the education of my children. Despite the ten years of her absence, in my memory she is alive and will be so until my dying day. My children, too, carry in their hearts eternal love and imperishable memory. This is a sacred day for us.

...Today was a happy day, such a great personality as Zarifa khanum, who made me happy and presented me with such beautiful children, was born. However, this is also a day full of sorrow. Despite the ten years of her absence, I still cannot turn away from this sorrow."

On April 15, 1997, the memory of Zarifa khanum was honored with another impressive event: the presentation of the marble statue 'Elegy' dedicated to her memory, and an album of the work of Omar Eldarov, the eminent Azerbaijani sculptor, People's Artist, and a member of the Republic's parliament.

**Faramaz Magsudov - the President of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan (unfortunately, now deceased)**, said, opening the ceremony: "A sculpture is often described as music frozen in stone. I would call this memorial statue, love reincarnated in marble."

The sublime love, revived in marble; the heart of a careful mother, intellectual and patriot, a talented doctor and wise scientist, throbbing in the marble chest... This image radiates

the light that penetrates hearts, purifies souls, and calls people to be kind and sincere. It is the light of the eyes which were opened by this talented and skilful ophthalmologist throughout her life.

It seems as if the healing energy that radiated from those hands, lowered down onto the bolsters for just a little rest, is still alive and healing...

Perhaps such beauty inspired the great Fuzuli to say these vatical words:

Oh, my idol, your vision  
Surprised me to speechlessness,  
Seeing the surprise on my face,  
They see me as a vision

Turning the pages of the portfolio of the talented sculptor Omar Eldarov, readers become acquainted with the detailed story of the statue's creation. It turns out that the statue is not only a sign of the success of its creator, but also of the people who roused him to create such an artistic but authentic image of Zarifa khanum: her husband Heydar Aliyev and deserving children Ilham and Sevil Aliyev... They helped him to reconstruct the charming, loving and unforgettable woman and mother, and Omar Eldarov, by strength of his imagination and talent, eternalised the love of these people and their longing for the deceased, within the marble...

Talking of the range of Zarifa Aliyeva's scientific achievement and her contribution to ophthalmology, as well as the development of the healthcare service, it is necessary to point out its happy harmony with her social life and her role in the home, that was perhaps not so noticeable to the public, along with her daily heroism as a mother, wife and companion of such an eminent person as Heydar Aliyev. There is an old saying among people, the meaning of which may be roughly conveyed by the following words: 'The lion breed is not divided into two genders: a lioness is as strong as a lion.'

The name 'Zarifa' means 'fragile and graceful'. She bore on her fragile shoulders the burden of great responsibility and selfless love - alongside of the nation's leader, the Republic's head, who was among the authorities of a superpower - and

was his backstop, looked after him and empathised with him in days of trial, and walked with him shoulder-to-shoulder. She took care of their children and brought them up to be worthy and famous citizens of the homeland and successors of the highest moral principles of their forefathers...

Today, the life of Zarifa khanum continues in her children and grandchildren. 'Elegy' embodies her image as a marble statue. But her other statue - the spiritual one, is embalmed in our hearts.

Her love still illuminates the path of her family members and friends, colleagues and students...

**The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev**, delivering his speech during the memorial ceremony held in April, 1997, said: "Today is a special day, but at the same time, sorrowful. It is special because it is the Memorial Day of Zarifa khanum. It is sorrowful because it is the twelfth anniversary of her death. It is also the day that we exhibit this beautiful artistic work which reflects the image of Zarifa khanum.

It is possible that my comments are subjective, but I always say what I think. This statue, created by Omar Eldarov... is indeed beautiful. I knew Omar Eldarov as one of the most eminent artists of our Republic as early as ten or twenty years ago... The sculptures created by Omar Eldarov are spiritual and cultural assets of the people of Azerbaijan...

...The departure of Zarifa khanum was a shock to our family - to my children and me. Every family goes through this... But people and families are distinguished by how they approach the tragedy, misfortune and loss befallen to them...

Twelve years has passed since her death. Up to this day we cannot get used to the fact that she is not with us. Her memory is embalmed in our hearts and not only in ours, but also in hearts of future successors of our family..."

Four more years passed.

It is April 28, 2001. Again, we are at the evening memorial service of Zarifa khanum Aliyeva. **Heydar Aliyev** says heartfelt and grateful words about the unforgettable star of his destiny: "... Perhaps today it is even more painful for me to recall Zarifa khanum, for she was my life companion. Perhaps there wasn't any other person who knew and understood her as

I did. Of course, her parents gave birth and nurtured her, brought her up and educated her. However, my thoughts of her today when she is not with us, are more comprehensive than all that is said about her. But, naturally, I wouldn't like to speak those thoughts aloud - it is all in my heart and in the hearts of all the people who knew her. As for you, masters of the arts and science, today you awakened my feelings for Zarifa khanum and, I think, you've brought joy to other people who took pains to come to this memorial evening and witness for themselves, one more time, what a beautiful person Zarifa khanum was. You have spoken many words about her, and the words that can be said about her are even more numerous. However, to me, she was a person with a great heart. Zarifa khanum lives in my heart as a faithful companion, a fond and committed mother and a selfless woman who nurtured, brought up my family, my children and my grandchildren.

...We mark this day within the family. I would like to make a point of this, for it has never been our custom to hold large ceremonies, or spectacular and pompous birthday parties. Apparently, Zarifa khanum was the founder of this tradition, which is true to my character too.

However, today is her birthday. The fate of Allah was such that she was born and gone in April.

I remember the time when she was undergoing treatment at the Moscow hospital. I knew then that she was terminally ill and only dreamt that she would live to see her birthday... But my dreams didn't come true and she passed away on April 15...

...My sorrow is natural. However, I wouldn't like the people who made the effort to come to this event, to leave here fraught with sorrow.

...Indeed, by remembering Zarifa khanum today, we, her family, children, grandchildren and friends, celebrate her birthday. So, I would now like the atmosphere to change. I believe that we would gladden her soul by that."

Heydar Aliyev, who frequently showed his inexhaustible and devout love for Zarifa khanum and her memory, once again expressed his feelings at the opening ceremony of the Museum in Nakhichevan City Polyclinic, named after Zarifa Aliyeva, dedicated to her life and activities. He wrote an entry in the visitor's book: 'Acquaintance of the polyclinic, which



bears the name of my wife, now deceased, Zarifa khanum. Seeing the corner dedicated to her memory stirred the deepest feelings in my heart. This corner, which represents the life and activities of the person so special to me, delighted me. It is a worthy monument of her great human qualities and scientific and medical merits.'

We have already brought you the testimonials and memories of Zarifa khanum's daughter, Sevil Aliyeva, of her mother. The media has always wanted to interview Zarifa Aliyeva herself and get answers to their questions, but were rarely successful. I would like to now recall some fragments of an interview Sevil khanum gave to a correspondent of the 'Panorama' newspaper:

- *Does someone help you? (educate the children. - H.M.)*

- I do that myself as no one can replace a mother.

- *It seems that this quality of yours you inherited from your mother. Was she a housewife too?*

- I don't like the word 'housewife'. It suits neither my mother nor me. Mother just gave the whole of herself to father and us. But with all that, she still had time for scientific activity and social work.

- *Which qualities of yours are similar to your mother's?*

- Many of them. The point is that the characters of my parents fit well together. I think such harmony of characters is very rare. So, I think that I take both after my mother and father.

It is possible that some of readers will consider our narrative fragmented. However, we assume that the testimonials of real people, relatives, family members and colleagues, fully characterise the image of our book's protagonist, and reflect the aura she radiated. Any guess work, in our opinion, would be inappropriate.

Going on with our story, let's refer to the representative of the youngest generation of the Aliyevs - granddaughter Leyla, who was not lucky enough to meet her wonderful grandmother. However, as recreated in the stories of elders and felt in the glowing atmosphere of her memory which warms the home of the Aliyevs, the image of Zarifa khanum lives in her granddaughter's heart. Leyla, the little girl, smart and sensitive beyond her years, having listened to the serene melody of the family's music and experienced the persistent pain of the

grievous loss - the pain which her elders tried to keep from her - took a strong liking to her grandfather and worshipped him, as if she unconsciously desired to grasp, through her grandfather's tender nurturance, the breath and light reflected by her grandmother, whom she will never see... We can only imagine what a wonderful relationship Zarifa khanum would have had with her granddaughter. She noticeably differed from the other girls her age, as early as during her school years. She would try to express her feelings through poetry, most of which she dedicated to grandfather.

Let's refer to the interview that young **Leyla** gave to **Fazil Alesgeroglu**, the newspaper correspondent for 'Panorama':

- *Let's get acquainted.*

- My name is Leyla. Leyla Ilham gizi Aliyeva. I study in the sixth form. My grandfather is the President!

- *How do you address him?*

- Grandpa, Grampa.

- *If they assign you some work such as writing about the person you love the most, who do you prefer to write about?*

- My family. I can't distinguish any of them.

- *You love all of them?*

- Of course!... Well, I love the Grandpa a bit more than the others.

- *Can you ask what makes you love him so much?*

- What do people love a man for? He is my Grandpa - that's all there is to it. You know, he is a very tender, very smart and sensitive Grandpa.

- *I guess you know that you have a special Grandpa; well, he is not like other Grandpas. I also guess that he hasn't much time to play with you, has he?*

- Yes, he is always busy and we don't see each other often.

- *Surely, there are times when you all gather round the table at dinners or suppers. What do you talk about?*

- Well, such gatherings occur very occasionally. He returns home late and has his suppers upstairs in his room. On holidays and family celebrations we get together and have great time, socialising and having fun...

- *But, it seems that he is not always in a cheery mood. So many things can happen during his working hours...*

- He never comes home in his work mood. No matter what happens, he always enters the door smiling. He never talks of his work. However, we can tell when something is wrong with it.

- *And what do you do when Grandpa is with you?*

- You know, he's great fun to be with! He knows everything about everything and has answers to all questions.

- *It seems like you are inquisitive - a 'why girl'? Well, a bit! Is that so?*

- In general, I like asking questions about everything, especially about myself. Sometimes Grandpa begins to say: 'When you were a very little girl...' I don't remember and learn from his words. In addition... when we are in Zaghulba, he tells me about the construction of local buildings.

- *Do you ever go on family trips? And how do you spend your time together?*

- Yes, sometimes... We go the sea for a swim or the park for a walk. Grandpa tells funny stories about what happened to him and his friends in their childhood. He likes funny stories... and jokes often.

- *Really? So, he likes making fun of you?*

- No, no! He adores me.

- *Does he give you presents? Can you remember?*

- I remember everything. I have a doll I like very much that he gave to me. Also I have a doggie - another gift from Grandpa.

- *You mean a real dog?*

- No. Not a real one! But Grandpa did give me rabbits. Real rabbits... They have such beautiful, soft fur... I like playing with them.

- *What do you enjoy most?*

- I love poetry, both reading and writing. As for playing... Playing with my rabbits is the best.

- *And what does your Grandpa like? What does he do in his leisure time?*

- He watches TV - news programs such as 'Vremya', 'Novosti', 'Vesti' (Russian news programs)... Then he reads newspapers.

- *Which meals does he like best? Do you have similar tastes?*

- Yes, we have similar tastes. He likes pilaf and tea with milk...

- *Where were you On October 4,<sup>19</sup> when your Grandpa appeared on TV to deliver a speech? For whom did you fear the most?*

- We were in Turkey then. I was very afraid for my Grandpa and the work he was doing. Then we heard that people rose in his defense and were very pleased with the news.

- *Have you ever been to foreign countries with him?*

- We went to Morocco together once. But he couldn't detach himself from work... And once he came to Turkey when we were there.

- *You mentioned poetry. Have you dedicated any of your poems to your Grandpa?*

- Of course! I would like to read one of them aloud, if you don't mind...

Why does the sun shine so powerfully  
On my motherland?  
The answer is one of the easiest for me;  
As my beloved grandfather  
Works for our sake and for the sake of people.  
So much work has he to do and does in time.  
He is tired when returning home.  
He forgets about sleeping and rest. When he sees disorder  
He responds to disaster.  
Bringing with him hope and joy,  
Giving the people light and kindness.

I wrote this poem on his birthday...

- *Do you get up to mischief?*

- Of course, but only during breaks between lessons.

- *What does Grandpa say about that? Does he complain?*

- No, no. He just asks about my study.

- *Does Grandpa get angry with you?*

- Never. I don't do things which may make him angry.

- *And you? Have you held a grudge against your Grandpa?*

Let us suppose, for example, that Grandpa didn't come to your birthday party because he was late for work.

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<sup>19</sup> At the beginning of October, 1994, an armed band consisting of Special Police Force members and incited by opposition made an unsuccessful coup attempt.

- No way. He loves me most of all.

- *How would you like to celebrate his birthday, if you could organise it?*

- May I to put it bluntly?

- *Of course, go on.*

- I would arrange for nobody to disturb him that day. I would like for him not to be in a hurry - no foreign visitors or urgent matters. I would like him to be with me all day. We would go to Zaghulba for a walk on the beach, and Grandpa would tell me jokes. Then we would get together around the dinner table, laugh and have fun as a family...

Here is a quote from another interview:

- *Would you like to tell him something through our newspaper?*

- Yes. Grandpa, I love you so much! I wish you all the happiness and joy! May your shadow never get smaller! I hope that the war is over soon and all refugees can return home! I wish for peace and quiet to come to the country. I also wish that he would take me for a walk and talk to me. Hugs and kisses.

Several years passed. Leyla grew up and now we read another interview of hers, given to the newspaper 'Panorama' on May 9, 1998. The conversation turned to her first steps in literature:

- *What else do you write, except the poems dedicated to your Grandpa?*

- Mainly lyrical verses on various topics, reflecting my thoughts...

- *...Birthdays, for everyone, especially people of such an eminent personality, as your Grandpa, are like holidays or important events. However, your Grandpa doesn't like the nationwide celebration of his birthday.<sup>20</sup> In spite of that, I'm sure the family will celebrate it. Would you tell us, what will you give to your Grandpa as a birthday gift?*

- In my opinion, the most valuable gift for Grandpa would be something made with my own hands. So, I wrote a book. I collected all my poems, old and new, in a book and dedicated it to Grandpa for his birthday. This will be my present... I

named the book 'Azerbaijan'. But he's unaware of it at the moment, and I hope that it will be a nice surprise for him.

- *Is this your first book?*

- No. It is my second one. The first was published in 1995. I've been writing poems since I was eight years old. But my new poems differ from the old ones...

- *When you come to Baku, do you feel that your peers and other people treat you as a special person - as a President's granddaughter? Does that help or hinder you?*

- I don't think so. Perhaps that is because we behave naturally. I like going with Grandpa to various events, concerts...

- *We know that you like 'KVN' ('Club for the Lightheaded and Quick-witted' - a popular comedy contest in the USSR and later, in many ex-union Republics - translator's note) and were even a member of the club. What about the last concert of 'Parni iz Baku' ('Boys from Baku' - the KVN team of Azerbaijan)? Were you there?*

- No. Unfortunately, I wasn't in Azerbaijan then. But I watched the videotape and I enjoyed it a lot.

- *Your range of interests, has it changed? What career do you dream of now?*

- Of course, many of my interests have changed. When I began to attend upper school I had to spend more time on studies. As to my interests, I like painting a lot, take great interest in computers, continue writing poetry, and I know that I will be writing when I'm older...

- *You said that you like drawing. I know that this gift is characteristic of your family. Was it you who illustrated the book that was published for your Grandpa's birthday.*

- Yes, it was me.

- *What do you prefer to draw with: a pencil, pen or paints?*

- I use paints. However, it is very difficult to work with paints. Therefore, I made the illustrations with pencils and felt-tipped pens.

- *How long have you been painting for? Do you show your work to your Grandpa?*

- For a long time, and I usually show my work to Grandpa, as well as my poems.

- *Your Grandpa is big on the arts. Also, I heard that he also paints quite well. What does he think of your paintings?*

<sup>20</sup> On May 10, 1998 he was 75 years old

- He always compliments my paintings.
- *Which field of arts do you prefer?*
- It varies depending on time and other circumstances. Sometimes I am more inclined to write poetry, sometimes I am absorbed in painting...
- *Your paintings - are they creations of your imagination or do you paint your surroundings?*
- I piece together illustrations from my imagination. They have to fit the poems. But generally, when I am outside, I like to paint the scenery...
- *Do you still keep your favourite childhood toys?*
- Though I have grown out of them, I still keep my favorite toys in memory of my childhood. They are in the closet and sometimes I get them out to look at...
- *Can you give more detail about these toys? Are they mostly dolls?*
- They are the toys I used to play with when I was a baby. Toys become more valuable as you get older. My toys are not dolls. For some reason I have never played with dolls. There is also a rubber doggie among them...
- *Who would usually give you toys?*
- Everyone would give me toys on my birthdays, although I wouldn't like all of them.
- *Who gave you the rubber doggie then?*
- I honestly don't remember!
- *Perhaps, like all other gifts of nature, you also like listening to music.*
- ...I often plug in the tape recorder and listen. However, I would not say that I am musically talented. I am better at poetry and drawing. Generally speaking, I like Azerbaijani music and Russian pop music.
- *And what about books? Do you read a lot? Any favourite books?*
- Yes, I read a lot and try to read more, for the more a person reads, the more he or she draws inspiration... I read books in Russian and English. An interesting book carves into your memory.
- *Is there a fairytale of childhood which, as you said, is carved into your memory? Did you have a heroine in your childhood who you wanted to be like?*

- I like writing tales myself. All fairytales have something in common as they are remembered... However, there aren't any fairytales that I particularly like. Moreover, I have never put myself in the place of a fairytale heroine... Fairytale books are, as a rule, illustrated. But I prefer those without illustrations, as I think it is better to use your imagination.
- *Do your teacher and classmates know that you write poetry and paint? If they know, then what are their general thoughts on this?*
- I always get good marks in painting. I've shown my poetry book to teachers and read them my poems in English. To be honest, I think that I am better at writing poetry in Russian... Among objective subjects I like mathematics, computer science and literature.
- *Do you recite your poetry in the classroom?*
- Yes, I do. The boys like it and even ask me to dedicate poems to them.
- *But you dedicate all your poems to your Grandpa, don't you?*
- No, I dedicate my poems to all members of my family. To Mum, Dad, Arzu (sister) and little brother... But I didn't include these in the book, as they were written for the birthdays.
- *Tell me, please, what did you feel when your little brother was born? I have no doubt that you wrote a poem on this occasion.*
- That day I was so happy. I couldn't even believe that I had a brother. I adore my brother. I dedicated a long poem to him and several shorter ones.
- *Did you recite them to your brother?*
- No. He is still too little. I don't think he would understand them. I like telling him stories. If I think that he is listening, I tell more. I can't wait for the day when he begins to talk...
- *Though little Heydar can't talk for now he shows great interest in all things, as all children of his age do, and maybe he feels how much his Grandpa loves him. Perhaps, on the eve of his Grandpa's jubilee, his little heart will be full of love and joy too...*
- My brother walks on air at the sight of his Grandpa!
- *You dedicate poems to all your family members on their birthdays. Has anyone written poems for you?*
- No. There has never been a poem for me.
- *School children adore holidays. What about you?*

- Of course, holidays are wonderful. But I also understand that I have to study too. I spend a lot of time studying during lessons and at home... Sometimes I want to forget study sessions to take my mind off things and rest.

- *Do you have friends who you often meet and play with?*

- During elementary school I used to play with the boys at break times. But I don't usually play with them anymore.

- *Do you dream of growing up as soon as possible?*

- I don't yet know if it is good or bad to be a grown-up. In fact, I haven't thought about it. Of course you have more freedom when you are an adult. Maybe that's the reason why most children can't wait to grow up... I never dream of it... I like life as it is...

- *Do you often ask your family members for advice?*

- Yes. They are my elders and it is more likely that they will give the right advice.

- *Who do you share your secrets with among your folks?*

- If it is something about school, I share it with my sister. However, my Mum gives certain advice. I also consult Dad and Grandpa.

- *Do you consult your mother or do you rely on your own fashion sense when you pick out dresses?*

- In general, I choose dresses according to my own dress sense. My mother and I have similar styles. Of course, I regard my mother's opinion.

- *Which of your family members would you like to take after? Do you have an ideal?*

- I don't know, honestly! All of them have something I would like to take after. I would like to take after my mother in one thing, and father or grandpa in other things...

- *I suppose colour is important for painters. Which colours do you like most?*

- I like yellow. It is bright. I've even written poems about the colour yellow. As for clothes, I prefer brown and white-pink colors. Black is also very good for dresses.

- *Whose critical judgment about your poetry do you take seriously? Is there a person who you recite your poems to first?*

- When I have finished a poem, I usually check it myself and rewrite what I don't like. They usually become much

better after rewriting. I usually recite them to those who are beside me - I want to hear an opinion as soon as possible.

- *Leyla, do you feel yourself special - as a person, who differs from others?*

- No, I don't.

- *But it appears to me that you are different from others. Not because you are the President's granddaughter, but because you are a talented person. By no means all people can write poetry at your age, and draw.*

- In my opinion, everyone has particular qualities that distinguish them from others. People can possess various talents. One person might draw well, someone else might sing, and someone else plays the piano. Everyone possesses an inherent gift.

- *Who is your favorite poet?*

- I like reading Pushkin's poetry.

- *Do you think that fame is good for poets? Would you like your poetry to be passed on from mouth to mouth?*

- Yes, I would. Perhaps that is why I like it when people read my poetry and give me praise. However, a poet has to make a name and fame for himself.

- *Leyla, please express in our newspaper your wishes for your grandpa's birthday.*

- I wish him good health and happiness. I love him so much... I know he loves all of us and worries about us.

My grandpa is a wonderful man  
A loving, beloved and hearty man.  
Wishing him to live a century  
Would not be enough I think.  
There are people with insidious hearts  
With dark deeds and ridiculous arrogance  
But my Grandpa defends the truth, the good  
And justice with might and main, lending a  
helping hand forever to people and his nation  
and his country. This is how my Grandpa lives  
and walks the path of life

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*Chapter Fourteen*

IMPERISHABLE LIGHT

Not knowing the days of birth and death  
Living and living forever in the immortality of people  
Under thousands of names in the motherland  
and living in the bread, grain, words and wine...

**Samed Vurghun**

Anton Semyonovich Makarenko used to say: 'You come into existence and bring up your sons or daughters not for the sake of parental joy. It is all about bringing up a future citizen, worker and fighter in your family, and under your auspices.'

That's the truth itself! Parental debt and mission is so important. Moral codes of all nations, covenants and commandments of great religions have thrown light on the role played by the mother and father in the family circle and society. Religious teachers have suggested: 'Honour thy father and thy mother.' The Seal of Prophets, Prophet Mahammad said: 'Paradise lies under the feet of our mothers.'

Once they showed on TV a discovery made by Chilean archeologists who found a burial dumping ground belonging to pre-Columbian America: the remains of a young woman was found with an ancient weapon lying by her side. History shows us numerous examples confirming the distinguished role played by strong women in the life of their people, nation and homeland. Classical mythology and literature left us with a rich legacy of impressive legends and stories telling the momentous participation of women in history.

Ancient tales of Dede Gorgud - a remarkable literary monument of the Azerbaijan and Turkic World, represent the enchanting and heroic image of Burla Khatun, an embodiment of devoted motherly love and feminine dignity.

Prophetic and wise Gorgud names the sons of his tribe as they perform a dignified deed. Many centuries have passed since the time when it was traditional to name grandchildren, great grandchildren and other descendants after their ancestors, as if trying to continue the spirituality and lessons of their fathers and grandfathers, mothers and grandmothers.

Such a tradition is clearly traced in the family of Heydar and Zarifa Aliyev. The name of Zarifa khanum was given to her granddaughter - the daughter of Sevil Aliyeva. Grandma adored her little namesake. However, she dreamt of a grandson too. Alas, she never saw this happy day - the fatal disease interrupted her life's journey.

However, the agency of providence made her dream come true and indulged her soul in heaven - a son was born to Ilham Aliyev, to whom they gave the name of his great grandfather, Heydar Aliyev...

Several years ago, when Ilham Aliyev met with students of Baku State University, the conversation turned to this event and a student asked: "Ilham muallim, I am not sure how appropriate it is to ask such a question, but I still want to ask: you gave to your son his Grandpa's name, was that to suit your father, or was there another reason for this?"

"You know, I have never talked about this, but I will say to you now: My son was born on August 2, 1997. That day, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev was on an official visit in the USA. Our family had the intention, but of course, we had to ask the baby's grandpa for consent to give his name. So, in my conversation with father, I said that I would like to name the baby Heydar. He gave his consent and asked: 'Do you not want to give your baby another name?' I said that it never crossed my mind. You know, when a baby is born, its parents draw a list of five or six names. When our first and second children were born, we too tossed around a list of names... But, with time, there was no longer a list.

In that university meeting with Ilham Aliyev, then the President of SOCAR, another problem was considered concerning the social activity of the partners of political leaders.

That question was: "As we all know, the spouses of foreign politicians play a critical role in the social sphere of their

countries. Mr. Aliyev, what do you think about such activities for your spouse? How does she actively participate in the social scene?"

"First of all, I would like to say that I am not a political leader, but the Vice-president of SOCAR. In my opinion, the main duty of a partner is not based on stereotypes. Every family has its own peculiarities and no two families are the same. The only thing I can say in this regard is that my wife, for many years, has worked as a doctor in the ophthalmology hospital. Presently she is not working as our children are too young. To answer your question, honestly speaking, I would say that I personally do not think that the spouse of the executive head of the nation should hold a relative position or always be on TV... just because she is the wife of a leading official. Everyone should engage their own talents and follow their heart. If someone is forced into duties for the sake of something, e.g. for the sake of their image, then it is unnatural. So, I can't set any boundaries in that regard. I think that everyone has to follow their heart... However, I would like to note that sometimes I observe, in newspapers and other publications, promotional activities of officials and some heads of organisations. I personally am not sold on this - as a human, as a man, and as a husband. In my opinion, family and work are two different things and they are not to be confused.

It is obvious that this passage from Ilham Aliyev's thoughts applies to artificial flackery of certain people - so-called 'public relations' - by which the workers of mass media and subservient 'drumbeaters' pursue opportunistic objectives. I hope that the reader will not place the author along the same lines as such 'dreambeaters', the author of this book, who familiarises others with the real facts of the real social activities of Mehriban Aliyeva - the First Lady of Azerbaijan, the Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO and ISESKO, Deputy of Parliament, and the President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation.

This list of important duties speaks volumes for the range of her activities.

We have already had the opportunity to cast light on the range of public affairs and concerns of Azerbaijan's First Lady

in the book 'Ilham Aliyev',<sup>21</sup> with which the readership is probably familiar. So, we will try not to repeat those published facts but add a new dimension to the portrait of Mehriban Aliyeva, and show new examples of her humanitarian and cultural initiatives. These episodes, included in the general plan of this book, will help to expand awareness of the moral existence of this family, and bridge the generations of spiritual atmosphere of Zarifa khanum Aliyeva's family. This, in its course of history, organically formed a union with the traditions of two other dignified families - the Pashayevs and ImanGuliyevs.

"A beautiful life fell to Mehriban khanum, **writes the literary journalist Atababa Ismayiloglu.**" First of all, this life was predetermined by her family roots... Her grandfather on her father's side, Mir Jalal (Pashayev) and her grandfather on mother's side, Nasir Imanguliyev. Mir Jalal was a famous writer, while Nasir Imanguliyev was one of the pioneers of Azerbaijani journalism.

Among the people who remember Mir Jalal muallim with gratitude are many writers and linguists, while Nasir Imanguliyev educated a generation of journalists. Both of them were lecturers at the Baku State University. They were able to capture the hearts of the rising generation, harness new talent and channel it to serve people and society....

In my opinion, the example of her eminent grandfathers played an important part in the life of Mehriban khanum and her sister, the well-known linguist Nargiz khanum. The second important factor, of course, is the example of her parents: her mother Aida Imanguliyeva was a remarkable scientist-orientalist and her father, Arif Pashayev, was an academician and one of the leading physical scientists of Azerbaijan.

Their aspiration for high achievement and noble ideals as parents naturally influenced their children's characters. I am confident that those beneficial family statuses and spirit of human compassion and mercy brought Mehriban khanum to medical college. Later, following the advice of her mother-

<sup>21</sup> Andriyanov V.I., Miralamov H.F. "Ilham Aliyev", Moscow, publishing house "Molodaya gvardiya", 2007

in-law and remarkable ophthalmologist Zarifa Aliyeva, she chose to become an ophthalmologist... Mehriban khanum, who graduated with honours, would become one of the leading doctors of ophthalmology..."

We would like to add for our part that Mehriban khanum had time to work in subordination of her future mother-in-law, but destiny ordained another vocation for her...

She became a member of the outstanding family and partner of the future leader of the State. She presented him with beautiful children. She would continue her medical service; she would continue to diagnose, treat patients, restore their sight, and present them with the joy of seeing the inexhaustible beauty of the surrounding world; to present people with light - as the unforgettable Zarifa Aliyeva did throughout her life...

But Mehriban Pashayeva, after taking the surname of her husband and becoming Mehriban Aliyeva, joined the family during a surge of State worries, and when she could feel the pulse of social life, national aspirations, anxieties and hopes... This new rhythm of life - or, in a manner of speaking, family status - motivated her to take an active part in the social scene attached to it, and awoke the energy of her hidden personal potential. This is how the social activities of Mehriban Aliyeva began, who, before the end of the century, became the First Lady of Azerbaijan.

As early as 1995, she established the Friends of the Azerbaijan Culture Foundation. Let us recall that rough period in the history of the sovereign Republic when it had recently emerged from a devastating war - a war which brought death and sorrow and ruined many towns and villages.

Millions of refugees, deserted homes, ruins and inflation - it took the titanic efforts of Heydar Aliyev to consolidate society, establish order, enforce the rule of law and normalisation of state institutions - and all of this against fierce resistance of the opposition.

It seemed that it was a situation best characterised by the idiom: 'beggars can't be choosers.'

The cultural life of the Republic was on its last legs and the threat of spiritual regress and degeneration was mounting, while total apathy and pessimism, caused by the Armenian invasion that occupation a fifth of the Republic's territory, set

in. All of this was accompanied by the powerful, well-paid and sophisticated disinformation of our enemies and their minions from former Soviet republics, as well as abroad...

The rebirth of faith through Friends of Azerbaijani Culture was a difficult and courageous project, but vital in such circumstances.

It was a question of Azerbaijan's prestige - saving its good name and promoting its rich cultural heritage and familiarising the world with Azerbaijan. The magazine 'Azerbaijan: Irs' ('Heritage') became its printed platform.

Ten years later, **Mehriban khanum** said in an interview: "The main objective of the Fund is to publicise the culture of Azerbaijan. It was then that I established the magazine 'Azerbaijan: Irs'.

The magazine covered the activities of the Fund and every issue was dedicated to a certain theme, introducing and popularising research material. I can proudly point out that no one has written so intriguingly about the culture of Azerbaijan. For example, having set us a goal to write about miniature pictures or, say, about architectural monuments, we would get opinion from scientists of the Academy, journalists, and fine art experts..."

In 2004 she took charge of the newly established Heydar Aliyev Foundation. In parallel with the preservation and promotion of political heritage, the Foundation undertook the colossal mission of reconstructing cultural centers, ruined schools, building new schools and hospitals and orphanages, and finding a solution to diabetes and thalassemia...

"There are times when a man finds that all his doors are closed and he is left alone with his problems, thinking that nothing or no one can help him. It is at these times when people turn to our Fund. I wouldn't say that we solve all problems at once, but people who apply to us for assistance will encounter neither indifference nor coldness, and we will try to solve their problems by all means available. It is evident that charity, love for mankind and mercy, are among the finest characteristics of the mentality and culture of Azerbaijani people, of our traditions, formed over centuries. Today, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation aspires to develop these traditions," says Mehriban khanum.



The good deeds of the Foundation are too many to count: magnificent palaces of culture, education centers, reconstructed and newly constructed schools all over the Republic... There are thousands of them. Not to mention tens of thousands of trees reviving the wastelands and the formerly unsightly Absheron salt marshes.

The Foundation and its President's eager and stoic care of spiritual values and treasures of national culture has drawn attention from across the world. Mehriban Aliyeva was entrusted with a responsible and honourable mission as the Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO, and later, of ISESKO.

The efforts of Mehriban Aliyeva in the promotion of such a unique phenomenon of world musical culture as mugham has resulted in unprecedented levels of development in Azerbaijan and representation to the world - a victory which rightly belongs to the famous mugham masters of Garabagh, continued by the brilliant artists, musicians and singers that follow-up this humanitarian mission.

A mugham festival was recently organised to promote this style of music. It attracted performers from Central Asian Republics and Middle East countries. The International Mugham Centre was built for this purpose. We can also add other 'mugham' initiatives, including the release of the music album, 'Garabagh khanendeleri' ('Garabagh singers'), the project called 'Mugham destgahlari' ('Complex of musical melodies') and the television contest 'Mugham-2005' which later became an annual event...

Add to this the important sphere of her activity in Parliament.

On the evening of a Novruz feast, M. Aliyeva stood up in Parliament to suggest granting an amnesty to certain prisoners. Hundreds of prisoners regained their liberty with jobs in the offing, as full citizens of the country. Today, the number of prisoners who gained their liberty thanks to the initiative of Parliamentarian M. Aliyeva, has risen to over a thousand.

International tournaments and rhythmic gymnastics competitions held in Baku speak for the highly active level of sport, which is definitely a merit of Mehriban Aliyeva - the President of the Republican Federation of Rhythmic Sportive Gymnastics. It is often possible to see children dispossessed by

untender fate, comforted by the tendance of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation. The doors of one of the most beautiful palaces of the Republic - 'Gulustan' palace - is often open for such children during special ceremonies and festivities.

At the beginning of the disastrous 1990s, one could scarcely imagine that this war-torn country, after some ten years, could lend a helping hand to earthquake victims in Pakistan and build them a school. This in particular speaks for the economic power of the Republic.

We read in the article of **Alibala Zaloglu**, 'The path which leads to Garabagh': Mehriban khanum Aliyeva embodies humanism. Noble deeds run through her every action... It is not a coincidence that her achievements were recognised by international organisations and she was awarded a 'Golden heart'.

The 'Children Homes and Boarding Schools Development Program', 'New Schools for New Azerbaijan', the project 'Support to Education' and other initiatives also are associated with the name Mehriban Aliyeva.

Among these noble campaigns is 'The highest care for children with diabetes' project, implemented in collaboration with the Danish 'Novo Nordisk' company; the project 'For Life without Thalassemia'; the reconstruction and refurbishment of medical institutions, developing solutions to numerous problems related to healthcare services; the school built for children in Pakistan; the restoration of sculptures in the famous Versailles Palace; the construction of a library in the town of Mardakan; the reconstruction of the house museum of poet and enlightener, Abdulla Shaig; the restoration of historical monuments in Georgia, the construction of the museum of the last Khan of Ganja Javadkhan; and the reconstruction of many holy places in Azerbaijan... This is by no means the full list of deeds performed under the patronage of Mehriban Aliyeva.

Mehriban khanum personifies the image of the dignified daughter of her own family - a wonderful mother, beloved and loving wife, protector of culture and caring about the younger generation. Her life, her moral and citizenly behavior is an example to others and living personification of the highest family traditions as well as the legacy of the unforgettable Zarifa khanum Aliyeva, of the Imperishable Light...

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*Chapter Fifteen*

**ILHAM ALIYEV: "HER MEMORY WILL ALWAYS LIVE WITH ME"**

Once, when a journalist asked him who is the person he loves the most, Heydar Aliyev answered: "Zarifa khanum."

**Ilham Aliyev:** "By the way, grandpa adored his little grandchild. He loved all his grandchildren. He would talk to them on the phone almost every day. They would often visit him. Heydar Aliyev has quite a number of descendants: three children of mine and three of my sister's. Yet, the other children are far older, so grandpa spent more time with my son. The boy would see him off everyday and in accordance with our national tradition, sprinkle water after him. Little Heydar was proud of this 'duty'. By the way, I also would like to say that my son speaks both Azerbaijani and Russian equally well. All the children in the family are bilingual.

Mehriban is my backstop. I am sure that family members should be like-minded, first and foremost. A family - a man and a woman - is two people who have similar principles and moral values. Therefore, there will not be any 'opposition' (in the most radical sense of the term) within a family. I have similar opinions as Mehriban on many topics. We have grown up in more or less the same environment. We are descendants from family members of Azerbaijani intelligentsia, who despite all difficulties of the last century, remained loyal to their ideals, moral values and national traditions. It is a genuine fortune to have such roots.

A woman remains a woman even when she is the wife of a President. She is the guarantor of serenity, harmony and love within the family. It is very important to me that I see that I am understood and supported when I come home after a hard and busy day at work."

The continuance of the family traditions of Zarifa khanum has fallen to Mehriban khanum and she copes with this task masterfully.

Let us hear again from **Ilham Aliyev:** "The roots of my mother's philosophy of life may be found in her childhood. She would often say that childhood is the overwhelmingly important and irreplaceable period of a person's life. It is in our childhood when we begin to understand the meaning of good and compassion. She was a very happy child and always remembered her childhood as a time full of love and source of many happy memories.

My mother's family belonged to the most intellectual part of society of that time. Often, conversations in front of the children would cover many aspects of their society's spiritual life. This family attached great importance to the education of children. In addition to language and music teaching, they also aimed to cultivate the drive for self-improvement.

For Zarifa khanum, the remarkable life of her father - Aziz Aliyev - was an integral part of her nation's history. One of the chapters of her book dedicated to the ethics of the medical profession, my mother called 'Enthusiasts are as necessary as the sun'. This phrase alludes to her attitude toward Russian culture. Throughout her life she nourished an ardent love of Chekhov and Rakhmaninov. While Chekhov's understanding of society's problems was familiar to her as a doctor and human being, the music of Rakhmaninov would deliver inner peace and separate her from the daily grind, reviving harmony within herself.

My grandmother, Leyla khanum, had a great influence on our family. Zarifa khanum learnt a lot from her. It was as if she was quick to learn everything: to cook as an excellent chef, to engage in scientific work, to sing from the heart, to be both subtle and to the point. The people around her would draw the conclusion that this was because of both the feminine and machismo influences within the family.

Providence favoured Zarifa khanum with a man who changed her life. What terrible ordeals they underwent to be together - the daughter of a politician who was disfavoured by the authorities, and a young man with high potential as an

officer of the state security service! This was their 'personal secret'.

In the last few days she spent with us she knew that her life was approaching the end and as all doctors are, was sincere with herself and frank with us, not using any vague words in this regard. Her soul didn't lose its spark and she wasn't afraid of any thoughts of death. However, she was anxious about the people who would lose her. She was quietly withdrawing, with a silent pride that she had throughout her life. Her death in itself commanded the deepest respect as she did when she was living. She knew that all small, perishable things diminished before eternity and only good deeds remain. This was her only consolation.

My mother was a genuine scientist. She aspired to conceive many refinements of medicine, finding the time to deal with mine and Sevil's education and upbringing as worthy citizens of Azerbaijan. Her memory will always live with me."

**Doctor of Medical Science Professor Nuraddin Humbatov**, in talking about Zarifa khanum, remembers her father: "The memory of Aziz Aliyev is unforgettable and valuable to me as it is to thousands of others. I will never forget his moral support and care when I was entering postgraduate study. Aziz Aliyev was the Rector of the institute then. He was a forthright and modest person. When I submitted my application to join the postgraduate programme, I learnt that there were five more applicants. I began to study for the examinations day and night.

Four or five days before the exam I was summoned to the Human Resources Director's office. He asked: 'Are you from Ganja?'

'Yes, I am.' I said. The director recommended: 'Withdraw your application and go. Don't waste your time. You will not pass'. I was alarmed: 'Why?' He said in return: 'A minister's nephew applied for the place and it is him who will go through.' I took this news dreadfully. After some thinking I decided to inform the Rector of this warning.

I waited for Aziz Aliyev to arrive and asked him to see me: 'Dear Rector, I came to withdraw my documents.'

'Why?'

I told him everything. Aziz Aliyev replied: 'Don't listen to anybody. Go and study. If you show the highest level of knowledge, you will pass. No minister or anyone else will influence the examinations.'

In the core curriculum subjects I got top marks. However, I was anxious about philosophy. I took the exam paper and sat down to think about the answers. After a while, Aziz Aliyev came in to check on the progress of the exam. He noticed me when I was heading for the exit after handing my papers to the Chairman of the Enrollment Committee. He turned to the lecturers, pointing at me: 'It seems that this boy from Ganja is very well versed.' Then he left the room.

The lecturers gave me the top mark. Aziz Aliyev lent his great moral support to my scientific career.

When I saw how badly the aforementioned ministerial nephew performed in the exams, only achieving a pass grade ('C'), I took the evidence that in an institution headed by Aziz Aliyev, the highest criteria would be only integrity, labour and justice.

I was Zarifa khanum's colleague for many years. She was in the ophthalmology department, while I was in the department of internal diseases. As a scientist, doctor and linguist, she was a darling of the people. However, I would like to talk about her humanly qualities, about her simplicity.

Even though she was a great scientist and wife of the Republic's leader, her conduct both among colleagues and in any other company was always demure. She was sincere and affable with seniors as well as juniors. As a colleague of hers, she was friendly towards me. We defended our doctoral theses and got our professor's degree in the same year. After discussion within the academic council of our institute, it was necessary to send our documents to Moscow. At that time, the Supreme Attestation Commission was in Moscow. After the academic council's meeting she called me and said: 'Nuraddin, prepare your documents. I will send them to Moscow with mine. When they see in Moscow that our documents are in the same file, they will think that you are either a relative or a close friend of Heydar Aliyev. Therefore they will facilitate the approval of your thesis.' No one would do that for me! I was an ordinary man, a simple doctor and didn't have any

high-ranking patrons. Such a good deed by the First Secretary's wife elated me. I promptly prepared all the necessary documents and gave them to Zarifa khanum. In less than two weeks we received news from Moscow that my documents were approved.

At an Academy of Sciences function, the academician Topchubashov presented Zarifa khanum and me with our diplomas.

We were also colleagues in the household air conditioning plant that she established. She was researching ophthalmology, while I studied in the field of internal diseases. Zarifa khanum would treat other workers and employees with such softness and delicacy that many of them weren't aware of her status. There were cardiology, gastrointestinal diseases, pulmonary diseases and endocrinology departments in the laboratory, as within the scope of our studies.

When meeting with the plant workers, regardless of their rank, Zarifa khanum, would first greet them, then ask about their health, etc. She was never indifferent towards those who applied for help, receiving and listening to them, giving her advice and helping as much as possible."

**Sughra Babayeva** worked as a doctor for more than half a century and was in charge of a department within the Research Studies Institute for Eye Diseases, presently named after Zarifa Aliyeva. When she remembers Zarifa khanum, she is on the verge of tears, her eyes shining with warmth.

Lazifa khanum, our central character's sister, was Sughra Babayeva's teacher in the State Medical Institute. Noticing the student's special interest in the diagnostics and treatment of eye diseases, she encouraged her to specialise in ophthalmology. She also arranged for Sughra to participate in surgery.

When she eventually met Zarifa khanum, Sughra Babayeva was inspired by her deepest compassion for her colleagues and tutors.

"It seemed that Zarifa khanum came into the world to help people and do good," she says. "At that time, we were inexperienced and would find it difficult to write clinical records, especially in Russian. Zarifa khanum would come to our rescue and find the right turns of phrases to edit our writing... She would warmly greet all of us when she came to

work and kiss Lazifa khanum every time. I admired the deep love between the sisters and brothers in the Aliyev family.

We had a colleague called Slutskiy. He got a new apartment and we went to his house-warming party. His wife was a music teacher and there was a piano in their house, noticed immediately by Zarifa khanum. She sat at the piano and began to play fragments from our national operettas and world-famous classical music. We got to our feet and began dancing merrily.

Toward the end of 1970s, the leaders in Soviet ophthalmology came to Baku. There were heroes of socialist labour and heads of major ophthalmology centre among them. We decided to invite the distinguished guests to my place, also the first time that Zarifa khanum had visited. She met with my family and tenderly kissed my children.

We laid a festive table which fully reflected the wealth of Azerbaijani cuisine. There were different kinds of pilaf, seasonings and dressings, shish kebab, chicken, pickled vegetables and spices. The vine shoots on our balcony drew some attention. It was late autumn and the grapes were in the prime of their life. We tore some off and regaled our valuable guests.

Zarifa khanum pleased us all with her piano playing. Everyone was on great form. Zarifa khanum was quite satisfied with the evening, although didn't fail to say when leaving that the piano was out of tune..."

**Rasim Hajiye**v was one of Zarifa khanum's favourite graduates. Presently, he practices as a well known ophthalmologist. He recalls Zarifa khanum with admiration as a dear friend: "I met her in 1978. At the time she was looking for young, talented ophthalmologists. She asked me many questions about my profession so I got impression that I was in an interview. Then she offered me a job. After a while, she suggested that I choose diabetic retinopathy as my dissertation subject. She justified this by stating that the disease is one of the leading causes of blindness. There were many patients in the department of endocrinology at Hospital No. 4. Tamerlan Aliyev (the brother of Zarifa Aliyeva. - *H.M.*) was in charge of the department, who we would consult when we needed.

I prepared an abstract, Zarifa khanum read it, and wrote a detailed critical review. That review of hers is kept in the departmental museum to this very day.

She put forward the hypothesis that diabetic retinopathy is caused not by vascular injuries, as was accepted then, but by the damage of particular cells of the retina. Her article on this topic was first published in 1982, in the Medical Journal of Azerbaijan. The article stated that it is possible to employ the vitreo technique to stabilise the diabetic retinology process. Subsequent studies confirmed the validity of her hypothesis.

The memory of Zarifa khanum, a wonderful person, scientist and humanist and my scientific supervisor will always be in my heart."

**Aydin Imamaliyev, Professor and Doctor of Medical Science, writes:** "Although human destinies have something in common, they don't all complement each other, and it is difficult to find two identical people. In this respect, Zarifa Aliyeva and Heydar Aliyev are an exception. They, as all of us do, took care of their children; sometimes they were pleased, sometimes upset. In their lives, work and social affairs, success and failure also alternated. But their spiritually enriched each other against all the odds, and they stood confidently against all difficulties."

**The former alternate member of Politburo, Alexander Dzasoxov,** takes us back to the days of mourning for Zarifa khanum: "It was a very sorrowful day. Both the weather and people were gloomy in Moscow, following Zarifa khanum to her grave. She was a charming wife and a faithful friend of Heydar Aliyev. She left us, and the life of Heydar Aliyev changed profoundly. Zarifa khanum was a doctor of sciences and grew up in a highly cultured and educated family, and complemented Heydar Aliyev in the best possible way."

Following this thought, the well-known painter, **Professor of the Russian Academy of Pictorial Arts Nikas Saphronov** said such words during the presentation of Zarifa Aliyeva's portrait: "I am happy to present to the President, Heydar Aliyev, this portrait of his soul mate and great personality, the late Zarifa khanum Aliyeva. Mister President, the facial features of Zarifa khanum show that the years spent with you made her face so beautiful. First, she has extraordinary eyes. I depicted

them slightly sad, while she herself looks like a guardian angel who cares for all of us. In fact, many authoritative persons brought up in your family devoted their life to people. People perceive Heydar Aliyev not as a high-ranking person, but as a man whom they love whole-heartedly with great affection."

**Faguma Baghirli,** who was a lecturer at the State Medical Institute for many years, recalls: "Once, when I was a young doctor, I was on night duty in the children's department at the hospital. I was told that the child of the Chairman of the KGB had been brought in for examination. I went out and saw the little, faint Ilham in Zarifa khanum's arms. She was crying, while Heydar Aliyev consoled and comforted her: 'Zarifa, don't cry. He is our only son and Allah will not bereave us of him...!'

Zarifa khanum was a tender mother and her heart overflowed with love for her children. Throughout her whole life she was guided by spiritual values. She was a secure foothold for her husband and cared for her children and aspired to bring them up as worthy and dignified citizens. Therefore, along with the serene and happy days, she saw many anxious ones.

Many books have been written about her noble humanly qualities, and medical and scientific achievements. Authors have the unanimous opinion that it is impossible to imagine Heydar and Zarifa Aliyev without one other."

The book called 'The genius who was far ahead of his time', written by **Mirkazim Seyidov** and **Mammad Rzayev** and dedicated to our great leader, talks in detail about Zarifa khanum Aliyeva. Outlining her professional activities, the authors draw attention to her medical ethic and education of students, not only on a professional level, but also a moral one. She would always inspire younger generation to extend their scientific gamut and choose not to isolate themselves as a narrow-focussed specialist, and widen their circle of professional interests. In order to fight for the life and health of patients, it is necessary to understand every one of them and to treat them with affection. Zarifa khanum would point out that along with professional knowledge, a doctor needs to be a person of the highest culture and to understand the world of arts, music and literature...

Only the doctor who is capable of inventively using the information obtained by modern research methods in the age of scientific and technical progress, will stand the test of time in his profession.

All social shortcomings that she discovered, Zarifa khanum would approach as a health professional. She would trace 'symptoms of a disease' of society just as a doctor studies a case record, and seek to clarify the etiology to understand how to cope with the disease.

From October 22-24, 1977, the VII Plenary Meeting of the All-Union Society of Ophthalmologists was held. Two hundred outstanding scientists and healthcare professionals engaged in the field of child ophthalmology, severe eye damage and treatment of glaucoma. Zarifa Aliyeva's reports were distinguished by their novelty and actuality.

After the Plenary Meeting the guests and participants were received by the First Secretary of the Central Committee Heydar Aliyev, for a two-hour discussion.

The guests were enraptured by the live speech of the Head of the Republic, which was rich in facts about economics, literature and the arts, the current state of medicine and healthcare services in Azerbaijan.

The VIII Plenary Meeting was held October 8-9, 1981, in Yerevan. Zarifa Aliyeva's speech was dedicated to the problems of medical deontology. She, as all other progressive representatives of healthcare workers of the time, was alarmed by the decline of moral criteria among healthcare workers and doctor-patient relationships... The changes caused by scientific and technical developments in the field of medicine, and implementation of new apparatus and equipment, inducted patients into the multi-specialised environment of doctors, technicians and laboratory assistants. Although Zarifa Aliyeva didn't consider such 'assembly-line' methods of treatment as wrong, she saw in it the factor which could lead to the leveling of iatric thinking, fraught with increasing the number of fatal mistakes. She gave much importance to live, direct communication between doctors and patients, that facilitates the mobilisation of the patient's mental strength and capabilities, their will to fight against illness, and awakens their optimism. Zarifa khanum would often underline that

despite the participation of tens of dedicated experts involved in treatment, the main responsibility falls on the attending physician, while 'group responsibility' of doctors in fact lends itself to irresponsibility.

In her report read at the Moscow Society of Ophthalmologists meeting and published afterwards, Zarifa Aliyeva proposed a real strategy of specialist training in higher education institutions and in the Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners. Zarifa khanum justly pointed out that when a patient withdraws into himself and shuts out everyone, he won't find supporters and consolers, becomes exhausted quickly and loses will, which is so important for resisting disease. Finally, he loses his vital power completely. This is why a doctor, by virtue of his vocation, is obliged to give moral support to every one of his patients, regardless of their rank, position, office or financial standing; he should aspire to revive his patient's will to live. Zarifa Aliyeva said time and time again that the soul and moral health of a man is the support and foundation of physical health. In this context, every doctor is obliged not only to engage himself in the treatment of his patient's illness, but also to heal his patient's soul.

She, the eminent health worker, would urge people to conserve their health, especially their sight, and to relish and value it as long as it served them. She would point out that the modern age requires thorough study of not only the causing factors of diseases, but also the environment, to ensure that it promotes good health, protects against diseases, and contributes to a full and happy life. 'Since the dawn of time, medical practice only covered the treatment of those suffering,' Zarifa Aliyeva would say. 'In our days, however, along with treatment of various illnesses, medical service providers also face problems in the protection and preservation of people's health.' In those years the multidimensional work performed by the Republic's leader, contributed greatly to the development of medicine. The fact that the healthcare system began to consider the healthy section of the population too, spoke for the logic of the State's social development.

The internationally acclaimed surgeon, laureate of the Lenin Prize, Academician F.G.Uglov, underlined in his book called 'A man among human beings' (published by 'Molodaya Gvardiya',

1978) that a good doctor should cure not only his patient's body, but also his soul. The true surgeon is the one who feels obliged to learn about his patient's life before approaching the surgical table, to find a way into the most concealed corners of the patient's heart. Words may kill, not only in a figurative sense, but also literally. By the same means, it is possible to facilitate treatment by way of personal support with words of encouragement and a humanistic nature. The medical practice of Zarifa Aliyeva was based on such principles.

Her spiritual, psychological and moral principles run clearly through her attitude towards her profession, people and society. Our ancestors used to say: 'Where there is a sound body there is a sound mind'. Now, listen to the words of Zarifa khanum, directed to the younger generation of doctors: 'Cherish the best qualities of national character: simplicity, unselfishness, loyalty in your friendship, stick by your words and be good-hearted. Spiritual health guarantees physical soundness.' It seems as if the two poles ensuring harmony of human beings, switched places and coalesced in her phrase.

As the reader has had the opportunity to see for himself from numerous testimonials of her colleagues, loves ones and close acquaintances brought together in this book, Zarifa khanum was a person of the highest moral standards. She would receive patients not only in the clinic where she worked, but in other places when necessary, offering her advice and, if circumstances allowed, surgical intervention if required. She never refused to help and left no one without hope.

She actively advocated the acquisition of medical knowledge among the rural population, set high value on the role of 'family physicians', insistently recommending the reestablishment of the family therapy institute. Her book called 'The problems of moral education of doctors, deontology, medical ethics and moral' published in 1983, not only became a medic's reference book, but also a code of social behavior and relationships. Summarising, Zarifa Aliyeva defines the doctor's attitude toward his patient as the foundation of his role. She thought that a true doctor couldn't stand cold to pain and suffering, and should empathise with his patients.

Zarifa Aliyeva's book called 'Diabetes related eye diseases' published by the Uzbek Publishing House 'Tibb' ('Medicine')

played a large part in the combat against such diseases, widely spread in Central Asia and Transcaucasia. This work of hers became a reference book for ophthalmology practitioners.

We have told, throughout this book, the wide range of our central character's interests, of her musical talent, love for theatre and music, more than once. Now we shall complement this narration with the testimonial of **Professor A. N. Dobrolyubov**, the head of the Department of Eye Diseases on the Leningrad (currently St. Petersburg) Sanitary and Hygiene Institute. He said that Zarifa Aliyeva's ability to listen and feel the music was evident in her 'talking eyes'. According to Zarifa Aliyeva, music is purgative magic.

She was proud of Uzeyir Hajibeyov, Muslim Magomayev, Gara Garayev, Tofiq Guliyev, Fikret Amirov and many other prominent Azerbaijani composers known not only in Azerbaijan, but also far beyond.

Her natural charm was also expressed through her speech, distinguished by its refinement. The success of her informative and professionally profound reports and speeches can be explained to a certain extent by the clear words, expressive voice and inherent artistry.

Hegel wrote that '...one's inner beauty may certainly be determined by the charm of his speech, while a rude and rough voice speaks for ugliness and monstrosity of feelings...' In this context the speech and voice of our central character reflected the harmony of her inner world and level of her cultural and moral values.

Expressiveness of voice and richness of intonation are by no means unimportant factors in determining a level of communication. Zarifa khanum could always find the necessary and appropriate tone of voice for the occasion and, as you know, my reader, medical practice is full of most difficult situations... Therefore it is especially important in doctor-patient relationship, for patients may be of different characters and ages. They are distinguished by their general well-being as well as by the severity of their illnesses. So, the psychotherapeutic impact of the doctor's words on his patient comes to the forefront. Zarifa khanum was bestowed with such a gift to the fullest extent.

We have told of her love for music. However, she loved poetry and literature as just much, regarding poets and writers as spiritual healers.

**Adil Najafov, Professor, the Head of Department of Philosophy of Azerbaijan's State Medical Institute** (now-deceased) wrote in her memoirs that Zarifa Aliyeva considered the revival of a perfect, noble and powerful personality, who derives his strength and inspiration from the grandeur of beauty and good, and who is the uncompromising enemy of evil and injustice, as the highest mission of literature.

As early as at the beginning of the 1950s, the talented **poet and playwright Islam Safarli** used to come to the Ophthalmology Institute for advice from Zarifa khanum in relation to his play, 'Eye doctor'. He admitted afterwards that her comments spoke for the ophthalmologist's sophistication and thorough knowledge of national and world literature as well as writing techniques. However, she politely but firmly declined the playwright's offer to be the official consultant of the play, adding that ideally both medicine and literature serve the same purpose.

Zarifa khanum, in spite of being busy, tried to keep track of theatrical repertoire and would say that classical music has a magical effect. Artists, like medics, should strive to find effective ways to employ the great magic of theatre for the sake of man.

The significance of words as a remedy, well-known and highlighted by the eminent ophthalmologist, is confirmed in the statement by Academician Dmitriy Sergeevich Likhachev who, in his article, 'Gradations of words' (newspaper 'Literaturnaya gazeta' January 25, 1984) likened poetry to the last healing profession": "Of course we perceive the healing impact of poetry and the arts in a metaphoric and spiritual sense.

Possibly there are no other professions where we find such a confidential relationship as the one between doctors and patients. It is unlikely that other occupations can deeply penetrate a man's life, in its physical and psychic condition and spiritual world (may my colleagues, men of letters, not condemn me for such words!)..." Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, a doctor and word-painter by vocation, wrote: "If a doctor

doesn't think broadly, he contradicts his profession." What the Russian classic alludes to is the quality that Zarifa Aliyeva cultivated in her students.

Zarifa Aliyeva inherited all high moral virtues that were characteristic of her family. The intellect, diligence, modesty and love for people and the homeland, and adherence to universal values... She embodied those qualities in life.

Being the keeper of hearth and home is in itself a great task, and if while at the same time socialising, pursuing science, healing thousands, opening their eyes, bestowing them with the full joy of living, is a vast and noble effort.

During Soviet times when Heydar Aliyev was in the charge of the Republic, leading officials and ministers of the USSR often visited Azerbaijan, showing great interest in its economy and culture. More often than not, the high-ranking guests would arrive with their partners.

**Mustafa Nassirov, a veteran of war, the officer of the KGB, USSR and major-general**, remembered: "The Member of Politburo, Secretary of Communist Party's Central Committee for Agriculture F. D. Kulakov arrived in Baku, to present Azerbaijan with the Red Challenge Banner. It was planned that the guests would visit Lankaran and Astara (regions of Azerbaijan with many places worth seeing. - translator's note). I, our Chairman of the KGB S. Krasilnikov and the Minister of Internal Affairs Arif Heydarov, left Lankaran and headed for Astara a bit earlier than others. We heard en route that the First Secretary of the Regional Party Committee was planning a meeting with the participation of the working masses in front of the party committee's building. However, I had informed my colleagues and officials from Astara in advance that the guests would arrive at the frontier post and gather there. The officers of the two ministries had to be there for peacekeeping. We approached the square in front of the party committee's building and saw that it was empty. After waiting for a while on the outskirts of Astara, we headed for the frontier post. By that time, Zarifa khanum and Kulakov's wife were at the post, familiarising themselves with the everyday life of soldiers. They slackened their pace before the propaganda corner, on the wall, the portrait of the Hero of



the Soviet, Union Gujev. I quite understood their motherly and compassionate silence. Then they made for the border.

The complement of post lined up on the parade ground for salutation. The border guards gave Heydar Aliyev and F. D. Kulakov artless and simple presents including a green service cap.

Then the time came to ascend to the border bridge. We were supposed to enter the street through the main gate, but the street was full of people who had gathered there to meet the Republic's head and his guest. The people of Astarra blocked the gate.

Heydar Aliyev, after greeting people, stepped forward and turned to Kulakov: 'They came here to show respect and welcome us gladly.' Accompanied by the applause of locals, Kulakov behind, he passed through the crowd which parted to make way for him. The guards followed at some distance.

Upon returning, Kulakov said to Zarifa khanum and his wife: 'Too bad that you didn't see the bridge connecting the two riverbanks, and how his people expressed their love and respect for Heydar Aliyev and his guests.' When the women said that they were at the border and managed to see all of it, Kulakov once again expressed his gratitude to Heydar Aliyev."

I think that it would be interesting for readers to read the chapter 'Politburo and worries of Zarifa khanum' in the book written by **Bayram Husseyinli** called, 'Heydar Aliyev: A life spent for giving life' (published in Azerbaijani). This chapter depicts a dramatic episode from the political biography of Heydar Aliyev: "Heydar Aliyev was leaving the room in the capacity of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of Azerbaijan Communist Party. Conversations during the farewell meeting with the Republic's public representatives, opinions expressed during those conversations, and the pangs of affection heard in their speeches touched him. Tired as he was, he got up from the table and cast his eyes around the room. The audience fell silent. He suddenly felt how hard it was to part with his native land, but you take what's coming to you. Reluctantly leaving the room, he went downstairs and stopped at the official car. He looked with excitement at the grand building of the Central Committee under construction. The neighbourhood of the old building, headquartered by the

Council of Ministers headquarters, gave a pleasing impression against the new one. The great leader thought to himself: if a simple Azerbaijani construction worker is capable of erecting such a magnificent building, then he has made quite an advancement. It means that the sons of my race may continue to build many such palaces... He looked around: it was a period of quietness after the day-time hours of fuss and jostle. It raised some anxiety within him, for some reason reminding him of the silence of the hot July days of 1969. But in those days the silence was of a different nature - the silence of apathy and colourless days in the life of people... This quiet evening was just the resting hours after solid labour and hard construction work...

With these thoughts in mind, he got into the car.

He still was moved from that meeting with the public representatives.

Separating from his native Azerbaijan was a pain in his heart. He was also confused by Zarifa khanum's worries. Everything indicated that she didn't feel good about this invitation to work in Moscow - to a post at the top of political power. Busy with those thoughts he didn't notice that he'd driven up in front of the house. As usual, he was welcomed by Zarifa khanum and he immediately noticed, looking at her face, a concealed agitation. He gave no sign that he sensed her mood, changed his clothes, sat on the sofa and smiled, turning to her: 'Well, I'm all ears...'

She silently jerked up her head and fixed him with a look of deep anxiety. Then she looked away. Heydar Aliyev knew that she wanted to talk but didn't know how to begin. He got up and approached her. With a careful motion of his hand he turned her head towards him and, looking into her eyes, said:

'What's the matter, Zarifa, honey?'

'You know, Heydar...' She tried to speak with a level tone, but the quiver in the voice exposed her emotion. 'I am not quite myself after yesterday's talk. Yes, you justified the Moscow transfer, referring to Narimanov... The fate of Narimanov makes me think. I couldn't help but think all day about his career full of dreadful twists and turns. Yes, I am aware of your political moves and I know that you have been thinking of your prospects in Moscow... However, today, right now, I would like

to share some my observations with you. Once you, Heydar, desired to erect a monument to Narimanov in one of the most noticeable places of Baku... I knew that it was going to be a very big monument. Now you tell me, what happened afterwards? Don't you remember the attacks from everywhere? How surreptitiously all of them went against you? ...How especially zealous the homebred spitpoisons were? Well, it is true, you struggled, toiled and suffered much but made it, though not to the full: the monument was erected at the place chosen by you, but it was a smaller one... All this was without reason, Heydar!

Here her voice broke and she faltered. It was the first time that he'd seen her so agitated. He continued to listen, occasionally rubbing his forehead with the palm of the hand.

'...and why did they transfer Narimanov to Moscow?' Zarifa continued. 'They said it was a promotion. Yes it was, but only for eliminating him on the sly... for Narimanov always cared about Azerbaijan with all his heart. The political heritage of Narimanov, his biography, has not been released to this day, and I believe that the political views of Narimanov and many other historical personalities of Azerbaijan will be studied in years to come. I don't know how to explain it, but I don't feel good about your transfer to Moscow, to Politburo. I have a woman's heart, a mother's heart, which tells me this... and I worry. Here, in Azerbaijan, you manage far more important affairs, and it seems to me that this is the reason why Moscow invites you into its 'embrace'...

'Zarifa, my darling! Don't worry, please. What you said was true and you judge history correctly. Today I learnt that Zarifa khanum is not only a talented doctor, fond mother and patriot, but also a great politician...' said Heydar Aliyev, jokingly, to dissipate her fear somehow, and continued with a smile: 'I understand your concern and appreciate it very much, and I give you a big black 'A' in politics!' He looked into her eyes. The anxiety had changed to genuine interest. 'Yes, you are right. Narimanov was eliminated because he was the true son of his people: it was too late when he understood that he had been deceived. There are many secrets in the archives, but now is not a good time to dwell on this... All this will be clarified when the time comes. Narimanov understood that he

was deceived and he understood his responsibility to the nation. He wrote four letters to Lenin, demanding that he treated Azerbaijan without discrimination and as an equal republic. May his soul rest in the kingdom of heaven... He wrote those letters... and died in mysterious circumstances...'

Heydar Aliyev's features seemed to darken with these words. He felt that it was an appropriate time to disclose more bitter things to his wife.

'Zarifa, I think that Narimanov chose the path which gave him the possibility to save his people from the worst catastrophes, at the cost of his 'mistake'. Suppose that the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan offered armed resistance to the Red Army... The defeat of the young democratic republic would be inevitable and lead to heavy casualties. I think Nariman took the correct stance in the historic situation and made a wise decision. Who would support Azerbaijan in 1920? Turkey, just recently out of World War I, was busy constructing a new political system. As the saying goes, the Bolsheviks had time on their side. Narimanov judged the balance of political forces correctly and saved his people from an awful tragedy. The time will come when Narimanov's personality will be regarded in light of his era's circumstances and his priceless services to his country and people will receive the highest praise... Zarifa, honey, we need to be realists...'

Silence reigned, only to be disturbed by the regular tick-tock of the clock. They listened to this 'music of time' and it seemed as if the pendulum, driven by some irrepressible and invincible power, shouldered the heavy burden..."

Those who read the book 'Heydar Aliyev' are well aware of the details of his return to power in Azerbaijan, which was exhausted by the devastating war and internal discord. The following revival of the Republic under the leadership of Heydar Aliyev, the recovery and development of the economy and government institutions, the establishment of order and peaceful development of society, and rise of Azerbaijan's prestige on the world's stage, are also well known.

Zarifa Aliyeva didn't live to see those days. She didn't see the rise of her husband to the highest position in his native Republic. She also didn't see her son Ilham Aliyev taking the oath before his nation as its elected President. But we believe

that her soul blessed and protected her near ones and dear ones in their fight for the honour, dignity and independence of Azerbaijan.

In his book called 'Two lives - one destiny', **Teymur Yahyayev** recalls that sorrowful April day of 1985, when Zarifa khanum Aliyeva departed from life.

"Every time, when I recall the scene of the last respects paid to Zarifa khanum - the embodiment of the noblest qualities of an Azerbaijani woman - I experience once again the shock of that painful loss...

Even though I understand the readers who reproach me for writing how Heydar Aliyev bemoaned his dearest companion lost forever, I don't accept it. For me, genuine grief is a natural state of human beings. Was it possible for the story of Leyli and Majnun, Romeo and Juliet, and Asli and Karam to go on without mentioning tears and suffering? Our Holy Prophet Mahammad called tears, 'divine light'...

The lying-in-state ceremony held at the Moscow House of Scientists went on for a long time. Her husband and son were among those who carried the coffin with the body of the deceased. Heydar Aliyev went to the Novo-Dyevitchiye cemetery alongside the body, leaving his service car behind. I was in the bus, holding a portrait of Zarifa Aliyeva in my hands.

The agitation of our leader gave way to deep silence. All the way he was absorbed in his thoughts, his eyes fixed on one spot...

The Novo-Dyevitchiye cemetery is the most prestigious burial site next to the Kremlin walls. The terminal home of academician Zarifa Aliyeva was in the land where philosophers, heroes of socialist labour and heroes of the Soviet Union, eminent writers and scientists, went to rest...

Later, the remains of the deceased were moved to her motherland, Baku. However, on her return, there was not a tincture of the anguish and oblivion that hovered over the remains of Husseyn Javid that were dug out of the enumerated grave in the Siberian depths and returned to Azerbaijan...

The path leading to her grave in the Novo-Dyevitchiye cemetery would not become overgrown with grass, for many people visited her: Zarifa khanum's husband, children, colleagues, Azerbaijani people living in Moscow and

representatives of other nations, holding the Aliyevs in honour. The flowers on her grave wouldn't fade either. The attendants of the Novo-Dyevitchiye said that Heydar Aliyev came everyday...

Surrounded by his loyal friends, Ilham Aliyev was distressed for the world orphaned by the death of his mother and thoughts of finding a way to console his father. The pain of the grievous loss and care of his beloved father fell to him.

Other terrible events were nearing - the events that worsened the situation within the Republic and took its toll of the great leader's health...

In June, 1993, when I was in the Novo-Dyevitchiye cemetery at the grave of Zarifa khanum, a woman - a stranger - came up to me suddenly and introduced herself: her name was Tamara. She inquired if I was a relative to the deceased and was touched to hear that I was a friend of Ilham Aliyev, and carried special compassion for the Aliyevs. I said that I was going to be sent by the ITAR-TASS agency on an assignment to Baku and it is possible that I would see Heydar Aliyev. She asked me to convey that she will always cherish the memory of Zarifa khanum and would not leave her terminal home unkept.

In Baku, in Heydar Aliyev's room (he had just been elected Chairman of Milli Mejlis, i.e. Parliament), I delivered the message from that ordinary resident of Moscow.

He mused upon a distant scene and for a moment he took his mind off the numerous troubles of Azerbaijan, the burden of which he took upon his own shoulders at the most crucial time for the Republic, and returned to imagining the days of the past. Yes, the sorrow of his loss didn't pass by his private life too.

Perhaps, he recalled the last letter of Zarifa khanum..."

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Chapter Sixteen

VOCATION - DESTINY - LIFE

*Life is appraised not by its length,  
but by its significance*

Seneca

The former First Secretary of the Lankaran region's committee of the party Dilruba Jamalova (deceased in 2009) remembered notable details related to the visit of the Aliyevs to this southern region. They arrived in Lankaran with their young son Ilham. They had a few hours left to relax and enjoy the bountiful nature of the land.

"It was 1982. After visiting the farms we made for the Khanbulanchay impoundment. Zarifa khanum and Ilham were already in the guest house located nearby. Everything was ready for their stay. We prepared several rooms for Heydar muallim (we called these rooms 'Kekkonen apartments'). After Heydar Aliyev retired to his room, I went down to the kitchen to find his personal chef, Sona, there. She had cooked so many dishes! They said that Heydar Aliyev ate only the meals that she cooks. She was both his cook and doctor. Sona said that she had to check the dishes cooked by us.

'Please, feel free to check,' I said. 'Heydar muallim, his wife and son, came to see Lankaran. He is our guest and it would be better if he tastes Lankarani dishes.'

'That is impossible,' objected Sona.

I instructed my people to have everything ready, but to serve up only upon my order, and I also gave the instruction to serve up a little bit of everything. We prepared different dishes and drinks and wanted our guests to have a taste of all of them. Zarifa khanum got worried and said to her husband: 'This would be not good for your health. Be careful.'

Heydar muallim put her off with a joke: 'We came here, to Lankaran, to see Dilruba khanum, and we have to obey her.'

At that time we were on very good terms with Heydar Aliyev and, relying on this, I began to persuade him: 'Try the pilaf with lentils.'

'Yes,' he replied, 'since my mother's death I haven't eaten such pilaf.'

'You can't eat it.' Zarifa khanum began to worry again.

At that time Heydar Aliyev had some stomach problems and they fed him only oven-baked meals. However, he tasted all of our food and drink with great pleasure. Perhaps he missed such delicacies.

'Now, may we serve the roasted Black Sea roach?' I said. I sought his permission every time I served the next dish.

'Let them to serve. I would like to try a taste...'

We served it, and our guest ate some fish too.

I knew that he would have his supper and next morning's breakfast at our place too. Therefore, I did my best to change the menu every time.

In the evening, we took a boat out on the Khanbulanchay reservoir. He was rather reluctant but I succeeded to talk him into spending ten or fifteen minutes on the boat tour.

Guards followed the boat. During the tour I started a conversation about the forests and unique trees and fauna of Lankaran... The impoundment was surrounded by forests and the scenery was captivating.

'It is indeed so beautiful here!' he said admiringly. 'Zarifa! I will send you and Sevil here, to Dilruba khanum, as soon as I return to Baku. I want you have a good time here.'

Isai Rubenchik was taking our photographs from the accompanying boat. These photographs were included in many photobooks dedicated to the President.

The next morning, Heydar Aliyev left for Astara and I took Zarifa khanum and Ilham on a city tour. We visited Isti-su (health resort) after which we lost ourselves in the forest, heading for the spring. That's where we drove the **President of Finland, Koivisto**, and many other high-ranking guests. The guest from Finland said on his return: 'It's a pity to drive in such a pretty forest. You should only walk here.' I remember that he covered all four kilometres on foot. It was difficult for

us to catch up with the tall President, who marched with meter-long steps... It was that place where I took Zarifa khanum and Ilham. It is a fascinating reserve with mountain slopes, dense forest and a spring with such bitterly cold water that your teeth ache after drinking it... No need for refrigerators - you can just bring your food and drop it into the water...

A tea table was already waiting for us laid with homemade butter, honey and fresh village foods. We reached the path through the woods by the car and had to climb the next one or two hundred meters on foot.

'Dilruba khanum, my feet ache,' complained Zarifa khanum. 'Let's sit there for ten or fifteen minutes and go back.'

Ascending along the mountain trail, finally we reached the spring.

The forest ranger had spread a carpet on the grass and unfolded a tablecloth on top of it. He laid the tablecloth exactly as it should be done. We sat down and started talking. Zarifa khanum questioned the forest ranger about the flora and fauna of the place and the peculiarities of the old grown trees... Thus, having our tea and chatting, we sat for some forty minutes. Ilham reminded: 'Mum, you were going to be here for only ten minutes...'

'But, the air here is so fine, clear as crystal, even in the thick of the summer (it was June 30). Water from this spring is so good! I don't usually drink plain water, but I've drunk my fill!'

In a word, Zarifa khanum was very satisfied with the walk. She phoned her daughter, Sevil, and shared her experience. At that time Sevil had just given birth to her daughter.

'My granddaughter is still too little,' said Zarifa khanum, 'Otherwise I would bring her here with me.' Although Heydar Aliyev insisted: 'Let's all go there and take Sevil and the baby with us.'

Returning to Baku, Heydar Aliyev said: 'I will send my daughter and Zarifa to see you as soon as the baby grows a bit stronger. Take them on a city tour, to Khanbulanchay and Gizilaghaj (nature reserve - H.M.). Very many thanks for your hospitality. I've had a good break here...'

I also feel obliged to bring to your attention the recollections of **Boyukkhanum Nazirova - a well-known doctor** and daughter-in-law of the eminent health worker, Abulfaz Garayev.

She was the wife of the late Mursal Garayev who was also a medical worker - the Surgeon General of the Republic. The world-famous composer Gara Garayev was a brother of Mursal and brother-in-law of Boyukkhanum Nazirova. Zarifa khanum's brother, Jamil Aliyev, used to be a student of Mursal Garayev. In addition, Mursal muallim was connected to Kamil Aliyev - Zarifa khanum's first cousin, and they had a close and intimate friendship. Kamil Aliyev was a brilliant painter who made a great contribution to the art of carpet weaving in Azerbaijan. The friends were inveterate hunters and would often go out hunting. Their families had a warm and strong relationship.

Boyukkhanum Nazirova, absorbed in memories, goes over the past and her face shines with gladness: "Zarifa khanum and her family are well remembered, not just by me. Everyone knew her well, elders and youngsters. They knew her not only due to her distinguished ancestry but also because she was an extraordinary woman. On her face you would find all of the best qualities that are characteristic of our people. I knew her since my student days. Although she was small in stature, and this clever girl was the daughter of nice and famous parents, she would behave and treat everyone with simplicity, sincerity and warmth. I felt a sense of pride every time I saw her - the feeling that you get from seeing a person of kindred blood.

There was a book published in Baku called 'Doctor Garayev' about my friend. The foreword, written by the writer Anar, begins with such phrase: 'There are families and dynasties that are not only very important social units, but that also bear the pillars of the society.' Anar is right, indeed. The period, lasting for the last century and a half, gave our society many famous dynasties. The spiritual heritage of these dynasties is a source of pride not only for their descendants, but also for the nation, and even the world. The memory of such families is held sacred both in Azerbaijan and beyond its border: these are the descendants of Javanshir,<sup>22</sup> and family lines of the Bakikhanovs, Rafibeyli, Aliyevs, Topchubashovs, Garayevs, Vekilovs, Shikhlinskiys and others.

<sup>22</sup> Javanshir - a sovereign in ancient Azerbaijan whose descendants ruled in the Garabagh Khanate.

Our nation draws inspiration from the spiritual heritage of the eminent representatives of those families and is proud of their noble deeds. Such personalities made an invaluable contribution to the establishment and rise of the nation, strengthening national values, and themselves were exemplified selfless and committed people of the motherland. Ancestors of these dynasties were wise and far-sighted builders who predetermined the development of society for the following decades and centuries. Of course, the new generations, following the example of their great ancestors, will be a source of pride for their descendants.

Zarifa khanum is one of the worthiest representatives of two famous families - the Aliyevs. She was a daughter of Aziz Aliyev and daughter-in-law of another Aliyev. She doubled the fame of both surnames. I was an acquaintance of her brothers, sisters and children. We were on very good terms with members of their families.

The life of Zarifa khanum's father Aziz Aliyev, is marked with hard and sometimes dramatic ordeals (in previous chapters of this book we detailed the change of Aziz Aliyev's destiny. - *H.M.*)

Zarifa khanum and Heydar Aliyev were brought together by the true mutual love that coincided with the period of unjust disgrace of her father. However, they married. Later, when Heydar Aliyev was in the higher realms of the Civil Service, he too faced slanderous attacks and fought against devious plots of envy.

The party instigated unprecedented hounding on Aliyev - both in Moscow and Baku. This is a very painful and bitter story. Remembering it, I would like to say: Zarifa khanum shared the hardships both of her father and of her husband, worrying about them and empathising with them in those dark days.

Many people think that living the life of a high-ranker's child is peaceful and quiet. But I have a different opinion. The decree of fate was such that the sense of responsibility for her own reputation and family honour, fostered by Zarifa khanum in the home of her father, she sharpened in the home that she entered as a wife. She was the faithful supporter of Heydar Aliyev, who took the lead of Azerbaijan and later rose to the highest standing of greatness of the superpower with a population of two hundred and fifty million people...

I devoted my whole working life to the medical profession. Therefore, I know her achievements well. She was a skilled

doctor, talented scientist and selfless organiser of the healthcare services. We are proud of her. But I now feel obliged to repeat: in spite of her status as the wife of the Republic's First Person and one of the leaders of the USSR, she used to treat all of us as if we were her kindred and close friends. She was straightforward and sincere. It is no secret that as a daughter of Aziz Aliyev and wife of Heydar Aliyev, she had every possibility to support and offer assistance to anyone who referred to her for help. However, as with all political leaders' families, their family life was, in a manner of speaking, within a sphere of confidentiality. No one would talk to his family members in private. Nevertheless, Zarifa khanum used to give her assistance and support to many young colleagues in their professional establishment in scientific development. She lent a helping hand to thousands of workers who needed treatment and medical care, and we remember her good deeds with gratitude.

My brother-in-law Gara Garayev, was a favourite of the Aliyevs. Many times I witnessed conversations with Garayev: Heydar Aliyev did a lot to facilitate his education and promote his talent! Gara Garayev could not praise the cordiality of this family enough. He admired the noble humanly qualities and high culture of Zarifa khanum. I remember this episode: Once my husband, Mursal Garayev, went to the airport with his friends - painters Kamil Aliyev and Tahir Salahov - to welcome a guest of theirs. The plane was delayed and we had to wait for a few hours. Kamil suggested visiting Heydar Aliyev's place (he was working for the KGB at that time). They sat around a table for an hour or two, singing, eating, drinking, and then headed to the airport. On the way to the airport, Tahir Salahov wanted to drive and took the wheel. Somewhere near the town of Sabunchu they had an accident: their car collided with another car. Tahir and Mursal got injured: one broke his leg, the other, his arm... Having heard about the accident at midnight, Heydar and Zarifa khanum Aliyev immediately went to the hospital. Naturally, the unlucky patients received every possible help. Zarifa khanum phoned the hospital every day until their full recovery to inquire about their condition...

Talking about Zarifa khanum's life, I have to say few words about Jamil Aliyev - the youngest child in Aziz Aliyev's family. Carrying on the family tradition, Jamil Aliyev became a doctor

and made a great contribution to healthcare system of Azerbaijan. He is the author of many inventive and innovative proposals as well as more than two hundred and fifty scientific works published in many countries, including eight monographs. He also wrote twenty textbooks on methodology. Academician Jamil Aliyev founded the Republic's school of oncology. Forty clinical attending physicians trained under his auspices; more than thirty young scientists defended their candidate's dissertation, and three, their doctoral thesis. In 1979, for his co-written monograph entitled, 'The treatment of skin tumors', Jamil Aliyev was awarded the N. N. Petrov prize by the Academy of Medical Sciences of the USSR. Currently, under his a guidance, studies are being performed in the field of early diagnosis and multimodality therapy of breast cancer. This process of scientific research involves the interchange of experience with foreign oncological centers. These works aim to study the etiology of malignant tumors and causes of their growth, as well as clinical diagnostics and treatment.

Since 1994, Jamil Aliyev has been in charge of the department of oncology of the State Extension Course Institute of Azerbaijan for Medical Practitioners and leads the Republican Center of Cancer Research. From 1973 to 1978 he engaged in research work as a senior research associate of the All-Union Centre of Oncology; in 1973 he defended his candidate's dissertation and, four years later, his doctoral dissertation. In 1996, Professor Jamil Aliyev, along with Yusif Mammadaliyev, was awarded a merit in medicine development. In 2001 he was elected Full Member of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences and National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan.

As the Chairman of the Republic's Society of Medical Oncology, General Oncologist of the Ministry of Health of Azerbaijan, member of Russian and European cancer societies, member of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences and New York Academy of Sciences, and a Professor of the British Royal University of Hammersmith, academician Jamil Aliyev exemplifies an extraordinarily active personality, engaged in organisational and creative activities.

Today, the humanistic and noble tradition of the Aliyevs is being worthily continued in the healthcare system of Azerbaijan: children of Jamil Aliyev, Irada and Aziza, are also doctors.

On April 14, 1999, the book 'Zarifa khanum Aliyeva' was presented in the Rashid Behbudov Song Theatre. Heydar Aliyev once again recalled those bright and sacred days spent with Zarifa khanum: "This ceremony once more took me back fourteen years. Despite that so many years had passed since her departure, our family still feels the bitterness of that grievous loss and, in my opinion, not only we, but also my grandchildren will live with this feeling. The memory of dear and unforgettable Zarifa khanum is embalmed in our hearts.

...It has already been stated that one of the best qualities of Zarifa khanum was her great optimism... Her fundamental principle was kindness to people. She loved people and people loved her. Therefore, I would like to call this evening the evening of friendship and consolidation, as this would be the best tribute to the memory of Zarifa khanum..."

In 2005, the Association of National Societies of Turkic and Caucasian Nations established the People's University of Eastern Culture in Tallin, named after Zarifa Aliyeva. The government of Estonia adopted a special resolution for this purpose. The activity of the university is partially subsidised by the government of Estonia.

On May 22, 2009, the new building of the Research Studies Institute for Eye Diseases named after Zarifa Aliyeva was officially opened. The building is equipped with up to date medical equipment, devices and laboratories. In his speech delivered during the official ceremony, **the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr. Ilham Aliyev** said: "Zarifa Aliyeva was both a very talented scientist and a professional and solicitous doctor. She is the author of many monographs and other scientific works. Her scientific activities were highly praised in former soviet territory. The most distinguished award in the field of ophthalmology - the M. I. Averbach award - was awarded to Zarifa Aliyeva. Her activities as a medical researcher were also multifarious. During the 1970s and 1980s, scientific research laboratories were established at industrial sites. The main aim of these laboratories was to study of the impact of hazardous industries on visual organ. Ordinary people, workers, could receive qualified medical care in these small medical centres. Thousands of people regained their sight thanks to Zarifa Aliyeva. At the same time, we remember her as an

unforgettable and remarkable person and a good doctor. Today, in this wonderful centre bearing her name, I would like to say again: this centre offers all the necessary facilities for performing the most sophisticated surgical procedures, along with scientific research. At the same time, the Institute has a children's department... It is, in the truest sense of the word, an irreplaceable medical institution for the whole region. I even think that people from foreign countries will come here for treatment."

**Rafiq Baghirov, personal photographer of Heydar Aliyev,** captured on film the joyful, sorrowful and difficult moments of Azerbaijan's national leader, and created a tremendous collection of illustrated material of great value to historians. With the highest level of professionalism, Rafiq muallim transferred the image of the great leader into 'photo-memory' - his face in moments of agitation, inspiration and joy; his eyes dim with tears at a moment of a commotion. Rafiq Baghirov remembers how the eyes of this courageous man were filled with tears during the visit to the resting place of Zarifa khanum in the Alley of Honor. However, there were also times when the face of Heydar Aliyev, upon receiving good news, radiated with joy, and those eyes would fill with tears of happiness...

Rafiq Baghirov: "It was the beginning of August, 1997. The President was on an official visit to the USA to meet with Bill Clinton. We arrived in Houston to hear good news: Heydar Aliyev had become a grandpa to his next grandchild. The President, usually reserved, made no secret of his happiness. He led all the members of our delegation and received their congratulations. For the first time in years I saw Heydar Aliyev celebrating. On our way back to Baku he stopped in London and went to the clinic to meet his newly born grandchild. The President literally ran, and when they showed him the little baby his eyes welled up in his eyes. He declared in a solemn but, at the same time, trembling voice: 'I name this child Heydar!' The eyes of everyone in the room, at that moment, glistened with tears..." Today we think sadly: if only Zarifa khanum could have lived to see that day and experience that feeling of happiness, holding the baby, love him, shed a tear, cover him with kisses. Maybe she would say to her partner: 'Let me offer my congratulations, Heydar! This is a happy event - the birth of my grandchild, Heydar!'

If only she could see two Heydars in her family home - the grandpa and grandchild, connected to each other with a bond of infinite love; if only she could see how now her grown-up grandchild throws a cup of water after grandpa, following popular tradition...

If only Zarifa khanum could live to see the wedding of her first granddaughter, Leyla - see her in a wedding gown and give her blessing, see her off to the home of the bridegroom and wish joy to the newlyweds... If she could see the beautiful children, Ali and Mikayil... How her motherly heart would be filled with pride and happiness if only she'd lived to see how her son, Ilham, became the President of new Azerbaijan! If only she could see the great deeds of her son as the head of the State, see the rise of the Republic; the grandiose constructions in Baku - growing prettier day by day... If she could see with her own eyes the realisation of the sacred precept - to devote all energies of heart and soul to the nation and motherland; the precept which was followed by Aziz Aliyev and Heydar Aliyev and which is now so successfully materialising because of her son...

Yes, she lived a short life. However, the importance of human existence is determined not by the number of years on Earth, but by creative content, spiritual energy and good deeds for people and society. Each day of her life was distinguished by the sincere and ardent aspiration to serve people. The happy days and events related to her kindred people and motherland would have brought joy to her heart, and will exist in immortal memory for generations...

The great thinker, Hegel, once wrote about the debt owed by man to himself, to his family, nation, state and other people. According to the philosopher, this feeling of debt and adherence to it is what makes a human being and raises him up, detaching his soul from the mark of day-to-day hassle and trivialities. Throughout the years of her earthly life, bestowed by destiny, Zarifa khanum exemplified the excellent fulfillment of this difficult, but high mission...

#### *The last letter*

'Don't worry about me and take good care of children. Just remember I love you...

Never forget I love you!...'

**Baku, 2007-2010**



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## A LEGEND FOR ETERNITY

If we delve deep into the essence of life and the way that we live it, we find that it is something of a phenomenon. Having hardly managed to look around and learn the way things work, life begins totaling our pluses and minuses... It is beyond reach and we are merciless to it... Our lives are mere flashes compared to the age of the world. Some people burn brightly, while others pass through this world like a handful of smouldering ash. It is not about the number of years that you've lived or the amount of grey hair that you have. What counts is that the life lived was not in vain; that it leaves its mark. If you don't leave imprints for the next generation, if you don't leave behind part of your heart and soul, then you have not burned, for living is like burning. Then you leave emptiness and inutility... No one will remember you.

People who have crowned themselves with immortality in the pages of history are a different story. With her life burning like a torch of selflessness, Zarifa Aliyeva is one of those people. With a pure character she has left an indelible mark in the hearts of people who knew her, even on those who only met her once.

We are simply guests in this world and live as long as we stay alive in memory. The more people who remember us, and remember us with smiles on their faces, the longer we live. One lengthens his life by virtue of help and kindness. One who is guided by such principles aspires to do good. It makes no difference whether that good is through words or actions. Such people will do good till their hearts merge with eternity.

The eminent Russian poet Andrey Voznesenskiy, on the death of India's great daughter, Indira Gandhi, wrote confirming her influence on the next generation's thinking: "Gandhi melted into eternity." There isn't any work greater than that

which merges with the history of your nation; directing the flow of such an immense river as history, becoming not only a witness to one's era but also creating it, leaving sweet memories and winning eternal life.

Zarifa khanum won her place among the legendary personalities of our nation's history. That is why the legend of Zarifa Aliyeva is still unfinished, continues in new stories, and that's why there isn't an epilogue in this book. Besides, how am I supposed to write the last words for an everlasting dastan!<sup>23</sup> Memories don't end... Memories have been awakened in Zarifa khanum's close acquaintances and flow onto the pages of the present time. Those memories are full of love and affection for this strong personality - for the woman with a heart full of mercy and kindness.

Zarifa khanum wasn't making history herself. Her destiny was first and foremost to be the love of a man who was making history. A philosopher once said: "Behind every great man there's a great woman." Zarifa khanum is one of those women, who make the brilliant people around them shine even brighter. She came into this world as a pure and beautiful girl and personified all moral values of a true Azerbaijani family. She merged with the tide of legendary destinies easily and naturally as a mother and wife, as a doctor and scientist!

She was not a religious person but was educated to have deep respect for the religion of fellow people. Love for Allah and the motherland was born through her family's influence in her childhood and growing up, and she knew that this love was a grain of the earth - of this country.

Her kind heart was a rare, natural wealth that embraced the hearts of others. Everyone who met her recovered their poise, found self-confidence and peace, and gained spiritual strength from the sincerity and mercy on her smiling face. Zarifa khanum serves as an example of human kind, bestowed with the highest dignity by the Divine. Only few people are able to

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<sup>23</sup> Dastan - a heroic or romantic rune in the literature and folklore of peoples of the East. It may be written as poetry or prose with poetry insertions.

preserve such qualities amid the ordeals of life. Impure intentions deprive most people of such characteristics.

The social motivation behind her personality such as kindness and mercy, were so powerful that she decided to become a doctor, and devote her life to what she was able to do best - help people. That was the essence of her being. She loved her profession and spared no effort in that field.

Zarifa khanum had the ability to value others. Everybody's thoughts and ideas were important to her. She was a good listener. The feeling of hope and confidence she created in her patients was due to her humanistic approach to everything. Zarifa Aliyeva highlights this in her book called 'Highest ideals': "No doubt technical progress plays a part in medicine in general and in diagnostics in particular. Yet a living doctor occupies the most important place in protecting health, as they always did in the past." As time went on, these words of Zarifa Aliyeva were confirmed. The positive attitude of a doctor's personality has had an undeniable impact on contemporary medicine too. Francois Rabelais expressed this thought through the following phrase: "The main role a doctor has to play is creating an optimistic mood in his patients and to make them believe in their recovery."

Zarifa khanum did well in this context, as she was gifted with love for humankind. She was able to penetrate deep into the hearts of her patients, and considered this ability the underlying principle of doctor-patient relationships. She wrote: "The very essence of a doctor's profession is to act compassionately and tenderly towards his patients. The daily work of a doctor requires comprehension of the tone of relationships between him and surrounding people. Besides which, he has to know that these people need help, first and foremost."

Practice of medicine and the treatment of patients in particular requires the highest talent... A doctor should have much patience and be a good listener. As a doctor, Zarifa khanum would often cite philosophers. One of her favorite statements was the following phrase of Greek philosopher Plato: "The greatest mistake which a doctor can make is curing the body instead of the soul."

Indeed, Zarifa khanum was not merely a doctor but also a philosopher. Such doctors are called 'Tabibs' in the east.

Ancient tabib traditions were inherent in her blood and she became the 'high priestess' following those traditions.

It was impossible for her to be indifferent or nonchalant and she would feel true empathy for any person suffering, always trying to help such people and solve their problems. Throughout her life she sided with light and never surrendered to darkness - even for a single moment. She even managed to 'frighten' the dark... "The range of my actions lie between Light and Dark," she would say.

Zarifa khanum's love for her profession was in harmony with her love for her family, people and country. She knew the value of the gift called 'life'. She knew that the time allotted for life is not that long, and all of us will come to the end of life's journey sooner or later, and we need to exercise the benefit of humanity while there is time.

Zarifa khanum already had profound humanistic qualities when she entered the Aliyev family as a daughter-in-law. Modesty, intellect, loyalty to her family, feeling of national pride, endless love for her partner, unconquerable will, boundless love for the motherland and many other fine qualities, were among the purest gems of her spiritual treasure.

This family was built on great love. It is worth noting that to win the love of such a great and strong-willed person as Heydar Aliyev is not only an honour, but also a great responsibility. Very few women have such destiny bestowed on them. Only a chosen woman would be worthy of the love of such a great person. Near the end of his life, Heydar Aliyev talked of his feelings for Zarifa Aliyeva with great affection, and remembered her departure with deepest sorrow. However, we can confidently say that their mutual love gave birth to a sacred family - sacred, because this family serves as an example to the whole nation, as a source of its pride.

Zarifa khanum never hid behind the personality of Heydar Aliyev. In fact, she erected a living monument of herself by virtue of her character, hard work, motivation and kindness. A doctor's life is longer and fuller than the lives of ordinary people. Homer claimed that, "a doctor's life is worth many lives put together." Zarifa khanum was exactly such a doctor, and perhaps this is the reason for her eternal fame. She was the wife of the Republic's leader and great statesman and became the First Lady of

Azerbaijan in 1969. Time itself confirmed afterwards that she was worthy of this honour. Unfortunately, Zarifa khanum didn't live to see the presidency of both her husband and son. However, we believe that her soul in heaven was glad to hear the speeches given about her as about the wife and mother of the two presidents.

Without fail, the day when her only son got married was one of her happiest and most memorable. That day two noble families - the family of Heydar and Zarifa Aliyeva, and Arif Pashayev and Aida khanum Imanguliyeva became relatives. Mehriban khanum - the granddaughter of Mirjalal (a famous Azerbaijani writer) became the daughter-in-law of Heydar Aliyev and wife of Ilham Aliyev.

Along with being the daughter-in-law of the family that played an important role in the history of Azerbaijan, Mehriban Aliyeva became the bearer of this great family name. Mehriban khanum, President Ilham Aliyev's beloved and faithful wife, presented her husband with three beautiful children - two daughters and a son, named Heydar Aliyev after his grandfather.

Mercy is the highest attribute demonstrating the greatness of a woman's heart. Mehriban khanum shares the warmth of her heart not only with the growing generation of Azerbaijan, but with all children of the world. Her life and activities are characterised by her loyalty to Ilham Aliyev and respect for Heydar Aliyev. One may be convinced of this by reading lines written by Mehriban khanum Aliyeva herself: "Heydar Alirza oglu was a person of extraordinary energy and able to make evolutionary changes. Everything fundamentally changed after his coming to power. With his phenomenal memory, unlimited intellect and the ability to feel the pulse of the times, he was able to solve the most difficult problems and cope with the most serious challenges."

Every time I watch a documentary dedicated to the life and activities of such a symbol of independent Azerbaijan's glorious history, like Heydar Aliyev, it stirs magnificent feelings in my heart, and his pure love for Zarifa khanum Aliyeva touches me deeply.

When I watch the parts where he waits at her funeral with tears in his eyes I think to myself, 'Zarifa khanum doesn't dare

to look backwards over the sea of flowers to see the tears in the eyes of the person who she endlessly loved...'

Oh, Good Lord Almighty! How can we put out a fire of grief in a heart that cannot and does not want to accept such a loss?.. This powerful man who had never surrendered to difficulties and ordeals of fate, and always exemplified pride and courage, was now not able stand against this stroke of misfortune, and for the first time in his life tears flowed down his cheeks in an unstoppable stream. Now he was absolutely helpless, realising that the woman that he loved most, his sweetheart, left him to head to her final home and join other travellers on that path....

But the legend of eternal life and love doesn't end there. The hero that God chose for the greatest mission had to engage in a keen fight. Zarifa khanum didn't leave him alone in that fight. She brought up Ilham as a worthy son who fully understands that his father's honour stands above all things.

Separation and union are both predestined in heaven... two loving hearts united forever after eighteen years. Today there are two granite statues in the Alley of Honor - in the corner which became a place for Azerbaijani people to state their pledges, erected on the graves of two Legends of Eternity, two heroes that understood each other without words... Tens, hundreds and thousands of their fellow citizens have gone there to lay flowers before these statues and receive guidance... guidance of two hearts, loving each other eternally, for a long and happy life...

**Baku, 2007-2010**

## IMPORTANT DATES IN THE LIFE AND CAREER OF ZARIFA KHANUM ALIYEVA

- April 28, 1923 - Zarifa Aziz gizi Aliyeva was born in the village of Shahtakhti, Sharur region of Nakhichevan
- 1932 - 1942 - Studies at primary and secondary school
- 1942 - 1947 - Studies in the treatment-prophylactics faculty of the State Medical Institute of Azerbaijan
- 1948 - Takes advanced studies in ophthalmology at the Moscow Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners
- 1949 - 1950 - Resides at the Azerbaijan Ophthalmology Research Institute
- 1950 - 1953 - Graduates and becomes a research assistant at the Azerbaijan Ophthalmology Research Institute
- 1954 - Marries Heydar Aliyev
- October 18, 1955 - Zarifa and Heydar Aliyevs have their first child, daughter Sevil
- 1960 - Awarded Candidate of Medical Sciences
- December 24, 1961 - Zarifa and Heydar Aliyevs have their second child, son Ilham
- 1967 - Becomes Assistant Professor at the Department of Eye Diseases at Azerbaijan's State Extension Course Institute for Medical Practitioners, named after Aziz Aliyev
- 1977 - Awarded a Doctorate in Medical Science
- 1980 - Becomes an Honoured Scientist of Azerbaijan
- 1981 - Becomes the first woman to receive the MI Averbach award
- 1982 - Awarded the "Veteran of Labour" medal, becomes a member of the editorial board of the All-Union journal "Vestnik ophthalmologii" ("Ophthalmology journal"), a member of the All-Union Scientific Society of Ophthalmologists and a member of the Committee for Defense of Peace
- 1983 - Becomes an Academician at the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan
- April 15, 1985 - Dies in Moscow

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Zarifa Aliyeva (1923-1985) is well-known, respected and loved in her country by everyone from labourers to party and state officials, scientific and creative intelligentsia, not only as the wife of Heydar Aliyev - the First Secretary of the Communist Party (President since 1993) of Azerbaijan - and mother of Ilham Aliyev - the present President of Azerbaijan - but as a doctor, ophthalmologist, academician and brilliant scientist. At the same time she was a sensitive and caring tutor and wise leader. She devoted her life to the service of people. This life story of such a remarkable woman is based on archival material as well as the memoirs of close acquaintances. It is illustrated with photos which help to fully represent the central character.



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