

# The Russian Conquest of Inner Asia(1)

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The imperialism of tsarist Russia has been neglected in both the history of the Russian empire and in general theories of imperialism. In the history of Russia it has been trivialized as a posited essence of “the Russian tradition”, of a Russia in a state of endemic inflation since the sixteenth century, and as an instinctual, elemental, natural, *ergo* mindless process, akin to the “seasonal migration of birds”,(2) or to the revolution of the earth round the sun.(3) In theories of imperialism it has been ignored, perhaps owing to an axiomatic Russian backwardness which denied her the possibility and the luxury of a true colonial career, or because the expansion occurred overland in contrast to the European overseas; otherwise it has been forgotten because the Soviet Union is paradoxically both a socialist and a territorial legatee of the tsarist empire. However, there is little ground to justify such trivial neglect since it did in fact occur over a very large territory and for a longer time than for example German imperialism overseas. Most of all it is doubly interesting for being the only colonial empire that decolonized without political disintegration, that is, unity remained but development occurred, after the Revolution of 1917, instead of political independence and economic underdevelopment, as in the rest of the decolonized world.

The colonial expansion of Russia occurred in many phases and in many directions throughout the nineteenth century. The nomadic Kazakh steppe (roughly modern Kazakhstan) was subjugated between the 1820s and the 1850s; the sedentary Turkestan states of Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand (comprising modern Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kirgiziia) were invested in the 1860s and 1870s; and finally the Transcaspian desert (largely modern Turkmeristan) in the 1880s. In addition, between 1858 and 1860 Russia grabbed the eastern seaboard of Siberia beyond the Amur and the Ussuri from China in true colonial fashion. In the 1850s, after half a century of intermittent warfare, she consolidated her hold over Transcaucasia. After 1828, northern Iran effectively became a Russian sphere of influence and Iran herself passed into a state of near subordination to Russia. But these extraordinary successes were punctuated by significant withdrawals and humiliating reversals in other theatres. In 1867 she sold Alaska to the USA in the hope of making the latter challenge and hold off the British in North Pacific waters. With her defeat in the Crimean War in 1856, her semiprotectorate over the Rumanian provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia was dismantled. And, in the course of the nineteenth century, she lost her commanding position in Turkey, especially in regard to the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, established by the treaty of Unkiar-Iskelessi in 1833. She was compelled to share it with the Europeans, especially her most determined challenger, the British. Of all these changes we are now concerned only with the conquest of Inner Asia, that is, the Kazakh steppe and the Turkestan states of Central Asia, Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand.

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The usual explanations for this process may be classified into three clear categories. The first or the Orientalist version hold that these people were barbarians threatening Russian peace and law on the frontier and therefore in need of pacification and civilization. This is the standard textbook account still available in the relatively recent works of Khalfin in the Soviet Union, Geoffrey Wheeler in Britain, and Pierce in America.(4) The second is the economic interpretation, much favoured by Khalfin and most of Soviet historiography but ultimately rejected by the single Soviet historian with the most thorough grasp of the economic statistics and commercial archives of the period, M.K. Rozhkova(5). In this version, a rapidly developing Russian capitalism was in search of necessary overseas markets which existed in Turkestan. The third or the political is the most famous or notorious, the cold war of the nineteenth century, an Anglo-Russian rivalry described with typical colonial light-heartedness as the Great Game in Asia. According to this, the Russian expansion was a pre-emptive move against the British inexorably reaching out into Central Asia from India and threatening to approach Russian interests; simultaneously it was an offensive against British positions on the approaches to India as a diversion from the British menace in the Eastern Question (the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles). All Soviet and western historiography of the political aspect revolve around these issues. All three types of explanation are wholly derived from and usually congruent with colonial arguments of the nineteenth century as advanced by the players of the game then. It is significant that the discussion has moved forward so little from such ancient polemic. For reasons of space, we will touch upon only the first two here, the Orientalist and economic presentations(6).

In the Orientalist account, Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Kirghiz and other tribes were accused of raiding Russian settlements on the frontier, plundering Russian caravans in the steppe, and trading in Russian slaves seized from Siberia and Caspian waters; and they would never respect international law or treaty obligations. The reasons for such wickedness lay in their cultural decay, intellectual stagnation, religious fanaticism, technological primitiveness, moral dissoluteness, and political amorphousness(7). Russia therefore, in order to protect her subjects from slavery, her frontiers from raids, and her 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, presumably those of her collaborating rival, the British empire in India(8). It is Orientalist in that it is derived from or an aspect of the stereotype created by Orientalist scholarship about the Orient or the non-western world, or, more precisely, the world that had not yet attained the threshold to industrialization(9). Let us therefore examine the problems of slavery and brigandage.

The Russians complained that Kazakh and Turkemen tribesmen seized Russian peasants and fishermen from Siberia and the Caspian and sold them off into slavery in Bukhara and Khiva. The figures are usually wild guesses; but Murav'ev claimed 3000 Russian slaves in Khiva in 1819 while Meiendorf opted for just 600 of them in Bukhara, and Conolly, the English officer, settled for around 300 only(10). The Englishman seems to have been nearest the correct figure, even if his motive was only anti-Russian propaganda; for, when *all* Russian slaves were eventually released by Khiva in 1840, there were only 416(11). The slaves were more Iranian than Russian, even if the figure of 30,000 for Iranian slaves, as given by all of them, seems a shot in the dark.

But it would be more instructive to see what was meant by slaves. The diplomatic correspondence of the time refers almost exclusively to *military captives* and *prisoners*; publicist literature preferred *slaves*. It is known for example that Russians were highly valued in these parts as gunsmiths and metalsmiths, and as military instructors; Conolly records that as many as 7000 Russians were employed in the Iranian army; and Popov informs us that an entire battalion of Russian and Polish deserters under one Samson Khan participated in the siege of Herat in 1838 and was then amnestied and withdrawn to the Caucasus(12). Thus it is only too likely that a certain number of Russians had found jobs in Khiva and Bukhara in this manner. Moreover, a large number of Russian prisoners had been seized in 1824 from the Tsiolkovski mission which had set out with 1777 camels and much equipment to assist Bukhara in a war with Khiva. These were the prisoners restored in 1840. And, since frontier conflicts between Russia and Khiva were routine, prisoners were equally routinely taken by both sides. These have then been passed off as slaves by Russia. It is not surprising therefore that Russia denounced only Khiva of slavery whereas Bukhara, the Russian ally, was in fact the chief slave market and the more prosperous.

Although this might appear banal, the Russian horror at Khivan slaving had little to do with human rights. Russia licensed the brisk slave trade between the Caucasian mountains and the Istanbul slave market, levied an export toll, shipped the slaves under Russian passport, and finally made slaving a privilege

of submission to Russia(13). Likewise, until its legal abolition in 1822, Kazakh destitutes regularly sold themselves and their families into Siberian slavery, an un-Christian practice that charitable Russians reluctantly accepted for the benefit of starving Kazakh children. But charity proved more potent than the law; and the practice continued into the latter half of the nineteenth century at least(14). But more, Russian farmers in Siberia would hire agricultural labour from the internal provinces of Russia for summer seasonal work, arrange for their seizure by Kazakh tribesmen, and thus secure both the price of the slave and the free labour. This went on until at least 1840, according to Terent'ev, just as Russia was invading Khiva to suppress slavery(15). Finally Russia was renowned for having retained serfdom until 1861; and Russian serfdom was very like slavery, with the open sale and purchase of human beings, despite innumerable legal prohibitions(16).

The reason for selecting slavery as the weapon for the propaganda offensive against Khiva is not difficult to find. Slave emancipation was then a live issue in Europe, enlivened by the horrors of American slavery, the African slave trade, and Christian martyrdom in Roman antiquity. In England, it was the single most important issue for mass mobilization before Chartism in the 1840s. The mass signature campaigns of 1814, 1823, 1830, and 1833, to list the peaks of mobilization, attained the levels of those for parliamentary reform, Catholic emancipation, Chartism, and against the Corn laws. It even mobilized women as never before; and in 1833, a petition of 187,000 "ladies of England – a huge feathered bed of a petition" was hauled into Parliament by four sturdy members(17). And, since Britain was Russia's competitor in Inner Asia, British public opinion was an important target. The strategy was successful enough for British planners in India to admit their helplessness; hence the somewhat desperate British humanitarianism in negotiating the release of Russian captives in 1840(18). Finally, it is worth noting that the problem vanished by 1840; yet the conquest occurred in the 1860s, setting the seizure of Tashkent in 1865 as a date.

The other Russian charge against Kazakhs and Uzbeks was brigandage. Once again, like slavery, this was a disguise for international tensions. First, they could be guerilla wars by the Kazakh tribes as Russia advanced into the steppe. The most important of these were led by Srym Batyr of the Little Horde between 1783 and 1795, by Kaip-Galii Ishimov, again of the Little Horde in 1824–1836, by Isatai Taimanov and Makhambet Utemisov of the Little Horde in 1836–1838, by Sultan Kenesary Qasim-uli of the Middle Horde in 1836–1845, and the last by Iset Kutebar-uli of the Middle Horde in the 1850s. As Russian forces advanced, constructed forts, and attacked in the steppe, these Kazakh tribesmen made their desperate last stands, going down one by one in history as brigands while Russians wrote their history(19).

Second, they were wars and frontier skirmishes between Russia and Khiva. Khiva, like Russia, was expanding at the expense of the nomadic tribes; and she moved northward beyond the Syr and northwestward to the Caspian and the Emba, meeting Russian advance posts everywhere. Each fully instigated or used the Kazakh tribes against the other. This was especially so when Russian intelligence or military missions entered territories claimed by Khiva.

Third, and very frequent, was the Russian entry on one side during an international war between Turkestanian states, usually on the side of Bukhara against Khiva. Russian forces or missions were then naturally attacked by Khiva. Thus in 1803, the Gaverdovskii mission to Bukhara was plundered; and in 1824, Colonel Tsiolkovskii's ostentatious military caravan to Bukhara met a similar fate. Between 1816 and 1823, trade in the steppe was disrupted because of war between Khiva and Sultan Arungazy Abdulgaziev. Between 1822 and 1824, owing to similar strife, there were no caravans from Orenburg to Bukhara, and, such as did set out, were attacked by tribesmen.

Fourth, caravans were trapped if they sought to evade customs duties, which merchants and an interested Russian government instantly described as robbery. Russians disputed Khivan claims to sovereignty in the steppe by trying to evade duties or to change routes; but, as long as Khiva was in a position to enforce its claims, it had to suffer the odium of such abuse from Russia also. It is interesting that all this should be so despite duties being minimal, a mere 1.5% in effect as Pavel Nebol'sin recorded in the 1850s, and that there was complete security in the steppe after 1840(20).

As opposed to all this, the victims of such conflicts were the nomads and Turkestanians, not the Russians. This is only to be expected, given the disproportion of resources. All encounters took place in the steppe, never in Russia; Russian punitive expeditions were horrific even by Russian admission; Russia had the advantage of being able to promote inter-tribal rivalries and massacres, as in the 1750s between the Bashkirs and the Kazakhs; and Russia could arrest trade to her advantage and to Khivan disadvantage, as when 572 Khivan merchants were all imprisoned in Russia in 1836 and released only in 1840 in exchange for Russian prisoners.

Indeed Khiva earned such Russian hostility precisely because she was a putative modern state, not the primitive brigand depicted by colonial historiography. Khiva and Kokand, like Russia, were sedentary states expanding at the expense of their nomadic neighbours. Like the Russians, Muhammad Rahim Khan of Khiva (1806–1825), the Russian *bête noire*, built fortresses in the steppe as at Chirkaily, Kandzhabai, and Aidos–kala to cow the nomads and control caravan routes; like them he appointed khans of the Kazakhs, meddled in their politics, and inflamed inter-tribal conflicts. In Kokand, a series of able khans in the first half of the nineteenth century similarly unified Ferghana, annexed Tashkent and Chimkent, moved up along the Syr and then into the Ili valley and Semirech'e, colonizing and controlling the Kazakh and Kirgiz steppe, constructing forts, and creating vassals. These forts were merchandise depots, the first nuclei of sedentary Uzbeks in nomadic territory, and centres of agriculture and horticulture and the dissemination of new technology, commerce, indebtedness, and Islam. Khiva and Kokand were thus emulating Russia, hence the vitriolic abuse hurled at them. In typical responses to the threat and promise of European modernity, they modernized their armies and fiscal systems, established personal autocracies and where possible bureaucracies against feudal challengers, and sought to import technology as best they could. They were the cousins of Tipu Sultan of Mysore, the later Marathas, and finally the Sikhs, all of whom had so effectively resisted the British in India: their other counterparts were Muhammad Ali of Egypt, and more distantly, Abbas Mirza of Iran and Selim III of Turkey. In the Eurasian steppe world the first of them was Sahin Girey of the Crimea in the 1770s and the last of them was Yakub Khan of Kashgar (1864–1877). As dynamic reformers they challenged Russia most seriously; and their international conflicts with Russia were universally and successfully described in both colonial and modern historiography as slavery and brigandage. And that depiction carried the imprimatur of Orientalist scholarly authority which had discovered or created the stereotype known as the oriental.

The economic interpretation of the Russian conquest pursues a similar logic of necessity. It may be summed up in the two theories of 1) Asia as a compensation and substitute of the Russian exclusion from Europe, and 2) the compelling need for a foreign market for Russian capitalism. As usual both arguments date from the early nineteenth century when the expansion began.

The theory of Asia as a substitute for the lost European market derived from Russia's decline in Europe with the English industrial revolution. Russia was the leading iron producer in the eighteenth century and exported heavily to Europe. The other two staples were naval stores, especially to England, and linen. All these ran into crises in the early nineteenth century but for different reasons and with different consequences. English revolutions in the technology of iron-smelting based on coking coal made their product cheaper and superior to the Russian iron smelted with wood coal in the Urals. The Urals iron industry suffered a serious slump from 1800 to 1830 after which it revived. The recovery was based however not on a Central Asian export market but on the expansion of Russian domestic demand, itself derived from the first steps at industrial development in Russia(21). As for naval stores, it lost its markets with another technological revolution, that of steamship navigation replacing sailing ships. Obviously, Asia was not and never could be a substitute for this loss. Finally, linen lost to cotton the world over and did not find an Asian substitute at all. The exports to Asia were cloth to China and cotton to Central Asia. Cloth was a traditional Russian product, but without a European market, only a domestic market, chiefly the State ordering for the army. That now expanded with mechanization and found an additional market in China. Cotton on the other hand was an entirely new product, the result of the industrial revolution in England, never exported to Europe from Russia, but now increasingly exported to Inner Asia. In no way then was Asia a substitute for European markets. Moreover, the vociferous outcry against the loss of markets did not begin when they were actually lost at the turn of the century but in the 1820s when the new cotton industry emerged, exported to Asia, and began to face periodic capitalist crises. Nor was the protest voiced by the losers, the Ural iron magnates, the naval stores interest, or linen producers, but by the cotton lobby in Moscow. The losers went down silently, but the winners complained noisily about losses they had not sustained historically. The loss of a European market and the rise of an Asian one did not denote a shift from the one to the other, instead only the decline of Russia's precapitalist industry and the rise of a capitalist industry. But it suited merchants to use the argument to press bureaucrats for a more active policy of conquest in Asia; bureaucrats were happy to find an elegant argument to recover lost Russian greatness; and generals on the frontier turned economists very fast in the hope of making their careers cheaply.

The other is the theory of the poverty of the Russian domestic market necessitating a foreign market. This was energetically advocated by expansionist lobbies; but it is still upheld by much Soviet

historiography. This is curious since it reads as a theory of underconsumption, so favoured by the Narodniks at the end of the nineteenth century and mercilessly demolished by Lenin then. Soviet historians, as Leninists, cannot be Narodnik underconsumptionists. They cannot therefore be suggesting the underconsumptionist contradiction within capitalism; instead they might be, and indeed must be, proposing the feudal and backward environment which hindered capitalism in Russia. If that is so, and it cannot be any other, then they seem to be suggesting no more than the banality that capitalism must emerge from within feudalism and must overcome it. But that does not necessitate a foreign market as a compensation. Indeed, it would mean that had Russian feudalism been feeblener and capitalism more vigorous, Russia would not have needed foreign markets and might not have launched on her colonial career. That would indeed be absurd. On the other hand, were it said that capitalist development now gave Russia the capacity and opportunity to penetrate a pre-capitalist colonial market rather than imposing on her the necessity, the argument might have been more sound and acceptable.

The penetration of the Inner Asian market and the transformation of the commercial relations between Inner Asia and Russia must now be examined. It is important to note that by the time of the conquest of Central Asia in the 1860s, a recognizably colonial trading relationship had emerged. Turkestan or the Central Asian states, who used to export mainly cotton goods to Russia, had become, by the 1860s, a supplier of raw cotton and importer of cotton goods. This occurred independently of the military conquest itself, and essentially before it. It would appear that in Russia they were largely unaware of the degree and importance of the change while noting only the fact of the conquest itself in the 1860s. And those who did argue the economic importance of Turkestan to Russia, as a justification for the conquest, seek to show the growing market, which cannot be adequately demonstrated, and ignore the change in the relationship, which can in fact be amply documented. That mistake, or misleading emphasis, is current among historians today. The change in the trading relationship, not the statistical growth of a market, exposes the Russian interest and strength in the area. That will now be shown.

Several apparent paradoxes appear from the outset. First, Asia was insignificant in Russia's foreign trade. Between 1802 and 1867, it grew from 5% to 10% of total Russian foreign commerce. The growth was absolute but relatively insignificant, with Europe being by far the greatest trading partner. This does not mean that it was irrelevant or unimportant to industry, as too often imagined. It is the fact of growth, not merely its volume, which matters in this case, for, in international trade, that with less developed areas like colonies must always be less than that with the more developed like Europe. Russian foreign trade was no exception to this general pattern. However, more significant to our purpose, Russia's export of manufactures to Asia as a percentage of total exports to Asia, steadily grew in this period, while Russian import of manufactures from Asia as a percentage of total imports from Asia slowly declined. This suggests a growing Russian strength in the relationship, whatever the volume. Equally interestingly, and in parenthesis, Russian exports move steadily while Turkestan exports fluctuate violently annually. Russia was clearly in control of its circumstances; Turkestan was the victim of numerous contingencies.

The second paradox is the Russian weakness in the single region of its military might, Transcaucasia. It was fully incorporated into the empire between the 1780s and the 1820s; yet she failed to make it into a Russian export market. Until the 1820s, planners in St Petersburg did not think beyond stimulating east-west trade through the region, without necessary preferences for Russian goods, but in the hope of Russia emerging as the profit-making carrier for such trade. The Moscow textile lobby and Kankrin, the finance minister, wanted to convert it into a protected area for Russian exports through high tariffs; but other like Nessel'rode, the foreign minister, and Ermolov, the commander-in-chief of the Caucasus, anxious to appease the local population and fight off insurgency, demanded free trade through the region. The result was a compromise in the 1831 tariff of a 5% import duty on foreign goods, which benefited Russian industry little or not at all. The importance of the region as a market for Russian goods plummeted sharply even as the Russian was consolidated. (Table 1).

Similarly Russia failed in her other area of military superiority, northern Iran. After the treaty of Turkmanchai in 1828, Russian hegemony in northern Iran was acknowledged by the British, the Caspian became a Russian lake, and Iran was effectively a subordinate Russian ally. Kankrin hoped to turn the situation to commercial advantage, urged the merchants of Astrakhan to penetrate Iran, and made heroic efforts to construct a merchant fleet at Astrakhan. But it all came to nought, and British textiles reigned supreme in Tabriz, with British contraband freely entering Transcaucasia.

Third, Russia's greatest Asian export boom in mid-century was in the one region that was neither subject militarily like Transcaucasia, nor to become a colony, like Turkestan, the Chinese empire (see

**Table 1. Russian manufactures exports as percentage of manufactures to Asia. Annual averages**

<i>Years</i>	<i>Iran &amp; Turkey</i>	<i>Inner Asia</i>	<i>China</i>
1825-1829	46.5	40.0	13.1
1845-1850	4.9	24.6	70.5

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

table 1). China was a traditional importer of Russian cloth; now she took cotton also; and she was the most important trading partner in Asia until the rise of Turkestan after 1860. If Russia had a statistically growing market interest, it was in China; if Russia was militarily supreme, it was in Transcaucasia and Iran; yet the colonial relationship developed in Inner Asia (Kazakhstan and Turkestan) even as it was declining statistically as a market. (table 1)

There is perhaps one final statistical paradox worth noting. Within Inner Asia, Kazakhstan, not Turkestan, was the trading partner of importance until the reversal of the situation circa 1860 (tables 2 and 3).

**Table 2. Russian exports as a percentage of total to Inner Asia. Annual averages**

<i>Years</i>	<i>To Kazakhstan</i>	<i>To Turkestan</i>
1833-1835	60.0	39.9
1851-1855	68.6	31.4
1856-1860	65.7	34.3
1861-1865	37.8	62.2

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

**Table 3. Russian cotton goods exports to Kazakhstan as a percentage of total manufactures exports to Inner Asia. Annual averages**

1833-1835	68.5
1846-1850	66.8
1851-1855	67.2
1856-1857	73.8

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

Interestingly, Kazakhstan was more important even in that single commodity, cotton goods. From all such statistics it might appear that Turkestan was an area of steadily declining commercial importance to Russia just before the conquest. At any rate, it suggests that military superiority was no guarantee of commercial success.

Let us now examine the details of the penetration. It appeared that Kazakhstan was more important than Turkestan. However, the Turkestani producers had as their market the whole of Inner Asia as well as the Russian Siberian frontier and the Chinese Inner Asian frontier. Consequently, this entire region should be treated as a single unity, not broken up as Kazakhstan and Turkestan. In which case there would be nothing surprising about Russia penetrating first Kazakhstan and then Turkestan: it was all an incremental entry into the same market, the single one of Inner Asia commanded by Turkestan.

This is clearer from a correlation analysis of the Russian cotton trade with Inner Asia, (table 4).

**Table 4. Correlation between Russian import of Turkestani raw cotton and Russian exports of cotton goods to Turkestan and Kazakhstan, R<sup>2</sup>**

<i>Years</i>	<i>Turkestan</i>	<i>Kazakhstan</i>
1833-1867	0.7114	
1833-1853	0.0634	
1854-1867	0.6022	
1833-1857	0.1167	0.401

Russia was now importing Turkestani raw cotton and exporting the finished product to Kazakhstan and Turkestan. The high correlation for Turkestan alone for the whole period 1833–1867 suggests the use of Turkestani raw cotton for the finished cotton goods being exported during this period. However, the differences in the two sub-periods are significant. For 1833–1853 that correlation is low, but for 1854–1867 it is once again high. This suggests that Turkestani raw cotton was being used for export of cotton goods to Turkestan only from 1854; before that date it was evidently being used for another market. The final figures of the correlation shows us which market in fact: Kazakhstan. For the period 1833–1857, the correlation is low for Turkestan but high for Kazakhstan. In other words, for this first period, Turkestani raw cotton was used for cotton goods exports to Kazakhstan. In Kazakhstan then, Russian cotton goods displaced Turkestani cotton goods until the years 1854–1857, and then moved on to do the same in Turkestan itself. Therefore, if the whole of Inner Asia be treated as a single market belonging to Turkestan, the growth of Kazakhstan and the decline of Turkestan (table 3) would appear as the growth of the Turkestani market in fact for Russia. Russian colonial propaganda therefore was not too far off the mark when they proclaimed the growing importance of Turkestan to Russia although until 1860 China was the more significant partner than Inner Asia. Nevertheless, Turkestan was growing in importance in a way that China was not, viz., in the internal nature of the relationship itself. China was only a market; but Turkestan was the supplier of the very raw material which was then finished in Russia for export to Turkestan.

Now let us examine the other aspect of the relationship: Turkestan moving from export of cotton goods to the export of raw cotton to Russia. In the cotton goods trade with Turkestan, Russia became a net exporter only in 1859; until then she imported more cotton goods from Turkestan than she exported.

**Table 5. Turkestan cotton exports to Russia; thousands of silver roubles. Annual averages**

<i>Years</i>	<i>Raw cotton</i>	<i>Cotton goods</i>
1833-1852	114	600
1853-1861	590	657
1862-1867	4,058	478

Sources: Rozhkova, *Ekon. Pol.*, table 49, p. 191. *Ekon. Sviazi*, table 9, p. 54, table 22, p. 69.

In three clear phases (table 5) then, Turkestan shifts from being a cotton goods to a raw cotton supplier for Russia. Until the Crimean War 1853–1856, cotton goods prevailed. The war blocked Egyptian and Indian raw cotton supplies through the Black Sea, so Russia turned to Turkestani raw cotton instead, poor in quality though it was. The Crimean War ended in 1856 but raw cotton did not return to the earlier level, although cotton goods did not rise appreciably. But with the American civil war in 1861, world raw cotton prices rose intolerably, and once again Russian industry turned to Turkestan. The civil war ended in 1864 but the Turkestani raw cotton export to Russia remained high, and the cotton goods figures slowly declined. In these three phases, punctuated by two international crises, Turkestan descended into Russia's cotton colony. Yet none of this was due to Russian military might or to any measures of Russian economic interference in Turkestan.

Thus two sets of relations have been presented to show the shift in relation between Russia and Turkestan. The first was how Russia used Turkestani raw cotton to penetrate the Turkestani Inner Asian market; the second was how Turkestan declined into a principally raw cotton supplier from its earlier and healthier status as a cotton goods supplier. It is these relations which show the importance of this

market to Russia, not its actual statistical position in Russian trade turnovers, global or Asian. It was not due to any superior military might which was far greater in the Caucasus, nor even political strength, which was perhaps greater in Iran. Nor was the military conquest which followed in the 1860s necessary, for this process which had already been completed in fact. The conquest was an aspect of Russian superiority, not the cause or the consequence of the economic penetration. Russia established herself here because she had the opportunity in the circumstances and the productive capacity to do so. The sustained argument of compelling necessity to do so was itself a part of that process, for historical actors must present their actions as necessary lest it appear immorally opportunistic. But these should be no justification for the modern historian to repeat that ancient polemic, save as a justification for the act itself.

## Notes

- (1) Revised version of lecture delivered to the Economics Society of the Institute of Catalan Studies, Barcelona, 3 July 1989. I am most grateful to Professor Joaquim Muns the President, and Josep Vergés, the Secretary, for having so kindly invited me and given me this opportunity to address this Society.
- (2) Cited in R. Wittram, 'Das russische Imperium und sein Gestaltwandel', *Historische Zeitschrift*, no. 187, 1959, pp 583–584.
- (3) George N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia in 1889 and the Anglo-Russian Question*, London 1889, p. 319.
- (4) N. A. Khalfin, *Rossia ig khanstva (pervaia polovina XIX veka)*, Moscow 1974, pp 16, 24, 41–45ff; see also his *Politika Rossii v Srednei Azii (1857–1868)*, Moscow 1960, pp 20–27; Geoffrey Wheeler, *The Modern History of Central Asia*, London 1964, p. 64; Richard A. Pierce, *Russian Central Asia, 1867–1917. A Study in Colonial Rule*, Univ of California Press 1960, pp 17–18.
- (5) M.K. Rozhkova, *Ekonomicheskie Sviasi Rossii so Srednei Azii, 40–60e gody XIX veka*, Moscow 1963, pp 123–124. and *idem*, *Ekonomicheskaia Politika tsarskogo Pravitel' stva na srednem vostoke vo vtoroi chetverti XIX veka i russkaia burzhuaziia*, Moscow–Leningrad 1950, pp 174–176.
- (6) For a more detailed discussion of all these aspects see Madhavan K. Palat, 'Tsarist Russian Imperialism', *Studies in History*, vol. 4, no. 1–2, 1988, Sage Publications, New Delhi, pp 157–297.
- (7) The list is necessarily large, but see for example, Alexis de Levchine [Levshin], *Description des Hordes et Steppes des Kirghiz–Kazaks ou Kirghiz–Kaisaks*, trans. from the Russian by Ferry de Pigny, Paris 1840, (original Russian edn 1832); [N.V.] Khanikoff, *Bokhara: Its Amir and its People*, trans. from the Russian by Baron Clement A. De Rode, London 1845; M. N. Mouraviev [Murav'ev], *Voyage en Turcomanie et à Khiva fait en 1819 et 1820*, trans. from the Russian by M. G. Leconte de Laveau, Paris 1823; Baron Georges de Meyendorff [Meiendorf], *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.
- (8) Best stated in the circular Note to the powers by A. M. Gorchakov, the foreign minister, in 1864, cited in Firuz Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864–1914 A Study in Imperialism*, New Haven 1968, p.8.
- (9) See Anouar Abdel-Malek, 'L'Orientalisme en crise', in his *La Dialectique Sociale*, Paris 1972, pp 79–113; and Edward Said, *Orientalism*, London 1978.
- (10) Mouraviev, *op. cit.*, pp 355–356; Meyendorff, *op. cit.*, p. 285; Arthur Conolly, *Journey to the North of India Overland from England through Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan*, 2nd edn, vol. 1, London 1838, pp 148–149.
- (11) Khalfin, *Rossia i khanstva*, p. 253; M. A. Terent'ev, *Istoriia Zavoevaniia Srednei Azii*, vol 1, St Petersburg, 1906, p. 175.
- (12) Khalfin, *Rossia i Khanstva*, p. 25; Mouraviev, *op. cit.*, pp 355–356; M. P. Viatkin, *Srym Batyr*, Moscow–Leningrad, 1947, pp 134–135; N. G. Apollova, *Ekonomicheskie i politicheskie sviasi Kazakhstana s Rossii v XVIII–nachale XIX v.*, Moscow 1960, p. 82; Conolly, *op. cit.*, vol 1, p. 214; A. K. Popov, 'Bor'ba za sredneaziatskii platsdarm', *Isticheskie Zapiski*, no. 7, 1940, pp 205–206.
- (13) J. Hoffmann 'Das Probleme einer Seeblokade Kaukasiens nach 1856', *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischer Geschichte*, vol 11, 1966, pp 163–164; Ehud R. Toledano, *The Ottoman Slave Trade and its Suppression: 1840–1890*, Princeton 1982 pp. 115–123, 138–151.
- (14) S. S. Shaskov, *Isticheskie Etiudy*, vol. 2, St. Petersburg, 1872, pp 105–126, 152–164; M. Raeff, *Siberia and the Reform of 1822*, Seattle 1956, pp 13–14, 64.
- (15) Terent'ev, *op. cit.*, pp 175.
- (16) J. Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, Atheneum, New York, 1964, pp 422–428.
- (17) 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 chapter 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.
- (18) M. E. Yapp, *Strategies of British India. Britain, Iran, and Afghanistan, 1798–1850*, Oxford 1980, pp 392–414.
- (19) Viatkin, *op. cit.*, Levchine, *op. cit.* pp 231–235; Shashkov, *op. cit.*, vol 2, pp 128–129; E. Allworth ed. *Central Asia, A Century of Russian Rule*, New York 1967, p. 11.
- (20) Pavel Nebol'sin, 'Vvedenie', pp 29–30 and 'Sledovanie', pp 9–12, in *Ocherki Torgovli Rossii s Stranami Sreinei Azii, Khivoi, Bukharoi, i Kokanom (so storony Orenburgskoi linnii)*, St. Petersburg 1859. See also his 'Poriodok Ochishcheniia' in *Ibid.*, pp 1–2.
- (21) S. G. Strumilin, *Istoriia chernoii metallurgii v SSSR*, vol 1, *Feodal'nya period, 1500–1800* gg, M. 1954, pp 374, 368.