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THE POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN THE TURKESTAN REGION IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES: MAIN DIRECTIONS AND OUTCOMES

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In the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the Turkestan Region occupied an important place in the foreign and domestic policy of the Russian Empire. As a result of military campaigns, Russia established control over a significant part of Central Asia and developed a system of administrative governance, with the Turkestan Governor-Generalship becoming its most important component. The policy of the Russian Empire in the region was simultaneously aimed at strengthening its military and political positions, developing the local economy, and integrating the region into the imperial administrative and economic system. At the same time, Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia, known as the “Great Game,” played an important role in shaping Russian policy.

One of the principal directions of Russian policy was the military and political consolidation of the region. Following the completion of the major military campaigns, the Russian administration faced the tasks of securing the empire’s southern borders, establishing a stable system of governance, and preventing external political threats. Important stages in this process included the establishment of a Russian protectorate over the Emirate of Bukhara in 1868, the signing of the Treaty of Gandymian with the Khanate of Khiva in 1873, and the



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abolition of the Kokand Khanate in 1876. As a result, the Russian Empire strengthened its military and political position in Central Asia.

Land and taxation policies occupied an important place in the activities of the Russian administration. Following the adoption of the “Regulation on the Administration of the Turkestan Region” in 1867, the adaptation of traditional forms of land tenure to the Russian administrative system began. The policy pursued by Governor-General K. P. von Kaufman was aimed at transforming land relations and weakening the economic position of the traditional local elite. At the same time, the taxation system was reorganized: a unified household tax was introduced for nomadic populations, while the sedentary population continued to pay the land tax (kharaj) and trade tax (zakat).

The Russian administration paid considerable attention to the economic development of Turkestan, particularly to cotton cultivation. The region was gradually transformed into a raw-material base for Russian industry. In order to increase cotton production, agronomic research was conducted, experimental farms were established, and improved varieties of cotton were introduced. As a result, by the end of the 19th century, Central Asia had become one of the principal suppliers of cotton to Russian industry. However, the expansion of cotton cultivation was accompanied by a reduction in the area devoted to food crops, which adversely affected the food situation of the local population.

Railway construction became an important factor in the economic integration of Turkestan into the Russian Empire. The Trans-Caspian Railway was of particular importance, as it established closer connections between the region and the central parts of the empire. The development of transport infrastructure contributed to the acceleration of trade, the expansion of commercial ties, and an increase in the export of cotton and other raw materials. At the same time, manufactured goods



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from European Russia increasingly entered Turkestan, further integrating the region into the imperial economic system.

Another important direction of Russian policy was settler colonization. The Russian government sought to strengthen its presence in the region by encouraging the migration of peasants from European Russia and Siberia. The settlement policy contributed to population growth and the agricultural development of the region. At the same time, however, it intensified the land question. The allocation of land to settlers was in a number of cases carried out at the expense of the land resources of the local population, becoming a source of social tensions and conflicts.

Thus, the policy of the Russian Empire in the Turkestan Region was comprehensive in nature and included military-political, administrative, economic, and colonization measures. The reforms contributed to the development of transport infrastructure, the growth of certain sectors of the regional economy, and the integration of Turkestan into the wider imperial economic system. At the same time, these processes were largely subordinated to the interests of the imperial center and consolidated Turkestan's role as a supplier of raw materials and a market for Russian manufactured goods. Russian policy consequently became one of the major factors contributing to the socio-economic transformation of Central Asia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Keywords: Russian Empire, Turkestan Region, Turkestan Governor-Generalship, Central Asia, colonial policy, cotton cultivation, settler policy, "Great Game," K. P. von Kaufman.