

EXPO FROM PARIS TO ASTANA

Amre, the one whose singing brought fame to Kazakh nation... There is quite enough information about participation of Kazakhs at international exhibition EXPO in Paris, back then it was called “World’s fair”. A representative of the Kazakh nation, singer Amre Kashubayev took part in that exhibition and performed a song “Balkadisha” to a dombra. His worth was not recognized in the native country and on return home, the Committee for State Security initiated surveillance of him, which eventually led to his death. The year 1925. When it was reported that World’s fair would be held in Paris, the Soviet government launched major preparation. Stalin summoned all ideologists and encharged them with a task to improve the country image. The topic of exhibition was “Art”, delegation was formed from among best singers, dancers, and dombrists. A people’s commissar for education Lunacharsky summoned Amre Kashaubayev from Semey, thus, as a member of the delegation he went to Paris. According to honoured worker of Kazakhstan, musicologist Zharkyn Shakarim, the first concert was held at the USSR exhibition-hall. Subsequently, artists gave 11 concerts at Paris theatres; Amre Kashaubayev performed songs. At the time Mustafa Shokay had been living in Paris, he burst into tears upon seeing his fellow countrymen. He was an enemy of the Soviet government, not the people. Mustafa Shokay accompanied Amre everywhere, supported him and gave him a suit as a keepsake. At that time they could not foresee how it would all turn out. Upon his return to homeland, KGB questioned Amre about Mustafa Shokay. Amre stayed out of politics and had nothing to say, but under pressure he confessed to a crime he had not committed. He had been persecuted for nine years; he had been tormented. Eventually, in 1934 his body was found in the one of Alma-Ata streets. This is the way Amre, who had been possessed of a rare talent, passed away. According to Nikolay Anonov’s notes, he was poisoned. Consequently, a record of the Amre Kashaubayev voice would be found in Moscow Central museum.

What was the value of Montreal exhibition for Kazakhs? EXPO, held in Canadian Montreal in 1967 became a significant event in history of Kazakh people, as it was the first time KazSSR sent its own delegation and opened an exhibition-hall. Our country acquainted the whole world with its culture, art and mode of life. A team of Kazakhstani artists was sent to Canada for participation in cultural programme of EXPO; a famous opera singer, “Kazakh nightingale” Bibidul Tulegenova was among them. Bibigul Akhmetovna said, “It was my first visit to a capitalist state. I was the daughter of a repressed person, so I had no right to go abroad. That trip turned into an event which I would not forget for the rest of my life. Having come off the plane we found ourselves in a different world. Imagine my feelings when after the Soviet Union I came to a city with 20-30-storeyed glass buildings, and wide roads flooded with cars – it just took my breath away! The delegation included such celebrities as Roza Zhamanova, Yermek Serkebayev, Baygali Dossymzhanov, Nariman Karazhigitov, and Bolat Ayukhanov, as well as communist party representatives. Saint Helena Island was intentionally enlarged

for the purpose of EXPO conduction, and an artificial Notre Dame island was created; that process required 15 million tons of soil, extracted during subway construction. Those islands were connected to the city via monorail road. Exhibition-halls of 62 countries were located in the islands territory; they were quite impressive for those days. The USSR exhibition-hall was visited by the record-breaking number of 13 million people. Foreigners got interested in Kazakh art and culture. A total of 50 million people visited that exhibition. All countries took their exhibition-halls away with them, only USA left its exhibition-hall, which became a symbol of EXPO-67.

What changes have taken place over a period of a century? And now, exactly half a century later, Kazakhstan as an independent state is going to hold international exhibition EXPO on its own land, using its own resources. A forthcoming exhibition under the slogan “Energy of the future” will deal with one of the most actual issues, which troubles the world community, i.e. alternative energy sources. Achievements and prospects in the sphere of alternative energy sources usage, as well as their advantages, such as ecological purity, low operating cost and environmental safety will be demonstrated. EXPO-2017 will become a milestone event for Kazakhstan, as such large-scale exhibition has never before been held in the countries of Central Asia region and CIS. Everyone will be given the right to become a participant of this great event. It has been about a century since the Paris exhibition, and the only Kazakh Amre Kashaubayev was able to take part in it. For Kazakhs, the exhibition has started from Paris, namely, with Amre Kashaubayev voice. In 2014 a monument to the singer was erected in Semey. Zharkyn Shakarim said, “The songs of Amre, which he performed at Paris exhibition, should be played during an international exhibition EXPO in Astana”.

Arman ASKAR, journalist