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## ON THE HISTORY

OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF THE SURMALI DISTRICT OF THE  
IREVAN GOVERNORATE ON THE EVE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

### **SOBRE LA HISTORIA DE LA VIDA SOCIOECONÓMICA DEL DISTRITO DE SURMALI DE LA GOBERNACIÓN DE IRVAN EN VÍSPERAS DE LA PRIMERA GUERRA MUNDIAL**

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#### ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to review the socio-economic situation of the Surmali district which was attached to the Irevan Governorate before the First World War. The paper examines the state of various sectors of the socioeconomic life of the Surmali district trying to determine the main characteristic features of the ethnodemographic, administrative and economic processes of the region. Although among the bibliographical sources the main place is occupied by the so-called annual "Reviews" in the government published by Edelson, other documents of great interest were searched. The information from the various sources convincingly demonstrates that the Surmali district was one of the important agricultural regions occupying in some branches a prominent position in the Irevan Governorate. At the same time, salt mining in the Gulp fields played a significant role in the economic life of not only this district and the aforementioned governorate but was also an important factor in the food supply of several nearby regions and countries. As in other regions of West Azerbaijan, the strengthening of relations between commodities and the market was felt in the district, many traditional sectors of economic life were forced to adapt to the requirements of a market economy, there was a clear predominance of commercial agriculture, there were sharp changes in the ethnodemographic structure of the county population, an increase in the number and proportion of immigrants, and vice versa, a decrease in the proportion of autochthonous ethnicity.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijani heritage, Irevan governorate, Surmali district, agricultural region, Qulp salt pans.

#### RESUMEN

El objetivo de este artículo es revisar la situación socioeconómica del distrito de Surmali que se adjuntó a la gobernación de Irevan antes de la Primera Guerra Mundial. En el trabajo se examina el estado de varios sectores de la vida socioeconómica del distrito de Surmali intentando determinar los principales rasgos característicos de los procesos etnodemográficos, administrativos y económicos de la región. Aunque entre las fuentes bibliográficas el lugar principal lo ocupan las llamadas "Revisiones" anuales en la gobernación publicadas por Edelson, fueron rastreados otros documentos de gran interés. La información de las diversas fuentes demuestra de manera convincente que el distrito de Surmali era una de las regiones agrícolas importantes ocupando en algunas ramas un lugar destacado en la gobernación de Irevan. Al mismo tiempo, la extracción de sal en los campos de Gulp desempeñó un papel significativo en la vida económica, no solo de este distrito y la gobernación antes mencionada, siendo también fue un factor importante en el suministro de alimentos de varias regiones y países cercanos. Al igual que en otras región del oeste de Azerbaiyán, en el distrito se sintió el fortalecimiento de las relaciones entre los productos básicos y el mercado, muchos sectores tradicionales de la vida económica se vieron obligados a adaptarse a los requerimientos de una economía de mercado, hubo un claro predominio de la agricultura comercial, hubo cambios bruscos en la estructura etnodemográfica de la población del condado, un aumento en la número y proporción de inmigrantes, y viceversa, una disminución en la proporción de la etnia autóctona.

**Palabras clave:** Herencia azerbaiyana, gobernación de Irevan, distrito de Surmali, región agrícola, salinas de Qulp.

## INTRODUCTION

The countries of the South Caucasus have always been the “lands in-between.” In between the Black and Caspian seas, Europe and Asia, Russia and the Middle East, Christianity and Islam. Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia and the territories around them have the mixed blessing of being at the crossing-place of different cultures and political systems. These fault lines have made their region a geopolitical seismic zone so the kind of local shock that might be muffled elsewhere in the world reverberates more loudly here (de Waal, 2019). In this regard the Caucasus has been the scene of numerous territorial conflicts due to a combination of historical, ethnic, and geopolitical factors which have provoked this geographically diverse and strategically important region has experienced disputes over the centuries. The presence of various ethnic groups in the region has given rise to a complex mix of identities and territorial claims, which has contributed to tensions and conflicts.

Countries such as Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia inherited state borders and unresolved territorial conflicts after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In this sense, the borders established during the Soviet era often did not take into account existing ethnic divisions, leading to disputes later. The lack of resolution of these conflicts during the transition period has led to persistent tensions and confrontations. The territorial dispute in the Nagorno-Karabakh region between Armenia and Azerbaijan is a clear example (Mozaffari & Barry, 2022; Yamskov, 1991). Natural resources and transportation routes have also played an important role in the territorial conflicts of the Caucasus. The region is rich in resources such as oil, natural gas, and minerals, as well as being a key transportation route between Europe and Asia. Control of these resources and trade routes has been the subject of disputes both among the countries of the region and among external powers interested in the region.

Considering the Caucasus, Azerbaijan has an amazing historical and cultural legacy (Hasanov & Hasanov, 2018), and although this was minimized and even tried to be erased through Russification during the Tsarist and later Soviet conquest, it was not destroyed. As known, after Irevan khanate was occupied by Russian Empire in 1827, almost the whole land of western Azerbaijan got attached to newly declared “Armenian province” and afterwards to Irevan governorate that settled on the same area. Later, during the Soviet regime reign in North Azerbaijan local scientists and especially historians were given a strict directive of referring to only periods that lay after XIX century when it comes to conducting research relevant for

these lands. Even though up until the mid XIX century population majority was comprised of exactly local natives – Azerbaijani Turks, scientists did not have the right to study the history of our people, that lives on these lands even during XIX-XX centuries. Thus, ever since the first years till the end of Soviet regime, the most fundamental research work pieces did not have any observable attempt to research even the slightest notions that relate to the history of this part of our motherland (Geibullaev, 1991; Mahmudov, 1960; Sumbatzade, 1987). Therefore, after the restoration of Azerbaijan’s independence, there has been a enlivening in the field of objective research and promotion of the national culture history. With the restoration of national statehood, real conditions were created for the study of the people’s spirituality, historical and cultural past (Suleymanli, 2021).

However, even today, part of former Irevan governorate still remains out of reach for the research of Azerbaijani historians, as is the case of Surmali district. This district that was first related to the Irevan khanate and then to the so called “Armenian province” and since the 1840s to the Irevan governorate was situated on the right, southern shore of Araz river. After World War I this area even became the part of Ottoman Empire and consequently got relayed to the state Republic of Turkey as a “heritage” and remains as part of it up until today. For a long time, there was no much information about Surmali, mainly due to unavailability of reliable references and literature, however, today in several generalizing research papers we can track several valid references touching the history of those lands (Amrahov, 2022; Garayev, 2016; Gasanov, 2020; H. N. Hasanov, 2016).

But considering the gap, the aim of this paper is to review the socio-economic situation of Surmali district that was attached to Irevan governorate during the pre-World War I. To achieve this, historical-comparative research method was mainly used. The relevance of the topic chosen for present article is related to the research of history of the lost part of motherland is an integral part of Azerbaijani historiography’s duty and directive. Without researching this kind of matters, it is impossible to create and formulate a comprehensive and complete history line for Motherland’s history. This actual task has not only scientific, but also political-historical and moral-ethical value.

## DEVELOPMENT

The Irevan Khanate is one of the small Azerbaijani states that emerged in the South Caucasus in the period of feudal division following the break-up of the empire of Nader Shah Afshar (1736-1747). It maintained flourishing political and diplomatic ties with the

neighboring countries, including the Ottoman state. During Nader Shah's tenure and in a short period after his death, the Ottoman state and Russia were wary of openly interfering with the affairs of the South Caucasus, limiting their involvement to closely following the ongoing developments. The region was of strategic importance for the Ottoman Empire due to its territorial, ethnic and religious proximity. Therefore, the Irevan Khanate was a centerpiece in the country's foreign policy (Garayev, 2019).

The Irevan Khanate was at the center of trade routes and maintained trade relations with many regions including Iran, the Ottoman Empire, Georgia, and Russia. Traders coming from these countries to Western Azerbaijan bought cotton, rice, wheat, millet, vegetable oil, dried fruits, leather, wool, wine and other local products. However, the laws of the khanates, as in other areas of the country, sometimes hampered its general development. The general recession of the economy especially affected trade. Then, the deterioration of economic life, high taxes and tariffs, the lack of security of trade routes, the protection of the privacy and assets of merchants, as well as frequent wars, ultimately had a negative impact on the general economic life of the people (Mammadov, 2020).

In the last triad of XIX century Surmali district was one of the 7 districts of Irevan governorate. By the 1870s Caucasian statistical committee has registered 266 distinctive populated areas (plus 10 distant localities), where there were 7630 houses with a total estimated population of 58487 people (31533 men and 25954 women). Amongst these inhabited locations there were 140 villages, 89 kishlags (winter shelter area), 36 kazak military posts, and 1 headquarter location. 6481 houses were located in villages, and 1149 in kishlags (Glavn, 1880). A population of 49791 was located in villages and 8696 people were located in kishlags. According to the data from 1879 muslim-"tatars" (Azerbaijani Turks) constituted major share of governorate's population numbering in 29800 people, kurds meanwhile constituted a population of 10591, whereas Armenian population (even after mass population transfers that occurred during Qajar-Russian and Ottoman-Russian wars in the first triad of XIX century, as well as during consecutive Ottoman-Russian clashes that came afterwards) constituted only 18096 meaning less than 31% of the total population of the governorate (Glavn, 1880).

According to the data from "Caucasian Calendar" of the year 1901 (where all statistical data refers to the demographic registrar initiative of the 15th of January 1897) Surmali district of Irevan governorate had an area of 3220.07 sq. verst (335.425 decadiene or 3664.5 sq. km.) and included 3 police control areas, each of which had

3 village communes. In the I police district there were 61 inhabited areas, 62 in the II and 105 in the III one respectively (a total of 228 villages) (Liberman, 1900, pp. 42–43). As seen by the last quarter of the century number of villages significantly shrank. This was reasoned firstly by agglomerations (unification of inhabited areas), as well as the diminishing number of kishlags population of which eventually resulted in people located there getting back to the "foundations" of the commune and switch their occupation from cattle breeding to agriculture.

According to the data from the year 1909 Surmali district had a total population of 12417 "actual registered taxpayers". Overall, district had a total annual paid tax amount of 86400 rubles for state compulsory tax, 11108 rubles for state land tax, 73649.6 rubles for land related soil tax, 13096.7 rubles for military taxes, 60333.57 rubles for peace tax collection, all these totaled in 244587 rubles for all of tax collections (Edelson, 1911, p. 78).

As known, ever since the beginning of the XX century several consequences of worldwide economic crisis of 1900-1903, and especially blood-soaked Armenian-Azerbaijani tensions of years 1905-1906 had a destructive and heavy impact not only on morale-cultural-social life, but also on socio-economic life within the whole land of South Caucasus and in particular North Azerbaijan, where mass number of Armenian population got transferred to, from the lands of Kadjar and Ottoman Empires during the period and after Russian occupation of XIX century.

Here is what was mentioned in "The review of Irevan Governorate from the year 1907": "In comparison to 1906 bread harvest in the fiscal year got diminished in several times. So, the average harvest of 1906, without rice constituted 3.3 sam, in 1907 – 3.1 sam. Despite this insignificant difference in harvest amount, the governorate suffered from a huge scarcity of common provisions and people had no choice but to ask the government for help. This kind of sensible scarcity of bread taking place exactly in this fiscal year can be explained by low harvest in recent years, and majorly by Armenian-Tatar tensions; population poverty had risen so much that there was no other choice for recovery but to ask for governmental help" (Edelson, 1908, p. 3).

"Aside from all these, seeds from this year's harvest in many areas got to be much smaller, these issues altogether made the population to refer to the government for help and replant the land and avoid starving till the next harvest season". These circumstances were relevant for almost 6 districts in the governorate, in which the thread of starving rose over the population like a death sword. In the very same report, it was emphasized that "In the

Surmali district only we could say that harvest was appropriate, however even here it got damaged by natura disasters” (Edelson, 1908, p. 3). Table 1 depicts statistical data regarding the wheat harvesting in the district of Surmali just before World War I:

Table 1. Wheat harvesting in the district of Surmali between 1906-1913

	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913
Planted (pud)	335 838	335 868	336 465	366785	236 945	-	204 224	181 827
Leveraged (pud)	1 653 600	1 653 600	1 190 548	277 225	1 028 630	-	1 153 400	600 946
Harvested (sam)	5	3,8	3,5	6,1	4,3	5,6	9,3	3,6

Source: Constructed based on Edelson's reports

As the data suggests from the table above, wheat harvesting in Surmali district just before the World War I suffered from very unstable efficiency: it varied between 3.5 sam and 9.3 sam, which was surely not sufficient to feed local population to the demanded extent. This volatility obviously had an effect on “appealing quality” of this area of agriculture. Many researchers suggest that just the way it was for the whole South Caucasus, wheat harvesting in western parts of North Azerbaijan was heavily dependent on natural conditions (certainly, except for mass bloodshed of years 1905-1906), and also on the agricultural infrastructure directed towards this area within the boundaries of colonial province of Russian Empire. Here we conclude, the situation could not be worse.

When it comes to cotton production, Surmali district did not occupy the first place in it amongst many others within the whole governorate. For example, in 1907 area utilized for cotton harvesting constituted 6980 dec. meaning the third part of the whole Irevan governorate's cotton lands (total of 24131 dec.) was situated in Surmali district. In the harvested cotton weight perspective too (72450 pud American species and 30100 pud of local species) – Surmali district preserved its leading position amongst the rest of Irevan (total of 96744 pud), Sharur-Daralayaz (70740 pud), Uchmuedzin (62571 pud) and finally Nakhichevan districts (36962 pud) (Edelson, 1908).

Nonetheless, referring to the data 1909 based on the cultivated area (which though got shrinked to 6990 dec.) Surmali district was second to Irevan district (131776 pud) by the amount of cleansed cotton with a total estimate of 100k pud of cleansed cotton material (Edelson, 1910). In 1910, cotton production in the region soared up even further, seeding the area of 6990 dec., amount of produced cotton output has decreased to 92430 pud (79450 of Americal species and 13980 pud of kagarose species). This was the second-best result in the governorate (more than 361594 pud. of cleansed cotton canvas) (Edelson, 1912).

In 1912 as well Surmali district preserved the second place by the area of cotton seeded land (6427 dec. out of 23145 dec total in the governorate), and got the 1st place by the amount of produced cotton in the governorate; district produced 226373 pud of cleansed cotton (210325 pud American+16048 pud kagarose species) out of the whole governorate's output of 467652 pud (426249 pud American+41403 kagarose species), meaning almost half (48.41%) of the whole cotton processed in Irevan governorate was coming from the right shore of the Araz river. It is worthy to mention that even though compared to 1911, in 1912 governorate's cotton land got shrinked by 11%, if we compare it to 1908, we get an increase of ridiculous 44% (!!!). The authors of “The review” were complaining about that “people from the river downstream started to enhance their cotton lands compromising wheat harvesting areas, whilst being very concerned regarding their true right for water that is to be sufficient to properly meliorate these lands” (Edelson, 1914).

The last pre-war year of 1913 came out to be less suitable for cotton production: a very long-lasting winter of years 1912-1912, short spring and very hot and windy summer with critical water supply shortages resulted in harsh decrease of plantation areas (having 15.8, compared to 20.2 of the year 1912). In this year as well, Surmali district continued to preserve its leading position in Irevan governorate, where the seeded areas got harvested with a total of 104640 pud of cleansed cotton (100.96k pud American+3680 pud kagarose species). Share of Surmali district in cotton production of the whole Irevan governorate constituted 32.53% the plantation area and 29.2% by cleansed cotton production.

In 1913, 4 districts (Irevan, Sharur-Daralayaz, Uchmuadzin and Surmali) introduced one-time seeding on a 100 of plantations with the total area of 90 dec, there were 20 industrial press machines designed for the production of cotton tyuks (Edelson, 1915 pp. 5-6). As observed in the above-mentioned materials and statistical data, cotton production in Irevan governorate was no less than the whole Baku-Yelizavetpol stats (worth to mention that Soviet and Azerbaijani-Soviet history practices deliberately avoided covering these successes at all referring only to Baku-Yelizavetpol governorates, where exactly here in Surmali we could observe the dawn and the center of Azerbaijani cotton trade getting industrialized like never before). Meanwhile, Soviet historiography gladly associated these successes being a part of Armenian history instead, obviously all due to some well-known "subjective" reasoning. This is all disregarding the fact that almost 100% of cotton industry workers of Irevan governorate were exceptionally Azerbaijani people.

One of the major occupations in Irevan governorate's agriculture, including Surmali district were related to winery and wine production. So that according to the data relayed from Caucasian state financial representative by the early XX century Irevan governorate had more than 20 species of wine grape being cultivated in the area. Interesting fact, that even in Russian sources all species had names in Azerbaijani language, the ones like "kechimelesi", "Hosseini", "sari ezendar" (this one was cultivated particularly in Gamarli region), "gulabi", "khamili", "asgarli", "sari kishmish", "qirmizi kishmish" etc. (Kozlovsky, 1901, pp. 1–20).

Based on the data from the 4th area Governmental Tax Control entity of the year 1907, the governorate had delivered 8.98 mln. degrees of alcohol (among these 0.132 mln degrees of toot, 0.566 mln degrees winegar and 3.31 degrees of whiskey). In the very same year the governorate produced 2.36 mln. buckets of wine, which was 330556 buckets more compared to 1906 (Edelson, 1908 p. 9). Based on data from the following year total area of grape plantations in the governorate constituted 9765 dec. of 80 m<sup>2</sup> which fruit plant areas were situated with the total area of 2926 dec (Edelson, 1909 p. 5). Surmali district was almost in the last position by the area of grape plantations in the district. In 1905, there were a registered total grape plantation area of 797.7 dec. that gave a harvest of 155525 pud of grape and 23567 pud of fruits (Edelson, 1909).

The next year of 1909 came out to be more successful and luckier for grape farmers of Surmali district; the total area of grape plantations rose to almost 771 dec, and the total grape harvest has increased by more than twice – up to

41272 pud; meanwhile fruit harvest dropped to 7790 pud (Edelson, 1910 p. 5). Based on the data of 1910, district had a total fruit harvesting proprietors' population of 2191. In this year, harvest amount hardly came to 271.2k pud, which was way lower than the previous year (Edelson, 1912 p. 5). Moreover, fruit harvest (just 62 dec.) also got diminished to 7.1k pud (Edelson, 1914 p. 6). In the next year of 1912, the situation in grape harvesting in Surmali district got even worse: 2179 grape farmers harvested almost less twice (141711 pud) as 1910, results from the area of 650 dec. In the pre-World War I we can observe total collapse of this agricultural sphere; in 1913 2175 grape farmers harvested only 71395 pud of grape from the area of 621.4 dec (Edelson, 1915 p. 6). However, this year was remarkable for resurrection of vinegar and wine production, in 1913 Surmali district delivered 142618 degrees of alcohol (price per degree constitutes 11 kop.), which was 1.5 times higher than 1912 results. Same results were observed in wine production, wine suppliers of the district produced almost 57.32k buckets of wine (Edelson, 1915 p. 12).

Another area of technical agriculture in the district in early XX century was tobacco. In 1907, based on tax collection authority, downstream lands of Irevan governorate number of tobacco plantations in the fiscal year reached 1604 plantations in 140 inhabited areas spanning to the total 204 dec. The amount of harvested tobacco – makhorka the lowest quality that went mostly to the local consumption constituted 11905 pud (Edelson, 1908 p. 7). Unfortunately, exact location of these plantations is not mentioned. In the next year, tobacco production got significantly lower – 1350 plantations of 114 dec. 663 sq. planted and a total harvest of 7699 pud (Edelson, 1909 p. 7). In the "Review" only for 1909 it is stated that "tobacco was mainly the occupation of people in Surmali and Irevan districts". In this year too, tobacco harvest results were not that promising: 121 villages, 1203 plantations 167 dec 1303 sq planted, 8241 pud of harvest per each (Edelson, 1910).

Only in review for the year 1910, there is data that allows us to define the exact places of harvest and share of Surmali district in Irevan's tobacco production: so that there were 4 districts in the governorate (Irevan, Surmali, Nakhichevan and Sharur-Daralayaz) that had tobacco production, people from 111 villages (43 of which are from Irevan and 11 from Surmali and Nakhichivan and 46 from Sharur-Daralayaz districts), having 1260 plantation areas (524 -Irevan, 256 – Surmali, 192 – Nakhichevan and 278 – Sharur-Daralayaz) with the total area of 174 dec. 1517 sq. plants out of these only 6 dec. 2962 sq. plants were situated in Nakhichevan (3 dec. 994 sq. plants), and the

rest was in Irevan (83.6 dec.) and Surmali (84 dec. 286 sq. plants); the latter district had a time when it delivered more than a half (4961 pud 21 pounds) of total harvested tobacco of the governorate (9116 pud, 19 pounds) tobacco – makhorka, major share of which was collected from Irevan district (3585 pud, 3 pounds) (Edelson, 1910 p. 7)

In 1912 there was a significant drop in tobacco production observed in Surmali district where only in villages (over the whole governorate 137) there were stilled a total of 148 lands and plantations with the area of 34 dec (89 dec. 1904 sq plants). Meanwhile harvest efficiency was amongst the lowest ones throughout the whole period of early XX century-633 pud. 15 pounds (4386 pud, 37.5 pounds) (Edelson, 1914 p. 9). As observed, several times' shrinkage in tobacco agriculture was in place within the boundaries of the whole governorate.

During the last pre-war year of 1913 Surmali district had only 7 villages with 141 tobacco plantations with the total area of 98 dec. 1286 sq. plants that gave the harvest of 2733 pud of tobacco – makhorka (Edelson, 1915 p. 9). But if we estimate by the net weight of produced tobacco Surmali district was still on the first place in Irevan governorate; almost 55% of governorate's tobacco supply was coming from Surmali's tobacco-machorka planters.

Surmali district was also one of the main pinpoints for cattle breeders in Irevan governorate. Based on the data of 1907 this district had a share of 11% from the whole Irevan governorate's cattle headcount. Almost 110K of cattle in Surmali district were sheep. In this district, peasants tended to keep only bulls (13.64k), cows (13.1k), buffalos (3.9k), goats (almost 20k), etc. (Edelson, 1908). In 1910, there were already 177 k head of cattle in this district, and in 1913 there were 219.5 K heads of cattle (Edelson, 1915). In other words, in pre-World War I period, almost 15% of the whole Irevan governorate's cattle were held in this district.

In agriculture-economic life of Surmali district one of the major shares was given to gardening farmers as well, including grape gardens, cultivation of other species of plants, collection of feeding grass, mountain harvesting, trade etc. One of the main three salt production facilities of Irevan governorate – Qulpin, was located exactly in Surmali district. Just as the one located in Nakhichevan, Kilpin salt mines were considered a governmental property, whereas another salt mine Susmit was a private one. Referring to the data of 1907, Qulpin salt mine was used to be leased on an annual rent for a price of 34 750 rubles, whereas Nakhichevan's salt mines' lease price was only 1600 rubles. Salt from Qulpin mines were traded to Irevan and Tblisi governorates of Kars area (Edelson, 1908). "Salt

from Qulpin mine was first carried to Araz – Alexandropol-Irevan railway and then got distributed to Tblisi and Irevan governorates as well as to Kars area". Referring to the data of 1909, Qulpin's production got leased also by per-pud price of 4.95 per ton with a mandatory condition for yearly production of 1 010 000 pud (Edelson, 1910 p. 10).

The salt mine that was placed on lease for Qulpin salt production corporation, in 1910 "got produced 650 849 pud, sold and transferred to stocks 437 257 pud with overall market value of 60 630.95 rubles". It is worthy to mention that by January 1st 1910 there was 315 421 pud of salt suitable for production. Also, in the remaining 2 salt facilities production was much lower, for example in Nakhichevan facility during the year of 1910 there was almost three times less salt – only 210 450 pud (Edelson, 1910 p. 12).

In 1912 Qulpin salt facility got mined a total of 888.8k pud of salt (Edelson, 1909 p. 11). Interesting fact is that in some sources relevant for the period regarding the production facilities and factories information about any type of such facilities about Irevan governorate's Surmali district up until 1908 were missing. Only starting from 1908 in various sources information about number of salt production facilities in the region began to occur. So that according to "The Review" in 1908 Surmali district had 313 "factories and various production facilities", where there were 445 paid workers being hired and a total yearly production reaching 1109966 rubles (Edelson, 1909).

In essence, these facilities could hardly be called a factory. In the year mentioned Surmali district had only 4 types of such facilities:

1. Vinegar-fruit-vodka facilities -22, total employees equaled 40 and total of yearly production was 7720 rubles.
2. Flour factories -180, 183 workers, 19301 rubles.
3. Vegetable oil facilities -6, 12 workers, 460 rubles.
4. Cotton producing facilities-105, 210 workers, 83485 rubles.

As we see, total number of workers in each of these "production facilities and factories" did not exceed 2 workers. Only in flour producing wells as well as cotton processing entities yearly production could constitute more than 10k rubles (Edelson, 1909).

In "The review" section no. 4 for the year 1909 there is almost no difference in this direction (there was only 1 extra wine producing facility) (Edelson, 1910). In 1910, additional 10 entities got added up to these and about 20 workers (Edelson, 1912). In 1912, not only the number of facilities went down (about 20), but also their total yearly output. In this year, Surmali district had a total registered

number of 282 facilities and 297 workers. Yearly production hardly reached 132k rubles (Edelson, 1914).

During the last enlisted year of 1913 Surmali district had only 5 winery-alcohol entities left (10 workers and 15 500 rubles yearly turnover), 178 flour-producing facilities (185 workers, 82500 ruble), 6 vegetable oil facilities (6 workers, 1000 ruble), and 105 cotton-producing facilities (70 500 rubles) (Edelson, 1915). Most probably the ones that got left were comparatively small, where all “production” was heavily dependent on manual human labor of 1-2 workers max. Unfortunately, there is no actual and reliable source of data for the technical supplies of these facilities in that period. However, the total sum of yearly turnovers allows us to assume that in some of those small factories, there were untimely advanced machinery and mechanisms employed.

Part of village peasants of this district also had an occupation of carpet sewing. So that based on the data from “Memory book” of this district for the year of 1902 in 65 of villages in Surmali district there were actually extensive carpet sewing practices. 214 houses in total that had a yearly output of carpets and similar production in total market value of 7013 ruble (Marlino, 1902, pp. 129–137). Finally, in the very same year, researchers from Caucasian Handmade Committee “Kara-Murza and Mugandze” were collecting data regarding the state of affairs in carpet sewing in some villages (Karakurch, Yastibulag, Aslanli, Ashraflu, Javanli etc.) and concluded that as a result of agricultural development carpet sewing was becoming less appealing for local people (Piralov, 1903, pp. 39–42).

## CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the XX century Surmali district, which was situated on the right shore of the Araz River had gone through almost similar processed with other regions of Western and for this matter the whole of Northern Azerbaijan. On the southern banks of the Araz River, in socio-economic life, there were observable patterns of developed trade-market relationships, exceeding trade-oriented farming, and diminishing rates of traditionally shaped agricultural activities in favor of industrialized ones. An ethno-demographic perspective as well, similar patterns were in place, population size kept soaring up alongside the net share of the incoming ethnic population and simultaneously, the other way around diminishing the share of ancient inhabitants of these lands. Nonetheless, in the pre-World War I period Surmali district remained to be a non-detachable ethnical part of North Azerbaijan in all the aspects.

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