

Apollon Konstantinovich Krivoshein: the last Railway Minister of the Russian Empire in the Era of Emperor Alexander III

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The aim of the work is the analysis of the professional activity of Apollon Konstantinovich Krivoshein as the Railway Minister of the Russian Empire. The mentioned qualities, which were acquired and developed by A. K. Krivoshein during his career progress towards the post of Minister, allowed him to do many things on the position of Minister. Among his main initiatives and achievements, the following should be noted: beginning and a successful development of an extremely complex construction of the Great Siberian Railway; development of infrastructure of the Institute of Railway Engineers; opening of two railway technical colleges – in Yekaterinoslav and Krasnoyarsk. The career advance of A. K. Krivoshein's was promoted not only by his personal abilities but also by the family ties and intrigues at the court of Emperor Alexander III. And conversely, during the reign of Nicholas II, A. K. Krivoshein had already become a hostage of circumstances and court intrigues that caused his resignation.

[A. K. Krivoshein; Railway Minister of the Russian Empire; Railway Transport; Trans-Siberian Railway; S. Yu. Witte; Paper Factory]

Introduction

Alexander III (1845–1894), the penultimate emperor of the Russian Empire, ascended the throne in 1881 after his father, a famous liberal and reformer Alexander II, was assassinated by members of the revolutionary political organization “Narodnaya Volya”.³ In general, Alexander III had been preparing for military service, but after the death of his older brother Nicholas in 1865, he became the heir to the throne. His ascension to the

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³ J. ETTY, Alexander III, Tsar of Russia 1881–1889, in: *History Review*, 60, 2008, pp. 1–5.

throne was unexpected and steeped in blood of his father, which caused a tough response in society and inhibited the reforms initiated by Alexander II. Certainly, there were some processes that could not be stopped, but now they all occurred under stabilization of social and political life, strengthening of autocracy and power of aristocracy.

The reign of Alexander III is interesting to us because at that period ministers of Railways of the Russian Empire were changed very intensively.⁴ They all sought to develop the country's transport system. In some matters they succeeded. During the 80's of the 19th century the government implemented a number of progressive reforms: abolition of poll tax; introduction of mandatory redemption; reduction of redemption payments. A special role in implementing those reforms was played by Nikolai Khristianovich Bunge, Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers.⁵ With the appointment of Dmitry Tolstoy as the Minister of Internal Affairs, the period of open reaction began. In the late 80's – early 90's of the 19th century some reactionary reforms were carried out – the institution of zemstvo (land) captains was introduced as well as zemstvo and city charters were revised.⁶

The government of Alexander III hoped that rail transport would be developed due to cost cutting and meeting the growing demand for passenger and freight transportation. In addition, a stable and high-quality operation of rail transport was supposed to contribute to strengthening of the single economic space of the country and ensuring its security. A due attention was paid to solving the problems related to construction of previously planned railways, which could positively affect the development of certain regions of the Russian Empire and securely strengthen its borders. In such conditions, the transport industry and, particularly, railway transport were actively developing.

The Adjutant-General Konstantin Nikolayevich Posyet resigned as the Minister of Railways at the end of 1888 and on November 7 of the same year, the Lieutenant General Herman Yegorovich Paucker, engineer and a member of the Military Council of the Russian Empire, was appointed

⁴ O. PYLYPCHUK – O. STRELKO, Historical Analysis of the Impact of S. Yu. Witte for the Development of Rail Transport in the Russian Empire, in: *History of Science and Technology*, 8, 2 (13), 2018, pp. 353–367, [https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2018-8-2\(13\)-353-367](https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2018-8-2(13)-353-367) [2021-02-21].

⁵ F. TARANOVSKIJ – R. McINERNY, *Reform in Modern Russian History: Progress or Cycle?*, Cambridge 1995, p. 88.

⁶ ETTY, pp. 1–5.

to that position.⁷ G. Ye. Paucker occupied that post truly short time. At the beginning of the next year, on March 30, 1889, he died. On April 9 of the same year, the State Secretary Adolf Yakovlevich von Hiubbenet was appointed as the Minister of Railways.⁸

During the activity of Adolf Yakovlevitsch von Hiubbenet, the final decision was made regarding the construction of the Great Siberian Railway. On February 12, 1891, the Committee of Ministers studied in detail the construction of that railway from Vladivostok to Grafskaya Station (383 versts).⁹ In addition, the Committee of Ministers unanimously voted for the urgent need in the construction of a direct Trans-Siberian Railway main line.

A. Ya. von Hiubbenet also did not stay long on the post of the Railway Minister. On January 17, 1892, he was dismissed because of illness and became a member of the State Council of the Russian Empire.¹⁰ And on February 13, 1892, the Ministry was headed by the acting State Councillor, Sergei Yuliyevich Witte. But he also did not stay long in that position since he was appointed as the Minister of Finance.

On August 30, 1892, as the Minister of Railways Apollon Krivoshein (1833–1902), Master of the Royal Court, was appointed, who stayed at the post for more than 2 years, until December 16, 1894. He became the 15th Minister of Railways of the Russian Empire and the last Minister of Tsarist Russia, appointed by Emperor Alexander III.

As remembered by Sergei Yu. Witte, Emperor Alexander III was interested whom Witte could recommend to the post of the Minister of Railways. S. Yu. Witte replied that at that time there was no one he could recommend. And when the emperor asked: “*What do you think if I appoint Krivoshein? He is highly recommended by the Minister of Internal Affairs Durnovo.*” S. Yu. Witte replied that he was truly little acquainted with Krivoshein, but he knew him as highly intelligent and smart person.¹¹

⁷ Activities of the Ministry of Railways in the period 1889–1894, in: *A Brief Outline of the Development and Activities of the Ministry of Railways over a hundred Years of its Existence (1798–1898)*, Saint Petersburg 1898, p. 181.

⁸ E. ANDREEVA et al., *The Administrative Elite of the Russian Empire. History of Ministries. 1802–1917*, Saint Petersburg 2008, p. 238.

⁹ Activities of the Ministry of Railways in the period 1889–1894, p. 182.

¹⁰ O. PYLYPCHUK – O. STRELKO, The thirteenth Minister of Railways of the Russian Empire Hiubbenet Adolf Yakovych (1831–1901), in: *History of Science and Technology*, 8, 1 (12), 2018, pp. 39–52, [https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2018-8-1\(12\)-39-52](https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2018-8-1(12)-39-52) [2021-02-21].

¹¹ S. WITTE, *Count. Memories. Memories. Childhood. Reign of Alexander II and Alexander III. (1849–1894)*, Berlin 1923, p. 263.

The work continues a series of articles by different authors, devoted to the activities of ministers of railways of the Russian Empire.¹² In preparation of the article, the methods of processing the material were used, which are widely used in the study of individual personalities.¹³ During the preparation of the article, chronological, comparative methods of historical knowledge, classification, and systematization of historical sources and bibliographic material were used. The use of these methods and approaches to scientific research allowed to retrace the way of life and professional activity of A. K. Krivoshein systematically and critically evaluate the sources used, highlight the main points in the current state of studying the subject and the results of predecessors, specify the most promising directions of research, give a description of the previous works on this issue and clearly distinguish issues that have not yet been resolved. The appointment of A. K. Krivoshein to the post of the Minister of Railways was a surprise to many. According to most memoirs covering the reasons for his appointment, his activity on the Minister's post and a scandalous resignation in December 1894, A. K. Krivoshein acted as a risky businessman, swindler, and bribe-taker.¹⁴ Such an opinion was greatly influenced by the memoirs of S. Yu. Witte. Based on the materials

¹² PYLYPCHUK – STRELKO, The thirteenth Minister of Railways, pp. 39–52; PYLYPCHUK – STRELKO, Historical Analysis of the Impact, pp. 353–367; O. PYLYPCHUK – O. STRELKO, Work in the Interests of Rail Transport: the Second Minister of Railways of the Russian Empire – Volodymyr Bobrynsky (1869–1871), in: *History of Science and Technology*, 9, 1 (14), 2019, pp. 19–32, [https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2019-9-1\(14\)-19-32](https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2019-9-1(14)-19-32) [2021-02-21]; O. PYLYPCHUK – O. STRELKO, Count A. P. Bobrinsky (1826–1894), the Third Minister-Reformer of Railway Management in the Russian Empire, in: *Analele Universităţii din Craiova. Istorie*, XXV, 1 (37), 2020, pp. 7–19, http://www.istoriecraiova.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020_1_ANALE.pdf [2021-02-21].

¹³ H. DEFORZH, Academician Pavlova Mariia Vasylivna (1854–1938): Life and Scientific Work, in: *History of Science and Technology*, 10, 1 (16), 2020, pp. 100–109, [https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2020-10-1\(16\)-100-109](https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2020-10-1(16)-100-109) [2021-02-21]; R. FANDO, Russian Women at the Beginning of Human Genetics, in: *History of Science and Technology*, 10, 1 (16), 2020, pp. 110–126, [https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2020-10-1\(16\)-110-126](https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2020-10-1(16)-110-126) [2021-02-21]; L. SOLOVIOVA – S. HURINCHUK – Y. BERDNYCHENKO – O. STRELKO, Professor V. Ye. Timonov – the Formation of the Scientific Worldview, in: *History of Science and Technology*, 10, 2, 2020, pp. 368–382, <https://doi.org/10.32703/2415-7422-2020-10-2-368-382> [2021-02-21].

¹⁴ A. BOGDANOVICH, *Last Three Autocrats*, Moscow 2017, p. 198; I. KOLYSHKO, *The Great Collapse: Memories*, Saint Petersburg 2009, p. 68; WITTE, p. 262; N. ZENZINOV, Krivoshein Apollon Konstantinovich, in: *Ministers and People's Commissars of Railways*, A. BOGDANOVICH et al. (eds.), Moscow 1995, pp. 82–83.

presented in his memoirs, many researchers picked up those talking points. In addition, they were supported in the memoirs of other contemporaries – subordinates of A. K. Krivoshein who could be offended by him. The most unbiased and detailed work, where the abovementioned events and preconditions for their occurrence are considered, is the article by Dmitry Andreev.¹⁵ The author shows the milestones of his activity at different governmental positions and analyzes the rumours spread by the contemporaries and the true facts that testified to the “corruption” of Krivoshein. A particular attention is paid to the circumstances around the Minister’s resignation from his post at the end of 1894: the first personnel decision of the new Emperor Nicholas II.

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Prior to Appointment as the Railway Minister of the Russian Empire

Apollon Krivoshein was born on December 19, 1833 in Nikolayev (at that time the city of the Kherson Governorate). His father, Konstantin Fyodorovich Krivoshein (1789–1843), was a naval officer, a bearer of the old noble family of the Krivoshein, which descended from the grandfather, Lieutenant Colonel Fyodor Zakharovich Krivosheya, who served with distinction for many years in the troops of A. V. Suvorov.¹⁶ According to military traditions of that time, the family saw a young Apollon on the military path of life. After finishing the secondary school in Nikolayev, he was sent to study at the prestigious Richelieu Lyceum in Odessa.¹⁷ Having successfully completed his studies at the Lyceum, he entered the Michael School of Artillery, from which he successfully graduated in 1855 and obtained the rank of warrant officer.

For some time, Apollon Krivoshein served in various artillery units until he was attached to the Michael’s Military Artillery Academy in St. Petersburg. In 1858, A. Krivoshein retired from military service. And only three years later he resumed the service, but already in the civil field. In 1862, A. Krivoshein got a job at the Ministry of Public Education. At that job, at his 30th birthday he received the rank of a titular councillor

¹⁵ D. ANDREEV, Krivoshein’s Case of (1894): Rise and Fall of Krechinsky from Rostov, in: *Bulletin of the Moscow University. Series 8. History*, 2, 2013, pp. 15–32.

¹⁶ V. FEDORCHENKO, *Imperial House: Prominent High Officials, in Two Volumes, Vol. 2*, Krasnoyarsk 2000, p. 590.

¹⁷ ANDREEVA et al., p. 240.

(corresponding to the military rank of captain). In 1866, Apollon Krivoshein again retired from the state service and that time for five years. In 1871, he returned to the service, but already in the field of local self-government in the Yekaterinoslav Governorate. By that time, his carrier path looked like that: Marshal of Nobility in the Rostov uyezd of the Yekaterinoslav Governorate (1871–1874); Honorary Justice of the Peace in the same uyezd (1872–1883); then Deputy Mayor of Rostov; *glasny* (elected member of local government) of the Zemstvo Assembly in the Rostov uyezd (1872–1881); *glasny* of the Rostov City Council (1875–1879); *glasny* of the Zemstvo Assembly in the Yekaterinoslav Governorate (1872–1881); Mayor of Rostov (1874–1878).¹⁸

There is little information covering the activities of A. K. Krivoshein in that period, but in the available literature he is shown as a multifaceted and enterprising person. It is mainly remembered about his initiative in the construction and administrative fields.

For example, on January 20, 1873, A. K. Krivoshein, as Marshal of Nobility, presided over the joint meeting of the Rostov City Council and Zemstvo Assembly.¹⁹ At that meeting, the elections of honorary trustees of the Petrovsk Non-classical Secondary School were held. A. K. Krivoshein was elected a member of the trusteeship of this educational institution on behalf of Zemstvo. On February 27, 1874, an emergency meeting of the Rostov City Council was called, at which it was decided to petition for the establishment of governorate institutions of the new governorate in Rostov. To progress with that issue, a special deputation was formed, which included A. K. Krivoshein.²⁰ In 1874, A. Krivoshein changed A. M. Batashev as the Mayor of Rostov.²¹ From May 23, 1874 to May 20, 1878 A. K. Krivoshein worked as the Mayor of Rostov.²² Under A. K. Krivoshein, on June 30, 1875 the charter of the Rostov Music Society was approved.²³ In the same 1875, in the city the local Board of the Society of Ship Accidents Assistance began to act, and A. K. Krivoshein became

¹⁸ *Krivoshein Apollon Konstantinovich*, <http://chel-portal.ru/?site=encyclopedia&t=Krivoshein&id=9161> [2021–02–21].

¹⁹ G. CHALKHUSHYAN, *History of the City of Rostov-on-Don*, Rostov-on-Don 1896, p. 187.

²⁰ I. KUZNETSOV, *The Past of Rostov: (Sketches on the History of Rostov-on-Don)*, Rostov-on-Don 1897, p. 244.

²¹ A. ILYIN, *History of the City of Rostov-on-Don. Sketch with Drawings in the Text*, Rostov-on-Don 1909, p. 85.

²² KUZNETSOV, p. 236.

²³ CHALKHUSHYAN, p. 198.

a member of the Board.²⁴ In 1876, the State Councillor A. K. Krivoshein in the status of Mayor participated in the meeting of the commission, which considered the draft changes in the administrative and territorial subordination of the Rostov uyezd and Taganrog town government.²⁵ Holding the position of Chairman of the Trade and Manufactories Committee in addition to the position of Mayor, A. K. Krivoshein stated that the existing administrative and territorial structure had nowhere near hindering a “*good run of the local trade*”. The participants of the meeting took a decision to preserve the “status quo”.

It was during the period of A. K. Krivoshein’s work on the post of Mayor in 1877, when in the Rostov City Council the issue of loaning money for the construction of a building for the City Hospital was raised and began to be actively discussed.²⁶ At that time, the City Hospital had been long time located in rented buildings. However, it was later decided to attract voluntary donations for the construction and the main building of the City Hospital was laid only in 1890. On January 12, 1877, on behalf of Mayor, Apollon Konstantinovich submitted a draft charter of the Rostov Technical College to the Rostov City Council, which, as he stated, was required by Rostov.²⁷ According to his words, Rostov had a “*brilliant start to the future important centre of works and factory activity*” and owned a “*significantly immense*” merchant fleet. In the Mayor’s opinion, the Rostov Technical College was supposed to satisfy the need of the city in “*specialists in different fields of technical and real knowledge*”. However, despite that the report by A. K. Krivoshein was accepted by the City Council, it was failed to find such a College. Instead, a Technical Railway College was found.²⁸ On the proposal of A. K. Krivoshein, in Rostov on the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the reign of Alexander II in 1880, Alexander Park was created, which “[...] was extended from Bolshoy Avenue in the field, along one versta from Stepovaya Street”.²⁹

Later, in 1881, Krivoshein received a rank of acting State Councillor.³⁰

²⁴ Ibid., p. 206.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 159–161.

²⁶ I. TER-ABRAMIAN, *All Rostov-on-Don for the Year 1897. Calendar Address, Commercial and Industrial Reference Book*, Rostov 1897, pp. 114–115.

²⁷ CHALKHUSHYAN, pp. 188–189.

²⁸ ILYIN, p. 85.

²⁹ V. SIDOROV, *Encyclopedia of Old Rostov and Nakhichevan-on-Don. In 6 Volumes, Vol. 1*, Rostov-on-Don 1995, p. 39.

³⁰ ANDREEVA et al., p. 240.

This civilian rank, which had the IV grade according to the Table of Ranks of the Russian Empire, granted privileges of hereditary nobility and was equivalent to the military rank of Major General. Coat of Arms of State Councillor Apollon Krivoshein from the Part 13 of the General Armorial with Noble Families of All-Russian Empire see Figure 1. In May 1884, A. Krivoshein resigned from his positions in Rostov-on-Don and moved to St. Petersburg, where he got a job at the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 1887, Apollon Krivoshein became a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the Provisional Administration of State Railways. At the new place he got himself acquainted with the problems and needs of national railway transport. From that time and until 1892,



Figure 1 – A. K. Krivoshein, Minister of Railways of the Russian Empire.³¹

³¹ Activities of the Ministry of Railways in the period 1889–1894, p.183.

A. Krivoshein participated in the meetings of various committees and commissions, which were engaged in the elaboration of legislative acts regulating the operation of railway transport. In fact, at that period, he acquired useful ties to the governmental and court societies. From May 1889, A. Krivoshein became a member of the Ministry of Railways in the Tariff Affairs Council of the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Empire.

The Analysis of the Professional Activity of Apollon Krivoshein as the Railway Minister of the Russian Empire

On August 30, 1892, A. K. Krivoshein (see Figure 1) was appointed as Minister of Railways. Previously, he had also worked as a member of the Special Council during a year to find out what measures had to be taken to eliminate the detention of cars with “bread” cargoes on the railways of the empire.

As Minister of Railways, A. K. Krivoshein preserved the management of the Department unchanged (see Figure 2). Lieutenant-General M. P. Petrov remained his assistant (deputy), V. V. Salov and M. O. Mikhnevich remained the members of the Council of the Ministry of Railways, V. S. Sumarokov remained the Director of the Department of Railways.



Figure 2 – A. K. Krivoshein, Minister of Railways of the Russian Empire (sitting in the centre of the photo) with the ministry staff.³²

³² N. NILSKY, *Minister of Railways of the Russian Empire A. K. Krivoshein with the Ministry Workers*, <https://nilsky-nikolay.livejournal.com/478452.html> [2021-02-21].

The most well-known and significant project on a nation-wide level, the development and implementation of which was undertaken by A. K. Krivoshein on the post of the Minister of Railways, was the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway (Great Siberian Railway).

The final decision on the construction of the Great Siberian Railway was approved by the highest rescript of Alexander III to the cesarevich Nikolai Aleksandrovich on March 17 (29), 1891. *“Now I am ordering to start the construction of the direct railway across the whole Siberia that should connect the abundant gifts of nature of the Siberian regions with the network of internal communications.”*³³

Emperor Alexander III, who signed the rescript, understood the fact that failures in the Crimean War and a forced sale of Alaska showed that the level of communications development in the Russian Empire came into a sharp contradiction with the sizes of its territory. Maintaining the integrity of the empire depended on the economic development and settlement of Siberia. Before the Trans-Siberian Railway had been built, resettled peasants reached the Primorye in three years (that period included necessary stops for sowing and harvesting on the intermediate territories). Siberia until the second half of the 19th century remained a rich but neglected region. To ensure the development of the region, a plan was accepted, which envisaged the construction and connection of 6 major sections of the Railway from Chelyabinsk to Vladivostok with a total length of about 7 thousand km. The first stage included designing and construction of the West Siberian section from Chelyabinsk to Ob (1418 km), the Mid-Siberian section from Ob to Irkutsk (1871 km) and the South-Ussuri section from Vladivostok to Grafskaya station (408 km). The second stage included the construction of railroad from Mysovoe station on the eastern coast of Baikal to Stretensk on the Shilko River (1104 km) and the North-Ussuri section from Grafskaya station to Khabarovsk (361 km). And in the last turn, the hardest-to-cross Circum-Baikal road from Baikal station at the head of the Angara River to Mysovoye station (261 km) and the equally difficult Amur road from Stretensk to Khabarovsk had to be built (2130 km).³⁴

³³ V. SHUVALOV, Iron belt of Russia, in: *Expert*, 30–31 (764), last modified August 1, 2011, <https://expert.ru/expert/2011/30/zheleznyj-poyas-rossii/> [2021-02-21].

³⁴ *Trans-Siberian Railway main line. History of construction*, http://www.rzd-expo.ru/history/transsib_history_of_creation/ [2021-02-21].

It was generally accepted that namely from the official celebrations on the occasion of laying the first rail of the Ussuri Railroad on May 19, 1891, the construction of the Great Siberian Railway began, although already in March 1891, the construction of the Mias-Chelyabinsk section began.³⁵ All the construction works were supervised by the Siberian Railway Construction Board, the Engineering Council of the Ministry of Railways and the Bridge Commission, which were subjected to the Provisional Management of State Railways, which was a part of the Railway Department.

On December 10, 1892, under the chairmanship of the heir to the throne, the future Emperor Nicholas II, the Committee of the Siberian Railway was founded. The Committee was composed of ministers from different agencies. The Committee's tasks included: selecting the railway's directions, extending credits for its construction, supervision of the construction works, etc. The provisions on the Committee were approved by Alexander III on February 24, 1893. According to the provision, the Committee also included A. K. Krivoshein, Minister of Railways. In 1893, 12 meetings of this structure were held, at which Krivoshein repeatedly delivered reports.

During the management of the Ministry of Railways by A. K. Krivoshein, significant steps were taken in building the Trans-Siberian Railway. Since 1892, on all roads except of Amur, exploration and construction works began. The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway Network required huge funds.³⁶ In November 1892, the government allocated 150 million rubles on the priority works and 20 million rubles on the auxiliary works.³⁷ The construction was supposed to be completed in the following terms: Chelyabinsk – Ob – Krasnoyarsk – in 1896; Krasnoyarsk – Irkutsk – by 1900; Vladivostok – Graftskaya line – by 1894–1895 years. According to preliminary calculations of the Committee, the cost of construction of the Siberian Railway was estimated at 350 million gold rubles or 44 thousand

³⁵ A. KALACHINSKY, *Trans-Siberian Railway: through Space and Time*, last modified May 2, 2011, [https://www.eastrussia.ru/material/transsib_cherez_prostranstvo_i_vremya/\[2021-02-21\]](https://www.eastrussia.ru/material/transsib_cherez_prostranstvo_i_vremya/[2021-02-21]).

³⁶ *Great Siberian Way of 1891–1916*, <http://www.ids55.ru/ais/articles/stroitelstvo/277----1891-1916-.html> [2021-02-21].

³⁷ G. FADEEV et al., Management Structure of the Construction of the Great Siberian Railway. Phased Deployment of Construction Works, in: *History of Railway Transport in Russia. Vol. 1: 1836–1917*, E. KRASKOVSKY – M. UZDIN (eds.), Moscow 1994, p. 150.

rubles per kilometre.³⁸ In fact, for the construction of the Railway the Treasury spent more than 1 billion rubles.³⁹

Therefore, in accordance with the Committee's recommendations, in 1891–1892 to accelerate the construction and cut the costs, for the Ussuri and West Siberian lines (from Chelyabinsk to the Ob River) as the basis, simplified technical specifications were taken. Therefore, the width of the roadbed in the embankments, excavations and in the mountain areas was shortened.⁴⁰ The thickness of the ballast was almost half reduced, and straight sections of the road between the sleepers quite often could be laid without the ballast at all. The track was laid with lighter rails (18 pounds instead of 21 pounds per meter) and shortened sleepers. The number of sleepers per 1 km was reduced. It was permitted to make steeper ascents and descents unlike those envisaged by the standard. The distance between the stations could be up to 50 versts. The track facilities were built on wooden piles. The major construction works were envisaged only for large railway bridges. Over the middle and small rivers, wooden bridges were supposed to be built. The station buildings were also of a lightweight type, most often without the foundations. Everything was calculated on a low crossing capacity of the Railway. However, as the loading increased, and, particularly, it grew many times in the years of World War II (1939–1945), it was necessary to urgently lay the second track and reluctantly eliminate all the “reliefs” that did not guarantee the safety of movement.

The problem of providing manpower for the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway was the most acute and difficult one.⁴¹ The need in skilled workers was provided by the recruitment and transfer of builders to Siberia from the centre of the country. Over the years, in the construction of only the West Siberian section of the Railway main line, from 3.6 thousand to 15 thousand workers were involved from the European part of Russia. After long hesitation, it could attract persons deported to a hard labour camp, exiles and prisoners of different categories for the construction of the Railway, providing shortening of the term of punishment for them for participation in the works. In total, in 1891 at

³⁸ FADEEV et al., p. 151.

³⁹ Y. PETROV, Siberian Railway: Experience and Lessons, in: *Transport Law and Safety*, 8 (8), 2016, pp. 56–65, http://ui-miit.ru/files/docs/trans-safety/trans_safety_08.pdf [2021-02-21].

⁴⁰ FADEEV et al., p. 149.

⁴¹ PETROV, Siberian Railway, pp. 56–65.

the beginning of the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway there was 9.6 thousand people, and in 1895–1896 in the midst of construction works there was 84,000–89,000 of them.

Since the terrain was almost impassable, a lot of time and costs were spent to deliver the necessary building materials and, in fact, it was necessary to deliver everything except the forest. For example, to build the bridge over the Irtysh River and the station in Omsk, the stone was transported 740 versts on railway from Chelyabinsk and 580 versts from the banks of the Ob River and it was delivered by water on barges from the quarries located on the banks of the Irtysh River up in 900 versts from the bridge. The metal structures for the bridge over the Amur were manufactured in Warsaw and delivered by railroad to Odessa, and then they were transported by sea to Vladivostok, and from there by railroad to Khabarovsk. Almost all the works were done by hand, the tools were primitive – axe, saw, shovel, hammer pick and wheelbarrow. In spite of that, each year about 500–600 km of railway tracks were laid. History did not know such a pace before.

The builders reached a record pace in laying rails, which amounted to 642 versts per year. It was one and a half times faster than it was done at the newly built Canadian Pacific Railway in America.⁴² The Trans-Siberian Railway had been built in a single track. During the management of Ministry of Railways by A. Krivoshein, the first sections of the Great Siberian Railway began to operate: in 1893 the traffic of trains was opened at 413 km, and in 1894 – at 891 km.⁴³ In 1893, being two years ahead of schedule, the government opened financing for the construction of the Mid-Siberian Railway. That was done just in time, as the workers and specialists who had completed the Zlatoust – Chelyabinsk line in September 1892, were free from the work and a local population suffered from crops fail and needed earnings.⁴⁴ An important event of that time was the construction of a bridge over the Ob River. By the river a settlement emerged, which later turned into the city Novosibirsk. The line of the Mid-Siberian Railway started from the bridge over the Ob River and ended in Irkutsk.

In April 1894, before the construction the survey on the section of the Transbaikal line from Mysovoye station to Sretensk station was carried

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ FADEEV et al., p. 153.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 154.

out.⁴⁵ In spring of the next year, the Committee of Siberian Railways allowed beginning of the construction, having accepted the variant of the surveying party of G. V. Andrianov. In that region the works were also carried out in severe natural conditions. Flooding from storm waters, permafrost and mountainous terrain forced builders to quickly change the position of the track, the position levels of embankments, a number and location of openings of culverts. The costs for furnishing of the road amounted to 77.2 thousand rubles per 1 km. In August 1894, Apollon Krivoshein conducted an inspection of the West Siberian Railway under construction.⁴⁶ On August 24, 1894 he was present at the interlocking of the Petropavlovsk-Omsk section. On August 25, 1894 in Omsk the first train from Chelyabinsk arrived.⁴⁷ It consisted of 10 two-axle cars. Among the passengers there was the Minister of Railways Apollon Krivoshein, accompanied by a group of experts from the Department and railway builders. The travel in the first three pairs of passenger trains between Chelyabinsk and Omsk was free. Also, on August 27, 1894 Apollon Krivoshein was present at the prayer service on beginning of the construction of the Chelyabinsk-Yekaterinburg connecting line.⁴⁸ In Chelyabinsk, A. K. Krivoshein held the reception for the officials from the Construction Management and representatives from a local clergy, intellectuals, and merchants. For all the participants it took a long time to come to decision: on what slope of the Ural Ridge – Western or Eastern it is necessary to build the railway.⁴⁹ A variant through Nyazepetrovsk directly to Berdiaush was liked neither by the factory owners of Kyshtym nor by the merchants of Chelyabinsk. Moreover, it had several technical difficulties: mountains, rocks, tunnels, bridges. The railway through Seversk, Polevskoy, Ufaleisk and Kyshtym factories looked much more attractive. Before making the final decision, A. K. Krivoshein suggested calling all *“interested owners to the general meeting, in which the owners even of the factories which are distant from*

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 155.

⁴⁶ *Krivoshein Apollon Konstantinovich*, <http://chel-portal.ru/?site=encyclopedia&t=Krivoshein&id=9161> [2021-02-21].

⁴⁷ *This Year Marks 123 Years from the Beginning of the Railway Communication in Omsk*, last modified August 25, 2017, https://zszd.rzd.ru/news/public/ru?STRUCTURE_ID=42&layer_id=4069&refererLayerId=3307&id=125165 [2021-02-21].

⁴⁸ *Krivoshein Apollon Konstantinovich*, <http://chel-portal.ru/?site=encyclopedia&t=Krivoshein&id=9161> [2021-02-21].

⁴⁹ V. LYUTOV, When the First Train arrived in Kyshtym, in: *Provincial Tetrads by Vyacheslav Lyutov*, last modified October 28, 2016, <https://lyutov70.livejournal.com/77794.html> [2021-02-21].

the line, would indicate their preference [...]”. When exactly the meeting of the factory owners was held, it is difficult to establish, but the fact that it was held is undoubted. As a result, the choice in favour of Chelyabinsk was made. The project of building railway track from Yekaterinburg through Kyshtym to Chelyabinsk will be approved by S. Yu. Witte. As the manager of construction, K. Ya. Mikhailovsky will be appointed.⁵⁰

The Ministry of Railways of the Russian Empire under the management of A. K. Krivoshein continued the policy introduced by S. Yu. Witte. It was directed at the concentration of railways in the hands of the state by buying out private railways. Thus, in January of 1893, the Moscow-Kursk Railway was purchased. From the new 1894, Nikolayev (St. Petersburg-Moscow), St. Petersburg-Warsaw, Moscow-Nizhny Novgorod, Mitavsk and Riga-Dvina Railways passed under state control. In the same year, the Orel-Vitebsk Railway was prematurely purchased. In general, in 1893, under the management of the Ministry of Railways of the Russian Empire by A. K. Krivoshein, 1670 km of railways were put into operation.⁵¹ Most of them began to operate on the Moscow-Kazan line: Ryazan – Sviyazhsk – Kazan, on the South-Western railways: Zhmerynka – Mogilev – Novoselitsa. In 1894, 2340 km were put into operation on the Kiev – Voronezh Railway: Kursk – Voronezh, Chernigov – Piryatin; in Ryazan-Uralsk: Tambov – Kamyshyn – Uralsk; in Vladikavkaz: Beslan – Petrovsk. All these railways were built by joint stock companies.

One of the examples of such construction, the following railway line may be. Pokrovskaya Sloboda (now Engels city) at the end of the 19th century was considered to be the largest grain market in the Samara Transvolga Region.⁵² However, Pokrovskaya Sloboda might not become an important centre for storage, processing and sending of Transvolga grain if there was no railway built in 1894 when A. K. Krivoshein managed the Ministry. Thanks to the railway, wheat from the remote regions of the Transvolga Region flooded into the city. In Uralsk (now Uralsk, Kazakhstan), things were different. The city was the centre for sales of cattle and fish products. The development of grain trade was extremely hard there largely because there were no roads connecting the city with the nearest trade centres: Samara, Buzuluk and Balakovo. In a bad

⁵⁰ FADEEV et al., p. 154.

⁵¹ ZENZINOV, p. 81.

⁵² I. SERGEEVA, Bread Line, in: *Zheleznodorozhnik Povolzhya*, last modified June 17, 2016, <https://www.gudok.ru/zdr/174/?ID=1340579&archive=39990> [2021-02-21].

weather, the Samara section, on which most of the cargoes were transported, turned into total oceans of mud. In a good weather the cargoes were transported from one city to another on the fourth day, whereas in a bad weather the wagon trains had to be on the way for up to two weeks. Sometimes merchants were even forced to abandon some part of the cargo at all for they could somehow drag themselves to the city. Therefore, it is not surprising, that the idea of building a railway in the Uralsk was received with great enthusiasm. On December 10, 1894, the Minister of Railways, Master of the Court Apollon Krivoshein, reported to Emperor Nickolas II: *“The Ryazan-Ural Railway Company has completed the construction of a narrow-gauge railway line from Pokrovskaya Sloboda on the left bank of the Volga River to the city of Uralsk. The length of this line is 396 versts, the track gauge is 0.4687 fathoms.”* Four years later, Uralsk became an industrial city.

During the management of the Ministry by A. K. Krivoshein, his numerous orders concerning the work of the Ministry were striking, which were published in the *Journal of the Ministry of Railways* for 1893 and 1894. In particular, the following should be mentioned: *Approval of the rules of travel privileges for railway employees and members of their families, On the prevention of accidents on railways, On personal scholarships for students of railway technical colleges: in the Konotop College there were scholarships named after a military engineer Colonel M. K. Shaufus (later he became the Minister of Railways), V. V. Salov, the Chairman of the Engineering Council of the Ministry of Railways, and V. V. Bernadsky, member of Engineering Council of the Ministry of Railways, and the scholarships named after V. M. Pechkovsky in memory of his 10-years management of the Kharkov–Nikolayev Railway were granted in Kremenchuk.*

A. K. Krivoshein contributed to the opening of two railway and technical colleges in Yekaterinoslav and Krasnoyarsk in 1894. There were also the orders like these: *On providing free travel to 20 architects for a trip to Constantinople for scientific purposes, Announcement of awards to the participants of the 1st All-Russian Hygienic Exhibition in 1893 from the Ministry of Railways.* The awards were awarded to 33 railway organizations, their exhibits received Honorary Diplomas, Grand Gold Medals (18 pieces), Small Gold Medals, as well as Grand and Small Bronze Medals. Also, it is noteworthy to mention one of the last orders dated December 7, 1894, which is the order on the approval of *Technical specifications for testing and acceptance of steel rails.* They were elaborated by the Engineering Council of the Ministry of Railways and put into effect on January 1, 1896. Depending on the size of the supplied batch of rails (up to 250, 250–500 and 500–1000 pieces),

a different number of rails had to be subjected to the tests on bending, fracture, and tearing.

The time when the Ministry of Railways was managed by A. K. Krivoshein is featured by one of the stages of infrastructure development of the Emperor Alexander I Institute of Railway Engineers in St. Petersburg. On June 16, 1892, the Provisional Building Committee was established.⁵³ Its duties included drafting and reviewing projects for the construction of new and conversion of old buildings of the Institute. On the submission of the Minister of Railways, Sergei Yu. Witte, the professors Kurdyumov, Brandt, and D. A. Andreev, representative of the State Control were included to the Committee. As the Chairman, academician of Architecture, acting State Councillor Jerome Sebastianovich Kitner was appointed.

In the first year of its existence, the Provisional Construction Committee conducted major capital works. According to its projects, a new drawing room was built and the old drawing room was reequipped, a building of the electric generating station was constructed and all the premises of the Institute were equipped with electric lighting.⁵⁴ On July 16, 1893 Alexander III approved the plan of building a dormitory for students of the Railway Institute presented by A. K. Krivoshein.⁵⁵

The designing and construction of this dormitory was imposed on the Provisional Building Committee. On July 28, 1893, Krivoshein gave architect I. S. Kitner the order *“to proceed immediately to the works on designing and construction of the dormitory building on the basis of the Highest Approved Plan and submit the elaborated drafts and instructions for approval”*.⁵⁶ The further events went so fast that even modern builders would envy. As early as on August 26, 1893, Krivoshein proposed Kitner to undertake all the possible measures to guarantee that the *“grand ceremony of braking ground for the dormitory building could take place not later than in early October”*. In September, the Committee granted the right to the contractor N. V. Smirnov (in the competition for the right to build the dormitory three contractors participated) to carry out excavation and masonry works to lay the foundation of the dormitory *“on the terms stated by him and offered him to start the works immediately”*. On October 1, 1893, the grand ceremony of braking ground for the dormitory building for students of the Institute

⁵³ B. TARASOV, *Valerian Ivanovich Kurdyumov, 1853–1904*, Saint Petersburg 1997, p. 106.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁵⁵ Activities of the Ministry of Railways in the period 1889–1894, p.188.

⁵⁶ TARASOV, p. 107.

of Railway Engineers was held on the area of the land belonging to the Institute, where a drill ground was located. Specially on this occasion, at the company of Grachyov brothers the gold and silver “Plaques” (at a total cost of 1350 rubles) were ordered, which, according to ancient Russian custom, were laid under the foundation of the building.

For the construction of a 4-storey dormitory building of a 20-fathom length (approximately 43 m) with a dining room for 200 people, a hospital, steam-water heating and ventilation equipment and apartments for accommodation of service personnel, estimated at a total cost of more than 200 thousand rubles, the Institute of Railway Engineers did not spend a single ruble. All construction works were carried out at the expense of donations from the graduates of the Institute, some railways as well as construction and industrial organizations of Russia.⁵⁷ As early as of November 5, 1893, in a month after the dormitory was laid, Krivoshein reported to Alexander III about the noble initiative of the graduates of the Institute: *“Many of the most well-off railroad companies, as well as private individuals involved in the railway enterprises, were rather warm-hearted to this initiative and expressed their full readiness to participate in the construction of the dormitory by making financial contributions.”* After that, the Minister listed those, who at the time had already made their contributions. The largest sums were donated by the South-Eastern, Moscow-Kazan Railways and the Main Society of Russian Railways. Having informed the Emperor that the Institute *“had already received more than 200 thousand rubles, which together with the expected revenues would make a sufficient capital for the construction of the dormitory”*, Krivoshein *“asked for the Highest permission to accept the mentioned contributions”*. On the original letter it was written by the hand of His Imperial Majesty: *“I order to accept the contributions and thank for them. Alexander. In Gatchina, November 19, 1893.”* In total, more than 400 thousand rubles were donated for the construction of the dormitory. For all construction works only 170 thousand rubles were spent, other funds were preserved as untouchable capital and converted into security papers, the interests from which were used as the maintenance costs of the dormitory.

By the Highest order, the dormitory was given the name *Nikolayev Dormitory named after the August Chairman of the Committee of the Siberian Railway for Students of the Emperor Alexander I Institute of Railway Engineers*.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 108.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 109.

In those years, the son of Alexander III, Nicholas, later (since 1894) the Emperor Nicholas II was the Chairman of the Committee of the Siberian Railway. On February 18, 1894, the Emperor approved the Charter of the dormitory. The Charter, which consisted of 17 paragraphs, stipulated that the funds of the dormitory “*consisted of a fee collected from the students living in it and from the interests on untouchable capital from the donations*”.

Resignation

However, neither the advances in development of the railways of the Russian Empire, nor the infrastructure development saved A. K. Krivoshein from intrigue and resignation. The circumstances of his resignation are covered in detail in the article by D. A. Andreev.⁵⁹

On December 16, 1894, by a twist of fate, Apollon Krivoshein appeared to be the first minister removed from the post during the new reign. It was the time of Emperor Nicholas II.⁶⁰

At first, the fuss surrounding his resignation, starting from the choice of the date extremely important for Krivoshein and ending with his simultaneous demonstrative degrading from a court rank, was undoubtedly intended to cause the maximum effect of propaganda.⁶¹ Apparently, making his first personnel decision, the young Emperor Nicholas II tried to demonstrate to the society and mainly to high officials and bureaucracy that there was no chance to hope on weakening the ruling style inherent to his father. In this regard, the choice of a figure for exemplary punishment turned out to be flawless and in some sense the rumours of abuses in the Railway Department even provoked the supreme authorities to take tough measures against Krivoshein. However, at such events, the formal and legal justifications for dismissal of the Minister were more significant. So, what exactly A. K. Krivoshein was accused of?

He was accused of having lavishly set up his office apartment at the expense of the Ministry, having substantially expanded it at the expense of neighbouring premises and even built a family chapel in it.⁶² Moreover, there was a talk about supplying sleepers for railway construction from Apollon Krivoshein’s own estates at concessionary rates, and that one of the branch lines was designed in such a way that it went across his

⁵⁹ ANDREEV, pp. 15–32.

⁶⁰ ANDREEVA et al., p. 240.

⁶¹ ANDREEV, pp. 15–32.

⁶² V. MESHCHERSKY, *My Memories*, Moscow 2003, p. 667.

possessions (of course, with payment of appropriate compensations).

Tertiy Filippov, Chairman of the Russian State Control Committee, provided a detailed report on this issue to Nicholas II, and although he could have exaggerated and twisted some of the facts, having no sufficient protection from the court, Apollon Krivoshein was forced to leave his post. That was the end of Apollon Krivoshein's state career.

However, in that affair there was an apparent lack of reliable proofs that would convincingly evidence Kryvoshein's machinations and were adequate to his punishment. In 1895, General Alexander Alekseevich Kireev wrote in his diary that concerning the evidence of Krivoshein's "corruption" "nothing was cleared up" and "the accusations of Filippov and others were not justified".⁶³ However, a "knave nature" of the former Minister of Railways manifested itself with all its ugly sides. It became clear that Krivoshein was a "swindler by vocation". Kireev could catch the collision in that fact. On the one hand, a "knave nature" of Kryvoshein did not cause any doubt. On the other hand, since there was a lack of proofs and based on the elements of violations themselves (even if they indeed occurred), the specific accusations brought against the Minister were clearly not sufficient to cause the first huge resignation initiated by the new emperor. Moreover, the agreement on the supply of sleepers for railway construction turned to be advantageous for the state-owned railway.⁶⁴ The opponents hurled accusations of supplying firewood for the needs of the railroad from the estate belonging to Krivoshein. Later, it was revealed that the contract on wood had been signed even before Krivoshein became minister. The opponents hurled accusations of the construction of a new branch line through the town of Shklov owned by the Minister. As a result, the former Minister of Railways "was partially rehabilitated" but was not returned to the post. Here is how Iosif Iosifovich Kolyshko describes one of the main reasons for A. K. Krivoshein's resignation. "The old officials returned to their posts at the Department and Krivoshein, after he had established all the formalities of his state activity and founded a 'personal' chapel in the Ministry building, began to organize lavish ceremonies during his visits around Russia. The cost of those ceremonies, which exceeded the cost of all previous ones, drew the attention of the court. On the other hand, the 'charmer' disregarded the relationships with his protectors Durnovo, Meshchersky, Witte and Terty and began to act in his own interests. Having taken an example from Matilda Ivanovna Witte, his wife orga-

⁶³ ANDREEV, pp. 15–32.

⁶⁴ KOLYSHKO, p. 86.