

# Your Bitter Lessons

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A funeral of martyrs was held after Black January, which resulted in nearly 150 deaths, in Azerbaijan's capital Baku in January 1990. Soviet leader Michael Gorbachev attempted to suppress the Azerbaijani independence movement then roiling in Baku by ordering a Soviet invasion that entailed much destruction and loss of life. However, the invasion only accelerated the popularity of the movement, culminating in the final establishment of Azerbaijan as a new, independent nation 21 September 1991. A native Azerbaijani and former soldier in the Soviet army, the author was present during the events as they transpired. After independence was achieved, he was assigned to help to open the first embassy of Azerbaijan in Washington, D.C., and served there as a senior diplomat for three years. The author wrote this poem originally in Russian before translating it into English. (Photo courtesy of the Embassy of Azerbaijan)

Azerbaijan, the land of fires  
Embattled by grief and misery.  
They trampled your children's honor.  
They shot our mothers  
without a shadow of compassion

Bloody January! Forever and ever  
will remain in the hearts of the people.  
My soul cries out, what  
have you done?! O wise guardian,  
master of the race!

O my pain! O my land!  
The sons have closed their eyelids.  
They've closed their eyelids, their  
sons ... To eternal freedom, the  
voluptuous.

But these sacrifices are not in vain,  
Though the agony of your suffering  
soul of your suffering soul.

The people live and will live  
with hope and faith.  
To serve the ideas of good and  
happiness. Not drowning in  
the mire of evil.

And the wisdom of life  
♪ Without crossing the threshold ♪  
Of hardness,  
He must only learn a lesson  
That he will learn from the  
past from past mistakes  
repetition.

(March 1990)