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# TRADE AND THE ECONOMY (SECOND HALF OF NINETEENTH CENTURY TO EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY)\*

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## Introduction

Russian colonization in Central Asia may have been the last phase of an expansion of the Russian state that had begun centuries earlier. However, in terms of area, it represented the largest extent of non-Russian lands to fall under Russian control, and in a rather short period: between 1820 (the year of major political and administrative decisions aimed at the Little and Middle Kazakh Hordes, or *Zhuzs*) and 1885 (the year of the capture of Merv). The conquest of Central Asia also brought into the Russian empire the largest non-Russian population in an equally short time. The population of Central Asia (Steppe and Turkistan regions, including the territories that were to have protectorate status forced on them) was 9–10 million in the mid-nineteenth century.

\* See Map 1.

Although the motivations of the Russian empire in conquering these vast territories were essentially strategic and political, they quickly assumed a major economic dimension. They combined all the functions attributed by colonial powers to colonies while being closely connected to the European motherland. Consequently, while tsarist Russia came to involve itself in the history of Central Asia, the subjection of the area in turn profoundly altered the history of the Soviet Union, and subsequently of contemporary Russia.

The formation of new ethno-political entities in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, with the Kazakh khanate, the Uzbek khanates, Safavid Iran, Mughal India and the *khoja* power in East Turkistan, redrew the political, economic and cultural map of this vast area of Central Asia. As transcontinental economic flows largely dried up, Russia's growing interest in Central Asia and its geo-strategic significance increased, leading, over much of the nineteenth century, to its direct subjugation and conquest. By the late eighteenth century, Russian frontier forts had become centres of economic exchange, through a dense network of fairs and barter markets. As a result, the economy of the region became oriented towards Russia.

Although it was part of the long history of the expansion of the Russian state, the colonization of Central Asia stands out from it in several ways, the most important of which (the brevity of the conquest, the direct control of the land and its peoples, the significant numbers of these latter, multiple roles in the Russian empire) are discussed in the first chapter of this volume. Yet we still lack consolidated accounts to provide a rounded overview of this colonization. There is, in particular, a lack of soundly based general writings covering the whole history of the expansion of the Russian empire and comparing its different phases. There is also a lack of comparative analyses of Russian and other European expansionist policies.

In 1870, 89 per cent of the population of the Russian empire was rural, and there were only 4 cities of more than 100,000 inhabitants. However, an industrial revolution and a capitalistic expansion took place in the last decades of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century until the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. From 1870 to 1913, the total population of the Russian empire rose from 80 to 170 million inhabitants. The population of Turkistan governor-generalship was 6.8 million in 1911, and about 5 million in the same year in Steppe governor-generalship. In Turkistan, 1 million out of the total population of 6.8 million was urban.<sup>1</sup> In only 10 years, for example, between 1890 and 1900, the production of the empire more than doubled, and a workers' movement started in 1885.

In 1897 the rural population still accounted for some 87.5 per cent of the entire population of the empire (79 per cent, poor people) and 83 per cent in 1906. The economic crisis

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<sup>1</sup> Masal'skiy, 1913, p. 857.

of 1903–6 and the political crisis of 1905–6 must also be noted. This overall setting of the Russian empire is important in order to analyse the transformation of the Central Asian region during the extension of the new Russian political and economic order.

The colonial infrastructure clearly shows that strategic and economic aims were closely connected in the decision-making processes, and this largely explains the geography of colonization. Indeed, if its aftermath was considerable in all economic spheres and to all local Central Asian communities, the main strategic and economic transformations were concentrated in a few sectors and in a few regions.

In the steppes, the main regions of economic and strategic significance were the eastern and western ‘flanks’: in the west, the axis linking the Aral Sea to Orenburg, in addition to the region between the Ural river and the Caspian Sea; in the east, the basin of the Irtysh river. The region of Semirechye and the basin of the Syr Darya river, which both served as links between the steppes and Transoxania, were also an important axis of the colonial presence. In the southern part of Russian Central Asia, the valley of the Zerafshan, the Ferghana region, the valley of the Amu Darya and the Persian boundary were the main areas of colonial activity. Russian Central Asia was composed of two governor-generalships (after 1882), but economically speaking, all these regions were closely linked – as they had been in the pre-colonial past – and this was reinforced by the economic colonization, due to the polarization towards the Russian economy, and the territorial continuity between Russia and Central Asia.

With Russian colonization, Central Asia entered the age of state statistics. The new colonial government collected an impressive amount of data concerning the relief, river flows, populations, crops, flocks, manufacturing output and trade; these were published in a wide range of forms (reports, books, articles, yearbooks), circulated widely in the Western world. Each *oblast’* had its own Statistical Committee which published yearbooks, such as, for example, the yearbook of Ferghana *oblast’* published from September 1901.<sup>2</sup> The ministry of agriculture had a resettlement administration (*pereselencheskoe upravlenie*) which published numerous monographs, and reports on Semirechye *oblast’* and Kazakh

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<sup>2</sup> Among the articles appearing in *Ezhegodnik Ferganskoy oblasti*, 1902, pp. 41–65, was a long article by N. Fedorov describing exchanges with China across the borders of the *oblast’* between 1888 and 1900.

agriculture (*Materialy po Kirgizskomu zemledeliyu*) edited by P. P. Rumiantsev.<sup>3</sup> The colonial administration made a special effort to establish archives and collections of documents.<sup>4</sup>

Trade and the economy are two fields that clearly reveal the workings of colonial rule. The production and circulation of consumer goods is a rich field for historical analysis, but it has not always received the scientific and institutional interest it deserves.<sup>5</sup> Economic history is one of the least developed topics in the field of Central Asian studies, in both Russian (subsequently Soviet) and Western sources. There are still no comprehensive studies based on archive materials which encompass the entire area.

Consequently, the scarce literature mostly includes non-comparative studies that are based on material of regional significance. Indeed, 'Central Asia' was never an administrative unit, and neither in Steppe and Turkistan governor-generalships until 1917, nor in the five republics afterwards, has research been conducted with the aim of cross-questioning topics or data. There is still a lack of studies providing a balanced treatment of the various aspects of Russian colonization (conquest, administration, populations, economy and trade, for example) throughout the region.

Finally, one might note that despite the claim for new historiographical orientations in the independent countries of Central Asia, the economic history of the colonial exploitation of their lands and the transformation of their economies into colonial ones is not a topic of academic publications and research. Enormous advances still need to be made in this field.

From the end of the Crimean war to the Bolshevik revolution, the Russian empire experienced one of the periods in its history when it was most in contact with the outside world, particularly the West. The territories of Central Asia were inevitably affected by these contacts.

As far as the military conquest, the establishing of boundaries with neighbours, the changes in economy, trade, infrastructure and laws, and the response from the local communities are concerned, this period is clearly divided into two parts by the 'watershed decade' of the 1880s. This applies to the whole of Russian Central Asia, both Steppe and Turkistan regions. The military conquest came to an end during the 1880s, a decade

<sup>3</sup> For example, Chs. 1 and 4 of the 1912 volume on Perovsk *uezd* in Syr Darya *oblast'* deal with 'The general state of the economy of the Kazakhs' inspectorate of Perovsk *uezd*'. This volume contains 127 pages of tables setting out figures by Kazakh village (*aul*) on the administrative name, water use, population, agriculture, stock-raising, hay and lucerne harvest and craft production.

<sup>4</sup> In 1876, for example, General von Kaufman, the first governor-general of Turkistan, handed over the archives of Khiva (which had come into his possession after the fall of the khanate) to the Saltykov-Schedrin public library in St Petersburg, where they became mixed up with documents from the Ferghana valley.

<sup>5</sup> The bulk of studies on Central Asia were published during the Soviet period but, contrary to what the primacy of economics in Soviet ideology might lead one to expect, works on economic history are far outnumbered by those on archaeology or ethno-history, and, indeed, writings on heritage, culture and identity.

during which Russia signed a border agreement with China, adopted laws on population settlement in Central Asia, implemented a new fiscal system, decided on the construction of railways, imported new species of cotton, started a large-scale exploitation of the resources of Central Asia and began to face unrest from local communities, as well as the intellectual and ideological response of many native educated people.

After the 1880s, the Central Asian economy came gradually under the control of Russian, or foreign, capital. Central Asia already had active economic relations with Russia, and for centuries, thousands of camels carrying tonnes of goods crossed the steppes every year, and there was already some specialization and interdependency (Fig. 1). The active presence of Bukharan merchants in Russia and Siberia in the seventeenth century is a vivid testimony of this trend.<sup>6</sup> The main changes after the 1880s were the rapid development of new economic activities (mining and the oil industry, for example) and the concentration of Russian, or foreign, investment in a few leading sectors (cotton and the railways, for example). This had a strong impact on the local and regional markets, and consequently transformed the local economy into a colonial economy, dependent on the global political and economic agendas of the Russian empire. These changes were to affect the large majority of the inhabitants of Central Asia, whether directly or indirectly, at very different levels and in many different ways.



FIG. 1. Tashkent. Camel caravan going to Verny (modern Almaty). G. and L. Gain expedition to Central Asia. 1914. (Photo: © mimdi.)

<sup>6</sup> Burton, 2003, pp. 407–25.

## The agrarian question

Until 1914 the population of the Russian empire (and of Central Asia) was predominantly rural. It was therefore in the agrarian sector (production, populations, commercialization) that the impact of Russian rule was greatest. The various regions of Central Asia were opened up to settlement at different dates by the Russian tsarist administration, but the agrarian question arose everywhere.

In the steppes, Russian colonization transformed land use and population distribution, with long-term consequences. In the previous chapter, some figures were given demonstrating the scale of colonization during a period of barely 30 years before the Soviet revolution. Among the colonial empires of that time, Russia had one of the highest numbers of settlers moving into the newly colonized territories.

In Turkistan, Russian colonization also precipitated changes in the population through the settlement of colonists, but in much smaller numbers than in the steppes. The farming techniques that were introduced made use of existing methods, with some degree of technical modernization and a sharp increase in the share of cotton among the region's crops.

The 60–70 years of the period under review (1850–1917) were thus the framework for fundamental changes in the steppes and changes on a lesser scale in Turkistan.

### IRRIGATION

Artificial irrigation, by definition, makes it possible to establish sedentary life in a natural environment that is arid or semi-arid, where the ecological niche of rain-dependent agriculture is very restricted. Only the hills are well watered in Central Asia (although there are a few high-altitude deserts), but the relief and the mountain climate impose constraints on agriculture that are harder to overcome than the aridity of the low-lying areas.<sup>7</sup>

Irrigation occurs in the basin of the Syr Darya, the Amu Darya and the large region of Transoxania which lies between the two rivers. This means that irrigation is also common slightly to the north of Transoxania, in what is now southern Kazakhstan (which is part of the Syr Darya basin), as well as in southern Kyrgyzstan and south-west Turkmenistan. The traditional picture of Central Asia erroneously attributes the main characteristics of

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<sup>7</sup> The Tajiks of the western Pamirs, or Badakhshan, live in the valleys of the Pamir and Wakhan Darya rivers, two right-bank tributaries of the Panj. Traditionally, they cultivated very small fields there, rarely more than 80 m<sup>2</sup>, at altitudes up to or above 3,000 m (like the village of Lyangar): see Mukhiddinov, 1975, pp. 5–6.

Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen nomadic-pastoral culture to the whole territory of those republics, whereas they are also the site of ancient irrigation systems and oasis cities.

The particular feature of the peak flows of the rivers and streams of Central Asia (the Amu Darya, the Zerafshan, the Syr Darya, the Sokh, etc.) is that they occur in the hot period, which corresponds throughout Central Asia to the dry season. The reason for this is the presence of very high mountain ranges all along the southern and eastern edge of this region, and a continental climate which causes the accumulation of snow and ice in these mountains in winter, and then their melting in spring and summer until the middle of the hot season. Thus, during the first half of the growing season, the level of the rivers that feed irrigation continues to rise. Moreover, most of the cultivated crops, and in particular cereals, ripen before the water level falls, which occurs in autumn.

In the area between the Aral and the Caspian seas, the improvement in the humidity level in the mountains, apart from a few high-altitude deserts, in contrast to the worsening of the thermal conditions, means that the highlands of Central Asia are only suitable for rain-dependent agriculture in small plots. Conversely, in the lowlands of Transoxania, significant regional differences are caused not by the latitude, but rather by the proximity to a watercourse that can be diverted for irrigation.

Of all the forms of irrigation practised in Central Asia, diversion by harnessing a surface flow into a network of artificial canals in order to water farming plots is by far the most widespread. It is also the most diversified. It can be done equally well from large rivers and from small streams with intermittent flows,<sup>8</sup> lakes, springs and even reservoirs collecting rainwater.<sup>9</sup> There are canals in the mountains, as well as at low altitudes, in regions receiving 500 mm of rainfall a year and more, which would allow a rain-dependent agriculture, as in deserts or the very dry steppes crossed by the 50 mm isohyet.<sup>10</sup> Diversion using the natural flow, supplemented by water-lifting devices if necessary (like the *chigir*, or water pump), is the most important feature of regular intensive agriculture throughout this arid zone.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to this physical diversity, there is a wide range of economic situations associated with artificial irrigation, since this is practised by widely differing communities – from

<sup>8</sup> The Amu Darya, with its flows of up to more than 9,000 m<sup>3</sup>/s contrasts starkly with the little River Sargun, with an average flow of 0.91 m<sup>3</sup>/s, or the fast mountain streams of the Kopet Dagh.

<sup>9</sup> Lakes in the region of the Aral Sea, springs in the mountains and *khāks* (reservoirs) in the Kara Kum desert feed a few small canals.

<sup>10</sup> There are significant variations in the degree of aridity in Central Asia: the north-west part of Ferghana, with an annual average rainfall of 50 mm, contrasts sharply with the Panjikent oasis, not far from there, which receives an annual average rainfall of 400 mm.

<sup>11</sup> The issue of the *kārez/ qanāt*, which is not a very common irrigation method in Central Asia, is not dealt with here.

groups consisting entirely of settled farmers to nomads engaging in a little agriculture who have dug a few *ariqs* (irrigation canals) in a steppe. There are exclusively sedentary communities settled around large-scale irrigation systems as well as small isolated systems, in conditions of extreme aridity as well as on well-watered foothills. The agro-pastoral communities of Central Asia vary just as greatly in their use of water for farming.

### COLONIAL AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND NEW RUSSIAN PROJECTS

The amount of lands opened to cultivation with new irrigation projects remained quite low during the decades of tsarist rule. In this respect, there is a sharp contrast between the boom in trade (see below) and the mere increase in irrigated land under cultivation. Traditional techniques continued to prevail as did the geography of irrigation. New large-scale irrigation projects in Transoxania, as well as in the southern regions of present-day Kazakhstan, only started during the Soviet period.

The increase in irrigated lands was obtained by extending the existing canals, digging new systems and building new dams. New systems were created in particular in the 'hungry steppe'. The creation of the Nicolas I Canal on the Syr Darya, one of the main constructions dating from this period, irrigated 12,000 *desiatinas* of land (1 *desiatina* = 1.09 ha).<sup>12</sup> The canal was finished in 1898. Dams were also built in Transcaspia *oblast'*, on the Murghab river, creating reservoirs which fed large canals irrigating a few thousand *desiatinas* each. New dams were created, like the Hindu Kush dam, or old ones were repaired.

Among all the crops of Central Asia, tsarist Russia put a particular emphasis on cotton: Turkistan governor-generalship was the only region of the empire where it was possible to develop this culture on a large scale, mostly for climatic reasons. The Turkistan species (*Gossypium herbaceum*) gave low yields, however, and it was decided just after the conquest to encourage more profitable American species of cotton, among which was Upland'a (*Gossypium hirsutum*).<sup>13</sup>

American cotton-seeds were therefore distributed to indigenous farmers in Transcaspia from 1880.<sup>14</sup> Booklets explaining how to cultivate this new cotton were printed in local languages,<sup>15</sup> helping to lay the groundwork for the increase in cotton production and linking it to the market. The surfaces under cultivation of American cotton grew very quickly, as did most of the new economic trends during this period: from 300 *desiatinas* in 1884 in Turkistan to 12,000 in 1886, then 37,000 in 1887, 58,000 in 1890, etc.<sup>16</sup> However, the

<sup>12</sup> Masal'skiy, 1913, p. 430.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 457.

<sup>14</sup> Lavrov, 1916, p. 169.

<sup>15</sup> Masal'skiy, 1913, p. 456.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 458.



Turkistan species also continued to be cultivated, and the overall surfaces under cotton cultivation amounted to 380,000 *desiatinas* in 1910 in four out of the five *oblasts*' of Turkistan governor-generalship (the Semirechye region was not yet a successful area for cotton cultivation). Ferghana *oblasts*' was by far the most important, since 300,000 out of the 380,000 *desiatinas* under cotton cultivation were located in this region. In the Ferghana valley, 50–75 per cent (and even up to 80–90 per cent in some places) of the agricultural surfaces were already under cotton cultivation before the First World War.<sup>17</sup> In the protectorate of Bukhara, the surfaces under cotton cultivation were estimated at 100,000 *desiatinas*, and at 50,000 *desiatinas* in the protectorate of Khiva. The total cotton production of Turkistan and the two protectorates was 10–11 million *poods* (1 *pood* = 16.38 kg) of clean fibre, out of which more than 8 million were produced in the governor-generalship.<sup>18</sup> St Petersburg maintained a low freight rate on grain shipped to Turkistan to encourage the cultivation of cotton.

In 1909 the Russian Government set up the Turkistan hydrological service,<sup>19</sup> to meet a growing need for improved techniques of artificial irrigation for the cash crops that Russian entrepreneurs were hoping to develop, especially cotton. Cotton was also the leading export of the Khiva protectorate, with 10,000 tonnes a year.<sup>20</sup> The cotton trade to the factories of Russia was a major sector of activity, where Russian as well as local firms took advantage of the rapid growth in production and trade.

The new commercial networks and trading outlets were also the cause of the increase in rice cultivation. In 1869 there were 11,000 ha of rice-fields in the districts of Samarkand and Kattakurgan; in 1875 there were 20,000 ha; and in 1900, in the district of Samarkand alone, this figure reached 43,000 ha.<sup>21</sup>

By 1909, wheat was the leading crop in the provinces of Syr Darya, Ferghana, Samarkand and Transcaspia (394,000, 188,000, 227,000 and 75,000 tonnes a year respectively). The advance of cotton was also very marked, since in those same provinces at the same date, the annual tonnage of raw cotton harvested was 20,000, 187,900, 12,000 and 23,000 tonnes respectively, for a total of 884,000 tonnes of wheat obtained from 1,326,000 ha and 242,000 tonnes of cotton from 297,000 ha.<sup>22</sup> As these figures show, Ferghana had become the leading cotton-producing area in tsarist Central Asia. Woeikof stresses the fact that the increase in the share of new crops:

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 463.

<sup>18</sup> Masal'skiy, 1913, p. 464.

<sup>19</sup> Woeikof, 1914, p. 310.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 248.

contributed to the destruction of the old order that prevailed in the distribution of water. . . [as] rice-growing, according to the old customs, was allowed only on marshy ground and rice-fields received water from irrigation canals only after the other main crops.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, whereas in the steppes the Russian Government directly seized a large proportion of nomads' lands to distribute them to colonists, in Turkistan colonial pressure on the land largely operated through the market.

Livestock-breeding was the basis of the traditional economy among the Karakalpaks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Turkmens, and it was also a traditional economic pattern among the sedentary populations in the oases. A pattern of trade and specialization in Steppe *oblast'* arose as this region turned to stockbreeding for the Russian market. A trend towards the concentration of livestock among the richest Kazakhs was also evident during this period. In some areas of northern Kazakhstan, for example, about 30 per cent of the horses were concentrated in the hands of those owning more than 50 horses.<sup>24</sup> Just as stockbreeding was common among sedentary communities, some forms of agriculture were not unknown among the nomads, but this trend increased under the colonial economy. However, even if some agricultural activity was found among the Kazakhs, this does not mean that they became sedentary, as the figures clearly show.<sup>25</sup> Overall, the cultivated area amounted to 8 or 9 per cent of Steppe *oblast'* on the eve of the First World War. In 1916, on an area covering present-day Kazakhstan, there were 18 million sheep and goats, 5 million cattle and 4.5 million horses.

## LAND TENURE AND TAX REFORM

The situation regarding land tenure and land use was complex because of the principle according to which all land belonged to the ruler (in sedentary societies) or to the community (among the nomads), frequently in the absence of pertinent legal documents. Land-tenure rules were governed by the *sharī'a* (Islamic law) and by *'ādat* (customary law or local customs).<sup>26</sup>

When tsarist law was extended to the land-tenure rules, in parallel to the traditional ones, individuals could buy private land. However, after 1822, the principle according to which the Kazakh lands were declared possessions of the Russian state was constantly reassessed (in 1868, and then again in 1891). The same contradictory legal situation obtained in the area of personal status, as is demonstrated by the example of the few hundred Kazakhs

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>24</sup> Masanov, 1995, p. 255.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>26</sup> For a good presentation of the traditional land uses in sedentary Central Asia, see Carrère d'Encausse, 1966, and among the nomads of the steppes, see Masanov, 1995.

who were accepted into the Russian aristocracy but who were at the same time registered as *inorodtsy* (lit. ‘people of different birth’, i.e. indigenous people).<sup>27</sup> This juxtaposition of several customs and uses was characteristic of the tsarist period in Central Asia, as well as many other colonial orders.

Old and new taxes were also typical of this period. However, the consequences of the new fiscal policy were particularly noticeable in the steppes. In the reforms of 1867–8, taxes were standardized and collected in cash. Each *kibitka* (‘tent’) had to pay a tax in cash, a very new concept for many poor nomads. The new tax was increased to 4.5 roubles and extended to all types of Kazakh housing in the reforms of 1886–91. Thus many poor Kazakhs, particularly the nomads, were forced to pay their taxes through intermediaries. This led to the formation of new social groups of Kazakh intermediaries and the appearance of new forms of economic and social dependency in the steppes as well as in Turkistan.

## Infrastructure

Although several features of the Russian colonization of Central Asia and its impact on the region were peculiar to the Russian empire, there were also many points that are reminiscent of other colonial empires. The clash between traditionally agrarian or pastoral societies and technological modernity is one such similarity. In the steppes above all, Russia built towns, and in Turkistan the Transcaspian railway was a major source of transformation (Fig. 2).

### TOWNS

The creation of towns is one aspect of the colonial infrastructure. It was more marked from the very beginning of the Russian expansion than, for example, in the case of the colonization of Indochina. There was also a sharp contrast between the lands formerly subject to nomadic pastoralism (where Russia settled new populations and built towns not only in the steppes but also on the desert fringes) and the heart of the irrigated lands, which, with their dense ancient urban network, saw the construction of European quarters in already existing towns. A new urbanism was created through colonialism, which contrasted with the older one and merged with it. This urban development was of great military, administrative, economic and cultural significance. Dozens of towns were set up in the steppes, following a similar process: first there would be a military outpost, followed by growth, then the arrival shortly afterwards of colonists, and then integration into the regional economy and the economy of the Russian empire, a pattern to be found in town after town.

<sup>27</sup> Kappeler, 1994, pp. 148, 341.



FIG. 2. Turkistan. Monument (dated 1913) on the bank of the Romanov canal. A railway is seen behind. (Photo: © S. Gorshenina-Rapin.)

### Astana (present capital of Kazakhstan)

The garrison post of Akmola was established in 1830 and it was granted the status of a town in 1862. In 1869 the town became the centre of the *uezd* and *oblast'* of the same name, which was much larger than the present-day *oblast'* of Astana. In 1916 the total population of the *oblast'* reached 1.5 million, largely made up of European (mainly Russian) settlers, and it grew from 276,000 Russians in 1897 to 835,000 in 1911.<sup>28</sup>

### Almaty (ex-capital of Kazakhstan)

The town grew up around a fort in the Trans-Ili (*Zailiyskiy*) line of forts built in 1854. The little settlement took the name of Verny, and then the town was renamed Alma-Ata (in

<sup>28</sup> By comparison, there were never more than 25,000 French nationals living in the whole of Indochina (estimate just before the Second World War), and the majority of them were civil servants on temporary postings who worked there only for periods of a few years, after which they would return home, or were assigned to other colonies.

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Russian; in Kazakh, Almaty) in 1921. Its population was 22,800 in 1897, and 36,000 in 1910.<sup>29</sup>

#### Ashgabat (present capital of Turkmenistan)

The Kese-Arkash plain was a place with settlements of tents; there was no city before the creation of Transcaspia *oblast'* in May 1881. Being the centre of Transcaspia *oblast'*, the city grew up around a military fortress under the name of Askhabad, until 1919. It was called Poltoratsk between 1919 and 1927, and then Ashkhabad. Its population was about 10,000 inhabitants in 1886, and 43,000 in 1911.

#### Bishkek (present capital of Kyrgyzstan)

The Kokand fortress of Pishpek was taken by Russia in 1860 and destroyed. Then, over the next decade, a fixed point of settlement grew up there around the Cossack garrison and a staging post on the mail route between Verny and Tashkent; it became the centre of the *uezd* in 1878. The population (which was overwhelmingly non-Kyrgyz) rose from 2,100 in 1882 to 6,600 in 1897 and 18,500 in 1913.<sup>30</sup>

#### Dushanbe (present capital of Tajikistan)

The existing settlement in Dushanbe prior to colonization only became a town in 1923. Dushanbe was located in the territory of eastern Bukhara, which was attributed to the emirate of Bukhara after the signature of the status of protectorate. Therefore, among the present-day capitals of the Central Asian countries, Dushanbe is the only one not to have been exposed to the new urbanism of the tsarist period.

#### Tashkent (present capital of Uzbekistan)

Tashkent is a very ancient oasis, whose population rose from *c.* 60,000 to 80,000 inhabitants in 1865, 156,000 in 1897 and 271,000 in 1914. The construction of the Tashkent–Orenburg railway in 1906 (see below) boosted the imports and exports through the city: by 1912, this line was hauling more freight than the Transcaspian one.<sup>31</sup>

New towns, particularly in the steppes, had a strong influence on the history of the region, yet their population was still relatively low. In 1903, Aktyubinsk had a population of 4,300; Kokchetav, of 6,000; Pavlodar, of 7,500; Akmolinsk, of 8,800; Guriev, of 9,600;

<sup>29</sup> Masal'skiy, 1913, p. 348.

<sup>30</sup> Frunze. *Entsiklopedia*, 1984, p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> *Istoriya Uzbekskoy SSR*, 1956, p. 210.

Ust-Kamenogorsk, of 10,000; Petropavlovsk, of 21,700; Semipalatinsk, of 31,000; and Uralsk, of 39,000.<sup>32</sup> Omsk, the capital of Steppe governor-generalship, had a population of 128,000 in 1911.

The fortress of Krasnovodsk, founded in 1869 on the Caspian, received the status of town in 1896. Its population reached 8,000 according to M. V. Lavrov, and 20,000 according to A. Woeikof in 1912.<sup>33</sup> Krasnovodsk is a good example of a town that was founded due to the growing utilization of the Caspian. However, after a dramatic increase of trade through the city, the construction of the Tashkent–Orenburg railway led to a fall in trade.<sup>34</sup>

Turtkul is another example of a town founded in the desert of Turkistan, while the town of Ferghana was founded (under the name of Skobelev) in a highly urbanized environment, which was quite unusual. Skobelev had a population of 16,000 in 1912.

The Russian quarters in already existing towns were home to significant numbers of people. Russian Tashkent had 55,000 inhabitants in 1909, or a quarter of the total population of the town at that time, which was 202,000.

In the protectorates of Bukhara and Khiva, where the changes were not so marked, the urban centres traditionally had large populations: Bukhara, 80–100,000; Karshi, 60–70,000; Guzar, 20,000; and Khiva, *c.* 20,000.<sup>35</sup> Russian civilians and the military in the emirate mostly lived in the new city of Kagan, 15 km from Bukhara, under the resident-general. The capital of the previous Uzbek khanate of Kokand had a population of 120,000 in 1914.

## RIVER TRANSPORT

Prior to the conquest of Central Asia, its rivers were of fundamental significance to the life of the area. During the second half of the nineteenth century, however, their role in the economy and strategic policies of the empire diminished. Initially, Peter the Great's dream had been to link Russia with India via the rivers. However, the geography of Central Asia, with mainly land-locked rivers, and the fact that many of them are barely navigable, prevented a wide economic use of fleets. Nevertheless, Russia displayed a strategic approach to the question and created regional flotillas:

Between 1850 and 1869, at the cost of vast efforts, Russia caused to be brought from Orenburg to the Aral Sea several vessels built in Sweden, England and Belgium, in the hope of creating a fleet intended for the movement of military hardware with the idea of enlarging it later to foster trade in Central Asia.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Kirgizkiy kray*, 1903, pp. 180–1.

<sup>33</sup> Lavrov, 1916, p. 177; Woeikof, 1914.

<sup>34</sup> *Istoriya Uzbekskoy SSR*, 1956, Vol. 1, p. 210.

<sup>35</sup> Masal'skiy, 1913, p. 349.

<sup>36</sup> Moser, 1885, p. 58.

The attempts made on the Syr Darya were less successful. The commercial fleet on the Amu Darya was of some importance, but the construction of the railways, particularly the Orenburg–Tashkent railroad in 1906, lessened the role of river transport.

By far the most active river trade in the whole of Central Asia was on the Irtysh. The establishing of a secure frontier with China at the beginning of the 1880s led to an increase in trade with China and Mongolia due to the river. Therefore, the trade on the Irtysh was significant for Russia in its exploitation of Central Asia as well as in its international relations with important neighbours.

### CONSTRUCTION OF THE TRANSCASPIAN RAILWAY AND ITS IMPACT

The introduction of the railway was a major innovation in Central Asia and was a direct consequence of the policy of making the colonies profitable. Preparations needed to be made for possible military operations southwards, to guarantee the internal and external security of the territory, and to make it profitable for the colonial power. Russia was quite late in constructing railways; however, its network increased very rapidly after 1865. By 1880, just before the construction of the Transcaspian railway, Russia had built 21,000 km of railways, and 70,000 km of railways were built in 1906.

Transport by camel, horse, donkey or yak, which had been used for centuries, was suddenly largely replaced by the Transcaspian railway. The construction of this railway was a triumph of technology. Construction of the Transcaspian was commissioned and brought to completion by the Russian General Annenkov. There were many disputes over the final trajectory of the track. More than 40 projects had been submitted, including one by Ferdinand de Lesseps, the ‘Asian Grand Central’.

Its origin lay in a decision by the military in 1879, when the first Russian defeat in Central Asia (against the Turkmen Tekes) called for a spectacular gesture to wipe out the affront to tsarist omnipotence and facilitate access to the Turkmen fortress of Geok-tepe, which had to be captured (Fig. 3). The railway was to serve to move both troops and military hardware. The battle against the Tekes resumed even before the section of railway line was finished. On 1 January 1881 a new battle gave victory to the Russians, causing more than 6,000 deaths on the Turkmen side. But it was in June 1881 that Ashgabat finally came under Russian rule. In 1885 the station of Kushka became the most forward point of the railway towards Afghanistan and hence towards the British.

The technical achievement is remarkable: 474 km of track were laid in less than 11 months, with the line growing by 1 or 2 km a day. In summer, work went on from 5 a.m. to midday, the sun making it impossible to work in the afternoon. Annenkov recruited some 20,000 Turkmens to speed up completion of the project. The work of extending it



FIG. 3. Geok-tepe. Fortress and the historical war museum. (Photo: © S. Gorshenina-Rapin.)

resumed after the annexation in 1885 of the Merv oasis, which surrendered without resistance, much to the dismay of the British. On the Amu Darya, a wooden bridge was built, which was specially designed to be flexible enough to withstand the river in flood.

The engineers and most of the workers were Russians. They were the ones who ensured both security and maintenance. Each new halt or new technical construction was inaugurated in style and with military fanfares. In 1888 the railway passed 12 km from Bukhara, but without entering it, at the Kagan halt. The reason was that the building of the railway was held to be a creation of the Devil, and the mullahs in Bukhara, who represented the religious centre of the region, opposed its entry into the emirate's capital. Russian engineers were threatened with having their throats cut if the train entered the city. On 15 May of the same year, the station of Samarkand was opened. A section was begun in 1898 in the direction of the Ferghana valley. In 1899 Tashkent station opened. The Transcaspian now ran on a line from the Caspian to the Ferghana valley.

This line symbolized Russian colonization in Central Asia, whence the need to guarantee the railway's security. Garrisons were posted along the right of way, in the main towns. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, administration of this railway was in the hands of the military. The Turkmens were the first to be affected by the railway, followed by the populations of the other regions of Turkistan crossed by it.

The introduction of the railway had major consequences for the local economy. At first the passengers were mostly traders, above all Russians and Armenians. The Turkmens, on the other hand, settled in the stations to sell their products when the trains stopped.





FIG. 4. Samarkand. Carriages (*arbas*) of the Sarts. (Photo: © S. Gorshenina-Rapin.)

Initially, there were only as many passengers as there were carriages. Annenkov then did some ‘advertising’ for his train, vaunting the merits of cheap, fast transport for pilgrims who wanted to visit the holy places. It was a great success and the pilgrims were carried in special carriages. Some occupations associated with the caravan trade (muleteers, guides, etc.) inevitably disappeared. Train prices were extremely competitive (Figs. 4 and 5). In 1876 to go from Tashkent to Bukhara took 26 days by camel: the train did the same journey in a quarter of the time at three-quarters of the price.

In addition, the role of the railway was obvious: to check any rebellion in the shortest possible time, to maintain a military presence, to counter British power, to introduce Russian manufactured goods into local markets, to strengthen the Russian presence in the region and to turn the region into a source of raw materials (cotton) for Russian industries. In 1894 the customs barrier between Russia and Bukhara was set up. Russian customs officials were also posted along the Afghan frontier, thus halting the inflow of British Indian goods.

Drawn by the need to maintain the track, the numbers of Russians swelled along the railway line. After 50 years, 250,000 Russians were living along this line in the countryside, while 250,000 others were living in the towns. Businesses were set up, all within 10 km of the railway. Passenger traffic was also rising all the time: between Tashkent and Orenburg, the annual number of passengers rose from 442,000 in 1899, 2.5 million in 1908, 3.4 million in 1910 to 4.25 million in 1912.



FIG. 5. Tashkent. Tramway on Romanov Street. (Photo: © S. Gorshenina-Rapin.)

## FROM STRATEGIC TO ECONOMIC PRIORITIES: THE CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAYS IN THE STEPPES

The Kazakh steppes were first linked to railway networks in their northern fringe, to the city of Uralsk by 1894, in an extension of the line linking this region with Saratov, Riazan and Moscow, and also to the Trans-Siberian (whose construction was decided in 1891) in the region of Omsk and Petropavlovsk. Next, the Transcaspian railway was linked to Orenburg and the European network through the western part of the steppes. Construction of the Tashkent–Orenburg line started in 1900; it began to operate in 1905 and was fully operational by the following year. Its total length was 1,660 km (1,936 *versts*).

## Manufacturing and trade

The first region to be developed industrially was Steppe *kray*, due to the discovery of important minerals, the development of mining, and the concentration on cotton in the colonial exploitation of the southern parts of Central Asia.

### THE COTTON TRADE AND THE RAILWAY

Trade was transformed by the railway: it is still difficult to connect the abundant but scattered information about the multifaceted new dimensions of trade after the 1880s. Every element of the new modernity of the period under review had its impact on the local society: taking the train for the pilgrimage to Mecca, which meant accepting a seat in this



FIG. 6. Kokand. Pot-maker in the old town. (Photo: © S. Gorshenina-Rapin.)

'*shaytan arba*' (Devli's carriage), buying a Russian stove or using Russian bricks to build a home, etc. Many occupations suffered or even disappeared to the benefit of Russian producers, for example pot-making, shoemaking, domestic utensil-making, etc. (Fig. 6). The numerous advertisements for Russian banks in Central Asia, Singer sewing machines and French perfumes found in contemporary publications (such as in Dmitriev-Mamonov's book),<sup>37</sup> the many pictures of colonial Turkistan published in recent books<sup>38</sup> and the large areas of colonial architecture still found in Samarkand and Termez today, as well as in many other cities of the five independent republics, are contrasted with the credo of the Jadids, who wanted to awake their dormant society. These two trends coexisted in Central Asia until the end of the tsarist period.

Cotton was very important for the Russian textile industry, and the share of cotton from Turkistan rose from about 30 per cent to more than 60 per cent in a very short period (from 1908 to 1912).<sup>39</sup> In 1915 more than 350,000 tonnes of cotton were shipped to Russia, compared to 11,000 tonnes by 1877, that is before the construction of the railway and the introduction of American species of cotton.<sup>40</sup> The processing of cotton was partially done in Turkistan itself. The first cotton gins were installed in the 1880s, and Turkistan had about 160 ginning plants by 1914. Processing cotton was the only industrial activity that led to

<sup>37</sup> Dmitriev-Mamonov, 1903.

<sup>38</sup> For example, in Golender, 2002.

<sup>39</sup> Suvorov, 1962, p. 72.

<sup>40</sup> Kostenko, 1890, p. 221.

the creation of dozens of small factories throughout Turkistan. There were a few dozen small factories processing pelts in the steppes.<sup>41</sup>

## FOREIGN INVESTMENT

The few decades of strong Russian economic involvement in Central Asia were also a period of rapidly growing foreign investment in the Russian economy in general: foreign capital amounted to 26.5 million roubles in 1870; 215 million roubles in 1890; and 911 million roubles in 1900.<sup>42</sup> Foreign investment in Central Asia was concentrated in the railways, the cotton industry, the oil sector and the mining industry. (In 1900, 70 per cent of all foreign investment in the Russian economy was still concentrated in the mining industry.) The Spassky Copper Mine, Ltd and the Atbasar Copper Fields, Ltd (in the region of present-day Karaganda) and the Altai District Mining Company (in the Altai) are examples of companies that exploited a number of mines scattered over a large territory with a rapidly rising production. The Ekibastuz mines (north-east of present-day Karaganda) produced 5 million *poods* of coal in 1915, 10 million in 1916 and 17 million in 1917.<sup>43</sup>

In 1895 total Russian oil production amounted to 426 million *poods*, out of which 396 million were produced in Baku and 29 million in the region of Groznyi.<sup>44</sup> The oil industry only really started in Central Asia in the early twentieth century. However, the sector grew extremely fast, and in 1912 the West Ural Petroleum Company and the Central Ural Caspian Company (with British investment) were created in the region of the Emba river. Oil production in this region was concentrated in two sites, Dossor and Makat.<sup>45</sup> In Turkistan, oil had already been discovered near Namangan before the colonial conquest. Industrial production of oil started (on a rudimentary scale) at the end of the 1860s and at the beginning of the 1870s. Another oil field was exploited near Skobelev, and a small refinery was built in 1907.<sup>46</sup>

This Western participation in the economy of colonial Central Asia attracted a handful of foreigners to the region. This was a new phenomenon for Central Asia, a region where representatives of Western powers had never lived in the past (contrary to the situation in China, Persia and the Ottoman empire). Russian law forbade foreigners from owning land or other property in Turkistan, although there were ways of getting round the rules,

<sup>41</sup> Dil' mukhamedov and Malikov, 1963, p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> Fridman, 1960, p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>44</sup> Brockgauz, 1897, Vol. 40, p. 943.

<sup>45</sup> Dossor produced 16,000 tonnes in 1911, 117,700 tonnes in 1913, 270,000 tonnes in 1915, and 240,000 tonnes in 1916. Makat produced 1,500 tonnes in 1915, and 14,500 tonnes in 1916. See Fridman, 1960, p. 81.

<sup>46</sup> *Aziatskaya Rossiya*, 1914, Vol. 2, p. 523.

particularly by taking Russian nationality. Thousands of foreigners, Westerners for the most part, came for longer or shorter periods or settled in Central Asia. Thus Moser met ‘an Italian seedman who had come to Tashkent to produce silkworm eggs, which he wanted to import into Italy, where disease had decimated these valuable insects’.<sup>47</sup>

In the main industrial regions with a strong foreign investment in the steppes, Fridman reports the presence of 19 British, 3 Americans, 3 Swedes, 3 Austrians and 1 Dane working for various companies at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>48</sup> However, there were also foreigners outside the companies in colonial Central Asia: Western merchants, travellers, nannies for wealthy Russian families of Tashkent,<sup>49</sup> as well as the first scholars, for example the British archaeologist Aurel Stein in the Pamirs, the French Joseph Castagné in Steppe and Turkistan regions, and the American Raphael Pumpelly at Merv and Anau. Non-Western foreign communities were small in number; however, Hindu merchants were not uncommon at that time in Central Asia.

### A LOCAL PROLETARIAT

The birth of a working class is part of the overall changes brought about by the colonial economy. Despite the efforts of Soviet historians to attribute an important social and political role to this nascent working class (which is not demonstrated by the history of Central Asia much before 1916), some mention must be made of the formation of a new social group: factory workers. Their numbers were never large: Fridman reports a total of 7,000 workers on the whole Ekibastuz territory in the steppes. From the work of Dil’ mukhamedov and Malikov, it is clear that workers in the various industrial sectors did not exceed a few thousands, among whom were numerous Kazakhs.<sup>50</sup> The emergence of a mixed Russian and local proletariat exposed the local workers to revolutionary ideas – and to the first social movements, such as strikes.

### PRODUCTION AND TRADE

Many products and objects were actively traded towards Russia at this period. Silk production and the silk trade were a significant branch of this colonial economy. Considerable quantities of silk cloth were exported from Central Asia to Russia, while Russian

<sup>47</sup> Moser, 1885, p. 8.

<sup>48</sup> Fridman, 1960, p. 62.

<sup>49</sup> René Koechlin, a young French engineer whose book on his travels in Central Asia in 1888 has recently been discovered and reprinted, met a young nanny escaping from Tashkent when he was in Samarkand: see Koechlin, 2002, p. 133.

<sup>50</sup> Fridman, 1960, p. 39; Dil’ mukhamedov and Malikov, 1963.

manufactured cotton goods were flooding the Central Asian markets (Fig. 7). Carpets were also actively traded to Russia.

Manuscripts and books were also objects of trade, and the decades of tsarist rule were a period of an active accumulation of new academic knowledge on Central Asia, based on better access to the local written sources. Valuable manuscripts have always been bought, sold (and stolen) in Central Asia. Moreover, it was in the nineteenth century that this luxury trade developed in almost every town, especially in Bukhara and Karshi, where manuscripts and printed books were openly displayed in the bazaars. Evidence of this is to be seen in the collections built up by Russian orientalists in the late nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth. One example is the collection of A.L. Kun, who was the first to sort through the Khiva documents in the khan's palace, after the capture of the capital by the Russian army in 1873.<sup>51</sup>

At the time of his mission to Turkistan in the summer of 1902, V. V. Bartol'd whose initial purpose was not to acquire manuscripts but to locate them and study them on the spot, had however been told by the director of the Asiatic Museum not to miss any opportunity that might arise.<sup>52</sup> On his purchasing mission to Bukhara in 1915, V. A. Ivanov collected



FIG. 7. Samarkand. The Char-su bazaar. (Photo: © S. Gorshenina-Rapin.)

<sup>51</sup> See the A. L. Kun Collection, No. 33 in the archives of the Leningrad Division of the Institute of the Peoples of Asia (*LOINA*).

<sup>52</sup> Bartol'd, 1973, Vol. 8, p. 119.

no fewer than 1,057 volumes of Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Judeo-Persian manuscripts in four months.<sup>53</sup>

There are a number of works that deal predominantly with economic history. One such is the unpublished Bukharan *Tārikh-i Sālīmi* [History of Salimi] by Mirza Salim Bek b. Muhammad Rahim ‘Salimi’, historian and Bukhara official, born in 1267/1850–1, who held positions of high office under the last three Manghit emirs.<sup>54</sup> This work, which is written in Persian, is also known as *Qasqul Salami*. It covers the period from the conquest by Chinggis Khan to the Soviet revolution in Bukhara, but focuses mainly on the Russian conquest of the emirate.<sup>55</sup>

## Transforming societies

The response to transforming economies may be traced in many sectors of the local societies and communities. Reformism in Islam, which paved the way for Jadidism in Central Asia (see Chapter 7 below), is one of the responses to the changes that occurred in the heart of the Muslim lands. Besides such ideological attempts to face global issues, local communities also showed a complex mixture of cultural resistance and multi-faceted adaptation to the modernity of that time.

### THE ECONOMY AND INTERCULTURAL CONTACTS

Trade fairs have always been places of intense intercultural contact. This was particularly true during the tsarist period, with a great increase in the number of fairs throughout Central Asia, particularly in Steppe region, for example in the Irtysh valley.<sup>56</sup>

Although most of the colonial economy of Central Asia was developed with Russian or foreign capital, local entrepreneurs also existed and some local capital was not absent from the region. Individuals such as Sa‘id Azimboi helped to finance Jadid schools and newspapers. He also created a new economic journal, *Tujjar* [Trader], in Tashkent. Alikhan Bokeykhanov (1869–1932), the founder of the Alash-Orda movement, had a financial interest in the copper mines in Semipalatinsk *oblast’*.

<sup>53</sup> Today, under the name ‘ Bukhara Collection’, it is held at the *LOIV ANSSR*. For the list of 1,000 Persian manuscripts which was drawn up by Ivanov in 1918 and had not been published, see Ivanov, 1974, pp. 407–36.

<sup>54</sup> In 1870 Emir Muzaffar sent him to Tashkent as a tea merchant, where he remained for twelve years to observe the Russians’ movements, returning every six months to Bukhara to make his reports; then, in 1884, he was appointed Bukhara’s official observer in Tashkent: see Epifanova, 1965, p. 45.

<sup>55</sup> *SVRAN UZSSR*, 1971, Vol. 11, Tashkent, pp. 93–4; manuscript: *IVAN UZSSR*, No. 2016.

<sup>56</sup> On Central Asian and Russian traders, see Rozhkova, 1963.

Photography and even cinema started prior to the end of the tsarist empire. Khudoybergan Divanov (1878–1940) is considered to be the first Uzbek photographer and film-maker. It is believed that the first screenings of films in cinemas took place in Tashkent before the end of the nineteenth century, and in Khujand in 1905.

Many prominent personalities like the great Kazakh and Uzbek writers Abay Kunanbaev (1845–1904) and Mahmud Khoja Behbudi (1875–1919) grew up in a rapidly changing historical context; they were profoundly affected by the varied intercultural contacts. Too little mention is made of the region's scholars (with the exception of Chokan Valikhanov, 1835–65), although they were also part of these transformations: for example, the Kazakhs Musa Chormanov (1818–84), Muhammad Salih Babajanov (1832–71), Tleu Muhammad Seidalin (1837–1902) and others. Some of these prominent historian-ethnographers were also active members of the local branches of the Russian Imperial Geographic Society.

### CENTRAL ASIAN JEWS

Central Asian Jewish communities are also a good (though too rarely studied) example of overall changes due to the new political and economic context of the colonization. From the arrival of tsarist Russia, which set up Turkistan governor-generalship in 1867, down to the first decades of the Soviet era, Bukharan Jews lived in close-knit groups in the great oasis-towns of ancient Transoxania and the Ferghana valley: Bukhara, Samarkand, Merv, Shahr-i Sabz, Panjikent, Kokand and Marghilan. Until the emirate of Bukhara was made a protectorate in 1873, Bukharan Jews formed the only major religious minority alongside the Muslim majority. Various sources agree that they numbered 10,000 out of a total population of some 3 million.

The Russian colonization of Turkistan and the subsequent economic growth led to major changes in the geography of Bukharan Jewish settlements, initiating a wave of emigration from Bukhara to Samarkand, Tashkent and the large towns of the Ferghana valley.<sup>57</sup> The new arrivals thereby hoped to escape the obligations attached to their status as *dhimmis*<sup>58</sup> and enjoy a better legal, financial and social situation than that prevailing in the protectorate of Bukhara until its abolition.

This area, with its rich raw materials (such as cotton, which had been in short supply since the American civil war, silk, coal, copper and oil), had become indispensable to the Russian industrial elite, who were determined to turn it into a profitable region. They hoped to attract the most enterprising Jews by holding out the prospect of possible integration into

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<sup>57</sup> Poujol, 1993, pp. 549–56.

<sup>58</sup> Status granted to the 'People of the Book', principally Jews and Christians.



the economic development planned for Turkistan. A policy of relative liberalism turned on the opening up to local Jews of residence rights and access to property ownership.

Thus began a period that was particularly favourable to the Bukharan Jewish minority – it was to last for the three decades preceding and the three following the Russian colonization. Already prior to the conquest, in July 1833, a decree lifted the ban on Asian Jews becoming members of trading guilds in districts closed to Jews. In 1835 Jews were authorized to attend the fair at Nizhniy-Novgorod; in 1842 they were allowed to carry their goods into Russian towns along the Orenburg line (where Russian and foreign Jews were not usually allowed to live) and then, in 1844, into all the towns of Siberia.

By 1873 a distinction was made among three categories of Central Asian Jews, based on their rights of residence: indigenous or Bukharan Jews (*tuzemnye*) living in Turkistan before the colonial period, paradoxically called ‘foreign Jews’ in the archives, like those coming from Persia or Afghanistan; (eastern) Asian or Central Asian (*aziatskie, sredneaziatskie*) Jews, settled in Turkistan after the Russian colonization, who enjoyed the exclusive right to reside in Moscow for their business affairs; and finally Russian (western) Jews, of whom there were only a few before 1917.<sup>59</sup>

With the decree of 29 April 1866, some Bukharan Jews could claim the status of Russian subject (*poddanstvo*).<sup>60</sup> Joining a Russian trading guild was the simplest way of gaining that status, although there were many administrative pitfalls. Membership of the First Guild of Russian Merchants was accessible to only a few major Bukharan entrepreneurs who were either rich or had become wealthy in a few years in Kokand and Tashkent. Examples were the Vodiaev father and sons (who called themselves the ‘Rothschilds Turkistan’); the Simkhaevs; the Potilahovs, settled in Kokand, who owned silk-spinning mills, carding, karakul skin and railway-coach businesses and controlled the bulk of the export of cotton to Russia and England; and the Davydov (Davidoff) family settled in Tashkent.

Thus, by the beginning of the twentieth century, there were 8,032 Jews settled in Turkistan, and some 14,400 in 1908.<sup>61</sup> However, these figures, taken from the 1897 census, even when supplemented by Count Pahlen’s revision in 1907–8, are unreliable (since Jews hid from the census enumerators). In the 1926 census, a linguistic criterion was adopted (Judeo-Tajik or *tuzemno-evreyskiy yazyk*). This produced a total count of 18,172 Jews, 17,816 of whom were living in urban areas and 356 in rural areas. After seeking to conciliate an enterprising religious minority (the only one available) that was also well-disposed

<sup>59</sup> The 1926 census indicates that there were 19,611 Yiddish-speakers in Uzbekistan: see Amitin-Shapiro, 1933, p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> Before then, Bukharan Jews were forced to turn to Muslim intermediaries to trade with Russia: see Davidoff, 2002, pp. 185–214.

<sup>61</sup> Dmitriev-Mamonov, 1903, p. 322.

towards it, the Russian Government was thus 'overtaken' by the 'Jewish question' It was precisely from the late 1890s that Russian policy began to harden towards the Jews of Central Asia.

## Conclusion

A rapidly changing economy and trade, more slowly changing political structures and societies, and slowly evolving mentalities – these were the three different, yet closely interconnected frameworks which constituted a unique reality during the period under review and which were addressed from many different points of view by political elites and thinkers, both the colonizers and the colonized.

Coal in Steppe region but also in Turkistan near Khujand, Chimkent and in the Ferghana valley, the processing of wool, fishing in the rivers and on the Caspian and Aral seas – all the diverse sectors of the economy and trade between Central Asia and Russia were influenced by the increasing concentration of capital during the tsarist period.

As we have seen through the example of the Transcaspian railway, the major impact of the Russian occupation was in the economic sphere. To avoid newly created tsarist businesses being harmed by the shortage of cotton (as was the case after the American civil war), the Russian authorities encouraged cotton planting in the new regions that they occupied. This had the direct consequence of destabilizing local agriculture, with the shift from food-crop mixed farming to monoculture. This standardization of plantations led to the great post-revolutionary famines, as basic foodstuffs became scarce.

With the arrival of cotton came banks, branches of big firms and all the activities associated with that industry. This meant a shift to a real market economy. A secure market existed in Russia for Central Asian cotton, combined with favourable food prices, even while food production declined in favour of cotton.

Some local entrepreneurs were able to amass great fortunes. Nevertheless, the ongoing changes provoked new questionings and revolts. Consequently, the development of a colonial economy went hand in hand with the birth of reformism in Central Asia.

At the end of the period under review, the *inorodtsy* were faced with a refusal to recognize their military capacities on the part of the colonial authorities, which poisoned relations between the communities. To avoid teaching them how to use weapons, they were excused from military service. But Russia would remember its *inorodtsy* in 1916, when it was engaged in the First World War. Calls for mobilization would then be placarded in every town and village, but, instead of conscripting future soldiers, it was labourers that were needed. All these *inorodtsy* were given spades to dig ditches and do road

maintenance. This policy of segregation was the last straw in a resentment that had been building up for years. It took hold in the steppes and the oases of Turkistan. The revolt of 1916 was a turning-point in this period of Central Asian history.