



THE LAUNCH OF THE SAMARKAND–ANDIJAN RAILWAY LINE AND ITS DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

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Annotation. This article covers the section of the Central Asian Railway from Samarkand to Andijan, as well as the branches to Tashkent and New Margilan, the main construction materials used for the construction of the railway, the launch of postal passenger trains from Krasnovodsky to Samarkand and from Samarkand to Tashkent and the Andijan and Margilan regions, its importance for the local population, and its place in material life.

Key words: Central Asian Railway, Samarkand-Andijan railway network, railway lines, station, postal communications, rails, telegraph lines, military headquarters, railway line, contract system, military trains, local population, working conditions.

The section of the Central Asian Railway from Samarkand to Andijan, as well as its branches extending to Tashkent and New Margilan, was placed under the disposition of the Head of Construction Works, under the direct supervision of the Directorate of State Railways and with the participation of the local state control department. The railway line designated for the local construction management, with a total length of over 645 versts, was divided into six construction sections; among these, the smallest section spanned 83 versts, while the largest comprised 142 versts. Each section, in turn, was divided into three divisions, with a separate chief assigned to each division.

The construction processes were primarily carried out on a contractual (tender) basis, where contractors were typically limited to performing only one or two types of work. Due to the complexity of the tasks, combining them under a single contractor was not a common practice. The only exception was the first 107-verst section (the entire first division and part of the second division), where excavation works, the construction of artificial structures, track-laying and ballasting, civil engineering construction, and



water supply-related tasks were entrusted to a single contractor. All remaining types of work were independently transferred from one contractor to another across separate fields of operation¹.

Furthermore, information indicates that in accordance with Decree No. 1666 dated November 13, 1902, issued to the Military Governor-General of the Fergana Region, various private individuals' land plots and buildings were purchased during the construction of the Samarkand–Andijan railway section to expand the Kokand station. A portion of these properties was acquired through voluntary agreement, while the remainder, due to the inability to reach an amicable agreement, was obtained through appraisal and mandatory expropriation.

According to the records of the Railway Directorate, 26 such mandatory expropriation cases were carried out for the Kokand station, totaling a value of 23,093 rubles. However, the Directorate lacks precise information regarding the specific individuals to whom the expropriated lands belonged and the legal proceedings conducted regarding these cases. In order to expedite the completion of tasks related to the acquisition of these lands for railway needs and to clarify their legal status, the Head of the Railway Directorate requests that you confirm with an order to the relevant authorities, specifically:

- To whom the properties mandatory expropriated for the expansion of the Kokand station belonged;
- What legal measures were taken regarding these cases.

The Railway Directorate also requests to be informed about these matters subsequently². Additionally, according to information from the Head of Construction Works of the Transcaucasian Railway from Samarkand to Andijan, the following leaders were appointed to the sections of this route:

¹ Самаркандь-Андижанская железная дорога с ветвями на Ташкент и новый Маргилан альбом исполнительных чертежей 1895–1898. – С-Петербург, 1900. – С. 6.

² CSARU (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan), Fund I–19, Inventory 1, File 4611, Folio 433..



- **Section 1 (from verst 1 to verst 101):** College Assessor, Railway Engineer A. A. Yesayev. His place of residence will be in the city of Samarkand.

Section 2 (from verst 101 to verst 201): Titular Councillor, Railway Engineer Ye. V. Khoromansky was appointed. In 1900, based on the calculation of revenues from the operation of the state-owned Central Asian Railway, the Samarkand–Andijan line itself (including the Margilan branch) spanned 504 versts. Furthermore, siding tracks (reserve lines) were also established along the Samarkand–Andijan route (including the Margilan branch), and the total length of these tracks intended for train movement comprised 42 versts³. Another important aspect of train operations along these routes was the existence of separate freight and mail trains. Specifically:

1) A daily pair of mail-passenger trains operated from Krasnovodsk to Samarkand, and from Samarkand to Tashkent and Andijan, 2) including the branch line to Margilan; additionally, the operation of a weekly pair of express trains was planned from Krasnovodsk to Samarkand, and from Samarkand to Tashkent.

Furthermore, the amount of baggage and express cargo to be transported from the Krasnovodsk–Samarkand section amounted to 230,000 poods. Based on the above information, if the average revenue along the Krasnovodsk to Samarkand route over 1 year, namely in 1900, amounted to 678,400 rubles (with an average revenue of 2 rubles 12 kopecks from each passenger), the average receipt from freight trains was 31.01 kopecks per pood of cargo. A total revenue of 71,323 rubles was obtained⁴. Furthermore, regarding the labor conditions during the construction of the Samarkand–Andijan railway, the working conditions in the process of building the Samarkand–Andijan railway were extremely harsh. In the initial stages of construction, the labor of workers belonging mainly to the local population – Sarts, Uzbeks, Tatars, and Kyrgyz – was utilized. However, compared to Russian workers, the local workers had a number of relative disadvantages. In particular, these included a lack of sufficient adaptation to

³ CSARU (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan), Fund I–33, Inventory 2, File 41, Folio 119.

⁴ CSARU (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan), Fund I–33, Inventory 2, File 41, Folio 121.



regular labor processes, a shortage of necessary practical skills, as well as low endurance required to perform complex and responsible railway construction work.

These factors created significant difficulties for the Russian railway company, negatively impacting the ability to organize the construction process in a stable and consistent manner.

Among the newly arrived workers, specialists sent from the central European provinces of Russia — stonemasons, carpenters, mechanics, and sailors — predominated first of all. Mostly naval personnel were recruited from the Persians, while stonemasons (masons) were drawn from the Armenians, Italians, and Greeks.

Despite the harshness of the labor conditions, the working season in this region could usually continue almost uninterrupted throughout the year. It was only between the 11th and 12th months, as well as during the coldest periods of winter, even when the temperature dropped below 5 to 10 degrees of frost, that work had to be temporarily suspended.

Nevertheless, the winter of 1897–1898 differed drastically from usual conditions, experiencing severe cold, heavy gales, and snowstorms. This caused significant delays, especially in the track-laying and ballasting processes. The prolonged winter cold also negatively affected the operation of waterways: the small water streams used for temporary water supply frequently ceased to flow as a result of freezing.

Furthermore, under the influence of strong local winds, an increase in snowdrifts and avalanches was observed in the open steppes, which posed additional difficulties for the construction process. Moreover, regarding the supply and delivery of construction materials, the primary construction materials — rails and fastening components, bridge irons, iron trusses, sleepers, and timber products, as well as secondary materials: roofing iron, nails, window and door fittings, furniture equipment, ironware for stoves, glass, parquet, and other necessary supplies — were delivered in a centralized manner.



The responsibility for preparing and dispatching these materials was placed partly on the State Railway Administration and partly on the Construction Administration. It is noted that the materials were obtained from the following main sources:

Rails — supplied by the Putilov Plant (Putilovsky), the Dnieper Metallurgical Plants of Southern Russia, and Novorossiysk enterprises; the main volume was provided by the Bryansk Plant.

Fasteners — delivered from plants in Saint Petersburg.

Bridge irons — manufactured at the Milevitsky, Huta-Bankovsky, Southern Russia Dnieper, Pastukhov, Gvitka, Shylonsky Islands (O-va Shylonskikh), and Ostrovets plants.

Products of the Satyn, Rudzeniya, and Warsaw enterprises provided the metal structures necessary for bridge construction.

Lumber and other wood products intended for construction materials were prepared and dispatched by specialized sawmills. Due to the fact that certain types of materials were delivered from long distances via railway, the supply process was occasionally delayed under the influence of transport conditions and weather factors⁵.

"With the completion of the construction of the Samarkand–Andijan section and the Murghab branch, the number of soldiers in the railway service reached 1,678 people. They performed the tasks that required the highest level of qualification in the construction and ensured the exploitation (operation) of individual sections as they were completed"⁶.

In 1899, major riots took place along the Samarkand–Andijan section. The contractor refused to pay the workers the money earned during the season and, fearing a mass strike, asked the government for assistance. The military governor of Samarkand dispatched a police detachment, but justly noted that "this measure cannot stop the starving people." The prolonged and fruitless struggle broke the people's will, and they

⁵ Самаркандь-Андижанская железная дорога с ветвями на Ташкент и новый Маргилан альбом исполнительных чертежей 1895–1898... – С. 7.

⁶ Кунавина Г. С. Формирование железнодорожного пролетариата в Туркестане (1881–1914 гг.). – Москва, С. 26.



sent a petition to the Tsar. In it, stating that after long wanderings on the construction site, "enduring heat, cold, hunger, and various privations," they had been sitting "unemployed for three months waiting for their settlement," the workers pleaded for help to "prevent them from dying of starvation." The telegram was sent on behalf of 104 employees and several hundred unskilled laborers. However, as the documents testify, even after this, the prolonged negotiations regarding the unpaid money did not cease⁷. These insights reveal several important aspects of the socio-economic situation of that period:

Negative consequences of the contracting system: Although the state allocated funds for the railway construction, the intermediary contractors (employers) often misappropriated the funds or delayed paying the workers;

– the condition of the workers: The workers were forced to struggle not only against natural hardships (heat, cold) but also against systemic injustice and hunger;

– the attitude of the local administration: As can be seen from the words of the military governor of Samarkand, the local government understood the situation, yet realized that the problem could not be solved through the use of force;

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5. CSARU (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan), Fund I–33, Inventory 2, File 41, Folio 119.

6. CSARU (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan), Fund I–33, Inventory 2, File 41, Folio 120.

⁷ Кунавина Г. С. Формирование железнодорожного пролетариата в Туркестане... – С. 27.



7. CSARU (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan), Fund I–33, Inventory 2, File 41, Folio 121.
8. CSARU (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan), Fund I–19, Inventory 1, File 4611, Folio 433.