

## **THE ROLE OF COTTON IN THE “BIG GAME” FOR CENTRAL ASIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The article reveals the role of cotton in the international politics of colonial countries and the Central Asian khanates falling under the colonial dependence of Russia.*

**Keywords:** *cotton, market, colony, dependence, conquest.*

### **АННОТАЦИЯ**

*В статье раскрывается роль хлопка в международной политике колониальных стран и подпадании среднеазиатских ханств под колониальную зависимость России.*

**Ключевые слова:** *хлопок, рынок, колония, зависимость, завоевание.*

### **ANNOTATSIYA**

*Maqolada paxtaning mustamlakachilik mamlakatlarining xalqaro siyosatida va O'rta Osiyo xonliklarining Rossiyaning mustamlakachilik qaramligiga tushib qolishidagi o'rni ochib berilgan.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *paxta, bozor, koloniya, qaramlik, bosib olinish.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

For the first time in the ancient world, cotton was grown 7000 years ago (5th millennium BC) by representatives of a civilization located in the Indus Valley. Evidence of cotton cultivation was found in archaeological studies of the Mergarkh culture, where copper beads with cotton threads were preserved[4].

The beginning of the industrial revolution in Britain in the 18th century led to the rapid development of the cotton industry, which made textiles the main export product of the British. In 1738, Lewis Paul and John White of Birmingham, England, patented a spinning machine with a system of rotating shafts and rotating coils to produce cotton cloth of equal thickness. Later, the invention of the spinning loom by Richard Arkwright in 1769 greatly accelerated the production of cotton yarn and clothing by English weavers. Since the late 18th century, the city of Manchester, England, has received the nickname "Cotton Fields". Cottonopolis), because the cotton industry filled the city and it became the center of world trade in products. The production capacity of Great Britain and the United States increased in 1793 with the invention of the first efficient cotton gin by the American Eli Whitney.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS**

In the process of analyzing this article, the methods of logic, historicity, consistency and objectivity of scientific knowledge were widely used. Scientific work with Beckert, "Cotton Empires: a Global History" it was defined as a methodological resource.

## **DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

Improvements in technology and increased control of the global market allowed English merchants to create a production chain that bought raw cotton from colonial plantations and processed it into cotton cloth in Lancashire factories, which were then controlled by the British Navy. XIX In the 19th century, the main consumers of raw cotton were the colonial markets of British West Africa, British India, and China (from Shanghai to Hong Kong).[12].

According to Sven Beckert's 2014 book Cotton Empires: a Global History, the main cotton producing countries in the 19th century were the United States, India, and Egypt. As Beckert noted, "In the 19th century, the most important cotton-growing regions were the southern United States, India, and Egypt, which together produced more than 80 percent of the world's cotton."

By far the largest cotton producer in the United States, the southern states of the United States, known as the "Cotton Belt," produced more than two-thirds of the world's cotton production by the mid-19th century. India was another major producer, especially in the Gujarat region, where Indian cotton was prized for its good quality. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 made it easier for Egypt, an important cotton producer, to transport raw materials to Europe.

In the 19th century, cotton-growing countries included Brazil, China, and Russia, but their production levels were much lower than in the United States, India, and Egypt.

Imports of cotton from the United States to Russia began around the 1850s as a result of the expansion of the Russian textile industry in the mid-19th century and continued until the early 20th century. At that time, the Russian Empire sought to increase cotton production to meet the demand for textile products, and turned to the United States as a source of raw cotton.

At first, the trade was dominated by English merchants, who acted as intermediaries between the Russian and American markets. However, after the Crimean War (1853-1856), when Russia was under international sanctions, American merchants won a large share of the market. Cotton imports from the United States were controlled by American merchants and trading companies that sent cotton to

Russian ports on the Baltic and Black Seas. These companies include Baring Brothers and Co., Brown Brothers and Co. and the New York firm Phelps, Dodge & Co. Later, Russian merchants and entrepreneurs also engaged in the cotton trade, creating their own companies and buying cotton directly from American producers. Famous Russian cotton merchants of that time were Ivan Aizovsky, Pavel Tretyakov and Dmitry Mendeleev.

Cotton was mainly transported by sea. The main entry points to the Russian market were the ports of Odessa, Riga and St. Petersburg. The journey from the United States to Russia took about two to three months, cotton was packed in bales and sent on large cargo ships. American cotton was particularly important for Russia's textile industry, which was heavily dependent on imported raw materials. Trade was an important source of income for American and Russian merchants and contributed to the development of world trade. It should be noted that the import of American cotton to Russia was not without controversy during the American Civil War, when the Allied blockade of southern ports stopped the cotton trade. Some Russian industrialists and government officials advocated the development of domestic cotton production as a means of reducing dependence on the United States, while others continued to support the import of American cotton. [7]

According to Sven Beckert's book *Cotton Empires: A Global History*, published in 2014, in XIX In addition to Russia, several other countries were also interested in Central Asian cotton.

For example, Great Britain is the main importer of Bukhara cotton, the quality of which is highly valued. According to Beckert, " Bukhara cotton, long sold along the Silk Road, became the centerpiece of the British cotton complex in the 1860s and 1870s." English merchants established trading posts in Central Asia, and the cotton they brought was used to produce quality fabrics in Manchester and other English textile centers.

The United States was also interested in Central Asian cotton, as American cotton producers faced fierce competition from Egyptian and Indian cotton, which was valued for its quality. American merchants established contacts with merchants from Central Asia and the Far East. XIX centuries began to import Bukhara cotton. As Beckert noted, "Bukhara cotton also became part of the American Cotton Empire, and American merchants traded in this area."

France and Germany were also interested in Central Asian cotton, although less so than England and the United States. French textile manufacturers began importing Bukhara cotton in the 1860s, and German merchants in the 1870s. [5]

In the end XIX For centuries, rising prices for American cotton and difficulties with its supply forced the Russian government to grow cotton in Turkestan. Since Khiva and Bukhara were not yet fully conquered by the Russian Empire, Central Asia could not meet all the needs of Russian industry[11].

Although these khanates were part of Russia, they had virtually unlimited power in internal affairs. Russia still had to buy cotton from the United States. About 60 percent of the cotton was imported. The main supplier for the Russian Empire was the southern states of the United States. During the American Civil War (1861-1865), the supply of raw cotton to Europe, including Russia, declined sharply. In two years: from 1861 to 1863, the import of raw cotton to the Russian Empire decreased almost fivefold. During the American Civil War, cotton exports from the country almost stopped, as the Allies blockaded southern ports and decided to stop exporting in the hope that the northern states would force Great Britain to recognize the Confederacy or join the war. But in this situation, the British and French began to buy Egyptian cotton instead of American cotton. Huge investments were made in the development of cotton plantations, Ismail Pasha <sup>1</sup> the government has received very large loans from European bankers and stock exchanges. Also at this time, cotton cultivation in India increased by the British government[9].

The American Civil War coincided with the conquest of Central Asia, and, of course, this event was significant for economic reasons, and at the same time had economic consequences for the future of the region. From the beginning of the century, Central Asian merchants supplied local cotton raw materials to textile enterprises of the Russian Empire. Their share in the supply of cotton for the Russian textile industry gradually increased and by 1864 for the first time exceeded imports from the United States. But the raw materials of Central Asia were of poor quality, and local farmers could not guarantee stable trade due to the lack of proper infrastructure. infrastructure. In Central Asia, the Russian government had to solve several tasks simultaneously: to switch to new varieties of cotton, to build transport communications in the colonial territories, to update and repair irrigation networks. Governor-General Konstantin Petrovich Kaufman carefully studied the economic situation of the newly conquered country... a true statesman saw the future and understood what a great future Turkestan would have if the cotton industry developed there. He sent two of his best-educated and most efficient officials to Texas: Brodovsky and Samolevsky. They were instructed to study the process of growing and processing cotton, return in two years and bring with them seeds of the latest American varieties. Kaufman instructed them to create a cotton plantation as an

experiment, where local residents could receive cotton seeds for free and get acquainted with the process of processing raw materials[1].

Thanks to the first-hand introduction of the technology by local farmers, initially imported cotton gin machines and presses were used on the farm with minimal costs. Cotton seeds quickly spread throughout Turkestan, and a wave of orders for the latest agricultural equipment came from Central Asia. Cotton had to be imported. By 1880, Central Asia was separated from the European part of Russia by vast deserts and steppes. Camel caravans could not provide a reliable cargo connection. The decision came from the military, which is in dire need of stable logistics, fighting with Turkmen tribes and anticipating a possible conflict with Afghanistan in the Kushka region. They decided to build a railway from the port of Krasnovodsk on the Caspian Sea to the city of Kyzyl-Arvat at the foot of Kopetdoh. This railway was completed in 1881. In 1885, the road was extended to Ashgabat, and in 1888, at the request of civilians, a bridge was built across the Amu Darya and reached Samarkand, and already

In 1891, 165,000 tons of cotton were transported through it to Russia.

Irrigation works were less complex and responsible activities. It was impossible to grow cotton without guaranteed irrigation. In South America, due to the abundance of rivers and rain, it occupied an area with high natural humidity, and in Central Asia there was neither the first nor the second. There have been previous attempts to dig channels on Kaufman's initiative, but each time these attempts did not give the expected result. As a result of the mass production of raw cotton in Turkestan, a local industry for its primary processing was created[2].

So, in the 19th century, Central Asian cotton was considered a valuable commodity for many countries due to its high quality and availability. During this period, Russia was undoubtedly one of the main participants in the cotton trade in Central Asia, but other countries also showed serious interest in this raw material.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, in the 19th century, one of the most important countries in the cotton trade in Central Asia was Great Britain, the second largest country after the Russian Empire. British textile manufacturers enjoyed high demand for high-quality cotton, and Central Asian cotton was considered the best in the world. As a result, the British government and private companies invested heavily in developing cotton production in Central Asia, especially in present-day Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

France also took part in the Central Asian cotton trade in XIX in the 21st century, although to a lesser extent than Russia and the United Kingdom. French

merchants were particularly interested in silk production in Central Asia, but according to sources, they also traded in cotton and other goods. Other countries interested in the cotton trade from Central Asia, included Russia, the UK and France, along with Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. These countries were looking for sources of high-quality cotton in this region to develop their textile industry[8].

As a result of new changes in the economy and related shifts in the vision of the entire complex of geopolitical issues, this is related to ensuring national security[2].

In general, the demand for Central Asian cotton in the 19th century was high, and many countries competed for this valuable product. Russia, of course, was an important player in this trade, but other countries also showed serious interest in it.

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