

THE FOURTH ESTATE

of the First Republic

A significant event will take place in the public life of Azerbaijan this year: the country will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the national press. There is no need to talk about the importance of the press in the life of modern society, but the national press of Azerbaijan, having emerged in 1875 through the newspaper "Akinchi", played an exceptional role in the movement gaining strength at that time – the Azerbaijani Renaissance. This liberal-democratic movement supported by the dynamic development of capitalism in and around Baku led to remarkable progress in spiritual, cultural, ideological and social spheres of life and in many ways prepared the ground for the birth of the Azerbaijan People's Republic (1918-1920), the first parliamentary republic in the East. Due to unfavorable international conditions of that time, the First Republic was short-lived, existed for less than two years, but it implemented reforms of epochal importance in all spheres of life, and there is every reason to assert that it was this short period that was marked by the true blossoming of the Azerbaijani press. This is the topic of an article published in this issue.

Those fond of history will be interested in the article devoted to the outstanding Azerbaijani poetess Khurshidbanu Natavan and mainly her public activities. Being a representative of Karabakh khans' family, Natavan advocated a lot for her native town of Shusha and for Karabakh in general. In this context, the laying of a water pipeline in Shusha, which was carried out with funds allocated by Natavan herself, holds a special place.

The article devoted to the development of architecture in Baku at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, a period of accelerated development of capitalism and the oil boom, which was, among other things, also marked by the establishment of art nouveau style in architecture, might also attract readers' attention.

As always, the issue also contains other materials on various issues of Azerbaijan's history and culture. Enjoy!

By Musa MARJANLI,
Editor-in-Chief