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SOI: [1.1/TAS](#) DOI: [10.15863/TAS](#)

### International Scientific Journal Theoretical & Applied Science

p-ISSN: 2308-4944 (print) e-ISSN: 2409-0085 (online)

Year: 2020 Issue: 10 Volume: 90

Published: 11.10.2020 <http://T-Science.org>

QR – Issue



QR – Article



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## HISTORY OF THE RAILWAY SYSTEM OF UZBEKISTAN: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THE BIRTH OF A NEW PROFESSION

**Abstract:** *The article analyzes the historical conditions of the railway system, formation of the industry and international relations. The article also discusses issues such as the construction of railways in Uzbekistan, the emergence of new professions and the integration of economic, spiritual, and cultural ties between the country and secular cultures.*

**Key words:** *railway, Central Asia, human resources, international relations, research, new values and knowledge, economic changes, labor communities, services, scientific literature, development of the railway system industry.*

**Language:** English

**Citation:** Gulmurodov, A. (2020). History of the railway system of Uzbekistan: international relations and the birth of a new profession. *ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science*, 10 (90), 163-167.

**Soi:** <http://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS-10-90-30> **Doi:**  <https://dx.doi.org/10.15863/TAS.2020.10.90.30>

**Scopus ASCC:** 3300.

### Introduction

The study of railway formation system in Uzbekistan is becoming one of the most important issues today. There is a growing need for qualified specialists in the railway system, which is a key sector of the country's economic growth. In particular, the launch of new railway routes in the country and the annual growth of number of employees in the industry (over 80 thousand) have further increased.

Qualitative reforms – in sectors such as tourism, transport communications, transport logistics within a framework of the Action Strategy for Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021 – will further speed up demand for specialists, working in these industries. In this regard, for employees of the railway system, it becomes an urgent task not only to acquire, master and apply professional knowledge, but also to have an improvement strategy of effective activity, analysis and forecasting of socio-economic processes, management technologies and psychology.

Strengthening state independence is achieved through the establishment of new progressive relations in labor communities, production and

services and educational and upbringing processes. Such approaches lead to various forms of protest in communities: reduced labor productivity and reduced profitability. The railway system is a key sector of the country's economic growth, and it requires highly qualified personnel with a high level of moral and ideological qualities.

It is known that the emergence of a new type of industrial development has become a necessity. Despite this, the first railway in the world was built in 1825 in the United Kingdom. This phenomenon also ensured connection of different regions and exchange of cultures.

### Materials and Methods

The beginning of railways construction not only increased demand for crude iron, and steel, but also the demand for science, knowledge, and values. At the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century, the first crude iron tracks appeared, and by 1840s length of all railways in the world was 7,700 km [1]. The most of it came from the United Kingdom and the United States of America, which has led to the growth in economy and prestige of these nations in an international arena. By 1870,

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total of 200,000 km of railways in the United States of America and Europe had brought closer interstate borders, which led to the popularity of different languages and exchange of knowledge. The first truck was built by Trevithick and was driven along the trail using a steam engine. Inventions and discoveries have shown that the theoretical knowledge exchange; in practice they are based on experience and gradual transfer of human labor into the hands of technology. The use applied science in social sciences has also helped to find solutions to problems in society. Humanity's demand for science and knowledge has grown even more.

G. Stephenson built his first steam locomotive – the Blucher – in 1814, and the first 21-kilometer public railway between Stockton and Darlington was built under his leadership, inaugurated on September 27, 1825. That became the reason of great news spread throughout the world. Later, the construction of railways began to be built in different countries, namely, in 1830 in the USA, in 1832 in France, in 1835 in Germany and Belgium, and in 1837 in Russia. The construction of subsequent railways was accompanied by periodic changes. There were thousands of examples in the scientific literature that there was a period of rapid development of railways between the 60s and 80s of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Since the first half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, the ruling circles of Russian Empire have been consistently working to further expand trade relations with the Uzbek khanates. There is historical information about the dispatch of ambassadors to Bukhara and Khiva. The ambassadors were tasked with identifying natural wealth of the Uzbek khanates and collecting valuable information on scale of trade. However, the lack of convenient and accessible transport links between Turkestan and central regions of Russia impeded the implementation of the planned policy. The Russian press wrote with the concern: “Trade relations between Turkestan, Khiva and Bukhara and the central regions of Russia are carried out along the single caravan route Kazalinsk-Orenburg, partly in the direction of Troisk. The route is extremely difficult, and level of service is low and expensive” [2]. These problems created difficulties both for both merchants of the Russian Empire and the Uzbek khanates. The need for expanding transport links between metropolis and colony was to implement a policy of increasing trade between Russia and Central Asia – especially the growing appetite of Russian capitalist factories for cotton. While many merchants advocated the development of shipping to shorten distance for transporting Russian goods to Central Asian markets, whilst some suggested opening railways, which quickly penetrated European industries [3]. It was about shipping along the Aral Sea, Syr Darya and Amu Darya. They argued openly about this, viewing Central Asia as “their rightful property” and conducting research to calculate its wealth.

One of these studies was A. Stetkevich “Does Russia need Turkestan?” He proved that the country is “an excellent source of income” and recommended making it “harmless” and in the future “as soon as possible to lead the shortest railroad to the country” [4].

It should be noted that the issue of connecting Turkestan with the central regions of Russia by rail was raised in the mid-60s of 19<sup>th</sup> century. For the first time on January 12, 1854, Major General Maltsev submitted to the Special Court of Main Directorate of Ministry of Communications of Russia an official proposal to build a railway along the Kharkiv-Perekip route, extending it through Kzlyar to the Aral Sea. However, the proposal was rejected by the Special Court on May 13, 1855 due to the lack of careful study and theoretical justification [5]. Unfortunately, Russia's policy of building railways in Central Asia remained open for a long time.

On July 19, 1856, the commander-in-chief of Russian army in Caucasus, Prince A. Baryatinsky, presented to the Russian emperor Alexander II a project: the construction of a railway along the Ustyurt territories, through which the Caspian and Aral seas are connected. This project clearly formulates the need of expanding Russia's influence to the East. The proposed railway would replace the “complex and detour caravan route” with convenient and affordable transport links, as well as “unite trade with neighboring countries, create great opportunities for the sale of Russian goods to distant countries” he wrote in his presentation. He added that the importance of this road is not limited to trade, “politically it lays the foundation for our spiritual superiority in the Far East, and it allows us to mobilize our military forces in short period of time from the Caspian Sea to the Aral Sea. Thus, Russia would be able to use the positional advantage given it by nature and freely increase its influence on territories inaccessible to other European countries” [6]. The issue of connecting central regions of Russia with Central Asia by rail has been discussed for more than 25 years, and from 1854 to 1880 over 40 projects were submitted to the government of Russia [7]. Some sources cite several factors that delayed the construction of railway to Central Asia. Most of these projects are tied with the connection of central regions of Russia with Central Asia through the construction of railway along the Orenburg-Karatogay-Tashkent, Uralsk-Aral Sea-Tashkent, partially Petropavlovsk-Akmola-Turkestan-Shymkent-Tashkent, Omsk-Karakara-Avliyoota-Tashkent and connect Central Asia with the Siberian highway [8]. These were projects proposed by local and foreign engineers to connect the Russian and Anglo-Indian railways along the Orenburg-Tashkent-Peshawar route.

According to the first project proposed by Ferdinand de Lesseps in the late 1960s, and it was supposed to connect Russian and Anglo-Indian

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railways along the Orenburg-Tashkent-Peshawar route. In the letter, drawn up by Ferdinand de, it says: “This path ... would open up new markets for Russia, which will make it a source of inexhaustible wealth” [9].

The history of railway construction in Turkestan began in 1874, when the Special Commission analyzed all the projects and found reasonable the construction of Orenburg-Tashkent railway. The history of railway construction in Central Asia began in 1880. Construction of Caspian Railway began in November 1880. In 1885, the railroad reached Ashgabat and in 1886 Chardzhou. In May 1888, with the construction of 30 bridges across the Amu Darya, a railway was opened to Samarkand. In 1885, starting point of the Caspian Railway was moved from Mikhailovsky Bay to Uzun-Ada, and in 1896 to Krasnovodsk (now Turkmenbashi).

Railway construction in Central Asia is aimed at solving the biggest problem. This was to serve to strengthen the military superiority and political domination of Russian Empire in these lands.

The first 217 km railway in Central Asia was completed in 10 months. On September 20, 1881, trains began to run along steel tracks from Mikhailovsky Bay to Kyzyl-Arvat. Later, the railway was extended from Kyzyl-Arvat to Samarkand, and the second Caspian railway battalion was formed. In May 1895, under the leadership of engineer A. Urusatiev, construction of railway from Samarkand to Tashkent and Andijan began, the length of which increased to 2,368 km. 1,748 km of road passed with the Krasnovodsk-Tashkent route, 294 km – to Murghab, 306 km – to the Andijan network, 12 km – to Kogon-Bukhara and 8 km – to the Gorchakovo (Margilan)-Skobelev (Fergana) stations. The railway industry built 99 stations, 96 bridges, many residential buildings, workshops, and educational institutions [10]. The capacity of trains on rails reached 17 pairs per day in 1903.

In fall of 1900, construction of the Orenburg-Tashkent railway began in Russia. Construction began in two directions – Orenburg and Tashkent, and in 1906 the Orenburg-Tashkent railway with a total length of 1,736 km was exploited. In the same years, 354 km Kinel-Orenburg network was built. There is an open information, which says the entire railway network in 1906 totaled 2,090 km. The Tashkent-Orenburg route is the second largest railway network connecting Central Asia with central industrial regions of Russia. Later, construction of internal routes began, such as the Fergana railway, Kogon-Termez, Karshi-Kitab.

In 1899, the Caspian Railway was transferred to the Ministry of Communications after joining the Samarkand-Andijan route and was named Central Asia, passing through the territory of the Syr Darya, Samarkand, Fergana, Caspian, and Bukhara khanates. The total length of the railway was 2,354 km.

At the initial stages of the exploitation process, its primary role was to use it for political and military purposes, but afterwards it was used for commercial purposes as well. From 1887 to 1900, freight turnover increased 7.3 times. Exports from Central Asia, such as cotton, dried fruits, silk, and karakul, have sharply increased. In return, they began to import more fabrics, sugar, metals, and other manufactured goods from Russia. Under these opportunities of export to Russian market, there was an increase in production of Central Asian countries, and certain industries began to develop. The appearance of railway had a positive effect on the development of Russia's trade with Afghanistan and Persia. If in 1896-1900 the Russian Afghan trade turnover amounted to 2.7 million rubles, then in 1906-1910 it reached to 5.08 million rubles and in 1911 to 10.6 million rubles [11].

In Soviet times, the Central Asian railways united the railways of the Uzbek SSR, the Turkmen SSR, the Tajik SSR, and partly the Kyrgyz SSR. The location of railway department was in Tashkent.

Reconstruction of Central Asian railways was carried out in 1920s. In 1931 regular passenger and freight transportation by locomotive began on the Ashgabat-Dushak and Ashgabat-Bami routes. In 1974, the railway became the first in the USSR railway network to be completely converted to locomotive traction.

During World War II, the railway connected Central Asia with Caucasus and center of the USSR. After the war, construction of new railway routes in territories of present-day Uzbekistan Kungrad-Beineu (408 km) was considered as an important route, which was launched in 1972. In 1982, the opening of a road-rail bridge across the Amu Darya in the Termez region, which in turn contributed to the strengthening of transport and economic ties with Afghanistan.

In 1980s, the railway system was in recession. As a result of the long inactivity of railway industry, many problems accumulated. In passenger traffic, intercity and inter-country trains often deviated from the schedule. The wagon trade, wagon mishandling and betrayal of state and customer property was rampant. The carriage corps were rusted out because of hot summer and cold winter, the carriage windows were smashed, and they were barred with iron bars resembling a prison. This situation has become a serious problem of great damage to economy and social life of the republic.

The main reason for this situation was an inability to pay attention to the railway industry for many years, an inability to carry out the necessary reforms – due to inefficient of locomotives and wagons repair base.

August 31, 1991 gave the people of Uzbekistan unforgettable moments. It will remain in our memory as a date of the proclamation of independence – the country determines its own fate.

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Independence was not easy to achieve. Our achievements, in all sectors over the years of independence, are related to reforms of the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov. On the eve of independence, the country was in a difficult situation in all directions. In particular, the railway system was going through a period of severe recession. Many problems have accumulated because of prolonged neglect of the railway industry. To create favorable conditions for the development and strengthening of international transport and economic relations, Uzbekistan in the first years of independence took several organizational, legal, and practical measures.

### Conclusion

On the eve of independence in railway system, as in other sectors, several problems arose, and situation became much more tense. If these problems were not immediately resolved, and appropriate measures were not taken, the situation would have been worsened and become more complicated. On February 25, 1991, the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov gathered representatives of the industry. The situation was analyzed, and necessary actions were determined to make a major turnaround for the future.

While measures were being taken to remedy the situation, the former Soviet Union collapsed, and our country gained independence. Disagreements began between the newly independent states, and more complex problems arose in the railway system due to the lack of a legal basis for cooperation.

The situation was exacerbated by the neglect of training local leaders at the time and the departure of a large part of the local engineering staff. In addition,

the repair base was located mainly in Russian regions. Spare parts were produced entirely outside of Uzbekistan and were imported through a “barter” method, which was contrary to our interests.

The main problem was the passage of transport communications through territory of neighboring republic. Due to unjustified delays of freight trains both in the southern and northern directions, the chiefs of railways went to border points and waited for a pass for months. To overcome these problems, the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov put forward a policy to create a training system: modernizing industrial production, existing equipment and technologies, building alternative routes and creating a unified national railway system.

After all, the development of economy of the landlocked country largely depended on the development of railways. It should be noted that the railway system of Uzbekistan paved the way for great progress. Over the past quarter century, based on a well-thought-out, long-term strategy has been done to comprehensively develop the industry. Today, within the framework of the Strategy of Actions for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021, reforms are being carried out in the railway system, as well as in other industries.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said: “First of all, our people should feel the impact of reforms today. To this end, entering a new phase of development, we conducted a critical analysis of our mistakes and shortcomings, as well as objective assessments of our potential capabilities. If we do not do it by ourselves, no one from outside will tell us these mistakes. We are building our own future. We have no right to make mistakes”.

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