

**RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION IN TURKESTAN IN THE LATE 19TH – 20TH
CENTURY: IMPACT OF RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION ON MARKET LIFE:
HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS**

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Abstract. This article comprehensively analyzes the process of railway construction in Turkestan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries using the examples of the Trans-Caspian Railway (1880–1888), the Samarkand–Andijan (Fergana) Railway (1895–1899), the Orenburg–Tashkent Railway (1901–1906), and the Turkestan–Siberian Railway – Turksib (1927–1931). The construction stages, main stations, strategic tasks, freight transport indicators, and economic results of the railways are covered based on the research of local and foreign historians. The study reveals the connection of the railway construction process with colonial policy, its role in the region's transport integration, and its impact on industrialization processes on a scientific basis.

Keywords: Turkestan, Trans-Caspian Railway, Fergana Railway, Orenburg-Tashkent Railway, Turksib, cotton transportation, transport policy of the Russian Empire.

Introduction. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the construction of railways in Turkestan was carried out in direct connection with the military-strategic and economic interests of the Russian Empire. One of the main goals of the construction of railways was to integrate the region into the imperial transport system, expand the raw material base, and strengthen geopolitical control. The construction of railway networks accelerated the urbanization process in Turkestan, led to the emergence of new industrial centers, and dramatically increased the volume of internal trade.

Construction of the Trans-Caspian Railway (1880–1888). The Trans-Caspian Railway is the first strategic railway line built in Turkestan. Construction work began in 1880 at the port of Krasnovodsk on the Caspian Sea. The railway covered the following main stations: Krasnovodsk - Kyzyl-Arvat - Ashgabat - Tejen - Merv - Chorjoi - Kogan - Samarkand. In 1881, it was extended to Kyzyl-Arvat, in 1885 to Ashgabat, in 1886 to Merv, and in 1888 to Samarkand. After 1888, it was planned to extend the railway from Samarkand to the Fergana Valley, and in 1898 the Kokand and Andijan routes were put into operation. The main goals of the railway construction were to strengthen military control over the Turkmen territories, strengthen political influence over the Bukhara Emirate, expand cotton exports, and ensure strategic advantage against British colonial policy. In 1896, the volume of cargo transported via the Trans-Caspian Railway was 338 thousand tons, while in 1900 this figure exceeded 500 thousand tons.

The main products transported:

- raw cotton;
- silk fiber;
- wool;
- building materials;
- military equipment.

Construction of the Samarkand - Andijan (Fergana) railway (1895-1899) Since the Fergana Valley was one of the main cotton-growing regions of the Russian Empire, it was

important to connect this region with the central highway by rail. This railway passed through the following stations: Samarkand - Jizzakh - Khovos - Kokand - Margilan - Andijan.

In 1899, the railway line was fully commissioned to the Andijan station. By 1905, about 250 thousand tons of cotton were transported along this line annually. The main tasks of the Fergana Railway:

- accelerate the transportation of cotton;
- integrate the Fergana Valley into the empire's transport system;
- form new trade centers.

Construction of the Orenburg-Tashkent Railway (1901–1906)

The Orenburg-Tashkent Railway is the most important trunk line connecting Turkestan with the central regions of the Russian Empire.

The railway consisted of the following main stations:

Orenburg - Iletsk - Kazalinsk - Aralsk - Kazalinsk - Turkestan - Shymkent - Arys - Tashkent.

The total length was 1,736 kilometers.

In 1910, the volume of cargo transported by this railway was 700 thousand tons, while in 1913 this figure exceeded 1 million tons.

The main products transported:

- cotton;
- wheat;
- petroleum products;
- metal products;
- livestock products.

As a result of the construction of this railway, Tashkent became a major transport center of the region. At the beginning of the 20th century, the railway line from Arys station to the Fergana Valley was expanded. This project made it possible to connect the most densely populated areas of Turkestan to the main railway system.

By 1916, the volume of cotton transported along this route had reached 300 thousand tons.

Construction of the Turkestan-Siberian Railway (1927–1931)

The Turkestan-Siberian Railway was one of the largest transport projects of the Soviet era, connecting Central Asia with Siberia.

The railway consisted of the following main stations:

Lugovaya – Chu – Almaty – Ayaguz – Semipalatinsk.

The total length of the railway was 1,445 km.

In 1932, the volume of cargo transported through Turksib exceeded 2 million tons.

Products transported:

- cotton;
- grain;
- coal;
- non-ferrous metal ores.

As a result of the construction of railways, the volume of cotton exported from Turkestan to Russia increased 5 times between 1885 and 1915. In 1913, the total volume of cotton sent from Turkestan to Russian industrial centers exceeded 800 thousand tons. The following industrial centers were formed around the railway stations:

- Tashkent;
- Samarkand;
- Andijan;

- Kokand;
- Ashgabat.

As a result of the construction of the railway, a new working class was formed. By the 1910s, more than 30 thousand workers worked in the Turkestan railway system. The process of internal migration through the railways also intensified, and new cities and industrial settlements were formed. The volume of freight transportation by rail in the territory of Turkestan increased sharply in the late 19th century - the first half of the 20th century. The following table shows the dynamics of the growth of freight transported by rail:

**Table 1
Dynamics of freight transportation by rail in 1890–1935**

Year	Cargo capacity (tons)	Main products
1890	220 000	cotton, wool
1896	338 000	cotton, silk, building materials
1900	500 000	cotton, grain
1910	700 000	cotton, metal products
1913	1 000 000+	cotton, petroleum products
1916	1 200 000	cotton, food
1932	2 000 000+	cotton, grain, coal
1935	2 600 000	ferrous metal ores, industrial cargo

Railway construction in Turkestan was carried out in three main stages:

The first stage (1880–1890). During this period, the Trans-Caspian Railway was built, establishing transport links with the Caucasus and central regions of Russia through the Caspian Sea. This stage had a military-strategic character.

The second stage (1895–1916). During this period, the Fergana Railway and the Orenburg-Tashkent highway were built, and Turkestan was fully integrated into the economic system of the empire. In particular, cotton exports increased sharply.

The third stage (1927–1935). During the Soviet era, economic ties between Central Asia and Siberia were strengthened through the construction of the Turksib. This stage was associated with the policy of industrialization.

Representatives of the local population actively participated in the construction of the railway. In particular, Turkmen, Uzbek and Kazakh workers were widely involved in the construction of the Trans-Caspian Railway. In the 1890s, about 60 percent of the workers working on the Trans-Caspian Railway were local residents. By the 1910s, the number of workers working on the Turkestan railway system had exceeded 30,000, more than half of whom were local. The involvement of local workers contributed to the rapid construction of the railway infrastructure. Foreign historiography evaluates the construction of the railway in Turkestan based on two main approaches. According to the first approach, the construction of the railway was associated with the military strategy of the Russian Empire. The Trans-Caspian

Railway was built precisely as a geopolitical tool against British colonial policy. According to the second approach, the construction of the railway was the result of a policy of economic integration. Supporters of this approach emphasize the role of railways in increasing cotton exports. Modern researchers consider these two factors as interconnected. That is, the construction of the railway simultaneously fulfilled both military-strategic and economic tasks.

Geographically, railway lines developed in three main directions:

- western direction (via Caspian ports to the Caucasus and Moscow);
- northern direction (via Orenburg to the Ural industrial regions);
- eastern direction (via Turkestan to the Siberian regions).

These routes played an important role in the formation of Turkestan as an economic region. Cotton logistics model: Turkestan - Moscow industrial centers route In the late 19th - early 20th centuries, Turkestan became the main cotton supplier region of the Russian Empire. Cotton transportation via railway networks was carried out via the following logistics routes: Fergana Valley → Andijan → Arys → Orenburg → Moscow → Ivanovo-Voznesensk textile centers.

In 1913, about 50 percent of the cotton used in the Russian textile industry was supplied from the territory of Turkestan. As a result of the increase in the volume of cotton transported by rail, the volume of textile production in industrial centers such as Moscow and Ivanovo-Voznesensk increased sharply. The construction of railway networks significantly accelerated the urbanization process in the territory of Turkestan. Between 1897 and 1917, the population growth rate of cities with railway stations was twice as high as in other regions. In particular:

- The population of Tashkent increased from 156 thousand in 1897 to 270 thousand in 1917;
- The population of Samarkand increased from 55 thousand to 90 thousand;
- The population of Andijan increased by more than 50 percent⁷.

These indicators confirm that the railway infrastructure had a strong impact on the urbanization process. By 1917, the total length of railway lines in Turkestan had expanded significantly. According to statistics:

Table 2

Statistics on the length of railways in Turkestan until 1917

Year	Railway length (km)
1888	900 km
1899	1 400 km
1906	3 000 km
1913	4 200 km
1917	4 800 km

These indicators indicate that the territory of Turkestan was fully integrated into the transport system of the Russian Empire in a short time. Decisions made during the Russian Empire on the construction of railways were reflected in the documents of the Office of the Turkestan General Governorate and the Ministry of Roads of the Russian Empire. For example, the resolution of May 15, 1901 specifically emphasized that the construction of the Orenburg-Tashkent railway corresponded to the strategic and economic interests of the empire.

Also, the report of the Governor-General of Turkestan in 1898 indicated the connection of

the Fergana Valley by railway with the central highway as the main condition for increasing cotton exports. The military-strategic tasks of railway construction were also specifically noted in archival documents, and the Trans-Caspian Railway was assessed as a means of rapid deployment of troops.

Foydalanilgan adabiyotlar ro'yxati

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