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# **The Construction of the Transcaspian Railway and Its Role in Domestic and Foreign Trade Relations**

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**ABSTRACT:** After the conquest of Central Asia by Russia, its ruling circles began to pursue an aggressive policy, appropriating all of its natural and material riches. To achieve these goals, the agenda raises the question of linking the territory of Russia with Central Asia via railways. This article focuses on issues related to the design of the Trans-Caspian Railway, the approval of these projects, the progress of construction by rail between cities, as well as changes in trade links, an increase in the number of goods carried. This article focuses on issues related to the design of the Trans-Caspian Railway, the approval of these projects, the progress of construction by rail between cities, as well as changes in trade links, an increase in the number of goods carried. These informations are presented through archival data and relevant literature.

**KEYWORDS:** product, river trade route, gupsar, shipbuilding, pood, right to free navigation, flotilla, iron barge.

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

One of the topical issues on the agenda is the importance of strengthening the relationship of new lands, with the center of the Russian Empire, when the Central Asian lands were occupied one by one in the 60s and 70s of the XIX century. It is known that with the acquisition of the Marv Valley in 1884, the occupation of Central Asia by Russia ended. With the "Border Agreement" signed between Russia and Iran in 1881, the borders between Iran and the new Russian property were defined, after negotiations in 1885-1887, the governments of Russia and Great Britain entered the border with Afghanistan and, finally, in 1895, the border between Pamir and modern Central Asia. It was necessary to build railways to manage the expanded empire and connect it with the integral and integral economic space of the country. Despite the fact that to connect Central Asia and Russia it was necessary to spend a lot of money to connect the Caucasus, Siberia, the Far East, the construction of the railway, the transportation of many raw materials from this country and the transfer of wealth began in regions dominated by Russia in the 1860s years. After a long discussion, debate and analysis, it was decided that the construction of a railway in Central Asia will take place. In 1880, work on the construction of the Beyond Caspian Railway through Kyzyl-Arvat, Ashgabat, Marv, Chordju and Novaya Bukhara, to Samarkand, and then to Tashkent and Andijan was begun. Thus, the railway traffic in Central Asia began, which became an important commercial route.

January 3, 1875 issues related to the construction of railways in Central Asia, were discussed in the Asian Department of St. Petersburg. Such officials as the Russian State Chancellor, General Counsel Chevkin, the fond Kaufman, Engineer-General Melnikov, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Railways attended. At the meeting, the Lesseps project on the construction of railways to Tashkent was discussed. The draft says that Russia's trade route through the railway should reach the Caucasus, Iran and India through the Caspian Sea. The total length of the railways was 7,000 versts, 1 verst and 1pood of goods amounted to 0.33 kopecks, and 25 kopecks - 2 rubles - were spent to send 1 pood of goods. At that time (1875) British goods were sent to India through the sea at a rate of 40 million pounds sterling, one pood was brought by 45 kopecks.<sup>ii</sup>

This project consists of two parts: in the first part, the construction of a railway linking India and Central Asia was developed, and in the second part - to expand the Russian railway to Central Asia - to Tashkent.

Fon Kaufman, Governor-General of Turkestan, analyzes the situation in Central Asia, paying special attention to the Russian-English competition in the region. "In 1868 Kaufman said that we feared the holy Muslim war and spent a lot of money on military service, but now there is no such risk and we can spend money on building roads and



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Vol. 7, Issue 6, June 2020

trade.<sup>iii</sup>In general, the work of the council rejects the project of building a railway in India, and the issue of railroads to Tashkent will be postponed.

In a written statement to the Russian emperor on July 25, 1883, by lieutenant-general of Turkestan Chernyayev was hold abroad analysis of the connection between the Caspian Sea and the Amu Darya through portable railways during his tenure as a governor-general of Turkestan (1882-1884), focused on questions the construction of railways, the development of trade relations in Russia - Central Asia and Central Asia - Afghanistan, Iran, India and China.<sup>iv</sup>

To stop the import of other state goods to the Central Asian market, it was necessary to connect the Volga and the Amu Darya by railway. It should be taken into account that the consumption of Indian and Japanese tea by the Turkmen, Khivinians and Bukharans in the Transcaspian region, which was imported through British traders. To satisfy the needs of these products and the initiative in this regard, the Turkestan Governor General bought green tea from China to sell in Turkestan.

The Russian government attaches great importance to the construction of railways with the aim of increasing Russian goods in Central Asia, displacing English goods and traders from the region. Therefore, the Central Asian Railway, which began construction in November 1880, continued despite the economic and financial difficulties in the country. The construction of this railway from Krasnovodsk to Kyzyl-Arvat was completed by 1884<sup>v</sup>. In 1885, at the state level, negotiations were held on the continuation of the construction of the railway. On May 8, 1885, the Russian diplomatic representative from St. Petersburg, Charikov, visited the Bukhara emirate, where negotiations were held with the Emir on the transit of the Transcaspian railway through the Bukhara region.<sup>vi</sup>

## II. LITERATURE SURVEY

The situation in neighboring Afghanistan, which came to power in Abdurrahmanhana, in which the British established the opposite attitude against Central Asia, the Afghan occupation of Shughnan and its surrounding areas in 1883, the re-arming of Afghan troops with modern British weapons, the meeting of the eldest son of emir Katta Tura with the Afghan emir, naturally, all this complicated the situation in the region. British goods were traded in the Afghan market, and it is likely that this event will also take place in Bukhara. In the unfavorable situation for Russia, the imperial power was not indifferent to the construction of the railway. To this end, the construction of 765 versts of the railway Kyzyl-Arvat-Kakhka-Mariv-Chorju was allocated 12.24 million rubles<sup>vii</sup>.

Issues related to the construction of the Transcaspian railway were in the focus of attention of the Central Administration and the Turkestan Governor General. Because the construction of the railway was not only relevant for trade, but also for strategic issues.

Devoted to his great empire and chauvinistic ideas, the ruling circles of Russia paid special attention to the construction of the railway. Because the issue of conquering the Central Asian market was ending, and it was the turn of Afghanistan and India. The "Great Emperors" were amazed at the plan to expand the railways to India. The complete settlement of the British in India, gradually approaching Afghanistan and reaching the Afghan-Bukhara border, did not correspond to Russia's interests in Central Asia. Therefore, the role of the railway in the British-Russian competition was to play an important role in the Central Asian market, as the conquest of a new zone of influence. In 1886 by March the railway of Transcaspian to Merv was completed. The last question was to deliver it to the Amu Darya River and pass through the territory of the Bukhara emirate to the Samarkand region. This issue was discussed in detail at a meeting of the Committee of Ministers in February 1886. A railway line was built 300 versts from Kizil-Arvat, and this line from Kaakhka to Merv, where excavation work was in progress and additional financing was required. In 1885, it was decided to invest all 12.2 billion rubles in the construction of the railway<sup>viii</sup>. At the end of the XIX century, when the Transcaspian railroad covered the entire internal territory of the country, this road was named in 1898 as the Central Asian Railway and 100 000 people participated in its construction<sup>ix</sup>.

The construction of the Trans-Caspian Railway was carried out under the leadership of the Turkestan Military District, its headquarters and Russian military. A separate department was created for each of its sections. For example, to manage the construction of the Samarkand site, on July 12, 1887, the Military Ministry established the administration for the construction of the Samarkand section of the Transcaspian railway<sup>x</sup>. All expenses were included in the balance of expenses of the headquarters of the Turkestan Military District and were made through a separate loan.

The branch of the Trans-Caspian Railway to Samarkand was completed in 1888, and from May 15 of that year, the trains traveled to Samarkand.

The construction of the Transcaspian railway had a great influence on the development of trade relations between Russia-Central Asia, Russia-Iran. Between 1896 and 1898 about 4-5 million poods (70% of the demand of



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# International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

Vol. 7, Issue 6, June 2020

Russian industry) of raw cotton were exported from Central Asia. The railway gave 45 million rubles of transportation income to the Russian Treasury, thanks to the transportation of only raw cotton. In 1898, Russian manufacture in Central Asia reached 1 million poods, and the annual turnover increased to 12 million poods. In particular, the import of sugar amounted to 812 thousand poods, 441 thousand poods of iron, construction materials - 763 thousand poods, tea - 344 thousand poods, oil and oil products - 164 thousand poods, paint - 110 thousand poods, and as a result, 5.2 million poods of goods from Russia to Central Asia were transported<sup>xi</sup>.

And also, 563 thousand poods of wool, 853 thousand poods of dried fruits, raisins, 276 thousand poods of karakul leather, 166 thousand poods of leather and fur products were exported from Central Asia to Russia. The volume of exported goods to Russia amounted to 7 million poods, which is 40 percent of the total transport volume<sup>xii</sup>.

With the completion of the Kokand Khanate and the establishment of the Ferghana Valley within the framework of the Turkestan Governor General, the use of raw materials for Russian industry in the valley was widely used. And also, the prospects for the development of trade relations between Russia and China (through Kashgar) also played an important role in extending the Transcaspian railway from Samarkand to Fergana. From an economic point of view, the construction of a railway became a necessity. If the railway was not built, 2/3 of the goods that were to be shipped from Kokand through Samarkand were not sent to Russia<sup>xiii</sup>.

It was supposed to build a railway line 650 versts from Kinderli port of the Caspian Sea to the Amu Darya, the construction of which cost 10 million rubles. In 1892 Lieutenant-General Glukhovskiy, in October 1893 the retired captain of the cavalry guard of the Cornet Sergey Bashmakov and the statistics consultant engineer Gronskey, drafted and submitted to the government a project for the construction of a railway called the Khiva Railway. Soon, due to the tragic death of engineer Gronskey in connection with a technical malfunction on the Vladimir steamer on the Black Sea, the project remained inattentive.

In June 26, 1896, the adviser of the palace, Peter Ratmanov, will present to the government a project for the construction of the Khiva railway<sup>xiv</sup>. All projects were aimed at creating favorable conditions for transportation of more raw materials from Khiva to Russia. In 1895-1896, most of the cotton and most of the other products grown in the Khiva Khanate, i.e. 375,000 poods of goods were transported through the old caravan route through Orenburg and Krasnovodsk to Russia, and 350,000 poods of goods were sent through Chorjuu to the center along the Transcaspian railway<sup>xv</sup>.

In conclusion, the railways built in Central Asia, in particular the Transcaspian railway, had an impact on the development of domestic and foreign trade. The current railway route in Central Asia, Krasnovodsk-Chordjoy-Bukhara-Samarkand-Tashkent, the Tashkent-Andijan railway route, the Bukhara-Karshi-Kelif-Termez railway line connecting major cities and shopping centers created many opportunities for the wide distribution of a large number of agricultural raw materials, industrial and handicraft goods. The construction of railways also affected the growth of trade through Central Asia with Afghanistan, Iran, Kashgar, and its waterways were more preferable and cheaper than ground caravan routes.

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