

Rail Links to Georgia

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The Strategic Spark (1860's)

- **Geopolitical and Military factors**

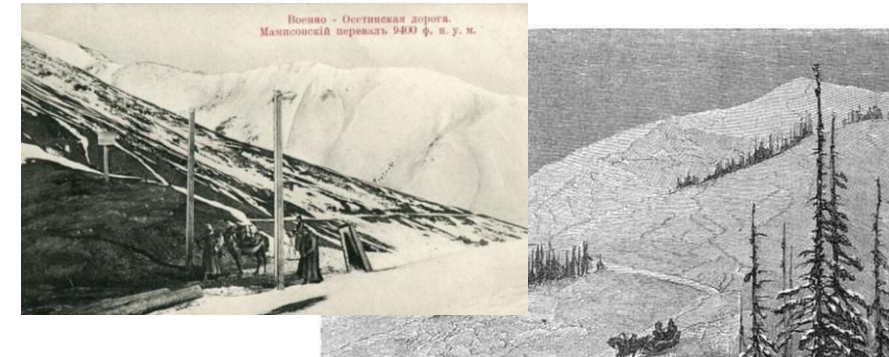
After the Crimean War and the final conquest of the Caucasus, the Russian Empire needed to solidify its control over the region.

- **Logistics vs. Geography**

Moving troops and supplies across the Mamison Gorge and Georgian road by horse-drawn carriages was incredibly slow and expensive.

1871 –The first train travelled from the Zestaponi to Poti

1872 – First Train arrived from Poti to Tbilisi

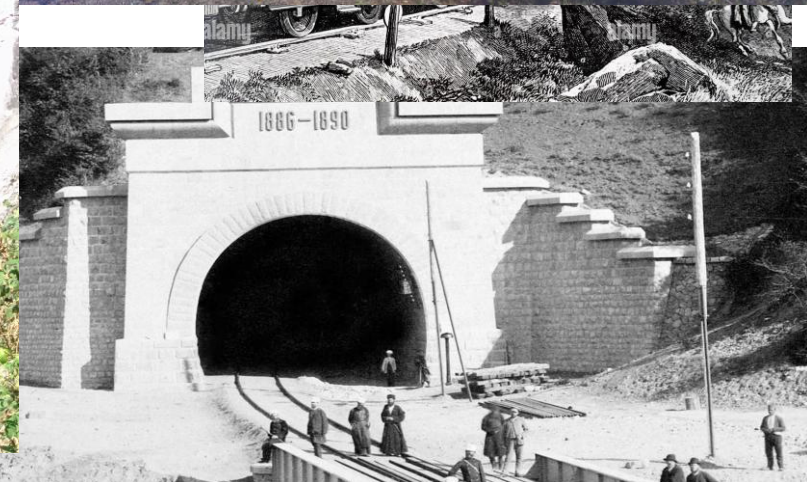


Imperial Era

(2/2)



(Azerbaijani and other noble families) heavily invested



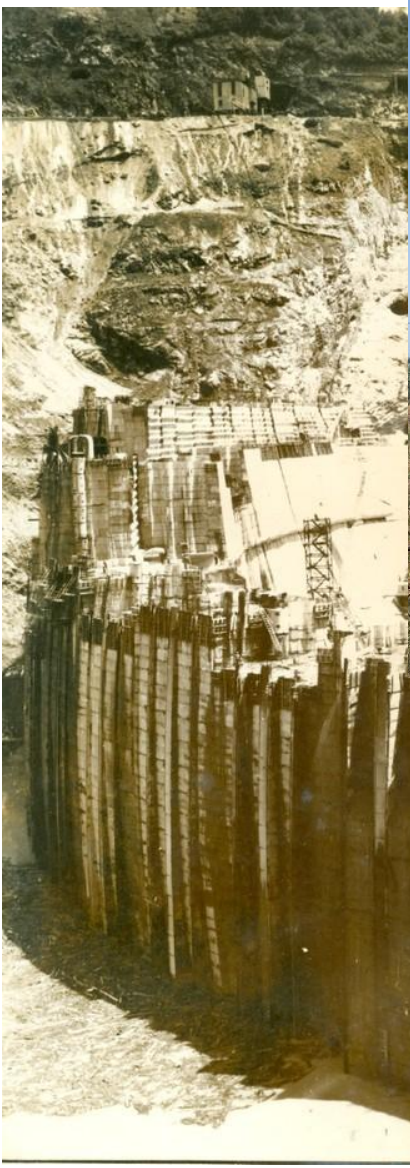
The connection between East and West (due to high operational expenses due to the extreme terrain) was resolved in 1890 with the opening of the Baku-Tiflis Railway and a 4 km tunnel, significantly increasing trade.

Annual cargo volume by 1910 - ~6.5M Tons



Soviet Era

(1/2)



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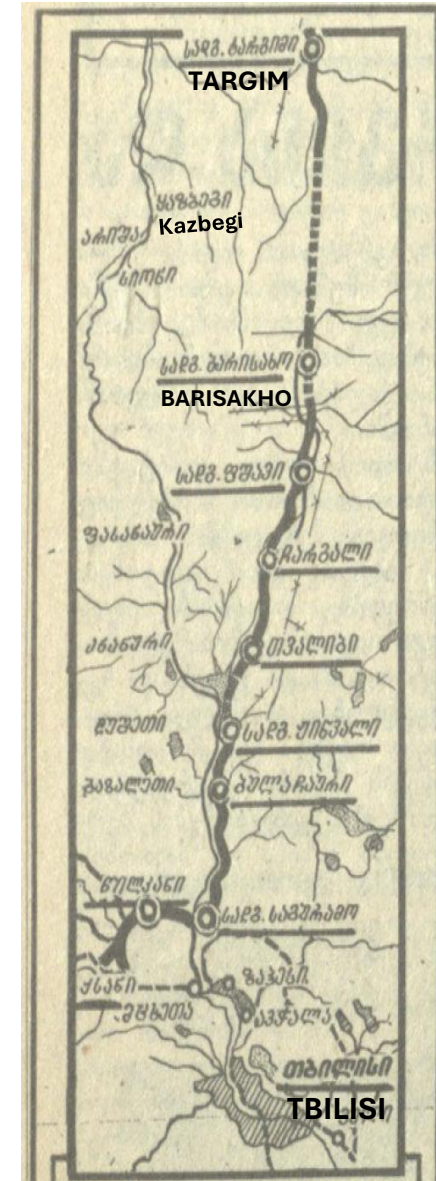
The Soviet Peak and Unrealized Dreams

- **The Peak**

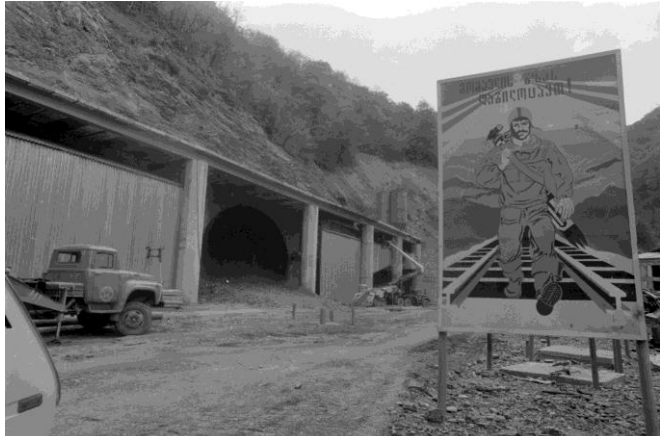
operational peak was achieved in 1988, the network moved a record 38 million tons of cargo annually, serving as the strategic bridge for the Soviet Union's energy and industrial exports. the collapse of the USSR and the severance of the rail link though Abkhazia region to Russia caused volumes to plummet to around 10 million tons

- **Unrealized Project**

Caucasus Pass Railway - reached the construction phase in the 1980s. Designed to shorten the Tbilisi-Moscow route by 1,000 km, the project aimed to bypass overstretched rail lines and increase capacity of the region. The Arkhoti Valley route featured a 23.3 km main tunnel. The project was mothballed in 1989 due to Soviet economic collapse.



Year	Annual Volume (Approx.) (M/T)
1910	6.5
1988	38.0
2004	18.9
2024	13.7



Collapse

- Much of the infrastructure suffered from looting and a lack of maintenance, turning once giant enterprise into a struggling national asset fighting for survival in a fragmented geopolitical landscape.
- The 1992–1993 War in Abkhazia effectively severed the Black Sea Link to Russia, leaving the network physically fractured. Trains that once moved 38 million tons of cargo were repurposed as "Refugee Expresses," carrying thousands of displaced families in overcrowded wagons.
- The railway assets of Georgia were formed into the new 100% government-owned company *JSC Georgian Railway* – the biggest employer in the country (12,700 employees)
- In 2004 from nearly 11,000 rail cars, only 7,000 were in operational condition, corruption became widespread within the system.



Renaissance

- The 20th century initiated a major railway expansion in Georgia.
- Additional lines were built by Swiss and French companies.
- A significant railway network was established.
- Surrounded by doubt and skepticism.
- Baku-Akhaltsikhe construction project.



rics	
	\$238.4 Million
n	34%
	\$407.1 Million
	~69%
Passengers	2.48 million



THANK YOU