

VOLATILE BORDER

By Musa MARJANLI,
Editor-in-Chief

Karabakh and the situation around it continue to be the main topic on the agenda in Azerbaijan. The recently liberated region now attracts increasing attention with large-scale economic restoration and improvement projects being implemented here. At the same time, tensions persist: the Armenian military feel fairly confident in the territory temporarily occupied by Russian peacekeepers, not to mention the provocations on the state border which is still waiting for delimitation and demarcation.

In this regard, an article on the history of the border between Azerbaijan and Armenia from the declaration of independence in 1918 to 1930, when the Soviet communist regime already significantly strengthened its positions, seems quite topical. The article clearly shows how parts of the territory of Azerbaijan in the northern, middle and southern (Zangezur) sections of the border were transferred to Armenia during the period of Sovietization under the guise of dividing “disputed” territories.

This article is thematically close to the material on Armenia’s ecological terror against Azerbaijan, which took on immense proportions after the occupation of the Karabakh region. The author notes that the invaders plundered the natural resources of the region, cut down forests, including rare and endemic plant species, causing serious damage to natural biodiversity. In addition, the Armenian side resorted to actions such as dumping radioactive waste into trans-boundary rivers and reservoirs, restricting the release of water from the occupied reservoirs to prevent the irrigation of croplands in the summer, as well as the use of banned environmentally lethal phosphorus munitions during the April 2016 hostilities and the 44-day war in the fall of 2020.

Other stories of interest in this issue include an article about the history of banking in Azerbaijan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This period was marked by the transformation of Baku into one of the leading centers of world’s oil production and oil industry, which served as a powerful impetus for the development of entrepreneurship. Baku became one of the leading economic and financial centers of the Russian Empire, attracting many Russian and European companies. This naturally led to the accelerated development of banking. Also interesting is an article describing the chronicle of the first campaigns of Shah Ismail, the founder of the Azerbaijani state of the Safavids. An article about the architectural gems of Sheki, an Azerbaijani city where history is present at every step, also claims the attention of readers.

The issue also contains other historical and ethnographic materials about Azerbaijan.