Oil has been produced in the Baku region from pits since time immemorial, but the development of the oil industry began with the production of kerosine in 1861. Oil became an important source of income for the government.

Ideas as to the nature of the oil pools were inaccurate. It was thought that operations should not move out from the oil pits in order to avoid getting into unproductive areas. Drilling of the Balakhano-Sabunchin area in 1873 showed that pools occur both far beyond the areas of the oil pits and also at depth.

As a result of the work of D. V. Golubyatin, commissioned by the Geological Committee in 1903, the first concrete knowledge was obtained on the oil fields of the Baku region.

I. M. Gubkin began work in Azerbaydzhan in 1913. He determined that the stratigraphic sections of Eastern Azerbaydzhan and the North Caucasus have the same characteristics.

From 1903 to 1917 in the area of geologic study of oil fields the successes are well known, but only one area, Surakhan, was placed in operation.

In 1918 when Azerbaydzhan was separated from the Soviet Union, oil production dropped significantly, and exploration activity ceased.

After establishment of Soviet power in Azerbaydzhan (April 28, 1920) and nationalization of the oil industry, a geological service was organized. The main task of this time was restoration of the inactive wells.

After restoration of the oil industry (middle Twenties) the task was to start production in new pools in old and new areas. Wells were first placed in operation in the Bibi-Eybat Bay (Il’icha Bay). At the end of the Twenties percussion drilling was replaced by rotary drilling with limited core recovery. At the beginning of the Thirties geophysical method (electrical logging), small diameter structural drilling, and laboratory core analysis came into use.

The new methods extended the depths of study. In exploration of the Kala field it was found that the crests of the folds shifted considerably with depth; local unconformities were found between the productive unit and the sediments of the Pontain stage, and the appearance of a new oil-gas formation, the Kala, at the base of the productive unit was noted. Pools were found in stratigraphic traps in the Chakhnaglyar, Yasamal Valley, and other areas.

Offshore exploration in the Forties culminated in the Neftyanye Kamni discovery, and the rich gas pools of Karadag were found in the Fifties.

New rich pools were found in the productive unit on the Apsheron Peninsula, in the offshore areas of the Apsheron and Baku Archipelagos, and in the Apsheron beds of the Kura area. New pools were found in the Maykop formation in the Kobystan, Peri-Caspian, and other regions. Little oil and gas have been found in the Mesozoic.

New discoveries can be expected onshore and offshore in the Kura and other areas in Miocene-Paleogene deposits, in the Mesozoic of the Southeast Caucasus, in the Neogene of West Azerbaydzhan, and elsewhere.

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