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KAZAKH STEPPE IN THE NATIONAL POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE: COMPARATIVE HISTORIOGRAPHY.

Abstract

In modern historiography there is a certain interest in the national policy of the Russian Empire. This is due to changes in the methodological approach, the application of a new paradigm of "new imperial history", imperiology. There has been a shift of interest from how the Russian Empire managed and integrated the peripheries to how the peripheries modified the empire. On this basis, the article examines what assessments/views are used in foreign and Kazakhstani historiography. The area of historiographical review includes works on Russian imperial policy in the Steppe regions published in the post-Soviet period. The problem of Russia's national policy towards the Kazakh community in the Western historiography was studied in the context of general tendencies of studying colonialism as a historical phenomenon "with all its negative and positive features". Most Kazakh researchers adhere to the traditional assessment of Russia's imperial policy towards the Kazakh steppes, calling it colonial. In Russian historiography there is a revision of classical approaches, which resulted in new concepts: imperial policy of acculturation, frontier modernization.

Keywords: empire, imperiology, imperial policy of acculturation, frontier, cultutragerism, comparative analysis

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КАЗАХСКАЯ СТЕПЬ В НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ РОССИЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ: КОМПАРАТИВНАЯ ИСТОРИОГРАФИЯ

Аннотация

В современной историографии наблюдается определенный интерес в отношении национальной политики Российской империи. Обусловлено это изменениями в методологическом подходе, применением новой парадигмы «новой имперской истории», империологии. Произошло смещение интереса с того как Российская империя управляла и интегрировала окраины, на то, как окраины видоизменяли империю. Исходя из этого в статье рассматриваются какие оценки/взгляды применяются в зарубежной и казахстанской историографии. В зону историографического обзора вошли труды по Российской имперской политике на территории Степных областей, изданные в постсоветский период. Проблему национальной политики России в отношении казахского сообщества в западной историографии исследовалась в русле общих тенденций изучения колониализма как исторического

явления «со всеми его отрицательными и позитивными чертами». Большинство казахстанских исследователей, придерживаются традиционной оценки относительно имперской политики России в отношении казахских степей, называя ее колониальной. В Российской историография происходит ревизия классических подходов, результатом которой стали новые концепты: имперская политика аккультурации, фронтальная модернизация.

Ключевые слова: империя, империология, имперская политика аккультурации, фронт, культуртрегерство, компаративный анализ

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РЕСЕЙ ИМПЕРИЯСЫНЫҢ ҰЛТТЫҚ САЯСАТЫ: КОМПАРАТИВТІ ТАРИХНАМА

Аңдатпа

Қазіргі тарихнамада Ресей империясының ұлттық саясатына белгілі бір қызығушылық бар. Бұл әдістемелік тәсілдегі өзгерістерге, "жаңа империялық тарихтың" жаңа парадигмасын, империологияны қолдануға байланысты. Қызығушылықтың Ресей империясының шеткі аймақтарды қалай басқарғанынан және біріктіргенінен, шеткі аймақтар империяны қалай өзгерткеніне ауысуы болды. Осыған сүйене отырып, мақалада шетелдік және қазақстандық тарихнамада қандай бағалар/көзқарастар қолданылатыны қарастырылады. Тарихнамалық шолу аймағына посткеңестік кезеңде жарияланған Дала облыстарының аумағындағы Ресей империялық саясаты туралы еңбектер кірді. Батыс тарихнамасындағы Ресейдің қазақ қоғамдастығына қатысты ұлттық саясатының проблемасы отаршылдықты "барлық жағымсыз және жағымды қасиеттерімен" тарихи құбылыс ретінде зерттеудің жалпы тенденцияларына сәйкес зерттелді. Қазақстандық зерттеушілердің көпшілігі Ресейдің қазақ даласына қатысты империялық саясатына қатысты дәстүрлі бағалауды ұстанады, оны отарлық деп атайды. Орыс тарихнамасында классикалық тәсілдерді қайта қарау жүріп жатыр, нәтижесінде жаңа тұжырымдамалар пайда болды: империялық аккультурация саясаты, алдыңғы қатарлы модернизация.

Кілт сөздер: империя, империология, империялық аккультурация саясаты, фронт, культуртрегеризм, компаративті талдау.

Алғыс айту: Зерттеуге Қазақстан Республикасы Ғылым және жоғары білім министрлігінің Ғылымкомитеті қаржылай қолдау көрсетті (грант № AP19679853).

Introduction. The topic of Russia's imperial policy towards the traditional Kazakh society gets a new sounding and conceptualization within the wave of interest to the problem of empire and imperial policy in general. For domestic science Russian imperial policy in relation to the national outskirts, which was the territory of Kazakhstan is undoubtedly of special interest. In these conditions, both the issues of strategy and practices of implementation of imperial colonial policy in the regions, and the processes of transformation of Kazakh traditional society, as a consequence of the reforms.

According to researchers, the interest in the history of empires is also caused by the rethinking of the essence and idea of nationalism and the nation-state, due to the desire to learn their national history after the collapse of the Soviet Union. And it is certainly true to note in historiography, this interest is dictated and spurred by modern "global challenges" and geopolitical considerations.

Materials and Methods. The theoretical basis of the study on the interaction between the center and peripheries of the Russian Empire was the methodology of E. Shils and Sh. Eisenstadt, theoretical models of interaction between "center" and "periphery" in large multi-ethnic and multi-confessional states. [1] The works created within the framework of the "new imperial history" served as an important methodological basis. A new angle in research as a result of the new imperial paradigm was defined, focused not on the political and military

component, but on the implementation of imperial policy in the periphery, imperial "practices and discourses" [2] Domestic studies written in the direction of national history allowed us to analyze the concept of Russian imperial policy.

Modern researchers turn to the comparative method as the most interdisciplinary and effective in the conditions of modern scientific problems. This study was not an exception, the method of comparativism allowed to analyze historiography in two directions: comparison of historical concepts and comparison of the development of historical sciences of different countries and regions.

The realization of the principle of historicism allowed us to consider the topic in studies from the last quarter of the 18th century and practically to the present day by scientists of the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods of history. The historical-comparative method allows us to analyze the dynamics of Russian state policy in the Kazakh regions of the late 18th - early 21st centuries, to identify common patterns, what was characteristic of each of them, what influenced their views. The historical-typological method allows us to divide the totality of historical objects recorded in the sources into certain types, genera and species both by internal (classification) and external (systematization) criteria.

One of the methodological problems is the disappearance of clear universally recognized "units of measurement". The historiographical sources we analyze present the following evaluative judgments regarding imperial policy: colonialism, acculturation policy, frontier modernization and cultuertragerism. The paper gives the authors' understanding of these terms, which they use in their concepts.

Discussion. The problem of Russian imperial policy in the eastern national peripheries as an independent topic was widely covered, but no special historiographical work on this topic appeared either in Soviet science or later. The issues of administrative management, despite the presence of historical works, are not developed in a special historiographical plan. As a rule, authors give historiographical reviews in the introductory part of their studies, monographs or dissertations. But there are scientific articles in periodicals. For example, M. Churkin, reviewing works on colonial policy in the Kazakh regions, representatives of historiographical studies found themselves in diametrically opposed evaluation fields after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The author singles out the so-called "official direction" (Kozybaev M.K.), which gives an unambiguous assessment of the activities carried out in Kazakhstan in the 19-20 centuries as a colonial policy with all the inherent negative consequences for its people. Thus, the idea of "absolute evil" prevailed in historiography, with the only difference that the imperial period now included the period of the Soviet era. Another direction, the so-called "moderates", in many respects agree and support some Russian researchers, believe that in assessing the colonial period it is not necessary to romanticize and create myths (I.V. Erofeeva). [3] A.I.Miller, considering the historiographical situation on the problem, notes that a significant fact that influenced the change of paradigms was the publication of Andreas Kappeler's work "The Russian Empire as a multinational state" [For example, D.B. Tebaev defined the main tasks in the issues of imperial policy in the peripheries. These are elaboration of the activities of the colonial apparatus, terminological apparatus (for example, such as accession, protectorate, conquest, incorporation); analysis of the main stages of the inclusion of the "steppe" in the empire; publication of new archival materials; analysis of the theoretical and methodological platform of the problem [5]. A.Sabirova analyzed the formation of the problems of imperial and national studies in modern Russian scientific periodicals, conditionally divided them into three groups: central historical and ethnographic; political science and sociological; and specialized journals. She notes that a significant number of articles allows us to see the main trends in the development of this problem [6].

Of historiographical interest is the work "Imperial Turn in the Study of Russian History: Modern Historiography", which allows us to familiarize ourselves with the international historiography of the Russian Empire, written within the framework of the "imperial paradigm". Regarding our topic, of particular interest to us is the review of J. Campbell's work "Knowledge and the Purpose of Empire: Kazakh Mediators and Russian Administration in the Steppe, 1731-1917". In his study Ian Campbell notes the role of knowledge and awareness for successful governance in the Kazakh region. And here he notes the time it took to accumulate this knowledge and the importance of who contributed to it: officials, scholars, Kazakh mediators [7].

A.V. Shcherbina, analyzing the Western historiography, concludes about the multiplicity of topics on monarchical Russia, united in common directions. She, on the basis of comparativistic method, demonstrates typical features inherent in Russia as an imperial power. And also the peculiarities, which are conditioned by mentality, geopolitical factor, general course of history, are outlined. According to the author's position, it is the inadequate management of national margins and led to the crisis and the fall of empires. [8].

Domestic authors Z.Sadvokasova, A.Sharipova consider the historiography of the problem of colonization of Kazakhstan, which is equal to the state policy of the Russian Empire. The researchers note that modern assessments of the situation of the national suburbs within the Russian Empire differ depending on which category the researcher belongs to. Most often justify the policy of tsarism and show its civilizing role in Kazakhstan scholars from Russia and less often from the national regions. The third category is represented by scholars from far abroad, who consider the events more objectively, although they make individual errors [9].

Kokebaeva G.K. investigates the theory of frontier in modern Russian historical science, how acceptable this theory is in the study of Russian colonialism. According to this theory Kazakhs had no statehood, national liberation movement. About the unacceptability of the frontier theory in the study of Russian colonialism was noticed by foreign scientists. She notes that in the study of colonialism the position of historians of the former Soviet republics and Russia are diametrically opposed [10].

Results. The subject of research of this paper is the study of works reflecting the administrative policy of Russian tsarism in the imperial peripheries, published after the 1990s. Giving a historiographical review of modern scientific literature on the imperial state policy of Russia, we consider to start with foreign authors. Since the topic we have outlined received scientific direction precisely from the works of foreign historians, political scientists, sociologists.

As noted above, the work of A. Kappeler became a kind of triggering factor in the study of imperial history. Many of his works have been translated into Russian. Having rejected the "Russocentric" approach typical for most historians, Kappeler was able to objectively analyze the nature and forms of participation of many peoples in the construction of the building of Russian statehood [11].

In his article, Kappeler notes that the process of formation of Russian nationality occurred in parallel and intertwined with the formation of those nations that were part of the Russian Empire. Thus, in addition to Russians, Georgians, Belarusians, and Ukrainians entered the zone of his attention. The next aspect is related to constructive cultural approaches. It is through them it is possible to analyze the national history of Russia as much as possible, since the latter was characterized by autocracy, which distinguishes it from European states [12, P.391].

Tracing the history of Russia over several centuries, A. Kappeler concluded that imperial national policy was characterized by a number of features. Among them the researcher includes: the demand of the center of political loyalty from the peoples of the empire, in return for the inviolability of their identity; class, i.e. the implementation of the incorporation of national elites into the imperial ruling class; hierarchy of ethnic groups that were part of the empire, which was based on the principle of socio-cultural remoteness from the Russians.

If we talk about the interest of foreign researchers specifically to the history of Kazakh society within the Russian Empire, it is necessary to note the monograph of the American researcher Virginia Martin, which touches upon the problems of bureaucratization of the colonial apparatus and the adaptation of "nomads" to the norms and procedures prescribed by Russian legal law [13].

According to Ian Campbell, it is a mistake to speak of the Russian Empire as a unified whole. "The Empire was a mixture of different managerial cultures, different notions, different personal views. It was always weaker than its representatives wanted it to be and always depended on the help of subordinates from the local population [14].

The topic of interest to us is actively developed by the Center for Slavic Studies of Hokkaido University (Sapporo, Japan), namely Kimitaki Matsuzato. Kimitaki Matsuzato proposed a typization of the governor-general power in Russia. He presented a scheme of dividing the imperial space into three parts: "inner provinces" and peripheries of two types, some governed by "ethnopolitical generals", others by "economic generals"

He notes the importance of extracting new interests and trends from the mass of information, empirical studies about the Russian Empire. He identifies three trends: mental geography (Andrei Zorin, Leonid Horizontov, etc.); borderland studies (Alfred Rieber, Ilya Vinkovetsky, etc.); and the influence of the outside world on imperial governance. The last two trends can be summarized as "cross-border history" [15].

If we talk about modern works in Russia on Russian imperial policy in Kazakhstan, both the topics of scientific research and the methods used by researchers have expanded. As Tebaev D.B. notes, in modern historical science, the theory of "absolute evil" in the assessment of the metropolis to the colonized population served as a kind of impetus for Russian historians to study this topic.

Many researchers are unequivocal in their opinion that A. Kapeller's work became a new page in Russian historiography. Scientific centers engaged in this area of research have opened. Many of them are located in the border zone, which is the reason for their interest. One of them is the Laboratory of Imperial Studies of the Asian Margins of Russia at the Faculty of History of Omsk State University. Actively developing the imperial direction in his research, was Dr. I.S., Professor A.V. Remnev (Omsk State University named after F.M. Dostoevsky). Since the defense of his doctoral dissertation "Administrative policy of autocracy in Siberia in the XIX - early XX centuries" (1997), his steady scientific interest in the problem under study can be traced. In his time, his ideas about the influence of the geographical remoteness of the peripheries on imperial policy, the peculiarities of Siberian mentality, and postcolonial discourses were innovative. In 2021, a conference "People of the Empire - Empire of People: Personal and Institutional History of the Asian Suburbs of Russia" was dedicated to his memory. The themes of the collection were defined by the framework of personal and institutional history of the empire. The articles address the study of images of empire and ways of its description, the phenomenon of imperial power and practices of its extension to the peripheries. Administrative and scientific practices of

developing and integrating territory and population are examined through the individual as the main subject and object of imperial attention. Looking at the individual through his or her personal documents, attention to the awareness and reflection of the transformations taking place around him or her, allows us to consider the mechanisms of adaptation practices. Within the framework of personal history, the authors consider and analyze the impact of spatial and social transformations on the personal and career biography of a person and its reflection in various types of personal sources [17].

The research of E. Bezikonina testifies to the evolution of views in Russian historical science, on the basis of Orenburg and other Russian historical sources considers the imperial history from the opposite side, as a participant of the process, who is influenced by it [18].

The team of the Orenburg Pedagogical University under the leadership of Dr. S. V. Lyubichankovsky, Doctor of History, initiated and actively promotes the concept of acculturation. It emphasizes how the imperial influence is reflected in the social component: education, culture, religion.

In 2019, the imperial theme was supplemented by a number of studies on Asian and Ural- Volga territories. The scientific editor and head of the monograph's author team was the famous Orenburg historian S.V. Lyubichankovsky. The collective monograph «Imperial Acculturation Policy and the Problem of Colonialism» continues the series of scientific studies of the phenomenon of acculturation of the population of the empire's peripheries. The policy of acculturation is defined by him as "cultural influence within the framework of a single state organism, aiming to create loyal imperial subjects with their own ethno-identity from the newly annexed inhabitants, with the possibility of reverse influence from these peoples" [19]. This concept of acculturation is reflected in a number of works by S.V. Lyubichankovsky [20].

Of particular interest and worthy of attention in the collective monograph are the views of Abashin S. (European Institute in St. Petersburg) and Gafarov A. (Kazan Federal University) Abashin S. argues "about Russian imperial history in regions where the empire faced not an empty space (which it imagined as empty), but a space filled with its own history, its own culture, its own actors; a history that has its own modern national historiography (...) It is necessary to enter into a dialogue with the Russian historiography (...). Regarding the term "acculturation", in his opinion, it voluntarily and unwillingly leveled, hiding the theme of violence and hegemony. In his opinion, it is impossible to understand historical and social processes in any society and in any period of time without paying close attention to different types of violence and structural disproportions that create different forms of subordination. Empires are political formations that were created largely through violence and in which the principle of inequality and hierarchy was fundamental in the structure [19, p.74].

A.A. Gafarov notes that in the structure of imperial management of the territories of nomadic peoples of the south-eastern parts of Russia (Volga-Ural, Kazakhstan and Central Asia) there is a full set of colonial elements: forced annexation of these territories, deprivation of their political independence, special legal status, economic exploitation, colonization, infringement of civil rights of the natives (and the corresponding desire of the majority of the inhabitants of these territories to improve their situation), suppression of the liberation movement and so on. Undoubtedly, the region under consideration as part of Russia had a colonial status, although it should be recognized that the domestic literature makes significant discrepancies in this issue [19, p.414]

V.A.Voropanov in the framework of his doctoral dissertation analyzed the creation, reforming and development of the justice system in the Middle and Senior Kazakh zhuzes in the context of the policy of defrontirization of the south-eastern periphery of the Russian Empire [21].

Another direction has been developed since 1990 in the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences - the concept of frontier modernization (Academician V. V. Alekseeva, E. T. Artemov and I. V. Poberezhnikov). Frontier modernization is an increase in the level of border regions not fully developed to the state of developed regions, i.e. in relation to the territories only partially integrated into the political and legal space of the state that implements modernization policy.

The works of R. Pochekaev (National Research University Higher School of Economics, St. Petersburg) are published within the framework of this concept. His monograph demonstrates the role of personality on the imperial politika in the Central Asian region in the period of XVIII - early XX centuries. The leading personnel of the imperial regional administration and representatives of the national elite of Kazakhstan and Central Asia often played a key role in the political and legal development of the region, depending on their personal positions sometimes formed the policy of a certain region [22].

There are also studies in the legal aspect of administrative reforms. These are the works of D.V.Vasiliev [23]. D.V.Vasiliev (a student of Lyubichankovsky, professor of Moscow State Pedagogical University), specializing in the issues of administrative policy in the Kazakh steppe, determines that the tendency to spread the general imperial legal norms to the Central Asian region became the leitmotif of state policy, the real expression of which was the system of military-popular administration, implemented in the Kazakh steppe. It

sought to homogenize its heterogeneous space and followed the path of unification and multidimensional assimilation of the peripheries. Therefore, it constructed regions, even if they were not such, and pursued a unified regional policy with regard to each of them. And while all the works are devoted to lawmaking, the last study considers anthropological aspects: visualization of urban everyday life, domestic acculturation, and Russian cultural influence on the everyday life of the peoples of Central Asia.

Amiran Urushadze, Oleg Grom, Natalia Dmitrieva (European Institute in St. Petersburg), how imperial administration was transformed under the influence of national peripheries. In their work, the authors note the geographical factor, remoteness of territories; administrative practices in the form of reforms. Clearly outlined imperial orientation towards the peripheries is the merger both political and cultural with the center. As a result, there was a change in the status of peripheries from objects to subjects in these relations [24].

We consider it necessary to mention another of Russia's leading experts on the history of empires from EUSPb) Miller A., who became the curator at the Yeltsin Center of the historical cycle "Empire: from the heyday to the sunset" (2023). Today, the historical role of empires is being seriously reconsidered in terms of understanding their place in the historical process. As A. Miller notes: "At the beginning of the twenty-first century we are dealing with a dynamic situation in historiography. Postcolonial discourse, for which the concept of "empire" was unambiguously abusive, is still very influential, including in Eastern Europe, but its one-sidedness is already quite obvious. Let us remember, however, that the unilateralism of the postcolonial school was largely a reaction to the previous apologetics of empires or the silencing of the dark sides of their history" [25].

A.Y. Bykov, considering the transformation of Kazakh traditional society, touches not only on political and economic changes, but also on the transformation of the traditional mentality of Kazakhs [26].

The monograph "Ethnic elites in the national policy of Russia", edited by V.V. Trepavlov, explores the policy of Russian and Soviet central and local authorities in relation to the elites of the peoples within Russia. It traces in detail the degree of involvement of multi-ethnic social elites in the social and political life of the state, analyzes the ways of forming mutual inter-elite complementarity [27].

A number of collective monographs were published on the topic under study. The release of the series «The Outskirts of the Russian Empire» was a landmark, as it was an attempt to systematize the material on the subject. This project was positioned as the most large-scale scientific and publishing project that describes the imperial experience of Russia.

Thus, in the work «Traditional Kazakh society in the national policy of the Russian Empire: conceptual foundations and mechanisms of implementation (XIX - early twentieth century)» the authors note that they analyze the conceptual foundations of the national policy of the Russian Empire in relation to traditional Kazakh society, its main mechanisms and directions of implementation, which has not been carried out before. They conclude that their totality allows to assert the involvement of Kazakh nomads in the process of modernization, which implied the creation of a qualitatively new system of administrative-territorial, socio-legal, judicial, economic structure of the Kazakh steppe. Analyzing all the circumstances, noting the positive results, nevertheless, the authors emphasize that the most important factor that predetermined the direction and content of Russia's national policy towards the Kazakh traditional society was the thesis of the civilizing mission of the empire. The question of recognizing the equality of the Kazakh people was not raised, which automatically led to the absence of civil and legal equality. The authoritarian nature of the political system of the Russian Empire and its political culture excluded relations of dialog and partnership with all social and ethno-social formations and predetermined the nature of these relations on the basis of complete subordination to the supreme power [28, p.262]

In the collective work «National peripheries in the politics of the Russian Empire and Russian public thought», two aspects are noted. This is about the mutual influence and conditionality of the process of development of nations and the development of empires. Next, this expansion of the empire at the expense of the national peripheries contributed to the modernization of the empire itself, its state institutions first of all [29].

One of the publishing centers devoted to the raised problem is the journal *Ab Imperio*, which is dedicated to the development of new imperial history, as well as to the interdisciplinary and comparativist study of the history and theory of nationalities and national movements in the post-Soviet space. Its contribution to the development of the new historiography of empire can hardly be overestimated: thanks to the creation of this journal and the activities of its editorial board, a new approach to the study of the history of Russia and the USSR and the states of the former Soviet space was institutionalized. Our domestic authors are also published in the pages of this journal [30]. To mark the fifth anniversary of the work of the editorial team, a collection of articles «New Imperial History of the Post-Soviet Space» was published, which analyzes the stated topic and considers empire as a research situation rather than a structure and problem [31].

In the conditions of gaining independence in Kazakhstani historical science there appeared a number of works on political and socio-economic history of Kazakhstan, based on new methodological approaches.

The sphere of interest of researchers became the policy of the tsarist autocracy in the XIX - early XX centuries in the Steppe region as a whole, and works on the study of administrative reforms and their consequences appear. Among them we can note the works of K.A. Zhirenchin [32], B.M. Abdrakhmanova [33]. These works focus on the administrative policy of the Russian Empire in Kazakhstan and in connection with it the evolution of the regional administrative and political system. The authors demonstrated that the Russian authorities were the main source of changes that took place in the Kazakh steppe in the new time.

This problem has been studied in modern Russian historiography. One of the first attempts to study the colonial policy of tsarism on the example of a single region was made in the work of Sarieva R.H. The preparatory measures and the process of establishing a new system of administrative and judicial management in the region, the activities of the colonial administration were traced. The activity of the latter created the necessary conditions for the colonial development of natural resources of the region and the autochthonous population. The author comes to the unambiguous conclusion that the colonial policy in the region had a universal character, covered all spheres of life of the Kazakh population, was directed against the vital interests and ideals [34].

Aitmukhambetov A.A. considered the process of incorporation of Chingizids and aristocratic layer in the administrative apparatus in the complex reform period in [35].

The issues of the formation of officialdom in Kazakh regions are raised by G.S. Sultangalieva. These issues are also considered in the aspect of those changes that occurred under the influence of modernization in traditional society [36]. Also works by Sultangalieva G. and Dalayeva T. are devoted to the institution of volost administrators, given that in the domestic historical science prevail so far works on the study of the process of implementation of the Russian government administrative reforms in the Steppe and only fragmentary information about the formation of volost system of governance [37].

Izbasarova G.B. considers the regional policy of the empire in the Kazakh steppe, studies the opinions of officials of different ranks on its improvement [38]. The structural-system method of studying sources allowed the author to outline the contours of government policy, to study the genesis of views of officials of different ranks on the development of Kazakh society, on the improvement of administrative policy after the introduction of the reform of 1844. In her monograph "The Kazakh steppe of the Orenburg department in imperial projects and practices of the first half of the XIX century." analyzed the ongoing administrative changes, considered the system of political institutions, their powers and principles of interaction, the attitude of Kazakh society and its elite to the ongoing processes. The concept of «nomadic mental map of space» is introduced [39].

With regard to the problem of Russia's imperial history, J. Abylkhodzhin, in the above- mentioned discussion on imperial acculturation policy, has very definitely stated his point of view, noting that the concept of "imperial acculturation" is understood as a one-sided process where the Russian metropolis acts as the transmitter of the "advanced cultural model" and its recipients are the colonial national suburbs, in our case nomads and semi-nomads of Kazakhstan. The notion of "imperial acculturation" as applied to the nomadic Steppe is hardly acceptable (we are referring here to its mass level, and not individual cases, for example, the perception of Russian culture by the nascent, and therefore small number of national intelligentsia). Yes, the Russian Empire, we repeat, did not pursue such a goal here. Like all empires, it had purely pragmatic goals: to use the territory in its own interests. Here J.Abylkhodzhin also notes that one should bear in mind the incommensurability of the territories of Kazakhs, Bashkirs and Kalmyks in terms of the organization of their administrative management, and therefore its methods were different. As for Kazakhstan, the empire did not try to seriously transform local traditional structures and interfered very little in their internal life and foundations, but tried (and it succeeded) to bind and keep under control the steppe elite [19, P.379]

Conclusions. The problem of Russia's national policy towards the Kazakh community has been studied in Western historiography in the context of the general tendencies of studying colonialism as a historical phenomenon "with all its negative and positive features". The majority of researchers adhere to the view that the most severe consequences for the fate of the Kazakhs had the resettlement policy of Tsarism, which initiated numerous tragic pages of its history.

As modern Russian researchers point out, most advocate that Russia "developed a type of national relations that took into account the interests of foreign ethnic groups and promoted centuries-long, relatively peaceful coexistence of peoples of different racial, religious-confessional and ethnic orientations". It was possible to solve such a grandiose task in the conditions of multi-ethnicity of Russian society only through the policy of Russification, which "meant not the creation of advantages and privileges for Russians, but primarily the systematization and unification of governance, the integration of all ethnic groups into a single Russian nation". And they come to the conclusion that the policy of Russification was not the goal of national policy, but a means, a method of realization of political ambitions, it should certainly contribute to the increase in social mobility of the population of ethnoregions, the Russian language was to act as a "language of modernization". The analysis

of the Russian national policy implemented in the Steppe region allows us to assert that in its content it was, in fact, an attempt to modernize traditional social institutions and relations, the system of life support of Kazakh society.

Most Kazakhstani researchers, as well as foreign researchers (except Russia), adhere to the traditional assessment of Russia's imperial policy towards the Kazakh steppes, calling it colonial, without adhering to the concept of frontier or imperial policy of acculturation. More acceptable to the colonial policy is the concept of *kulturtreğestvo*, which implies actions, behavior or ideology in the enslavement of countries, colonies by imperialists under the pretext of imposing culture.

The analyzed historiography both foreign and Kazakhstani allows us to note that in the studies on the history of Central Asia and Kazakhstan of the imperial period, preference is given to the Turkestan region, more weakly expressed research on the Steppe regions.

Of course, the researcher/author reconstructs/imagines the empire in his/her own way, operating with certain ideas and concepts. All this contributes to the creation of a kind of mosaic, but at the same time quite a holistic portrait of national imperial policy.

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