

THE INTRODUCTION OF RUSSIAN BANKS AND INDUSTRY INTO THE TURKESTAN REGION AT THE END OF THE 19TH AND BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY IN THE MEMOIRS OF IMPERIAL HISTORIANS

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MAQOLA
MALUMOTI

ANNOTATSIYA:

MAQOLA TARIXI:

Received: 23.06.2025

Revised: 24.06.2025

Accepted: 25.06.2025

KALIT SO'ZLAR:

The subject of discussion for the vast majority of authors in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was the agrarian situation in the region, in particular the state of cotton production and the importance of this industry for Russian entrepreneurs. The works raised the issue of financing cotton production in the region, as harvesting and processing the plantations cost a considerable amount of money.

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In this regard, the primary focus in the source studies of that period was on the activities of trading houses and firms that issued small loans. According to the observations of Central Asian researcher V.I. Masalsky, partnerships, firms, and trading houses provided loans to local cotton growers under certain conditions and on the basis of contracts. According to the author, cheap credit provided to planters could contribute to the further development of cotton growing in Central Asia [1; 80].

A. Krivoshein notes that in order to expand cotton cultivation, it is necessary to increase the working capital of the local population. He emphasises that cotton is an expensive and labour-intensive crop. A simple planter, sowing one dessiatine of cotton, must spend 70 to 80 roubles if he and his family are involved in the work. If workers are hired, the costs increase to an average of 150 roubles, since the owner is obliged to provide them with food

from the beginning of sowing until the harvest. Thus, more than 70 roubles must be spent on just one dessiatine of sowing [2;45].

A. Krivoshein rightly mentions the fact that cotton cultivation required serious costs and efforts, and perhaps these costs were too high for a simple dekhkan. As can be seen from the author's calculations, even a small plot of land required a considerable amount of money. This confirms that it is impossible to develop cotton farming without additional capital. As a result, such a situation could lead to economic difficulties in the region.

S. Gulishambarov's work also notes that loans were issued by both banks and large industrial enterprises. This process contributed to the widespread development of cotton farming in the region [3; 48.]. At the same time, another author, V. Kuznetsov, mentions credit notes in such a way that loans were mainly taken out by those who were capital traders and did business with Russia, while the rouble was worth a rouble [4; 301].

The importance of cheap credit in the formation of a new culture in the region was emphasised by another expert on the cotton industry, S. Poniatowski. According to him, the Ministry of Agriculture and State Property was interested in promoting small loans to the people. This interest was justified by the fact that cheap credit could provide cheap working capital for cotton growing in the Turkestan region [5; 311].

In his article, P. Andreevich put forward a similar idea that the main purpose of small-scale lending was to support the local population. Since cotton farming in the region was heavily dependent on private capitalists who charged extremely high interest rates on loans, the idea arose to provide assistance to local volost and rural cash registers through state and private commercial banks, as well as interested Moscow firms [6;119].

Overall, the works of authors from the imperial period focus primarily on the achievements that the Russian Empire brought to the Turkestan region. Researchers emphasise the development of trade, industry, financial institutions and infrastructure, but make virtually no mention of measures taken in the interests of the local population. The image of the people is usually portrayed as 'ignorant' and passive, incapable of independent development without outside intervention.

At the same time, although some sources mention the forms of economic life that existed in the region before the conquest, this information remains fragmentary and is not properly analysed. Thus, the colonial reality in these sources is presented one-sidedly, from an imperial perspective that does not take into account local experience and potential.

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