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Annotation. This article describes the main purpose of fairs organized in Tashkent in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The activity of the fair in the first was stated its material support, the activity of fairs in later periods, its development, decline and positive influence on fairs as a result of railway penetration into Central Asia. The attitude of Russian authorities to fairs and its support

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The economic policy implemented in the territory of the Turkestan Governor-Generalship in the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th century was aimed at the gradual integration of the region into the unified economic system of the Russian Empire. In this process, the reorganization of trade infrastructure—particularly the introduction of fair trade (yarmarka)—emerged as an important strategic task for centralizing urban economic life. The establishment of fair trade in the city of Tashkent reflects the transition from a traditional Eastern bazaar system to a new model of trade under administrative control, thereby providing an opportunity to study the practical mechanisms of colonial economic policy. In this regard, the study of this issue necessitates a scholarly analysis of the economic modernization of Turkestan, the transformation of urban хозяйство, and the evolution of trade institutions. The activities of the Tashkent fair were closely connected not only with the development of trade relations, but also with the formation of transport infrastructure, financial institutions, the banking and credit system, and export-oriented economic ties. Through the organization and subsequent transformation of fair trade, it is possible to identify the processes by which Turkestan's economy was incorporated into the imperial market system, the transformation of the local economic structure, and the mechanisms of the introduction of capitalist relations. Therefore, a comprehensive economic-historical analysis of the history of the Tashkent fair holds significant scholarly importance for a deeper understanding of issues related to urban economic development and market integration in modern historiography.

The organization of fair trade in Tashkent occupied an important place in the economic policy of the Turkestan Governor-Generalship. One of the main tasks of the regional administration was the development of trade relations, with a particular focus on transforming Tashkent into a regional trade center. According to a decree of the Governor-General, a decision was adopted by the city administration on May 16, 1868, to close the traditional market in the old city starting from May 19 and to establish two new fairs in the European part of the city. This decision was aimed at restructuring the urban trade system and placing it under administrative control. In 1869, a Fair Committee was established under the chairmanship of Colonel A.I. Glukhovsky. From that time, significant funds began to be allocated from the state treasury for the construction of fair infrastructure. The fair rows, administrative management, police services, and other expenses were regularly financed. For example, approximately 14,500 rubles were spent annually on maintaining the Fair Committee. Between 1870 and 1879, a total of 509,793 rubles and 40 kopecks were allocated by the state for the construction and maintenance of the fair, distributed as follows:

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- maintenance of the fair administration – 134,558 rubles;
- purchase of land for the fair – 33,677 rubles;
- construction of fair buildings – 219,673 rubles;
- construction of wooden bridges – 62,450 rubles;
- repair works – 25,694 rubles;
- other expenses – 33,738 rubles.

In order to stimulate trade, Governor-General K.P. von Kaufman exempted local and foreign merchants from zakat payments during the fair period. As a result, the state treasury lost approximately 100,000 rubles in revenue in 1871–1872 alone. A large land area, formerly known as “Ming Uryk,” was allocated for the fair. Later, warehouses, grain markets, and other trade facilities were constructed there. The total area of the fair exceeded 417 desyatinas. Initially, it was planned to hold fairs twice a year—in spring and autumn—but due to the absence of merchants at the spring fair, only the autumn fair was retained. Due to low trade activity, in 1870 there was even an attempt to compel local merchants to bring goods to the fair; however, this measure also failed to produce the expected results. Although official reports estimated the fair’s turnover in millions of rubles, in practice its economic efficiency remained low. For instance, state revenues from fair buildings averaged only 2,258 rubles annually during the first four years, and amounted to just 1,717 rubles in 1873. In 1875, zakat was abolished and replaced by fees for trade certificates. However, in an effort to reduce merchants’ dissatisfaction, it was proposed to exempt fair participants from taxes, but this was deemed contrary to the law by state financial authorities. Consequently, on August 4, 1876, K.P. von Kaufman abolished the practice of compulsory participation in the fair. An audit conducted in 1876 revealed financial abuses within the fair’s operations. As a result, credit allocations were suspended, the committee was reduced, and parts of the fair land began to be sold to private individuals. Some buildings were converted into military warehouses or leased out. Ultimately, the fair system was deemed inefficient, and on April 1, 1879, the Fair Committee was officially dissolved. Only a small supervisory staff was retained. Later, in 1888, at the initiative of Governor-General N.O. Rosenbach, a significant portion of the former fair territory was transferred to the administration of the city of Tashkent. According to the Supreme decree of December 19, 1888, the city received more than 184 desyatinas of land along with its facilities. The Tashkent fair was established as an administrative-economic project aimed at integrating the economy of Turkestan into the all-imperial market system of the Russian Empire. However, the artificially introduced fair model, implemented within a local economic environment dominated by traditional market relations, failed to produce the expected economic results and ceased its operations by the late 1870s. In this study, the period of the 1880s–1890s, conditionally defined as the second stage, represents one of the most economically active phases in the history of the Tashkent fair. During this period, the growth of fair activity was accompanied not only by an increase in scale, but also by a transformation in the nature of trade relations, structural specialization of commodity turnover, and expansion of regional economic ties. As a result, the Tashkent fair moved beyond the internal market framework of Turkestan and became a strategic trade center linking the region with the economic space of the Russian Empire. Archival documents and municipal reports indicate a sharp increase in the number of participants in fair trade by the 1880s. The full occupancy of торговые площади, the increase in temporary stalls, and the intensification of caravan movement all demonstrate the growing economic importance of the fair. For example, “the number of merchants arriving at the Tashkent fair from the internal provinces of Russia and neighboring regions of the territory is increasing year by year.” This process indicates the

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strengthening of the fair's role in interregional trade turnover. The composition of fair participants also changed qualitatively in the 1880s. Alongside local merchants, traders from central and industrial губернии of Russia became widely involved. The participation of торговые circles from Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, Samara, and Orenburg demonstrates the gradual integration of the Turkestan market into the all-imperial economic system. This is also reflected in archival sources stating that "the influx of Russian merchants contributes to the expansion of trade turnover and the strengthening of the region's economic ties with the all-Russian market." Thus, the fair served as a key intermediary between the industrial centers of Russia and the raw material base of Turkestan. The commodity structure of trade at the Tashkent fair in the 1880s–1890s acquired a clear economic specialization. Analysis of archival statistical data allows for a conditional classification of goods turnover into the following groups:

Type of goods	Share (%)	Economic function
Cotton and raw cotton	45–50%	Export product
Leather and leather goods	12–15%	Handicraft trade
Silk and textile raw materials	8–10%	Interregional trade
Grain and food products	10–12%	Domestic market
Russian manufactured goods	15–20%	Imported industrial products

At this stage, the main feature of economic specialization was the dominant role of cotton trade. The demand of the Russian textile industry for raw materials stimulated the rapid development of cotton cultivation in Turkestan and turned the Tashkent fair into a central hub of export trade. By 1880, the Tashkent fair had become a stable source of revenue for the city's financial system. Archival documents show that revenues generated by the fair were formed through several economic mechanisms, mainly related to fees for the use of trade infrastructure. The economic policy of the Russian Empire toward Turkestan aimed at gradually incorporating the region into the imperial economic space, with the development of transport infrastructure serving as a key practical instrument. In this regard, the arrival of the Trans-Caspian railway to Tashkent in 1888 marked a qualitatively new stage in the region's economic life. According to periodical press reports, the establishment of railway connections significantly increased trade turnover in Tashkent and accelerated the delivery of goods from the internal provinces of the empire. This indicates the strengthening of the city's role as a regional trade center. Before the construction of the railway, caravan trade routes to Bukhara, Kokand, and Kashgar constituted the main form of товарооборот, with transportation often taking several months. The introduction of the new transport system reduced this time to a matter of days, significantly intensifying trade relations. In the 1890s, the steady growth in freight transport via railway became a decisive factor in transforming the economic functions of the Tashkent fair. Statistical data show that freight volumes increased rapidly: from approximately 1.8 million poods in 1890 to 3.2 million poods in 1895, representing a growth of about 78%, and exceeding 4 million poods by 1898—an overall increase of approximately 120% compared to 1890. This dynamic confirms that the introduction of railway transport not only expanded the geographical scope of trade relations but also directly influenced the economic nature of fair trade. As commodity flows became regular, trade activity was no longer confined to seasonal fairs but evolved into a year-round system. Thus, the Tashkent fair gradually transformed from a retail market into an institution of wholesale distribution and contractual trade relations. Periodical press materials emphasize that the fair was no longer a random marketplace but was evolving into a center for wholesale trade agreements.

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The regular supply of factory-produced goods from industrial centers such as Moscow, Nizhny Novgorod, Kazan, and Orenburg via railway stimulated the development of urban trade infrastructure. Alongside temporary stalls, permanent warehouses, wholesale shops, and storage facilities began to emerge. Municipal reports indicate that the increase in trade spaces and warehouses during the 1895 fair led to a rise in city revenues, confirming the fair's growing role as a key component of the urban financial system.

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