



DESCRIPTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNANCE OF THE TURKESTAN REGION IN LEGISLATIVE DOCUMENTS OF THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

This text analyzes the source value of legislative and official record-keeping documents produced during the period of the Russian Empire for studying the history of the Turkestan region. Normative acts—particularly statutes and instructions related to the governance of Turkestan—are interpreted as a primary evidentiary layer that makes it possible to reconstruct the evolution of the region’s administrative management and the legal status of the local population. In addition, the service records (formular lists) of colonial administrative officials, reports by senior authorities, and materials from senatorial inspections (F.K. Girs, K.K. Palen) are presented as reliable sources illuminating the region’s economy, tax policy, land–property relations, and the mechanisms of bureaucratic governance. Using the reports of K.P. Kaufman as an example, the content of the land-tax reform project, the distribution of the tax burden, and issues of fiscal interest are examined. In conclusion, although the imperial legislative documents served to consolidate the colonial position in Turkestan, it is substantiated that they possess high source value for analyzing the administrative and legal practices of the period.

Keywords: Turkestan region, Russian imperial legislation, normative legal acts, colonial governance, “Regulations,” official reports, formular lists, senatorial inspection, land and tax policy, administrative evolution.



**ROSSIYA HUKUMATINING QONUNCHILIK HUJJATLARIDA
TURKISTON O‘LKASI MA’MURIY BOSHQARUVI TAVSIFI**

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Annotatsiya:

Ushbu matnda Turkiston o‘lkasi tarixini o‘rganishda Rossiya imperiyasi davrida yaratilgan qonunchilik va rasmiy ish yuritish hujjatlarining manbaviy ahamiyati tahlil qilinadi. Me‘yoriy hujjatlar, xususan Turkiston boshqaruviga doir nizom va ko‘rsatmalar o‘lkaning ma‘muriy boshqaruv evolyutsiyasini hamda mahalliy aholining huquqiy holatini rekonstruksiya qilish imkonini beruvchi asosiy daliliy qatlam sifatida talqin etiladi. Shuningdek, mustamlaka apparati amaldorlarining formulyar ro‘yxatlari, yuqori mansabdorlar hisobotlari hamda senatorlik taftishlari (F.K. Girs, K.K. Palen) materiallari o‘lka iqtisodiyoti, soliq siyosati, yer-mulk munosabatlari va byurokratik boshqaruv mexanizmlarini yorituvchi ishonchli manbalar sifatida ko‘rsatib beriladi. K.P. Kaufman hisobotlari misolida yer solig‘i islohoti loyihasining mazmuni, soliqlar yukining taqsimlanishi va fiskal manfaatdorlik masalalari ochib beriladi. Xulosa sifatida, imperiya qonunchilik hujjatlari Turkistonda mustamlakachilik mavqeini mustahkamlashga xizmat qilgan bo‘lsa-da, ular davrning ma‘muriy-huquqiy amaliyotini tahlil qilish uchun yuqori manbaviy qimmatga ega ekani asoslanadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Turkiston o‘lkasi, Rossiya imperiyasi qonunchiligi, me‘yoriy hujjatlar, mustamlaka boshqaruvi, “Nizom”lar, rasmiy hisobotlar, formulyar ro‘yxatlar, senatorlik taftishi, yer-soliq siyosati, ma‘muriy evolyutsiya.

In studying the history of the Turkestan region, legislative documents occupy a distinctive place, and, by their origin and characteristics, they are highly diverse. Among them, it is necessary to single out normative acts—namely, compilations of laws and documents adopted by the government of the Russian Empire that were connected with the administration of the Turkestan region and the administrative changes implemented there.



Modern American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities

ISSN (E): 3067-8153

Volume 2, Issue 2, February, 2026

Website: usajournals.org

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The source value of these legal documents lies in the fact that they make it possible to trace the evolution of Turkestan's administrative governance and the legal status of the local population as specific to the period under study. The colonial administrative apparatus of Turkestan, governed from St. Petersburg, consistently needed such compilations. As examples, one may cite the "Instruction on the Organization of the Turkestan Region and the Rights and Duties of Rural Officials," the "Regulations on the Administration of the Turkestan Region" published in 1892 along with its supplements of 1906, 1908, and 1909, as well as the laws and decrees adopted by the government up to 1 June 1911, among others.

The title of the first of the above-mentioned legal documents itself indicates that, although this compilation was not included in the formal corpus of laws, it nevertheless required the local authorities to comply with its provisions and to implement prompt measures. The second legal document, in turn, was introduced as a result of changes that had occurred in the region over a twenty-year period. It should be emphasized that, in fulfilling the tasks set out in scholarly research, these legislative materials have considerable significance.

A separate group of official documents consists of the service, or formular, lists of each official in the colony. These contain information on an official's full name, surname, age, religious affiliation, social estate, education, records of immovable property, salary, ranks and titles, place of service prior to arriving in Turkestan, and the reasons for and destination of departure. Formular lists are regarded as reliable sources, since they did not include vague information. In cases where the data were insufficient, reference publications were also consulted to complete them.

Reports on the activities of senior officials of the Turkestan administrative chancellery constitute an integral part of the sources related to official record-keeping. An analysis of these reports shows that all of them were compiled according to a clearly defined scheme. They contain information on the condition of the national economy and the population's economic activity, taxes and obligations, lifestyle, public health, administrative and judicial institutions, and other matters.



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The reports typically included conclusions and proposals, while also presenting the personal views of particular officials regarding ongoing events. This indicates that the reports were prepared at a serious level and with high professional competence. The report by K. Kaufman is regarded as the most comprehensive and substantive document, covering the entire period of his activity. According to the data contained in the report, Kaufman planned a land-tax reform in the colony. Although the core of the project concerned taxation, it was precisely in this sphere that the project was judged unsatisfactory. In the view of the commission, the burden of land taxes would fall on the least well-off strata of the population—namely, those whose lands, under the K.P. Kaufman project, were declared state property and granted for permanent use. While the project stipulated a tax rate of 10 percent to be levied from peasants in the form of produce or money, it was to be collected not from the harvested yield, but from the gross income of the entire landholding (whether the plot was cultivated or left fallow). In practice, the specific tax rate was not 10 percent but 13.5 percent. Furthermore, the system of volosts and uyezds introduced by Kaufman as administrative units did not allow for determining the level of productivity of arable land in the distribution of taxes. The information in Kaufman's reports demonstrates that Turkestan was not an unprofitable territory for the imperial treasury: revenues extracted from the region more than covered the military and political expenditures being carried out there. In Russia, senatorial inspections had been conducted as a mechanism for overseeing the state apparatus since the eighteenth century. In Turkestan, two such inspections were carried out. The reports of the senatorial inspections by F.K. Girs and K.K. Palen provide rich material for analyzing twenty-five years of activity of the colonial governmental system and, at the same time, clarify the approaches of high-ranking officials of the Russian imperial bureaucracy to the governance of Turkestan.

During the inspection conducted by F.K. Girs, a set of plans and a list of problematic issues related to Turkestan's economic condition were compiled across a number of spheres. These included land use, tax policy, the financial situation, the condition of the credit system, irrigation, and water use. The report also presented the results of statistical examinations of the expenditures and revenues of state institutions in Turkestan and analyzed the budget deficit



*Modern American Journal of Social Sciences
and Humanities*

ISSN (E): 3067-8153

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Website: usajournals.org

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allocated by the empire for the colony for the period 1867–1881. In particular, although the Girs report repeatedly emphasized a deficit of 100 million rubles for the region, it did not mention that during 1867–1881—amid the conquest of the Central Asian khanates—the imperial army was quartered in the homes of the local population across Turkestan’s provinces and uyezds, that local residents were compelled to provide tents and accommodations, and, most importantly, to supply food; nor did it mention the construction or repair of roads necessary for troop movements. All of these burdens fell on the population of the region. As a result of military campaigns carried out against the peoples of Turkestan, many new taxes were introduced.

Members of the inspection commission headed by F.K. Girs visited villages where disputes related to land affairs had arisen, held conversations with local residents, and carefully examined land-related documents. In Girs’s view, land laws associated with Muslim rulers that had existed since the era of Amir Temur’s rule, waqf deeds, legal norms concerning religious inheritance, as well as decisions of people’s courts on land use could serve as important sources for developing new land legislation in Turkestan. Girs accused the Kaufman administration, which had governed the region, of spending fourteen years translating the Qur’an and sharia provisions and, in resolving issues related to land use and taxation, limiting itself solely to those materials. In his assessment, the Kaufman administration did not study the colony’s socio-economic situation with sufficient thoroughness.

Among the materials collected by the senators, documents on the tax system introduced in Turkestan represent an especially valuable source for research.

As F.K. Girs emphasized, Kaufman replaced tax payments that were, from the standpoint of the imperial government, fair and beneficial with tax systems that were unjust and produced deficits. In his view, the first Governor-General of Turkestan followed the sharia-based notion that the conqueror is “the ruler of all conquered lands” and therefore introduced a state obrok (quitrent) tax on all lands used by the population. In practice, however, transactions related to land held in permanent use should have been carried out on the basis of private property rights. In Russia itself, the discussion of peasant-dependent (serf) institutions was largely



limited to proposing “general initial” explanatory principles for land organization.

The final conclusions concerning the basic principles of land-and-tax policy were formalized in the “Regulations on the Administration of the Turkestan Region” of 1886. F. Girs and K. Palen were compelled to acknowledge the very low level of literacy among officials of the colonial administration responsible for governing the region and the widespread nature of bribery within this system. In doing so, both effectively cast doubt on the slogan, endorsed in the Russian press of the time, that Turkestan’s officials were “leaders of the Eastern regions toward European civilization.”

Thus, the legislative documents of the government of the Russian Empire primarily served to consolidate the empire’s colonial position in Turkestan. The source value of these legal acts lies in the fact that they allow one to trace the evolution of Turkestan’s administrative governance and the legal status of the local population as characteristic of the period under study. Moreover, in response to the needs of the local administration, various compilations of laws and instructions, directives, obligations, and resolutions were published, all of which functioned as military, administrative, and departmental modes of rule and contributed to further strengthening imperial authority.

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*Modern American Journal of Social Sciences
and Humanities*

ISSN (E): 3067-8153

Volume 2, Issue 2, February, 2026

Website: usajournals.org

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