Tsarist Russian Imperialism

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Part I: The Conquest of Inner Asia

Tsarist Russian imperialism, while acknowledged as having occurred, is, to a surprising degree ignored in the specialised study of the Russian empire and neglected in general theories of imperialism. The reasons for ignoring it may be traced in part to the polemic of the Great Game in Asia in the nineteenth century and to superpower rivalry in the twentieth. This has been done by incorporating expansionism into a posited *essence* of Russia, by presenting her as being in a state of endemic inflation since the sixteenth century, and thus inventing a part of 'the Russian Tradition'. The outward movement of Moscovite Russia has been described as an elemental, instinctual, natural, *ergo* mindless process, akin to the seasonal migration of birds[1] or the revolution of the earth round the sun,[2] all induced and permeated as much by the dementia of Ivan the Terrible as by the paranoia of the pock-marked Georgian. Russia, however, was in no sense unique in this matter. Britain and France were similarly in a state of almost unimpeded expansion from the sixteenth century until the process was reversed

[1] Cited in R. Wittram, 'Das russische Imperium und sein Gestaltwandel,' *Historische Zeitschrift*, no. 187, 1959, pp. 583–84, fn. 2.

[2] George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia in 1889 and the Anglo-Russian Question*, London, 1889, p. 319.

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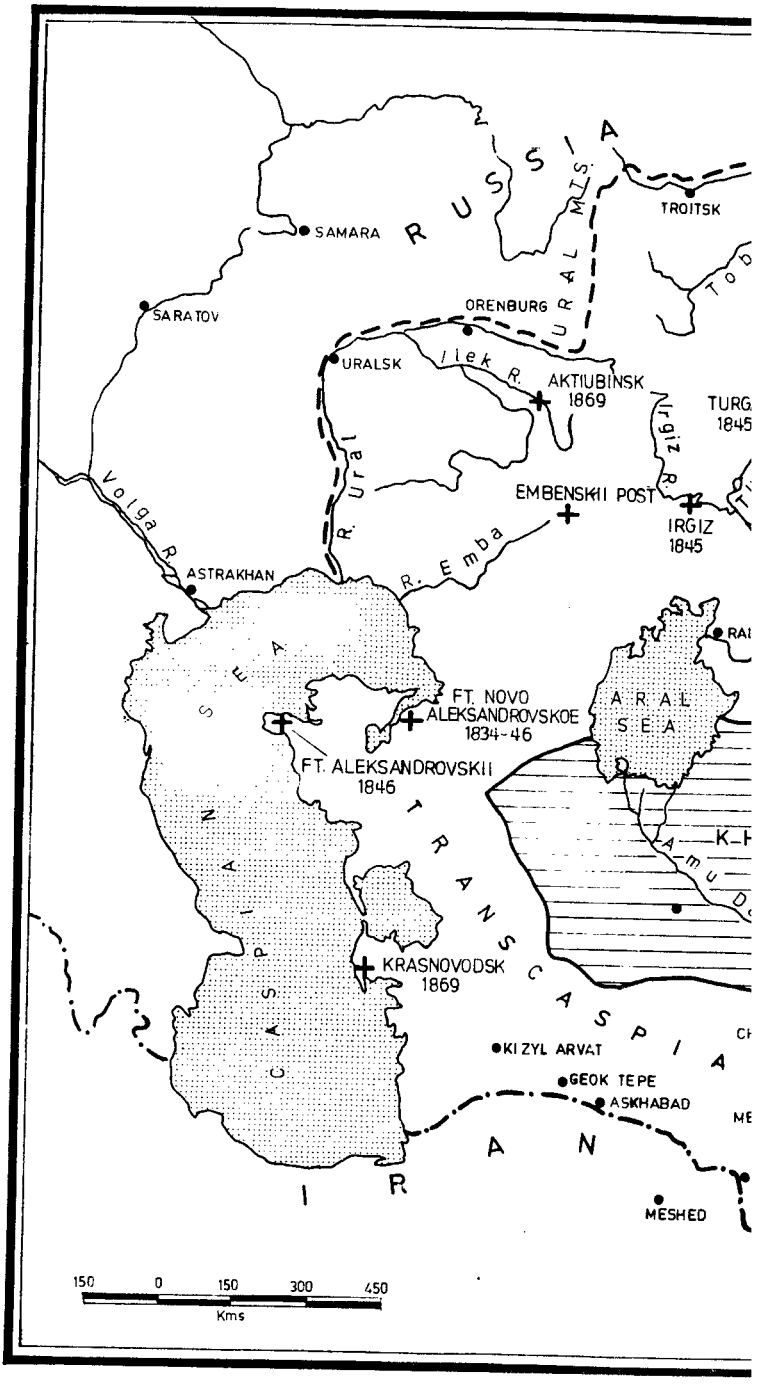

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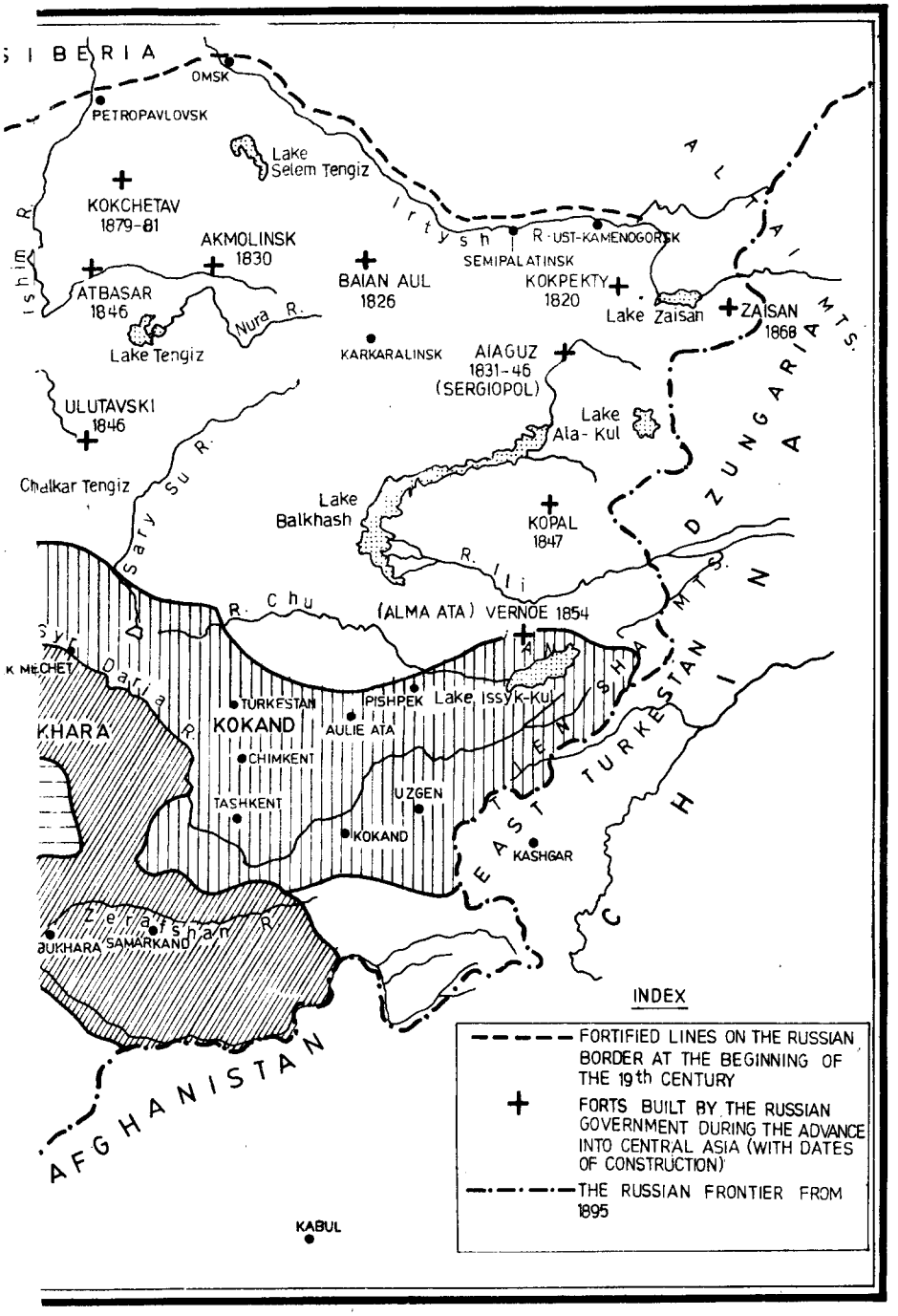

in mid-twentieth century in India and Vietnam; Spain and Portugal had that experience between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries; and the United States moved outward from the nineteenth. Even the distinction between overseas and overland expansion does not apply if America be considered. The cliché of Muscovite expansionism has neither the merit nor the wit of Oblomov's languid comment that Englishmen are compelled to travel because their own homeland is so miniscule.[3] Nor was Russia alone in each phase of this process. The Mongol empire crumbled under the combined assault of Ming China, Safavid Iran, and Muscovite Russia; Poland was shared out between Russia, Austria, and Prussia, with Frederick II 'partaking eucharistically of Poland';[4] Finland came as Napoleon's gift; the Caucasus was disputed between Turkey, Iran, and Russia; Kazakhstan with China, Dzungaria, and Khiva; the Turkmen with Iran and Khiva; Central Asia and the Maritime Province and Amur came as parts of deals and rivalries with Britain; Manchuria was a joint venture with all the imperialist powers, including Japan and Italy; and the whole of the Eastern Question was another combined effort at keeping the Ottoman empire in a state of permanent asthmatic seizure. All this clearly cannot be collapsed into one process nor ascribed to the malign genius of Ivan.

We are concerned here with modern imperialism as an industrial capitalism relating to a pre-industrial world by dominating and under-developing it. This occurred only in the nineteenth century and in the company of a host of other colonial powers. It has been neglected in general theory in part on the assumption that Russia was too backward to have sustained a genuine imperialism. The backwardness of a Russia 'dripping with pearls and vermin' has been routinely presented in history, theory, and fiction to the point of its having attained 'the fixity of a popular prejudice'. But this is a deliberate Eurocentrism. It has been smugly maintained by the European as an insulation against the great power status of Russia, and vigorously asserted by the Russian intelligentsia and imperial bureaucracy to measure the distance from their goal of an industrial society. The concept of her backwardness was as much a strategy as the fact of it might have been obviously true by the usual comparative indices of growth. However, the fact of the comparison, not the result of it, shows where Russia truly belonged, to the industrial world of the nineteenth century, even if it was the weakest link in the chain. Hence her inclusion in the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, volumes 6–8, along with the USA and Japan but without the whole of the south of Europe, including Italy, or even such important societies as the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Austria, leave alone east-central or south-east Europe. Further, the Soviet development of the Tsarist colonies has sundered them from their immediate neighbours to the south and from their own colonial past, which therefore now seems antediluvian, save of course to those who prefer to claim that the Soviet

[3] I.A. Goncharov, *Oblomov*, pt. 2, ch. 3.

[4] Norman Davies, *God's Playground. A History of Poland*, vol. 1, *The Origins to 1795*, Oxford, 1981, p. 511.

Union is still a colonial empire. Rather than be so neglected, this history should be of special interest as the only colonial empire from which political unity and economic development have emerged as congruent rather than divergent processes. As such it runs counter to the standard model of decolonisation for having induced development without political separation; it is thus arguably the earliest case of decolonisation and national liberation, both earlier than the Indian. It is an especially interesting instance of a backward capitalism or a 'developing society' setting out on a colonial career just as another, the Iberian, lost it in South America, and then of the core and periphery fusing within the same state. These processes command attention, not as peculiar emanations from a Russian essence but as examples of the general problems of modern history contained uninterruptedly within a single territorial state.

This study will examine the conquest of a colonial empire in Inner Asia[5] in this part, and, in the following two parts, the creation of a colony in the steppe and Turkestan, and the processes of decolonisation and national liberation in the Revolution and Civil War. The conquest of Central Asia and of Kazakhstan has been explained by a combination of the following three elements: the civilising mission, the commercial and investment needs of Russian capitalism, and Anglo-Russian rivalry in Central Asia, otherwise known as the Great Game.

All these elements, whether severally or jointly, date to the beginning of the colonial conquest itself; but they are now presented in modern garb with the apparatus of research, and sometimes without even that. The civilising mission is the least respectable for its having been such a crassly colonial and racist ideology of justification; but, as will be seen, it seems to have lost none of its attractions for modern historians, whether western or indeed Soviet. The other two explanations, respectively economic and political, are engaged in brisk rivalry, as in other parts of the world, the divide between Gallagher and the 'economic' theories, mistakenly identified as anti- and pro-Marxist. Let us begin therefore with the first, *la mission civilisatrice*, by which Russia assumed the White Man's Burden of bringing peace, prosperity, order, and rationality to the 'Orientals' of Kazakhstan and Central Asia.

The Civilising Mission

From the early nineteenth century Russians systematically accused their neighbouring 'Asiatics' and 'Orientals' of unmitigated barbarism and violence, lawlessness and restlessness, ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism. The specific charges against the nomadic Kazakh, Kirghiz, and Turkmen, and the sedentary Uzbek and Tajik, were that they traded in Russian slaves, that they ceaselessly attacked Russian settlements on the Siberian

[5] Inner Asia here denotes the modern Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirgiziia, and Turkmenistan. Central Asia is Inner Asia minus Kazakhstan. More generally, as would be evident from the context, Inner Asia applies to the nomadic world of Eurasia.

frontier and Russian caravans in the steppe, and that they never could or would respect the sanctity of international law as prescribed by the Russian government. The reasons for such wickedness lay in a certain political and social flux such that they could not gain enough control over themselves to emerge from their cultural decay, intellectual stagnation, and religious fanaticism. Russia, therefore, in order to protect her subjects from slavery, her frontiers from raids, and her trading caravans from assault, was compelled to bring peace and order at the point of the sword to these territories. This demanded expansion across a series of deliquescent states until she abutted on those with firm institutions and boundaries, namely, colonial India, and, presumably, Iran and China. Such reasoning was then presented in formal and unabashed terms by the foreign minister, A.M. Gorchakov, in the oft-quoted circular note to the powers in 1864:

> The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilised states which are brought into contact with half savage, nomad populations, possessing no fixed social organisation.
>
> In such cases it always happens that the more civilised state is forced, in the interests of the security of its frontier and its commercial relations, to exercise a certain ascendancy over those whom their turbulent and unsettled character make most undesirable neighbours.
>
> First there are the raids and acts of pillage to be put down. To put a stop to them, the tribes on the frontier have to be reduced to a state of more or less perfect submission.

This then became ineluctably continuous:

> Such has been the fate of every country which has found itself in a similar position. The United States of America, France in Algeria, Holland in her colonies, England in India—all have been irresistibly forced, less by ambition than by imperious necessity, into this forward movement, when the great difficulty is to know where to stop.[6]

A major statement of foreign and colonial policy, it was Russia's claim to complete equality with the rest in the matter of colonial expansion.

It is interesting that this justification has been repeated a full century later, in both western and Soviet historiography. To cite the standard examples, Richard Pierce, an American historian and the author of the textbook account in English, lists the reasons for the expansion as follows and in the following order: Kazakh raids on Russian settlements and towns, lands suitable for Russian settlement, the wealth of Turkestan, and the Great Game in Asia with Britain.[7] Nomadic violence thus heads the

[6] Quoted in Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864–1914. A Study in Imperialism*, New Haven, 1968, p. 8.

[7] Richard A. Pierce, *Russian Central Asia, 1867–1917. A Study in Colonial Rule*, Univ. of California Press, 1960, pp. 17–18.

list. Another modern textbook, a British account by, as might almost be expected, an ex-colonial Indian army officer, Geoffrey Wheeler, has remained faithful to Gorchakov thus:

> . . . . . it was inevitable that she [Russia] should expand southward to the frontiers of properly constituted states. When the Russians appeared on the scene, the peoples of Central Asia were just beginning to recover from long centuries of foreign invasion, massacre, and enslavement. Russia was the only power on the Asiatic mainland with the necessary military strength, dynamism, and economic urge to take over responsibility for the Central Asian steppes, desert, and mountainous regions.[8]

On the Soviet side, N.A. Khalfin has a different combination of the same reasons. The Central Asian khanates were a series of feudal despotisms incapable of even pretending to adhere to international treaties or preserving documents; Khivan slave-raiding compelled Russia to resort to military solutions after peaceful or diplomatic effort failed; Kazakh and Turkmen brigandage instigated by Khiva and Kokand led to serious losses by Russian trading caravans, so that Russia was forced, once again, to military solutions; these were then followed by Russia's main interest, the market needs of Russian capitalism and Khalfin's need to disprove the Great Game thesis.[9] The force of Gorchakov's arguments on Asiatic barbarism and Oriental despotism does not in the least seem to have abated; they cannot therefore be dismissed as mere colonial propaganda and need to be examined more closely. Let us therefore begin with slavery, brigandage in the steppe, and raids on frontier settlements.

Russian complaints on slavery were twofold: it was an intolerable assault on Russian sovereignty and it was immoral and inhuman. The Russian side thus appropriated international law and morality by presenting Russia as an innocent victim of unilateral attack and as one who had long forsaken such barbarism. The major slave markets that concerned Russia were in Khiva and Bukhara in Central Asia and another in Istanbul. Only the Central Asian markets dealt in Russians. With Khivan backing, Kazakh and Turkmen tribesmen seized Russians from the steppe or from among those out fishing in Caspian waters near the Emba and sold them off in Bukhara; Iranians suffered the same fate at Turkmen hands. Istanbul received only Caucasian tribesmen and some Georgians from Russian territory, but not Russians.

[8] Geoffrey Wheeler, *The Modern History of Central Asia*, London, 1964, p. 64.

[9] N.A. Khalfin, *Rossiia i khanstva Srednei Azii (pervaia polovina XIX veka)* Moscow (hereafter M.), 1974, pp. 16, 24, 41–45 ff; see also his *Politika Rossii v Srednei Azii (1857–1868)*, M., 1960, pp. 20–27. This is just the point that Khalfin's colleague, N.S. Kiniapina, has deplored as colonial apologetics although with reference to a nineteenth century author: she might well have cited Khalfin himself, see N.S. Kiniapina, 'Sredniaia Aziia vo vneshnepoliticheskikh planakh tsarizma (50–80e gody XIX v.)', *Voprosy Istorii*, 1974, no. 2, p. 37.

From the extremely rough guesswork of interested Russians and British propagandists of that time, we can form only a hazy idea of the numbers involved. Nobody distinguishes between military captives, fugitives in Central Asian employ, cases of self-sale by destitutes, those in search of employment, and outright slave-raiding. There were numerous military conflicts between Russian forces on the one side and Kazakhs independently or Kazakhs and Turkmen under Khivan suzerainty on the other, all leading to military captives in large numbers. Thus, in an exchange of *prisoners*, not slaves, between Russia and Khiva in 1837–8, 130 Russian *prisoners* were returned, with another 416 in 1840.[10] This was probably the vast majority of Russians, whether slaves or others, to be found in Khiva, if we examine the statistical guesswork of various travellers. Murav'ev in 1819 claimed that there were 3000 Russian slaves in Khiva with another 30,000 Iranians, all most dubious since his sole source seems to have been a Russian slave he encountered there.[11] Meiendorff, the following year, thought there were only five to six hundred in Bukhara.[12]

As Arthur Conolly, the British colonial officer on an overland mission to India then pointed out, with some justice, Bukhara was the main slave market and had a population six times as large as the Khivan, so Khiva could not possibly have had six times as many Russian slaves as Bukhara did.[13] He thought the figure more likely to be in the hundreds than in the thousands, but, being a British publicist, of course, had good reason to reduce the figure. Gagemeister, the Russian economist, then loosely gives a figure of 30–40,000 slaves for Khiva, chiefly Iranian, and his source is obviously Murav'ev; while Vambéry cheerfully hands out the figure of 30,000, again chiefly Iranian, but in Bukhara. Clearly, they all seem to be copying from each other, and not very accurately at that, with a peculiar fixation on the figure of 30,000 Iranians but evidently confusing Khiva and Bukhara.[14]

Meiendorff, as a Russian colonial officer, certainly had no grounds to underestimate when he arrived at 600 for Bukhara; so Khiva could not possibly have had much more. Of these, it is not at all clear how many were slaves and how many were in some form of employment, military,

[10] Khalfin, *Rossiia i khanstva*, p. 253; M.A. Terent'ev, *Istoriia zavoevaniia Srednei Azii*, vol. 1, St Petersburg (hereafter Spb), 1906, p. 175.

[11] M.N. Mouraviev, *Voyage en Turcomanie et à Khiva fait en 1819 et 1820*, trans. from the Russian by M.G. Lecointe de Laveau, Paris, 1823, pp. 355–56.

[12] Baron Georges de Meyendorff, *Voyage d'Orenburg à Boukhara fait en 1820, à travers les steppes qui s'étendent à l'est de la mer d'Aral et au delà de l'ancien Jaxartes*, Paris, 1826, p. 285.

[13] Arthur Conolly, *Journey to the North of India Overland from England through Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan*, 2nd edn, vol 1, London, 1838, pp. 148–49.

[14] Julius de Hagemeister [Gagemeister] 'Essai sur les ressources territoriales et commerciales de l'Asie occidentale, le caractère des habitans, leur industrie et leur organisation municipale,' *in Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Russischen Reichs und der angränzenden Länder Asiens*, ed. K.E. Von Baer and Gr. von Helmersen, vol. 3, Spb, 1839, p. 270; H. Carrère d'Encausse, *Réforme et révolution chez les musulmanes de l'empire russe, Bukhara 1867–1914*, Paris, 1966, pp. 52–53.

technical, artisanal, agricultural, or medical, with limits on their liberty of movement. It is attested by all that Russians were prized for their military and related technical expertise, especially in casting cannon and handling artillery.[15] Indeed, Iran employed as many as 7000 Russians in her army in 1838 according to Conolly; and Popov has confirmed from Russian archives that an entire battalion of Russian and Polish deserters under one Samson Khan participated in the seige of Herat in 1838 and was then amnestied and withdrawn to the Caucasus.[16] Russian deserters in Iranian employ could not have been very free men; but nobody has accused Iran of practising slavery, perhaps because she was a Russian ally. Finally, Russian accounts of the conquest of the khanates in the 1860s merely announce with much fanfare that slavery was at once abolished, with never a figure as to how many Russian slaves might have been liberated nor any account of their repatriation.

Thus Khalfin, who has specifically listed this as one of the reasons for the expansion and otherwise waxes eloquent on the barbaric misdeeds of Khiva, does not deign to investigate the emancipation of slaves after the conquest of 1873 beyond mentioning the bare fact of such a stipulation in the Russo–Khivan treaty of that year.[17] Khidoiatov provides a minimum account, but only of the liberation of Iranian slaves and their repatriation under armed Russian escort via Krasnovodsk and Meshed.[18] The prolonged research of Khalfin and others in archives has not taken us beyond the detail already supplied by the American diplomat, Schuyler, in the 1870s. Like everybody else, he cites the figure of 30,000 for Iranian slaves, and like Khidoiatov, describes the repatriation via Krasnovodsk and Meshed. But he further claims, from contemporary Russian newspaper reports, that not more than 5000 Iranians were in effect freed. Once again, there is no mention of Russian slaves at all.[19] Clearly, there were no Russian slaves in Central Asia beyond the few hundred *prisoners* set free in the early forties.

These details suggest that colonial propaganda has conflated several different categories of Russians, especially military captives and slaves and therewith warfare and slaving. The only point which seems evident is that Iranians were the chief target of slaving as they were indispensable for agricultural labour in both Khiva and Bukhara. The Russians were just a sprinkling, the result of frontier conflicts, not of systematic acquisition. Prisoners, naturally enough, were put to work rather than be allowed to

[15] Khalfin, *Rossiia i khanstva*, p. 25; Mouraviev, *op. cit.*, pp. 355–56; M.P. Viatkin, *Srym Batyr*, M-L 1947, pp. 134–35; N.G. Apollova, *Ekonomicheskie i politicheskie sviazi Kazakhstana s Rossiei v XVIII-nachale XIX v.*, M., 1960, p. 82.

[16] Conolly, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 214; A.L. Popov, 'Bor'ba za sredneaziatskii platsdarm,' *Istoricheskie Zapiski* no. 7, 1940, pp. 205–06.

[17] N.A. Khalfin, *Prisoedinenie Srednei Azii k Rossii (60–90e gody XIX v.)* M., 1965, p. 308.

[18] G.A. Khidoiatov, *Iz istorii anglo-russkikh otnoshenii v Srednei Azii v kontse XIX v. (60–70x gg.)*, Tashkent, 1969, p. 101.

[19] Eugene Schuyler, *Turkistan: Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkistan, Khokand, Bukhara, and Kuldja*, vol. 2, London, 1876, pp. 353–54.

fatten on the Khivan exchequer, and so were called slaves. Russia did the same with her Khivan, Kazakh, and Turkmen prisoners, but we have little information on them. The significant point is that this was the result of international conflicts between Russia and Khiva, bitter enemies during the twenties and thirties, especially during the reign of the able Muhammad Rahim Khan (1806–25). Russia and Bukhara on the other hand were on good terms; there were therefore little or no complaints against the fact that the chief slave market was in Bukhara, not Khiva. Similarly, there were no complaints against Iran, the Russian ally, employing so many Russians, and even rebellious Poles, in her army. It was thus an affront against Russian sovereignty only to the extent that warfare implies; and, as such, Russia was an equal partner in the game. It is not at all established that Khiva was practising slaving in any systematic manner against Russia. Slavery itself is an entirely different matter and must not be confused with raiding and trading. The problem then, essentially, was one of frontier conflict and war, with little or nothing to do with slavery as such.

On the moral issue Russia derived a capital advantage by demonstrating the fact of it. It was then before European public opinion owing to the abolitionists exposing the full horrors of American slavery and the African slave trade. In addition, its history in Roman antiquity was part of the folklore of Christian Europe. However, slavery in Central Asia and Turkey was very different from either the American or the Roman. Conditions were genuinely far better: a slave could acquire a peculium in Kazakhstan, dignified employment in Turkey and Central Asia, and even reach high office, or be integrated into a well-placed family, especially in Turkey. For these reasons the Circassian tribes were anxious to send their younger members to Istanbul, the men to enter Ottoman military service which promised the best careers, and the women, because, *inter alia*, the royal harem preferred the pretty Adyge lass to the plain Turkish maid. Such women in important households could even influence policy, 'like Brizais in the tent of Achilles', to the benefit of their menfolk at home. Therefore, any Russian attempt at suppressing the traffic only earned them the hostility rather than the gratitude of the Circassian tribes it was designed to benefit.[20]

Even in Central Asia conditions were good according to Burnes, who claims to have studied the Bukharan slave market closely; 'and the circumstance of so many of them continuing in the country after they have been manumitted seems to establish this fact'.[21] But this account by an anti-Russian British officer need not be treated any more seriously than the sombre tales of the Russians, Murav'ev and Meiendorff.

However, Russia's own record was equally stained or worse. What she claimed to be suppressing in Central Asia she, in fact, sustained in Russia

[20] J. Hoffmann, 'Das Probleme einer Seeblokade Kaukasiens nach 1856,' *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischer Geschichte*, vol. 11, 1966, pp. 163–64.

[21] Alexander Burnes, *Travels in Bukhara*, 2nd edn., vol. 2, London, 1835, pp. 241–42.

proper and even encouraged in the Caucasus. Slavery had never, in fact, been abolished in Russia as it had been in Poland; it merely transformed itself gradually into serfdom during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the end of the sixteenth century, coinciding exactly with the great wave of enserfment, full hereditary slavery was replaced by law by limited contract slavery (*kabal'noe kholopstvo*), which meant automatic liberation on the death of the master. With the tax exemption on slaves being abolished in 1649, there was no longer any fiscal inducement to prefer slaves to serfs; and, from 1720, domestic slaves were converted into domestic serfs (*dvorovye liudi*).

A historic decision in 1700 permitted a fugitive slave freedom by mere enlistment in the army, if freedom that be. Throughout the seventeenth century a number of restrictions on the enslavement of foreigners was imposed, and a large part of the chapter 20 of the *Ulozhenie* of 1649 dealt with Tatar slaves. In 1684, the Tatar and Siberian peoples were forbidden to sell themselves into slavery. Slavery thus gradually receded in Russia, to be replaced by something, in personal terms, equally onerous, serfdom.[22]

Even so, it did not disappear altogether, not even officially in Siberia and the border with Kazakhstan. The laws against enslavement were little enforced; and baptism of the heathen meant slavery, at least in this world. The law of 16 November 1737 permitted the sale of Kalmyks and others. In 1742, Nepliuev at Orenburg petitioned for the right to purchase Bashkir children and to exchange them for prisoners, while in 1756, Miatlev, the governor of Siberia, asked for merchants to be allowed to baptise others into slavery. While these demands were not acceded to, the law of 1763 required purchased Asians to be sent to the crown lands in Astrakhan, Kazan, and Orenburg provinces instead of being retained in private service. Yet the Senate ruled that year that no slaves were to be removed from their owners. The ukaz of 9 January 1757 decreed that anybody offered for sale by the Kazakhs may be bought or bartered, must then be baptised, registered, and firmly held by their owners. Thus Siberian slavery was confirmed and extended in the eighteenth century by the highest authorities, not merely carried on surreptitiously by lower instances.

One reason for this, according to Shashkov, was the extension of agriculture in Siberia, especially into the lands left empty by the Enisei Kirghiz and the Dzungarians.[23] The Kalmyk migration into Dzungaria in 1771 was the time of the greatest slave harvests in all the Siberian towns, when the Kalmyks were harried from the south by the Kazakhs and from the north by the Russians and Cossacks. Throughout, natural disasters in the steppe led to huge sales of children by destitute Kazakhs and Kirghiz at the Siberian frontier posts. Equally often, Russian and Cossack punitive raids into Kazakh *auls* were so terrible that only women and children were left alive, if at all, such that enslavement became an act of charity. The ukaz of

[22] Richard Hellie, *Slavery in Russia, 1450–1725*, Chicago and London, 1982, pp. 695–710

[23] S.S. Shashkov, *Istoricheskie etiudy*, vol. 2, Spb, 1872, pp. 105–26.

23 May 1808 once again reaffirmed slavery on charitable grounds. Orphan children so acquired could be used as slaves but were to be freed at the age of 25. Sales until that age were permitted but had to be registered, and the wife and children of such freed men were automatically free. But such laws were easily violated as the enforcers were themselves slave-owners. Any attempts at liberty or petition resulted in dire punishments while courts quibbled over the scope of the ukaz of 1808, especially whether it applied to military captives. The situation improved with the Senate taking a firmer line.

The greatest change then occurred with the ukaz of 8 February 1822 by Speranskii, then governor-general of Siberia, liberating slaves and abolishing slavery altogether. It led to the expected tearful petitions by deprived slave-owners, who lobbied in St Petersburg with the support of Kaptsevich, the next governor-general of Siberia. The Council of State then ruled in 1825 that those bought before 1808 were for life and that only those purchased after that date were to be freed at the age of 25. It also required that children be found foster homes but be released on attaining majority. This was celebrated as a victory by the Omsk slave-owners: and markets for sale and exchange were established and rates announced.[24] The practice declined thereafter, if with numerous infractions of the law and with Kazakh debt bondage continuing into the latter half of the century.[25]

Violations could occur in reverse direction as much. Terent'ev has described the practice of Russian merchants supplying Russian peasants to Kazakh raiders and traders. They would hire peasant labour from the internal provinces of Russia with promise of high wages, and, after the harvest, arrange for their capture, thus securing both free labour and the price of the slave. As usual, such methods were possible only with official connivance and extensive bribery; and it has been recorded until at least 1840.[26] Not surprisingly therefore, a Bukharan mullah described to Alexander Burnes the barbarism of the Russians who ill-treated their slaves, forced them into idolatry, despatched them to Siberia, and inflicted on them that atrocious Russian 'black bread' unlike the gentle treatment they received in Bukhara. Nor is it surprising that Burnes took the trouble of recounting (and possibly embellishing) a barbarian's account of Russian barbarism.[27]

Russian practice in the Caucasian slave traffic is equally revealing. In order to secure control of the Caucasian Black Sea coastline and of the tribes, the Russian administration wished to regulate and manipulate but not abolish the business. They attempted to restrict it until the 1840s by when they found this merely further provoked the tribes. Thereafter, it became the reward for accepting Russian sovereignty, as for the Dzigits of

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 152–64.
[25] M. Raeff, *Siberia and the reform of 1822*, Seattle, 1956, pp. 13–14, 64.
[26] Terent'ev, *Istoriia zavoevaniia*, vol. 1, p. 175.
[27] Burnes, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 253.

Gagay, when they submitted in 1840. It evolved into a partnership between the Russians who used it as a carrot, the tribesmen who sought release from noble savage status in the mountains, and the Turks, who needed labour, especially in Istanbul. Only the British tried to stop it for reasons that need not detain us here, but were not humanitarian. All approaches to Nessel'rode, the foreign minister, brought the standard response, 'what do you want us to do with people who flee?' Finally Stratford Canning agreed that it was impossible to stop the traffic as long as slavery was legal in Istanbul. During the Crimean War it was restricted; but thereafter Miliutin was agreeable to lifting the restrictions and Vorcntsov, the commander-in-chief of the Caucasus, restored it by describing the slaves as 'free passengers' or as 'family members' of pilgrims en route to Mecca. Their Russian citizenship was proclaimed on their passports and even an export toll of five to twenty silver roubles per head was levied.

In 1857, General Filipson pleaded for free trade in men, and Miliutin agreed, with the acid comment that Russian merchandise and human commerce were not in competition with each other. Russia then used the system to depopulate the Muslim Circassian territories while restricting the outflow from Christian Georgia. In 1863, Russia ordered 150,000 of the Abaza tribe to leave. In 1864, the Ubykh tribe was similarly expelled after defeat. The transfer of population was negotiated with a helpless Turkey and the slave trade network was mobilised to organise the tragedy. The Ottoman government claimed that upto one million were so deported; Gorchakov dismissed it at less than 300,000.[28] The Caucasian slave trade thus became first the privilege of Russian citizenship and then the means of depopulating the tribal lands. To the bitter end there was little question of suppression by Russia; only the British were so interested, in keeping with their worldwide preoccupations of the moment.

Not only did Russia practise slavery and its trade in Siberia and then along the Caucasus-Istanbul axis, she also maintained the traffic in human beings in the system of serfdom until its abolition in 1861. It was, in fact, something of an extension or a substitute for the slavery which had declined in the early eighteenth century. The ukaz of 15 April 1721 prohibited the sale of peasants and domestic servants, but earlier laws had, in fact, endorsed it by permitting military recruits to buy substitutes. Otherwise, serfs of bankrupt serfowners used to be sold at public auction along with the rest of their goods. The enlightened Catherine II prohibited such auctions in 1771. But the law was simply disregarded; so she compromised by forbidding only the use of the hammer on such occasions! She also decreed against the purchase of military substitutes; but that again was generally ignored, especially as the state had the greatest need for such recruits. In fact the government itself fixed the rates for such substitutes in 1766 at 120 roubles, in 1786 at 360 roubles, and in 1793 at 400 roubles. In

[28] Hoffmann, 'Das Probleme', pp. 163–64; Ehud R. Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression: 1840–1890*, Princeton, 1982, pp. 115–23, 138–51.

spite of such price ceilings, the market rate was higher, with the greatest landowner of all, Count N.P. Sheremet'ev, doing excellent business by selling substitutes for 400–800 roubles each, and finally establishing a scale according to the wealth of the peasant who needed a substitute. He made the richest serfs pay as much as 2000 roubles for one.

In 1798, Paul had to legislate the prohibition again, this time as against the sale of peasants without land; yet that law was still being routinely flouted in mid-nineteenth century. As might be expected, there was a regular market in slave girls, and even Ivan Turgenev, exiled for his writings against serfdom, bought a girl for himself in the 1850s for 700 roubles. Alexander I forbade advertisements for the sale of serfs, but disguised announcements appeared nonetheless. Recruit substitutes were again prohibited in 1804, but with limited results. In 1808, the sale of serfs without land was both disallowed and the law ignored as usual. Public auction of serfs of bankrupt serfowners continued in the vicinity of the Winter Palace itself. Nicholas I decreed against such sales again in 1833 and 1841, but it all continued down to 1861. Indeed, the virtual repetition of the same set of prohibitions over a century and a half provides some idea of how ineradicable the practice in fact was.[29]

Russia and Khiva were engaged in numerous frontier conflicts: the artist of the colonial genre then painted them in the lurid colours of Khivan slaving; and the Soviet and modern western historian still marvels deliberately or uncritically at the picturesque irrationality he so enjoys viewing. But Russia carried on slave raiding, trading, slavery, and the open purchase and sale of human beings throughout this period on a scale that would make the Central Asian practice seem paltry. Yet the latter has suffered the moral odium for it, then and now. It reflects the 'unequal exchange' of colonial propaganda that no Bukharan or Khivan was able to expose the Russian then. The Russian side needed to justify to Europe, in unanswerable legal and moral terms, the expansion into and impending conquest of Inner Asia; slaving provided the ideal argument.

Anti-slavery was the single most important issue for mass mobilisation in England before Chartism in the 1840s. The mass signature campaigns of 1833 probably attracted more than either parliamentary reform in 1830–1831 or Catholic Emancipation in 1829. In signatures per capita, the campaigns of 1814 and 1833 were probably not surpassed even by the Chartist and anti-corn law campaigns. As an international movement it took form in the 1780s on either side of the Atlantic with only a minor ripple in France at the end of the ancien regime and at the end of the July Monarchy. England was the undisputed centre in Europe. The peeks of mass mobilisation for abolition were attained in 1788, 1792, 1814, 1823, 1830, 1833, and 1838, after which it gradually identified itself with evangelical non-conformism. More interestingly, it mobilised women on a scale

[29] J. Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, Atheneum, New York, 1964, pp. 422–28.

not seen before, despite Mary Wollstoncraft. From the 1820s women were repeatedly urged to form their 'Ladies Anti-Slavery Associations'. In 1833, a petition of 187,000 ' "ladies of England—a huge featherbed of a petition" was hauled into Parliament by four sturdy members'.[30] It was with such a mass abolitionist movement in progress in Britain where governments had to be responsive to public opinion that Russia drove her propaganda machine open throttle; and Britain was the target as Russia's rival for expansion into Central Asia.

Russia clearly won the propaganda point on her civilising mission. John Macdonald, the East India Company envoy to Iran, helplessly reported thus in 1831:

> On what grounds, for instance, can we deny her [Russia] the right of chastising the barbarous governments of Khiva and Bukhara, for the open and civil violation of the laws of nations they are daily guilty of in carrying into slavery the subjects of Russia.[31]

The next year Charles Trevelyan, argued, again somewhat helplessly, that Russia was using slavery as an excuse, therefore she should be permitted to act against Khiva only for the release of her subjects and not for expansion.[32] Which would explain the sudden British fit of humanitarianism on behalf of their sworn enemy languishing in Uzbek captivity, all to deny Russia her perfect excuse for conquest, as Terent'ev expostulated in moral outrage.[33]

So, between 1838 and 1840, during the Afghan crisis and Perovskii's failed invasion of Khiva, a comic series of British missions of slave emancipation set out for Turkestan. In 1838, Colonel Charles Stoddart was sent, at Palmerston's behest, to secure the release of Russian slaves in Bukhara. The Amir was not amused by his mission or his manners, and Stoddart was circumcised and executed for his pains in 1842. In 1840, Lieutenants James Abbott and Richmond Shakespear were despatched for the same purpose to Khiva, and Shakespear was even instructed to purchase the slaves for £10,000 if the need arose. Abbott was contemptuously dismissed by Alla Quli Khan, but Shakespear triumphantly arrived at Novo-Alexandrovsk with 25 Russians in his baggage. The next was Arthur Conolly, who was in any case obsessed with the idea of making English gentlemen out of the

[30] Seymour Drescher, 'Public Opinion and the Destruction of British Colonial Slavery,' in James Walvin ed., *Slavery and British Society, 1776–1846*, London, 1982, pp. 22–48, citation p. 33; see also in the same volume, ch. 2 by James Walvin, 'The Propaganda of Anti-slavery'; and Edith F. Hurewitz, *Politics and the Public Consensus. Slave Emancipation and the Abolitionist Movement in Britain*, London, 1973, *passim.*, esp. pp. 53–54, 96.

[31] Sir John Macdonald to Secret Committee, Court of Directors, National Archives of India, Foreign Department, Secret Consultations, (hereafter NAI, FD, SC) 9 July 1830, no. 9, p. 94.

[32] C.E. Trevelyan to Lord William Bentinck, Delhi, 15 March 1831, NAI, FD, SC, 25 Nov. 1831, nos. 7–10, p. 5.

[33] Terent'ev, *Istoriia zavoevaniia*, vol. 1, p. 174.

human race. With Hobhouse he believed that Anglo-Russian tensions could be dissipated by civilising the East; and the best means to that was to exhibit a true gentleman, namely himself, to the barbarian: 'All that an envoy would require would be to make the appearance of a gentleman amongst them'. Macnaghten in Kabul accordingly instructed him to put together a league of Uzbek states to fight slavery and to conciliate Russia. It is remarkable that everyone, from Palmerston downward, seemed to buy the Russian line that slavery was the chief cause of friction in the region. But perhaps they were more anxious to use that excuse to send more missions and to conduct the argument further with Russia.[34] Even if so, Russia derived the maximum advantage from it, with both a just cause for complaint and the White Man's Burden.

But sharp-witted Iranians did not permit the Russians and British any monopoly of the morality platform. Abbas Mirza, the crown prince, complained to Burnes about Turkmen slave raids:

> I am entitled therefore to the assistance of Britain: for if you expend annually thousands of pounds in suppressing the slave trade in Africa, I deserve your aid in the quarter, where the same motives exist for the exercise of your philanthropy.[35]

The indignant colonial officer could only snort 'cant' in intellectual and moral discomfiture and lamely argue that Abbas Mirza must have got his bright idea from some English friend or newspaper. That is only too likely, given the noise made by the abolitionist cause. The Iranians had obviously learnt how European, and, in particular, British public opinion operated, as indeed the Russians had. Abbas Mirza made Turkmen slave-raiding his public grievance for the Khorasan expedition in 1833.[36] Four years later Muhammad Shah again made Afghan slave-raiding and lawlessness the official excuse for the campaign into Khorasan.[37] Anticipating Gorchakov by nearly three decades, he said as much in a circular to Britain, France, Russia and Turkey in June 1838.[38] It was successful enough for Conolly's instructions to include Iranians along with Russian slaves.

The issue of slavery was thus a battle for European, or rather, British public opinion with little or no serious investigation to this day as to who

[34] M.E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India. Britain, Iran, and Afghanistan, 1798–1850*, Oxford, 1980, pp. 392–414.

[35] Burnes *Travels*, vol. 3, pp. 79–80. Thirty years later Sultan Morad Mirza, governor of Khorasan, asked exactly the same question of Arminius Vambéry, see Vambéry, *Sketch of Central Asia*, London, 1868, p. 229

[36] J.N.R. Campbell, 'Epitome of a Political Journal in Persia for the year 1833,' NAI, FD, SC, 8 May 1834, nos. 1–5, pp. 12–13.

[37] Mirza Allee, Deputy Minister for foreign affairs, to McNeill, 12 April 1838, NAI, FD, SC, 26 Sept 1838, no. 3, p. 63.

[38] Foreign Minister to Nessel'rode, 1 Nov. 1838, NAI, FD, SC, 15 May 1839, no. 53, pp. 73–74.

the slaves were and how many of them there might have been. Russia effortlessly won the battle against Turkestan as she both had monopoly access to the European media and was energetically seconded by the British, who shared her opinions on 'Orientals'. As a result, Russia won out against the British who knew very well that it was all an excuse. Even Iran scored a hit in Britain against Khiva. The function of this propaganda battle was strictly ideological: it provided irrefutable evidence of Asiatic barbarism, proof of Russia facing the same problems as Britain and France, and therefore of the imperative necessity of the civilising mission.

Brigandage in the steppe and the insecurity of frontier settlements were Russia's other most widely advertised and universally accepted grievance against the entire Inner Asian population. Once again these were almost entirely international conflicts or their consequences, all passed off by the Russian side as robbery. For convenience they may be classified into *a*) purely international tensions, and *b*) disputes over customs duties.

The international tensions themselves were of several types. The first of these, purely geographically, were conflicts between the Kazakhs and an expanding Russia. The most famous of these, amounting to guerilla attacks or outright war, were those led by Srym Batyr of the Little Horde between 1783 and 1795; of Kaip-Galii Ishimov, again of the Little Horde, in 1827–1829; of Sultan Sarzhan of the Middle Horde in 1824–1836; of Isatai Taimanov and Makhambet Utemisov of the Little Horde in 1836–1838; of Sultan Kenesary Qasim-uli of the Middle Horde in 1836–1845; and finally of Iset Kutebar-uli of the Middle Horde in the fifties. They were all attacks on Russian penetration of the Kazakh Hordes. Srym Batyr sought to overthrow a khan who owed allegiance to Russia. Kaip-Galii Ishimov, Sarzhan, and Kenesary were all laying claim to the title of khan, recently abolished by Russia. The movements of Iset Taimanov and of Iset Kutebar-uli were both against Russian prestations generally. There were many lesser movements also breaking out sporadically, especially in the Little Horde. In effect, therefore, from the 1780s until the 1850s, the Kazakhs were engaged in hostilities against the Russians all over the steppe. This is not surprising since these were the very years of the Russian military and political conquest of the steppe or modern Kazakhstan. Inevitably Russian trading caravans and settlements were all fair game at such moments. These actions had nothing in common with brigandage but are always presented as such, then and now, in imperial Russian, Soviet, and western historiography.

The next group of conflicts were those between Khiva and Russia. Khiva watched with growing disquiet the Russian expansion into the steppe with the Syr Daria as the intended frontier. At the same time Khiva was expanding in all directions from the beginning of the century, especially northward upto and beyond the Syr, and northwestward to the Caspian and the Emba. The Kazakh tribes owed a highly shifting allegiance to Khiva and Russia, and they were used regularly by each against the other.

Once again, during moments of tension, Russian trading caravans were obstructed and penalised.

The main targets of Khivan attacks were not the caravans so much as the ostentatious Russian intelligence missions which set out from Orenburg with fair regularity. Such a caravan under Ia. P. Gaverdovskii, proceeding to Bukhara in 1803, was plundered by Khivan forces near the Syr. In 1819, M.N. Murav'ev, on another intelligence mission from the eastern banks of the Caspian, was briefly interned in Khiva. In 1824, Colonel Tsiolkovskii's enormous military mission, including Cossacks and infantry and with 1777 camels, was set upon by Khivan forces, half way between the Syr and Bukhara, and had to flee to Russian safety. In 1839 the Russians actually made war on Khiva by sending Perovskii with an expeditionary force which however suffered a defeat as humiliating as the British effort in Afghanistan the next year. Thereafter such conflicts decreased in number as Russian power grew too obviously and menacingly for Khiva to resist meaningfully. These were all Khivan efforts to resist Russian expansion, just as the various Kazakh tribes had tried and failed; and from the 1840s the Khivans gave up the attempt altogether.

The third, and perhaps most frequent type of international conflict consisted of warfare between the Inner Asian states with Russia entering as an ally or suzerain of one of the belligerents. Thus trade was disrupted for a long time between 1816 and 1823 because of war between Khiva and Sultan Arungazy Abdulgaziev of the Little Horde, which was a Russian ally and claimed as an integral part of the Russian empire. At the same time Khiva was at war with Bukhara, Russia's chief trading partner with amicable relations with Russia. Russian attempts at stiffening Bukharan resistance failed. In 1822 therefore Nessel'rode, the foreign minister, suggested to P. K. Essen, the military governor of Orenburg, that Bukhara, Khiva, and the Little Horde meet in conference under Russian auspices to settle the disputes. They did not respond to the invitation of such a partisan honest broker. There was no talk of brigandage here.[39] Khalfin has made the most detailed complaints against Khiva, but he himself has presented the most cogent reasons for Khivan conduct.

This was acknowledged at that time by the leading specialists of Russian-Asian commerce, otherwise most hostile to the khanates on all the usual grounds. Grigorii Nebol'sin in 1835 admitted that in 1822, 1823, and 1824, 'owing to tensions which had arisen among the rulers of Central Asia', there were no caravans at all from Orenburg to Bukhara, and that the usual two to three thousand camel caravans from Orenburg was down to 50 from Tashkent and Troitsk in 1823.[40] Similarly Pavel Nebol'sin also acknowledged that caravans used to be plundered only during wars between

[39] Khalfin, *Rossiia i khanstva*, pp. 133–54.

[40] Grigorii Nebol'sin, *Statisticheskiia zapiski o vneshnei torgovle Rossii*, Spb, 1835, *chast'1*, p. 179.

Khiva and Bukhara when Turkmen tribesmen would be licensed to enter Russian or Bukharan territory in hot pursuit.[41]

Finally, as a permanent backdrop, and relatively unrecorded for that reason, were the routine conflicts between Russian settlers extending their arable lands and fortifications and nomads being obstructed and squeezed by such advance. This was the most ancient nomad-sedentary friction, but now with the dice loaded permanently in favour of the sedentary Russians. All these actions, international conflicts and their consequences and nomad-settler disputes have been lumped together as brigandage by peoples organised for robbery whereas Napoleon's continental system and the innumerable disruptions to trade caused by European war are discussed in the same texts and often on the same page as examples of growing capitalist rationality, which of course they were. Once again, like slavery and slaving, even this was a declining problem from the 1840s, with the Iset Kutebaruli, in 1848, having led the last major movement.

The other point is duties levied by sovereign authorities in the steppe and again described by Russia as robbery. It must be remembered that the khanates were anxious to promote trade, whether transit or otherwise, as they derived substantial revenues from transit and customs dues. Therefore each ruler was keen to ensure transit through his territory. It was not in anybody's interest to plunder caravans and kill the goose that laid these golden eggs. It is a measure of the importance that they attached to these caravans that often the khan himself or his highest officials would personally go out to inspect the caravan when its arrival was notified, usually two days' march from Tashkent or Bukhara.[42]

Murav'ev's mission to Khiva in 1819 failed, not on account of Muhammad Rahim Khan's supposed malevolence, but, as he clearly explained, because he wanted Russian caravans to follow the traditional route through his own territory from Mangyshlak on the east coast of the Caspian rather than via Krasnovodsk further south along the coast as Murav'ev demanded. The new route was inhabited by the Yomud tribe of Turkmen owing allegiance to Iran, not Khiva. Russia wanted the change in order to reduce travelling time from 30 to 17 days. It was a simple incompatibility of material interest.[43] Indeed so keen were they to have Russian caravans pass through Khivan territory that the khan's agents would appear in Orenburg to threaten Russian merchants with dire consequences should they attempt to bypass them. The intemperate tone of Russian denunciation of Khivan levies as outright plunder suggests, not plunder, but Russian consciousness of her immense military superiority to which Khivan assertions of independence appeared an affront.[44]

[41] Pavel Nebol'sin, 'Sledovanie karavanov iz Bukhary v Rossiiu i obratno,' pp. 53–57, in his *Ocherki torgovli Rossii s Stranami Srednei Azii, Khivoi, Bukharoi i Kokanom (so storony Orenburgskoi linii)*, Spb, 1859.

[42] Idem., 'Poriadok ochishcheniia tovarov poshlinoi', pp. 1–4, in *Ocherki torgovli*.

[43] Khalfin, *Rossiia i khanstva*, pp. 104–07.

[44] See for example G.F. Gens, 'Nachrichten über Chiwa, Buchara, Chokand, und den

There were other circumstances also which might appear irrational to Russia. Given the disintegration of the Kazakh Hordes, every sultan in the Kazakh steppe used to levy duties in the territory over which he asserted sovereign authority. Caravans therefore had to pay any number of dues as they passed through a series of such jurisdictions. It was easy indeed to represent all this as unnecessarily expensive and ceaseless plunder, just as the modern traveller paying for a dozen transit visas on a train ride across Europe justifiably might. But there are no figures and trade never seemed to diminish for that reason. With the expansion of Russia into the steppe, all this stopped in what came to be called Russian territory. At the same time however Khiva expanded, especially from the 1820s, and, from the next decade, Kokand also, so that they centralised the collections in their respective territories or deputed the sultans to do so as royal officials. This expansion of the two khanates was denounced as illegitimate by the Russian side although it was symmetrical with the Russian advance.[45] It was thus a problem arising out of a Russian rejection of any sovereignty of anybody at all in Inner Asia on any basis whatsoever, whether parcellated among the sultans or centralised with the khans.

It might not come as a surprise after all this to find that the actual levies were in fact insubstantial save during political conflicts, which are exceptional situations. Pavel Nebol'sin has given us the most detailed account of commercial practices in the steppe after examining more than 200 agents in the business in the 1850s. First of all there was complete security and bonhomie in the steppe after c. 1840 because of Russian punitive expeditions and the construction of the Aral fort in 1839. The armed servants that caravans hired were now more decorative appendages than necessary security.[46] Further, the Khivan customs duty or the *ziaket* was insignificant. Khivan officials were too ignorant about finance and commerce to be able to assess goods; and the job was carried out in great haste without even opening the boxes of merchandise. They could be effortlessly bribed with small amounts and flattered by the usual courtesies. They thus easily let slip hundreds of roubles worth of legitimate customs duties. Nor were they called to account by the khan, who was satisfied with a regular annual payment and tended to act only if there were sudden and suspicious fluctuations. In that case the *ziaketchik* or customs collector was put in irons and his property confiscated.[47] In Bukhara they were more precise, to the extent of opening the boxes at least, though not those with iron and copper items.[48]

As for the actual figure, Russian colonial propaganda has made much of

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nordwestlichen Theils des chinesischen Staates', in *Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Russischen Reiches und den angränzenden Länder Asiens*, vol. 2, Spb, 1839, pp. iii-iv.

[45] Pavel Nebol'sin, 'Sledovanie', pp. 29–30, 50, in *Ocherki torgovli*.

[46] Idem., 'Vvedenie', pp. 29–30, and 'Sledovanie', pp. 9–12, in *Ocherki torgovli*.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 27–33.

[48] *Idem.*, 'Poriadok ochishcheniia', pp. 1–2.

the discriminatory duties of 2½ per cent on Muslim merchants and 5–10 per cent on Christians. Again the picture is rather different. The 2½ per cent duty applied only to Sunni merchants. All others: Jews, Hindus, and Christians (which included Armenians) and even Shias were subject to the higher levy. It was not directed against Russians alone. Further, Russian trade was carried mostly by Central Asian merchants; so it did not necessarily suffer. Where it was carried by Russian subjects, these were usually not ethnic or Christian Russians but rather Sunni Muslim Tatars, both loyal subjects of the tsar and beneficiaries of Central Asian discriminatory tariffs. If any Christian suffered, he was more likely an Armenian, who, in any case, did not carry Russian goods from Russia proper. However, these figures were only in theory. As will already have been understood, the practical question of assessing the value of the goods and their actual examination was handled in the most cursory fashion imaginable. The settlement took the form of a bargain deal between the *caravanbashi* and the *ziaketchik*. Customs collectors from Bukhara, for example, settled for a round sum like 150 or 200 roubles. They were usually entirely alone, with no police force to summon in case of need and could easily be cowed or flattered by the *caravanbashi*. The latter, in fact, had a much larger force of men at his disposal, both of merchants and armed escort, and these materially influenced negotiations. Eventually, Russian firms paid only 1–1½ per cent, whatever the religion, instead of the stipulated 5 per cent for Christians and 2½ per cent for Sunnis; and this is a statement from Pavel Nobel'sin himself. Much the same procedures were followed in the other khanates.[49] En route, through the *auls* of the sultans in the steppe, it was an endless round of hospitality and presents, no more. On the Russian side practice was equally imprecise. Agents of Russian firms were supposedly salaried employees. But if one went with 100 roubles worth of goods and came back with 150 roubles worth, no questions were asked. It was thus more agency than employment.[50]

As might be expected then, the conquest or defeat, of Bukhara in 1868 and of Khiva in 1873 made no difference to this situation. Only with the 1880s, after the coming of the Transcaspian railway, did Russian merchants in any number establish themselves in Bukhara: until then there were only two or three, and as usual the trade remained in Bukharan hands. As for these arbitrary duties, to the extent that they were levied before the conquest, they continued to be so even thereafter, despite their specific prohibition in the treaties of 1868 and 1873 with Bukhara. Until the first world war, we hear complaints from Russian merchants, endorsed even by Senator Count Palen when he undertook his magisterial survey of Russian colonial rule in 1908. The Russian government in Tashkent paid only half-hearted attention to them at best. The situation was the same in Khiva, which, for example, levied special discriminatory duties on Russian

[49] *Idem.*, 'Sledovanie', pp. 32–33.
[50] *Idem.*, 'Vvedenie', pp. 18–20.

tea imports from Iran as late as 1884 and was permitted for eleven years to continue them, again despite the treaty of 1873. Similar duties were imposed on other Russian merchandise leading to the same round of complaints and official inertia.[51] If such discrimination or arbitrariness was a contributory cause of the conquest, then the conquest made little or no difference in fact.

That is why merchants were loud in complaints only, but systematically rejected any armed escorts for their caravans which frontier generals were only too keen to impose. As early as 1803, G.C. Volkonskii, the military governor of Orenburg, proposed armed convoys. They were approved in 1808 provided that merchants contributed 2.5 per cent of the value of their merchandise and that at least one million roubles worth of goods was going. They were to inform the customs house at Orenburg at least four months before departure and it would be once a year only. All this was obviously too onerous for merchants accustomed to striking bargains on customs dues. Further, it invited unwelcome attention from customs officials as to the exact value of exports and bureaucratic interference in the actual conduct of operations. They only wanted compensation for losses which they claimed, no more.[52] As might be surmised, much of it was a fraud by merchants anxious to frighten off competition.

The trade on the Asian frontier was, in fact, controlled by approximately ten persons. According to Rozhkova, those with a turnover of more than 50,000 roubles were at most only 39 in 1863 and at the least just five in 1850 and 1851. This was simply one of the devices for keeping the trade in their limited group.[53] But it was enthusiastically endorsed by frontier generals eager to make their careers cheaply.

Thus the charge of brigandage may be traced to the numerous political conflicts between the various concerned parties, the khanates, the Kazakh sultans and khans, and Russia. Otherwise they were just customs dues of which Russia was denying the legitimacy on no grounds other than vague claims to sovereignty, and often not even that. Most of all, it was subsiding from the early forties, hence a declining problem, not one of growing intensity demanding military solutions and conquest, as both colonial and contemporary historiography have maintained.

If Russian claims of injured innocence in the steppe are untenable, what is the Russian record there? The evidence shows the Russians to have been consistently more violent and lawless than anybody else could possibly have been. All the action took place in the steppe, never on Russian territory, and the heaviest losers were the nomads or the khanates. Terent'ev has left us a vivid account of how the governors at Orenburg

[51] Seymour Becker, *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865–1924*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, pp. 171–75, 176–79.

[52] Khalfin, *Rossiia i khanstva*, pp. 85–103.

[53] M.K. Rozhkova, *Ekonomicheskie sviazi Rossii so Srednei Azii, 40–60e gody XIX veka*, M., 1963, pp. 123–24.

regularly provoked inter-tribal massacres and ceaselessly conducted raids into the steppe. In 1735, Tevkelev burned 50 *auls* and a warehouse with 105 persons sheltering there. In June 1736, under Rumiantsev, 'the Bashkirs were burnt out but not pacified'. After him, General Khrushchov regularly took hostages whom he massacred. In 1755, Nepliuev, the true specialist of this genre, organised the massacre of 10,000 Bashkirs by the Kazakhs.

During the Bashkir rising of 1755 under Batyrshi some 50,000 Bashkirs, men, women, and children, streamed out into the steppe hoping for Kazakh support. Nepliuev twice appealed to the Kazakhs to attack them, and Nurali, the khan of the Little Horde, obliged with colossal slaughter.[54] Nepliuev's deal with them was that the women would be theirs but the men were to be delivered to him. The Bashkirs, back in Russia, swore vengeance. They asked permission of Nepliuev to cross the Iaik [former name of the river Ural] to fall upon the Kazakhs. The governor officially refused permission, since that was Russian policy, but instructed his subordinates not to obstruct illegal crossings into Kazakh territory. The Bashkirs seized the opportunity and periodically slaughtered the Kazakhs. Finally, when Nepliuev felt that they had bled each other enough to live in permanent enmity, he took cognisance of Nurali's complaints and prohibited further crossings.[55] It is the familiar pattern of the colonial power provoking such genocidal horrors and then remaining innocent in history.

Throughout, the Ural Cossacks, the Bashkirs, and the Kalmyks, all under Russian control, were instigated to plunder and pillage Kazakh *auls* just as the Khivans used the Kazakhs against the Russians and the Turkmen against the Iranians. In 1790, a Kazakh elder complained in typical fashion to Catherine II that Ataman Donstrov of the Ural Cossack Host

> with 1500 soldiers fell upon our innocent Kirghiz-Kaisaks [i.e. Kazakhs] plundered 225 *kibitkas*, looted all their belongings, slaughtered 150 persons and seized 57 prisoners and an untold number of horses, camels, cattle, and sheep.[56]

After Srym Batyr's struggles of 1783–1797, the number of Cossack punitive expeditions rose sharply. Kazakhs were astonished that the Siberians, especially Cossacks, plundered even the poor, not merely the rich. And Shashkov, a mid-century student of Siberian life, noted that the Russians far exceeded the Kalmyk (Dzungarian) record for brutality:

> It is difficult to say who, the Kalmyks or the Russians, displayed the greater instinct for pillage and inflicted the greater damage on the other

[54] Viatkin, *Srym Batyr*, pp. 169–170.

[55] Alexis de Levchine, *Description des Hordes et Steppes des Kirghiz-Kazaks ou Kirghiz-Kaissaks*, trans. from the Russian by Ferry de Pigny, Paris, 1840 (orig. Russian edn 1832), pp. 231–35.

[56] *Istoriia kazakhskoi SSSR*, vol. 1, Alma Ata, 1957, p. 289.

> side. It seems in this case that the Siberians surpassed their semi-barbarian neighbours. Russian Cossacks, soldiers, dragoons, officers, and peasants made out of plundering the Kalmyks a kind of permanent occupation. Under the pretext of pursuing Dzungarian robbers and bandits, they often intruded into Kalmyk lands, plundered the uluses, slaughtered the inhabitants, fired the homes, drove off the cattle . . . . . 'and slit the tits of the women and tossed the babes into the flames'.[57]

The following complaint by Kenesary Qasim-uli, in 1841, gives us a measure of the scope of Russian violence in the steppe:

> Following the example of our ancestors, Ablay Khan, who took the oath of allegiance to the emperor, we wandered on the Isel Nur trusting in God and not worrying about anything except the tranquility of our people, but suddenly a thunderclap struck us. . . . . In 1825 . . . . . Sultan Yamantay Bokay-Uli . . . . . slandered us to the chief of the Qarqarali jurisdiction, Ivan Semonovich Karnachev who, moving out with 300 Russians and 100 Kazakhs . . . . . sacked the village of Sultan Sarjan Qasim-Uli . . . . . plundered an untold quantity of cattle and property, and slaughtered 64 people; the remainder saved themselves by flight. In 1827 . . . . . 200 men under Major Mingraev destroyed the villages of the Alike Shuburtpaly divisions, slaughtered 58 people and plundered untold property. In 1830 . . . . . a command . . . . . slaughtered 190 people . . . . . In 1831 . . . . . 500 men under Lt Col Aleksei Maksimovich . . . . . slaughtered 450 persons and kidnapped a child of Sarjan . . . . . In 1832 . . . . . 250 men under . . . . . Petr Nokolaevich Kulakov . . . . . killed 60 persons. . . . . In 1836 . . . . . 400 men under Major Tint'iak . . . . . slaughtered 250 persons . . . . . In 1837 . . . . . 400 men under Ivan Semonovich Karpachev sacked the Alikin Kalkaman-Uli's, Turtul-Uli's, and slaughtered 350 persons.[58]

Figures are bound to be exaggerated in such documents, but it clearly suggests a degree of overkill power and genocidal fury on the part of the Russians which the others could not match.

Russian sources, even at their wildest, and Soviet accounts in their more sober research, do not suggest Russian casualties of this magnitude. Levshin gives figures for the number of prisoners taken by the Kazakhs between 1782 and 1794. The highest in any one year was 176, the lowest 2, and generally between 50 and 60 were killed.[59] This was at a time of war with Srym Batyr. If Russian trade convoys were interrupted by the Khivans, the latter were similarly arrested in Russia. In 1836 as many as 572 Khivan merchants were arrested with all their merchandise, and the exchange of

[57] Shashkov, *Istoricheskie etiudy*, vol. 2, Spb, 1872, pp. 128–29.
[58] E. Allworth ed., *A Century of Russian rule*, New York, 1967, p. 11.
[59] Levchine, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

prisoners dragged on for several years.[60] This hit the Khivans hard as they were the carriers, not the Russians.

It is evident that Khiva was the special target of Russian propaganda although it was an insignificant oasis at the mouth of the Amu Daria and Bukhara was, in fact, the more important centre of population, culture, ideology, and business. After Khiva, Kokand took the heaviest Russian broadside. The reason was their expansion from the turn of the century into nomadic territory and their visible consolidation as putative modern states. Muhammad Rahim Khan of Khiva (1806–1825) was, by far, the ablest and most successful in concentrating military and administrative power. Khiva was freed from Bukharan tutelage. Rahim Khan advanced on Merv, subjugated the Turkmen of the Caspian and the Ust-Urt plateau, the Karakalpaks of the Zhany Daria, the Kazakhs of the Syr, and had ambitious plans to reach out to the Emba while absorbing the Kazakhs of the Mugodschar. In modern fashion he built fortresses like the Chirkaily, Kandzhabai, and Aidos-kala, to dominate his vassal nomads and the caravan routes.

Like the Russians, Muhammad Rahim Khan and his successor, Alla Quli Khan, appointed khans of the Kazakhs as their vassals and used them against their neighbours. In this business, he encountered the expansionist power of Russia along the Caspian, in the Ust-Urt, and along the Syr; and, despite his weakness, he could afford his implacable hostility to Russia, whose expansion into the steppe had just begun. His example was emulated by Kokand. Alim Khan (1800–1809) unified Ferghana and annexed Tashkent and Chimkent. Omar (1809–1822) absorbed Turkestan on the Syr and Semirech'e upto the Ili valley; and finally Muhammad Ali (1822–1842) went upto Balkhash, Kashgar, and Dzizak. They colonised the Kazakh and Kirghiz steppe in two directions from Tashkent, via Chimkent, Aulie-Ata, and Pishpek to the Issyk-Kul, and along the Ferghana valley across the Kurgart pass to Toguz-Torau, Kochkar, Naryn, and Atbashi. Lines of fortresses were constructed along these routes, Tala, Kochkar, Naryn, Sangalda, Toguz-Torau, Merke, Ashmar, Pishpek, Tokmak, Ak-Beket, and others.[61] These were all merchandise depots, the first nuclei of sedentary Uzbeks in nomadic territory, centres of incipient agriculture and horticulture and of the dissemination of new technology, commerce, indebtedness, and Islam. All these policies were pursued with special vigour by Khudoiar Khan (1845–1858 and 1864–1875) until the eve of the annexation of Kokand.

These developments explain to some extent why they were the *bêtes noires* of Russia: they were not *yet* 'traditional' and 'Oriental' but were rivals to Russia in a way that Bukhara was not. They competed with the

[60] Khalfin, *Rossiia i khanstva*, pp. 252–53.

[61] E.B. Bekmakhanov, *Prisoedinenie Kazakhstana k Rossii*, M., 1957, pp. 102–03; A.M. Khasanov, *Narodnye dvizheniia v Kirgizii v period Kokandskogo khanstva*, M., 1975, pp. 25–28.

Russians in the matter of subduing nomads by the same methods of fortress lines, technologically superior armies, agricultural colonisation, and penetration by trade and Islam. As such, Kazakhs could as well be bidden away from Russia as the deep dissension and rival khans in Kazakh politics shows. They belong to a recognisable type in the early history of colonial expansion the world over from the turn of the eighteenth century into the middle of the nineteenth century. These rulers saw the menace and promise that Europe presented and attempted 'reforms'. These consisted of the bureaucratic rationalisation of their armies, then of the civil administration starting with the fiscal apparatus and culminating in personal centralised autocracies, and importing technology to the extent that finance and other circumstances permitted.

In India they are represented by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan of Mysore, the later Marathas, and, most of all, the Sikhs. In Egypt it was Muhammad Ali Pasha. In much feebler fashion, in Turkey it was Selim III, and in Iran, Abbas Mirza. In the Eurasian steppe world, the first of them was Sahin Girey of the Crimea in the 1770s and 1780s on the eve of the Russian conquest. In that same class were Muhammad Rahim Khan of Khiva and the series of able khans of Kokand in the first half of the nineteenth century. The last of that type was Yakub Khan of Kashgar (1864–1877). As dynamic reformers attempting to emulate European developments, just as Peter had successfully done in Russia in the beginning of the eighteenth century, they were the most serious challengers of colonial expansion. Consequently they, especially our Khivan and Kokandi heroes, were honoured with an appropriate share of colonial abuse. This was especially concentrated in the 1820s and the 1830s when, by a naive Russian admission, lawlessness became a special problem.[62] Understandable, because these were the years of the definitive Russian advance into the steppe and the beginning of her colonial career proper. That was how poor, insignificant Khiva, more than anybody else, came to represent the lees of 'Asiatic barbarism', especially through slaving and brigandage.

These are however just specific activities on which colonial polemic focused for purposes of international justification at that moment. They are themselves embedded in the much larger and more complex substance of the 'Oriental', which was the target of the civilising mission. Let us turn then to the more complete and therefore more 'satisfying' colonial discourse, that of the 'Oriental' as the noxious substance from which issued the slavery and piracy so beloved of the historian.

It was an European axiom that the government, administration, and law, in short, the structuration of power within these countries, was whimsical to the point of infantile frivolity, and fluid, without form or structure. It was therefore unpredictable even to themselves, formally irrational, as Weber might say. The most authoritative work on the Kazakhs until fairly

[62] S.N. Iuzhakov, *Anglo-russkaia raspria. Nebol'shoe predislovie k bol'shim sobytiiam. Politicheskii etiud*, Spb, 1885, pp. 66–75.

recent times, and today the most important source on the subject, was compiled as a typical colonial gazetteer by Alexis Levshin in 1832 after years of study and exploration. Yet, or because of it, he began and ended every chapter with that general complaint. The Kazakh frontiers were known only to the north and east thanks to the Russian and Qing empires, and to the west because of the geographical fact of the Caspian Sea, which seems to have eluded Kazakh irrationality. To the south, if such frontiers existed, he was sure that the Kazakhs themselves did not know.[63] Murav'ev in the account of his embassy that served as a general manual on Khiva and the Turkmen, similarly asserted that there were no fixed frontiers at all to Khiva, surrounded as she was by the steppe. BaronMeiendorff, another official author, pronounced his aphorism, with all due melancholy: 'Nothing is more variable than the boundaries of a khanate in Asia.'[64] And Khanykov, who was a scholar among travellers for having digested Sylvestre de Sacy and other orientalists, and having pronounced on all his predecessors as a head examiner might on undergraduate answer scripts with only Alexander von Humboldt attaining the first class, repeated all over again, or stated, exactly what Gorchakov and Khalfin have told us:

> We lament that on the present occasion we are forced to join in the general complaint, because the khanate of Bokhara, like the states which are its neighbours, has no fixed boundaries, sanctioned by time or circumscribed by international treaties. They expand or contract according to the strength or weakness of its rulers.[65]

It is not important that every nomad or ruler knew the frontier and status of the people that concerned them and that their political relations were utterly rule-governed, as any anthropologist today knows or should know. It does not matter that European states and frontiers were as fluid throughout their existence, that is, from the end of the Roman empire until 1945, or even more that the Russian frontier moved forward from Peter's day at the rate of 90 square kilometres per day according to one calculation.[66] It was material that nobody in Inner Asia could dispute the point, and that nobody in Europe would, for it derived from a collective European Orientalism to which Russia contributed and on which she drew.

The external or international fluidity of these systems was matched by the internal amorphousness of their power structure. Thus, the Kazakhs lived under a combination of despotism and anarchy. It was not actually an anarchy as Levshin cautioned his readers with scientific precision, because that would be impossible:

[63] Levchine, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[64] Mouraviev, *op. cit.*, p. 230; Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

[65] [N.V.] Khanikoff: *Bokhara: Its Amir and its People*, trans. from the Russian by Baron Clement A. De Rode, London, 1845, pp. 2, 2–5.

[66] That of Graf Maximilian Yorck von Wartenberg, cited in Otto Hoetzsch, *Russland in Asien. Geschichte einer Expansion*, Stuttgart, 1966, p. 29.

> But the insubstantial nature of authority among the Kirgiz [the colonial Russian term for the Kazakhs] the lack of definition or of specialisation, their feebleness, their freedom to pass from the domination of one to another, which means they disobey everyone with impunity, the absence of laws, finally, the impunity of crimes, all approximate the condition of their society to what one would normally describe as anarchic.

And, for this reason, the Kirghiz nation does not even have a political existence.[67] The last point was indeed ominous: to that Levshin ascribed Kazakh subjection to Russia, China, and even Kokand. The Kazakhs were 'semi-savage nomads who have no principle of administration and shift continually from one place to the next',[68] while among the Turkmen the same condition led to anybody taking on the title and functions of *aksakal* or village elder if he could possibly physically enforce his authority.[69] In his routine chapter on the state, Murav'ev supplied the standard picture of oriental despotism, tyranny, arbitrariness, and sanguinary horrors in Khiva, where a royal education included compulsory courses in bloodletting, torture and execution,[70] much as dancing among the French aristocracy or riding to hounds among the English. Indeed, the only positive feature of the satanic Muhammad Rahim Khan of Khiva was his astonishingly Russian appearance, that is, his height, good looks, and blond hair.[71]

In the 1850s, Chokan Valikhanov, of Chinggisid Kazakh royalty by birth, a Russian colonial army officer by profession, but a member of the progressive Russian intelligentsia and an orientalist by consciousness, ritually damned all three Central Asian khanates, with more blood flowing in his Kashgar than in Murav'ev's Khiva: 'In this town there were towers of human skulls and they have started slaughtering human beings as they slaughter only barn fowl'.[72] China emerged equally mauled from his hands. It was a country in a state of putrefaction like the Roman empire, corrupt, disorganised, and arbitrary as the rest of Asia, that is, Persia and Turkey, he noted.[73] Only Islamic religious stability tempered the rot; but then that merely represented another aspect of mental debility with its rigidity, bigotry, superstition, and fanaticism. Thus, both fluidity and petrification led to the same conclusion, that the activity of the mind stood suspended.

If their statecraft or politics was determined by an unmediated power lust, their social behaviour was likewise little short of bestial. The constant

[67] Levchine, *op. cit.*, p. 391.
[68] *Ibid.*, p. 299.
[69] Mouraviev, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 294.
[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 290–91.
[72] V.V. Valikhanov, 'Ocherki Dzhungarii' (1860), *Sobranie Sochineniia*, vol. 3. Alma Ata, 1985, p. 377, available in English translation in Captain Valikhanoff, M. Veniukoff *et al.*, *The Russians in Central Asia*, trans. by John and Robert Michell, London, 1865, pp. 46–70.
[73] Valikhanov, 'Zapadnyi krai kitaiskoi imperii', being a diary of travel into Kulja in 1856, *Sob. Soch.*, vol. 2, pp. 239–41.

suggestion was of behavioural responses akin to those of animals with no evidence of the mental control that supposedly distinguishes man. Everyone was a bully, whether Kazakh, Uzbek, or Turkmen; and, typical of the genre, they were insolent to the weak, grovelling before the strong, devoid of courage, but amply endowed with its substitute, the capacity for surprise attack with great fury, and flight 'with the utmost pusillanimity'.[74] Murder was unknown among the Tajiks only because they were cowards.[75] As might be expected of the type, they were insupportable braggarts. Khanykov was especially outraged that they had broken his monopoly on insolence:

> Their bragging and impudence are insupportable. Thus, for example, individuals who have been fortunate enough to have been received at the imperial court, and have witnessed the splendours of the palaces and edifices of St Petersburg, had yet the audacity to ask, with a complacent smile, what we thought of Bukhara.[76]

Levshin found them so vain and boastful that they failed to be proper bourgeois and enjoy their wealth as befits that station. He asked a Kazakh why he did not sell the produce of his herds, to which the following reply:

> Why should I sell that which gives me pleasure? I dont have need of money: and if I do have it, I shall have to lock it up in a box where nobody will see it; but when my herds wander the steppe, everyone will see them and know that they are mine, and they will always remember that I am rich.[77]

Again everyone, without exception, was avaricious, false, and faithless. These were 'the most salient characteristics of [the Tajik] character';[78] the Turkmen added inhospitality to these vices;[79] and Meiendorff found that everyone, including the Amir of Bukhara, was trying to take the shirt off his back.[80]

Indolence was the next reigning vice. Uzbeks 'loved repose and inaction'. For all Muslims it was 'inactivity which constitutes their bliss'. Nomadism was no salvation for either Kazakh or Turkmen.[81] Since an idle mind is the devil's workshop, in true Victorian fashion they found that indolence bred an unforgivable sensuality. Murav'ev andMeiendorff did not perhaps have the leisure to investigate the private vices of their objects of enquiry.

[74] Levchine, *op. cit.*, pp. 344–45; also Mouraviev, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
[75] Khanikoff, *Bokhara*, p. 71.
[76] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[77] Levchine, *op. cit.*, pp. 348–49.
[78] Khanikoff, *Bokhara*, p. 71.
[79] Mouraviev, *op. cit.*, p. 478; on Kazakhs, Levchine, *op. cit.*, p. 344.
[80] Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, pp. 229–30.
[81] Khanikoff, *Bokhara*, p. vi.

Levshin clearly did, and found Kazakhs given over to voluptuousness. Valikhanov had all the time in East Turkestan and Semirech'e; and he found that the male population would fritter away the day in chatter with mullahs and then 'they come home to amuse themselves with their boys' which his Victorian translators have rendered as 'the grossest and most grovelling sensuality',[82] Like all Asiatics, the Chinese were universally guilty of sodomy.[83] Indeed Chinese sensuality extended to an uncontrollable gluttony such that they measured intelligence by the rotundity of the belly:

> In China the stomach is the seat of reason: if your paunch is remarkable for its size, then obviously you possess a distinguished mind . . . . He [the Chinese] intently gazed at our bellies in order to measure the range of our powers of thought, and, on discerning our lean attributes, he contemptuously turned aside and haughtily waddled off, from which it was evident that he had formed the most unfavourable opinion on the mental powers of us Russians.[84]

Now, Valikhanov was no schoolboy at this time nor even a tourist, but a scholar and orientalist of repute, recommended by none less that Semenov Tian-Shanskii and commissioned by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society to explore Semirech'e, one whose complete works were published by the Academy of Sciences in 1904, and have been recently twice republished in Kazakhstan, and one who is hailed as a member of the progressive Russian intelligentsia, sympathiser of the Petrashevtsy and close friend and correspondent of Dostoevskii.

Such social and political institutions could flourish only among those whose mind was at the mercy of the contingencies of nature and of the body without pretence to the mastery of either. It was, in short, the static mind of the unchanging East. Hence nobody seemed to know anything of the world outside their *kibitka, aul*, or tribe. The Kirghiz did not know one tribe from the next or the leaders of even their neighbours. The Kazakhs and Uzbeks did not know their own numbers or boundaries or their natural resources, or even, as Levshin deplored, the identity of their tombs and ruins. If they did seem to know anything with any certainty, it was a contemptible commerce and an idiotic religion.[85] Consequently, they were childish: 'The Asiatic is the most gullible of human beings—there is no absurdity that he will not swallow, and the more extravagant the rumour, the blinder his credulity'.[86]

[82] Valikhanov, 'Ocherki Dzhungarii', p. 326; translation in Valikhanoff *et al.*, *The Russians in Central Asia, p. 49.*

[83] *Idem.*, 'Zapadnyi Krai', *Sob. Soch.*, vol. 2, pp. 240–41.

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[85] Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, pp. xi–xii

[86] Valikhanoff *et al.*, *The Russians in Central Asia*, p. 54.

Murav'ev drew the appropriate conclusion from such infantilism among Turkmen:

> . . . . . when one of them demonstrates a little more of intelligence or ability than others, they will listen to him without ascertaining his authority . . . . Consequently there is no Russian who cannot assume among them an air of superiority and who, surrounded and disarmed, cannot without danger be angry, injure them, and even strike them if need be.[87]

That was why Khanykov found James Morier's *Haji Baba of Isfahan* the best book to date on Iran, especially on Iranian high society[88] just as his later English counterpart might have found Babu Jabberjee the best introduction to the Indian intelligentsia. Where such mental retardation was combined with their Islamic faith, the result was an intellectual stagnation, with movement, if at all, only on the scale of geological or evolutionary time as with nature or animals and the animal side of human beings, but not historical time. All these insights together created the composite picture of the Orient of Inner Asia: it was in its natural substance to function thus, and slaving merely fitted into this law of the jungle in obvious fashion. However, what now reads as the absurdities of the civilising mission was not self-generated: it derived from that glorious and impeccably academic tradition known as orientalism.

Orientalist discourse was and is the theoretical treatment of one part of humanity as the objects of history, incapable of being the subjects of their own destiny.[89] It does not connote any geographical attribute despite the interchangeable use of the terms Orient, Asiatic, and Eastern. It applied as much to such parts of the world as were not geographically eastward of the European continent, e.g., Africa and the Americas. It denotes the non- or pre-industrial world in the same fashion as Europe includes North America and Japan in the seventh volume of the *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*. As objects of history or of nature, they were inert, passive, immobile, unchanging; their past is their present and their present is their past. It is that part of the world where time has stood still and is represented by those eternal cliches of 'the timeless East' and the 'unchanging Orient'. They led every colonial traveller to scry in every stone, monument, person, action, or institution the density of the whole of the human past of the region and the 'wisdom of the ages', which, in Lawrence Durrell's irreverent hands, turned out to be a putrescent den of child prostitutes.[90] Such an Orient was discovered through behavioural study as of animals, or

[87] Mouraviev, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

[88] Nicolas de Khanikoff, *Mémoire sur la partie méridionale de l'Asie centrale*, Paris, 1861, pp. 23–24.

[89] See Anouar Abdel-Malek, 'L'Orientalisme en crise', in his *La Dialectique Sociale*, Paris, 1972, pp. 79–113, esp. pp. 84–85; and Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London, 1978.

[90] Lawrence Durrell, 'Mountolive' in *The Alexandria Quartet*, London, 1968 edn, pp. 628–30.

in the manner of a dissection *post mortem*. It was either pre-human or moribund. In either case it belonged to the past of modern, that is, industrial man. Anthropology on the one hand, and archaeology and philology on the other, discovered a living people to exist, not now, but then, distanced no longer spatially, given the technology of travel, but temporally, far back on a linear evolutionary scale. It was as such not a discovery but an invention or a creation of a system of knowledge.

This form of knowledge is distinct from the manner in which the Orient was known before the eighteenth century. International contacts existed from the most ancient times and over the widest spaces: and knowledge was acquired for commerce, warfare, politics, religion, and migrations. But these were deliberately selected segments for a technically limited purpose. It did not aspire to grasp the essence of a people nor pretend to condense all knowledge about them between the two covers of a book. Nobody claimed superior understanding of another, only of a pragmatic knowledge in a limited field for a limited purpose. But, from the eighteenth century, the acquisition of knowledge of the other laid claims to both totality and superiority of comprehension, superior, that is, to what the other could know about itself. This was when the Orient was constituted, as an object of history and of knowledge by the subject, Europe, and the ultimate distinction between the West and the Rest conceived.

In this context the nature and evolution of Russian attitudes to the knowledge of what came to be known as her own East would be instructive. Bartol'd has made the famous complaint that Russians have left us no account of their Mongol conquerors for the two centuries of their dominion, the thirteenth to the fifteenth. This is intriguing since Russian princes had to journey to the court of the khan of the Golden Horde for their investiture and other political manoeuvrings, Russian princes have attended the coronation of the khagan of the Mongols at Karakorum, Russian units fought in Mongol armies, and a Russian contingent was stationed at Beijing during the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty before it vanished without trace with the Ming revolution of 1368[91] But Halperin has proposed a convincing solution. The Russians knew all there was to know about their Mongol masters, and certainly more than the modern historian does, but they refused to glorify them by writing about them. Their ideological and cultural self-defence lay in a deliberate silence. A close reading of medieval Russian chronicles would expose their intimate familiarity with the Mongols. For example, the hagiography of one Prince Mikhail Aleksandrovich of Tver contains a detailed account of grave charges against him, his interrogation, tortures, travels with the court in its nomadising, his execution, final internment, and canonisation. From this we may construct an excellent map of nomadic routes between the Donets and the Derbent.

Chronicles contain extensive lists of the lineages of the entire Mongol

[91] V.V. Bartol'd, *Istoriia izucheniia vostoka v Evrope i Rossii*, (1911), in *Sochineniia*, vol. 9, M., 1977, pp. 363–64.

aristocracy, which must have been essential information for intrigues at Court and political survival in Russia. They likewise suggest extreme familiarity with Timur's empire because of the Russian contingents that fought against him. Finally, Russians communicated with their masters in possibly Chagatai Turkic. Vasilii II the Blind, of Moscow, was rightly accused of preferring the Tatar language to his native Russian.[92] This was an encyclopaedic knowledge that was deliberately not codified, with good reason. Similarly Constantinople and the Holy Land were the objects of pilgrimages and political missions, worthy of only pious and political statements; hence we begin to get personal and naturalistic observation only from the fifteenth century.[93]

By the end of the sixteenth century the Golden Horde, minus the Crimean khanate, had been largely annexed to Muscovy, while Siberia, upto the Pacific, followed by the middle of the seventeenth. Yet, until the eighteenth century we have essentially only scattered travellers' tales and reports of military and political missions. Even Semen Deshnev's discovery of the Bering Straits in 1648 went unnoticed until published by Miller in 1736, by which time Vitus Bering had already rediscovered it in 1728, at Peter's behest.

There is however a startling change from the very end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century, coinciding with Peter's reign. Siberia and the Arctic Circle were systematically explored in vast undertakings in the most appalling conditions. The south was explored upto the Aral, and the south-east up to the Ili; and the results of all these were composed in voluminous detail, still under investigation by Soviet and other scholars. At the same time, Gerhardt-Friedrich Miller laboured for ten years (1773–1783) on his history of Siberia. The naturalists Johann-Georg Gmelin and Peter Simon Pallas described Siberia and parts of the Kazakh steppe. The Rychkovs, father and son, wrote the history and geography of the Kazakh steppe. Catherine II then conceived the extraordinary project of a comparative dictionary of all the languages within and outside her empire. The second edition of 1790–1791, by Pallas, had as many as 280 languages. In their enthusiasm to accumulate knowledge they even captured a couple of Japanese teenaged fishermen, in 1728, to launch Japanese studies in Russia, with another five of them to follow in 1745.[94]

It was a burst of activity as never before, marked by an encyclopaedic optimism and painstaking application of the scientific method in all disciplines. In the first phase they refused to codify knowledge because the 'Orient' was master of both itself and of Russia; in the second they did not

[92] Charles J. Halperin, ' "Know thy Enemy": Medieval Russian Familiarity with the Mongols of the Golden Horde', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, Neue Folge*, vol. 30, no. 2, 1982, pp. 161–75.

[93] Joel Raba, 'Das Weltbild der mittelalterlichen und frühneuzeitlichen russischen Reisenden, *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geshchichte*, 1986, vol. 38, pp. 20–41.

[94] Bartol'd, 'Vostokovedenie v Rossii v XVIII v', *Soch.*, vol. 9, pp. 34–35.

bother, because it was still at least master of itself, even if politically subject already to Russia, as the Tatars were; only in the third phase did Russia feel itself subject of the destinies of other peoples and regions enough to accumulate and codify, with the stamp of authority, all knowledge about them. This was not due merely to political supremacy. Russians were rulers over the Kazan Tatars from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries without any manuals being compiled. Russians were not yet masters of the steppe and Central Asia, yet they began their orientalist compilations then. It was born of a new confidence in their capacity to appropriate the consciousness of those they regarded as other people. That was orientalism. International contacts until the eighteenth century were between presumed equals in a world of equilibrium despite periodic, violent convulsions. All such fluctuations however occurred within the tight skin of technological limitation, and inequalities were subject to that sovereign master. This skin was punctured in the eighteenth century: it gave birth to the optimistic philosophy of the Enlightenment; and Orientalism was one of its limbs.

In a work of outstanding scholarship and romantic enthusiasm, Raymond Schwab has commented thus on the orientalist upsurge of the late eighteenth century:

> It is here that one sees for a single time in the history of man a past which is not dead, *a past of today [un antique d'aujourd'hui]* and of always.[95] [emphasis in the original]

He has rightly pointed to that unique combination, the single time in history. It marked the birth of industrial society, comparable only to the coming of agriculture so many millennia ago. The resources it generated permitted one part of humanity to conceive of the rest as being in the state of the unborn, or of the past as still existing. It was experienced by the European public in real life most palpably in the opening of the tomb of Tutankhamen after its millennia of hermetic repose. And it was ceaselessly absorbed through fiction, as in the confrontation of the mummy of Kallikrates with his living English incarnation in Rider Haggard's *She*. But such an afflatus was an obvious exercise of power. Conceiving the Orient as located in another Time was to deny it what anthropologists have termed 'coevalness' and intersubjective communication, which are possible only on the premise of belonging to the same temporal universe.

Travel was always a voyage in time, and increasingly more so than it was in space. The present was therefore represented by its ruins and monuments, its texts and its dead and forgotten languages, and the animal-like behavioural responses of its human occupants. Edward Said has asserted that in the whole of the orientalist enterprise only Napoleon's Institut

[95] Raymond Schwab, *La Renaissance Orientale*, Paris 1950, p. 15.

d'Egypte concerned itself with the present.[96] Bartol'd, in his search for the pristine, the pure, and the essential, could not seriously interest himself in Uzbeks and Tajiks to whom he preferred their purer Turkic and Iranian forebears. And, with all due respect to Bartol'd's extraordinary authority, the contemporary Soviet historian has levelled the same charge against him as Said has against western orientalism: he studied by choice, as a theoretical preference, the dead and not the living East, which he deemed 'less attractive and fruitful.'[97] The past was the true reality; hence from the musings of travellers in Central Asia it might appear that Shah Abbas the Great and Timur were their companions or immediate predecessors in the region, just as from British travel accounts in Punjab it is clear that Alexander of Macedon had bivouacked there the night before. It is not merely that it created a comfortable lineage of conquest (hence the Russian silence on Chinggis and Batu) but more that it suppressed the movement of history.

Russian travellers therefore, like their western counterparts, sensed a sudden translation to an infinite past, often to the beginning of Time or to the Creation itself. Meiendorf's first statement on leaving Orenburg was that 'aridity, uniformity, silence, characterised the steppe'.[98] To Murav'ev, the steppe around Khiva was the 'image of death, or rather of desolation after a great convulsion of nature'.[99] And this is how Khanykov contemplated the Dasht-i-Lut:

> The absolute immobility of everything in this cheerless landscape, coupled with the complete absence of sound, produced an overpowering impression; one felt that it was a part of the world stricken by an eternal sterility, where organic life cannot reappear save after some terrible convulsion of nature. One was present, as it were, at the commencement of the agony of the planet.[100]

Yet the same or similar scenes produced very different impressions on those free of orientalism. Valikhanov was an impeccable orientalist everywhere except in his native Kazakh steppe which to him, was the domain of freedom. It was 'impossible to live in the mountains and be happy and carefree' whereas the steppe alone permitted a life of 'golden languour' without grief or sadness, 'without thinking of the future', where one could be 'carefree' and 'know sweet tranquility' as he described it, in terms more reminiscent of Keats in the Mediterranean sun than a Russian army officer and Kazakh prince in the open steppe. His steppe utopianism went to the

[96] Said, *Orientalism*, p. 52.

[97] B.V. Lunin, *Sredniaia Aziia v dorevoliutsionnom i sovetskom vostokovedenii*, Tashkent, 1965, pp. 62–64.

[98] Meyendorff, *Voyage d'Orenburg*, p. 11.

[99] Mouraviev, *Voyage en Turcomanie*, p. 79.

[100] Khanikoff, *La Mémoire*, p. 177.

extent of asserting that even animals were at peace with each other in those wild spaces.[101] To Gogol the wide open spaces of Russia were a land of opportunity and the future into which the troika hurtled at breakneck speed brushing aside other nations. The steppe of Taras Bulba was that of freedom and adventure. Like Khanykov on the Dasht-i-Lut, Chaadaev resorted to the metaphor of the Creation to describe the present state of Russia, but he saw in it the ferment of birth and primitive chaos, not a devastated moonscape. Valikhanov saw his home, sweetness, and repose in the steppe but the dead world of the Orient in Semirech'e, Dzungaria, and the Qing empire of China. Russians saw in Russia the tempestuous birth of a new society of hope but in the Orient the unborn, awaiting the finger of God. But they were all contemplating the same or comparable physical landscapes.

Indeed, the Russian intelligentsia's differing constructions of backwardness in Russia proper and the Orient, including the Russian Orient, is revealing. Chaadaev is generally regarded as having been the most pessimistic about Russia's past and present. While in all his *Philosophical Letters* and in his *Apology* he has dismissed the Russian past as barbaric and as not worth having lived, he has throughout suggested that the Russian present was a creative ferment, that she now belonged firmly to Europe which was in a state of dynamic expansion, that she had a unique destiny and a great future as an example to mankind, that Russia was a young nation. In his *Apology* he qualified his pessimism to say that Russia was not oppressed by tradition, that Peter had found her a *tabula rasa*, and that therefore the greatest creativity was possible. The contrast between the *Apology* and the *First Letter* is not as sharp as is made out to be; for even in the latter, he had already suggested the state of ferment thus: 'There persists the chaotic fermentation of things in the moral sphere similar to the eruptions of the globe which preceded the present state of the planet'.[102] Indeed, it might appear that Khanykov has borrowed the image and the wording, so similar is his statement on the Dasht-i-Lut to that of Chaadaev on Russia.

Again, it was in the same *Letter* that Chaadaev spoke of Russia as possessing 'some of the virtues of nations which are young and only slightly civilised'.[103] He was at his most optimistic on the unity, expansiveness, universality, and creative energy of Europe. He rejected only the rational optimism on the perfectibility of Man, so beloved of the Enlightenment. He thus aligned himself with European traditionalism and conservatism.[104] It was to such an Europe that he assigned the present and future of Russia even while deploring Russia's dreary past. And finally, in his *Apology*, he

[101] Valikhanov, 'Zapadnyi Krai', p. 175.

[102] *The Major Works of Peter Chaadaev*, A Translation and Commentary by Raymond T. McNally, London, 1969, pp. 30–31.

[103] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[104] *Ibid.*, letter 6.

suggested that Russia might have a unique advantage in not having had such a past, for she could therefore build a new society without that encumbrance. This idea was assumed by Herzen and much of the Russian intelligentsia subsequently.

Thus, what has been represented as the most pessimistic voice of the intelligentsia bemoaning the backwardness of Russia, was, in fact, unreservedly optimistic throughout on the present and certainly the future of Russia, whatever he felt about her past. This distinguished it from the orientalist position, even when orientalists like Khanykov employed the same imagery. To them, the present of the Orient was dead, not in ferment. It mattered little whether the past was glorious, as for Bhukara and China, or null, as for the Kazakhs and Turkmen, or even Russia. And *that* backward Russia could breathe life into the inert Orient.

A world that is passive cannot represent itself. Hence only the West could represent the Orient, as Said so often observes in his ringing allocution, *Orientalism*. Bartol'd was delivering himself of standard Orientalist wisdom when he pronounced thus:

> An orientalist wishing to work on the East must prepare himself seriously in a scientific manner in order that while studying the language, literature and history of the eastern provinces, he does not subordinate himself to his sources but inform his investigations with European science, remain European, and not become an Eastern scholar.[105]

So he warmly commended the Russian insight of 1820 when, while preparing for a faculty of eastern languages in St Petersburg, Senkovskii, Sharmua, and Fren argued that West European scholars were better than Russian sinologists even if the former had never left Europe and the latter had spent many years in Beijing and had mastered Chinese properly. The trouble was that such a sojourn created the 'scholarship of Chinese mandarins'.[106] The situation could not have been summed up better nor by a greater authority. The Chinese were not competent in Chinese scholarship, nor, for that matter evidently, the pandits of Banaras in Sanskrit; only the Europeans had that faculty, on the basis, admittedly not of race, but of *la science* or *nauka*. At best, the mandarin and the pandit could only be a source, like any text or inscription or specimen of fauna or flora. He understood as much of his glorious creations as the oyster of the pearl it fashioned or the mink of the fur it sprouted. As Levshin unashamedly put it, the Kazakh was like Herodotus' griffon, guardian but not master of his untold wealth.[107] The one thing none of them could do was to speak for his own mind and being: only the European was so authorised.

It is easy to dismiss such a position as ethnocentrism or Eurocentrism;

[105] Bartol'd, 'Po povodu proekta C.-F. Ol'denburga' (1902), *Soch.*, vol. 9, p. 493.
[106] *Ibid.*, pp. 493–94.
[107] Levchine, *Description des Hordes et Steppes*, p. 9.

but it goes far deeper than such an elementary duality of the self and the other. These are the terms in which a ruling class has described its inferiors until democratic mass mobilisation became the basis of politics. But in the polar oppositions of master to slave, lord to peasant, and capitalist to worker, the subaltern slave, peasant, and worker were granted a hated conceptual equality for their capacity both to create and to destroy that constitutive opposition of the social organism. In similar fashion, these are the negative terms in which one people have dismissed another: they provide the basis for the distinction between civilised and barbarian, the society of the *varnashramadharma* and the *mlechcha*, the Christian and the Pagan, the *dar-ul-islam* and the *dar-ul-harb*, or for the connotation of linguistic incompetence in the Greek term for the barbarian, the Hebrew for the Egyptian, the German for the Pole, or the Russian for the German. In this manichaean balance, the other was a part creator of the known world and a permanent menace; and, whether as a class or communal enemy, was subject of his own destiny enough for Lucifer to prefer 'to reign in Hell' in the universe supposedly of the Lord's creation. Despite the most violent fluctuations of fortune in innumerable crises, the equilibrium held in an eternal and externalised duality.

But orientalism, which means only the orientalism of nascent industrial society, destroyed that equilibrium, posited the unity of mankind, and internalised that external duality. The Orient was no enemy to hate or a menace to be dreaded: it was a mere inert object to be revived with the elixirs that had been recently discovered in the post-Renaissance Europe of the scientific revolution, bureaucratic rationality, and industrial potency. Raymond Schwab has argued that the partial humanism of the Mediterranean Renaissance was complemented by the 'integral humanism' of orientalism. Only from 1771, with Anquetil-Duperron's translation of the *Zend-Avesta*, 'did the earth become truly round', he has asserted with Galilean enthusiasm.[108] Such 'integral humanism' has indeed integrated all of humanity by overcoming these binary oppositions. An opposition that was once external and coeval had now become internal and allochronic within a single structure. Duality was overcome, but not eliminated: it was only rendered innocuous to the West by its internalisation and its effective subordination as the Rest. Mankind has not relinquished its concept of the other. But the conceptual unification of the human race has projected the other on to extra-terrestrial life. The appropriate genre of science fiction and speculations on life outside this planet would now be the new sources of our notion of the other. Schwab is preoccupied with orientalism as the consummation of the classical Renaissance. But it was more the child of the Enlightenment in its affirmation of the total sovereignty of the human mind and its infinite capacity to penetrate the remotest mysteries of nature. All those who did not share that optimism, or were not able to do so,

[108] Schwab, *La Renaissance Orientale*, p. 23.

therefore became natural objects instead of human subjects, the distinction between the Orient and the West, the non-industrial and the industrial world, and, for well over a century, between the exo-capitalist and the capitalist world.

If such orientalism was an instrument of conquest, it might well be asked why and how an internal change in the consciousness of the European world could become such an instrument. The explosion of orientalist knowledge that began in the eighteenth century was premised upon everything being knowable, including people who did not know themselves. It therefore led to an accumulation on a scale that had never before been known in history. Knowledge, so long treated as secret reserved for the initiate, now flooded the world in an endless flow, making it both universally accessible and obligatory to consume it. At the most practical level it consisted in compiling intelligence on future victims: topography and geography, ethnography, language, and politics. This has, of course, been practised from the most ancient times; but now it was at a higher or more 'scientific' level of empirical validation, that is, closely observed, checked and counter-checked, either published or stored in archives, continually updated, and thus gradually released from the contingencies of individual experience, prejudice, and memory. It partook of all the rationality of the bureaucratic exercise that it was, of impartiality, expertise, impersonality. This level, in itself, was most important, for now any Russian lieutenant had access to a centralised store of information, both reliable and up-to-date, on Bukhara or Khiva, which their respective khans did not. The awesome detail in which all the caravan and military routes were noted, the sources and quality of the water available, the people inhabiting every segment of it, the nature of the terrain and the climate, and all else that might be relevant, is still impressive. The difference it would make to commercial and investment decisions and to military manoeuvres was obviously disastrous to the rulers of Inner Asia. With such an imbalance of information even on their own territories, they were now doomed to a continual retreat into their defences. Such as it were was the Russian level of the accumulation of knowledge.

At the European level its significance lay in an exhaustively researched justification of the civilising mission. It presented in the greatest factual detail the 'essential' nature of these peoples, its primitiveness, its immersion in slavery, brigandage, and other forms of barbarism. Consequently, it argued in increasing detail as the conquest progressed, that Russian rule brought all the benefits of peace and progress to these benighted races of mankind, and that it was necessary to that purpose. Throughout the century, there were brisk polemical exchanges between Russia and Britain on their respective colonial empires, in which interested Europeans and Americans periodically entered on either side. Significantly, there was a general European agreement, including British and Russian, on the absolute good of colonial rule for India and Inner Asia. The disagreement

centred instead on who did the greater good and who nursed the more aggressive ambition against the other. All the travelogues, political discussions, strategic analyses, economic surveys, and anthropological descriptions, invariably raised these three issues. Thus, however russophobic a pamphlet on the latter two items, the first and fundamental point on the absolute good of colonial rule in general had been conceded to Russia by a European public. Russia was thus addressing a converted audience and the British were fighting a losing case on the morality of the Russian advance.[109]

Finally, and at the global level, it created an absolute disparity in the information available to the Russians and the people of Inner Asia. As a consequence, only the Russian view of the world, of Russia and of Inner Asia prevailed, not only in Russia, but also in the future colonies. It created an absolute Russian authority over them, not by excluding them from knowledge, but by inundating them with it. It might still be asked how this could capture an Uzbek or Kazakh mind since it was as yet directed at a Russian audience only. However, in a world that was increasingly integrating itself through, at least, intensified contact before formal political dominion, there was no escape from intellectual communication also, despite all the barriers of language and culture. When any Bukharan intellectual now attempted to comprehend his own world beyond the immediacy of being, he at once encountered the vast edifice of European scholarship that had been erected on his own territory. Three options were now open to him. The first was to retire into a corner in terror to gnaw at his intellectual and spiritual fingernails. In modern social science this is called traditionalism. It was not the distilled essence of tradition, since such a thing does not exist. It was a creation of colonial dominion and posited by it, the perfect repository of 'the wisdom of the ages' in colonial discourse. It was an intellectual atrophy and a major achievement of colonialism. The second was to surrender helplessly and become the compradore intellectual, if intellectual such a creature be called. This was the ideal of Macaulay and the other major success story of, especially British, colonialism, perhaps

[109] For the anglophil versions see the Hungarian, Arminius Vambéry, *The Coming Struggle for India. Being an Account of the Encroachment of Russia in Central Asia and of the Difficulties sure to arise therefrom for England*, London, 1885, ch. 11; the French, J. Barthelemy-St. Hilaire, *L'Inde anglaise. Son état actuel—son avenir*, Paris, 1887, Introduction; the English, Demetrius Charles Boulger, *England and Russia in Central Asia*, vol. 1, London, 1879, chs. 1 and 3 *passim.*; George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia in 1889 and the Anglo-Russian Question*, London, 1889, chs. 9 and 10 esp. pp. 319, 382–85. For the russophil versions, see the French Barthelemy-Edmond Palat, *L'Inde et la question anglo-russe. Étude géographique, historique et militaire*, Paris, 1895, pp. 126–27; the Austrian Frederick von Hellwald, *The Russians in Central Asia, a critical examination down to the present time of the geography and history of Central Asia*, trans. from the German by Lt-Col. Theodore Wirgman, London, 1874, ch. 13; the American Albert J. Beveridge, *The Russian Advance*, New York, and London, 1904; and again Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la Colonisation chez les peuples modernes*, 6th edn., vol. 2, Paris, 1908, ch. 13. The Russian accounts are naturally unanimous on this point.

rather less so of the French, and the least of all, of the Russian, corresponding to the relative strengths of their respective capitalisms. The third option was the counter strategy of liberation without shrinking from or surrendering to such orientalism. That is the course increasingly being followed the world over today. In Russia it clearly dates from the 1880s of Gasprinski. It was thus an instrument of conquest before the event. It was so not merely militarily and politically by accumulating intelligence; it was not confined to the publicist sphere of justification to a sceptical Russian and European audience; it was most profoundly so by being able to restructure the Uzbek view of the world and of itself, in principal independent of actual physical entry into their world.

That is how the Germans played such an important role in orientalism without a colonial empire most of the time and in regions where they never could even aspire to dominion. Similarly, the majestic orientalist sunrise of Anquetil-Duperron's translation of the *Zend-Avesta* in 1771 and then of the *Bhagavad Gita* long followed the French defeat in India. Yet Paris was the centre, not merely of orientalism, but especially of Indology and of Sanskrit well into the nineteenth century. Paris was the obligatory first stop for all the renowned Germans, Schlegel, Bopp, Klaproth, Max Müller and others before their proceeding to London and Oxford. Russian orientalism in this sense was the weakest for being the most confined to its colonial possessions, and the German was the strongest, for being the most disinterested, 'scientific', and free of the propagandist requirements of a colonial office, the bane of British scholarship, especially on India.[110] But these are all distinctions in detail in a general European and later American phenomenon.

Orientalism was not a means or an instrument of conquest, and still less one of the causes: it *was* the conquest, or rather a part of that process. It derived from the optimism of the Enlightenment and it was the conceptualised relation between the world that stood on the threshold of industrial society and the one that had not yet attained that threshold. This would indeed explain why the most developed industrial societies maintain the largest academic establishments akin to nuclear warheads, and why America proudly calls itself 'the information society'. This would also explain the counter strategy of liberation including intellectual tariffs to complement the economic tariffs that protect a nascent industry. Such censorship is protection from the aggression of intellectual freedom, so reminiscent of free trade. India has been much admired, and the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the Peoples' Republic of China much condemned, for their radically opposed positions on the freedom of opinion. Instead, this might as well be due to India's weakness, her lack of conceptual clarity on the world she inhabits, such that she helplessly flounders in the 'intellectual freedom' of multiple choices and answers.

[110] Schwab, *La Renaissance Orientale*, pp. 52–53.

We have thus come a long way from the 'causes' of the Russian conquest, of slavery and brigandage. This was just a small corner of the huge canvas of Inner Asia spread out by orientalism, and that is its only significance. It has now been abstracted by the modern historian, who has shed the evidently 'unreasonable' or embarrassing and racist aspects of that system of explanation. But such a selection has not rendered the explanation any the more satisfactory; instead it has made it only the more patchy as against the pure colonial account which had at least the merit of being complete.

The Market for Capitalism

When Russian capitalism felt the urge to a market, it seized Inner Asia. Such is the second panel of the triptych of Russian colonial expansion and includes the theory of so-called 'economic imperialism'. Capitalism created a voracious appetite for markets: but feudalism constricted the market within Russia; more developed capitalism shut it out in Europe; only Inner Asia was freely available, virgin, contiguous, and undeveloped. This is the received model in the Soviet economic interpretation and it is often accepted abroad, although there are no major studies. Soviet historiography is however deeply divided, not on this specific issue, but on its relative importance against political 'factors.' There are four interconnected questions here: 1) the extent and timing of Russian industrial development; 2) the exclusion from Europe; 3) the limitations within Russia; and 4) the potential of Inner Asia. Let us examine each one.

1. Industrial Development

Russian capitalist industry began[111], in traditional fashion, with textiles, but in reverse order, that is, with printing and finishing first, weaving next though it stagnated soon, and last and most vigorously, cotton spinning. The finishing industry began with Europeans establishing cotton finishing factories near St Petersburg at the end of the eighteenth century. Craftsmen then moved to the region of Moscow and Vladimir by the early nineteenth century, from when the central industrial region remained the undisputed centre of these industries. Weaving moved from Astrakhan to the central industrial area again at the same time and concentrated there subsequently; but it remained for long a handloom cottage industry with little mechanisation. The Jacquard loom came to Moscow only in 1843; and even in the 1850s there were eight times as many hand looms as Jacquard looms.[112]

Cotton spinning was however the success story. It began and remained in St Petersburg with some large plants in Moscow. The 1830s saw the

[111] This section is mainly drawn from W.L. Blackwell, *The Beginnings of Russian Industrialization, 1800–1860*, Princeton, 1968.

[112] M.K. Rozhkova, *Ekonomicheskaia politika tsarskogo pravitel'stva na srednem vostoke vo vtoroi chetverti XIX veka i russkaia burzhuaziia*, M.-L., 1950, pp. 174–76.

emergence of the famous names like the Russian Cotton Spinning Company and the Stieglitz Cotton Spinning Factory. Because of the English prohibition on the export of machinery until 1842, the State Aleksandrovskii Works in St Petersburg built machinery, with supplementary imports from France and Belgium. With the lifting of the British ban, another series of famous names came up: the Petrovskii, the Sampsonievskii, the Spasskaia etc. Between 1842 and 1860 the number of mills shot up from 19 to 57 employing 41,295 workers in modern factories. Thus, from the 1830s, there was a sharp upward movement in the most modernising direction, in technology, corporate structure, entrepreneurship and the labour force.

The woollen industry was distinctly poorer. Servile labour predominated in its labour force. Its technology was poor, with little mechanisation. And it was largely confined to producing coarse soldiers' cloth for military use, while the good quality stuff was imported from Poland. Here the change came in the forties. Led by the Guchkov Old Believer family, modern mechanised looms now produced smooth cloths like worsteds. They were followed by a great wave of mechanisation through machinery imports financed by such wizards as Knoop. An important shift in the structure of industry is visible from the 1820s. Until then production on gentry estates with servile labour was expanding. From the 1820s it began to give way to modern, urban, bourgeois manufacture using wage labour, such that from 80 per cent of production in the 1820s estate factories dropped to 20 per cent by the 1860s. At the same time a change of revolutionary significance occurred in technology. N.N. Zimin, a Russian, made aniline from nitrobenzine, which, at once, transformed the world dyeing industry. This was followed by closer cooperation between Moscow University and industry, which independently carried out much research also. The result of all this began to show extensively in the 1850s. The 1820s and the 1840s mark the two important watersheds in the woollen industry.

The third important textile sector was linen and silk. The linen industry, a traditional Russian one, remained backward and stagnant. It refused to mechanise and was seized by crises as it lost its American market for its principal export, ravensduck, a coarse material used for slaves. In addition, linen lost to cotton generally the world over. Silk was insignificant in quantity and quality and did not either mechanise to any degree, nor expand. These therefore played, at best, a marginal role.

Outside of textiles, Russia's main showpiece throughout the eighteenth century had been metallurgy. She had one-third of world production and was a major exporter; but she was overtaken by England and her new technology of smelting with coking coal while Russia adhered to wood coal. Russia lost her overseas market then, slipped relatively in output, and did not begin her technological transformation until the 1840s. Her problem was the Urals, which was an invaluable deposit of ores, but did not contain the coal. In addition, transport costs to Central Russia through two navigation seasons were prohibitive. In the 1830s, Russian urban and

domestic industrial demand began replacing the lost English market. But metallurgy was to remain plagued by technology and geography until the 1880s when the southern mining region was opened up. Thereafter industry consumed imported and domestic machinery in almost equal quantities. The Crimean war tipped the scales heavily in favour of domestic industry and, by the sixties, more domestic than foreign machinery was used.

In sum therefore, the near two decades from the 1820s to the 1840s witnessed a remarkable development of Russian industry. Her iron industry began to emerge from the slump induced by the English industrial revolution; her cotton industry sharply modernised and expanded in every way; her woollen production came up to date from the 1840s; and her machine-building industry came up from the 1850s, although import values in this sector shot up from the 1830s, which, in itself, was significant for the rest of industry. Only silk and linen were sluggish. Of less importance, but nonetheless showing signs of general economic dynamism, were the gold industry, growing rapidly from the 1820s and technically innovating from the next decade, chemicals expanding from the 1830s, and extensive capitalist beet sugar production from the 1840s in the Ukraine, with liquor following suit.

Such vigorous growth was then carefully nurtured behind high tariff walls. Only in 1819 was a liberal tariff and almost free import permitted. In 1822 prohibitive duties were slapped on a large number of items. There were numerous fluctuations and relaxations until the 1850s, but the textile industry matured behind these protective walls. Raw material like raw cotton enjoyed virtually duty-free import as did machines until 1857. But finished textiles suffered onerous duties, the only exceptions being those of the very highest quality for luxury consumption and therefore not affecting the growth of the domestic market, e.g., English woollen cloths, the finest batista linen, etc.[113]

Industrial development was then accompanied by an internal communications revolution. This was vital to Russia because of her extensive territory and the extreme distribution of her natural resources and production and consumption centres. However, European Russia was blessed with one of the world's most extensive navigable river systems. Great investments were therefore made in her waterways in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century before railways took priority in the forties. Peter, in the early eighteenth century, had built the Vyshnevolotsk river system to unite the Volga and the Baltic. But it suffered from frequent breakdowns along its 865 miles of length. Accordingly, between 1799 and 1808, a new one, the Mariinskii system of 700 miles, with a similar combination of canals, lakes, rivers, locks, dams, etc., was constructed. In 1811, yet another, the Tikhvinskii system was completed. Meanwhile, in 1804, the Baltic and the Dnieper had been connected by the Berezina system of 18 rivers, lakes, and canals. That same year the Dnieper and the Niemen were

[113] P.A. Khromov, *Ekonomicheskoe razvitie Rossii v XIX-XX vekakh, 1800–1917*, Gocudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1950, pp. 102–12.

linked by the Oginskii system. In 1830, the Augustus system brought the Niemen and the Vistula together. In 1841, the Vistula was connected with the Dnieper and the Bug up to the Black Sea, thus linking the southern sea with Danzig and Königsberg in the north. In 1850, the treacherous Dnieper rapids were circumvented by canals, thus eliminating a major hazard. To the east, the Württemberg system connected the Volga with the White Sea in 1825–1828, and gunboats cleared the lower Volga of piracy in 1825. Thus Russia was internally integrated to an unheard-of degree by the 1830s through her waterways, obviously complementary to the industrial investment and market integration then taking place.

The railways, the great epic of Russian transport system, then began in 1837 with the Tsarskoe Selo-St Petersburg line. The first major line came in 1851 between the capital and Moscow. By 1847, the Aleksandrovsk Locomotive plant was already producing two locomotives every six days. Even if constructed by Americans, or because of it, it was hailed as 'the finest establishment in all Europe'. Russians soon overcame their dependence on foreign engineers, and by 1860 could build and maintain their own railways fully. The major railway boom was to occur in the 1860s. Little as it was, it indicated growing self-sufficiency and continuous investment in a crucial sector. Coupled with the earlier investment in waterways, it had a telling effect on communication and the integration of the domestic market, on lowering costs, reducing waste, and expanding the scope of entrepreneurial activity, not to mention export performance

Like other late developers on the Continent, Russia sought to ensure professional technical expertise through specialised institutions rather than leave it to develop through amateurism. Here Alexander I's educational reforms were of the greatest importance. Between 1802 and 1804 the basis of a non-military technical educational system at all levels was laid. By 1810, even the lyceums, which were aristocratic institutions to prepare for higher state service, offered courses on technology, chemistry, statistics, commercial science, finance, etc., as for example in the Tsarskoe Selo and Iaroslav lyceums. Separate school systems were also maintained by the principal ministries, those of State Properties, War, Public Instruction, Communications, Finance, and Internal Affairs. By 1825, Russia had 600 parish schools, 370 district schools, 57 gymnasiums, 3 lyceums, and 6 universities, all providing a modern, to a large extent technical and non-ecclesiastical education. As Blackwell has summed it up:

> Most historians of Russian education would agree that the initial plan for the establishment and systematisation of public education in Russia from the local elementary level to the university was largely attained by 1805.[114]

From the 1820s, especially during Nicholas I's reign (1825–1855) education suffered many ups and downs owing to reaction, obscurantism, and even

[114] Blackwell, *The Beginnings*, p. 328.

primitive superstition at higher levels and a profound paranoia about technology and industry. Their effects were however felt more in the humanities with their exaggerated emphasis on classicism. The impact on technical education was more neutral.

The robust development of this system is evident in the universities, learned societies, publications and practical applications, all visible from the 1820s. Thus, the three universities of Moscow, St Petersburg, and Kazan were, by the mid-twenties, emancipated from dependence on Europe, in particular, Germany, for their professors. This was achieved, not by a nationalist lowering of standards and expelling the Germans but by Russians reaching the required standard, their membership of the European academic community, with participation in international conferences, and original and independent publications, as represented by such distinguished names as Pavlov in agronomy and botany, Lobachevskii in mathematics, and Pirogov in medicine. As for independent learned bodies, the Academy of Sciences and the Imperial Free Economic Society already existed in the eighteenth century. To these were added, during the nineteenth century, a series of others of great distinction: the Physics-Mathematics societies, and the Moscow Naturalist Society in 1805, the Mathematics Society in 1811, the Mineralogical Society in 1817, and a series of agricultural societies all over the provinces.

These societies published excellent professional journals which kept abreast of all the latest developments: the *Technological Journal, Journal of Useful Information, Journal of Generally Useful Information,* and others. The ministries also published their own professional journals, all of high academic standard: the *Mining Journal, Journal of Manufactures and Trade, Journal of the Ministry of State Properties, Journal of Ways of Communication,* with further specialised ones on the army and navy, and many more ephemeral, private undertakings. The cumulative impact of all this activity, stressing research, its application to industry, and independence, made Russia a member of the European and scientific establishment rather than a mere consumer, at second hand, of European wisdom. In all these many ways therefore, by the thirties of the nineteenth century, Russia had built up an independent if protected industry, with the material and academic infrastructure to support it. It was with this confidence that she faced the more advanced world of Europe and the pre-industrial world of Asia.

2. *Exclusion from Europe*

Despite such growth Russia could not compete in Europe against the impressive British and otherwise significant continental development. Until the end of the eighteenth century, Russia was an exporter of industrial manufactures and raw material to Europe and an importer of manufactures and colonial primary produce, but throughout with a positive balance of trade worldwide. Her major trading partner was England to whom she

supplied iron ore and manufactures, and great quantities of naval stores, chiefly cordage, tar, pitch, flax, hemp, and timber. She enjoyed a positive balance of trade throughout the century, the gap being covered by bullion. It was then proudly noted in Russia that not only did she export to England more than she imported from there but that she was the supplier of the material for English naval greatness.[115]

Russia did not export that important primary produce, wheat and other foodgrains, as she was to do in the nineteenth century. This used to be prohibited for fear of scarcity in Russia itself. It was occasionally permitted only during a crisis in Europe and in response to special requests.[116] European grain requirements were supplied by east Europe, especially Poland, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This has been the reason for Wallerstein discerning the peripheralisation of Poland already in the seventeenth century with Russia remaining free, or in the 'external arena' until the nineteenth century.[117]

Russia was essentially not dependent on European trade, unlike Poland. Only in shipping and the carrying trade was Russia the distinctly weaker partner. Trade was throughout carried in foreign bottoms, overwhelmingly English and Dutch, followed by Swedish and French. Peter's attempts to stimulate Russian shipping did not bear fruit: it did not go beyond the Baltic coastline despite numerous fiscal privileges.[118] This pattern dramatically changed at the turn of the century with the English industrial revolution. Russian exports of both manufactures and later of naval stores declined in favour of primary produce as if Russia herself were heading for a colonial future. English technological revolutions in iron smelting led to a steep fall in Russian exports from 1794 after a steady rise between 1762 and 1794; England was then followed by other Europeans, all of whom collectively led Russia for the rest of the century.

The other unhappy story was of textiles. Russian linen cloth, ravensduck, etc., and other exports which had been mounting until 1802–1804 plunged thereafter with the English mechanisation of spinning in the 1790s and the general European shift from linen to cotton. Even the traditional export of naval stores took a sharp knock with the Continental System of the Napoleonic era, and it never recovered thereafter because of the new technology of steamship navigation. At the same time, grain and other primary exports rose to compensate for the loss of the traditional items. Russia thus finally succumbed, like Poland and Bohemia, to the status of a European grain-supplier. Beginning with the 1780s, wheat exports were already at 18.7 per cent of all exports by 1802–1807, fluctuated around 15 per cent until the

[115] I.M. Kulisher, *Ocherk istorii russkoi torgovli do deviatnadtsatogo veka vkliuchitel'no*, Petrograd, 1923, pp. 191–92.

[116] *Ibid.*, pp. 273–74.

[117] I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century*, New York, 1974, pp. 303–20.

[118] Kulisher, *Ocherk istorii russkoi torgovli*, pp. 188–90

1840s, and shot up thereafter to 35.1 per cent by 1860. During the first half of the nineteenth century, grain became the single most important export item. Russian imports now complete this picture. She took English manufactures in growing quantity: woollen cloth, furniture, paper, linen, machinery.[119]

Russia was thus moving into, what Wallerstein has called, the semi-periphery, exporting raw material and primary produce and importing manufactures, yet remaining not merely politically independent but also one of the great powers of Europe. She was clearly not becoming a proper colony or periphery. This picture should be further differentiated. She was not just an exporter of primary produce and an importer of manufactures. Among her imports from Europe was a sizeable quantity of the raw material and primary produce of European colonies used for Russia's own nascent industry and local consumption. These were fruit, salt, fish, coffee, cane sugar, tea (directly from China), and most important of all, raw cotton and dyestuffs for the Russian textile industry. Until the 1840s, industrial products were only 40 per cent of all imports, the rest was Russia's participation in European colonialism, like that of Germany and others without their own colonies. As for the wheat export, large as it bulked in the export lists, it was a mere 5 per cent of total Russian wheat production until 1860. That was to change only toward the end of the century with Witte's determined bid to use foodgrains exports as a means to finance industrial investment.

It is true, then, that Russia was driven out of the European markets. Her turning to the East therefore appears plausible. However, her main export, iron, sought an internal, not foreign market after this experience. In 1793, about half the iron production was exported; but thereafter domestic consumption grew at the following rate, indexed to the 1793 figure:

1793 – 100
1801 – 159
1817 – 187
1834 – 213

Domestic consumption thus replaced the loss substantially, by doubling over these years. At the same time production of iron declined between 1801 and 1825 by 10–20 per cent reaching 25 per cent in 1814–1816. By 1826–1828 it had regained and surpassed the levels of 1801.[120] Thus the crisis lay in the loss of an export market and a relative decline internationally but not in the actual loss of markets since the domestic demand compensated, save for the years 1801–1825. There is no question here of an Asian market substituting for a lost European one in this single most important export item.

The other exports were linen products and naval stores. Linen suffered a steady decline throughout these years for the reasons given; but it never

[119] *Ibid.*, pp. 274, 270.

[120] S.G. Strumilin, *Istoriia chernoi metalurgii v SSSR*, vol. 1, *Feodal'nyi period (1500–1800 gg)*, M., 1954, pp. 373–74, 368.

yearned for an Asian market at all. It merely sought lower levels in both the European and domestic markets. As for naval stores, a large traditional item, the bottom fell out of it altogether again without an Asian substitute. The exports to Asia on the other hand consisted of cloth and cotton textiles, neither of them traditional exports. Cloth had always enjoyed a domestic market, chiefly from state orders, especially for the army: it had not been exported to Europe. Its exports now began, mainly to China, on the basis of the new technology imported from Europe. As for cotton, it was a wholly new industry whose exports went entirely to Asia: the question of an earlier European market does not even arise. Further, the vociferous outcry against the loss of markets did not commence when the markets were lost at the turn of the century with the English industrial revolution, nor was it raised by those who had lost them, viz., the Ural magnates and the linen and naval stores interests. It began in the 1820s when the new industries (cotton) emerged, new markets were being explored in Asia, and most noisily by the cotton lobby of the Moscow industrial region. They, and the colonial interest, were the ones who argued most vigorously that Russia needed an Asian market to compensate for the lost European one, although they had, in fact, never lost that market at all. This was thus only a logical sequence not a historical evolution and without any causal relation.

The cotton and colonial lobby started with the premise that an external market was necessary because the domestic market was inadequate. They then argued that since Russia was denied Europe, she must seek her future in Asia. It was not essentially a presentation of the chronology of Russian industrial development. But, as good lobbyists, they conflated the logical and historical arguments. Modern historians have confused the two by arguing that the loss of an European market *inter alia* caused the search for the Asian one.[121] Russia was therefore not seeking an Asian substitute for Europe; the two were autonomous processes denoting the rise of a Russian capitalist industry and the decline of her pre-capitalist one respectively. More than the conclusion, the initial proposition is the significant one, that of the inadequacy of the domestic market necessitating an external (and colonial) one.

3. *The Domestic Market*

As the argument runs, Russian feudal exploitation impoverished the domestic market, so the nascent Russian capitalist industry was driven outward in search of colonial markets. It is important to note that the colonial market here is a necessity, not a mere stimulus. Prima facie this reads as some sort of a theory of under-consumption, although Soviet historians, as Marxists, and even more as Leninists bred in the

[121] N.S. Kiniapina, 'Sredniaia Aziia v vneshnepoliticheskikh planakh tsarizma (50–80e gody XIX v.), *Voprosy Istorii*, 1974, no. 2, pp. 36–37; Khalfin, *Politika Rossii*, pp. 30–40.

anti-Narodnik tradition, would recoil in horror at the suggestion. It must be made clear, therefore, in what sense they are not Narodniks and under-consumptionists.

Under-consumption theory argues that capitalism itself creates the tendency to under-consumption through a contradiction between the capacities to produce and to consume. In the simpler version of the theory, represented by Sismondi and later by the Narodniks in Russia, capitalist development constricted the development of the market by expropriating the direct producer and maintaining wage workers at subsistence. This was demolished by Lenin in his polemic with the Narodniks by his demonstrating that the expropriation of the direct producer caused him to turn to the market increasingly for his consumption needs, that the expansion of the labour force under capitalism created an ever larger mass of the population dependent entirely on the market for consumption goods, that the division of labour, by specialising production processes, made each producer rely more and more on the market, and finally that capitalist industry itself created demand by consuming in the process of production.[122]

The more developed theory rests on the tendency of the ratio of the rate of growth of consumption to the rate of growth of the means of production to decline in the long term. Lenin recognised this as one of the contradictions of capitalism without, of course, adopting Narodnik worries about the ruin of the direct producer.[123] But this is not as yet a problem in early capitalism, when the establishment of new industries and the creation of a labour force were countervailing tendencies; and our concern, and also Rozhkova's, the leading Soviet economic historian on the subject, is with that phase, the first half of the nineteenth century in Russia. More importantly, these are all problems internal to capitalism. Rozhkova's concern, however, is the relation of capitalist industry to its external environment, feudalism, and not the internal contradictions of capitalism. Most of all, Rozhkova, as indeed any Soviet historian, would not subscribe to any Narodnik under-consumption theory. The question, therefore, is not of under-consumption at all but of a tension between capitalism and feudalism or serfdom, its minimal definition in Soviet usage.

Rozhkova's theory of the necessity of the external market is flawed on another and well-known ground. If the domestic market is blocked, whether owing to feudalism or aught else, and if industry is to seek an outlet in a foreign market, where is the domestic Russian market for the goods purchased abroad against Russian exports? If imports merely equal exports, there cannot be any net expansion of the market. The answer lies

[122] V.I. Lenin, 'On the so-called market question' (1893) *Collected Works*, London, 1960–70, vol. 1, pp. 79–125, trans. from the 4th Russian edn.; 'A Characterization of Economist Romanticism' (1897), *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 133–265; 'On the Development of Capitalism in Russia' (1899), *Ibid.*, vol. 3, ch. 1.

[123] Lenin, 'Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Capitalism. A Popular Outline', (1917), *Ibid.*, vol. 22, p. 242.

in the export surplus and an increase in that surplus. That does not, however, seem to be Rozhkova's concern. The foreign market therefore is no solution, if the problem is the general narrowness of the domestic market. On the other hand, if the problem is only of one product, cotton, having exhausted demand in the home market and so seeking a foreign or colonial one, which is the case Rozhkova seems to have in mind, then presumably it may be exchanged abroad for other goods which command a market at home. But this would then no longer be a problem of the limited market, instead only of the saturation of domestic demand for cotton textiles alone. Rozhkova and her colleagues seem to be arguing on both grounds, deriving the first from the second, the narrowness of the domestic market from the specific difficulties of marketing cotton textiles.

In which case what was the role of the foreign colonial market? Lenin, whose work Rozhkova knows well, has himself suggested the answer. Capitalism created the possibility of acquiring a foreign and colonial market but did not impose any necessity of doing so to compensate for domestic inadequacy. First, the division of labour did not stop at the national frontier but drove outward, beyond them, into foreign markets. Second, the uneven sectoral development in capitalism led to one branch seeking a foreign market after exhausting the internal one. On the first point he had this to say:

> This brings us to the question of why a capitalist country needs a foreign market. Certainly not because the product cannot be realised at all under the capitalist system. That is nonsense. A foreign market is needed because it is *inherent* in capitalist production to strive for *unlimited* expansion—unlike all the old modes of production which were limited to the village community, to the patriarchal estate, to the tribe, to a territorial area, or state. Under all the old economic systems production was every time resumed in the same form and on the same scale as previously; under the capitalist system, however, this resumption in the same form becomes *impossible*, and *unlimited* expansion, perpetual progress, becomes the law of production.[124] [emphases original]

In short, the foreign market was a continuous extension of the internal one, not an external compensation for an internal deficiency. Further, because the different branches of industry developed at different rates, one spilled outward rather than equalise with other branches within national boundaries:

> The various branches of industry which serve as 'markets' for one another, do not develop evenly, but outstrip one another, and the more developed industry seeks a foreign market. This does not mean at all 'the impossibility of the capitalist nation realising surplus value'—the

[124] Lenin, 'A Characterisation', p. 164.

> profound conclusion so readily drawn by the Narodnik. It merely indicates the lack of proportion in the development of the different industries. If the national capital were distributed *differently* [emphasis original] the same quantity of products could be realised within the country. But for capital to abandon one sphere of industry and to pass into another there must be a crisis in that sphere. And what can restrain the capitalists threatened by such a crisis from seeking a foreign market, from seeking subsidies and bonuses to facilitate exports etc.[125]

The issue of feudal constraints does not have to enter the picture for an explanation for the outward drive of capitalism in general nor of one sector of it in particular, in this case, the Russian cotton industry. The foreign market for Russian capitalism in relation to feudal poverty is not a problem at all.

What then are Rozhkova's complaints, if they cannot be the crises of capitalism itself, of under-consumption and of overproduction? They must then lie in the manner in which feudalism inhibited capitalist industry by 1) its different production processes, and 2) its own type of crisis. Under feudalism, as a pre-capitalist mode, production was either by self-sufficient rural entities of the 'natural economy' or by the independent artisanate, kustar, and peasantry. These collectively restricted the market for capitalism, not by reason of their poverty, but by virtue of their satisfying consumer needs directly, outside of capitalism, and thereby competing with capitalist industry. Similarly crises in pre-capitalist times were induced, not by overproduction, but by destruction of production and of the means of production through natural calamities like disease, harvest failures and war. A crisis of this nature instantly diminished demand and provoked a crisis for capitalist industry also. If these are the ways in which the development of the capitalist market was obstructed, Rozhkova's thesis amounts to a general complaint against the existence and survival of pre-capitalist formations and processes in the Russia of the 1820s and 1830s, that capitalism had not yet succeeded in dismantling all the pre-capitalist structures. It is, therefore, just a banal assertion of the nascence of capitalism in Russia.

It is thus no more than a reminder of the universal truth that capitalism has its genesis in non-capitalist conditions. At best it points specifically to the well-known fact that Russia was faced with historical and environmental problems of greater acuity than Europe. These special difficulties were

> 1) that capitalism germinated in Russia later than in Europe, therefore it aspired to a level already attained in Europe, which meant a higher jump than for the pioneers like England, France, or Holland;
> 2) that the social division of labour, whether due to serfdom or otherwise, was at a lower level than in Europe, hence the task of market integration was greater;

[125] *Idem.*, 'On the Development of Capitalism in Russia', p. 66.

3) that the natural environment was exceptionally hostile, with shorter agricultural seasons, immensely greater transport problems, and an almost perverse distribution of natural resources;
4) that Russia had immeasurably lower levels of literacy from which to make up the gap;
5) that capitalists had to pay higher wages to workers under serfdom to compensate for the *obrok* or quitrent obligations of the serf to the serfowner, and after serfdom because of the peasant's attachment to the soil, whether for fiscally induced or other social reasons. These disadvantages were made much of by leading Narodniks like V. Vorontsov, and, with refinements, they have become textbook wisdom.

Such a theory of the limited market does no more than posit the necessary fact of the pre-capitalist environment of the capitalist genesis and suggest some of the Russian variants of that relation. It amounts to complaining, therefore, that capitalism was not in eternal existence in Russia, that it had to endure the trauma of birth. It is thus the familiar old liberal complaint of the nineteenth century that Russia was backward and had to suffer feudalism instead of enjoying the fruits of capitalism. This is not surprising, since, despite the Marxist garb and Leninist tradition, this thesis regurgitates the grievances of capitalists and colonial expansionists from the 1820s and the 1830s. But more, it reproduces their tone of justification by suggesting imperious necessity rather than available opportunity. If instead it had argued that capitalist industry had matured to the point of being able to see and foresee opportunity in colonial markets to stimulate that industry, the thesis would have been more plausible.

There is much evidence, of course, of the challenge presented by pre-capitalist processes to Russian capitalist industry. These were, in particular, competition by the handicraft sector, the village industry known as *kustari* in villages, and the periodic crises caused by natural calamities. The competition was of two types, that of the traditional pre-capitalist handicraft, especially of linen weaving, and that of the more modern cotton weaving, which grew alongside capitalist enterprise and was posited by it. Thus, petty commodity production obstructed capitalist industry; yet not all of it was obsolescent or chronologically prior to such industry. Even to the extent that these may be deemed pre-capitalist in form, for the purposes of Rozhkova's type of argument, the most important sector of it, in cotton, was generated by the capitalist cotton industry itself.

As in Europe, the cutting edge of industrial development was cotton textiles. Russian industry became an extension of the English industrial revolution by importing the cheap, machine-produced cotton yarn and then weaving and finishing it in Russia. This was possible, chiefly at the expense of linen, only because of the cheap English yarn available before Russia mechanised her own cotton spinning in the 1830s and especially in the 1840s. With such imports of yarn, capitalists set up weaving

manufactories in the beginning of the century, plants with the division of labour but without mechanisation. But it was soon found cheaper to distribute the weaving in peasant homes and workshops in the countryside in the putting out system. Thus *kustar* weaving and finishing of cotton developed in dependence on the merchant capitalist but at the expense of such manufactories. This was accelerated during the thirties and forties with the growing import of spinning machinery, especially from 1842 when the British ban on machinery exports was lifted. Now Russia spun her own yarn mechanically and disgorged it into the *kustari*. But cottage industry did not easily succumb to factory industry. Such processes continually re-emerged and proved resistant, until the revolution of 1917 itself. All this was by no means unique to Russia, since, for example, in England, during the interval between the mechanisation of spinning and weaving from the 1770s to 1800, the handweaver prospered greatly. This was how weaving spread so rapidly in Moscow and Vladimir provinces, centred in the villages of Shuia and Ivanovo and aided considerably by the destruction of factories in Moscow during Napoleon's invasion of 1812. Printing alone did not have to compete with manufactories thus because of the skills involved and the relative concentration of calico printing in Ivanovo. Such, in pure form, was the *Verlagsystem*, in which the producer depended on the merchant capitalist for raw material, tools, credits, and sales. As such it was no competitor of capitalist industry.

The other was *Kaufsystem*, with a producer both independent and capable of competing to a certain extent with capitalist industry. This occurred by master weavers learning the business in a manufactory and then setting up on their own. The handloom was well within the reach of the peasant, as also the flying shuttle loom. How many weavers bought the yarn, wove, and sold the product entirely independently, is not known. But there were endless complaints during these years that such *kustari* got off lightly, without supervision from government or guilds for quality control or taxes, and so undercut the honest capitalist. Pazhitnov, the leading Soviet historian of the Russian textile industry, while accepting Tugan-Baranovskii's famous and brilliant account of this process, cites Nebol'sin on how the *kustar* could produce at about 40 per cent cheaper than the factory, and asserts that it hindered the development of the factory.[126] Nor was its quality necessarily lower. Ryndziunskii tells us the story of the municipal authorities in St Petersburg arresting a group of Iaroslav peasants and confiscating their goods on the ground that they were selling factory-produced linen whereas the law permitted them to sell in town only 'customary peasant manufactures'. The peasants complained that it was their own produce, even if equally good. The dispute dragged on until 1836 when samples were

[126] K.A. Pazhitnov, *Ocherki Istorii tekstil'noi promyshlennosti dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii. Khlopchatobumazhnaia, l'no-penkovaia i shelkovaia promyshlennost'*, M., 1958, pp. 34–38; M.I. Tugan-Baranovsky, *The Russian Factory in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. from the 3rd Russian edn. of 1907 by Arthur and Cloara Levin, Irwin, Illinois, 1970, ch. 7.

placed before Kankrin, the finance minister. Interestingly, he could not distinguish between the *kustar* and factory products.[127]

Tugan-Baranovskii has presented the evolution of such a *Kaufsystem* as a general process, even if always secondary to the factory. It appeared in a variety of industries: metal working, especially in copper and iron, the furniture trade, toymaking, brush manufacture, buttonmaking, gold lace, tinsel, braid, etc. *Kustari* thus became an ever present and highly visible feature of Russian industrial topography for most of the nineteenth century, and, within certain limits, acted as a newly-arrived competitor to capitalist production, especially in cotton. Alongside such modern developments, the traditional one of linen weaving based on peasant flax production continued to supply the peasant market while slowly falling back before the cotton onslaught. What was seen then as a problem of markets for Russian cotton textiles was a reflection of such competition. But since cotton was the dynamic success story of Russian industry, its problems were seen as those of Russian industry in general, as Kankrin began to feel from the 1830s.[128] Such then was one of the domestic constraints on the cotton capitalist: linen and independent cotton weaving and finishing. The market therefore was limited only by petty commodity production in linen and incomplete mechanisation of cotton manufacture and other industries. Only the forms of production were apparently pre-capitalist. But, save for in a part of linen production, most of them were engendered by capitalist growth rather than bequeathed by feudalism.

The other market constraint was the periodic crisis. As with the *kustar* sector, pre-capitalist and capitalist phenomena occurred in intercalary fashion. First, the usual pre-capitalist crises of harvest failure, natural calamity, and disease would lead to dearth, high food prices, and falling demand for manufactures. This especially affected the cotton industry as it was sensitive to such movements for having been the first to rely on a far-flung mass market. Second, it would fall victim to an industrial cyclical crisis emanating from England or the Continent. This consisted of reduced European demand for Russian exports of raw and semi-finished goods leading to a decline in domestic Russian purchasing power and hence in the demand for manufactures. Third, an English crisis would lead to lower prices of European manufactures which would, for that reason, flood the Russian market, beating down the high tariff walls and thus drive Russian manufactures out of the Russian domestic market. An English crisis would thus narrow the Russian market for Russian manufactures in these two ways. Yet it contained a distinctly contrary movement. Because English goods were now cheaper during the crisis, English yarn would flow into

[127] P.G. Ryndziunskii, 'Melkaia promyshlennost' (remeslo i melkotovarnoe proizvodstvo)' in M.K. Rozhkova ed., *Ocherki ekonomicheskoi istorii Rossii pervoi poloviny XIX veka. Sbornik Statei*, M., 1959, pp. 73–75.

[128] Walter McKenzie Pintner, *Russian Economic Policy under Nicholas I*, New York, 1967, pp. 93, 103–104, 110; Rozhkova, *Ekon. pol.* pp. 230–32, 244.

Russia more freely, which would enable Russian industry to reduce cotton textile prices eventually and thus expand the market. The English crisis therefore had simultaneous depressant and stimulant effects on Russian cotton. Fourth, Russian industry could suffer aspects of a purely industrial crisis of over-production. This would be due to a sudden technical advance leading to a great increase in output, especially of yarn, without commensurate offtake by the peasant weaver and others. These four processes could and did operate separately or simultaneously and would have seemed a shrinking of the domestic market owing to backwardness. All of them stimulated the demand for the supposedly safe colonial market. Let us examine the crises.

The first proper crisis of overproduction is meant to have occurred only in 1873, along with the Great Depression in Europe; and it fits in well with textbook theory by which Russia was feudal until 1861. But several earlier crises have been noted, occurring roughly every ten years: 1825, 1836–1837, 1847, 1857, and something akin to one in 1867. There is much obscurity about these as they were not statistically recorded as closely as the others; and there are disagreements as to whether they were reflections of English crises, domestic pre-capitalist crises, or even overproduction crises. Iakovlev cautiously suggests that they were combinations of all these even if he starts only with 1836. Mendel'son, the other leading historian of crises, starts with 1825.

The crisis of 1825 was almost entirely the product of English events. A crisis there led to British imports from Russia declining by 22 per cent in 1825–1826. But these were all of raw and semi-processed items, largely the traditional exports. Iron declined by 17 per cent, flax and hemp by 20 per cent, timber by 33 per cent, and wool by 70 per cent. There was no question, as yet, of overproduction of cotton; but it led to a loss of Russian purchasing power, and a contraction of the cotton demand, with some ambiguities, according to Mendel'son. However, the contrary trend also occurred. British yarn prices fell, leading to a fall in their prices in Shuia in 1827 by 20 per cent and a consequent expansion in the cotton industry. Thus cotton essentially benefitted considerably but at the cost of reduced purchasing power and the contraction of production in certain sectors.[129] This was at once reflected in policy-making with Kankrin's concern for protection for cotton in the Caucasus during the 1820s and his growing worry over the disproportion between output and demand. Merchants complained to that effect. And, in 1830, Baron Aleksandr'von Meiendorff, chairman of the Moscow section of the Manufacturing Council, observed that there was an oversupply of industrial goods which called for a policy of balance between sectors. By 1835, that is, before the next crisis, Kankrin had persuaded himself that there was indeed a danger of overproduction. He, therefore, resolved that the biennial industrial exhibitions he had

[129] See L.A. Mendel'son, *Teoriia i istoriia ekonomicheskikh krizisov i tsiklov*, 2nd edn., vol. 1, M., 1959, pp. 349–350; Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–52.

earlier proposed in order to stimulate industry should now be held every four years.[130] This was not a pre-capitalist crisis; it was a capitalist crisis, but not of Russian origin. Yet, as an outgrowth of the British crisis, it demonstrated more Russia's articulation to European capitalism rather than her immersion in Muscovite feudalism.

The crisis of the late 1830s was both more complex and more prolonged, if intermittent, stretching from 1837 to 1841 and combining all the processes. Once again it began as an extension of the English crisis of 1836 with a sharp contraction of Russian sales at the Leipzig fair in 1837 by 20–25 per cent; this was followed by a 20 per cent decline at the Nizhnii Novgorod fair, 50 per cent at the Kursk Korennaia, and as much as 80 per cent at the Shuia fair. While this led to the expected loss of purchasing power, it was not at once felt owing to two countervailing trends: a fall in grain prices in 1837, and falling British yarn prices leading to cheaper Russian cottons and expansion of production. However, the simultaneous steep fall in British finished cotton goods prices led to a flooding of the Russian market despite the prohibitive tariff of 1822. A British crisis thus caused all the three contradictory movements. 1838 was a year of recovery; but in 1839–1841 Russia was visited by natural calamities. The harvest failures of 1839–1840 led to sharp price rises in 1839, 1840 and 1841, which came painfully soon after those of 1832–1834.[131] Harvest failure then combined with disease, cholera, and scurvy in the south, higher mortality and reduced purchasing power and demand, as Strumilin has shown well.[132] The policy consequences of this crisis, after the usual outcry from manufacturers, was yet another protectionist tariff in 1841.[133] Iakovlev sees this as a partial crisis of overproduction merging with a pre-industrial crisis of scarcity and with the consequences of an European crisis, all together. Strumilin makes a spirited case, in keeping with his general thesis on the timing of the Russian industrial revolution, for including this in the list of Russian crises and to show her integration into the world market as a capitalist force in her own right.[134] These several ways in which the market shrank were mostly due to crises of capitalist production in England or in Russia, even if by derivation; the pre-capitalist crisis was secondary if important, but it neither initiated nor dominated the process.

Natural disasters however played a larger role in the disturbances of 1847–1850. It occurred after six years of uninterrupted growth; but the bad European harvests of 1846–1847 enormously stimulated demand for Russian

[130] Rozhkova, *Ekon. pol.*, pp. 81–93, 230–35; Pintner, *op. cit*, p. 93–110.

[131] P.I. Liashchenko, *Istoriia narodnogo khoziastva SSSR*, vol. 1, *Dokapitalisticheskie formatsii*, 4th edn., M., 1956, pp. 510, 557.

[132] S.G. Strumilin, 'Promyshlennye krizisy v Rossii (1847–1907 gg)', originally publ. 1939–1940, now in *Ocherki ekonomicheskoi istorii Rossii i SSSR*, M., 1966, pp. 420–21; Mendel'son, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 495–96.

[133] *Ibid.*, p. 419.

[134] A.F. Iakovlev, *Ekonomicheskie krizisy v Rossii*, M., 1955, pp. 32–42, 372–73; Strumilin, 'Promyshlennye krizisy', pp. 417–18; see also Tugan-Baranovsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 51–53.

wheat followed by a sharp fall in 1848 to normal levels. Such violent fluctuations themselves had a disturbing effect on demand and prices at home. But these were then followed by the bad Russian harvest of 1848 and a cholera epidemic in the south. The famous year of 1848 was thus one of double contraction, of European demand for wheat and of Russian demand for goods. These were reflected in the fairs as usual, with the Kurskaia Korennaia sales down by 48 per cent that year, which Iakovlev ascribes largely to the cholera wave. But he suggests that there was also evidence of overproduction in calico then. However the European crisis once again stimulated the Russian cotton industry with cheaper yarn and machinery imports. The latter especially permitted a rise in raw cotton imports and a general expansion. This then slowed down only when American raw cotton prices rose again in 1850.[135]

This survey gives us some idea of the manner in which Russian industry expanded and contracted spasmodically during the years of the cotton boom. It was easy to ascribe all these contractions to the poverty of the masses caused by backwardness and feudalism, with some empirical support in pre-industrial crisis patterns. But, as Iakovlev has argued generally, they were, at best, secondary to the impact of the European events and even to the tempo of Russian industrial development itself.

The problem of the feudal constraint on the capitalist market, therefore, turns out to be only a trivial exposé of the pre-capitalist environment of capitalist development, complemented by the textbook statement of the extreme hostility of that environment in Russia. Besides these, the specific movements which hindered the expansion of the market were independent production and periodic crises, both largely the product of capitalist growth itself rather than of pre-capitalist retardation. The obsession with feudal survivals only deflects attention to the marginalia of history rather than focus on the peculiarities of the structuration of industry in Russia. Most of all, it has led the historian to endorse a partisan campaign of the 1830s, that for the necessity of colonial markets, rather than examine the opportunities for such markets which capitalist development showered on those same campaigners. These possibilities were seen, and thus their 'necessity' created, in the manner Lenin proposed,[136] not because of a feudal environment but despite it. Indeed, it is inconceivable that Russia would have forsaken a possible colonial career were she free of her feudal shackles; that 'progressive' condition would have made her colonialism only that much more energetic. Russia's feudal chains could have acted only as a hindrance, not as a motor of such a career. How it came to be in Inner Asia rather than elsewhere must now be seen.

4. The Inner Asian Market

It is said that the Inner Asian market was growing in importance, both in itself and as a vital substitute for the European and domestic Russian

[135] Iakovlev, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–60.

[136] See above, pp. 207–08.

Table 1
Russian exports 1802–1867 (thousands of silver roubles)

Years	*1* *Total*	*2* *To Asia*	*3* *2 as % of 1*
1802	18,079	914	5.0
1807	15,304	1,025	6.7
1820	63,572	3,647	5.7
1825	66,689	3,387	5.1
1830	71,760	4,512	6.3
1835	60,864	5,024	8.3
1840	82,525	5,873	7.2
1845	88,563	9,761	11.0
1850–54	102,170	10,467	10.2
1855–59	134,279	11,559	8.6
1860–64	170,800	13,872	8.1
1865–67	217,099	21,474	9.9

Note: Silver roubles replaced assignat roubles in 1840; therefore the conversion has been done thus 1 silver rouble = 3.5 assignat roubles. This calculation will apply to all subsequent tables also. The figures for grouped years are averages.

Sources:

Rozhkova, *Ekon. Politika*, table 11, p. 65.

Rozhkova, *Ekon. Sviazi*, table 12, p. 56; table 14, p. 58.

markets. Table 1 shows the relative importance of Asia in Russia's total export performance. The big jump in the 1840s is accounted for by China as will soon be seen; but this table of averages successfully obscures the temporary disturbance caused by the Crimean war of 1853–1856 when, owing to the closure of the Black sea, trade with or through Asia sharply rose. The next major rise occurred in the 1860s, coinciding, rather too neatly, with the conquest of Tashkent and firm Russian control over the Central Asian khanates. But, Asian trade as a percentage of total Russian trade does not suggest any dramatic improvement as a conquest might lead one to expect. After the growth between 1825 and 1835, the final position in 1867 is only very slightly better, and, despite the enormous political and economic changes, only double the level of 1802. The Asian market was certainly growing, but absolutely rather than relatively. Even in 1867, it accounted for less than 10 per cent of total Russian exports. Asia was thus merely participating in Russian industrial expansion generally.

Some might rush to the conclusion, as Khidoiatov has in his polemic with Khalfin, that this discounts the economic significance of the Asian market.[137] However, it is possible that this market was vital to certain essential sectors or regions even if small globally. Also, it was common for the metropolitan or core economies to have a growing volume and even percentage of trade among themselves even while acquiring colonies with great energy for

[137] G.A. Khidoiatov, *Iz istorii anglo-russkikh otnoshenii v Srednei Azii v kontse XIX v. (60–70-x gg.)* Tashkent, 1969, p. 47.

supposedly economic reasons. Trade must necessarily be greater among the developed areas of the world than with the poorer regions which colonies, present and future, were. Each new colonial acquisition must, for that reason, appear proportionately puny. But this does not mean irrelevance, as too often imagined. The important point is that expansion must not cease, for which each additional territory can be both immensely significant and statistically paltry. The importance of colonial territories will be evident, not from mere volumes and percentages of trade, but from different sets of relations between regions and items.

The trade in manufactures alone already suggests a difference from the general trade figures. Russian manufactures exports for the period upto 1850 indicate a strong upward trend with some uncertainty in the early forties, due chiefly to Kenesary's movement; but the relative upward trend is even more marked (table 2, compare columns 2 & 3). Unfortunately, Rozhkova has not given us a series beyond 1850, but the trend continues if we use cotton as a substitute, as will be seen later. The Asian market was thus growing relatively important for Russian industry even if not for all Russian trade.

Table 2
Russian manufactures exports to Asia (thousands of silver roubles) 1825–1850 Annual averages for groups of years

Years	*1 Total to Asia*	*2 Manufactures to Asia*	*3 2 as % of 1*
1825–29	4,406	1,667	37.8
1830–34	4,522	2,025	44.8
1835–39	5,319	2,564	48.2
1840–44	8,850	5,254	59.4
1845–50	9,696	5,856	60.4

Sources: Rozhkova, *Ekon, Pol.*, table 14, p. 69; table 36, p. 182; table 56, p. 302.

Table 3
Russian import of Asian manufactures, 1802–1840 (thousands of silver roubles) Averages for groups of years

Years	*1 Total from Asia*	*2 Manufactures from Asia*	*3 2 as % of 1*
1802	2,228	1,035	46.4
1807	2,228	855	38.4
1825–29	6,398	2,218	34.7
1830–34	6,358	1,989	31.3
1835–40	8,277	2,765	33.4

Source: Rozhkova, *Ekon, Pol.*, table 9, p. 4; table 19, p. 73; table 41, p. 186.

At the same time the Russian import of manufactures from Asia does not indicate a downward trend (see table 3) as a growing colonial relationship might require. But more importantly, while Russian manufactures as a proportion of total exports was rising, Asian manufactures as a proportion of total imports from Asia was not. Russia was obviously the more dynamic in that dynamic sector leading to a shift in relations with Asia generally.

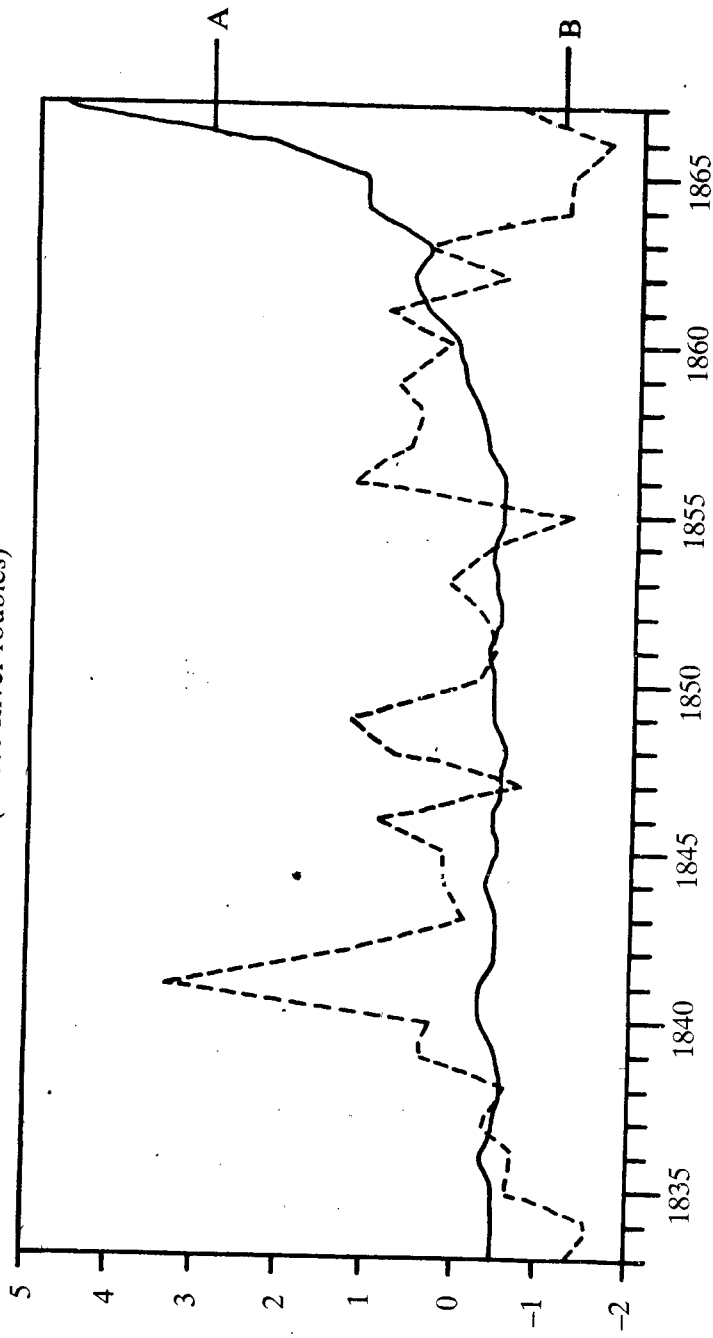
Since we do not have continuous series for the whole period, we must satisfy ourselves with cotton statistics as a substitute. As may be seen from figure 1 on cotton goods exports and imports, the sharp divergence occurs in the 1860s with cotton goods exports rising and cotton goods imports declining. But just now the more significant is the extreme contrast between the sharp fluctuations of cotton goods imports and the steady movement of cotton goods exports. It suggests a remarkably volatile Central Asian cotton goods trade with Russia with immense annual fluctuations. It was obviously the victim of numerous contingencies in a way that the Russian cotton goods exports were not.

This already demonstrates two Russian strengths: 1) manufactures were growing relatively in exports unlike the Asian; and 2) the Russian performance was steady and in control of its circumstances unlike the Central Asian. At the same time Russia was not yet able to reorient the Asian trade into primary produce supply as Europe was able to do with Russia. In general then, Russia was gaining ground with Asia, especially with Central Asia stagnating, hence losing ground in the power relation with Russia.

Some of the Russian weaknesses will be evident from a study of specific regions, especially the Caucasus and Iran. Russian trade with Asia occurred in six distinct sectors: with her current or future empire in Transcaucasia, Kazakhstan, and the Central Asian khanates, and with her semi-colonial neighbours, Turkey, Iran, and China. Russia's earliest colonial experiments were conducted in Transcaucasia because that region had been essentially incorporated by the time of the treaty of Gulistan with Iran, in 1813, and with Georgia already having become a protectorate in 1783 itself. However, until the 1820s Russia confined herself to a traditional pre-colonial concern to expand trade, whatever it be, with Transcaucasia, rather than structure it as a colony to herself. Her only ambition was to corner the trade, European and Russian, and to use her control of the region for transit trade to Iran and Central Asia. India, the target of earlier days, was now regretfully abandoned to the British. Consequently, until the 1820s, her export statistics did not even distinguish between Russian and European manufactures exported through Russia across the Asian frontier.[138] Only from the 1820s did planners begin to think of closing the area to European goods, convert it into a preferred market for Russian manufactures specifically, deindustrialise, discourage local manufactures, and ensure the specialised production of raw materials and cash crops for Russian industry. Hence, policy

[138] Rozhkova, *Ekon. pol.* p. 37, fn. 4.

Figure 1
Russian Cotton Goods Trade with Central Asia
(in 000 silver roubles)



A: Russian cotton goods export to Central Asia
B: Russian cotton goods import from Central Asia
(Normalised, that is, each series divided by its standard deviation)

debates until the 1820s concerned the stimulation of Russian trade only, not of the export of Russian manufactures. Thus, Count N.P. Rumiantsev, commerce minister from 1802 and foreign minister, 1807–1814, wanted Russia to capture east-west trade in emulation of Britain, whose prosperity, he believed, rested on the sale of colonial produce in Europe.[139] Such also was the substance of reports from persons like Colonel Strukov from Orenburg in 1810, and of Gur'ev the finance minister in 1811, of Russia as an exporter or carrier of European manufactures to Central Asia; and of P.K. Essen, governor-general of Orenburg in 1823, and others proposing Russian trading companies, caravans with armed escort, and Russian navigation on the Syr, Amu, and Aral. Even as late as 1828, A.S. Griboedov and P.D. Zavaleiskii, the civil governor of Tiflis, proposed Russian trading companies to do business in all goods, European and Russian, in Transcaucasia. This was the spirit of the ukaz of 1821, permitting duty free transit via Redut-Kale into Iran. Accordingly, Griboedov and A.S. Ermolov, the commander-in-chief of the Caucasus, wanted to encourage local industries like cloth, glass, sugar, leather etc. All these were ideas going back to Kirillov in Orenburg in the early eighteenth century and his dreams of commerce across the steppe. The substantive change now was a shift of attention from India to Central Asia because of the unshakeable British monopoly in the subcontinent.

But the twenties saw a distinct change. As early as in 1816, the Council of State had already observed that Russia could not compete on the European market and must seek instead an Asian outlet.[140] In the twenties, the Moscow textile bourgeoisie was already complaining against the tariff of 1821 for permitting European goods free entry into Transcaucasia. Between 1824 and 1830, the two positions were debated frequently in inter-departmental committees. Kankrin, the finance minister, supported by I.F. Paskevich, the commander-in-chief of the Caucasus, demanded protection from European goods for Russian manufactures. They had the important support of the protectionist economist Grigorii Nebol'sin who pointed out that Russia had not, in any case, captured the east-west trade which flowed via Istanbul, Erzerum, and Trebizond and that this policy damaged the development of Russian industry.[141] Kankrin lost his point in the Committee of Ministers in 1824 and in the Council of State in 1827 but won it in 1830 in the special committee of the finance ministry which discussed the renewal of the ukaz of 1821. Against them were ranged Ermolov, another commander-in-chief of the Caucasus, and Nessel'rode, the foreign minister. Solely preoccupied with political control, they hoped to make Georgia (Tiflis) the nodal point of east-west trade at the expense of Kars and Erzerum and thus appease the local population. The result was the 1831 tariff, a more consciously colonial one and a partial victory for

[139] Khalfin, *Rossiia i khanstva*, pp. 31–35.
[140] Rozhkova, *Ekon. pol.*, pp. 43–44.
[141] G. Nebol'sin, *Statisticheskiia zapiski*, ch. 2, p. 165.

Kankrin. It slapped on a duty of 5 per cent on foreign goods in the hope of stifling European traffic and converting Transcaucasia into an efficient producing base of raw material and cash crops, chiefly silk fibre, dyes, cotton, and wine.[142] These efforts did not yield noticeable results, largely because of the mere 5 per cent duty. At best, it discouraged spinning and weaving there, although Moscow was not capable of handling the silk yarn which had to be sent to Italy as much as to Moscow even as late as 1860. The Transcaucasian episode is significant more for a new official awareness of colonial possibilities than any actual achievement in that field.

The Iranian experience was miserable. After the treaty of Turkmanchai in 1828 which brought Russia to the Aras frontier, Russian exports, especially of manufactures, including cotton, increased dramatically for a few years, but collapsed from circa 1833 owing to British competition and did not recover thereafter (see table 4, columns 2 & 3). (The averages have obscured the rise in exports to Iran, 1829–1833)[143] Essentially, Russia supplied to Iran the same category of, at best, semi-manufactures as to Europe because she could not compete with European, especially British manufactures in Iran. Kankrin made heroic efforts to exploit Russia's natural advantage of the Caspian as a trade artery, but failed, somewhat hilariously. In 1831, a vessel was constructed at Astrakhan, but it keeled over. In 1833, it sailed to Baku on a trial run, but entirely empty, without freight or mail, because timorous merchants demurred. In 1835, Kankrin ordered another run; but merchants again refused to submit to official blandishments and the tub went unloaded up and down. That was the end of the experiment.[144]

Russian attempts at controlling the Transcaucasian route between Europe and Turkey and Iran similarly failed. In 1823, the British opened up the sea route to Trebizond and thence via Erzerum to Iran, all much encouraged by Abbas Mirza, the crown prince. Russia tried to counter this by opening a consulate in Ghilan in 1836. But she managed to sell only some metal products, glass, salt, oil, etc., whereas the important Tabriz market in cotton textiles was entirely taken over by the British. Despite the 5 per cent tariff of 1831, foreign and especially British goods entered Transcaucasia comfortably via Iran, both legitimately and as contraband. By the 1840s, Iran was meeting 41 per cent of the Transcaucasian demand for cotton goods, which explains Lermontov's hero Pechorin naturally sending for only Persian fabrics to please his beloved Ossetian princess Bela.

Russia's triple failure is noteworthy. She did not manage to close Transcaucasia to foreign goods despite a policy decision in favour of protection in 1831. Neither could she penetrate Iran or even hold a good position there; and she never could gain control of the transit trade. All this was despite Transcaucasia having become part of the empire in various stages since the early years of the century, her clear political supremacy in the

[142] Rozhkova, *Ekon. pol.*, pp. 81–88; on subsequent developments, see pp. 94–104.
[143] For details see *ibid.*, table 18, p. 71; table 29, p. 163.
[144] *Ibid.*, pp. 152–61.

Table 4

*Russian manufactures exports to Asia, by destination, 1825–50, **averages** for groups of years (thousands of silver roubles)*

Years	*1 Total*	*2 Iran and Turkey*	*3 2 as % of 1*	*4 Inner Aisa*	*5 4 as % of 1*	*6 China*	*7 6 as % of 1*
1825–29	1,667	775	46.5	668	40.0	218	13.1
1830–34	2,025	651	32.1	949	46.9	424	21.0
1835–39	2,564	497	19.4	1,067	41.6	1,006	39.2
1840–44	5,654	321	5.7	1,465	25.9	3,469	61.3
1845–50	5,856	286	4.9	1,443	24.6	4,127	70.5

Source: Rozhkova, *Ekon. Pol.*, table 15 p. 69; table 37 p. 183; table 55 p. 301.

north of Iran after Turkmanchai in 1828 and the regretful British acceptance of the fact as early as 1830,[145] and her immense natural advantage of the Caspian waterway. Russian political domination was not matched by economic performance, which recalls the similar lag between the conquest of Central Asia in the 1860s and her determined colonial restructuring of the area in the 1880s.

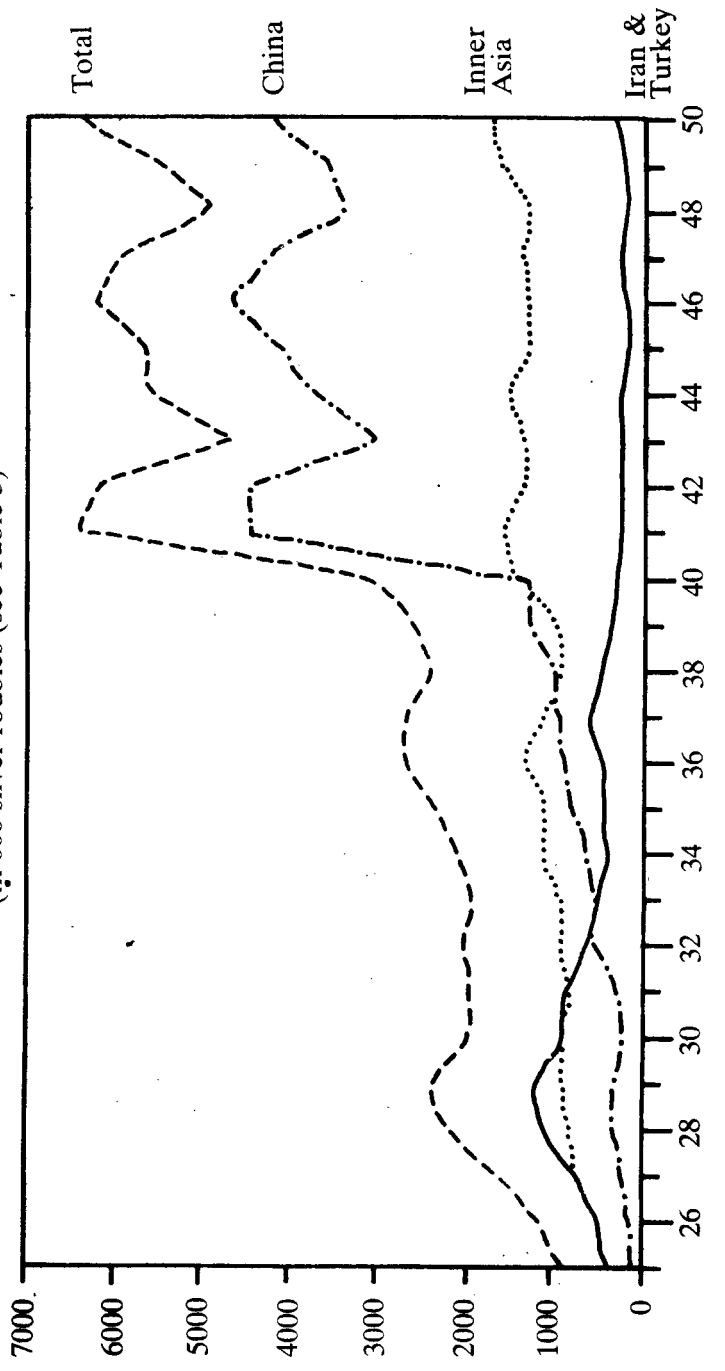
If Russia was a failure in the regions of her political predominance, her areas of success in Asia are still more curious. As may be seen from tables 4 and 5 and figures 2 and 3, the role of China increases dramatically from 1840 and it gives way eventually to Inner Asia only after 1860, on the very eve of the conquest. During this period the future colony of Inner Asia clearly stagnates absolutely while rising very slightly from the 1830s; but it declines proportionately in Asian trade from the 1830s to recover its lost position only in the 1860s (see table 5, columns 4 & 5 and table 4, columns 4 & 5). The great improvement in Russian export of manufactures is accounted for by China (fig. 2) chiefly consuming cotton also now in addition to the traditional cloth. As it appears, Russia was stagnating or declining in the very territory that was to become her colony. And she suddenly improves there with the conquest, as if caused thereby (fig. 3). But, all the while that Russian publicists were advertising Central Asia as the land of hope, China was, in fact, the important partner. There is nothing to suggest a growing and vital market which had to be secured by conquest.

This curious position is even more evident from a separate study of the Kazakh steppe and Central Asia, the two components of Inner Asia. The steppe, being nomadic, supplied livestock and their produce to Russia in exchange for food and manufactures, chiefly textiles and metalware. Central Asia on the other hand, being settled, supplied to Russia raw cotton and cotton goods including yarn, some fur, but no livestock. In return, it took textiles and semi-manufactures in metal, but no foodgrains. The Central Asian khanates, as the more developed region of Inner Asia, was presumably a better market; and Russian publicists saw that rather than the steppe as the obvious target for Russian colonial ventures. Yet, the Kazakh steppe clearly triumphs over the khanates as a general export market for Russia (see table 6). Until 1860, the eve of the conquest of the khanates, the Kazakh steppe is leading both absolutely and proportionately. Further, the growth there is continuous unlike the decline in Central Asia between 1846 and 1855, which is still lower than the averages for 1836–1840. Once again, there is a sudden reversal from 1861 with the position of the khanates having begun to improve from 1856.

Rozhkova's unconvincing explanation for this phenomenon is that the

[145] MacDonald, East India Company Envoy to Teheran, 'Remarks on Lt-Col. Evans' late publication', 11 March 1830, NAI, FD, SC, 9 July 1830, no. 2–9, p. 96; Charles Trevelyan and Arthur Conolly in 1831, in Yapp, *Strategies*, pp. 208–09 on Britain having to turn to Afghanistan as the buffer now that Iran was lost to Pussia.

Figure 2
Russian Export of Manufactures to Asia: 1825 to 1850
(in 000 silver roubles (see Table 5)



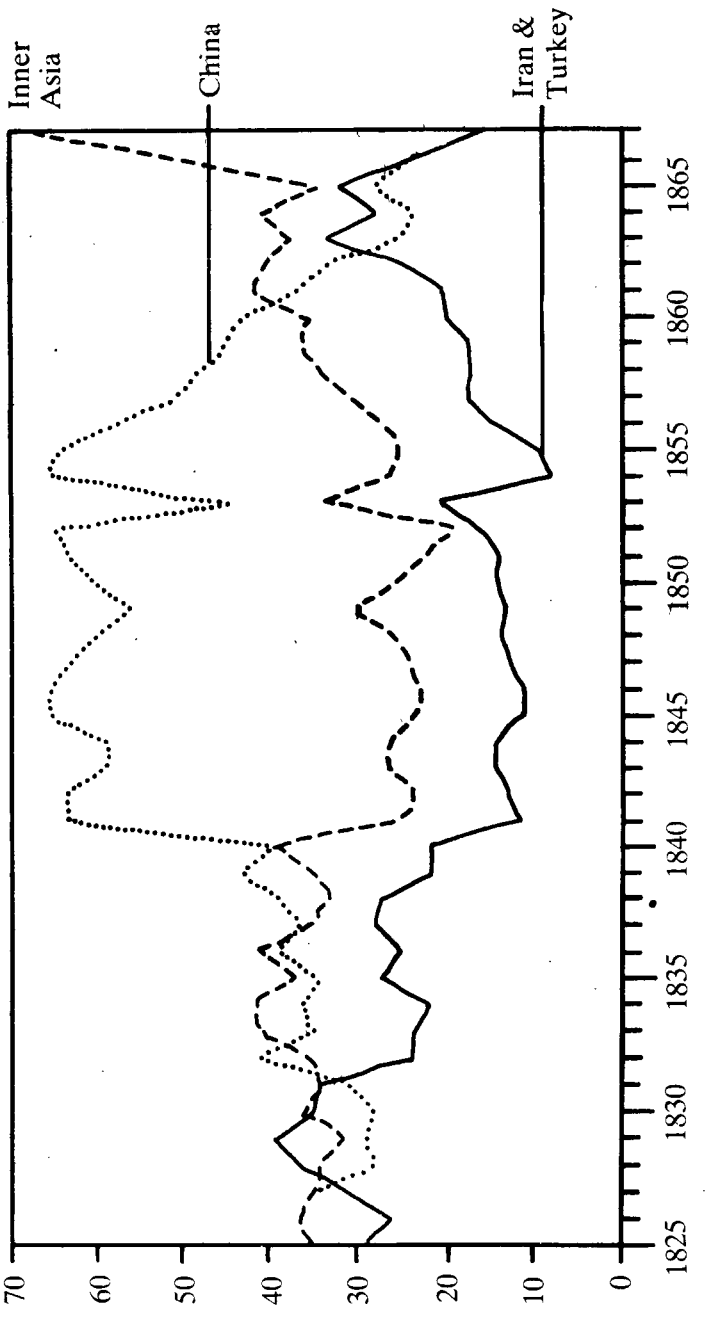


Figure 3
Russian Exports to Asia in Percentages
(see Table 4)

Table 5

Russian exports to Asia, by destination, 1802–1867, averages for groups of years (thousands of silver roubles)

Years	*1 Total to Asia*	*2 Iran and Turkey*	*3 2 as % of 1*	*4 Inner Asia*	*5 4 as % of 1*	*6 China*	*7 6 as % of 1*
1802	914	30	3.3	308	33.7	576	63.0
1807	1,025	55	5.4	252	24.6	718	70.0
1825–29	4,461	1,481	33.2	1,509	33.8	1,416	31.7
1830–34	4,518	1,256	27.8	1,716	38.0	1,550	34.3
1835–39	5,319	1,376	25.9	1,911	35.9	2,033	38.2
1840–44	8,858	1,271	14.3	2,401	27.1	5,179	58.5
1845–49	9,456	1,158	12.2	2,381	25.1	5,917	62.6
1850–54	10,467	1,514	14.5	2,586	24.7	6,367	60.8
1855–59	11,558	1,798	15.6	3,611	31.2	6,149	53.2
1860–64	13,872	3,533	25.5	5,532	39.9	4,491	32.4
1865–67	21,474	5,005	23.3	11,258	52.4	4,766	22.2

Source: Rozhkova, *Ekon. Pol.*, table 5, p. 37; table 13, p. 66; table 34 p. 180; table 53 p. 300 and Rozhkova, *Ekon. Sviazi*, table 5, p. 49; table 16 p. 60.

In the figures for the years 1840–50 there are insignificant and unexplained variations between the two books. The relevant tables are in *Ekon. Pol.*, table 53 p. 300 and *Ekon. Sviazi* table 5 p. 49. I have used the figures from the former.

Table 6

Russian exports to Inner Asia, 1833–1867, averages, (thousands of silver roubles)

Years	*1 Total to Inner Asia*	*2 To Kazakhstan*	*3 2 as % of 1*	*4 To Central Asia*	*5 4 as % of 1*
1833–35	1,281	769	60.0	511	39.9
1836–40	1,912	1,046	54.7	866	45.3
1841–45	2,259	1,228	54.4	1,031	45.6
1846–50	2,339	1,512	64.7	826	35.3
1851–55	2,554	1,751	68.6	803	31.4
1856–60	4,056	2,665	65.7	1,391	34.3
1861–65	5,759	2,178	37.8	3,581	62.2
1866–67	13,757	5,806	42.2	7,952	57.8

Source: Rozhkova, *Ekon. Pol.*, table 47 p. 192; table 61 p. 306 and Rozhkova, *Ekon. Sviazi*, table 6 p. 50; table 19, p. 66.

steppe was now within the empire and therefore easier for trade than the khanates,[146] who were still disfigured by tyranny and arbitrariness. That is too easy an answer since the Chinese trade flourished even more than the Kazakh or Inner Asian trade. It derives, rather naively, from the colonial argument that political supremacy was indispensable to Russian commercial success. In any case, as we have seen, trade with the khanates was peaceful and orderly from the 1840s, the very period of their decline as a trading partner.[147]

It might seem that the Kazakh steppe bulks so large only because of its huge food import; but then the picture seems to be much the same with manufactures also. Unfortunately we do not have a full or very satisfactory series for manufactures exports as may be seen from table 7. But, despite the uncertain performance in Kazakhstan, it was clearly better than in Central Asia, at least until 1850. These inadequacies are in part corrected in the figures for cotton goods (col. 6) which shows a rising trend at least until 1857.

Kazakhstan prevails over Central Asia in manufactures because of its peculiar demand for metal products. The nomads did not fabricate with metal or have smithies unlike Central Asia, which had a well-developed tradition of craft industry in metals. Therefore the Kazakhs depended entirely on Russian imports of finished metal products for utensils, tools, nails, boxes, etc., just as they did with foodgrains. Central Asia, on the other hand, imported only the semi-processed metal, the final product being made locally. This applies even more to cotton goods, which the

[146] Rozhkova, *Ekon. sviazi*, p. 53.
[147] *Ibid.*, pp. 76–80.

Table 7

Russian exports of manufactures to Inner Asia, 1833–1857, averages (thousands of silver roubles)

Years	*1 Total manufactures to Inner Asia*	*2 To Kazakhstan*	*3 2 as % of 1*	*4 To Central Asia*	*5 4 as % of 1*	*6 Cotton goods to Kazakhstan as % of cotton goods to Inner Asia*
1833–35	1,085	678	62.1	349	32.2	68.5
1836–40	1,145	533	46.6	431	37.7	46.5
1841–45	1,429	630	44.1	550	38.5	56.7
1846–50	1,467	804	54.8	439	29.9	66.8
1851–55						67.2
1856–57						73.8

Manufactures here means only the three items, cloth, cotton goods, and metal products, as there are no figures for the whole category.

Source: Rozhkova. *Ekon. Pol.* table 37 p. 183; table 55 p. 301; table 50 p.195; table 62 p. 307, and Rozhkova, *Ekon. Sviazi*, table 20 p. 66.

Kazakhs did not produce but the Central Asians did; hence the extraordinarily high and growing proportion of Kazakhstan in cotton goods exports until at least 1857 (see table 7 col. 6). Although we have no figures beyond that year, we do know that the steppe gave way finally to the khanates, again on the eve of the conquest. The pattern is thus repeated even in Inner Asia: until the late fifties Central Asia is a declining or stagnating market for Russia, generally in all items, specifically, in manufactures and even more in cotton goods. In every way then, Central Asia seems to be of declining significance until, apparently, the conquest reverses the trend.

Before we proceed to Central Asia it is well to dwell for a moment on Kazakhstan as Russia's first proper colony. The traditional relationship between the nomadic Kazakhs and the sedentary Russians consisted, as everywhere else, in exchanging livestock and their products for food and manufactures. It resembles a typically colonial relation of exchanging raw material and primary produce for manufactures. Nomadism also appears marginal because the sedentary could survive without nomadic offerings but not *vice versa*. The nomad however equalised this unequal relationship through his military prowess used to raid caravans and towns, to conduct full-scale wars, and to create large empires. Throughout history then, the nomad took something outside the exchange relationship: this was undone in the long-term by the development of sedentary military technology, which made nomadic cavalry raids ineffective from the seventeenth century onward. But settlements and caravans could still be plundered, until even that was suppressed by the nineteenth century in Russia and even earlier by China. That was the beginning of the truly colonial decadence of the

nomad. He was now limited to his traditional exchange without the equalising force of plunder. Some, like Viatkin, have discerned a non-equivalent, *ergo* colonial relation in the eighteenth century itself for the Kazakhs. As evidence, he cites the exchange of a Russian kettle priced 2.7 roubles for fur which would fetch 50 roubles. But this is not a proper comparison as he does not know the costs of production or procurement of fur for the Kazakhs, instead only their Russian market values. In all probability, the Kazakhs would have deemed it a non-equivalent exchange in their favour. This is a general feature of trade in luxuries or items in which the costs of production are not known in either market. As such, this has little to do with colonialism.

The restructuring of Kazakhstan as a colony may be observed from the 1820s. Before that date, the traditional sedentary policy, whether of China or of Russia, was to persuade the nomad on the frontier to sedentarise partially or settle to agriculture as an assurance against raiding. However, with that danger past, we note a sudden encouragement of nomadism instead of sedentarisation. Petrovskii, the governor at Orenburg, argued that land should not be given to Kazakhs to settle as they would then merely rent it out. He, his predecessor, General Sukhtelen, Levshin, and others, began to talk of a properly colonial relation between the Kazakhs and Russia, that is, the nomads as specialised producers of raw material and primary articles, which meant livestock and its products, and as consumers of Russian manufactures. For the same purpose Nessel'rode proposed in 1819 that Kazakhs be free to cross the Ural river at will both ways, prohibited until then for better political control. Further eastward, a swathe of steppe between the Ob and the Irtysh, 400 versts wide and 600 versts long, was released for Kazakh use.[148] Trade, which used to be restricted as a form of pressure on desperate nomads, was now fully encouraged. These were accompanied by sweeping measures of political control within the Hordes from the 1820s. They amounted to in effect replacing hereditary or elected khans, sultans, and batyrs by appointed officials, the construction of ever newer lines of fortifications deep into the steppe, and the introduction of Russian taxes and public law. Kenesary represented the last major resistance to that Russian advance. The Asiatic Committee of the ministry of foreign affairs finally decided in 1832 that nomads should be preserved as nomads:

> The committee, after attentively considering the question in all respects concerning the Horde and the frontier population, finds it most advantageous for our industry that our Kirghiz [the colonial term for the Kazakhs] remain a nomadic people with some arrangements to soften their inclination to pillage and insubordination.[149]

[148] N.G. Apollova, *Ekonomicheskie i politicheskie sviazi*, pp. 345–70.

[149] Rozhkova, *Ekon. pol.* p. 208; see also Levchine, pp. 422–23; Terent'ev, *Istoriia*, vol. 1, pp. 90–91.

The nomad, who used to be feared and suffered was now wooed and integrated into a new structure. He was finally made a colonial subject in the 1820s without apparently changing one whit his most traditional production system and exchange relations with the sedentary world. Colonialism revivified pastoral nomadism in the Kazakh steppe: there should be nothing surprising therefore in that backward and poor region becoming such an important consumer of Russian manufactures.

Yet Central Asia was the single most important area, and the colonial publicists were right after all. This is best seen in the cotton trade with Central Asia. Cotton represented the cutting edge of Russian industry, its most dynamic sector, innovative and assimilating most rapidly European technology, and leading the industrial revolution just as it had in Europe. Such cotton as Russia exported went only to Asia (see table 8). At the same time cotton was the single most important Central Asian raw produce and manufacture, whether as yarn or as the finished product, and Russia was the single most important customer. The Central Asian trading relation with Russia was determined therefore largely by cotton. Even here, at first glance, it would seem that Central Asia was of declining significance (table 9, and table 7 col. 6).

Cotton in all forms was the chief Central Asian export. Of these, cotton goods were supplied to the whole of the Inner Asian nomadic population, including the Chinese borderlands; it also went to the Russian population

Table 8

Russian cotton goods exports to Asia as % to total cotton goods exports (thousands of silver roubles)

1820	88.2
1830	94.1
1840	99.8
1850	99.1

Source: Rozhkova, *Ekon. Pol.*, table 12 p. 66.

Table 9

Russian cotton goods exports to Asia, by destination, averages (thousands of silver roubles)

Years	*1 Total to Asia cotton goods*	*2 Iran and Turkey*	*3 2 as % of 1*	*4 Inner Asia*	*5 4 as % of 1*	*6 China*	*7 6 as % of 1*
1825–29	946	533	56.3	394	41.6	20	2.1
1830–34	1,241	461	37.1	706	56.9	74	5.9
1835–39	1,213	245	20.2	789	65.1	202	16.7
1840–44	1,915	60	3.1	1,026	53.6	829	43.3
1845–50	2,297	27	1.2	1,066	46.4	1,203	52.4

Sources: Rozhkova, *Ekon. Pol.* table 18 p. 71; table 39 p. 185; table 58 p. 303.

on the nomadic frontier, but not to Russia proper. Therefore, the growth of the Russian cotton goods export market in Kazakhstan, and in part China, was at the expense of the Central Asian export market in these regions. At the same time Russia was cutting into her own frontier market, from the Ural to the Irtysh, which traditionally consumed the Central Asian product. If all these markets together be treated as a single Central Asian one, the picture would be clearer. Russian penetration proceeded in two clear phases. First into the nomadic Kazakh and Kirghiz populations of the steppe and the frontier Russian and Chinese populations, and second into the sedentary Central Asian population at the time of the conquest. This would explain the relative stagnation and decline of Central Asia in the forties and fifties, the rise of Kazakhstan then, and the sudden resurgence of Central Asia at the end of the fifties. It was all Central Asia in fact. The relative subsidence of Central Asia in the statistics therefore is, paradoxical as it might appear, a measure of its importance, not otherwise, to Russia. The conquest occurring in two stages, the steppe upto the fifties, and the khanates thereafter, coincides again, rather too neatly, with the political conquest, without in fact a causal relation between the two.

This does not yet mean that Central Asia was becoming important as a raw cotton supplier to Russia. Nearly all the Russian requirement was imported across the European frontier from America, Egypt, and India. There were sharp spurts in these imports during the Crimean War when Egyptian and Indian supply was interrupted, and dramatically during the American Civil War (1861 – 1864) when American supplies ceased and world prices shot up (table 10 and fig. 4). The structural change in this respect, with the khanates specialised as raw cotton producers for Russian industry to the extent of reducing acreage occurred only in the eighties and nineties, a quarter of a century after the conquest.

The significant process is the shifting relation between raw cotton and cotton goods exports to Russia and their relation to Russian cotton goods exports to Central Asia. The first and obvious point to observe is that Russia is a net importer of cotton goods from Central Asia until 1859 when

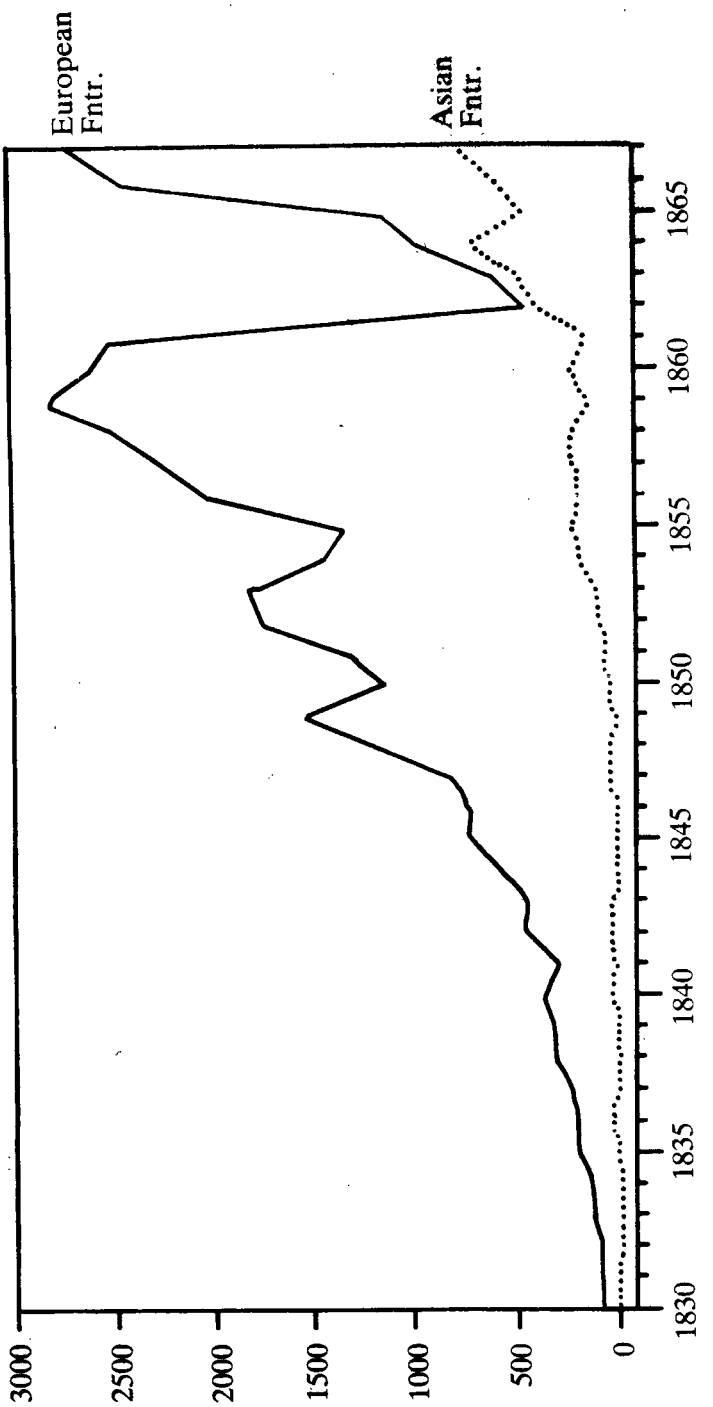
Table 10

Russian raw cotton imports in puds, across the Asian frontier, as % of total raw cotton imports, averages

1830–34	10.7
1835–39	7.1
1840–44	7.9
1845–49	3.5
1850–54	6.2
1855–59	9.1
1860–64	31.8
1865–67	23.6

Source: Rozhkova, *Ekon. Pol.*, table 42 p. 188;
and Rozhkova, *Ekon Sviazi*, table 10, p. 55; table 17 p. 61

Figure 4
Imports of Raw Cotton into Russia: 1830 to 1867
(in 000 puds) (see Table 10)



she finally becomes a net exporter (see table 11). We already know the Russian consumers of Central Asian cotton goods: they are the Ural, Orenburg, and Siberian Cossacks, the Bashkirs, Kazan Tatars, and other such peoples on the Siberian frontier, all with much the same taste and styles as the Inner Asian population.

Table 11

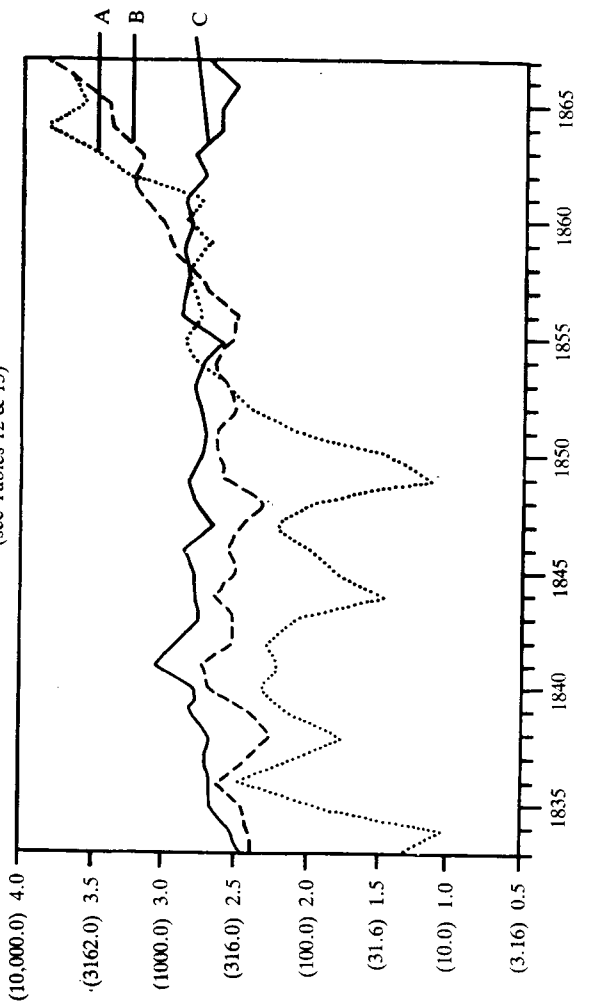
Russian Cotton Goods Trade with Central Asia; balance of Russian exports over imports. (Thousands of silver roubles)

1833	−118	1851	− 94
1834	− 81	1852	−235
1835	−217	1853	−271
1836	− 44	1854	− 72
1837	−276	1855	− 48
1838	−315	1856	−495
1839	−418	1857	−179
1840	−127	1858	− 31
1841	−622	1859	+211
1842	−507	1860	+379
1843	−260	1861	+727
1844	−152	1862	+1201
1845	−322	1863	+724
1846	−400	1864	+1985
1847	−170	1865	+1972
1848	−531	1866	+3455
1849	−407	1867	+6435
1850	−150		

Sources: Rozhkova, *Ekon. Pol.*, table 45, p. 189; table 63, p. 308 and *Ekon Sviàzi*, table 9, p. 54; table 11, p. 56; table 21, p. 67.

Let us examine first the Central Asian raw cotton and cotton goods exports to Russia and the process by which it becomes a raw cotton exporter from having been a cotton goods exporter (see table 12 and fig. 5). It clearly divides into three distinct periods. In the first, 1833–1852, Central Asian cotton goods exports fluctuate approximately between 300,000 and 750,000 roubles shooting above that only twice, in 1841 and 1842. (The averages have eliminated the disturbance, but it is visible in the graph). At the same time Central Asian raw cotton exports move in the 10250 band, which is to say, as many thousands of roubles. The general averages for the whole period are 600,000 and 114,000 roubles respectively (see table 12). This was the phase until the Crimean War, when Central Asia was clearly an exporter of cotton goods more than raw cotton to Russia. During the next phase, 1853–1861, the Crimean War and after, these two items fluctuate nearly together to the point of near equality in values for the period as an average for the period (see table 12). Cotton goods are still higher than raw cotton but it has remained in the same band while raw cotton has risen sharply. The Crimean War is the obvious reason: Egyptian and Indian cotton supplies through the Black Sea were reduced, and Russia stepped

Figure 5
Cotton Trade, Central Asia – Russia
(in 000 silver roubles)
(see Tables 12 & 13)



A: Central Asia to Russia, raw cotton export
B: Russia to Central Asia, cotton goods export
C: Central Asia to Russia, cotton goods export

Along the y-axis are plotted the logarithms of the absolute values. The anti-logarithms are given in brackets along the y-axis. Since the variation is so great over the whole period, this method has been chosen to bring the entire series within one graph. As may be seen, the change in absolute values in the higher reaches are in fact greater than would appear from this graph; the reverse is the case in the lower reaches.

Table 12
Central Asian Cotton Exports to Russia (averages)
(thousands of silver roubles)

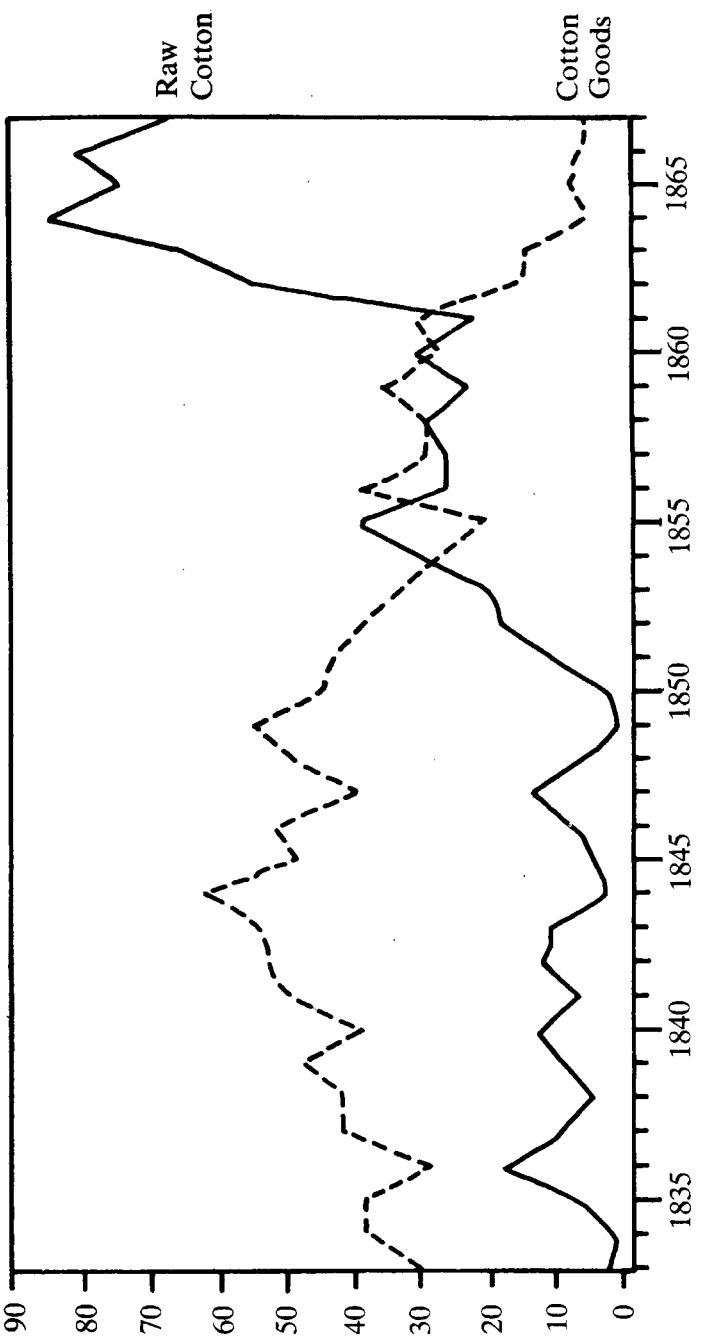
	1 *Raw Cotton*	*2* *Cotton Goods*
1833–1837	106.8	428
1838–1842	152	757
1843–1847	96	612
1848–1852	102	603
1853–1857	576	621
1858–1862	859	666
1863–1867	4,497	469
1833–1852	114	600
1853–1861	590	657
1862–1867	4,058	478

Source Rozhkova, *Ekon. Pol.*, table 49, p. 191; *Econ. Sviazi*, table 9, p. 54; table 22, p. 69.

up her demand for Central Asian raw cotton, poor in quality though it was. The Crimean War ended in 1856, but raw cotton does not return to the same level. Both Central Asia and Russia have clearly adjusted themselves to this new level of demand, and the Crimean War was evidently more of a catalyst than anything else. The next period creates the new relation and a dramatic reversal of the initial one. Raw cotton soars absolutely and relatively while cotton goods exports stagnates and slowly declines absolutely while obviously plunging relatively. This was due emphatically to the American Civil War when American raw cotton supplies were choked off and world prices rose intolerably. Russia, in desperation, turned to Central Asia. But once again, as with the Crimean War, the old levels were not restored after the Civil War ended in 1865. Meanwhile, as early as the 1840s, cotton yarn exports to Russia dropped off with the Russian mechanisation of spinning in the forties, especially after the British prohibition on the export of machinery was lifted in 1842.

Thus, in three clear phases, Central Asia moved from being a cotton goods supplier to a raw cotton supplier to Russia; the shift was punctuated by two international crises which provided the jolt for a trend already in existence. Even at the end of the period, Central Asia was a relatively unimportant raw cotton supplier, but its relation with Russia had been reversed in a clearly colonial direction. The impact of the reversal is perhaps more evident from figure 6. Before the 1860s, there was a significant gap between the cotton (raw and finished) and total exports. In the sixties cotton becomes virtually the sole export. Central Asia is clearly set on the road to specialisation, in addition to becoming a raw cotton source. Despite Russia's political advance, none of this occurs on account of any political measures or de-industrialisation by Russia in the khanates: all that

Figure 6
Cotton Exports as Percentages of Total Exports
Central Asia to Russia: 1833 to 1867



was to be only in the eighties. Thus the relation had begun to reverse itself even while Central Asia was declining relatively in Russia's Asian cotton goods exports during the fifties. The importance of Central Asia to Russia was growing just as the area was becoming visibly insignificant.

The reasons for this reversal are clear enough. The rise in raw cotton exports to Russia was due to 1) the replacement of yarn with the growth of Russian mechanised spinning; 2) the rise in Russian demand for raw cotton, owing to both the replacement of yarn and to the rise in spinning capacity owing to mechanisation; and 3) the Central Asian raw cotton being cheaper than the American and European colonial product. The cheapness of Central Asian raw cotton was always known; but its quality was lower, it was poorly ginned, and was more suitable for wadding than anything else. However, growing capacity and international crises forced an adjustment to it. The stagnation and decline of cotton goods exports were due to similar processes. Russian mechanisation and adjustment to Central Asian raw cotton made the Russian product cheaper and more competitive in the Russian frontier towns which otherwise consumed the Central Asian product. The fact of stagnation rather than outright decline in absolute values in this sense suggests that Russia was absorbing the growing demand in the Central Asian export market. This demand growth was especially marked in the Russian frontier towns with more Cossack settlements, migration from Russia, and natural growth. All this was evidently going to Russia, not Central Asia.

This is only one part of the story; the other is the growth of Russian cotton goods exports to Inner Asia and its taking over of that market (see tables 13, 14, and 15). We may now examine the phases of this penetration, first of the Kazakh steppe, and then of Central Asia. As already noted, Kazakhstan is preponderant until 1857, after which there are no figures in Rozhkova. Unfortunately, the statistics necessary to study this development, the Central Asian export figures to the Kazakh steppe separately, do not seem to exist. We must therefore satisfy ourselves with a substitute. This is the correlation between Russian imports of raw cotton from Central Asia (the only producer of raw cotton in Inner Asia) and Russian exports of cotton goods to Kazakhstan and Central Asia separately.

To examine first the correlation between Russian raw cotton imports from Central Asia and the Russian cotton goods exports to Central Asia (see table 14). The obviously high correlation between them for the whole period 1833–1867 suggests that Central Asian raw cotton was being used by Russia for manufacture and export of cotton goods to Central Asia. However, the differences in the two sub-periods is more significant. For 1833–1853, there is no correlation; for 1854–1867 it is high. This suggests that Central Asian raw cotton was being used for export to Central Asia only from 1854; before that date it was evidently being used for another market, clearly the Kazakh steppe.

It will be recalled (fig.5 and 6) that 1853–1854 was a turning point in the

Table 13
Russian Cotton Goods Exports to Inner Asia (averages)
(thousands of silver roubles)

Years	*1* *Inner Asia*	*2* *Central Asia*	*3* *Kazakhstan*
1833–1837	844	299	545
1838–1842	809	367	442
1843–1847	891	355	537
1848–1852	1,114	357	756
1853–1857	1,377	408	969
1858–1862		1,163	
1863–1867		3,383	

Source: Rozhkova, *Econ. Pol.*, table 50, p. 195; table 62, p. 307; *Econ. Sviazi*, table 8, p. 52; table 21, p. 67.

Table 14
Correlation between Russian import of Central Asian raw cotton and Russian export of cotton goods to Central Asia

Period	*R*	R^2	$\bar{R}^2$	*T-statistic*
1833–1867	0.843	0.7114	0.7026*	9.0185
1833–1853	0.252	0.0634	0.0145**	1.1378
1854–1867	0.776	0.6022	0.569*	4.2617

* significant at 1% level
** not significant at 5% level

Table 15
Correlation between Russian import of Central Asian raw cotton and exports of cotton goods 1833 – 1857

Area	*R*	R^2	*T-statistic*
Kazakhstan	0.633	0.401*	3.92
Central Asia	0.3416	0.1167**	1.74

* significant at 1% level
** not significant at 1% level

Central Asian cotton trade with Russia when the raw cotton export to Russia steeply rose. Similarly, Russian cotton goods exports also rose for the period 1853–1857 (see table 13, col. 2), with the next two phases marking much steeper rises, even if not as sharply as the Central Asian raw cotton exports to Russia (fig. 5 and table 12). At the same time, from 1859, Russia at last became a net exporter of cotton goods to Central Asia (table 11). Thus, the intimate relation between Central Asian raw cotton exports to Russia and Russian cotton goods exports to Central Asia begins only from 1854. Only then does Russia begin to use the Central Asian cotton to

invade the Central Asian market itself. These changes are concentrated in the years 1854–1858.

For the first period then, Russia was cutting into the Central Asian market in Kazakh steppe using Central Asian raw cotton for the purpose. This is evident from table 15, the period being 1833–1857, and Central Asian figures having been included for comparative purposes. Thus we have a high correlation with Kazakhstan for the first period 1833–1853 or 1833–1857, a low one for Central Asia for the same period, and a high one for Central Asia alone for 1853–1867 without any figures for Kazakhstan unfortunately for that phase. That is, Russia first entered the Kazakh market, and then the Central Asian one, on the basis of Central Asian raw cotton imports.

Thus two sets of relations have been presented: 1) the Russian cotton goods exports to the Kazakh steppe and to Central Asia in relation to Russian raw cotton imports from Central Asia, which shows the Russian invasion of the Central Asian markets before that of Central Asia proper; and 2) the Central Asian raw cotton export to Russia in relation to its cotton goods exports to Russia, which shows the conversion of Central Asia into a raw cotton supplier from having been a cotton goods exporter to Russia. At the same time Central Asian cotton goods exports to Russia remains stagnant and slowly declining even while Russian cotton goods exports to Central Asia are steadily rising, which suggests Russia absorbing a rising demand, whether the rise was due to higher purchasing power or to a growing population on the Russian frontier itself. Thus, at different times during the fifties, the Russian relation with Central Asia with respect to cotton alone reverses, both in terms of relative strengths in markets of sale and the relative importance of Central Asia as an exporter of goods. The reversal is more significant in the discussion of the importance of Central Asia to Russia than the fact of the stagnation of trade with Central Asia in relation to all of Asia. Rozhkova's focus on the latter aspect alone has led her to the conclusion that this must have been due to local misrule and British competition.[150] She might appear justified in that conclusion by the dramatic changes from the late 1850s and especially 1861 when the conquest was under way. But in fact, as we noted, all this occurred independently of any political control, and even more, before the conquest, which after all occurred only in 1864–1865, i.e., Tashkent.

It is time now to deal with the vexed problem of British competition. Rozhkova, after having made by far the most authoritative study of the subject of trade here, has come to two contradictory conclusions, that the British were and were not an obstacle to Russian trade. She has rightly discounted the reports of individual observers as unusable since there are as many claims on both sides of the argument by both Russians and the British. They would be useful at best only for micro studies in a particular

[150] Rozhkova, *Ekon. pol.*, p. 322; *Econ. sviazi*, p. 103.

year or two when that traveller passed through that region. But Rozhkova's other conclusion that the British were oriented essentially to Kashgar, not Central Asia, is founded on dubious logic. Her argument rests on an expressed British interest there, traditional contacts there, and British difficulties about getting to Central Asia on account of the terrain. Practically all these statements may be made about both territories, and a meaningful distinction cannot be made on such bases. Nor has she made any effort to demonstrate an economic articulation or special political relation between India and Kashgar to sustain her point.[151]

Without a doubt, the exclusion of the British would have helped; but Russian improvement on its own is significant. Perhaps there was room for both in Central Asia and they need not have been such desperate competitors as their respective polemicists have made out. As is well known, the Central Asians traditionally had a positive balance of trade with Russia and a negative balance with the British. The surplus of this trade with Russia was used to finance their British imports. The surplus was covered by bullion transfers, which explains the persistent Russian outcry against the drain of Russian gold to enrich Uzbeks and the British. Britain had little to buy in Central Asia, save fruit, but no cotton, whether raw or finished. Russia on the other hand had all the cotton to purchase in Central Asia while the Central Asians wanted much less from Russia. This turned out to be a British weakness and Russian strength, despite appearances. When the Russian trade balance improved, the khanates had decreasing surpluses with which to finance imports, and the British market in Central Asia consequently shrank. It would not have been so affected if there had been a British demand for Central Asian goods. However, there seems good ground to suggest that the Russian expansion in Central Asia was at the expense of Central Asian, not British products. We have already seen how the Russian cotton goods exports are correlated to their imports of Central Asian raw cotton. At the same time the graphs indicate an improvement in Russian exports occurring with the increased imports of raw cotton from circa 1853. The Russians were clearly bidding on the basis of Central Asian raw cotton, styles, quality and prices to enter the market. The Crimean and American Civil Wars immensely stimulated that tendency by reconciling Russian industry to this lower quality raw material. The British on the other hand were based on a higher quality and price. The markets for both these perhaps existed and were not as much in competition with each other as the products of Central Asia and Russia were. But, as the Russian trade balance improved, the British lost, not because of Russian competition, but because the Central Asians lost their surpluses with which to finance imports of British goods. The further circumstantial evidence of the absence of Anglo-Russian competition is the Russian failure to close the frontiers after the conquest, Kokand was closed only in 1876, after the annexation.

[151] Rozhkova, *Ekon. pol.* ch. 11, p. 388; *Ekon. sviazi*, pp. 93–108.

But Bukhara, the major trading centre, remained open until 1895 and consistently maintained the traditional positive trade balance with Russja to finance imports from India.[152] Once again, the answer is to be found in Russia's relation to Central Asia, not to other participants in the game.

Keen Russian observers noted these sources of Russian strength rather than merely denounce Uzbek iniquities and the British menace. Levshin in the 1830s argued that the Kazakh steppe, poor though it was, was vitally important as a market for goods that could not be sold elsewhere and that they were based on cheap Central Asian raw cotton.[153] But Meiendorf, Gagemeister, Pavel Nebol'sin, and Zalesov, all observed that the weakness of Bukhara lay in her need for a surplus with Russia in order to finance British goods imports. If that surplus could be choked off, Bukhara would be helpless and the British eliminated. This could be done by Russia simply reducing her imports from Bukhara who could not afford to cut down her own imports from Russia. Russian imports consisted only of raw cotton and cotton and silk goods. If Russia could reduce such cotton and silk goods imports by directly supplying the Russian frontier population, only raw cotton remained. This, they argued correctly enough, was entirely possible. On the other hand, Bukhara was dependent on Russia for all manufactures, especially metalware, Russian leather (*yuft*), and even cotton goods and cloth. Nebol'sin therefore presented his conclusion in this paradoxical form: 'I dare claim that the more the trade of Bukhara with Russia is hindered, the less dangerous for us would be the competition of English manufactured goods.'[154] Similarly Zalesov and Gagemeister clearly foresaw the possibility of making Central Asia specialise in the production of raw cotton and that this meant, not just increasing Russian sales as publicists demanded, but the brutal restructuring of a relationship:

> Finally, in order to be able to sell advantageously one's produce, it is necessary to take in return the products of the country where one seeks a market. The greatest difficulty lies here. Not only is one obliged to abandon all the traditional relationships with a people with whom one wishes to establish new ones, but it is necessary that they adapt the produce of their soil to the needs of *foreign invaders* [emphasis added]. The resulting complications are rarely appreciated fully and they often disappoint the hope of the most energetic speculators.[155]

By this simple device, they felt, they could shut off the outflow of bullion and thus drive out the British. These measures were then even considered

[152] Becker, *Russia's Protectorates*, pp. 171–79.

[153] Levchine, *Description des Hordes*, pp. 422–23.

[154] P. Nebol'sin, 'Vvedenie', in *Ocherkitorgovli,* p.31.

[155] Hagemeister, 'Essai', pp. 141–142; see also Valikhanoff *et al.*, *The Russians in Central Asia*, ch. 12. The author is not mentioned; but since it follows chapter 11, written by Zalesoff, presumably this is also by him. See also Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, pp. 242–43.

in high level committees in the finance ministry in 1863. Nothing of the sort was attempted, of course, nor was it as simple as they argued. But, in fact, by the independent performance of Russian industry, this was how the situation developed eventually.

The market of Inner Asia was therefore important, but not in the manner that publicists of the nineteenth century and reductionists like Khalfin have argued. It was not a substitute for a lost European market: it was an entirely independent development in Russian capitalism. It was not a substitute for a deficient internal market: it was merely a complement as an extension of it. It was not a growing market threatened by Asiatic barbarism and British wiles: instead it was one whose internal relation with Russia shifted from one of relative equality to that of specialised subservience heralding the colonial future of the 1880s. Most of all, it did not have to be secured by a political conquest: that followed the vital transformation of the relation and in fact did not disturb the multilateral international economic relations of Central Asia until the 1880s. This process, in itself, was the conquest, or a part of it like orientalism: it was not a mere background, prerequisite, or foundation for it, and still less a cause. At the same time, the political conquest would be meaningless without these two processes occurring simultaneously. The Central Asian market was not necessary for Russian capitalism, but it was possible for it, and that is its importance.

The Great Game in Asia

This is the third facet of the Russian expansion into Inner Asia, rendered famous for the Anglo-Russian rivalry there known as the Great Game in Asia. The chronology of the conquest was as follows: the nomadic Kazakh steppe from the 1820s to the 1850s; the sedentary Central Asian or Turkestan states of Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand, from the fifties to the seventies; and finally, the Transcaspian desert and oases in the seventies and eighties. This, at last, brought Russia to the frontiers of societies with Gorchakov's firm political institutions: Iran, colonial India, and China. But this colonial half-century contained many other territorial changes, both colonial and other. Russia acquired the eastern seaboard of Siberia beyond the Amur and the Ussuri in 1858–1860 in true colonial fashion. In 1867 she sold Alaska to the United States. She consolidated her hold over the Caucasus only in the late 1850s with the surrender of Imam Shamil. Both China and Iran experienced a great extension of Russian hegemony without annexation. In Iran Russian influence prevailed over the British, who decided from the 1830s that the Indian empire should be defended in Afghanistan, (yet to be created for the purpose), not Iran, and that northern Iran was in effect a Russian sphere. In the non-Chinese outer fringe, Manchuria, Mongolia, Dzungaria, and East Turkestan, Russian

pressures were undisputed by any other colonial power, save the British in Kashgar; and again, the Russian prevailed. These exhilarating colonial successes were accompanied by humiliating European reverses in what is known as the Eastern Question. Through a series of advances and retreats, Russian hegemony was firmly established and ultimately entirely obliterated in the European provinces of the Ottoman empire, Moldavia and Wallachia (modern Rumania) and Bulgaria. Most of all, Russia came close to, or everyone thought she had come close to seizing the greatest prize and the nub of the Eastern Question, control over the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. That would have permitted free egress into the Mediterranean and obstructed hostile entry into the Black Sea. But all attempts were resolutely blocked by the British. All these manoeuvres, both colonial and European, were conducted in the mode of an Anglo-Russian rivalry. In the colonial ventures Russia clearly triumphed over the British from the Caucasus to the Pacific; in the European theatre or the Eastern Question, it was a qualified British success against Russia. Out of all these, even in the colonial sphere, we are now concerned with only Inner Asia.

THE STEPPE

This chronology of the conquest of Inner Asia is not however generally used. The steppe is treated as having been subordinated in the eighteenth century or by the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was then followed by consolidation, and the conflicts there were rebellions against a legitimate authority. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are conceived of as a single process and the culmination of an incremental expansion into the vacuum represented by pastoral nomadism. Gorchakov was, therefore, merely distilling the experience of several centuries of Russian growth. The questions to answer here are 1) whether the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were a continuum or was there a distinction between a colonial conquest of the nineteenth century and the Russian supremacy of the eighteenth; and 2) whether all this was due to pastoral nomadism being a vacuum. The answer to the first question will already have answered in part the second.

1. The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

It is indeed necessary to distinguish between these two centuries in order to establish a firm chronology for colonial rule. Russian hegemony in the steppe during the eighteenth century may be traced only to her having been a sedentary society; her colonial supremacy was to come only in the nineteenth, from the 1820s. Russian suzerainty in the steppe in the eighteenth century was symmetrical with that of the other sedentary societies over

their respective nomadic neighbours in the Eurasian steppe. These were China, Iran, Turkey, and even the khanates of Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand over the Manchurians, Mongols, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Turkmen, and Crimean Tatars. During colonial times the Kazakhs were followed by the sedentary khanates into full colonial subjection with China, Iran, and Turkey halfway into it. Russia alone was the subject of both processes. The nomads alone were the objects of both. All the others were the subjects of the one and the objects of the other development. These two types of Russian domination must be differentiated, of the sedentary and pre-colonial from the strictly colonial, even if the first continued to feed the second.

The sedentary expansion into Inner Asia during the eighteenth century occurred in an international relations system peculiar to that epoch and area. Political relations between nomad and sedentary fluctuated violently and cyclically through the centuries. For that reason perhaps, the system explicitly acknowledged the real hierarchy of power without the official fiction of the equality and sovereignty of rulers and states as in post-Renaissance Europe. International alliances were therefore contracted through submissions of the weaker to the stronger: they abridged real sovereignty to the extent and in the manner that any hierarchy must, whether in the European diplomatic chess-board or in modern post-colonial times. They did not, however, prejudice claims to sovereignty as the acceptance of subject status might lead one to conclude in legal terms. Both sedentary and nomad observed this convention according to their real position in the hierarchy of the moment. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the nomads were in military and therefore political decline as one phase of the millennial cyclical fluctuation. This was reflected in diplomatic practice by nomadic submissions for the purposes of alliance. The submissions of the Kazakh khans in the eighteenth century to Russia, China, Khiva, or others like Dzungaria, were of this nature. The traditional dating of Russian sovereignty in the steppe to the first half of the eighteenth century is thus doubly flawed. First, there were as many Chinese, Dzungarian, or Khivan claims over the steppe as there were Russian, and second, there were innumerable submissions at least a century before the first traditionally cited one of Abulkhair Khan of the Little Horde in 1731.

Thus Dzungaria, the western extension of Mongolia, became a part of the Qing (Ch'ing or Manchu) empire of China in 1758 and has never been or claimed as a part of the Russian empire. Yet, between 1607 and 1758, there were frequent negotiations over submission and the oath was even administered on occasion. In 1607, Gagarin, the *voevod* of Tara, invited the ruling Oirat princes of Dzungaria to become Russian subjects and to pay tribute for protection from the Altyn Khan of Khalkha to the east and the Kazakhs to the west. The Derbets, an Oirat clan, asked for protection for this reason in 1607. In 1608, the Torghut, another Oirat clan, accepted these Russian conditions; yet, in 1609, when the Golubin mission arrived

with the draft treaty, the Oirat princes rejected it on the ground that their war with the Kazakhs was now over.[156] In 1619, when the Altyn Khan proposed to Russia an alliance of equals against the Oirat menace, Khara-Kula of the Choros clan of the Oirats arrived in Moscow with a proposal of submission on the very same day as the Altyn Khan's emissary. The Tsar chose Khara-Kula.[157] When Dzungarian power grew under Batur Khontaiji (1635–1653), this submission was revoked. After much frontier raiding and other conflicts, the two empires agreed on a species of joint sovereignty by both collecting taxes from the same peoples, chiefly the Baraba Tatars and the Enisei Kirghiz. This arrangement lasted through the reign of Senge (1661–1671) and of his brother Galdan, the Boshoktu Khan (1671–1697) when Oirat power attained its zenith. But in 1721, Tsewan Rabdan, his nephew and the next khontaiji, negotiated a submission again to protect his rear in his exhausting warfare with the Qing empire of China. But, once again, by the time, I. Unkovskii's mission arrived to administer the oath, the formidable Kang Xi (K'ang Hsi) emperor of China was dead, and the khontaiji repudiated the alliance of submission.[158] His successors maintained their distance until the last moment, in 1757, when a desperate Amursana offered it once again. But this time the empress Elizabeth rejected it for fear of offending the Qing, who liquidated the Oirats and their Dzungarian empire the following year.[159]

As for the Kazakhs, as early as the 1590s, the khan Tevekkel negotiated an alliance of submission to Russia against Kuchum Khan of Sibir, their common enemy of the moment. The charter described the khan as the tsar's vassal and, in 1595, the tsar Fedor Ivanovich assumed that Tevekkel was indeed such.[160] There were no more Kazakh submissions until 1730 when Abulkhair Khan of the Little Horde asked for it and Colonel Murza A.I. Tevkelev actually administered the oath to him and to thirty elders in 1731. This time it was against the Dzungarians. Various sultans of the Middle and Greater Hordes followed suit for the same reasons during the 1740s. But, at the same time, other khans and sultans of the Little Horde regularly submitted to Russia's arch rival Khiva for protection against Russia. Khiva, like Russia, distributed titles, arms, soldiers, money, and sundry favours all leading to a series of rival khans in the Little Horde disputing sovereignty on the basis of titles so cheaply acquired. In the early nineteenth century Kokand emulated Khiva and Russia with the Kazakh clans along the Syr.[161] As late as 1869, when the steppe was fully incorporated already, the Sultan Kangalii Arslanov sought to become a Khivan subject and requested that the whole of the Little Horde be taken under the wing of Khiva. This was to escape the new Russian regulations of

[156] Zlatkin, *Istoriia Dzhungarskogo khanstva*, pp. 123–27.

[157] *Ibid.*, pp. 138–40. [158] *Ibid.*, pp. 327–55.

[159] V.P. Gurevich, *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia v tsentral'noi Azii v XVII–pervoi polovine XIX v.*, 2nd edn., M., 1983, pp. 111–14.

[160] *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1, Alma Ata, 1957, pp. 224–26.

[161] *Ibid.*, pp. 315–16.

1868 in the Akmolinsk and Uralsk *oblasts*.[162] When the Kalmyks submitted in the first half of the seventeenth century, their main purpose was Russian protection from the raids of the Bashkirs and Cossacks, both Russian subjects already. In 1731 and 1734, the Karakalpaks under Kaip joined hands with Abulkhair of the Little Horde to submit to Russia only to escape Nadir Shah of Iran. Even in the 1870s, the Tekke Turkmen tribe planned to swear allegiance to the Qajar dynasty of Iran because their traditional suzerain, Khiva, had been laid low by Russia, and Russia was then threatening to enter the Transcaspian desert and oases. All these were international alliances, made and unmade as necessary, and following a standard formula that each would be safe from raids by the other, that the nomad would furnish military contingents during war and otherwise pay tribute regularly, and that the sedentary would warn off aggressors. There was no further political control.

How much submission was a means of securing an alliance may be guaged from the reverse process, the dominant partner abasing himself before his inferior. In the late fifteenth century, Ivan III, the Great, of Moscow, was already the political superior of Mengli-Girei, khan of the Crimea, who had been defeated and reduced to vassalage by the Ottoman sultan in 1475. Yet, in his diplomatic correspondence, Ivan III used expressions of abject submission like *chelom biti* and numerous other such terms. Interestingly, Ivan employed such formulae even with his puppet, the khan of Kazan. But this time the latter at least reciprocated, which Mengli-Girei never did. This was despite Ivan having installed Muhammad Amin as the khan of Kazan and the latter's correspondence with Crimea having to go through Moscow. Further, the tsar regularly distributed expensive gifts to these khans. Certain taxes collected in Moscow were still designated *vykhod* or tribute, although Moscow had ceased paying tribute as far back as 1452. These distinctions between gift and tribute, and between submission, suzerainty, and alliance, are singularly blurred and only a detailed study of the relative power balances can clarify the issue. Such practices by Ivan were essential to his foreign policy. He needed Mengli-Girei's alliance in order to beat off the menace of Ahmed Khan of the Golden Horde in the south east and of Casimir of Lithuania in the north-west. On that famous occasion in 1480, when the armies of Ahmed Khan and Ivan did not engage on the banks of the Urga, Mengli-Girei's alliance and raid on Podolia restrained Casimir from coming to the aid of Ahmed Khan, who, therefore, withdrew. That singular non-event finally released Muscovy from the dominion of the Golden Horde.[163] Yet, in 1521, Muhammad Girei, son of Mengli-Girei, raided Moscow and besieged the city, retiring only after a heavy bribe. There is even the possibly apocryphal story by Herberstein that Peter, the commander of the garrison, agreed to an annual tribute.[164]

[162] *Ibid.*, pp. 396–98.

[163] For details see Robert M. Croskey, 'The Diplomatic Forms of Ivan III's Relationship with the Crimean Khan,' *Slavic Review*, vol. 42, no. 2, July 1984, pp. 257–69; G. Vernadsky, *Russia at the Dawn of the Modern Age*, New Haven and London, 1959, pp. 80–92, 71–77.

[164] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

Thus both superior and inferior could go through the motions of submission in order to secure an alliance without either necessarily surrendering one jot of his sovereignty.

This would explain the apparent paradox of dual submission, so common in the eighteenth century especially. However, nobody then seemed to think it strange. If they are seen as alliances, there would indeed be nothing anomalous about such practices. We have already seen how the Russians and Dzungarians managed to agree to a joint sovereignty over the south Siberian Baraba Tatars and the Enisei Kirghiz; but this may not be so pertinent. Abulmambet of the Middle Horde submitted to Russia in 1740 and then to Galdan Tseren of Dzungaria also, sending even tribute and hostages as earnest. The most famous practitioner was Ablai Khan, again of the Middle Horde, and its most significant ruler in the eighteenth century. He effortlessly submitted to both Russia (1740) and China (1757); but he maintained closer links with the Qing. He sent them troops and tribute more regularly than to Russia. In 1771, he received the khan's title from them and refused to have it ratified by Russia or to swear another oath. So Russia quickly bestowed the title on his son and successor, Vali, who however submitted to China instead. But, to add yet another twist, China granted the title to Khankhodja, not Vali.[165] In 1731, the Kalmyk Cheren-Donduk was proclaimed khan by the Russians while he announced himself vassal of the Qing.[166] Abulkhair Khan of the Little Horde was especially dexterous in auctioning himself. Having already submitted more than once to Russia, he promised the same, along with hostages, to the arch enemy of the Kazakhs, Galdan of Dzungaria. He invited the Dzungarian envoys to Orenburg, and then gleefully looked on as Nepliuev, the Russian governor, and Galdan's emissaries wrangled over him.[167] On the very fringe of Inner Asia, as late as the 1820s, Moorcroft found that Ladakh paid a tribute to both Ranjit Singh and to the Qing via Lhasa.[168]

These submissions never led to any Russian control of foreign policy. They only committed these rulers to a friendly policy to Russia or China, and that was reciprocated. The case of Dzungaria has already been noted; but then Dzungaria was never even claimed by Russia. That was not however the case with the Kalmyks, deemed to have been included within the empire, in the territory between the Iaik and the Volga, already in the seventeenth century. Yet, they also pursued an independent foreign policy. The general basis of Kalmyk allegiance was the supply of troops for wars against especially Crimea in exchange for security from other Russian subjects, especially the Cossacks and Bashkirs. Beyond this, they acted freely. Thus Russia maintained good relations with Dzungaria as a consistent policy. Yet the Daichin Taisha of the Kalmyks conducted wars periodically

[165] *Ist. Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1, pp. 263–65.
[166] A. Bennigsen, *Russes et Chinois avant 1917*, Paris, 1974, pp. 46–49.
[167] Levchine, *Description des Hordes et Steppes*, pp. 196–97.
[168] Moorcroft, *Travels in the Himalayas*, vol. 1, pp. 336–37.

with Dzungaria. The next one, Aiuka, went much further. After supplying troops against Stenka Razin's Cossack war, he even joined hands with the Derbet taisha Solom-Seren and with the Crimean and Azov murzas to assault the Russian town of Penza in 1680 and then regularly raided the Don Cossack and Russian settlements along the Volga and the Iaik. In 1681, he received Crimean envoys and presents. In 1682, he assisted the Bashkirs in their rising of 1681–1683 against Russia with as many as 4000 troops sent against Kazan and Ufim uezds. In 1684, he conducted a series of campaigns against the Kuban, Kazakh, Turkmen, and Khivan peoples entirely on his own, not at Russian dictation. In 1690, he assumed the extraordinary title of khan, bestowed on him by the Dalai Lama, who had just granted the even more extraordinary title of the Boshoktu Khan to Galdan of Dzungaria in order to create a sort of Lamaist International. This Tibetan title was finally recognised by Russia in 1697 and again in 1709 for Aiuka's services rendered against the Turks. This situation is registered in Soviet historiography as a state within the state: it is perhaps more accurate to see it as a subordinate international alliance. Aiuka was particularly active in Dzungarian-Qing relations with both empires seeking his support. He cemented his Dzungarian alliance through the marriage of his sister, Seterdzhab, to Tseren Rabdan, and by himself marrying the latter's cousin, Darmabala. He then sent his nephew Arabzhur as his ambassador to Beijing and in 1712 received a return mission from there. By the time he died in 1724 at the age of 82, he had created a true Kalmyk state, or *gosudarstvo*, as it is known in Russian, not just a khanate, and he left behind a legendary name and authority for all of Inner Asia.[169].

Such alliances or submissions were intended not only for external security but as much to ensure the internal authority of the individual concluding the alliance. It was designed to demonstrate mastery of the international security environment. As such it served the same purpose as successful military leadership and the two were not often easily distinguishable. Nomads being the more vulnerable party in international politics, foreign policy was an especially salient feature of domestic politics. Abulkhair clearly calculated in this manner. For example, he hoped to establish himself over all three Hordes by submitting on their behalf although his authority even in his own Little Horde was parlous and it was otherwise null elsewhere. Abulkhair was not proposing to become a Russian subject for fear of his own people and to retain his title. He was staking his claim to their support by executing what appeared a major foreign policy coup, the alliance with one of the two most important factors in Inner Asian politics. But Nurali, his son and successor, was already different, more agent than sovereign, relying more on Russia than on his own people. That accounts for his craven support to Russia, as in 1755 to massacre the Bashkirs or in

[169] See N.V. Ustiugov, M.A. Kichikov, T.P. Belikov, 'Kalmykiia vo vtoroi polovine XVII—nachale XVIII v.' in *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoi ASSR. Dooktiabr'skoi period*, M., 1967, pp. 136–62.

1774 against Pugachev. This was the period of the true decline of the khan's authority with increasing Russian interference leading eventually to Srym Batyr's prolonged struggle in the eighties and nineties. Rivals likewise laid claim to the khan's authority by allying with Khiva instead. The Middle Horde went through a similar evolution. Semeke submitted to Russia, Abulmambet and Barak Batyr to Dzungaria, and Ablai to China mainly and to Russia marginally.[170] Among the Karakalpaks, Aidos of the Koldauly tribe similarly submitted to Muhammad Amin of Khiva in order to establish his own authority over all Karakalpaks by delivering a major international alliance and of course enlisting Khivan support. His aim was to secure a base among the group or *arys* of On-tort-uru of the Zhany Daria area, and he was successful.[171]

Above all, the manner of the submission reveals the nature of the relationship. It was the result of requests, not conquests; either side made the request; it was frequently refused by either, not just one party; and as already seen, it was equally frequently repudiated or simply ignored with impunity. Most of all, a submission was not followed by any Russian exercise of sovereign rights, e.g., the introduction of new law, taxes, or civil or military administration. Acceptance, therefore, did not mean truly subject status, and repudiation was never treated as rebellion. Russia exercised her new influence by intrigue at the court of the khan, and violations were followed by only the traditional exchange of raids and punitive raids at worst, and by further invitations to submit at best.

Thus the Dzungarians demanded such an alliance of the Russians in 1607, 1608, 1619, 1721, and 1757. The Russian side was generally willing but declined in 1757 for fear of China. The Russians asked for it in 1609, 1616–1618, and 1621, was rejected in 1609 and 1721, was accepted in 1619 and then rebuffed almost at once until 1721. None of all this was preceded by military defeat, still less invasion in any real sense, nor was it followed by garrisons and reprisals.

Oaths of allegiance were administered after prolonged diplomatic negotiation and had to be periodically renewed, like treaties or when circumstances changed. The Kalmyk taishas, Daichin, Lauzan, Mamsren, Sanzhin, and Monchak bound themselves and their uluses in 1655 to fight with Russia against the Crimea. In 1656 another oath was administered. In 1657, this had to be repeated because Crimean and Iranian envoys were bidding anxiously for Kalmyk support. In 1661, another two oaths were extracted; and in 1664, the Russian military colours were granted in a bid to attach the Kalmyks more firmly.[172] Aiuka must have been a thorn in the

[170] Viatkin, *Srym Batyr*, pp. 156–59, 169–70, 178–87, and ch. 3 *passim.*, *Ist. Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1, p. 241.

[171] *Istoriia Karakalpaksoi ASSR*, vol. 1, *S drevneishikh vremen do Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi Sotsialisticheskoi Revoliutsii*, Tashkent, 1974, pp. 112–13.

[172] P.S. Preobrazhenskaia, 'Dobrovol'noe vkhozhdenie kalmykov v sostav russkogo gosudarstva' in *Ocherki Kalmytskoi ASSR*, pp. 116–25.

Russian side, to judge by the frequency of his oaths: in 1671 on accession, in 1673 because of a forthcoming war with Turkey, in 1677 after the tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich died, in 1683 because of his campaigns against Russia, and in 1684 after his support for the Bashkir rising.[173]

The Kazakh case is the most notorious. In 1726, Abulkhair of the Little Horde sent his emissary Koidagar Kobekov to ask to be taken under the protection of the empress Anna. But the College of Foreign Affairs refused on the ground that 'there is no purpose in his being under the protection of Her Imperial Majesty'.[174] But in 1731 he was accepted after another attempt, which I.K. Kirillov, the chief of the Orenburg Expedition, proudly described as voluntary: 'The Kirghiz-kaisak people [the Kazakhs]. . . . . without any move by our troops and entirely of their own volition made eternal submission to us.'[175] But Abulkhair, like Aiuka, followed his own priorities, and the same oath had to be administered in 1732, 1736, 1738, and 1748, following his pursuit of an Iranian alliance by approaching Nadir Shah and a Dzungarian one by marrying his daughter to Tsewan Dorji.[176] In the Middle Horde Semeke Khan took the oath in 1731 on behalf of some lineages only, while Ablai and Abulmambet refused. In 1738, the sultans of the Middle Horde were asked to submit again after Semeke's attack on Ufim uezd and twenty-seven of them obliged. Ablai and Abulmambet finally did so only in 1740. In 1742, sixty-eight sultans and elders of the Middle Horde submitted yet again on demand. But in 1775, when they wished to do so once more, Catherine II tartly repulsed them on the ground that they had been through it once already to Anna. The reason for the fresh request was the hope of receiving a larger stipend and the rich presents that such ceremonies occasioned.[177] But, in 1771, after Ablai took the title from the Qing, Russia hastily asked him to resubmit, which this time he refused.

The independence of these khans continually bemused colonial observers and is still remarkable to note. Aiuka Khan of the Kalmyks, it has already been noted, created a 'state within the state', an expression unusual for Soviet historiography. Abulkhair could both submit and raid the frontier settlements simultaneously. He once arrived in Orenburg with his court to administer justice. He informed the aghast Russians: 'This town is mine and has been constructed for me; whoever disobeys me shall be decapitated.'[178] He was right in his claim, for Anna had agreed to build it for him as a refuge and had gone out of her way to pamper him. In 1738, for his submission, he was received like a visiting potentate by a major with a company of dragoons, two of grenadiers, and martial music, all to escort

[173] Ustiugov *et al.*, 'Kalmykiia', *loc. cit.*
[174] Viatkin, *Srym Batyr*, p. 156.
[175] *Ist. Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1, p. 237.
[176] *Ibid.*, pp. 258–59.
[177] Terent'ev, *Istoriia*, vol. 1, p. 183.
[178] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

him to the town. Troops lined the streets inside; a 9-gun salute was fired; and rich presents were distributed to all, including the poorest of his suite. His sons Nurali and Erali received the same honours in 1740. In 1749, when Nurali came for his investiture, such ceremonies were repeated. Terent'ev saw the point, if in good colonial fashion: 'In general, the submission of the Kirghiz was most strange; they neither paid taxes nor undertook any obligations, yet our government wooed them solely for the honour of being considered the overlord of the Kirghiz.'[179]

In this sense, the Qing empire of China was far more effective, expansive, and 'colonial' than the Russian during the eighteenth century. They installed their own administration in their outer fringe of Manchuria, Mongolia, Dzungaria, and East Turkestan. During the latter half of the seventeenth century, eastern Mongolia gradually crystallised into the three khanates of the Tushetu, Zagagtu, and Setsen, with the fourth, the Sain Noyon, being added in 1725. These transformed themselves from being the followers of the khans and lineages, as the Kazakh Hordes were, into territorial units with fixed boundaries which survived until 1924.

As early as 1655, Khalkha was divided into eight banners, each with its own governor or *zasag*. This process was vigorously pursued by Qing emperors, especially after the Convention of Dolonnor of 1691 when, amidst elaborate ceremonies and much feasting and jousting, 550 Khalkha nobles led by the three khans, and the princes of 49 banners of Inner Mongolia paid homage and swore allegiance to the Kang Xi emperor in person. From then Mongolia disappeared as a political entity to become a part of the Qing empire. The khans were then regularly invested by the emperor, linked by marriage alliances to the dynasty, salaries, ranks, and titles liberally distributed, and the Jebtsundambakhutuktu appointed Grand Lama. Khalkha was further subdivided into 34 banners and the khans, despite their exalted social status, reduced in effect to the level of other banner princes. In fact the number of banners almost tripled during the next century.[180]

Similarly, the conquest of Dzungaria in 1758 was followed by a virtual extermination of the Oirat Mongols and their substitution by their Kalmyk cousins in a final, and utterly tragic nomadic migration of 170,000 Kalmyks from the Volga to Dzungaria in 1771. That territory was then incorporated into the new province of Xinjiang (Sinkiang). Throughout the eighteenth century, the Han peasantry illegally pushed their arable through the Willow Palisades into the Jilin (Kirin) and Heilongjiang (Heilungkiang) provinces of Manchuria, and, by the end of the century there was no hope of preserving the Manchu character of Fungtien any longer. This was accompanied by the penetration of Han merchants into Mongolia with the predictable consequences of extreme Mongol indebtedness, alienation of

[179] Terent'ev, *Istoriia*, vol. 1, pp. 57–58.

[180] C.R. Bawden, *The Modern History of Mongolia*, London, 1968, pp. 48–50, 62, 79–81.

land to speculators and peasants and shortage of fodder, the rise of shanty towns, and an impoverished nomad living marginally, often through petty thievery and brigandage. The nomadic staple of stockbreeding declined sufficiently for regular imports of horses from Siberia by the end of the eighteenth century.[181]

The Chinese carried out colonial policies more characteristic of the Russians a century later in the Kazakh steppe. In that steppe beyond Mongolia and Xinjiang, the Qing preferred, like the Russians, the same policy of loose alliances, not direct administration, well expressed by the Qian Long (Ch'ien Lung) emperor thus:

> If we say 'the Kazakhs have been subdued', it means that they have been made subordinate to us in the manner of Annam, Liutsiu, and Siam. They have received the teachings of Heaven and no more. We do not wish to [create] here provinces, to set up state institutions, and to appoint officials, we do not [propose] to divide them into banners and to appoint *tsolins* as in Khalkha.[182]

One sure form of control over the nomad was their sedentarisation; but the Russians were remarkably unsuccessful in this respect also. Russian frontier officials attempted to get them to settle to regular agriculture, build winter shelters for their herds, lay in fodder against scarcity, graze within fixed limits of landed property instead of migrating, and to construct houses for permanent residence. But, throughout the eighteenth century, only some of the highest aristocracy built houses, or rather, had the Russian administration do it for them. These were for persons like Nurali, khan of the Little Horde, on the banks of the Emba; for Ablai, opposite Petropavlovsk near the Kolchakla river; for Sultan Urus, Soltomamet, and Mambet Batyr on the Irtysh; and for Kulsar Batyr on the Ishim near the Gagarin redoubt. These were generally along the Russian frontier lines and near the market towns of Troitsk, Petropavlovsk, and Semipalatinsk. But even these houses were occupied only in winter and frequently fell into disrepair. Agriculture, like houses and shelters, appeared only in the vicinity of Russian settlements, and even so with much artificial Russian stimulation. Generally nomads preferred to have the hay supplied to them by enthusiastic Russian officials rather than grow it themselves, given the summer departures and similar uncertainties. The areas of its appearance were chiefly the Russian lines along the Tobol, Ui, and Ishim, where the maximum exchanges with Russians and Cossacks occurred. The main effect of such contacts was not the development of agriculture by the Kazakhs but the reduction of the annual migrations of the Little Horde to

[181] See Joseph Fletcher, 'Ch'ing Inner Asia c. 1800' and 'The Heyday of the Ch'ing order in Mongolia, Sinkiang, and Tibet', both in *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 9, Cambridge 1978, pp. 37–58, 356.

[182] Gurevich, *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia*, p. 169.

3–30 versts given the haymaking season and its predictability. Other influences were the use of Russian agricultural implements especially those of metal. But Apollova goes to some length to caution that this did not mean any real technological change in the eighteenth century, still less a 'technological revolution'. The exceptions were occasional entrepreneurs like Ablai who demanded of the Russians seed of improved quality, superior agricultural equipment, and experts on fishing and beaver trapping.[183]

Where agriculture among nomads flourished, it was in areas and by methods untouched by Russian influence. It was a success in the Turgai basin, and along the Emba, Irgiz, and Nura rivers, especially where the Nura flowed into the Kargaldzhin lake, all far from Russian frontiers. To the east, it began in the Ust Kamenogorsk and Bukhtarma regions. But none of this was due to Russian influence or example. They were largely traditional ecological adaptations to natural disasters which destroyed herds of cattle. Agriculture was a desperate marginal escape route which was abandoned as soon as the ecological balance was restored and the herds revived. Similarly, the technique employed was the ancient one of intensive irrigation where possible, rather than the Russian plough. Such irrigation made multiple cropping possible, despite the enormous labour inputs, and so were always preferred. Turgai agriculture was successful enough on this basis at the turn of the century for Srym Batyr to make profits and for Kazakhs to exchange their herds against foodgrains here, as they were wont to do with any other sedentary. Sultan Saidullin then experimented with crop diversification, wheat, millet, barley, etc., and even imported improved seed from China. But not only was all this a traditional ecological adaptation, as already noted, it was a simple recurrence in areas which had gone through this same cycle of cultivation and its abandonment in former times, to judge from ancient irrigation channels and similar evidence.[184] All these were instances of partial sedentarisation, nomadic adaptations to sedentary society on the political or ecological margin throughout history, as Khazanov has well noted.[185] They were stimulated as much by the Russians as by the Tobol Tatars, or the Karakalpaks near the Zhany Daria, or the Uzbeks near the Syr.[186] The Chinese in the east and the Uzbeks in the south east in Kokand exerted the same influence on their neighbouring nomads. The paramount influence was of the sedentary, whoever it was, not colonial and specifically Russian.

Finally, the Kazakhs did not have to suffer Russian colonisation or crowding caused by such colonisation. Russian pressures were greatest along the Siberian line in north Kazakhstan and partial sedentarisation occurred most here. Yet the Kazakhs did not feel the crunch anywhere here. The crowding of pastures was experienced along the lower Iaik

[183] Apollova, *Ekonomicheskie i politicheskie sviazi*, pp. 166–83.
[184] *Ibid.*, pp. 183–98.
[185] Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, pp. 198–212.
[186] Apollova, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

(Ural) and upper Irtysh, not due to any Russian settlement but to the presence of other nomads, especially the Kalmyks beyond the Iaik and upto the Volga. Kazakhs were prohibited by the Russian government from crossing over as a matter of divisive frontier policy among nomads. When the Kalmyks departed for Dzungaria in 1771, their vacant territory was now opened to a part of the Kazakhs, newly constituted as another, the Inner Horde or the Bukeikhanate.[187] Consequently, the Kazakhs did not have to suffer Russian usury either. The financial intermediaries, to whom such populations were indebted in colonial times and already in the Chinese borderlands, were not yet a social presence in the steppe. Money had not penetrated the steppe world during the eighteenth century for the *bais* and *biis* of later times to make an impression as yet.[188]

In addition to international relations, agriculture, and colonisation, the role of the nomadic frontier also changed from pre-colonial to colonial times. In the eighteenth century it was still determined by the ancient nomadic rhythm of migrations and raiding. Traditional policy was to have the frontier always occupied by a friendly nomad, partially sedentarised for easier administrative control. Their function was military and political as a mobile defence system all along the steppe frontier. It was always a major worry that a routine migration might leave the space vacant for occupation by another, hostile nomadic force, or worse, that it might serve as a corridor for attack on settled Russian territory. Russian and Chinese governments therefore invited nomads to occupy the frontier and attempted to forestall departures. Their economic function was far more limited, not so vital, merely useful as livestock suppliers. In colonial times much of this relation was reversed. Russian preponderance was such that nomads lost their independent political defence function. Nomads were now more akin to a pillaging rabble, too irregular and unreliable for the rational methods of modern warfare. There was no longer any fear of another hostile nomad to be contained by a friendly one. All were equally insignificant militarily. Nor could they be a barrier against another sedentary force, were one to arrive on the Russian frontier. An empty space was no longer a fear; instead it was an immense attraction to hungry Russian peasant colonists and to governments desperate to relieve the demographic pressure in the Russian heartland.

Colonial policy tended to crowd the nomad into ever more restricted pastures in order to create space. To this end nomads were increasingly territorialised, with fixed boundaries within which to travel to summer pasture and winter shelter. While their political function disappeared and their relation to space was radically transformed, they acquired a new and productive economic function. This was to be efficient stockbreeders to supply the voracious appetite of a demographically exploding sedentary society and to be a market for colonial manufactures. All the nomadic skills were harnessed to this enterprise. They were preserved as mobile breeders

[187] *Ibid.*, pp. 345–70.
[188] Viatkin, *Srym Batyr*, pp. 81–87.

but territorialised for efficient production, colonial settlement, and political control.

This is perhaps most evident in policies toward the Oirats of Dzungaria and their Kalmyk cousins on the Volga. When the Kalmyks first appeared south of the Iaik in the early seventeenth century, the Nogai moved westward to the right bank of the Volga. At once the Russian government requested their return to the left bank for fear of losing their military presence.[189] During the Kalmyk succession crisis after Aiuka's death in 1724, the strongest candidate was Donduk-Ombo, Aiuka's grandson and a protégé of the queen mother, Darmabala. But the Russian government favoured Cheren-Donduk, Aiuka's eldest son, and even resolved to assassinate Donduk-Ombo. After numerous frictions, raids, and intrigues, Donduk-Ombo moved toward the Kuban with 11,000 *kibitkas* or households and 20,000 troops, which threatened to leave the steppe empty just as another war with Turkey was looming. That clinched the issue. In 1785 Russia capitulated, made him chief ruler, dethroned the luckless Cheren-Donduk, and finally, for services rendered against Turkey, elevated Donduk-Ombo to the khan's dignity in 1737.[190]

In the next succession crisis, Donduk-Ombo nominated Randul, a son by his second wife, in lieu of Galdan-Normo, the one by his first wife. Galdan hoped to repeat his father's performance, this time by threatening to move east of the Iaik, back to Dzungaria. But the Russian government was alert and whisked him off to captivity in Kazan, where he died in 1740.[191] In the 1760s, the question of converting the Kalmyks into peasants was seriously discussed and rejected by the College of Foreign Affairs. Their reasons were that

a) the Kalmyks were valuable mobile troops on the south-east frontier;
b) as nomads, they were the best defence against other nomads like the Crimean and Kuban Tatars;
c) if settled, they would only attract other nomadic attacks; and
d) settlement would leave extensive tracts vacant, which would only invite hostile nomad entry.[192]

The final and tragic return to Dzungaria in 1771 well reveals all these concerns of both China and Russia. Whenever any Kalmyk taisha failed in some scheme or the other, he threatened to return to Dzungaria. At the same time, the Qing were assiduously wooing them from the far end of the steppe in order to create a counterweight to the Dzungarian threat. After the extinction of Dzungaria, the Qing were now interested in filling the vacancy. Tibetan lamas were also energetically urging this Buddhist flock to avoid

[189] Preobrazhenskaia, 'Dobrovol'noe vkhozhdenie', p. 108.
[190] *Ocherki istorii Kalmytskoi ASSR*, pp. 185–91.
[191] *Ibid.*, pp. 191–93.
[192] *Ibid.*, pp. 198–99.

the Christian contagion on the Volga and return to the Mongol steppe. The taishas discussed the possibility in 1745 and 1757 when Russian colonists appeared in large numbers. With Dzungaria gone in 1758, the prospect was most inviting. The Kalmyks dreaded their translation into a Christian peasantry. There were strong rumours of forced conversions when Donduk-Ombo's widow reappeared in the steppe in her new incarnation as a Russian aristocrat by the name of Princess Vera Dondukova. At the same time Russian and German colonisation on the northern rim of the steppe from the Ural to the Volga, and on the Don, Terek, and Kuma, reinforced all these fears. The departure was planned in great secret by Ubashi, the Viceroy (*Namestnik*) and some taishas, and begun in January 1771 on the pretext of attacking the Kazakhs. About 31,000 households departed with just 11,200 left behind. Cossacks were despatched post haste after them and numerous efforts made to outflank them. A matter of high policy, it reached the Senate, which demanded their immediate return. But all to no avail. This last nomadic migration of 170,000 persons relentlessly pursued its tragic way through the steppe, mercilessly harried by the Cossacks to the north and the Kazakhs to the south. They finally arrived in Dzungaria leaving 100,000 sick, starving, or slaughtered en route. But they were warmly welcomed by Qing officials with yurts, rice, tea and other good things of life, a maintenance for all, titles for the taishas, and their assimilation into the provincial Qing bureaucracy. In 1791, the Russian government heard that the Kalmyks wanted to return and orders were issued to welcome them back. But none came.[193]

The Russian relation to the steppe in the eighteenth century is little distinguishable from that of the non-colonial sedentary to the nomad. Political power did not proceed beyond intrigue and punitive raids. Economically, the impact of money had not yet begun to make itself felt. Agriculture was a marginal phenomenon; and colonisation was as yet a trickle. Crises of the nomadic economy were natural events and sedentarisation was a traditional adaptation to ecological circumstances. In all these respects, the Chinese were more vigorous as colonisers, as usurers and merchants, as farmers, and through the Qing dynasty, as political overlords. The nomads were in decline; but that was due to an unfavourable balance in the relation of sedentary to nomad and not yet of capitalist to pre-capitalist.

The balance tipped against the nomad in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries largely owing to the new military technologies available to the sedentary. The military glory of the nomads rested on their matchless mobility on horseback. This was finally contained by infantries and cannon, and, to a lesser extent, small arms. These had been continually developed in Europe from the fifteenth century. Some of these innovations, especially of artillery, were imitated worldwide, and they made towns and strongholds

[193] *Ibid.*, pp. 213–22.

immensely more defensible than ever before. Consequently nomadic raiding, their staple in the political relation with sedentaries, declined in effect in the course of the seventeenth century. By the beginning of Peter's reign, for example, Crimean raids were no longer the serious threat they used to be. The loss of military capacity at once impaired the processes of political centralisation among nomadic lineages and states. Political authority, founded on military success, splintered with that possibility denied. Political fragmentation proceeded rapidly. Their ranks were open to sedentary interference far more than ever before. And Russia, China, Iran, Khiva, Kokand and others gloried in their new-found power to make and unmake khans. Even Turkey, a palpably declining power internationally, *extended* her control over the Crimean khanate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially in the appointment of khans, down to the Russian annexation.[194] Nomadic decline was thus a worldwide process in which both expanding sedentary societies like China and Russia, decaying and shrinking ones like Turkey, and miniscule oases ones like Khiva participated. Russia was not yet unique.

Russia broke with this system finally in the 1820s. The khanships in the Kazakh Hordes were abolished and a Russian administration installed there. In 1822, the Middle Horde was divided into an administrative hierarchy of *okrug, volost'*, and administrative *auls*. The last was to consist of 50–70 *kibitkas* or households. These were headed by nominated officials known as *aga sultan, volostnoi upravitel'*, and *starshina* respectively. The sultan was provided with a council of four, two of which were nominated by the governor and the other two by *biis*. Taxes were imposed and pastoral rights freely granted. All these measures were designed to dissolve a social organisation founded on lineages and to replace it with landed property, territorial divisions, and authority derived from appointment. These measures were strongly resented and in fact consummated only by 1844. The same principle was followed for the Little Horde, if with different nomenclature. After a premature and abortive attempt under Baron Igel'strom in 1786, the khanship was ended in 1824, and the Horde divided into three sections, West, Central, and East, each headed by a *sultan-pravitel'* appointed by the Frontier Commission. The sections were subdivided into *distantsii* and they in turn into *auls*. The territorial divisions deliberately cut across lineages except in the southern areas near the Aral, Syr Daria, Mangyshlak, and in the Karakum desert, where organisation by lineages was preserved.[195] Similar administrative measures were enforced among the few Kalmyks who now remained within the Russian empire.

These reforms were militarily consolidated by new lines of fortifications which had never before been attempted in the deep steppe. The Kazakh uplands, chiefly the territory of the Middle and Great Hordes, saw the new

[194] Alan W. Fisher, *The Russian Annexation of the Crimea, 1772–1783*, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 17–18.

[195] *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1, pp. 303–11.

forts of Kokchetav (1826), Karakalinsk (1824), Baian-Aul (1826), Kokpekty (1826), Shchuchinsk (1828), Akmolinsk (1830) and Sergiopol (1831). The new lines of the Ilek came up south of Orenburg in 1822 and the New Line crossing the steppe from Orsk to Troitsk in 1824. The 1840s saw another round of construction deeper into the steppe: Irgiz (1845), Turgai (1845) on the Ishim, followed by Atbazar and Ulutauskii in 1846. Next came the two major lines in a pincer movement to enclose the steppe altogether. The Syr Daria line, starting from Orenburg, ended in Raim on the Aral in 1847, Kazaly in 1848, and Ak-Mechet on the Syr in 1853. To the east, another line starting from Semipalatinsk ended in Vernoe (now Alma Ata) in 1854. The two lines left open a wide gap between them, to be closed in the conquest of the sixties. These fortified lines effectively enclosed the Kazakh nomad and controlled his free movement to pastures more than colonisation, settlement, and agriculture did for the moment. The lines contained Cossack garrison settlements with the agriculture and maintenance depots to service them only: they were not true colonists. That was to come with migration from the sixties after the conquest was complete. It became a flood from the nineties only, after which the ethnic composition of the steppe altered to the point of becoming almost as Russian as Kazakh.[196] Only from the 1820s did Russia enter the steppe purposefully, politically, administratively, legally, and economically, with the intention of converting it into a colonial appendage, and later, a territory for Russian peasant colonisation. Until then she followed the most traditional policies of sedentary societies, of trying to sedentarise the nomad on the fringe, of intriguing in the politics of lineages, and of maintaining pressure through punitive raiding.

There seems to have been good reason, however, for the colonial condescension to the nomad and ample justification for Gorchakov's prejudice: the military decay of nomadism from the seventeenth century had been preceded by its political decline from the fifteenth. Muscovy and Russia threw off Mongol nomadic tutelage from the late fifteenth century, customarily dated to that non-battle on the banks of the Ugra between Ivan III and Ahmed Khan. This was followed by the destruction of the Kazan and Astrakhan khanates in the sixteenth century while the Crimean khanate passed under Ottoman suzerainty. Russia had taken the devastating Mongol blow from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. Thereafter she had enjoyed uninterrupted success against nomadism, politically, militarily, and eventually in a colonial relation. The decay of nomadism might therefore have appeared to have been a condition, not a process. And the Mongol 'yoke' of two centuries could be presented as a momentary aberration in a millennium of Russian history. This is how it is still often conveyed. However, regarded from the perspective of Eurasian steppe history, that

[196] See I. Stebelsky, 'The Frontier in Central Asia', in J. Bater and J.A. French eds., *Russian Historical Geography*, vol. 1, London, 1983, pp. 154–55; George J. Demko, *The Russian Colonization of Kazakhstan, 1896–1914*, Mouton, 1969, pp. 74 ff.

was far from being a fault. It was instead a mere phase of a regular alternating cycle of advance and retreat by nomad and sedentary in a symbiotic relationship of nearly three millennia. Russian sedentary society, being only a millennium old by the nineteenth century, experienced only one cycle, the nomadic advance in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries and then the sedentary resurgence in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. That revival was then consolidated by the momentous developments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of which military technique was just one component. That consolidation by the sedentary, whether Russia, China or Turkey, or even Khiva and Kokand, we have just finished examining above. The cyclical alternation may be best observed in the history of China.

China proper is ringed by a series of what the Chinese called barbarian peoples, for the most part pastoral nomads. These were the Manchurians to the north, Turco-Mongols north and westward in a broad arc north of the Ordos plateau and including all of Mongolia and its western extension Dzungaria, then East Turkestan to the west, inhabited at different times by Indo-Iranian and Turco-Mongol peoples, and finally the Tibetans to the south-west. China proper of the last imperial period, that is of the eighteen provinces within the Great Wall, covered 1.5 million square miles with a population of 4–500 million. The outer periphery, including Tibet, stretched over 3 million square miles but with a population of only 45 millions.[197] This great outer ring, double the area of China proper, was continually disputed between sedentary Chinese and nomadic empires for well over two millennia. In addition, within China, the disputed area included north China, sometimes extending to the Hwang-Ho and even the Yangtse, and, on two memorable occasions, engulfing the whole of China. These were the Mongol and Manchu conquests of the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries respectively.

The alternation was as follows. During the Han period of 221 BC to AD 220. Chinese kingdoms and empires first established the boundary of the Great Wall, and, through many fluctuations of fortune, succeeded in keeping the Turkic Xiong Nu (Hsiung-Nu) and, from circa AD 155, the Xian Bi (Hsien-Pi) out. The balance was then reversed in favour of the nomads between 265 and the early fifth century AD. The Chinese retreated under the southern Qin (Ch'in) dynasty south of the Yangtse, leaving the north in the hands of the Turco-Mongols in their kingdom known as the Wei. This stretched north and conflicted with the more truly nomadic Ruan Ruan (Juan-Juan) in Outer Mongolia. The third to the sixth centuries were thus marked by the political (not ecological) retreat of sedentary China. The pendulum swung back from the late sixth to the early tenth centuries in a famous sedentary revival. First the Sui dynasty threw back the Turkic Tu Jue (T'u Chüeh) who had meanwhile replaced the Ruan

[197] See Owen Lattimore, *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, New York, 1951 pp. 10—13.

Ruan. But they failed, and the task was gloriously accomplished by the Tang dynasty, which lasted until the early tenth century. The Tang destroyed the eastern Tu Jue, dismembered its western branch in Dzungaria, and extended control over the Indo-Iranian peoples of the Tarim basin. This position was periodically shaken by partial Turkic revivals and Arab, Turkic, and Tibetan combinations. But the Tang outer glacis held nonetheless. The nomads then reasserted themselves to the point of the epic achievement of Chinggis Khan and his family until 1368. It started with the Mongol Khitan establishing their sway as far as Beijing. This was then continued by the Tungusic Manchurian Jurchids, known as the Kin in Chinese, overthrowing the Khitan, and striking farther south, upto and beyond the Yangtse, and partitioning China along the Hwai with the Song (Sung) dynasty. These were then, in turn, overrun by the Chingissid Mongols in the thirteenth century when the whole of China was smothered under the nomad wave. Kublai Khan and his grandson, Temur Oljaitu then reigned as khagans of all China, nomads, and sundry others upto the Euphrates and the Danube. The tenth to the fourteenth centuries thus witnessed another major retreat of the sedentary societies.

The next reversal occurred under the Ming from 1368 to 1644, when China revived the glories of Han and Tang and secured the outer glacis of Manchuria, Mongolia, Turkestan and Tibet. The nomads then enjoyed a brief moment of glory when the Manchus overthrew the Ming and repeated the Mongol achievement of absorbing the whole of China. But, during the eighteenth century, they transformed themselves into a proper sedentary force to fight off the Dzungarians. This they accomplished in spectacular fashion by exterminating the Oirat Mongols of Dzungaria. They accompanied this by re-establishing themselves in Turkestan and Tibet and gaining control of lamaism, and therewith, the principal ideology of Mongolia. The cyclical revival of nomadic power, which seemed to threaten with the Manchus and with the Oirats, was interrupted by the new military technology of both offence and defence, especially of artillery. With this the nomadic frontier retreated in all of Eurasia, from the Danube to Manchuria.

The full cycle of a rise and decline seems to have lasted approximately six centuries. Historians have however discerned shorter cycles of about a century each within one large one. Thus the Han relation with the Xiong Nu was of that type, with each phase of nomadic or sedentary revival or subsidence lasting about half a century.[198] These refinements need not detain us now. The Iranian experience with long cycles was comparable, if not so clear, while such an alternation has been discerned as a worldwide phenomenon, although, once again, without the remarkable clarity of the Chinese experience.[199] Russia went through it all, but just once. The

[198] Chusei Suzuki, 'China's Relations with Inner Asia: the Hsiung-Nu, Tibet', in Fairbank ed., *The Chinese World Order*, pp. 186–89.

Kievan culture of the turn of the millennium was overwhelmed by the Mongol wave of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. The simultaneous sedentary resurgence of Muscovite Russia, Safavid Iran, and Ming China then jointly destroyed the Chingissid inheritance. The precise reasons for such a cyclical movement do not seem to be well understood, although each cycle has been meticulously analysed in itself. The Muscovite, and then the precolonial Russian expansion therefore, were phases of such cyclical movements in common with other sedentary societies, in particular, China. Such recurrent cycles denote a homeostasis in the symbiotic relation of nomad to sedentary. It was such an equilibrium that Russia alone of all the sedentary societies destroyed and was able to destroy in the colonial advance of the nineteenth century.

2. *The Nomadic Vacuum*

This is ascribed to its inherent inability to create firm social and political structures: the image of the flux-like mobility of the nomad is firmly imprinted upon his social and political organisation. Nomadic societies are deemed to be acephalous and egalitarian, therefore incapable of political centralisation, of hierarchy, and of a strong state. This is ecologically determined by high spatial mobility and low population density, both of which 'make the development of an institutionalised political hierarchy improbable'.[200] It is further socially determined by the segmentary lineage system by which allegiances tend to cluster around lineages only, which might or might not coalesce into political formations and states. Strong states, when they do emerge among pastoral nomads, tend to be for the purpose of making war on neighbouring societies and usually fragment thereafter. States therefore are derivative, induced by external sedentary pressure; they are not internally generated.[201]

Such an argument does seem strained, however. It seems to make an artificial distinction between internal developments and external activity in a single if differentiated process. It is more than likely that the illusion of derivation arises from our sources being mostly sedentary chroniclers whose numbers and histories grew exponentially with warfare.[202] Nor, on closer examination, are the nomads the only ones guilty of erecting states for the purpose of external war or under its stimulus. Many aspects of the state of sedentary China during these two millennia were induced by the

[199] See Owen Lattimore, *Pivot of Asia. Sinkiang and the Inner Asian Frontiers of China and Russia*, Boston, 1950, ch. 1.

[200] William Irons, 'Political Stratification among Pastoral Nomads', in Claude Lefebure ed., *Pastoral Production and Society*, Cambridge, 1979, p. 362; see also P. Birnbaum, 'Spatial Mobility and Political Centralization in Pastoral Societies', *ibid.*, pp. 349–60.

[201] Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, ch. 5.

[202] The Complaint of René Grousset, in *The Empire of the Steppes. A History of Central Asia*, trans. from the French edn. of 1952, New Jersey, p. 193.

exigencies of warfare with the nomads of the north, e.g., the reforms of Han Wu Ti, the Song 'new laws' planned by Wang An Shi for 'self-strengthening' to deal with the Liao and Xi Xia (Hsi-Hsia) states, the Ming measures to ward off a revived Mongol menace, Qing efforts under the Yong Zheng (Yung-Cheng) emperor to handle the Dzungarians, and finally of course the 'Yang Wu'or westernisation to face the western powers. These features have been contrasted by the Japanese scholar to Tokugawa structures which, he claims, were internally generated.[203] This is also a textbook statement of the origins of the Muscovite autocracy, that it was shaped, indeed necessitated, by the epic struggle of several centuries against nomads. As with the Chinese, most of the sweeping reforms from the days of Peter the Great, including the 'Great Reforms' of the 1860s and finally Stalin's industrialisation, were dictated by the presumed needs of foreign war.

If in all these cases both internal and external compulsions have been treated as one continuum, there seems little reason to isolate the nomadic state as exclusively externally determined. Further, even if political systems do seem to have been borrowed from neighbouring sedentary societies, they are so taken for internal reasons with an internal logic, a point that may be made generally about cross-cultural borrowings. Detailed investigations, where possible, suggest that the fragmentation of empire did not mean the dissolution of central authorities as such. Thus as Jacques Legrand has shown, the collapse of the Chingissid empire in the fourteenth century did not prevent each prince exercising autocratic central control within his domain. For that reason, the Mongol empire can be related more to its predecessors than to its sedentary neighbours.[204]

Nor should spatial mobility be permitted to mislead. It did not in the least inhibit internal controls and domination within nomad society even while it made it virtually impossible for sedentary societies to control them beyond a certain ecological line.[205] The Great Wall of China is simply the intellectually most lucid attempt to draw that line. Also, spatial mobility did not mean imprecision, looseness, or disorder any more than the annual summer and winter vacation migrations in modern societies do. Such migrations regularly followed fixed routes to and from summer pasture and winter shelter within territorial limits clearly known and enforced by the interested parties.[206] This was so even if the distances covered seasonally were as high as 700–900 kilometres as in the Little Horde[207] or generally during the great nomadic migrations of history. Authority was centred in

[203] C. Suzuki, 'China's Relations', pp. 189–90.

[204] Jacques Legrand, 'Conceptions de l'espace, division territoriale et divisions politique chez les Mongoles de l'époque post-impériale (XVIe–XVIIe siècles), in *Pastoral Production*, pp. 164–65.

[205] Talal Asad, 'Equality in Nomadic Social Systems? Notes Towards the Dissolution of an Anthropological Category', in *ibid.*, p. 423.

[206] Zlatkin, *Istoriia Dzhungarskogo khanstva*, pp. 398–400.

[207] Apollova, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

the lineage, not territory, and the state was therefore so determined. But to the sedentary and its inheritors, nurtured on the territorial state, this might appear an almost impossible concept.

There is, however, a deeper reason for this prejudice, and that is the extreme parasitism of the nomad on the sedentary. Pastoral nomadism has never existed on its own, as a 'mode of production', independent and anterior to sedentary society. It emerged from agricultural and pastoral societies when a drying climate pushed pastoralists into nomadism. This occurred at the end of the second millennium BC in Eurasia, a trifle later in Inner Asia on the Chinese borderlands, during the second millennium in the Near East of Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria, Palestine, from the middle of the third millennium BC with the dessication of the Sahara to be fully formed there by the beginning of the first millennium BC, yet only in the second millennium AD in the reindeer-herding societies of north Eurasia. On the other hand in Asia Minor, Iran, and Afghanistan, it was due largely to conquest and migration in the Middle Ages, not *sui generis*.[208] They were not evolutionary antecedents of agriculture. Instead they developed from agricultural societies after prior preparation through mobile and extensive pastoralism, dairying, animal-driven wheeled transport, and horsemanship or camel-driving, as an ecological adaptation. From their origins they were thus filiated to agricultural societies.

As a result, throughout their history of three millennia, they have been vitally dependent on agricultural society in an exchange relationship. They have traded their livestock and its produce for food, textiles, and hardware. But they needed the products of sedentary society more than their own offerings were wanted. Consequently, in desperation, they were often compelled to exchange at a loss, resorting even to capital depletion, i.e., of their livestock herds.[209] A sure form of pressure, as any sedentary ruler knew, was to stop trading with them. Theirs was a case of extreme specialisation as a monochrome society. Exchange was, therefore, indispensable, and poverty was an essential attribute.

This dependence was not however realised in a necessarily uniform manner. One obvious means was a 'mix', i.e., partial sedentarisation. Another was political submission to the sedentary to ensure the necessary balance. The third was political independence and peaceful trade. But where trade was obstructed, it could be complemented by raids. The last was the political subjugation of the sedentary. All forms were employed, but the ideal ones were the third and fourth, of independence and conquest. Warfare, therefore, and its lesser form, raiding, were both necessary and internal to the relation of nomad to sedentary, a reflection of the parasitism of the one on the other. Martial or depredatory valour was thus the other essential attribute after poverty. Warfare, and the state it creates, cannot

[208] Khazanov, *op. cit.*, ch. 2.
[209] *Ibid.*, pp. 202–12.

therefore be conceived of as an external activity periodically transmogrifying the nomad into a statesman: it was his essential function.

Pastoral nomadism was thus no social and political vacuum gradually and inexorably filled by Russia. It might appear to have been so only from the limited perspective of Russian history alone, by ignoring the cyclical fluctuations of the nomad-sedentary homeostasis in which Russia was but one actor along with Iran, China, and others. If the political space occupied by nomadism in the nineteenth century looked particularly empty, more so than even that of the other non-capitalist sedentary societies, it was so for their having succumbed to both modern sedentary and colonial pressures. And it appeared such a vacuum to Russia only from her colonial heights in the nineteenth century. Until then, in the eighteenth century, it was a junior member in the international relations system of Inner Asia, in which Russia, China, and Iran were the senior partners. That structure of international relations was destroyed by Russia alone in the colonial advance into the deep steppe from the 1820s.

The Great Game

The conquest of Inner Asia in the three phases noted above has had many explanations. Two of them have already been noted, the lawlessness of the steppe and the commercial needs of capitalism. The first was an aspect of orientalism, itself derived from the optimism of the eighteenth century, and in itself a part of the conquest for its capacity to appropriate the consciousness of another people. It was not a mere justification for the conquest. The other is the market needs of capitalism, which, as has been seen, is again a discourse that arose out of a similar capacity to subordinate Inner Asia economically. That also was a part of the conquest, not merely a supposed foundation or motor of the process. The third is the political or military conquest, which is our final concern. This is not the *real* conquest, more than the other two. Like them, it is a part of the process, as necessary as the intellectual authority and economic hegemony discussed earlier, and as meaningless without them, as either of them would be singly. Nor is the distinction between formal and informal empire pertinent to this discussion. Informal empire rested on the demonstrated capacity for military intervention by the capitalist powers and on the strategic and other benefits that flowed from that action. It is this combination of intellectual, economic, and political supremacy that creates the imperialism of industrial capitalism, of which Russia was just one carrier in any case.

Let us now turn to the political explanation for the political conquest. It rests almost unanimously on a presumed Anglo-Russian rivalry for the mastery of the lands between Turkey, the British empire in India, China, and Russia, all of whose frontiers were in any case mobile. All discussions in terms of rivalry with Britain are fundamentally inadequate as the premise

of conquest and hegemony already exists. They therefore become an account of the diplomacy and timing of the moves by Russia and Britain in relation to each other alone and apparently in a vast, open, empty field entirely free for their manoeuvres against each other. Small wonder it is called the *Great Game*. And once again the premise of a vacuum is only too obvious. The Russian relation to Inner Asian societies is ignored, or it is taken for granted, as that of man to nature only.

Such rivalry itself was supposedly the consequence of Russia's two main purposes. The first, and most favoured, is the theory of the Russian advance toward India in order to act as a pressure on Britain over the Eastern Question. The Eastern Question, or the fate of the Ottoman Empire, is meant to have contained Russia's prime strategic ambition: control over the Straits of the Bosphorous and the Dardanelles, which Britain resolutely and sometimes venomously thwarted. The only vital British strategic interest that Russia could hope to menace was India. India herself was not a target of conquest, only a means of terrifying the British into a more conciliatory position during crises in the Eastern Question. Interestingly, in this scheme of explanation, Inner Asia was, by implication, not a target, only a means to get at the British in India.

The second explanation is the need to ward off a possible British strategic threat issuing from India. This itself has two possible meanings. The first is that Inner Asia or most of it was already Russian such that a British threat from India to a Russian territorial position could be credible. This would then not pretend to explain the conquest at all, at best only its concluding phases, largely, the occupation of Transcaspia from the 1870s, and the Pamir boundary delimitations in the nineties. Second, if the Russian position were still at Orenburg and Siberia, and the British still east of the Sutlej, a British threat in any sense of the term, even of the instigation of the nomads, is inconceivable. A Russian fear of British attack in any form in this theatre must require not merely foresight but indeed clairvoyance; and to present the conquest of the whole of Inner Asia as a pre-emptive strike against such a contingency is to repeat the fevered fantasies of the colonials of the nineteenth century. Once again, it makes of Inner Asia a mere means to another purpose. In both explanations then, the colonial empire is either a by-product or not accounted for; and the action takes place in an empty space, something akin to a football field, or, more appositely, a polo ground. The relation between Russia and Inner Asia is assumed not to have been; and only the relation between Russia and Britain is acknowledged. It thus faithfully fosters the colonial discourse of the *Great Game*.

It does so in two other respects also. The theory of the pressure on the British in India in relation to the Eastern Question was the favoured explanation of British and Russian strategists engaged in the *Great Game* and repeated *ad nauseum* throughout the century by both sides. The

two opponents were in surprising agreement on the purpose of the *Great Game*, which in itself should make it suspect as an explanation. The lesser theory of the British menace to Russian interests was naturally favoured by the Russian side only, or rather, principally. The British merely proposed a symmetrical Russian threat to India. Once again, it is an argument used by the players of the game. Second, and perhaps more important, it suggests Russian reaction to British action. The British threatened Russian interests either in the Eastern Question or in Inner Asia itself, and the Russians responded in self defence. Again, any explanation which proposes that human agents were merely reacting passively to outside initiatives is suspect: it is the obvious language of justification and moral rectitude. Most of all, it suggests that but for the British presence in India, Russia would not have embarked on a colonial career in Inner Asia. This would apply, not only to the theory of the British menace from India, but even to the Eastern Question without the British presence in India. For there would now be no reason for a Russian colonial enterprise without a British interest to endanger or a British threat to fear. This is indeed inconceivable: the reverse would have been the case in fact. Russia would then have pursued her empire even more vigorously and only the timing would have moved to a different logic. Once again the colonial pattern reappears, of Russian innocence, defensiveness, and legitimacy. It should be emphasised in passing that this critique of the theories of the *Great Game* applies equally to the British side of the expansion. Their claims of reacting to a Russian threat were equally strategies for expansion, not explanations of action. But our concern now is with the Russian, not British moves, symmetrical though they were.

Before examining these theories, a persistent red-herring must first be dismissed. This is the theory so called, of men-on-the-spot. According to this, frontier officials were located in territories on the knowledge of which in their home countries they enjoyed an undisputed monopoly. Further, they were physically remote in the days before the telegraph. The combination of these two factors permitted them to create events and present *faits accomplis* which compelled expansion even when it was contrary to policy. In plain words, frontier officials could not be controlled. This is widely accepted, at least, as an important aspect of colonial expansion. Once again, as is well known, this was a favourite argument used in negotiations or in justification in all colonial empires, that junior officials were excessively enthusiastic. It was one of Gorchakov's stock complaints. Persons like Clarendon, the foreign secretary in 1869, even professed to appreciate that problem since 'such in the main had caused the extension of our Indian empire and there was reason to apprehend that such was the course into which Russia, however unwillingly, was about to be drawn.'[210] If the defence forgot an argument, the prosecution helpfully supplied it.

[210] Cited in Gerald Morgan, *Anglo-Russian Rivalry in Central Asia 1810–1895*, London, 1981, pp. 238–39.

However, this may be shown to have been an instrument of colonial policy and possible only in colonial expansion, neither before nor after. Thus, during the crisis of the Iranian invasion of Khorasan and the British invasion of Afghanistan in the 1830s, the Russian envoys to Teheran and Kabul, Count Simonich and Jan Witkiewicz respectively, supposedly acted in this manner. Simonich, on his own authority and in his personal capacity, guaranteed a treaty between Iran and the Kandahar Sardars in 1838. It committed Herat to the Sardars if they were to accept Iranian sovereignty. Following British protests, K.K. Rodofinikin, director of the Asiatic Department of the foreign ministry, assured Lord Durham, the British ambassador, that Simonich had acted without authority and against specific instructions. Rodofinikin was indeed telling the truth, but only an official half. The other half was also important. Under him, the Asiatic Department, which was a branch of the foreign ministry, functioned, in fact, almost independently of and against the foreign minister, Nessel'rode. Simonich took orders, however, from both Nessel'rode and Rodofinikin. He took orders from two others also, the general staff and the governor general of Orenburg. The general staff were always aggressive, and now contained a series of able and successful generals like Vorontsov, Paskevich, and Ermolov of Caucasian fame. Paskevich was especially trusted by the tsar. These sought to coordinate and dominate policy from the Caucasian theatre. The governor general at Orenburg was another, almost natural, expansionist. He was now General Perovskii, rabid and jingoist, straining to drive on the Khiva and Bukhara, and at home a confidant of the tsar. Simonich thus received instructions from these four sources, of which the cautious foreign minister Nessel'rode represented just one-fourth or less of policy here. Above these four contending factions was the emperor himself, who determined policy, in fact, more than his ministers; and he had an especial penchant for foreign policy. From this structure of decision-making it cannot be said that Simonich was acting on his own. Indeed paradoxically, that might have been the case had he followed Nessel'rode's lead.[211]

Jan Witkiewicz in Kabul was Simonich's and Perovskii's envoy and trusted especially by them. Witkiewicz made extravagant promises of Russian support to Dost Muhammad, the Barakzai Amir of Kabul, in order to wean him away from the British. According to Burnes, Witkiewicz promised help to recover Peshawar from Ranjit Singh and the finances for it channeled through Bukhara.[212] Muhammad Hussain Kashi, the Dost's envoy to the Shah of Iran, reported that 'Vitkevitch, who was somewhat devoid of sense, replied that he would bring twenty regiments from Russia

[211] See the treaty in NAI, FD, SC, 28 Nov. 1838, no. 14–15, pp. 17–20; J.A. McNeill to Palmerston, Tehran, 1 Aug. 1838, *ibid.*, pp. 23–25; Harold N. Ingle, *Nessel'rode and the Russian Rapprochement with Britain, 1836–1844*, London, 1976, p. 74.

[212] Burnes to Auckland, 23 Dec. 1837, NAI, FD, Political Proceedings, 9 May 1838, no. 74–79, p. 9.

into Kabul in two months'.[213] He dangled Herat before the Kandahar Sardars to tempt them into the Iranian campaign against Herat. According to Leech, he also promised Multan, Sind and the Derajat if they allied with the Dost.[214] Technically, Witkiewicz had not the slightest authority to make such grandiose promises, but he was acting with the support of Simonich, who promised much the same, and of Perovskii at Orenburg. Most of all, Russia was anxious to detach the Afghan territories from British dependence. Witkiewicz was even planning a visit to none less than Ranjit Singh; but Claude Wade at Ludhiana scotched that plan.[215] Both of them were subsequently disowned in 1838 when the danger of conflict with Britain became imminent. These divergent pulls are at least a reflection of the factional divisions within the Russian policy making structure. They cannot be ascribed to local initiative alone or even principally.

Perovskii was another typical man-on-the-spot. In 1841 he altered the foreign ministry's instructions to Nikiforov, the Russian agent at Khiva, to raise the level to demands and to expand the scope of the mission enormously and provocatively. For example, Nikiforov was to insist on a 2½ per cent tariff against the ministry's 5 per cent. He was to demand also control of the east coast of the Caspian upto the Gorgon, which the ministry had not mentioned. In 1853, Perovskii seized Ak-Mechet in the course of a reconnoitring mission.[216] But he was throughout acting in the knowledge of the tsar's firm support. In 1863, during another reconnoitring mission, Cherniaev seized Suzak; this was deplored by Colonel Verevkin, the commander of the Syr Daria line and A.P. Bezak, the governor general, but upheld by Miliutin, the war minister.

The notorious case is the seizure of Tashkent. The foreign ministry was clear that it should not be taken. But the instructions that Cherniaev received were so fork-tongued that it was equally clear he could capture it. The foreign ministry instructed M.G. Cherniaev on 23 February 1865 that *a*) there was to be no interference in the internal affairs of Kokand, *b*) the frontier was to be crossed only in case of attack, *c*) Russia must exercise indirect influence on Tashkent to the extent possible, and *d*)Tashkent was to be pushed into seceding from Kokand without however being annexed. It was thus conveyed that Tashkent was the palladium of Central Asia, which Cherniaev knew in any case.

From the war ministry's side, Kryzhanovskii, the governor general of Orenburg instructed him thus:

[213] 'Account of an Embassy to the King of Persia from the Ameer of Kabul in 1837', in D'Arcy Todd, *Itinerary from Yezd to Herat and from Herat to Kabul via Kandahar*, n.d., pt. 2, p. 74.

[214] Leech to Burnes, Candahar, 28 Jan. 1838, NAI, FD, SC, 1 Aug. 1838, no. 14–15, pp. 11, 14–15.

[215] Macnaghten to Wade, 3 March 1838, NAI, FD, SC, 4 July 1838, no. 22, pp. 1–2; Wade to Macnaghten, 28 March 1838, *ibid.*, SC, 22 Aug. 1838, no. 49 pp. 1–2.

[216] Terent'ev, *Istoriia*, vol. 1, pp. 176–79, 216–17.

> Since everywhere, especially in Asia, offence is the best form of defence, it would be necessary, I suggest, to have enough ready forces at a headquarters, e.g., Chimken, to carry out a pogrom in neighbouring countries.[217]

To this he had added 'and to take Tashkent' but Miliutin, the war minister, made a marginal note: 'would it not be better not to mention the taking of Tashkent'.[218] Lest there be any doubt as to the foreign ministry's intentions, Kryzhanovskii's tone made matters clear. The drafting exposes the virtual conspiracy at headquarters between Miliutin and his subordinates to present *faits accomplis* without leaving written evidence.

Miliutin has left us however, ample evidence of what he deemed the correct attitude in such matters. Cherniaev's disobedience over the first and failed attempt to grab Tashkent in 1864 had become scandalous. Miliutin then passed judgement arguing that Cherniaev,

> could not have been entirely ignorant of the views of the government that is, of the ministry of foreign affairs, which constantly opposed any forward movement by us into Central Asia. Later it was confirmed that Cherniaev did not wish to know the views of the government and acted on his own against the most categorical instructions of his superiors. I have heard reproaches that such insubordinate conduct by local commanders went unpunished. The foreign ministry has, in particular, regretted that not only are such commanders not called to account, but they are even rewarded and commended. While acknowledging that there are grounds for such complaints, I was convinced of the need for great caution in this matter. While demanding of local commanders all possible adherence to instructions, I felt it dangerous to deprive them entirely of initiative.
>
> The fear of responsibility for every departure from instructions could dampen energy and enterprise. There are occasions when the commander must act on his own initiative, in a manner that could not have been planned in advance. *The point is, of course, that such partial departures from the plan should not contradict the general objective and that it should, in fact, be justified by necessity.* [emphasis original][219]

As long as action conformed to the general thrust of policy, the local commander was to be permitted discretion, even to flout instructions. The important point, to which we will return in a moment, was that the general thrust of policy was so wide that it had room for such wide discretion.

The campaign against Bukhara was preceded by obviously and deliberately imprecise instructions. Romanovskii was told by the war and foreign ministers in 1866 that Russia had no territorial ambitions, but 'at the same

[217] *Ibid.*, pp. 306–307.
[218] *Ibid.*
[219] Khalfin, *Politika*, pp. 173–74.

time [you must not] for that reason refrain from such action and instructions as would be necessary for us, and otherwise, in general, bear in mind the essential good of Russia'.[220] This amounted to permitting him to act at discretion. In 1878, the Stoletov mission, which precipitated the second British invasion of Afghanistan, acted just as Simonich and Witkiewicz had done on the earlier famous occasion.

Russia's British opponents were engaged in like manner in the same theatres. Thus William Moorcroft, without the least authority or even official status, felt free to negotiate with the Maharaja of Kashmir about his becoming a British subject in order to escape Ranjit Singh. He was reprimanded either because he was not clever enough to realise that it was British policy to sustain Ranjit Singh or because he was so clever as to have foreseen the post-Ranjit era.[221] It is significant that a person with such low status as manager of the stud, in the course of travels at his own expense and indeed little different from an adventurous tourist, could presume to negotiate on international affairs. In 1805–1806, Samuel Manesty, Resident at Basra, promised Fath Ali Shah of Iran a British treaty of support against Russian attack. This was repudiated by Barlow. Again Malcolm, on his second mission to Iran in 1808, exceeded instructions to assure Iran of British support in case of an Anglo-Russian war.[222] Lieutenant James Abbott, sent by Todd from Herat to Khiva to offer British mediation only in case of Russian attack, expansively held out a British treaty instead. This was upheld by Macnaghten in Kabul in 1840 but disowned by Auckland. Lieutenant Richmond Shakespear on a similar mission to Khiva did exactly the same.[223] Burnes, like his adversary Witkiewicz, offered money without authority to Kohun Dil Khan, one of the Kandahar Sardars, in case Herat fell to Iran and Kandahar was in danger. But Auckland reprimanded him for his excessive imagination. There are innumerable similar instances by junior officials and officers throughout all colonial histories and have been generally ascribed to their vaulting ambitions and their monopoly on information.

Yet none of this seemed to occur in pre-colonial times. Local officers and diplomats were presumably even better placed then: all information originated from them and they were conceptually more remote in space. Thus, to use examples from our area of interest, there is no suggestion of such discretionary behaviour in Russian diplomacy in the steppe or with China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Zlatkin's authoritative and exhaustive account of Dzungaria makes no mention of any such. Gurevich's history of the Inner Asian diplomacy of the Russians, Chinese, and Kazakhs and other nomads, presents no such problems; the accounts of Preobrazhenskaia and others on contacts with the Kalmyks, or of

[220] Terent'ev, *Istoriia*, vol. 1, p. 336.
[221] Moorcroft, *Travels*, vol. 1, pp. 418–22.
[222] Yapp, *Strategies*, pp. 31–41, 56–58.
[223] *Ibid.*, pp. 392–94, 399–400.

Appollova and Viatkin on relations with the Kazakhs, all show clear control of envoys and officers. Yet the expansion into Siberia is full of such typically colonial situations; of Ermak who began the conquest in the sixteenth century, of Nikifor Chernigovskii wanted for the murder of Obukhov, voevod of Ilim, re-establishing Albazin in the 1660s after its destruction by Qing forces, or of Pashkov, voevod of Enisei, dismissed as a mutineer, establishing Nerchinsk in 1656–1658.

The difference between colonial and pre-colonial days lies in the differences of the relations of resources. In colonial times, the disparity of resources available to the two sides was infinite and they were incommensurate. Before then, they were comparable, even if not necessarily equal. That alone could embolden such a lowly creature as the manager of the stud in Calcutta to negotiate with the Maharaja of Kashmir: in a colonial relation they had in fact become equals. That alone permitted such wide discretionary powers to the junior-most officers on the front. So great were the possibilities open to him that it was impossible to encompass them in instructions. Accordingly, they were told to act with the general interest of Russia in mind. This general interest, in colonial times, consisted of almost uninterrupted expansion and the acquisition of privileges: there were no fine balancing acts or complex chessboard patterns so characteristic of earlier and later diplomacy. Therefore, no brash action could disrupt the apple cart. The colonial powers did not go to war with each other for colonial reasons in a century of untold colonial violence. To western societies the nineteenth century was therefore the age of augustan peace, golden memories of which are fondly cherished to this day. To the rest of the world it was one of tragic violence, upheavals, and horror. On the other hand, in pre-colonial times, the room for manoeuvre was narrow because of the equilibrium between the two sides. The options could be foreseen more precisely even if information was more scanty and slower to travel than in the nineteenth century. There was little question of flouting instructions; and the assumption was not made at either end, by superior or by inferior. If it did happen, it was treated as mutiny, insubordination, or rebellion, with serious consequences to follow. Nelson's putting the telescope to his blind eye at the battle of Copenhagen is so famous for having been so exceptional and its having resulted in a major victory. The Royal Navy was not otherwise organised on the principle of subordinates disobeying orders and acting at their discretion. All colonial political (not military) services functioned as if that were one of their principles of action. To accept the theory of the men-on-the-spot today is to endorse such colonial special pleading.

Let us now turn to the most favoured theory, that of the threat to India as a means of creating a negotiating position on the Eastern Question. In its most general sense it meant attacking the British in India. As such it was immensely attractive to any strategic planner. India was the preferred target either because the British Isles were impregnable, given the worldwide

supremacy of the Royal Navy or because India *was* the empire, not merely its brightest jewel, as Katkov observed. Britain could be instantly reduced to a second-rate power by her position in India being broken. India was the more attractive also because the British position there was feeble. It rested on military superiority alone amidst a vast and hostile population. The obvious strategy, therefore, would be to synchronise a military invasion or the threat of one with an Indian rebellion, whether princely, popular, or nationalist. This was a bright idea that became an inspiring myth to all strategic planners as surely as the general strike has been to the working class in capitalist society. It has had, therefore, virtually the same life cycle as the British empire in India. Every one of Britain's imperialist challengers have conceived such a scheme and nearly all have seriously attempted to put it into operation, or imagined they had.

The first such plan was made as early as 1791 by Russia, as a projected overland invasion of India. The next was by Bonaparte in 1798 in his Egyptian venture, followed in 1800 and in 1807–1808 by France and Russia in tandem. From the 1830s until 1907 Russian planners and popular essayists, from the most secret conclaves to the most rabid journalism, have purveyed the idea to their respective audiences to the point of tedium. And, throughout the century, British strategists in India were equally seized by the fear of it or claimed they were and planned for it. In the First World War, the Germans saw the worth; on the German Right, during the twenties, Goebbels cast himself in the unlikely role of a liberator of India. And during the Second World War, it was strongly favoured once again. Most of all the Japanese took it up and carried out the only attempted invasion of India during colonial rule. The popularity of the plan among strategists gives us a clue to its attractions among historians to this day.

The plan of 1791 was a result of the Ochakov affair. Anglo-Russian relations had not been restored since Catherine II's Armed Neutrality during the American War of Independence when the maritime states of Europe were leagued against Britain. Russian successes in the Turkish war of 1787–1792 led to Pitt's fears of Russia acquiring a dangerously strong position on the Black Sea coast and he sought to join hands with Prussia to force a Russian retreat. The point chosen was Ochakov, which was supposed to command the embouchures of the Bug and the Dniester and so affect east European trade into the Black Sea. In March 1791, a joint ultimatum was delivered to Russia to withdraw or to face action in the Baltic and Black Seas. Pitt thus prefigured Palmerston by forty years, but nothing came of it eventually. This was the context of the first Russian project for an invasion of India. It was drawn up, appropriately enough, by a Frenchman, M.D. St. Genie, for the Prince of Nassau-Siegen, commander of the Russian Black Sea fleet. It proposed an invasion via Orenburg, Bukhara, Badakhshan, and Kashmir into British territory in India and the restoration of the Mughal dynasty. Even if the restoration did not succeed,

'little apprehension was entertained of a people [Indians] so disunited among themselves and who tremble at the name of Russia'. Catherine warmly approved of the plan, but it was shelved when the crisis passed.[224]

This was followed by Napoleon's more famous attempts. Bonaparte decided that the French did not have the resources to strike at the British Isles, but an expedition to India via Egypt was possible. He could expect support from Tipu Sultan, who had earlier established contact with the French; but these events merely proved to be an ideal excuse for Wellesley to carry out more conquests in India. The next was a Russo-French project during their alliance in 1800. After that alliance collapsed, the emperor Paul decided to try it alone in 1801. V.P. Orlov, ataman of the Cossacks of the Don actually set out from Orenburg with 22,000 Cossacks, 44,000 horses, and two companies of horse artillery in June 1801, but was stopped at Irgiz on Paul's death. This plan contained all the elements of the future ones. The principal routes, either via Iran and Herat or via Turkestan or the Central Asian khanates and Afghanistan were chalked out.[225] It was even liberationist. The plan was, according to later Russian accounts, 'to expel the English from Hindustan and to deliver their beautiful and rich lands from the British yoke . . . . .'[226] Another such scheme germinated and withered with the next Franco-Russian alliance at Tilsit in 1807.

With the Russian victory over Iran in 1828 and over Turkey in 1829 followed by the two Muhammad Ali crises and major Russian diplomatic victories over the Straits question, this became a standard talking point among Russian and British strategists. But the next set of plans were formulated only in the 1850s, with the Crimean War crisis. Khrulev proposed the despatch of 30,000 troops via the Caspian, Herat, and Kandahar to combine with Afghan and Indian risings 'to free the people who are the sources of her [British] wealth and [to] prove to the world the might of the Russian Czar'.[227] Even General Duhamel, regarded by Miliutin as 'inertia incarnate' (*voploshchenie inertsii*) thought an attack on the Indian redoubt necessary. Blaramberg and Chikhachev instead thought it sufficient to arrange diversionary movements in the direction of Afghanistan synchronised with a mission there, while Tornau suggested that the mere strengthening of the Russian position on the Caspian would send the required chill down the British spine in India.[228]

Yet another round of such projects came up during the next crisis of 1875–1878. Of these, Skobelev's was by far the most significant, combining an invasion of India with a rebellion there. He further argued that a British

[224] Lt.Col. De Lacy Evans, *On the Practicability of an Invasion of British India and on the Commercial and Financial Prospects and Resources of the Empire*, London, 1829, p. 17.

[225] H.S. Edwards, *Russian Projects against India*, London, 1885, ch. 2.

[226] V.M. Lebedev, *'V Indiiu'. Voeeno-statisticheskii i strategicheskii ocherk. Proekt budushchago pokhoda*, Spb, 1898, p. 6.

[227] Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 262–67.

[228] E.L. Shteinberg, 'Angliiskaia versiia o "russkoi ugroze" v Indii v XIX-XX vv', *Istoricheskie Zapiski*, no. 33, 1950, pp. 47–54.

defeat in India would lead to a revolution in England. On the other hand, a Russian defeat and even withdrawal in part from Turkestan could be safely contemplated, since Turkestan was negotiable to Russia which India was not to the British.[229] Nothing new was added to these ideas, and they continued to be discussed in popular and official literature into the twentieth century. They were always accompanied by a firm belief in an Indian popular rising, sometimes of Muslims, otherwise of just the downtrodden masses, and certainly of the dispossessed princes. This hope was quaintly expressed by Terent'ev thus:

> Sick to death, they [the Indians] are now waiting for a physician from the north, are hastening on his advance with eager prayers, and making him the text for discourses in their temples.[230]

In the twentieth century it was the turn of the Germans and Japanese to be so possessed. Interestingly, the idea of sponsoring nationalism issued from the right in either case. The conservative General Friedrich von Bernhardi's work *Germany and the Next War*, was published in 1911 and was at once picked up by exiled Indian nationalists and revolutionaries like M. Barkatullah, V. Chattopadhyaya and others. But little was actually done during the war, save some intrigue and financing of shadowy groups.[231]

During the 1920s, the left tendency within the National Socialist movement, the Strasser brothers, Goebbels, and Count Reventlow, put out the Strassers' programme of 24 January 1926 and their 14 Theses on the German Revolution in August 1929. These demanded an explicit liberationist plank for 'the suppressed nations of Asia, Africa, and the East', as 'common victims of international capitalism'. Goebbels was especially keen to join hands with, of all people, Gandhi. Hitler firmly quashed this dangerously radical tendency within the party, but they resurfaced within the foreign office and intelligence services periodically without bearing fruit. Subhas Chandra Bose was treated indifferently and the Free India Declaration, despite its draft in the foreign office, was not actually published by the Germans. Hitler was, at least, a consistent racist: he could not stomach the prospect of the Aryans of India being liberated from the British. He immensely admired the British empire, commended it for its excellent work in India, and saw it as a model for his own forthcoming empire in Russia. He was more anxious to share the world with a fraternal imperialist Britain than to destroy their good works. Churchill may not have warmed to the Führer because of the German threat to Britain. But Hitler's heart beat in unison with Churchill's on matters of empire. He liked the Englishman even more for the sodden cigar-smoker that he was, mentally feeble

[229] Edwards, *op. cit.*, pp. 271–93.

[230] Terent'ev, *Russia and England*, vol. 2, p. 156.

[231] See Thomas G. Fraser, 'Germany and Indian Revolution, 1914–1918', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 12, no. 2, April 1977, pp. 255–72.

and easier to deal with than some radical Stafford Cripps who might liquidate the empire. So Hitler ignored the liberationist component and concentrated on the military diversion alone. This, once again, led nowhere beyond some intrigue in Afghanistan and, astonishingly, an Indian SS contingent!

The final attempt, when made, came from the entirely unexpected quarter of the east. The Japanese alone seriously attempted to synchronise a military invasion with a nationalist movement. But imperialists and nationalists do not make convincing partners: the Japanese could not properly co-ordinate with a nationalist rebellion. The ideal moment of the failure of the Cripps Mission in April 1942, when Japan ruled the Indian Ocean, and the supreme moment of Quit India in August 1942, the greatest upheaval since 1857, both passed without Japanese action. Instead they hoped to use an instrument of their creation, as they saw it, the Indian National Army, and so constantly conflicted with the assertive independence of that force.[232] Russian strategic thinking of a diversionary move toward India fits in well with the structure of imperialist rivalry. But whether the Inner Asian colonial empire was acquired as a consequence of realising that strategy is another question.

This theory should now be tested: did Russian strategists ever use this expansion, in fact, to acquire a negotiating position on the Eastern Question, during the century of Anglo-Russian rivalry? It is the assumption that they did, in the most significant Soviet political interpretations, which themselves predominate, interestingly enough, over the so-called economic theory. Khalfin, in his series of monographs, is virtually the only one to cling to the latter. Popov, the first major historian of the conquest, forcefully argues this version of the political theory.[233] Rozhkova, the most authoritative economic historian of this process, with an unrivalled mastery of the trade statistics, political and business archives, and economic history in general, settles for this political explanation, using economic factors as secondary and complementary only. [234] Khidoiatov, the only historian in the world to have had free access to both Russian and British archives, rejects Khalfin at the very outset; to which the latter has tartly replied that Khidoiatov has been let loose too long in the Public Record Office.[235] Kiniapina, the historian of Russian foreign policy, again sides with Rozhkova against Khalfin.[236]

Theoretically, within the framework of the above strategy, the move

[232] Milan Hauner, *India in Axis Strategy. Germany, Japan and Indian Nationalists during the Second World War*. Stuttgart, 1981, pp. 20–34, 56–70, 96–106, 159–66, 188–89, 254–58, 360, 373–79, 436, 441, 479–80, 545–46, 628.

[233] A.L. Popov, 'Bor'ba za sredneaziatskii platsdarm, *Ist. Zap*. no. 7, pp. 182–83.

[234] Rozhkova, *Ekon. sviazi*, pp. 110–13.

[235] G.A. Khidoiatov, *Iz istorii*, pp. 41–47, 53; N.A. Khalfin, 'O dvizhushchikh motivakh politiki Rossii v Srednei Azii (60–70-e gody XIX v.)', *Istoriia SSSR*, 1972, no. 4, pp. 128–35.

[236] N.S. Kiniapina, 'Sredniaia Aziia vo vneshnepoliticheskikh planakh tsarizma', *Voprosy Istorii* 1974, no, 2, pp. 36–51.

towards India could have been related to any confrontation with Britain anywhere: it did not have to be confined to the Eastern Question. In fact, as will be soon seen, the drive toward Tashkent was timed to the Polish insurrection of 1863 and the British support it received, according to one interpretation. But the Eastern Question contained Russia's most ambitious, complex, and emotionally surcharged set of foreign policy commitments, and Britain was the leading and implacable opponent throughout. Therefore, Inner Asian strategy was couched in terms of a footnote to the Eastern Question. It must be seen whether any move into Inner Asia was synchronised, in fact, with a confrontation with Britain over the Eastern Question, and whether it led to any softening of British attitudes. It must also be seen whether any weakening of the British position in India was seized as an opportunity to make a move in the Eastern Question or Inner Asia.

The first such trial of strength occurred in 1828–1833. In 1828, the war with Iran was concluded by the treaty of Turkmanchai which brought the Russian position to the Aras. In 1829, the war with Turkey ended and the treaty of Adrainople confirmed the Russian protectorate over the Danubian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia along with important gains in Transcaucasia. In 1831, Abbas Mirza, the heir to the Iranian throne, launched his Khorasan expedition towards Herat, believed to be the gateway to India, with considerable Russian encouragement. Between 1831 and 1833, occurred the first Muhammad Ali crisis culminating in the treaty of Unkiar-Iskelessi, regarded as an extraordinary Russian diplomatic victory over Turkey and the western world. The only apparent Russian move toward India was in Iran, not yet in the steppe or Turkestan. But Iran was a component of the strategic environment for the conquest of Inner Asia. The question then is whether the Iranian events were a means to achieving Unkiar-Iskelessi.

Abbas Mirza's advance into Khorasan in 1831 was a demonstration of Russian influence and of what could be done to threaten India. Russia and Iran discovered an identity of interests in this theatre. Iran had an ancient claim to this territory, recently snatched from her by the Durrani empire. Russia could encourage her to recover such lost territory as compensation for what she had torn from Iran in the north west. Therefore Abbas Mirza embarked upon the expedition without 'actual assistance or proffers of aid from his Northern Ally' as reported by John Campbell, the British envoy. However, Russia encouraged it and wanted her staff officers to accompany the army.[237]

There were good reasons for Fath Ali Shah, the Shah of Iran, to want to

[237] See Campbell's 'Epitome of a Political Journal in Persia for the Year 1833', 31 December 1833, NAI, FD, SC, 8 May 1834, no. 1–5, p. 16; John Macdonald to Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, 11 March 1830, *ibid.*, SC, 9 July 1830, no. 2–9, p. 15; Campbell to H.J. Prinsep, Secretary to Govt. of India, 4 Dec. 1831, *ibid.*, SC, 30 July 1832, no. 1–2, pp. 8–12; and H. Ellis to Auckland, 30 Dec. 1835, *ibid.*, PC, 9 May 1836, no. 33–38, pp. 14–15.

appease Russia at this moment with such a move. Two instalments of the indemnity for the recent Russo-Iranian war were still due. Russia had remitted half of it, but the other half, or the 'tenth crore', as it was called, was outstanding. This was one way of getting out of that commitment, even if Iran did not possess the resources to reduce Khorasan fully, as Abbas Mirza, Campbell, and the Russians knew well.[238] In Kabul and Lahore it was assumed, therefore, that this was undertaken at Russian instigation.[239] Russia and Iran also found a common interest in chastising their common adversary, Khiva and the Turkmen tribes, who raided Iran and egged on the Khorasani resistance.[240] Finally, it was seen as a measure of Russian influence that the russophil Muhammad Mirza was appointed heir apparent on the sudden death of his father, Abbas Mirza.[241]

But there is no indication that this was timed to the first Muhammad Ali crisis and contributed, or was intended to contribute, to the treaty of Unkiar-Iskelessi. The British had been singularly passive at Istanbul during these events and were represented only by a chargé. When Muhammad Ali, Pasha of Egypt, rebelled, and his son, Ibrahim Pasha advanced through Syria, the sultan turned, in vain, to the western powers for help. Britain was distracted by crises in Portugal and Belgium, the cabinet was divided, and a general election was approaching. Earl Grey, the prime minister, and Lord Holland believed that the Ottoman empire was collapsing in any case, and even Palmerston was ready only with moral support. Stratford Canning was in Istanbul until August 1832, but he did no more than suggest the possibility of British help. The crisis was at its height in November-December 1832 after the Turkish rout at Koniah and Ibrahim Pasha taking even the Grand Vizier prisoner. Two Turkish missions waited in London during these months, but were turned away empty-handed.

In early summer 1832, Mahmud II had already sounded Butenev, the Russian minister. In November, Nessel'rode promised a naval squadron for the defence of Istanbul. With the disaster at Koniah, General N.N. Murav'ev landed at Istanbul on 25 December 1832 to prepare for Russian military support. Even this did not stir the British to action. Only the French, through their new ambassador, Admiral Roussin, reacted. He laboured hard, and failed, to break the Russo-Turkish entente. On 20 February 1833, a Russian squadron entered the Bosphorus, and on 5 April the unprecedented event of a Russian troop landing at Buyukdéré on the Bosphorus, occurred. On 8 July 1833, the Russo-Turkish treaty was signed at Unkiar-Iskelessi. It was a defensive agreement to last eight years. Russia

[238] Macdonald to John Swinton, Chief Secretary to Govt., Political Dept., Fort William, 24 Oct. 1829, *ibid.*, SC, 19 Feb. 1830, no. 13–15, pp. 1–3.

[239] Claude Wade, Political Agent, Lahore, to W. H. Macnaghten, Secretary, Govt. of India, 21 Dec. 1832, *Ibid.*, SC, 12 Feb. 1833, no. 19–20, pp. 1–2.

[240] Wade to Macnaghten, Ferozepur, 8 April 1837, *ibid.*, PC, 1 May 1837, no. 54, pp. 4–5; John McNeill to Palmerston, 13 May 1838, *ibid.*, SC, 26 Sept. 1836, no. 3, p. 85; D'Arcy Todd to Burnes, Kabul, 23 June 1838, *ibid.*, SC, 17 Oct. 1838, no. 194, p. 3.

[241] Campbell to Macnaghten, 21 June 1834, *ibid.*, PC, 21 Nov. 1834, no. 43, p. 2.

demanded that Turkey should close the Straits to all foreign warships. This did not change the situation essentially, since by ancient practice, warships never passed the Straits when Turkey was at peace. Russia did not acquire any rights of passage for her warships, nor did she attempt to do so during the eight years of the treaty. But it was widely believed that Russia had indeed acquired such rights and that mistake is repeated to this day.[242] What had occurred, to the chagrin of Palmerston and the French, was that Russia had acquired an overweening influence in Turkey, close to a protectorate. Palmerston devoted himself thereafter to ensuring a joint and explicit European control over the Straits question. This he accomplished during the second Muhammed Ali crisis. However, during the events of 1832 and 1833 leading upto Unkiar-Iskelessi, the British government was remarkably supine and did not challenge the Russian presence, indeed necessitated it by their inaction. Consequently, the Russian government won by default and without any need for a diversion elsewhere, least of all in the direction towards India. The growth of Russian influence at Teheran and the northern provinces of Iran on the one hand and at Istanbul on the other, were two autonomous processes, each an objective in itself, related to the other as all foreign policy ends must be, but without the one issuing from the other.

Before the next Muhammad Ali crisis began to mature in 1838, Palmerston made one major effort to bear down on the Russian position in the Caucasus. This is the *Vixen* affair. The international status of the Cherkes or Circassian tribes between the Black Sea coast and the Kuban was undefined. The tribes, especially the Adyge, claimed, entirely correctly, that they had never acknowledged the sovereignty of either the Crimean khan or the sultan of Turkey. Therefore, when Russia secured the east coast of the Black Sea by the treaty of Adrianople in 1829, the Circassian tribes were not necessarily included. The Russians themselves were ambiguous about their claims. In 1829, they justified their presence as a drive against slaving. Even in 1840, an official map showed Circassia as free. The British made full use of this situation after Unkiar-Iskelessi. They argued that the Russians had no rights there by the treaty of Adrianople, and followed this up with clandestine support to the mountain rebels.

Within Britain, a major propaganda campaign was mounted for the independence of Circassia. It was conducted by a mystical Scot and a fanatical russophobe, David Urquhart, through his journal, *Portfolio*. Lord Ponsonby, the British ambassador to Istanbul, virulently hostile to Unkiar-Iskelessi, suggested in 1834 that British warships be despatched to the Black Sea to support the rebellion. James Hudson, the British consul at

[242] E.V. Tarle, *Krymskaia Voina*, vol. 1, orig. edn. 1941, now in *Sochineniia*, vol. 8, M. 1959, p. 87; N.S. Kiniapina *et al.*, eds., *Vostochnyi vopros vo vneshnei politiki Rossii. Konets XVIII—nachalo XX v.*, M., 1978, p. 101; for clarification on this point, see M.S. Anderson, *The Eastern Question, 1774–1923*, London, 1966, (1983 reprint), pp. 84–85, and Ingle, *Nessel'rode*, pp. 99–101.

Odessa, was sent in 1835, to collect information. David Urquhart asked Palmerston to declare Circassian independence, which however the foreign secretary refused to do. But, in November 1836, a British brig, the *Vixen*, carrying ammunition registered as salt, was seized at Sudjuk-Kalé, under blockade then by the Russians. It did not lead to the crisis which Urquhart had wanted and the crew were soon released. Palmerston's brinkmanship did not go beyond wordy and unpleasant exchanges with Pozzo di Borgo, the Russian ambassador in London. Eventually, he accepted the Russian right to seize the brig for its violation of quarantine regulations at port. With this formula, the crisis blew over by June 1837.[243] Throughout these pressures, the Inner Asian theatre, including Iran and Afghanistan, was marked by utter quiet. The first provocative Russian move was to occur only at the end of 1837 with the new Iranian campaign in Khorasan, but after the *Vixen* affair.

The next round of crisis, at first sight, seems to prove the theory easily. This was the second Muhammad Ali crisis of 1838–1841 and a combination of them on the approaches to India. From December 1837 to September 1838, Herat was besieged by Iranian forces with very active and visible Russian cooperation. In 1837–1838, Witkiewicz was in Kabul trying to detach Dost Muhammad from the British. In retaliation against the Iranian move, the British seized the island of Kharg in the Persian Gulf in March 1838. Against the Witkiewicz mission, they invaded Afghanistan in 1839, overthrew the Dost, installed Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, the Sadozai British pensioner of Ludhiana, and were ignominously driven out of Afghanistan. In 1842, they returned and restored Dost Muhammad. In reply, Perovskii invaded Khiva in December 1839 with disastrous results, but followed it up with fort-building in the Kazakh steppe. It might appear indeed that these events were designed as a diversion to the Eastern crisis created by Muhammad Ali. A close look at the chronology, however, suggests otherwise.

As early as 1836, Muhammad Shah of Iran began preparing for the invasion of Khorasan and the conquest of Herat, left unfinished by his father, Abbas Mirza. On 15 February and 1 April 1836, Henry Ellis on a mission to Teheran, informed Palmerston of Muhammad Shah's preparations for an alliance with Dost Muhammad of Kabul and with the Kandahar Sardars for the attack on Herat.[244] Ellis had now decided that Afghanistan, not Iran, was to be the buffer to India, and he warned Simonich against encouraging the Shah in his invasion plans.[245] In June 1836, the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors instructed Auckland to counteract

[243] See Joachim Hoffmann, 'Das Probleme einer Seeblokade', pp. 130–34; Tarle, *Krymskaia Voina*, vol. 1, pp. 92–97; Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 91–92.

[244] W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan. A Study of Political Developments in Central and Southern Asia*, 2nd edn., London, 1953, pp. 89–90.

[245] H. Ellis to Auckland, Teheran, 30 Dec. 1835, NAI, FD, PC, 9 May 1836, no. 33–38, pp. 14–18; Ingle, *Nesselrode*, p. 75.

Russian influence in Afghanistan. The decision was taken in Iran and by Simonich in 1836 itself. There was no Eastern crisis as yet save the *Vixen* affair and British Circassian intrigues, which were, however, resolved by June 1837. But the move into khorasan began in July 1837, and the siege of Herat in December 1837, after the *Vixen* issue had blown over and before the Muhammad Ali crisis began. It was thus an independent thrust forward in this area by Muhammad Shah to vindicate an ancient claim, and by Simonich and his superiors, to probe British defences.

That such a probe was risky was evident to Nessel'rode early enough. In August 1837 itself, just as Muhammad Shah began his advance, Nessel'rode ordered the recall of Simonich. But that was stalled by intrigue in high quarters, obviously by the general staff. Even so, the tsar finally conceded the point, and there was a sweeping change of personnel in 1838. In May 1838, Simonich was replaced at Teheran by Duhamel, who promptly denounced his predecessor's treaty with the Kandahar Sardars. He came with instructions to restore good relations with England, who had seized the island of Kharg in March 1838. At the same time Rodofinikin was replaced at the Asiatic Department by L.G. Seniavin and Witkiewicz was recalled from Kabul.[246]

In May 1838 Auckland concluded an alliance with Shah Shuja and Ranjit Singh, preparatory to the invasion of Afghanistan. Thus Russia was in retreat and Britain on the offensive by May-June 1838 before the status quo in the Near East had been disturbed. Only two measures remained in the Russian withdrawal. The first was the lifting of the siege of Herat in September 1838 and the next Nessel'rode's overtures of October 1838 to Palmerston for a bilateral approach to the Iranian business followed up by Nicholas I's audience to Lord Clanricarde, the British ambassador. Thereafter the field was clear for the British invasion of Afghanistan, unhindered by either Iran or Russia in any manner. Russia's role in this crisis was over by the summer of 1838. The Muhammad Ali crisis was just about to begin.

In May 1838 the pasha of Egypt announced his intention of proclaiming independence. Palmerston at once seized the opportunity to move to a European control of the Straits and to break the Russo-Turkish agreement of Unkiar-Iskelessi. He feared that another attack by Muhammad Ali on the Ottoman empire would only reinforce the Russian alliance. Russia was isolated in Europe now because Metternich would support neither a Russian protectorate over the Ottoman empire nor a seizure of Istanbul. France was relatively more favourable to Muhammad Ali but would support Russia only in exchange for cooperation over Belgium.[247] This Russia could not afford for fear of isolation from Prussia and Austria. Nessel'rode's policy, therefore, lay in finally accepting Palmerston's joint regime for the Straits but with the hope of breaking the Anglo-French entente which had plagued Russia. The one element missing was any stirring of the pot in

[246] *Ibid.*, pp. 77–86.

[247] Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, pp. 93–95.

Iran, Afghanistan, or Turkestan. Russia had already retreated in that theatre and was not proposing any fresh move. Nessel'rode could handle only one problem at a time. He wanted his hands free of India before dealing with the forthcoming Ottoman complications. This he had achieved, in fact, by August 1838. On the other hand, Palmerston could act in both spheres at once. He therefore kept up the offensive beyond the Indian frontier while bringing Russia to a revision of Unkiar-Iskelessi. Britain, not Russia, was using India in the Eastern Question.

Only now did the Muhammad Ali affair unfold. Sultan Mahmud II decided to bring his overgrown subject to heel and in April 1839 Turkish forces invaded Muhammad Ali's domains. On 24 June 1839, they were routed by Ibrahim Pasha at Nijib in northern Syria. On 25 June, Palmerston ordered the British Mediterranean Fleet tc cut sea communications between Egypt and Syria. On 30 June, Mahmud II died, to be succeeded by the weak and incompetent sixteen-year old Abdul Majid. Obviously fearing a Russian move, the Kapudan Pasha, Giritli-Hain Pasha, departed with the entire Turkish fleet for Alexandria. On 27 July the ambassadors of Britain, France, Austria, Prussia, and Russia met in Istanbul and drafted a collective note to the sultan to act on their advice. On 22 August the hapless Sublime Porte did so by asking the five European powers to deal with Muhammad Ali on its behalf. Palmerston thus succeeded in making it into a general European concern without permitting Russia to invoke the treaty of Unkiar-Iskelessi. There was not the slightest question of a Russian move towards India, they concentrated entirely on European events. The only Russian objective was to separate France from England.

This was achieved in the Straits conventions of 1840 and 1841. In September 1839, Baron E.P. Brunnow arrived in London with Russian proposals for a joint European guarantee on the Straits and for an Anglo-Russian rapprochement. The French government under Marshal Soult did not want to drive Muhammad Ali out of Syria back into Egypt. So Nicholas realised that a direct negotiation with Britain would drive a wedge between the French and the British, which it did. Soult was replaced in March 1840 by Adolphe Thiers, who made things easier by his contumacy. On 15 July, the four powers, without France, signed a series of agreements closing the Straits to warships of all powers when Turkey was at peace and offering Egypt and Syria to Muhammad Ali in hereditary possession if he would accept the sovereignty of the sultan. In the face of Muhammad Ali's intransigence, Beirut was bombarded by the British fleet in September, and the deposition of Muhammad Ali proclaimed. A local revolt sufficed, and Ibrahim Pasha had to abandon Syria. Muhammad Ali was forced to accept Egypt alone, and France was properly humiliated. Thiers was driven out of office on 21 October and replaced by Guizot. On 13 June 1841, the agreements were finalised by another Straits convention at London, this time with French participation. Palmerston had thus secured a European control of the Straits; Russia was rewarded with an Anglo-French breach.

The Russian semi-protectorate over Turkey was over, although essentially the legal position over the Straits did not change. As at Unkiar-Iskelessi, the London convention did not permit any warships passage while the Sultan was at peace. Russia had thus retreated both in Turkey and over India. Britain had won out over the Straits and firmly extended her hegemony upto the Oxus.

The only Russian move in Inner Asia during the Muhammad Ali drama was Perovskii's failed expedition to Khiva. This was decided upon at St Petersburg in February-March 1839 after the Herat affair was over, Nessel'rode's declaration that the interests of Russia and Britain there coincided, the tsar's friendly interview with Lord Clanricarde, and the beginning of the joint approach with England over the Straits. The Anglo-Russian positions had already been decided. The Khivan expedition on the other hand was a response to the British invasion of Afghanistan. It provided the ideal excuse to Perovskii, who had proposed it in 1834 itself, a year after appointment as governor-general at Orenburg. It now seemed that the British would extend their influence deep into Central Asia unless Russia acted. Even Duhamel thought it necessary. The details of the decision are also instructive. Perovskii was to depart only after the British Afghan expedition and not to annex Khiva. The official excuse was to be Khivan slaving. Russia was keen to cooperate, not compete with Britain.[248] When the mission failed, Perovskii was not issued orders for a second round. When in 1841, the British were routed at Kabul, Russia took care not to take advantage of the situation with any hostile move and even restrained the Iranians.[249] If Russia wanted to use Central Asia for negotiations over the Eastern Question, 1839 and 1840 would have been the time for a move. Yet that was a period of cooperation in both Europe and, in effect, Central Asia.

If therefore any pattern is to be discerned in Russian policy here, it is that they were in effect using a British advance beyond India as an excuse for their own drive into Inner Asia. The British on their side were doing exactly the same. The provocative Herat siege and the Witkiewicz mission therefore functioned, not as diversions from Europe, but as inducement to the British to commit an aggression which would provide the ideal cover and excuse for a Russian forward move. This excuse was necessary as much before European and British public opinion and the cabinet as before the Russian foreign ministry and other such faint hearts. A sceptical government required the right mix of arguments. The long-term one was the strategic advantage of having a sure means of menacing India in order to ease a negotiation in the Eastern Question. Hence the persistence of that line and theory in all discussions. The short-term one was a British aggressive move demanding an appropriate response. Hence a local provocation sufficient to cause the British to move. Both these were realised in the

[248] Ingle, *Nessel'rode*, pp. 90–91.

[249] Popov, 'Bor'ba za platsdarm', p. 234.

crises of the thirties and were to be repeated in that of the late seventies with a weaker version of it in post-Crimean period. For the moment, Russia drove ahead militarily into the steppe with the Khivan invasion and lines of fortification or forts coming very near the Syr Daria, and in effect, embracing the Kazakh steppe.

The thrust forward in the forties and early fifties is in itself most revealing. After the Muhammad Ali and Afghan crises, the two empires carried out their largest territorial expansions utterly without rivalry or challenges to each other. In the western half of the steppe, the forts of Turgai and Irgiz were established in 1845, Ulutavskii in 1846, Raim on the Syr in 1847, and Ak-Mechet in 1853. From the east, through Middle Horde and Greater Horde territory, another line starting from Semipalatinsk via Aiaguz and Kopal, east of lake Balkhash, and traversing the Ili river, ended in Vernoe (now Alma Ata), in 1854. This was the Siberian line. This pincer movement nearly enclosed the steppe. The conquest of the sixties consisted of closing the pincers and heading south to Tashkent. Kazakhstan was thus fully enveloped during the forties and fifties without a British protest.

The British, equally undisturbed, annexed Sind in 1843, and Punjab in 1849. They followed this by building up Dost Muhammad. In the early fifties, employing a much strengthened army, his third son Akram Khan invested the principalities northward up to the Amu, Balkh, Khulm, Sar-i-Pul, Karategin, and others, thus creating Afghan Turkestan. His expansion was then cemented by a treaty of friendship with Britain in March 1855 and further consolidated in November that year by the annexation of Kandahar on the death of Kohun Dil Khan, the seniormost Sardar.[250] All this was accomplished during the Anglo-Russian rapprochement, begun in the early forties by Aberdeen and Nessel'rode after Palmerston's exit. This major forward move by Russia was not preceded by the slightest ripple in the Ottoman empire: it was independent and for itself.

The Crimean War of 1853–1856 should have been the ideal moment to carry out this strategy, but again nothing happened. This was Russia's gravest challenge between Napoleon and the First World War; it was the most serious eruption in the Eastern Question; and it is interesting for having been the only unsuccessful invasion of Russia from the south. Russia was engaged in major hostilities in Crimea, on the Danube, and in Caucasus. In addition the British sought to widen the sphere of conflict by attacking the Solovki island in the White Sea, the Kola peninsula off the Berents Sea, the Aland islands in the Baltic Sea, and Petropavlovsk in the south east of Kamchatka on the Pacific. But Russia did not attack India, did not make a move towards India, nor make any sort of hostile demonstration, whether directly or through her Iranian ally as in the 1830s.

In 1854, a special committee convened in St Petersburg to discuss Central Asian strategy. They decided to close the pincers but postponed it rather

[250] V.M. Masson, V.A. Romodin, *Istoriia Afganistana*, vol. 2, *Afganistan v novoe vremia*, M., 1965, pp. 223–26.

than hasten it because of the Crimean War. Instead G. Kh. Gasford, governor-general of western Siberia was permitted only to occupy the trans-Ili and upper Chu regions and to establish Vernoe, all safely farther up north.[251] As usual, however, the strategic planners came up with their routine suggestions as already noted. Even the excessively moderate general Duhamel demanded it in 1854:

> The present war, which is declared to the knife, imposes upon Russia the duty of showing how she can attack England in her only vulnerable point, in India, and thus force her to assemble so great a force in Asia as to weaken her action in Europe.[252]

Words were not matched by deeds. The scheme was a perennial source of inspiration, but the resources did not exist for it. The British, on the other hand, could afford to attack worldwide, while that great reserve, the Indian army, was not even deployed in the Crimean campaigns.

It is worth noting what happened with Iran over Herat. Russia hoped to persuade Iran to threaten Turkey rather than India as in the thirties. Nasruddin Shah had been convinced in 1853 that Erzerum and Baghdad should be assaulted. His reward was to have been the territories annexed and the remitting of that ancient debt, the war indemnity. But the Shah saw the chance of siding with Britain instead and regaining the north west, lost at Turkmanchai in 1828. The British saw no need to fight his battles for him and demanded neutrality instead. As a result, Iran was neutral during the Crimean War. There was no Russian design for a co-ordinated Russo-Iranian move towards Afghanistan and India from Turkestan and Khorasan despite the immensely improved Russian position on the Syr.

However, entirely independently of Russia, complications arose in Herat. When Yar Muhammad Khan, the ruler of Herat, died in 1851, he was succeeded by his son Said Muhammad. Fearing Kohun Dil Khan of Kandahar, he oriented his policy toward Iran, and even admitted a small troop of 700 horsemen sent by Soltan Morad Mirza, governor of Khorasan. This agitated the British enough to impose a treaty on Iran in 1853 whereby troops would never be sent against Herat. However, all this was before the Crimean War. In September 1854, in the course of a dynastic factional struggle, Said Muhammad was deposed and murdered by Muhammad Yusuf, nephew of the last Sadozai ruler of Herat, Kamran Mirza, who had been killed in 1844. Muhammad Yusuf had been living in Meshed for long and was strongly inclined to Iran. Russia was not involved in this, nor did Iran make any menacing move. But in March 1855, Dost Muhammad signed his friendship treaty with the British, and in August 1855 Kohun Dil Khan's death permitted him to annex Kandahar. The Dost hankered after

[251] Popov, 'Iz istorii zavoevaniia Srednei Azii', *Ist. Zapiski*, no. 9, 1940, p. 200; Khalfin, *Prisoedinenie*, p. 61.

[252] Edwards, *Russian projects against India*, pp. 266–67.

Herat. The British had been encouraging his expansion in all directions save Peshawar so that the newly-emerging Afghanistan might become the buffer to India. Accordingly, Nasruddin Shah of Iran launched the next Herat campaign in spring 1856 and in October that prize fell to him at last.[253] There is no evidence of the Russian hand in this. In any case, by the time Iran moved in the matter, Russia was negotiating the end of the Crimean war. If it was meant to help in that war, it was singularly tardy. Iran lost Herat and had to suffer a British invasion from the Gulf, which was settled by the treaty of Paris in March 1857. Russia was entirely helpless, merely advised Iran to end the war quickly, and magnanimously remitted the outstanding debt.[254] Such were the events in Iran and Herat, chiefly before and after the Crimean War, little during it.

The gods however smiled on Russia in 1857. The dream of the strategists came true in the form of a seismic upheaval in India, of princes, soldiers, lords and peasants in the first anti-colonial war of liberation. This might have been the true moment to retrieve a position lost in the humiliating Crimean defeat and the Paris peace settlement. But nothing whatever was done, neither to fan the flames in India nor to take advantage of it in Turkey and the Black Sea, nor even to move forward in Inner Asia.

The decade after the Crimean War was one of heady Russian conquests in Central Asia. The Syr Daria and Siberian pincers were closed, Tashkent invested in 1865, and the governor-generalship of Turkestan created in 1867. But the peace of the grave had descended over India and the Eastern Question in those years and the conquest proceeded independently of either. It was prepared by a major diplomatic offensive. Three important missions were despatched to Central Asia in 1858: N.P. Ignat'ev to Khiva and Bukhara, Khanykov to Afghanistan, and Valikhanov to Kashgar. The first two were designed to undermine the British position, and, on the assumption of the zero-sum game, to augment Russian influence. The third was a purely intelligence mission with Valikhanov even going in disguise. The first and third missions were eminently successful for the intelligence they gathered. Ignat'ev showed the Russian flag in the two khanates in a way the British never had. The Khanykov mission to Afghanistan was a dismal failure. Dost Muhammad, with bitter memories of his dealings with Witkiewicz, and having profited so immensely from his British patron, refused to admit Khanykov into Kabul. The Russian officer had to content himself with a reception in Herat by Sultan Ahmad Khan, (who had meanwhile replaced Muhammad Yusuf), a nominal Iranian subject, even if, at the same time, a nephew of Dost Muhammad.[255]

[253] N.A. Kuznetsova, *Iran v pervoi polovine XIX veka*, M., 1983, pp. 74–75; Sir Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia*, 3rd edn., vol. 2, London, 1963, pp. 346–51.

[254] Popov, 'Iz istorii', pp. 200–03.

[255] See Khalfin, *Politika*, pp. 85–105; John W. Strong, 'The Ignat'ev Mission to Khiva and Bukhara in 1858', *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, vol. 17, no. 2 & 3, 1975, pp. 236–259; Masson and Romodin, *Istoriia Afganistana*, vol. 2, p. 229.

These missions were preceded and followed by numerous important conferences in Russia to plan the conquest. In 1854, the Special Committee had already resolved on the pincer lines meeting but had postponed it to after the Crimean War. This was followed up in 1858 by A.A. Katenin, governor-general at Orenburg, presenting the plan for taking the line of Turkestan, Chimkent, and Aulie-Ata and to drive down to Tashkent.[256] This was considered in January 1859 by Gorchakov, the new foreign minister, and others. They felt an invasion was premature but decided on strengthening the flotilla on the Aral and constructing three new forts, the Emba, Iany Kurgan, and Dzhulek, all in anticipation. From the Caucasian theatre, A.I. Bariatinskii, the commander-in-chief, demanded reinforcing the Caspian flotilla and a railway link between the Caspian and the Aral. But again Gorchakov felt all this was too hasty in January 1857 even while agreeing in principle.[257]

The pace quickened with the able and energetic General D.A. Miliutin replacing Sukhozanet at the war ministry, and N.P. Ignat'ev coming instead of E.P. Kovalevskii to the Asiatic department. In March 1862, the Special Committee resolved on the occupation of Tashkent but postponed it for financial reasons.[258] Eventually, in February 1863, the Committee approved the unification of the lines, and in March 1863, Alexander II ratified the decision. Interestingly, for the decisive event, Miliutin deemed 'British fears for their East Indian possessions are totally fictitious.' But he felt that Tashkent would divert them from their irritating sympathy for the Polish rising which had begun in January 1863.[259] Thus finally, the most important move forward was linked to the Polish not the Turkish situation. Even Kiniapina, who has otherwise endorsed the Eastern Question thesis, has accepted this reasoning.[260]

The most remarkable post-Crimean events in the Eastern Question were the slow formation of Rumania and the cancellation of the Black Sea naval clauses of the Treaty of Paris of 1856. In neither event did Central Asia have a role to play. Russia had lost her protectorate over the Rumanian principalities with the Crimean defeat and she was not attempting to regain it. In 1859 Alexander Cuza was elected Hospodar of Moldavia and Wallachia. The approaching unification of the two principalities into the single state of Rumania was championed only by Napolean III but violently opposed by Austria, somewhat less so by the Porte, with Britain and Russia being lukewarm. Cuza was then invested by the sultan and he managed to retain his position until 1866. He was then replaced, after a plebiscite, by Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen who, surprisingly enough, endured. The Russian strategic concern of the Straits was not involved in these

[256] Khalfin, *Prisoedinenie*, pp. 107–09.
[257] *Ibid.*, pp. 88–90.
[258] *Ibid.*, pp. 132–33.
[259] K. iapina, 'Sredniaia Aziia', p. 44
[260] *Ibid.*, pp. 44–45.

events. But because they amounted to a revision of the Paris settlement of 1856, they were a useful argument to Russia to demand revision of the other parts of the Paris treaty, the naval clauses which had forced her to demilitarise the Black Sea. Lord John Russell, the British prime minister, did acknowledge that Russia could now claim compensations. And in 1866, a denunciation of the Black Sea clauses was indeed contemplated. It was postponed at the instance, interestingly, of the war and finance ministries. It was eventually announced on 31 October 1870, thus, at long last wiping out the Crimean humiliation. But it was achieved behind the cover of the European crisis of the Franco-Prussian war, not of the Central Asian one. In any case, the British had conceded the point already. The disagreement among the powers hinged on the manner of its repeal, whether it should be unilateral, as done by Russia in the note of 31 October 1870, or joint, through an international conference. But Bismarck and William I of Prussia, fresh from their epochal victory of Sedan on 2 September, had notified support in order to isolate France who was desperately seeking allies in her hour of national trauma. Turkey was agreeable for fear of losing Bessarabia also in the course of an European crisis. Gladstone, now prime minister, only wanted an international conference. Austria alone opposed the cancellation and was isolated.[261] The Central Asian factor was irrelevant and quiescent throughout. Tashkent had been taken in 1865. Bukhara had already been reduced in 1868; and Khiva's turn was yet to come in 1873. The repeal of the Black Sea clauses thus occurred between what might have been the two covering events and as such independently of either.

Again, if any pattern is to be discerned, it lies in an attempted provocation of the British in Afghanistan. The Khanykov mission of 1858 bore a suspicious resemblance to that of Witkiewicz twenty years earlier and of Stoletov twenty years later. But this time Dost Muhammad was not to be taken in, as he had been in 1838, and as his successor Sher Ali was to be in 1878. Dost Muhammad's tilt toward Russia in 1858 would have invited a British retribution, and that would have provided the ideal cover for the now contemplated action in Central Asia. But that did not happen. Even so, the British promoting of the Dost, his conquest of Kunduz in 1863 and other bekdoms upto the Amu, their war with Iran in 1856-1857, and finally, the gift of Herat to Dost Muhammad in 1863, provided a suitable background. It merely fell short of the ideal, the British invasion of Afghanistan.

The campaigns against Khiva in 1873 and Kokand in 1876 occurred against a background of Anglo-Russian rapprochement akin to the expansion of the 1840s, not of a confrontation over the Straits or anywhere else. Between 1869 and 1873 a series of negotiations between Gorchakov and the British led to an understanding that Russia considered Afghanistan to be outside the Russian sphere of influence. The foreign office understood

[261] Anderson, *The Eastern Question*, pp. 172–73.

this to mean that Russia would not interfere there at all; that the northern frontiers of Afghanistan included Wakhan and Badakhshan; and that Afghanistan was in effect a British protectorate. Gorchakov construed it as Afghanistan being independent and a buffer between the two empires, and that the British would ensure that the Amir would not extend his frontiers farther northward.[262] The two maintained a deliberate misunderstanding, it seems, as to whether Afghanistan was genuinely independent or not; but Gorchakov secured his point by implication, that beyond Afghanistan was the Russian sphere, and the British the assurance that Russia would not touch Afghanistan, whatever else they did. This was necessary in view of the Russian landing at Krasnovodsk, on the Caspian coast, in 1869, which, to the British, looked like a sinister threat to Merv and therefore Herat, the gateway to India. This was the diplomatic prelude to the Khivan campaign of 1873, to Markozov's foray from Krasnovodsk to Kizyl Arvat, into the Karakum desert of Transcaspia, and back that same year, and to the creation of the Transcaspian military district in 1874, which signalled the installation of a Russian administration there.

The annexation of Kokand was preceded by similar exchanges of letters. Gorchakov and Derby, the foreign secretary now, agreed in 1875–1876 that 1) Afghanistan was outside the Russian sphere, 2) each was free to act in his own sphere, 3) the two empires should not come into contact, and 4) they would ensure that there would be no conflict between khanates of one sphere of influence and another. Gorchakov treated this as freedom to act, and the annexation of Kokand followed in 1876. This was accepted in England with some reluctance by *The Times* and by Parliament but freely by Derby and even Disraeli. Shuvalov, the ambassador, and Miliutin the war minister, were both pleasantly surprised.[263] Khidoiatov is a leading authority on this phase of the conquest and has generally claimed that it was all a diversion for the Eastern Question. But he has not demonstrated the link, whether in decision-making or in consequences. Russia was at that time planning nothing in Turkey; that was to follow soon.

The Afghan and Turkish crises of 1878 very nearly coincided, if not actually so. Not surprisingly therefore, the most frequent claims for this thesis has been made with regard to this coincidence, especially the Stoletov mission. It is worth noting that the British needed little provocation for aggression in Afghanistan in 1878. The Conservative government, led by Disraeli, came to power in 1874 determined to tie Afghanistan more closely to Britain and to demonstrate the point to the world. With Salisbury as Secretary of State for India until 1878, when he replaced Derby at the foreign office, and Lytton as Viceroy from 1876, Sher Ali of Afghanistan was doomed. Northbrook was replaced by Lytton in order to ensure such an aggressive policy toward Afghanistan. The main item on

[262] Khidoiatov, *Iz istorii*, pp. 88–89, 100, and 57–105 *passim*.
[263] *Ibid.*, pp. 162–174, 179–185.

the agenda was to get Sher Ali to receive a British mission, demanded as early as in January 1877. This was accompanied by dire forecasts of Russian intentions in preparing for the Transcaspian railway in 1874, considerable propaganda by Henry Layard at Istanbul, and even more in the British press.[264]

Such was the situation in Central Asia when Russia declared war on Turkey on 24 April 1877. In July 1877, at the suggestion of General K.P. von Kaufman, the governor-general of Turkestan, Russian forces there were augmented by 4000 men and preparations made for accumulating arms and equipment. But nothing more was done until April 1878. In the interim, the Russo-Turkish war had gone through its most important phases. After the fall of Plevna on 11 December 1877, Anglo-Russian tensions mounted with many moves and countermoves about the Straits. In February the British fleet moved from Besika Bay, just outside the Dardanelles, upto the Princes' Islands, just short of the Bosphorus and ready for the defence or the occupation of Istanbul against any Russian attempt to do so. In March 1878, with the victorious Russian army now on the outskirts of Istanbul itself, the treaty of San Stefano was signed. But Beaconsfield insisted on a European congress to ratify it

While an Anglo-Russian war seemed imminent here, a conference met in April 1878 under the tsar to put into effect at long last a diversion in Central Asia. Baron Tornau and General Kryzhanovskii, the governor-general of Orenburg, proposed the ancient idea of the seizure of Herat. General Kaufman, Miliutin, and N.K. Giers, substituting now for Gorchakov, warned that any involvement of Iran would invite British retaliation in the Gulf, to which Russia could not respond and thus even the benefit of Iranian neutrality would be lost. They suggested instead a demonstrative move in Central Asia without actually attacking India, which could not be contemplated. This was to consist of troop movements to Shirabad and the Amu Daria with more such from the Caucasus towards Merv. Miliutin further proposed an approach to Sher Ali in time-honoured fashion. Since Lytton was bearing down on him,

> . . . . . the forward movement of our detachments is by no means hostile to Afghanistan but, on the contrary, may be of advantage to her in support of her independence against the English, and, under certain circumstances, even as help against them.[265]

At the same time the conference explained why no major move against India was, after all, possible:

> the majority of the armed forces of the empire must be held in readiness for other and more pressing needs, conditioned by the contemporary situation in Europe,

[264] Suhash Chakravarty, *From Khyber to Oxus. A Study in Imperialist Expansion*, New Delhi, 1976, ch. 4.

[265] Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain*, p. 46.

and that it would lead to military and financial commitments which 'after the enormous sacrifices of the victorious war, which has just concluded, would be an excessive burden for the people.'[266] In short, Russia just did not have the resources to handle India at the very moment when it was most necessary to do so and for which the conquest of Inner Asia had supposedly been undertaken in part. Finally, the conference settled for the troop movements in Turkestan and a mission to Sher Ali. These movements were actually carried out, but they passed entirely without notice, without all the dramatic consequences about which Russian strategists had talked themselves hoarse for several decades. This was the only time a feint towards India, if it was that, was executed during a tension in the Eastern Question.

The mission to Kabul was led by N.G. Stoletov; but as with the Witkiewicz mission, it occurred outside the crisis in the Straits. On 30 May 1878, an Anglo-Russian agreement was signed laying down the frontiers of the two Bulgarias at the Balkan mountains and ratifying the Russian annexation of Batum, Kars, and south Bessarabia, but leaving the question of the Straits open to the forthcoming Congress of Berlin. Russia seemed to have consolidated her victories. Only on 7 June 1878 were instructions issued to Stoletov to proceed to Kabul to detach Sher Ali from his British dependence. By this time, the war was over and Russia and Britain had even reached agreement on the major issues. The Congress of Berlin opened on 13 June. But only on 14 June did Stoletov leave Samarkand for Kabul. The hapless Sher Ali tried to prevent this coming, but Stoletov brusquely pushed through Mazar-i-Sherif, brushing aside the objections of Sher Dil Khan on the frontier that he await permission from the Amir. He arrived in Kabul on 14 July, one day after the Congress of Berlin had closed and was received in audience on 26 July. On 21 August 1878 he signed a military defence treaty with Sher Ali promising a force of 30,000 men, and departed on 23 August itself. Only after he had signed the agreement did he receive Kaufman's message that Miliutin had instructed him to cease warlike preparations given the end of the Congress of Berlin.[267] This extraordinary provocation provided Lytton with the ideal excuse for the invasion of Afghanistan, during which Sher Ali died wretchedly, abandoned by the Russians, overthrown by the British, a victim of a dual colonial conspiracy.

Everything about the Stoletov mission is intriguing. It was conceived at the April conference as a diversion when a war with England appeared to threaten. Yet it was carried out when there was no longer any rationale for it. The Anglo-Russian agreement of 30 May 1878 should have by itself put an end to the mission. The Congress of Berlin should have further made it unnecessary, especially since Stoletov left Samarkand only after it began. The end of the Congress should have made it entirely superfluous. Yet he hastened to sign the agreement more than a month after the Congress had ended. If it was meant to create a negotiating position, the time was

[266] Khidoiatov, *Iz istorii*, p. 260.
[267] *Ibid.*, pp. 265–68.

between the April conference and the Anglo-Russian agreement of 30 May or at least before or during the Congress, surely not after it. By the same logic, the mission should have dashed post-haste to Kabul for its effect to be felt in Berlin. Yet it was more than dilatory. It took the much longer route via Karshi instead of through Shahrisiabs, ostensibly to call on the Amir of Bukhara at Karshi. Between Dzham and Karshi, it made yet another detour, this time to call on the Amir's younger son, then bek at Chirchak.[268] It lost a full month en route from Samarkand to Kabul, and then took another five weeks in Kabul to sign an accord with Sher Ali. The timing suggests that they were more anxious to have an European settlement before an Afghan crisis rather than their simultaneous occurrence. Further, Stoletov exceeded instructions by a margin that is incomprehensible, given his seniority and the sheer impossibility of Russia carrying out the promise of 30,000 men. Not even the pattern of men-on-the-spot seems to fit this case; only the theory of conspiracy in high places seems to make sense. Most of all, the mission was outrageously provocative and with highly predictable consequences. The Witkiewicz mission was a probe, to see how far the British would react. The governor-general then was the particularly unwarlike Hamlet, Auckland. Thereafter the British had clearly decided to defend India at the Oxus and not Iran, and had created modern Afghanistan for the purpose, including within it Herat. Gorchakov had twice accepted Afghanistan to be outside the Russian sphere of influence, in 1872–1873 and 1875–1876, leaving open only the question of whether it was independent or not. Now a Conservative government had come to power committed to showing the British flag in Kabul. The viceroy was a mediocre poet with the mind of a dockside bully and a dangerously wild imagination. He was supported at the foreign office by the clear-thinking and tough-minded Salisbury; but he was complemented at Downing Street by a novelist of second degree. The mission therefore does not make sense in the Eastern Question, but it does as a means of securing the British invasion of Afghanistan to justify a Russian advance, this time into Transcaspia. And that was indeed achieved.

The scales were tipped in favour of annexing Transcaspia as soon as the second Afghan war began. Shuvalov in London told Salisbury that Russia had no intention of taking Merv, but that Britain had violated the independent and neutral status of Afghanistan as agreed in 1875 between Gorchakov and Derby. When the treaty of Gandamak between Britain and Afghanistan in May 1879 finally abridged Afghan sovereignty by placing foreign policy in British hands, Salisbury was told that Russia no longer felt bound by assurances about Merv. On 28 and 29 August 1879, N.K. Giers inspired articles in the *Sankt-Peterburgskii Zhurnal* on complete freedom of action in the respective spheres of influence, especially of Russia with respect to Merv, which was interpreted as semi-official statements in despatches from

[268] Doktor I.L. Iavorskii, *Puteshestvie russkago posol'stva po Afganistanu i Bukhareskomu khanstvu v 1878–1879 gg.*, Spb, 1882, vol. 1, pp. 26, 30.

St Petersburg.[269] Among Russian policy planners, the decision on Transcaspia crystallised quickly. I.A. Zinov'ev, the Russian ambassador in Teheran, had opposed the move into Akhal-Teke in Transcaspia in September 1878 but warmly welcomed it in December.[270] Shuvalov was jubilant and proposed the move, using the ancient justification of making the British nervous about India. Gorchakov was fully supportive.[271] New funds were assigned; General Tergukasov was appointed to carry out the job, and in September 1879 it was actually implemented. The only snag was the utter Russian rout at Geok-Tepe at the hands of Turkmen tribesmen, reminiscent of the Khivan humiliation in 1839. But the die had been cast. A series of conferences in January and February 1880 decided on it once again. The arguments were all the familiar old ones, of the necessity to be able to threaten Britain when necessary, and that an appropriate response to the British establishment of Quetta and the invasion of Afghanistan was now necessary. Kizyl 'Arvat was the base chosen, and a railway there from Krasnovodsk was to be built. 1880 was spent in preparation. The railway was not to begin until the British general elections were over, and the strike was to be in 1881.[272] This was duly carried out, and in 1884 Merv became Russian. This was then rounded out by taking Kushk in 1885 and by the Pamir boundary delimitations with Britain in 1895. With that the Great Game was in effect over.

The conquest of Inner Asia was meant to have been a means of creating a negotiating position in the Eastern Question by being able to threaten India. Yet never once was a military or diplomatic move against India made during a confrontation over the Straits or in order to plan for one, as might have been done in 1857. No military move was ever made even otherwise. Only diplomatic provocations were employed, chiefly the missions to Kabul, and always in fact independent of a crisis in the Eastern Question. As a result, from the Indian side, the British were the beneficiaries of what appeared to have been a Russian fiasco each time. The British Indian empire relentlessly expanded behind the pretext of the threat from the north west, from Wellesley down to Lytton. At the same time, the Russian side lost more than it gained in the Eastern Question in the course of the nineteenth century. At the outset, in 1829, Russia enjoyed a protectorate over the Danubian principalities, and in 1833, at Unkiar-Iskelessi, she achieved a special relationship with Turkey. Both these were decisively lost as the Russian colonial career progressed so brilliantly. Small wonder that British strategists were only too keen to espouse the Russian argument that Russia was trying to create a means of threatening India during an Eastern crisis.

[269] Khidoiatov, *Iz istorii*, pp. 311–21.

[270] T.L. Morozova, 'K voprosu o prisoedinenii Akhaltekisnskogo Oazisa k tsarskoi Rossii', *Ist. Zap.*, no. 92, 1973, pp.153–74

[271] Khidoiatov, *Iz ist.*, p. 322; see also V.M. Khvostov, *Problemy istorii vneshnei politiki Rossii i mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii*, M., 1977, pp. 178–83.

[272] Khidoiatov, *Iz ist.*, pp. 340–44.

But Russian planners were not performing a vast confidence trick on themselves. The strategy of linking Inner Asia to the Eastern Question was, in fact, a necessary part of their strategy for the conquest of Inner Asia, not of their solution to the Eastern Question. Strategist themselves must compete to have their strategies accepted; and there was little interest in Russia for Inner Asia. It had to be created. This was done by arguing its value to the problem of the Straits. The Straits, on the other hand, had acquired a prime position in Russian strategic thinking. This was not due to any supposed threat from the Black Sea but the immense significance of her becoming a Mediterranean power. The Straits were then enveloped in the ideology of Russia as the inheritor of Byzantium, as the liberator of the Slavs, and as the naval gates to South Russia. They contained hard strategic-calculation combined with religious piety, romantic enthusiasm, and a radical mass frenzy of nationalist justification. This last was especially important to an autocracy seeking new bases of legitimacy in the post-reform years of the 1860s and 1870s.[273] The Straits carried an unanimous acceptability as none other could. It was the intellectual achievement of Russian strategic planners to have demonstrated that the conquest of Inner Asia would be of advantage in the Eastern Question. That was the basis of acceptance beyond the level of frontier skirmishing. Although no advantage was ever once derived and there was not the feeblest attempt to implement the strategy, even in the matter of timing, the conquest proceeded under this ideology.

This has led to a curious asymmetry in the historiography of the subject. While an important number of excellent authorities, Popov, Rozhkova, Kiniapina, Khidoiatov, and Khvostov have treated the Inner Asian expansion as a means of easing the position in the Eastern Question, not a single account of the Eastern Question casts so much as a passing glance in the direction of Central Asia. Kiniapina herself appears in both roles. In her account of the Central Asian advance, she adheres to the general thesis of its relation to the Straits; in her separate account of the Eastern crises, she does not breathe a word about Central Asia being a diversion, whether generally or at any one moment.[274] The single decisive diversion that she has noted was in 1863, but for the Polish insurrection.[275] The Academician Tarle has composed a thousand page work on the Crimean war, perhaps the most important in any language. It contains an extensive account of the diplomacy of the Eastern Question until then, but without a reference to the Central Asian situation. One of the many merits of the work is that it shows the war to have been more than a Crimean affair: Russia campaigned on the Danube and in the Caucasus also, and was attacked by the British in

[273] See D. Geyer, *Der russische Imperialismus, 1860–1914*, Göttingen, 1977, for an able discussion of this relation of domestic legitimation problems to external expansionism.

[274] Compare Kiniapina 'Srendiaia Aziia' pp. 36–51 with Kiniapina *et al* eds., *Vostochnyi 'opros*, M., 1978, *passim*.

[275] Kiniapina, *Vneshniaia politika Rossii vtoroi poloviny XIX v.*, M., 1974, p. 243.

the Baltic, Berents, and White Seas and on the Pacific. It has treated of military history in the greatest detail with numerous discussions on strategy. Yet the question of Central Asia never enters so vast, detailed, and comprehensive an investigation as this.[276] The *Istoriia Diplomatiia*, a major summing up of diplomatic history, again makes no reference to Central Asia in this context.[277] The Academician Narochnitskii, another important authority on especially Russian colonial diplomacy in the Far East, sees no such possible relation in his account of the Eastern Crisis of 1875–1878.[278] In the volume on the history of foreign policy edited by him, both the positions are presented, as by Kiniapina, of the Eastern Question as an independent pursuit, and the Central Asian drive as derived from the former.[279] More detailed monographs on the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–1878 do not touch upon Central Asia.[280] This only suggests all the more how far the structure of nineteenth century strategic thinking and its devices for acceptability has infected the modern historian.

The conquest of Inner Asia must be understood in itself, not as part fulfilment of some grand design. Such grand designs speak of some vital Russian interest which needed to be protected. But it cannot be stated too strongly that there are no such 'interests' whether for Russia or for any other state or society, or indeed even class, other than what the strategists themselves create. Such interests do not exist independently and are not discovered; they are created according to possibilities which strategists see and foresee. Central Asia was only as much of a necessity as the Straits themselves were. And the Straits, with the egress into the Mediterranean, were no more necessary than were the command of the Baltic and the Scandinavian and north German coastlines with the exit into the North Sea and the Atlantic. But it was possible to contemplate control of the Straits which was inconceivable in the case of the Baltic. This was due to the levels of development of the respective states in either case. The disproportion of resources between Russia and Turkey and the relative proportionality between Russia on the one hand and the Scandinavian and German states on the other determined such strategic choices. A similar disproportion permitted the choice in the case of Inner Asia. But these are all the products of the thinking of strategists and cannot and did not exist independently of them. This would apply as much to a question like the defence of the homeland from foreign invasion. It is a strategic option always open

[276] E.V. Tarle, *Krymskaia Voina*, 2 vols., *Sochineniia*, vol. 8 and 9, M., 1959.

[277] V.P. Potemkin, *et al.*, eds., *Istoriia Diplomatiia*, vol. 1, M., 1941.

[278] A.L. Narochnitskii, 'Balkanskii krizis 1875–1878 gg i velikie derzhavy', *Voprosy Istorii*, 1976, no. 11, pp. 32–52.

[279] A.L. Narochnitskii ed., *Itogi i zadachi izucheniia vneshnei politiki Rossii. Sovetskaia istoriografiia*, M., 1981, ch. 4.

[280] V.A. Zolotarev, *Rossiia i Turtsiia, Voina 1877–1878 gg.*, M., 1983, ch. 2; S.L. Chernov, 'Osnovnye etapy razvitiia russkoi offitsial'noi programmy resheniia vostochnogo voprosa v 1877–1878 gg' in G.L. Arsh ed., *Russko-Turetskaia voina 1877–1878 gg. i Balkany*, M., 1978, pp. 25–42.

to surrender and that option has been exercised innumerable times in history. It is equally a strategic choice to fight to the last man in any number of heroic battles of Thermopylae and Stalingrad. Neither of them are due to any imperious and independent cultural, dynastic, or national interest. For that reason, it is unnecessary to account for Inner Asia in terms of an interest which existed outside of itself, whether that lay in the Straits or in the defence of acquired positions, in the market for capitalism or in protection from nomadic slaving and robbery. When however such an interest has been so conceived in derivative terms, that itself was a means to devising the strategy of domination, not an explanation for that domination.

The Inner Asian choice was made by the Russians on the basis of possibilities which they could see but their Iranian and Chinese peers could not see in the early years of the nineteenth century. This was derived from the new resources mobilised by an industrialising Russia which instantly distinguished her from China and Iran. We have seen the difference they made in the conceptual and economic spheres. Its impact in the military confrontation was dramatic as may be guaged from just one measure: the conquest was achieved almost without casualties on the Russian side!

In 1864, Aulie-Ata, now Dzhambul, cost the Russians only three wounded, its defenders 307 dead and 390 wounded. Turkestan north of the Syr was worth just 5 dead. Chimkent had only 2 dead and 17 wounded against 7000 Kokandians. Tashkent was stormed with 25 dead and 89 wounded. In 1866, at Irdzhar, on the road to Samarkand, Romanovskii lost 11 men to the 1000 dead Bukharans and Kazakhs. At Khodzhent, in the campaign against Kokand, it was 5 to 2500 dead. At Ura Tiube, Kryzhanovskii's score was 17 to 2000; and at Dzizhak, it was 6 to 6000. The depressing catalogue continues into the 1870s to culminate in the final paroxysm of the Geok-Tepe massacre in 1880 by Skobelev. When the position was bombarded and invested, 8000 refugees, men, women, and children, streamed out into the steppe by the opposite exit, only to be systematically hunted down and butchered for eleven long miles. Indeed, in colonial times, the distinction between warfare and hunting was obliterated.

The basis of such infinite superiority was not technology but bureaucratic rationality. The modern army, which led the colonial conquests the world over, was a professional bureaucratic army whose strike arms were the infantry and artillery. These were sustained by a professional civilian bureaucracy which mobilised the financial resources, ensured supplies, provided medical support, maintained transport and communications, and ceaselessly gathered intelligence and information in general. Against them were ranged the 'heroic' armies based primarily on mobile cavalry, highly personal structures of command, unprofessional to the point of always appearing a rabble, and with almost no civilian bureaucratic sustenance which led to permanent snarls in supplies, finances, information, recruitment, medical help, etc. The principle of the professional army, wholly equipped and paid

out of the royal exchequer, was established in Europe in the fifteenth century and its supremacy demonstrated in Charles VIII's army for the invasion of Italy in 1494. This finally put an end to the heroism of the feudal levy and the unreliability of the mercenary army. This process was completed by 1700 with the state solely responsible for equipping, maintaining, and recruiting the armed forces.

These innovations were accompanied by discipline. It amounted to creating a single hierarchical structure which coordinated all aspects of the field of battle. Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange (1567–1625) and Captain-General of Holland and Zeeland, pioneered with drilling, so tediously familiar to us today, but a great novelty in the seventeenth century. He analysed, for example, all the forty-two moves required to fire the marchlock gun and gave each one a name and word of command, to which each recruit responded. The process thus became systematic and mechanical. Soldiers could not forget moves and the discharge was simultaneous, predictable, and devastating in effect. With this he regulated marching, especially keeping to step and the countermarch, which enabled one line to fire, then countermarch in orderly fashion for the next line to advance and fire, and so on with great rapidity and precision. The army thus became a single 'articulated organism with a central nervous system' in which personal courage gave way to efficiency. Drilling, with its own rhythmic regimental music had its own psychological and socialising effect which Maurice perhaps little realised. Powerful muscular movements in unison by large bodies of men in response to words of command and the beat of music created tight social bonds akin to the ritual tribal dance around the camp fire. Parade drill to martial music was just such a modern tribal dance. It created and recreated continually the regimental community which had to face fire and die together. This was especially important as the process of recruitment violently tore the recruit from his secure social bed and threw him into a mass of similarly alienated individuals. The army became the new community, properly isolated and insulated from the rest of society, and distinguished by its own strange tribal rituals. It created blind unthinking obedience, on the basis of real psychological satisfaction, to a remote, unseen general. Every commander was assured of instant obedience whatever his personal qualities; and he was instantly replaceable, as any moveable part in a machine. It thus overcame that perennial problem of the commander dying on the field of battle and throwing the army into confusion.[281]

The results were spectacular. Maurice's ideas spread very fast, especially to Sweden under Gustavus Adolphus, with famous results during the Thirty Years' War. These measures account for the extraordinary success of company armies and their capacity to intervene in local politics in the

[281] W.H. McNeill, *The Pursuit of Power. Technology, Armed Force, and Society since AD 1000*, Oxford, 1982, pp. 128–35; André Corvisier, *Armées et sociétés en Europe de 1494 à 1789*, Paris, 1976, pp. 140–41.

early years of colonial expansion. European sergeant-majors seemed to have some trick up their sleeve, as every modernising prince found to his delight. Russia participated in all these reforms. Maurice's book was translated as early as 1649. The infantry (*streltsy*) came to predominate over cavalry by then, as in the rest of Europe and unlike elsewhere in the world, especially Inner Asia. The state increasingly monopolised the recruitment, equipping and paying of troops from the seventeenth century, a process that coincides with the growth of Russian absolutism. The reforms of Peter and his successors carried these processes to the extremes of centralisation and the total isolation of a professional army from the rest of society. A recruit knew no life other than soldiering until old age or invalidity. Recruitment was something short of capital punishment and was treated as death by the family. It proceeded to the logical extreme of the attempt to 'breed' a separate class of soldiers in Arakcheev's notorious military colonies in the early nineteenth century. And the parade ground ballet attained its absurd climax when Nicholas I complained that he could see his soldiers breathe.[282] Such bureaucratic rationality, of both the armed forces and of the civilian support, accounts for the superiority of all colonial armies, including the Russian, however rotten the human material, corrupt the administration, and poor the generalship. Technology was a derived and subsidiary aspect of the organisational principle which permeated all institutions. This was the basis of Russian superiority in a strictly military and political sense. On this basis strategists saw the opportunity to create interests as far away as the Hindu Kush and the Tien Shan. Strategy was born of such an awareness.

As is evident from this presentation, the conquest was a three-pronged movement of the assertion of intellectual authority over the nomadic and Turkestani peoples, the laying of the foundation for a particular kind of economic dominion over them, and the outright military conquest. Much ink has been wasted to dispute the rival claims of each 'factor'. But as might be expected, nobody has achieved anything beyond quotation-mongering to prove a point. For this kind of conquest, of a precapitalist society by an industrial capitalism, the event is meaningful as three currents of the same flow, distinguishable only for the purposes of analyses, but not as a hierarchy of causes. Non-colonial expansions do not combine these three elements, nor in this manner. This conjunction is generally applicable to the European colonial expansions from the eighteenth century. But, the search for the causes and reasons of expansion has not taken the historian beyond the mental structure of the expansionists themselves, of the barbarism of the nomad and his ilk, of the need for markets, and of the insufferable effrontery of the British over the Straits for which they had to be taught a lesson in India. All this brought capitalism and progress and eventually even socialism, which good luck did not attend other colonial

[282] For excellent and vivid accounts, see Dietrich Beyrau, *Militär und Gesellschaft im vorrevolutionären Russland*, Köln, 1984, ch. 2.

subjects. The question why has thus given us answers only to the question how. Purportedly causal explanations are unwittingly excellent accounts of the manner in which the conquest proceeded without telling us why it should have happened at all. They create and recreate the ambience of the action and as such an aspect of the action itself; and the story of the conquest has become its own analysis. Perhaps it cannot be otherwise. There is no answer to the question why other than the banality that this was an aspect of the spread of industrial society in its first or capitalist phase when it sought to monopolise the benefits of industry by creating colonialism. A later phase, the socialist one, devised the strategy of achieving an industrial society by deliberately not confining it regionally. Hence the territorial congruence of the colonial empire and the Soviet Union. The industrial revolution is even more potent and transformative than the agricultural revolution, the other event in human history of nearest magnitude. In the face of such a process, it appears futile to ask why it should have spread or why its pioneers should have attempted to enjoy their momentary flight in the sun by restricting its even distribution. It is perhaps too obvious. It would be more instructive instead to observe how this monopoly was attempted, how optimism became orientalism, how capitalist development became underdevelopment, and how bureaucratic rationality became arbitrary corruption, and thus how industrialism became colonialism. That might then be a history of imperialism beyond the mere discourse of its own ecstasy.