

# THE ROLE OF AZERBAIJAN OIL IN “NOBEL BROTHERS’ “ LIFE

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## Abstract

The detailed information was given about the famous “Nobel Brothers” who invested capital to having fertile oil reserves Azerbaijan in XIX century in the text. As it is known, possessing oil deposit of Azerbaijan attracted the attention of foreign investors. The investors became the oil magnats of the periods thanks to Azerbaijan oil getting a large amount of oil capitals. One of such oil magnats was “Nobel Brothers” by origin Swiss. The Nobels were four brothers. Emil, Ludvig, Robert and Alfred Nobel. In 1875 the Nobels founded their own company buying a little area, and then turned this company to the “Nobel Brothers Oil Production Society” company in 18 may 1879. The activities of company involved almost all spheres of oil industry: oil research, production, refining, transportation etc.

“Nobel Brothers” got leadership for developing of oil industry in Baku thanks to strong competition. Especially, in Russian bazaar they possessed representatives and depots for the purpose of transportation of much needed gas field in some cities of Russia (Charchin, Saratov, Babrusk, Nizhny-Novgorod, Perm etc.), as well as, in various Europe cities (Geneva, Hamburg, London and Manchester etc.)

“Nobel Brothers” worked for achieving significant success in all directions of oil business consulting with outstanding oil-chemists scientists (D.I.Mendeleyev, K.I.Lisenko, L.Q.Qurvich and engineers A.V.Bari, V.Q.Shuchov and others). As a result, “The Nobel Brothers” signed very important innovations in the world oil history.

Life of “Nobel Brothers” was studied in different years investigated. Today those studies are being continued by Azerbaijan and Swedish scientists. For instance, the book “The Nobels and Baku Oil”, information, unique photos and documents were reflected about genealogical tree of the Nobels, activities in 1830-1860 in Russia, 1874-1920 in Azerbaijan.

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**Keywords:** Azerbaijan, Oil, The Nobel Brother, Baku Oil, Oil industry and the Nobels

## Introduction:

At the end of XIX and early XX centuries approximately twenty foreign companies operated in Azerbaijan. One of the companies belonged to the “Nobel Brothers”. The Nobel brothers established the first foreign company in the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku. “The Nobel Brothers” firm had continued its trade generally in the course of 47 years in Azerbaijan. “The Nobel Brothers” firm that has 25-28 percent of the total volume of oil produced in Baku could become oil leader that wins all foreign competitors at the end of the XIX century.

“Nobel Brothers” firm paid special attention to commerce, as well as the development of science, increasing of employees’ financial maintenance, and the educations of them and their children.

## I.

Azerbaijan possesses the most ancient civilized nation and statehood tradition of the world and always affixed its signature with its spiritual and material values to the history. For

example: the first regime is formed in the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Manna state); the first alphabet consisted of 52 letters in the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Albanian alphabet); also the first parliamentary democratic state in the East (on 28 May, 1918 Azerbaijan Democratic Republic); the first positive woman's character in Eastern literature (the image of Shirin – the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi poem “Khosrov and Shirin“); the first woman composer in the East (Azerbaijani Shafiga Akhundova); the first opera in the East ( “Leyli and Majnun“ Uzeyir Gadjibekov) and etc. was set up in Azerbaijan.

Some of the first innovations in the oil refining, output and carrying areas were realized in Azerbaijan. As well, Azerbaijan is one of the most tolerant countries. Because of the rich oil-fields of Azerbaijan the foreign capitalists directed their attention to this region. Thanks to Azerbaijan oil, getting a great number of oil capitals have been turned to oil magnates. One of these magnates had been “Nobel Brothers“.

They were 4 brothers and Swiss by origin: Emil, Ludvig, Robert, Alfred Nobel. Emil was the youngest and died when he was 28 years old. Alfred was engineer- inventor. Robert was the first man who draw the attention of the family to the area of trade in Baku. And Ludvig was among the most important names of the oil industry. Robert Nobel was the first foreigner who took part in the capital of Baku oil-industry. At first, he bought a small area in 1875 and built his own company but then by reason of material constraints he exchanged that company to the company of “Nobel Brothers Oil Production Corporation“ on 18 May, 1879. Nobel Brothers get championship in the every kind of work for developing the oil-industry in Baku. Especially, it had thounds of workers together with its trade points and depots in the cities of Astrakhan, Saratov, Babrujsk, Nizhny Novgorod and Perm, because there was a great need carrying the gas deposit in Russian market. At the same time, they possessed depots and representatives in Europe, Geneva, Hamburg, London, Manchester and other cities. [1]

Let's inform, there were nearly 20 foreign companies at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and one of them which was a leader belonged to Nobel Brothers. Nobel Brothers had created the first foreign company in Baku. In general the activities of the “Nobel Brothers” firm in Azerbaijan encompass 1879-1917 years.

As a whole, The firm of the “Nobel Brothers” existed 47 years. Ludvig's son – Emmanuel led the oil business of the Nobel's family from 1888 till 1917. Because of political causes he was forced to return homeland in 1918. During this years, the Nobel Brothers could keep its championship in Baku's oil-industry. So, this unity possessed 44 oil-fields in Sabunchu and Balakhani. The total volume of the oil production formed 45-75 million poods and it meant that 25-28% of the volume of oil belonged to Baku.

When we spoke about Nobel Brothers it is especially necessary to speak about Alfred's labour. Alfred was not engaged with work of the firm but he gave a spiritual and material help. The gas deposits of this firm were invented by Alfred. Also he advised to his brother-Ludvig, not to use steam-boilers in the oil ships. He made a decision to use mazut for the furnace of the steamers and railway engines. For beginning to this process with assurance he sentna letter to Paris, consulted with his brother and made a request for giving an exact information about mazut. Immediately he received a letter in return and he recommended him to do this work urgently and seriously because , “Mazut has a bright future“, he said. If it has no value or if it is cheap in your country, you must build reservoirs and fill them for reserve.

After 5-10 years, mazut will bring profit. Ludvig began to buy and collect mazut and sign a treaty. Firm of the Nobel Brothers according to 20 treaties was able to gather nearly 10 million poods of oil-fuel. It get 32,25 million poods of fuel in Baku, 1895. The last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the firm is engaged to produce crude oil and oil remains. As a result of these activities at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Ludvig Nobel became “The king of mazut“. The volume of consumption of oil-fuel is risen from 144,5 million poods to 286,4 million poods.

As a result, in the mazut selling the portion of the firm increased from 28 million

poods till 96 million poods. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Nobel Brothers' firm was an "oil leader" consulting together with well-known oil-chemist scientists, such as, D.I.Mendeleev, K.I.Lisenko, L.G.Gurvich and engineers- A.V.Bari, V.G.Suxov and others, Ludvig achieved significant successes in all directions of the oil-business. For the first time in 1882, the incessant distillation of the oil which was suggested by Mendeleev put into practice at the factory of the Nobel Brothers firm. We must inform Gustav Eklundu who worked in the oil-field of the Nobel Brothers' firm and increased the fecundity of the oil output. For the first time Gustav employed the electric power in the oil-field. Some services of Ludvig Nobel must be considered greater in the oil-industry. So, the first "Zarathustra" steam-board has been assembled by Ludvig's order in the plant in 1877 which is located in the city of Motala.

The origin of the first steam-board rouses interest. Those times the doctrine of Zoroastrianism was very popular. According to French specialist Orlando de Rudder's assumption, Ludvig was seriously interested in Zarathustra's philosophy and the idea about the research of the purity and sanctity caused him to remember the cleaning of the oil's procedure. It is necessary to remark Ludvig Nobel's poem ("Zarathustra" steam-board) was serviced for a long time. Only in 1950s, by reason of drilling an oil-well in the sea-bed, the ship has been drowned together with other 7 ships. Therefore, in the first times, this field was called "The island of the 7 ships". After "Zarathustra" other liquid carrying steam-boards were occurred and all of them went under the great scientist's name of the world-wide prosperity: "Budda", "Muhammad", "Musa", "Spinoza", "Darvin", "Linnea", "Nordenskiold", and so on. As a whole, the "Nobel" firm possessed 134 steams and 212 sailing-ship. You could see the firm's steam-boards and motor ships in the different places of the Volga, Caspian and Black Sea Basin's. For the first time in the world, in 1886 the liquid carrying ship 1700t "Light" brought Baku's paraffin from Batumi, Biscay bay and The Atlantic Ocean to London. [2]

Thanks to his vital attendances in the technical and industrial affairs, the St. Petersburg State Institute of Technology named Ludvig Nobel as an engineer-technologist. Professor of the Mine Institute, well-known oil-chemist Konon Lisenko had said about Ludvig: "I will not count all affairs which was done in the sphere of the oil's distillation by Nobel. But I will inform only one fact. He organized incessant distillation, put cube and stirring rod in the open air, employed a serious control to the distilled and ready products, distilled the oil to the kerosene with the help of the heated steam". The foundation of the scholarships named after Ludvig was taken an account in the St. Petersburg Mining and Technical Universities, St. Petersburg Academy of Arts named after S.Nikolai, St. Petersburg Business School, also in the Baku Real School. There were three scholarship for the Nobel's servants' and labourers' children which named after Ludvig Nobel, Karl L. Nobel and Pyotr Bilderling. Moreover, besides the tuition fee, the firm allocated 30 rubles for the needy students. Brothers, especially Ludvig was working stubbornly and purposefully. Sweden historian Eric Bergengren noted: "All the Nobel's members owned high spiritual qualities and they were always ready to begin something with hope and continue stubbornly. More than 25 million of labourers worked in the Nobels' "Oil Empire". Alfred's collaborator and biographer Renjar Sholman have said about him: "Alfred was such kind of master who tried to keep the distance, formality between himself and others. He never get over the boundaries which is separated him from workers. He always took care of workers' living condition and not only engineers but also junior forms considered him as a pioneer of the social prosperity". And the following Ludvig's own words show everything clearly: "Without a toil my life isn't a life and I have no right to leave this work without providing people's welfare standards who have served to me and my father". Masters of the big oil- industry such as, Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiev, V.Kokorev, Viktor Rogazin, Musa Nagiyev, Shamsi Asadullaev, I. Hajinsky, Aleksandr Benkendorf, Sidor Shibaev, Murtuza Mukhtarov not only co-operated but also competed with Nobel Brothers.

The Nobel's were on good terms with H.Z.Taghiev and I. Hajinsky. They were helping to each other in some business-like tasks. [2]

One of the most interesting aspects in their action is that for the first time, they brought into fashion to write a slogan. Example: "White kerosene throw light on darkness"; "Kerosene helps people in the sharp frosty, cold, and snowy weather"; "Our century is a kerosene century" and etc. It was possible to come across with these slogans in towns, settlements, even in the rocks. [3]

After proletarian revolution in Russia, Bolsheviks yearned for Baku's oil. In April 1920, they came to Baku and the oil industry was nationalized. Thus, Nobel Brothers' occupations in Azerbaijan come to an end.

Nowadays, International Nobel Prize (one of the most prestigious prize) is connected with Nobels' name which is given in accordance with the great labour in the area of the scientific researches, revolutionary inventions, the development of the society and culture. When Alfred Nobel was in Paris, he proposed in his testament to set up international prizes in the branches of physics, chemistry, medicine, literature and peace. And the first prizes were presented as Nobel wish, in Stockholm, Sweden and Oslo, Norway, in year 1901. Alfred Nobel spent 30 million kronas to the building up of the prize system. 5 million and 200 thousand of this money was earned from Baku's oil.

There are a lot of articles and books about Nobel Brothers' activities in Azerbaijan. "The Nobel's and Baku's oil" is one of them. There was written the Nobel's occupation in Russia between 1830s-1860s and also from 1874-1920 in Azerbaijan, Baku. The Nobel's role in the development of Baku oil-industry and the technical innovations which is used in oil's output, refining and transportation have been lightened in that book. As well, a lot of documents and unique photos have been reflected in that book. [4]

Works have been published on the Nobel brothers sample is to add them: Agakishiev, Ismail. Oil rush. (2008); Akhundov, V. Monopoly capital in the pre-revolutionary Baku oil industry. (1959); Alakbarov, Farid. Baku: City that Oil Built. An Overview. (2002); Alieva, Leila. The Baku Oil and Local Communities: a History. (2009); Aliyarov, S.S. Oil monopolies of Azerbaijan during the First World War. (1974); Djafarov, K.I., Djafarov, F.K. Company of Oil production Nobel Brothers (120 years since the foundation of the day). (1999); Djanakhmedov, A.X., Akhmedov, A.I. Alfred Nobel His awards and Baku oil. (1997); Guliyev, A. The July general strike in Baku in 1903. (1999); Ibragimov, Z. Revolution during 1905-1907 in Azerbaijan. (1955); Mir-Babayev, Mir Yusif. Azerbaijan's Oil History. A Chronology Leading up to the Soviet Era. (2002); Seidov, Vugar Nadir ogly.

Archives of the Baku oil companies (19th - early 20th century) historical research (2009) and ets. [5]

The Nobels are the following official sites: Baku Nobel Heritage Fund (Azerbaijan) <http://www.bakunobel.org/main.html>; The Nobel Museum (Stockholm) <http://www.nobelmuseum.se/zino.aspx?lan=en-us>; The Nobel Brothers Museum in technological Batumi (Georgian) [http://www.georgianmuseums.ge/?lang=eng&id=1\\_1&sec\\_id=2&th\\_id=87](http://www.georgianmuseums.ge/?lang=eng&id=1_1&sec_id=2&th_id=87) and others. [6,7,8]

Let's note that obtaining information on Nobel and was established in order to study a number of international institutions. For example, "The Nobel Family Society"; "Nobel Museum" and the "Center for Business History" (Stockholm); "Baku Nobel Heritage Fund"; "The International Fellowship of the Nobel Foundation"; "Nobel Brothers Technological Museum" (Batumi, Georgia) and so on.

Establishment in honor of the Nobel brothers, "The Nobel Foundation, The International Community" in order to make contributions to the development of science in Azerbaijan and the Caspian region of Sweden was established under the leadership of well-known lawyers. The aim of the foundation is to provide contributions to the cultural and economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Sweden. One of the most important projects of

fund is "Azerbaijan and the Caspian region" project. Doctor of Political Sciences Tugrul Bagirov, he Baku Nobel Heritage Fund to restore the historic heritage of the Nobel brothers for his service in the Kingdom of Sweden on December 10 by the "Royal Polar Star" (Polar Star) has been awarded with the Order. [9]

There was also a Nobel Brothers Museum in Azerbaijan at the same time. Nobel Brothers in Baku museum has been functioning since 2008. In 1882-1884 by the Nobel brothers built the "Villa Petrolea" called Baku Nobel Heritage Fund complex was restored. This is the first museum of Sweden Nobel Heritage Museum. Today the museum collected household items used by the Nobel family. Interior of the house is in European style. But one of the rooms is decorated in oriental style. At present, the museum belongs to the family proceeded Nobel items displayed along with Timbaland, banquets and solemn ceremonies are also held here. The museum's official website (Website: [www.bakunobel.org](http://www.bakunobel.org)) also prepared and put into use. [10]

Nobel brothers and the majority of the original date on the activities of the oil sector, the number of documents are more than 250 000. This collection of documents in digital form and to provide a base of information on the Nobel brothers, researchers all over the world can use easily and free project developed. The main purpose of these materials is much broader and more in-depth research and publication. Legally registered non-governmental, non-profit organization "Azerbaijan-Nordic Cooperation" Public Union (PU ASE) and the National Archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan (MAI) has carried out several studies on the history of the Nobel brothers in this field and established useful contacts with local actors.

Centre for Business History in Stockholm (CBH) and the Baku Scientific Cooperation Agreement between the Department of National Archives, as well as the ASE MAI Union signed an agreement on cooperation between the associates. Established for this purpose as well as beneficial relationship with the Consul of Sweden in Azerbaijan, Nobel Brothers Oil Company on the date of its owners agreed to develop and implement joint projects for research. CBH in Stockholm receive financial assistance from the "Stiftelsen Olle Engkvist Builder" Fund since May 2010 and „Nobel Brothers History Project“ (BNHP) has to be carried out in Sweden. CBH on the Nobel brothers, including digital archive database [www.branobelhistory.com-developed](http://www.branobelhistory.com-developed) website. [11]

### **Conclusion:**

As a result of scientific research on the subject, the facts were about “The role of Azerbaijani oil in the life of Nobel Brothers”, briefly, as follows:

1. Azerbaijani oil had great importance for translating Nobel Brothers Oil magnat;
2. At the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the development of the oil industry, "Nobel Brothers" made a great contribution;
3. Azerbaijan, Sweden, and other countries 'economies, the development of the "Unity of the Nobel Brothers“ production and export of oil from the Baki and suburban areas (black and white oil) and petroleum products had a share;
4. Nobel Brothers is the first foreign firm participating in investment to "Baku oil industry”
5. Needs of a number of technological innovations in the world of oil has been associated with the name of the Nobels. For example, "Nobel Brothers" plants for the first time (in 1882) of oil carried out in a continuous distillation; for the first time in the oil fields of applied electricity; for the first time in the oil fields electricity was applied; as the world's first liquid-carrying vessels for the transport of oil products through the use of water supplied (for the first time in the world in 1886, "Light" liquid-carrying ship 1,700 tons of Baku kerosene from Batumi to London, through Biskay Bay and the Atlantic Ocean);

6. „Nobel Brothers Unity“ has managed to keep the first place "among the companies while competing in the Baku oil industry;
7. Nowadays, these brothers laid down one of the foundations of the Nobel Prize, scientific studies and cultural and social development of the revolutionary inventions of the most prestigious awards in the field of labor. While in Paris, designed by Alfred Nobel's testament he nominated international awards in the areas of physics, chemistry, medicine, literature and peace. And the first prizes were presented as Nobel wish, in Stokholm, Sweden and Oslo, Norway, in year 1901. Alfred Nobel spent 30 million kronas to the building up of the prize system. 5 million and 200 thousand of this money was earned from Baku's oil;
8. Nobel Brothers established benefits and scholarships for Azerbaijani and foreign students (grant named „Ludwig Nobel“, „Karl Ludvigovic Nobel“ and „Peter Bilderling“);
9. They participated actively in the public and social life of the Baku city;
10. At present, between Azerbaijan and Sweden in the directions of learning and propagating of life and activities of the Nobel Brothers are working toward;
11. It seems clear from taking into account all information, Azerbaijan's oil has been become not only the great investment in the Nobel Brothers' life but also an important factor in Sweden and the world economy.

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