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Role of Astrakhan Governor N. N. Tevyashev in the Development of Transport Infrastructure that Connected the European part of Russia with Iran, the Trans-Caspian Region and the South Caucasus at the end of the 19th century

Abstract

The article explores the work of Astrakhan Governor N. N. Tevyashev in developing transport infrastructure in the Astrakhan Governorate in the late 19th century. The research is based on the published minutes of the meeting of the Commission for the Discussion of Measures to Improve Shipping Conditions at the Mouths of the Volga in which N. N. Tevyashev participated in 1893. The study is also supported with archival documents – reports and submissions sent by the Astrakhan Governor to central agencies in 1895 based on decisions made by the Astrakhan Exchange Committee and the City Duma on the need to build the Volga–Caspian Canal and the Astrakhan Railway. This second group of sources is housed in the fund "Departments of Merchant Shipping and Commercial Ports of the Ministry of Trade and Industry" (F. 95) of the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA) and is being introduced into scholarly circulation for the first time. The methodological basis of the study is a historical-anthropological approach, transforming history into a science of man and his contribution to the development of human society, to the development of the transport infrastructure of the Astrakhan Governorate in this case. The study's novelty lies in its focus on the work of N. N. Tevyashev, a pioneer in the idea of large-scale infrastructure development of the Astrakhan Governorate as a logistics hub linking Russia's central industrial region with Iran, the Trans-Caspian region, and the South Caucasus. In his speeches and documents submitted to central government agencies N. N. Tevyashev explained in details the need for the rapid construction of both a deep-water canal connecting the Caspian Sea with the port of Astrakhan and a railway line connecting the city with the rest of the Russian Empire. He also skillfully determined the route along which the railway line should be built taking into account the economic development of the region and demographic indicators. The author concludes that N. N. Tevyashev made a significant contribution to the development of transport infrastructure in the Astrakhan Governorate during the period of Russia's first industrialization. Although the projects' implementation was significantly delayed and initial results were not achieved until the turn of the first two decades of the 20th century, even after his death, his efforts proved instrumental in giving initial impetus to the constructive processes that transformed the Astrakhan Governorate into a developed logistics hub.

Keywords

Volga Railway, Astrakhan branch of the Ryazan-Ural Railway, economic history, Caspian-Volga trade route, southern frontier, Volga-Caspian transit route, Russian-Iranian cross-border area, history of transport communications.

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