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Shelter for the Afflicted: Migration from Xinjiang to Russia in the 1860s–1880s

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Abstract: The authors examine the history of the migration of Chinese subjects from the territory of Xinjiang in the 1860s–1880s and measures taken by the Russian administration aimed at adapting them to the new socio-political and economic conditions. On the basis of the research, the waves and scales of migration are established and their reasons are named. The study of the sources is implemented using the formal legal method, the comparative legal method, the methods of analysis and synthesis of written sources, as well as induction. The application of these methods made it possible to formulate a general conclusion concerning the policy of the Russian Empire in relation to the non-Russian population of the region, including Chinese immigrants. The study of the documents related to the migration of the Xinjiang population to the territory of Russian possessions in Central Asia convinces us that the authorities of the Russian Empire were interested in this process. They sought to find a place for new subjects in the socio-economic communities of the indigenous population of the Turkestan territories. At the same time, the Russian authorities applied to the Chinese settlers the norms characteristic of both nomadic and settled residents. Their goal was to bring the status of former Chinese subjects closer to the status of the main population of the state. The Russian government sought to complete this adaptation through the merger of the former Qing subjects with the population of the internal provinces of the Russian Empire.

Keywords: Semirechensk region, Dzharkent, Kalmyks, Qing Empire, Uyghur-Dungan uprising, Petersburg Treaty of 1881, Kulja, Uyghurs, Dungans, Sibo, Solons, Manchus


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Приют для страждущих: миграция из Синьцзяна в Россию в 1860–1880-х гг.

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Аннотация: Рассматривается история миграции китайских подданных с территории Синьцзяна в 1860–1880-х гг. и мероприятия российской администрации, направленные на их адаптацию к новым социально-политическим и экономическим условиям. На основе предпринятого историографического исследования установлены волны и масштабы миграции, названы их причины. Научную новизну имеет исследование таких источников, как российская делопроизводственная и служебная документация, законопроекты и действовавшее региональное законодательство. Их изучение осуществлено с привлечением формально-юридического, сравнительно-правового методов; методов анализа и синтеза пись-

менных источников, а также индукции, которые позволили сформулировать общее заключение о политике Российской империи в отношении нерусского населения региона, частью которого были китайские иммигранты. Проведенное исследование документов, связанных с миграцией синьцзянского населения на территорию российских владений в Центральной Азии, убеждает в том, что власти Российской империи были заинтересованы в этом процессе. Они стремились найти новым подданным место как в физическом смысле, так и среди сформировавшихся социально-экономических общностей коренного населения своих туркестанских областей. При этом имперское правительство, вслед за региональными властями, в интересах адаптации китайских иммигрантов применяла в отношении них нормы, свойственные как кочевым, так и оседлым жителям, преследуя цель сближение их статуса с положением основного податного населения государства. Иными словами, власть, как и в отношении коренных жителей степных и туркестанских областей, стремилось завершить эту адаптацию органическим слиянием бывших цинских подданных с подданными внутренних губерний Российской империи.

Ключевые слова: Семиреченская область, Джаркент, Кульджа, империя Цин, калмыки, уйгуро-дунганское восстание, Петербургский договор 1881 г., сибо, солоны, маньчжуры

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Introduction

In modern domestic historiography there are a lot of works covering various issues of interaction between the Russian Empire and the population of Central Asia subject to it. It is known that this interaction had a systemic character and was aimed at integrating the so-called national outskirts into a single heterogeneous space of the empire, towards the prospect for its socio-political homogenization. At the same time, the issues of cross-border migrations are considered, as a rule, in the context of international relations, and the policy of the Russian state towards the non-indigenous population is overlooked by researchers.

The article is aimed at eliminating this gap. It proposes to evaluate migration processes not from the point of view of state security or the possibility of political pressure on a neighbor, but from the standpoint of the state's choice of a strategy for dealing with the non-indigenous population.

Among the works related to Russian-Chinese relations of the second half of the 19th century on the subject of border migration caused by the Muslim uprising in Xinjiang, one should note the monograph by V.A. Moiseev¹ which summarizes significant factual and statistical material and which, one might say, represents a full study of the foreign policy aspects of Russian-Chinese relations. Special studies on the history of Xinjiang of the period under consideration were conducted by D.V. Dubrovskaya,² as well as by Soviet researchers from Central Asia E.M. Mamedova³ and G.B. Nikol'skaya.⁴

Among the first migrants who left Chinese possessions in the 1860s, there were predominantly the Kalmyks who had moved from the Kalmyk Khanate to the territory of the former Dzungaria almost a century before. Various aspects of this history have been

¹ V.A. Moiseev, *Rossii i Kitai v Tsentral'noi Azii: (Vtoraia polovina XIX v. – 1917 g.)*. [Russia and China in Central Asia: (Second half of the 19th century – 1917)] (Barnaul: AzBuka Publ., 2003).

² D.V. Dubrovskaya, *Sud'ba Sin'tsziana: Obretnenie Kitaem 'Novoi granitsy' v kontse XIX v.* [The fate of Xinjiang: China's acquisition of the 'New Frontier' at the end of the 19th century] (Moscow: IV RAN Publ., 1998); D.V. Dubrovskaya, "Iliiskii krizis v rusско-kitaiskikh otnosheniyakh [Ili crisis in Russian-Chinese relations]," *Vostok*, no. 5 (1994): 51–63.

³ E.M. Mamedova, "Iz istorii vzaimootnoshenii narodov Turkestanskogo kraia i Sin'tszyana: so vtoroi poloviny XIX veka do 1917 g. [From the history of relations between the peoples of the Turkestan region and Xinjiang: from the second half of the 19th century to 1917]" PhD diss., Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, 1963.

⁴ G.B. Nikol'skaya, "Vykhodtsy iz Sin'tszyana v Turkestan v kontse XIX – nachale XX vv.: materialy k istorii Srednei Azii [Natives of Xinjiang in Turkestan in the late 19th – early 20th centuries: materials on the history of Central Asia]" PhD diss., Tashkent University, 1969.

quite fully explored both in academic publications,⁵ and in the works of individual scientists.⁶ The issues related to the outflow of Chinese subjects to Russian territory in the 1860–1870s are covered in the works of B.P. Gurevich,⁷ Yu.A. Lysenko⁸ and other authors.⁹ These studies seem to lack specific content in terms of government measures aimed at accommodating the non-indigenous population within Russian borders.

On this basis, the sources of this article are the record-keeping materials of the Semirechensk region authorities of the Turkestan Governorate General bordering on China,¹⁰ laws and bills that established the administrative and legal system in Russian possessions in Central Asia,¹¹ reports of officials of the Russian regional administration.¹²

These sources determined the use of the formal-legal method in the article, which allows for an appropriate analysis of the events and facts of legal significance. The comparative-legal method makes it possible to compare the legal acts related to the same area of regulation, but for different periods of time. This allows identifying continuity or deviations in the state policy implemented in relation to the category of the population under consideration. The analysis of published and unpublished (archival) sources, generalization of materials (synthesis) and induction allow us to formulate a general conclusion regarding the policy of the Russian Empire towards the non-Russian population of the region in general.

It is known that on 31 December 1770, Ubashi, the governor of the Kalmyk Khanate, ordered to go on a campaign.¹³ After secret preparations, on 4–5 January of the following year,

⁵ *Istoriia Kalmykii s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 1 (Elista: Gerel, 2009).

⁶ B.V. Dolbezhev, “Sud'ba kalmykov, bezhavshikh s Volgi [The fate of the Kalmyks who fled from the Volga],” in *Sbornik geograficheskikh, topograficheskikh i statisticheskikh materialov po Azii* 86 (1913): 1–52; Dordzhieva, E.V. *Iskhod kalmykov v Kitai v 1771 g.* [Exodus of the Kalmyks to China in 1771] (Rostov-na-Donu: SKNTs VSh Publ., 2002); V.I. Kolesnik, “Poslednee velikoe kochev'e (o znachenii ‘torgutskogo pobega’ dlia periodizatsii vseмирnoi istorii) [The last great nomad camp (on the significance of the ‘Torghut escape’ for the periodization of world history)],” in *VII-i Mezhdunarodnyi kongress mongolovedov. Doklady rossiiskoi delegatsii*, 30–32 (Moscow: Institut vostokovedeniia RAN Publ., 1997); V.I. Kolesnik, “K voprosu o politike Tsinskoi imperii v otnoshenii vozvrashcheniya kalmykov iz Nizhnego Povolzh'ya v Dzhungariyu v 1771 g. [On the question of the policy of the Qing Empire regarding the return of Kalmyks from the Lower Volga region to Dzungaria in 1771],” in *Byulleten' Obshchestva vostokovedov RAN*. Vol. 2, 116–118 (Moscow: Institut vostokovedeniia RAN Publ., 1999); N.A. Shikhanov, “Politika pravitel'stva imperii Tsin po rasseleniyu kalmykov-torgutov v Kitae v kontse XVIII v. [The policy of the government of the Qing Empire on the resettlement of Kalmyk-Torguts in China at the end of the 18th century.]” *Klio*, no. 6 (2021): 90–94.

⁷ B.P. Gurevich, “Istoriia ‘Iliiskogo voprosa’ i ee kitaiskie fal'sifikatory [The history of the ‘Ili question’ and its Chinese falsifiers],” in *Dokumenty oprovergaiut. Protiv fal'sifikatsii istorii rusko-kitaiskikh otnoshenii*, 423–459 (Moscow: Mysl' Publ., 1982).

⁸ Yu.A. Lysenko, “Problema ustroistva kitaiskikh bezhentsev v Semirechenskoi oblasti v 1868–1874 gg. [The problem of the settlement of Chinese refugees in the Semirechye region in 1868–1874],” in *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia v Tsentral'noi Azii: istoriia i sovremennost'. Materialy mezhdunarodnoi nauchnoi konferentsii* (Barnaul: Altaiskii gosudarstvennyi universitet Publ., 2008), 319–329; Yu.A. Lysenko, “K voprosu o pereselenii uigur i dungan Iliiskogo kraia v Rossiiskuyu imperiyu (70–80-e gg. XIX v.) [On the issue of the resettlement of the Uighurs and Dungans of the Ili region to the Russian Empire (70–80s of the 19th century)],” in *Rossiya i Kitai: istoriya i perspektivy sotrudnichestva. Materialy III mezhdunarodnoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii*, 71–75.

⁹ V.V. Tumaikina, “Vopros o kitaiskikh emigrantakh, prishedshikh na territoriyu Semirech'ya vo vtoroi polovine XIX v. [The question of Chinese emigrants who came to the territory of Semirechye in the second half of the 19th century],” in *Izvestiia Altaiskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, no. 4-5 (2008): 214–218.

¹⁰ Natsional'nyi arhiv Respubliki Uzbekistan [National Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan] (henceforth NA RUZ), f. I-1, op. 29, d. 16, l. 3–29.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, op. 22, d. 825, l. 13–32 rewers; *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii* [Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire], the 3^d collection (henceforth PSZRI-III). Vol. 11: 1891. (St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia Press, 1894), 135–147 (the 1st pag.).

¹² NA RUZ, f. I-17, op. 1, d. 579, 46 l.; *Ibid.*, d. 15749, l. 30.

¹³ D.A. Suseeva, *Pis'ma kalmytskikh khanov XVIII veka i ikh sovremennikov (1713–1771 gg.)*. [Letters from the Kalmyk khans of the 18th century and their contemporaries (1713–1771)] (Elista: Dzhangar Publ., 2009), 912–913.

the Kalmyks set off to Dzungaria, a region in the north of Xinjiang, where lived the population of the former Dzungar Khanate absorbed by the Qing Empire akin to them (Oirats).

Not mentioning the background of these events,¹⁴ we should quote M.M. Batmaev, one of the most famous historians of Kalmykia:

Along with the recognition of the Volga steppes as a “free and quiet” homeland, and the Volga as their “mother,” in the minds of the Kalmyk nobility there was a parallel conviction that they had a universal opportunity to preserve their freedoms and privileges from the claims of the Russian government. The Kalmyk nobility overly relied on the peculiarities of the nomadic way of life, on the mobility of their uluses, which, in their opinion, gave them an opportunity, under unfavorable circumstances or excessive pressure from the government, to get out of its influence and move to another area.¹⁵

It is believed that 70% of the Kalmyks (19,027 out of 30,285 people) irrevocably left Russia¹⁶ and this accelerated the process of liquidating the Kalmyk administrative autonomy in the Russian Empire. On 19 October 1771, the highest decree was issued abolishing the Kalmyk Khanate and destroying its organizational structure.

However, in the new place, the Kalmyks faced the things from which Tsebek-Dorji, the closest adviser of Ubashi, together with the Dalai Lama, allegedly tried to protect them: the uluses were fragmented, there were not enough territories for nomads, ordinary people became servants or were engaged in agriculture, and the Kalmyk elite was destroyed or assimilated.

The governor and the owners of the uluses were reduced to the level of the Manchu officials,¹⁷ Ubashi and Tsebek-Dorji mentioned above were forced to exchange uluses.¹⁸ The following year, for Ubashi's nomad camps there was given the southwestern part of Tarbagatay, at the back of the empire, remote both from the return route to Russia and from the road to Chinese lands.¹⁹ In 1773 the Kalmyks settled in East Turkestan east of Ghulja (from Karashar to Urumchi).²⁰

The administrative and political assimilation in the Qing Empire did not suit the Volga Kalmyks at all, and they wished to return to Russia. Preventing their consolidation, the Chinese government eventually divided the arrived Torghuts and Khoshuts into several groups and accommodated them in Kashgar in the northern foothills of the Tian Shan: west of Karashar (Yanqi); in the Shiho (Usu) area; in the Jinghe County; in the Kobuk-Sair area; in the area of Kobdo (Khovd).²¹ The Volga Kalmyks were divided geographically and administratively, as they found themselves in different administrative regions.

In 1775, an administrative reform was carried out, according to which the Torghuts and Khoshuts were divided into geographically isolated aimaks (according to tribal affiliation) and khoshuns, and they lost their ethnic unity. This was followed by reshuffling of the primary administrative units – soums (some were destroyed, others were divided among neighbors, others were created anew). The khoshuns were to face the same fate. “With the destruction of the tribal organization, old traditions disappeared, personal and property ties and close relations were broken.”²²

¹⁴ D.V. Vasilyev, *Rozhdenie imperii. Iugo-vostok Rossii: XVIII – pervaya polovina XIX v.* [Birth of the Empire. South-East of Russia: XVIII – first half of the XIX century] (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin Publ., 2020), 270–283.

¹⁵ M.M. Batmaev, “Ukhod bol'shei chasti kalmykov v Dzhungarii [Departure of most of the Kalmyks to Dzungaria],” in *Istoriia Kalmykii s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 1 (Elista: Gerel Publ., 2009), 421.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 431.

¹⁷ V.P. Sanchirov, “Predislovie” In N.Ya. Bichurin (Iakinf), *Istoricheskoe obozrenie oiratov ili kalmykov s XV stoletiya do nastoyashchego vremeni* (Elista: Kalmytskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo Publ., 1991), 16.

¹⁸ V.I. Kolesnik, “Poslednee velikoe kochev'e,” 31.

¹⁹ V.I. Kolesnik, “K voprosu o politike Tsinskoi imperii,” 117.

²⁰ N.A. Shikhanov, “Politika pravitel'stva imperii,” 91.

²¹ B.V. Dolbezhev, “Sud'ba kalmykov, bezhavshikh s Volgi,” 6; Dordzhieva, E.V. *Iskhod kalmykov v Kitai v 1771 g.*, 201.

²² N.A. Shikhanov, “Politika pravitel'stva imperii Tsin,” 93.

Immigration as a result of the Uyghur-Dungan uprising

In 1862, in the province of Shanxi, there broke out the Dungan uprising led by Muslim spiritual leaders. It spilled over to the neighboring province of Gansu and by the summer of 1864 it had reached Xinjiang, where it became extremely violent. In the center of the events were Ghulja and the Tarbagatay district, where the Kalmyks took the side of the Manchus; the Kalmyks inflicted a severe defeat on the Kazakhs that joined the rebels. Power in Kashgar passed to the former Kokand commander Yakub-bek. In March and April 1866 accordingly, Ghulja and Chuguchak (the center of Tarbagatay) fell into the hands of the rebels, which triggered uncontrolled processes of the migration of Russian nomads to Chinese territory, and Chinese Kalmyks and others to Russia. The refusal of the Russian government to provide military assistance to China led to the appearance in its western part of

Muslim state formations which were unfriendly to Russia - the Tarancha-Dungan Sultanate in the Ile region, the state of Dzhetysay or Yettishar in Kashgaria and the Alliance of Dungan towns in Urumchi, Manas and adjacent areas.²³

The Russian border administration was forced to immediately get involved in resolving the issue of settling refugees and was inclined to convert them to Russian citizenship and Orthodoxy, in the way characteristic of the empire. However, some local officials doubted the sincerity of Chinese immigrants' desire to accept citizenship of the Russian Empire.²⁴

The reasons for the flight of nomadic and sedentary Kalmyks that fled to Russia after the Muslim uprising in Western China were the persecution that fell on the Kalmyks, Uighurs (Taranchi), Dungans and Kazakhs on religious and ethnic grounds. But the main reason for the Kalmyks' emigration was the fact that during the uprising they did not take the side of any of the warring parties, although they were more inclined in favor of the Chinese and thus turned out to be hostile to the Muslims. They did not reach an agreement with the Chinese either; the warring parties did not put up with their neutrality. It was the Kalmyks of the territories adjacent to the border that fled to Russia. The Kalmyk tribes living in Kashgar and Ghulja actually became slaves for the Taranchi and Dungans, as they had submitted to them.

The first sedentary Kalmyks were sent in 1865 to the vicinity of the town of Verny, where they settled. The last groups of the Solon people resettled in Xinjiang from north-eastern China as early as the 18th century went to the vicinity of the town of Qapal on the river Turgen, where by 1869 their big colony had been formed. A number of refugees arrived at the cossack village of Lepsinskaya on another section of the border. During 1865 and 1867 more than 3,000 people emigrated to the Qapal uyezd (apart from those who moved to the Vernensky uyezd), about half of which were sedentary.²⁵

Nomadic Kalmyks that came to the Russian territory in 1865 initially settled in the Issyk-Kul uyezd, and then moved to Vernensky district. Their number reached 8,000 people.²⁶ These tribes were more prosperous than the others, since they themselves had saved part of their livestock from plunder, and part of the property plundered by the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz had been returned to them with Russia's assistance. Therefore, their maintenance required relatively minor expenses.

It was sedentary Kalmyks (they became sedentary after coming to the Dzungarian territory), as well as those nomads who arrived from the Qapal uyezd border that found

²³ V.A. Moiseev, *Rossiya i Kitai v Tsentral'noi Azii*, 67–92.

²⁴ K.S. Bizhigitova, "Religiozno-nravstvennoe sostoianie Sibirskikh i Semirechenskikh kazakov (vtoraja polovina XIX – nachalo XX vv.) [Religious and moral state of the Siberian and Semirechensk Cossacks (second half of the 19th – early 20th centuries)]," *Vestnik KazNPU imeni Abaa. Serija Istoricheskie i sotsial'no-politicheskie nauki*, no. 2 (2013): 16–20.

²⁵ NA RUz, f. I-1, op. 29, d. 16, l. 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 6 revers.

themselves in a different situation. They had neither livestock nor means of subsistence. In September 1866, for their settling, two special committees were established in Verny and Qapal. By 19 September 1867, the Qapal and Vernensky committees for the charity of Chinese emigrants had provided assistance to immigrants with bread, clothing and money in the amount of about 30 thousand rubles. In addition, they assisted the settlers in the allotment of land for their temporary use and the search for earnings.²⁷

While the requests of the emigrants to grant them citizenship were rejected by the Russian authorities, the Chinese leadership sent their officials to convince emigrants not to renounce Chinese citizenship offering the them land on the Black Irtysh, in which they succeeded. When the committees began to accept applications from those wishing to acquire Russian citizenship, there were very few of them among the sedentary emigrants. The first applications for acquiring Russian citizenship and Orthodoxy to the Qapal Committee from March 1867 were submitted by 73 families (298 people) of sedentary Kalmyks and 210 families (739 people) of nomadic Kalmyks.²⁸

The Semirechye administration realized that the new subjects of the empire could benefit the region only if they were given the opportunity to start an independent household, and their acculturation would become possible only under the influence of Russian enlightenment and faith. In a submission to the commander of the troops of Western Siberia dated 21 March 1867, military governor of the region G. Kolpakovsky asked for 1 bull, 1 horse, 1 cow, agricultural tools and cash benefits of 40 rubles for each family of new subjects for the construction of a house, 15 rubles for clothes, a small amount of grain for sowing. He proposed to build a church and a school for immigrants, and establish under them the posts of a missionary priest and a teacher. The Chinese settlers who accepted citizenship were supposed to be separated from others and settled on the lands in the areas of the Terekta (between the cossack village of Lepsinskaya and the village of Sarkansky).²⁹

The permission for this submission was received only a year later, on 6 March 1868, but instead of the requested amount for one-time expenses from the treasury (39,584 rubles 42 ½ kopecks), only 25 thousand rubles were allocated. This money began to be distributed only in May 1868. The delay for more than a year on the issue of the settlement of immigrants that wished to accept Russian citizenship provoked the return of a significant part of them to China. As a result, there were 175 families wishing to accept citizenship, rather than 283, including only 35 families that were sedentary. In the spring of 1868, they were gathered in the village of Sarkansky, where they were given land for sowing grain.³⁰

It is worth mentioning a very remarkable fact. When the Qapal Committee began paying benefits to immigrants, the number of applicants for citizenship increased dramatically. Instead of 283 (actually 175) families, 351 families (651 people) applied for benefits. (According to other sources, this number reached 873 people, and the number of families – up to 344.) Among them, 187 families (364 people) were nomads, and 164 (293 people) were sedentary.³¹

Of the 25 thousand rubles allocated for the settlement, 6,844 rubles 10 kopecks were deducted for the construction of a church and a school, for the purchase of crosses and icons. The remaining amount was to be divided among 283 families, as originally intended.³²

To increase the size of the payment, immigrants came up with the idea of splitting their families in order to receive two, or even three benefits. In order to prevent such abuses, the regional authorities ordered that the full amount (65 rubles) be paid only to

²⁷ NA RUz, f. I-1, op. 29, d. 16, l. 10–10 revers.

²⁸ Ibid., l. 11.

²⁹ Ibid., l. 11 revers.

³⁰ Ibid., l. 12.

³¹ Ibid., l. 12 revers – 13.

³² Ibid., l. 26.

families consisting of at least three people. Accordingly, families of two people were given two-thirds of the full benefit, and single people got only one-third. Later, payments to the latter were completely stopped on the grounds that they were not able to independently manage a household, and therefore they were to seek help in private charity, without burdening the government with expenses. At the same time, it was emphasized that the benefits were intended for state-economic purposes, that is, to help poor families for the initial establishment of a household, and not for philanthropy. When the amounts for the benefits were not enough, the missing funds were borrowed from the money allocated for the construction of the church and other needs.

The baptizing of the immigrants began in July 1868. In August a missionary priest and a teacher were appointed for them. In the spring of the following year, in the village of Sarkansky a temporary church was built from felt. Over time, two settlements of Chinese immigrants appeared there. Most of them had arable land, on which, in addition to bread, there were grown tobacco, sesame, as well as watermelons, melons, radish, etc. In the settlements of Koksuytsky and Karabulaksky, immigrants were engaged in arable farming; in the town of Qapal they were engaged in menial work: they made bricks, constructed adobe buildings, etc.

Many immigrants in the Qapal uyezd wished to join the Semirechye Cossack army. On 29 May 1869, there appeared the highest permission to accept them into the Cossack estate with settling in the villages of the Semirechye army and with the provision of a 15-year deferment from the draft. Thus, it was the military authorities that were in charge of the organization of the life of the Kalmyks ranked among the Cossack estate. The fate of the rest was dealt with along with the settling of immigrants in the Vernensky uyezd.³³

Sedentary settlers arrived in the Vernensky uyezd in the autumn of 1865 from Barakhudzir, and in the spring of 1867 from the Koksuytsk settlement. In August 1868, almost all of them left for the Srengiopol uyezd intending to head to the Black Irtysh to China. The mass exodus was caused by the Russian government's delayed solution regarding their fate. As a result, in the autumn of 1868, there were almost no immigrants left in the Vernensky uyezd, except for 18 Kalmyk families that applied to the Vernensky Committee with a wish to accept citizenship and get baptized. By the end of the year, the number of such families increased to 79 (197 people), of which 90 people had already been baptized by that time.³⁴

Most of these immigrants wanted to finally settle in the town of Verny, since the community of the Almaty village allotted land for construction, where they had already begun to procure building materials and erect buildings. A special officer was appointed to supervise the immigrants who settled in Verny.

Initially, there were few immigrants that were granted Russian citizenship, and the local authorities intended to accommodate them all in one special settlement. But when in search of work they went to almost all sedentary settlements in the region, the local authorities came to the conclusion that it would be more convenient to accommodate them in Russian sedentary settlements. In the opinion of the local authorities, in this way the immigrants, firstly, were more likely to become Russified; secondly, their knowledge of gardening and agriculture would be imparted to a large number of Russian settlers; thirdly, the Russian population could give the poorest of them more help when they lived in many settlements rather than when they were concentrated in one; and fourthly, all Russian settlements would get cheap and skilled workers for constructing buildings of clay and brick, as all buildings were supposed to be constructed of these ma-

³³ NA RUZ, f. I-1, op. 29, d. 16, l. 14 revers – 15.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 15 revers – 16.

terials. Providing the immigrants with the choice of places for settlement, the local authorities did not want to limit them in the choice of belonging to any estate.³⁵

On 3 March 1869, the Semirechye regional government decided: 1) to provide immigrants who wished to enter the lower middle class of the town of Verny with all the benefits that Russian representatives of the lower middle class of this town had, and allocate free land for building houses without a land allotment; 2) to allocate land near the town of Verny in the amount of 10 acres per capita (with appropriate benefits) to migrants who wished to become peasants, and form a suburban settlement; 3) those who wished to settle in the Cossack villages were allowed to do this by the decisions of the village communities with fixing the right of immigrants to use the land, but without joining the Cossack estate (since it was allowed by a special procedure); 4) immigrants who wished to become peasants outside the Cossack rural settlements of the region were to be provided with equal benefits with Russian settlers (only baptized people) and land allotment without decisions of the communities; 5) to allow entering the lower middle class of urban settlements on the same basis as the town of Verny.³⁶

These rules never came into force, although the regional authorities continued to consider it unnecessary to limit Chinese immigrants in choosing their place of registration and estate, guided by the greater convenience of their distribution among all the settlements of the region.

Immigration after the return of Ghulja (Ili region) to China

The decision to occupy Ghulja was made by Emperor Alexander II in 1871.³⁷ A special administrative-territorial entity was created there as part of the Turkestan Governorate General – the Ili region (Ghulja district) – under the command of the military governor of the Semirechye Region with a management system that differed little from the one that was in China period.³⁸ This was done in order to return the occupied lands to China least painfully, which happened after the conclusion of the Treaty of St. Petersburg in 1881.

Nevertheless, the social upheavals and the fear of the return of a harsh unification regime pushed the inhabitants of the Chinese border area to the Russian side. Shortly after the occupation of Ghulja by the rebels, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz that were Russian citizens began to migrate. The Sibe, the Solon people and Kalmyks followed them. There is evidence that during that period about 14 thousand Chinese subjects migrated to the Semirechye region.³⁹ At the same time, there was their outflow from the territory of Russia.⁴⁰

It was possible that anticipating the approaching end of the presence of Russians in Xinjiang, and most likely, wishing to be under the protection of the empire, some local residents began to migrate to Russia long before the return of the Trans-Ili region to China. Thus, on 29 December 1878, the head of the Aulieata uyezd reported to the person holding the position of the military governor of the Sirdaryo Region:

³⁵ NA RUz, f. I-1, op. 29, d. 16, l. 17 revers – 18 revers.

³⁶ Ibid., l. 19–20 revers.

³⁷ D.V. Vasilyev, R.Yu. Pochekaev, and S.A. Asanova, *Predel imperii: Vostochnyi Turkestan, Kul'dzha, Khunza v orbite politicheskikh interesov Rossii. Vtoraya polovina XIX v.* [The limit of the empire: Eastern Turkestan, Ghulja, Hunza in the orbit of Russia's political interests. Second half of the 19th century] (St. Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriya Publ., 2021), 26–181.

³⁸ D.V. Vasilyev, *Bremia imperii. Administrativnaia politika Rossii v Tsentral'noi Azii. Vtoraya polovina XIX v.* [Burden of the empire. Russian administrative policy in Central Asia. Second half of the 19th century] (Moscow: Politicheskaya entsiklopediya Publ., 2018), 348–361.

³⁹ Yu.A. Lysenko, “Problema ustroistva kitaiskikh bezhentshev,” 319–329; Yu.A. Lysenko, “K voprosu o pereselenii uigur i Dungan,” 71–75.

⁴⁰ V.V. Tumaikina, “Vopros o kitaiskikh emigrantakh,” 217.

I found out the following: there were only six families of them (Dungans – *authors' note*), they left the town of Urumchi in March of this year, and from there they went via Tashkent and Chimkent, and arrived here on 23 December. They intend to settle here because they consider that the life is not expensive here, and besides, they count on the possibility of earning money. All the Dungans who arrived here are very poor people. In view of their poverty, I gave them a free accommodation in the town and instructed the local Dungans who settled here to ensure their existence.⁴¹

The migration due to the Russian-Chinese demarcation in 1881–1882 was larger in scale. According to historians, it affected from 70 to 107 thousand people,⁴² of which 75 thousand were Uighurs (Taranchi), 5 thousand were Dungans, about 27 thousand were Kazakhs.⁴³ Just before the entry of the Manchu-Chinese troops into Ghulja, many residents left the Ili region in panic.⁴⁴ There was not enough land ceded by China along the Khorgas and the Borokhudzir in accordance with Article VII of the Treaty of St. Petersburg in order to accommodate this population.⁴⁵ They had to be settled in the territories of Semirechye.

It is known that China was to pay Russia 9 million rubles

to cover the costs caused by the occupation of the Ili region by Russian troops from 1871, to satisfy all monetary claims filed... as a result of losses that Russian subjects suffered due to the looting of their property in China, and to issue benefits to the families of Russian subjects killed during armed attacks on them in Chinese territory.⁴⁶

It should be noted that then Turkestan Governor-General K.P. Kaufman vigorously opposed the occupation of Chinese territory, considering it fair to demand 120 million rubles from the Qing Empire, hoping to use these funds not only to compensate for the damage, but also to build a railway between Orenburg and Tashkent. However, the government protested against his proposal. An unconditional victory was won by “the policy of sentimental unselfishness and generosity to the detriment of the people and state.”⁴⁷

The settlement of border issues was entrusted to Major General A.Ya. Friede, who was appointed the military governor of Semirechye in 1882, when his predecessor, Lieutenant General G.A. Kolpakovsky was appointed Governor-General of the Steppe. The Semirechye region was separated from the Turkestan region and transferred to Stepnoy. In 1883, G. Kolpakovsky established a commission headed by A. Friede to develop new rules for managing Semirechye in connection with the change in its ownership.

Without dwelling on issues that are not related to the subject of this article,⁴⁸ we should remind that some changes were already required due to the different ethnic composition of the region population, whose former primary administration was designed specifically for local Kazakhs and, to a lesser extent, for newly arrived Russians.

Now, due to the influx of settlers from Ghulja and the formation of the Dzharkent section which had the prospect of being transformed into a full-fledged uyezd, Friede's Commission proposed to strengthen the administrative staff and increase funding of

⁴¹ NA RUz, f. I-17, op. 1, d. 579, l. 5–5 revers.

⁴² V.A. Moiseev, *Rossiya i Kitai v Tsentral'noi Azii*, 206–207; B.P. Gurevich, “Istoriia ‘Iliiskogo voprosa’,” 458.

⁴³ A.V. Startsev, ed. *Politika Rossii i Kitaya v Tsentral'noy Azii vo vtoroy polovine XIX – nachale XXI v.* [The policy of Russia and China in Central Asia in the second half of the 19th – early 21st century] (Barnaul: Azbuka, 2014), 60.

⁴⁴ Gurevich, B.P. “Istoriia ‘Iliiskogo voprosa’,” 458.

⁴⁵ *Sbornik dogovorov Rossii s Kitayem. 1689–1881 gg.* [Collection of treaties between Russia and China. 1689–1881] (St. Petersburg: MID Publ., 1889), 228–229.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁴⁷ Kadnikov, V.S. “Iz istorii Kul'dzhinskogo voprosa [From the history of the Kuldzha issue],” *Istoricheskii vestnik*, no. 6 (1911): 906–908.

⁴⁸ D.V. Vasilyev, *Bremia imperii*, 466–482.

the region. In particular, one department was to be added to the regional government,⁴⁹ 8 district administrations were to be established, primarily in border uyezds.⁵⁰

The ethno-cultural change in the population of Semirechye (mass migration of Uighurs and Dungans) prompted the commission to propose applying the administrative norms established for the sedentary population of neighboring Turkestan regions.

In the Semirechye region, there were beys' courts and kadhis' courts. Certainly, the newly arrived people were to be adapted to these conditions. The materials of the commission mention 1000 Kalmyk tilt carts. Taking into account the similarity of their judicial customs with the Kazakh (and Kyrgyz) ones, it was proposed to extend the beys' courts to them according to the established rules.⁵¹

The Uighurs (Taranchi) were a sedentary population that retained people's court according to Sharia significantly supplemented by local customs.

People's court of the Taranchi in its forms and in the essence of folk customs is very similar to beys' court, and both nationalities <...> willingly used a common court of beys and kadhis. As a result of this, and due to the inconvenience to subordinate the Taranchi to the Russian court, until the gradual Russification of these people and the penetration of their way of life and views, their people's court was supposed to be preserved for the Taranchi subordinating it to the rules for the beys' court...⁵²

with some changes. The most serious criminal offenses were to be excluded from the jurisdiction of the Uyghur people's judges and transferred to the imperial court. Therefore, all these crimes were referred to the jurisdiction of the imperial court. It was proposed to extend the same rules to the Dungans who professed Islam and were tried by kadhis.⁵³

Not wishing to transfer the consideration of cases between Taranchi and Dungans to the Russian court, due to its low efficiency in cases of cattle theft, the commission proposed the following option:

The Taranchi and Dungans of the Semirechye region are subject to cases by the kadhis' courts formed and acting on the same grounds as are determined ... for the beys' courts, with the only change that claims over 100 rubles, sentences on punishment by a fine over 10 rubles or deprivation of freedom are decided only at the meeting of kadhis...⁵⁴

This unique case, when representatives of different nationalities were tried not by a Russian, but by a people's court testifies to the desire and readiness of the local administration not to go ahead with the goal of Russification of the region, but to find the most effective option for adapting the entire population of the region to the new political realities. In addition, the commission was convinced that the sedentary population of Semirechye was very far from the sedentary inhabitants of Turkestan, and therefore they were not supposed to have an identical judicial system.⁵⁵

The proposals of A. Friede's commission were not implemented, since the search for the most acceptable solution for the administrative and legal organization of the nomadic outskirts of the empire continued in the capital and in Omsk (the center of the Governorate General of the Steppe). In 1888, the Special Commission under the Ministry of Internal Affairs developed a draft Regulation on the administration of the Akmolala, Semipalatinsk, Semirechye, Ural and Kazalinsk regions.⁵⁶ It also reflected the emergence of sedentary population from neighboring China in the nomadic region.

⁴⁹ Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arhiv Respubliki Kazahstan [Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan], f. 64, op. 1, d. 115, l. 135 revers – 137.

⁵⁰ Ibid., l. 138.

⁵¹ Ibid., l. 150 revers.

⁵² Ibid., l. 151.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., l. 151 revers.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ NA RUz., f. I-1., op. 22, d. 825, l. 13–32 revers.

The draft of the Special Commission provided for a section on the management of the sedentary population, which was primarily caused by both the development of resettlement and immigration from China. According to the draft law, the volosts in the regions were to be organized not only according to the territorial principle, but also taking into account the ethno-social factor – separately for nomadic and sedentary (separately for Russian and non-Russian) population. By analogy with the Russian villagers, the Dungans and Uighurs in the uyezds were divided into volosts and rural communities. They were headed by volost governors and aul elders. In this regard, the procedure for electing officials of public administration, the procedure for the work of a volost convention and a village meeting were established identically to the nomadic population (§ 84, 88–89). The Chapter on taxes from the sedentary population emphasized the fiscal equality of the sedentary inhabitants – Russians, Uyghurs and Dungans, who were to be subject to quitrent on a general basis for the empire (§§ 250–251). The Chapter on the organization and functioning of the people's court in the steppe regions was largely unified and also devoid of ethnic identity. In § 183 it stated as follows:

Non-Russian, nomadic and sedentary people have separate people's courts that resolve cases within their jurisdiction on the basis of the customs of each of the mentioned parts of the population.⁵⁷

The result of the longstanding preparatory work was the Regulation on the management of Akmola, Semipalatinsk, Semirechye, Ural and Turgai regions approved legislatively in 1891.⁵⁸

The law did not distinguish between Chinese immigrants and the indigenous population of the Russian steppe in terms of legal proceedings for the reasons mentioned above. As for their primary administration, in fact, bringing them closer to the Russian Cossacks, the Regulations retained certain specificity. The settlements of the Uighurs and Dungans were divided into volosts, and the latter, in turn, into rural communities. The unification of settlements into rural communities was based on the principle of using nearby land plots and irrigation canals, which corresponded to the principle of integrating pastoral lands into auls. As with nomads, the transfer of individuals and families from one community to another was allowed with the permission of the uyezd chief based on a dismissal or acceptance decision of a village meeting. As with Russian farmers, volosts were headed by volost governors (with Russians, heads of volosts), and village heads were in charge of rural communities (with Russians, village elders). At the same time, the procedure for the election and appointment of public administration officials, the rights, duties and responsibilities, as well as the procedure for the work of the volost convention and village meeting, corresponded to the rules established for the nomadic population of the steppe regions (§ 91–96).

We should add that the Russian administration which sought to root the settlers and turn them into loyal subjects who could not become a reason for complicating border relations with a rather powerful neighbor took specific steps (including police ones) to prevent their migration,⁵⁹ returned those who had already accepted Russian citizenship and even provided them with government earnings.⁶⁰

Conclusions

The study of the documents related to the migration of the Xinjiang population in the 1860–1880s to the territory of the Russian Empire convinces that granting citizenship to nomadic (the first wave) and sedentary (the second wave) immigrants from Chinese

⁵⁷ PSZRI-III, vol. 11: 1891, no. 7574, p. 135–147 (the 1st pag.).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ NA RUz, f. I-17, op. 1, d. 579, l. 13–13 revers.

⁶⁰ Ibid., d. 15749, l. 2–2 revers.

possessions, the Russian authorities sought to find a place for them among the established socio-economic communities. At the same time, they treated this issue differentially: in some places providing them with the norms characteristic of the nomadic inhabitants of the steppe; in other places establishing for them the rules by which the main taxable population of the empire lived. Judging by the experience of the indigenous peoples of the Russian part of Central Asia, at the end of this process of adaptation, there was to occur the natural merger of the former Qing subjects with those of the inner provinces of the Russian Empire.

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