"The Touch of Civilization"

Sabol, Steven

Published by University Press of Colorado


For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/51250

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=1949107
Throughout the nineteenth century, American and Russian politicians, intellectuals, and others typically concluded that American and Russian continental expansion was territorial consolidation, unification, or some sort of destiny. That expansion also included indigenous populations that possessed, in the colonizers’ view, inferior social, cultural, economic, and political norms: they were allegedly uncivilized and claimed more land than necessary for their needs and survival. In addition, the United States and Russia each perceived themselves within exceptionalist representations and discourses, often expressed differently from concomitant European overseas expansion and imperialism. Yet, American and Russian internal colonization was “as dependent on colonial relations of dominance as were any of Europe’s external incursions.”

Both the Americans and the Russians perceived internal colonization as a process that differed from European imperialism and colonization in Asia and Africa, which they both claimed to reject but clearly paralleled and mimicked. Interestingly, the American government rarely used the term colonization to describe its expansion or policies. In the regions that experienced internal colonization, the term was referenced occasionally to force Indians onto reservations, but Americans never called them colonies. For example, in 1853, the Friend, a Quaker publication, debated the concept, noting that “[i]t has been suggested that it would be good policy to colonize these people along the rich bottoms with which those wild regions are interspersed, giving them lands to be held
in individual right as long as actually occupied. The suggestion is worthy of consideration.” In 1865 Army captain James L. Fisk urged the commissioner of Indian affairs and the American government “towards colonizing all the tribes of Indians who now roam over the territorial domain between Minnesota and Iowa and the Rocky mountains.” He claimed, “the policy of colonizing them on a common and restricted reservation of sufficient dimensions and resources for their subsistence will . . . prove a direct and immediate relief and benefit to both the government and the Indians.” Americans used the term to describe the territorial restrictions to be imposed on the Indians—the allotment of land for their specific and designated use—but colonization was not a reference to designate where Americans could settle.

The Russians often used the term colonization, but it was not until the 1880s that the government described parts of Siberia and Turkestan as colonies; beforehand, Russians interpreted expansion as integration and unification, similar to American perceptions of Manifest Destiny. Nonetheless, during the nineteenth-century expansion, the Russians looked to other European empires to model their own internal colonial policies—particularly the British in India and the French in Algeria. Some Russian officials and intellectuals also looked to the United States and its administration of internally colonized regions and people. Many Russians studied the importance of the American transcontinental railroad when constructing the Trans-Siberian Railway in the 1890s, and they also debated the utility of the American 1862 Homestead Act as a model for their peasant resettlement policies in Siberia, the Kazakh Steppe, and Turkestan. Interestingly, Russia was not the only European empire to study American expansion and colonization. After 1870 Germans also studied the American example, as they equated it to nineteenth-century European expansion and colonization in Asia and Africa. According to historian Jens-Uwe Guettel, many Germans “increasingly identified American expansion and racial policies as models that colonizers could replicate elsewhere in the world” and which linked the “American frontier to other areas colonized by Europeans.”

Internal colonization, and its attending ambition to nurture civilization, therefore, meant subverting—perhaps even destroying—Sioux and Kazakh social, cultural, political, and economic structures. The multiple American and Russian policies and programs were not, however, temporal mirrors of each other but did reflect comparable colonial ideologies and philosophies. Equally important, the policies, programs, ideologies, and philosophies reflected the sense of territorial unification and incorporation of uninhabited and unused land. The Americans and Russians asserted that the nomadic Sioux and Kazakhs claimed more land
than was reasonable for a backward, uncivilized people. Internal colonization was, therefore, comparable to settler colonialism in other contexts and included a set of policies, programs, and strategies designed to incorporate the land and socially and culturally integrate the people into the colonizing state structures and institutions.\textsuperscript{8}

\section*{ADMINISTERING THE LANDS}

In the nineteenth century, Americans and Russians shared a civilizing philosophy and imperial ideology with other European imperial powers. Unlike their European counterparts, however, neither the United States nor Russia established ministries or departments to deal with internal colonization. In other words, neither created a colonial office comparable to the British, the Dutch, or the French to deal with colonized people. For example, the British created a colonial office inside its War Department in 1801; it later became its own department.\textsuperscript{9} The Dutch established a colonial ministry in 1806. The French created something similar in the 1890s, known as the Ministry of Overseas France, but it did not administer Algeria. The French considered Algeria a province, not a colony and directed it under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior.\textsuperscript{10} Other nineteenth-century European empires organized the alchemy of internal colonization differently than the United States and Russia. Although the United States and Russia both created components of centralized, organizational administrations that implemented various policies and programs, they did not create a colonial ministry.

In 1824 the United States established the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), initially under the Department of War but later transferred in 1849 to the Department of the Interior, which was also the central department to manage the increasingly expanded federal lands and resources in the American West.\textsuperscript{11} The BIA was as close to a colonial office as the United States ever had during the nineteenth century, certainly until the Spanish-American War brought the Philippines and Hawaii into the American fold. The Russians pursued a slightly different path to govern their colonized lands and peoples. The Ministry of State Domains (established in 1837) managed the land. A governor-general within the Department of War, however, administered the people. According to Willard Sunderland, in a recent analysis, the “various peoples of the [Russian] empire tended to be administered according to their location, religion, occupation, or some combination of these criteria, and they often fell at once under several administrative structures. But no central organ existed to administer colonial people defined as a group.”\textsuperscript{12}
It appears that the main reason the Americans and the Russians never established colonial ministries was because the land and peoples were internal to the international boundaries. The United States and Russia incorporated and integrated contiguous territory. Another reason, perhaps, was that the United States and Russia each expected the internally colonized people eventually to amalgamate under the same governing structures that existed for the state’s other citizens or subjects. Essentially, at some point in the future, natives might enjoy whatever rights and privileges accorded to Americans or Russians. Settler colonization, the American and Russian form of internal colonization, required the state to intervene militarily, politically, and economically and typically emphasized recreating the colonizing society’s social, political, and economic characteristics in the new territory.

The United States and Russia did create geographic societies, similar to their European counterparts, initially chartered to investigate the new lands and peoples being discovered in Asia, Africa, and the Americas—the Russian Imperial Geographic Society (RGO) in 1845 and the American Geographical Society in 1851. Throughout the nineteenth century, Europeans dispatched scholars around the world, but the RGO focused its considerable energies chiefly on Russia’s territories in the Caucasus, central Asia, and Siberia. American scholars set off around the world as well, but they also recognized that their unexplored continent preserved its own incredible geography and indigenous populations. In a sense, the United States and Russia possessed internal, undiscovered lands and peoples that equaled whatever the Europeans might discover in recently colonized places.

At the core of American expansion into the plains and Russian expansion into the steppe, and all the internal colonization policies implemented by the United States and Russia, land was the indispensable stimulus: its control, its redistribution, and its use. As Patrick Wolfe correctly noted, “Whatever settlers may say—and they generally have a lot to say—the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory. Territoriality is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element.” Throughout the nineteenth century, the United States and Russia pushed rapidly across a defensive frontier boundary, behind which they possessed an immediate base of power that could and did operate at long distances from the dominant metropole, authority, populations, and resources. They established military posts in order to protect trade in the borderlands and later created settlements that permanently situated Americans and Russians in the plains and the steppe. Crossing the artificially imposed boundaries, American pioneers and Russia peasants engaged in settler internal colonization. By the 1820s, the Americans
were still barely a presence west of the Mississippi River; Russia, on the other hand, was more fully prepared to extend its reach further into the steppe regions south into Turkestan.

In both the American and Russian cases, resituating the frontier boundary around and over the colonized people physically integrated the land and indigenous people into the territorial contours of the colonizing state. It was, as anthropologist Deborah Bird Rose argued, a situation in which to be in the way of settler colonization, all the indigenous population had to do was stay home.14 Put another way, what constituted places where the Sioux and Kazakhs could live on the frontier was possible only as long as the frontier remained stagnant, immobile: “Indian homelands were only possible on the frontier; and as the frontier moved, so did the homelands.”15 Early twentieth-century traveler George Frederick Wright observed the comparable ideologies at work in the plains and the steppe. He wrote, the “result is the same . . . the pioneers [Russian peasants] who are far beyond the reach of the central government became a law unto themselves . . . their dealing with the native races of Siberia can be easily enough equaled in that of the frontiersmen of the United States, who have by similar means gradually wrested the continent of America from the improvident hands of the Red Indian.”16 The nomadic Sioux and Kazakhs used the land extensively rather than intensively. Therefore, Sioux and Kazakh claims to the land meant it was also their most important commodity. In Russian minds, the Kazakhs failed to exploit the land to its agrarian potential. Expelling the Kazakhs from pastures opened the land for intensive agricultural exploitation by Russian peasants rather than extensive livestock production by potentially marauding nomads.

In 1822 Mikhail Speransky, the governor-general of Siberia, proposed a series of reforms—essentially, administrative regulations—which demarcated specific territories for Kazakhs in the steppe.17 The new regulations also imposed stronger civil administrative codes on the Kazakhs in order to integrate the nomads further into tighter union with the Russian Empire. The goal was to advance Russian trade, culture, and control throughout the steppe.18 The new organizational pattern also resembled the Russian peasant system, appealing to a Russian administrator’s native sensibilities. Indeed, the Russians expropriated almost 7 million desiatin (1 desiatin equals roughly 2.7 acres) of land in the Ural River region for exclusive use by Russian peasants.19 Speransky’s reforms left Kazakh social and cultural norms generally unaffected; converting Kazakhs to Christianity was not part of the alchemy of Russian internal colonization and certainly not a part of Speransky’s objectives. What Speransky’s reforms revealed, as well, was that the internal colonization of the Kazakhs was an ad hoc
reorganization designed to deal with only the steppe region. It was not part of a larger set of organizational restructuring that characterized a singular Russian colonial or settler policy or program to incorporate the Kazakhs into the empire.

By the time of Speransky's reforms in the Kazakh Steppe, the Americans were only beginning to formulate policies and programs to integrate the land and the people internally colonized. Americans, however, generally confined relations with the Sioux at that time to trade; land was not the issue in the West that it was in the East. The federal government assumed control of economic intercourse with all Indian tribes, and in 1806 Congress created the superintendent of Indian Trade; all Indian affairs were under his supervision. Trade between the United States and Indians, including the Sioux, was organized chiefly through treaty relations. Nevertheless, treaties also served as a different mechanism to integrate Indians than the Russian method, which they never predicated on treaties and the notion of mutual sovereignty between signatories.

In both American and Russian cases, the colonizer determined to manage what land the indigenous population could use and, more importantly, how much land was necessary for survival. Unlike the United States, which controlled economic relations with Indians—particularly the marketplace for land—the Russians did not directly interfere with economic exchanges. One significant difference that influenced the character of the policies devised was the role that the Sioux and the Kazakhs played in the colonizers' general economy. Put simply, as the fur trade declined by the 1840s, the Sioux hunting nomadism produced nothing valued by the Americans; whereas the Kazakhs' pastoral nomadism generated large numbers of sheep, hides, and wool that Russians sought at annual markets throughout the steppe.20 In addition, Kazakhs were required to pay an annual kibitka tax (kibitka is the Russian word for yurt)—usually only about one ruble, which increased to four rubles by the end of the century. The Americans never extracted a comparable revenue stream from the Sioux; instead, treaties obligated the American government to compensate tribes for the land cession. The Russians did not compensate the Kazakhs. The United States used annuities and allotted land to regulate Sioux behavior, or at least behavior it considered consistent with civilization. The Russians never followed that path; instead, the Russians simply removed land on which the Kazakhs could migrate, thereby forcing Kazakhs to settle on the least favorable tracts of land to adopt farming.

THE ALCHEMY OF SETTLER COLONIZATION AND ALLOTMENT
Throughout the nineteenth century, the United States and Russia allotted land for a specific use. Land was allotted for resettlement by either pioneers or
peasants and different tracts were set aside for the Sioux and the Kazakhs. The American treaty system did not employ the concept of colonized land or people. Treaties, instead, established the framework whereby Indians ceded land to the Americans. Russia merely annexed the land, which it did in 1824 when it announced formal annexation of the Kazakh Steppe. The American treaty system and land cessation was complicated further by a new policy—removal—which was, according to Francis Paul Prucha, “the culmination of a movement that had been gradually gaining momentum in government circles for nearly three decades.”

It did not affect the Sioux directly, but it fashioned a legal relationship between all Indians and the American government. In 1831 the US Supreme Court decision in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* acknowledged the “distinct political society” that ultimately placed all Indians in a legal ambiguity called “domestic dependent nations.” As such, the Sioux and all Indians became “wards” under the guardianship of the United States. The American government claimed Indian land “independent of their [Indian] will, which must take effect in point of possession when their right of possession ceases.”

Those Indians relocated, or removed, from their territories east of the Mississippi subsequently, and forcibly, resettled on communally reserved lands in what Americans generously called Indian Territory, in present-day Oklahoma.

Indian removal was the result of conquest, treaties, legislation, and legal action. In the 1830s, removal forced some eastern Indian tribes onto reservations, but the Sioux continued to migrate freely on the plains. Although not called allotment, the affect meant setting aside specific land for a specific people. More importantly, it established the idea of using reservations to set aside land only for Indians to use. Conversely, the Russians similarly segregated land, but that segregated land was for Russian peasants to use rather than for the Kazakhs, more in common with other European colonial environments in Asia and Africa. The Russian colonizer initially segregated itself apart from the native population on land the natives could not use. In the United States, the government segregated native populations, quickly enclosed by colonial settlements, on land apart from the colonizer.

The Russians prohibited Kazakhs to migrate or pasture their livestock on or near steppe land reserved for Russian settlement; it was removal without treaties or obligations. The Russian goal was to integrate, economically and administratively, the Kazakhs, to manage their movement and open land for further Russian internal colonization. As such, Kazakhs were restricted to specific districts (volost); special permission was required from a Russian official for Kazakhs to move from one district to another. The persistent Kazakh resistance to Russian internal colonization in the 1820s did not impede Russian expansion.
and peasant resettlement in the steppe. In time, however, the Russians created land funds designated for agriculture and settlement but not held in reserve only for Russian peasants. The Russian government eventually permitted Kazakhs to accept allotted sections of land in order to abandon nomadism and take up agriculture.

To manage this allotment process in 1837 the Russian government created the Siberian Survey to direct and identify lands in the steppe most suitable for Russian colonization. It operated based on fifteen desiatin per adult male being the norm necessary for peasant settlement and agriculture. The government permitted Russian peasants from regions in European Russia considered “exceptionally short of land” to migrate and resettle in Siberia and the Kazakh Steppe. As will be recalled, in 1847 the Kenesary Kasymov rebellion ended, and by 1850 the Russian government halted Cossack colonization in the steppe region because the original purpose—namely, the defensive mission—was outdated.

By the late 1840s, the discovery of gold in the Far West triggered a massive migration that certainly aggravated the situation in the northern plains between the American government and the indigenous populations. According to Jeffrey Ostler, in 1841 less than 100 emigrants crossed the plains, but in 1849 that number exceeded more than 25,000. The Sioux complained about the increased traffic, claiming that the thousands of migrants competed with them for resources, especially timber, water, and game. This competition seemingly elevated the possibility of conflict between American pioneers and the Sioux for those limited resources. The widespread belief, however, that Indians constantly harassed and attacked emigrants was, as subsequent research revealed, the perception rather than the reality. Between 1840 and 1860, more whites killed Indians than Indians killed whites. Certainly, confrontations occurred, but not to the extent that the American public believed. Nonetheless, the United States took steps to administer Indian affairs and protect emigrants traveling west. The removal policy no longer worked.

In 1849 Congress created the Department of the Interior and moved the Bureau of Indian Affairs from the War Department into this new executive-branch department. The BIA appointed agents, paid annuities, distributed supplies, and administered relations with Indians. In 1850 the commissioner of Indian affairs, Luke Lea, proposed to establish reservations for the Plains tribes. The proposal included definite boundaries in order to protect tribes from trespassing whites on native lands, usually in violation of many previous treaties, and to restrict native lands and open territory to American settlements. The American government envisioned individual reservations for the
many different tribes to assist them as they adopted civilized behavior and agriculture.

Commissioner Lea ardently supported the reservation idea; he argued that the Sioux, Chippewa, and other tribes, given their “remoteness and scattered condition, it is difficult to exercise any effective restraint over them.” In addition, he claimed that the constant intertribal warfare was “revolting to humanity” because it fostered “that insatiable passion for war, which, in combination with love of the chase, is the prominent characteristic feature of our wilder tribes, and presents a formidable obstacle in the way of their civilization and improvement.” Therefore, he urged reservations for the Sioux and other Plains tribes so that they may be “placed in positions where they can be controlled, and finally compelled by stern necessity to resort to agricultural labor or starve.”

For the first time, beginning in the late 1840s, the Sioux became an essential factor to consider as American government policy changed.

Subsequent treaties with the Sioux reflected Lea’s attitude that a “portion of this country must soon pass sub judice; opening, by the extinction of the Indian title, a new theatre for the great drama of western civilization.” American pioneers and Russian peasants were, as geographer Rodolphe De Koninck suggested, the “territorial spearhead of the state” in a process he referred to as the “territorial compromise.” It was the “gathering of the pieces that comprise them [the state] and the colonization of their borderlands have relied at least partially on the peasantry, or on a process of peasantization.” In Russia, the
government built a fortified line that Kazakhs could not cross, but that did not stop Russian peasants, which compelled Russian government officials to extend their authority into contested territory in order to protect their interests. In the minds of many Americans and Russians, military forts, posts, and settler communities were a “protest against barbarism,” but often along the border or frontier the government, in the guise of the military, seemed a step behind the settler pioneer or peasant.33

To ensure that Americans traveling through the plains were safe, the American government determined to extend its military reach deeper into the northern plains and built a series of forts and posts. In 1851 and again in 1858, the American government signed treaties at Fort Laramie comprising most Plains tribes, including a significant number of Sioux bands. The 1851 treaty established tribal territories throughout the plains. According to Robert M. Utley, the government created these tribal territories to diminish intertribal warfare on the plains and reduce the chance of fateful encounters between warring tribes and emigrants. These tribal territories were not technically reservations but rather set the foundation for their future creation.34 Some Sioux bands relinquished title to more than 25 million acres in exchange for annuities and, ultimately, a reservation along the Minnesota River.35 The problem, from the American perspective, was that many Sioux remained outside of American control; many Sioux bands remained generally sovereign and not obligated to the treaty restrictions.

The American government determined to prevent attacks by the Sioux against emigrants and, to the extent possible, avert violations of the treaties’ provisions by Americans pioneers and emigrants. Those Sioux that signed treaties with the American government typically agreed to submit violators to American justice. The treaties obligated many Sioux to “agree and bind themselves to make restitution or satisfaction for any wrongs committed . . . by any band or individual of their people, on the people of the United States, whilst lawfully residing in or passing through their respective territories.”36 The consequence, however, was that if a single Sioux violated an article of the treaties, the American government reserved the right to withhold its obligations to the Sioux.

The treaties were a mechanism of control, one that the American government frequently and increasingly exercised during the next several decades. Any hostile act by an individual Sioux meant the United States reserved the right to punish all Sioux, which it did habitually. For example, article 8 of the 1851 Fort Laramie treaty stipulated that the “United States may withhold the whole of a portion of the annuities mentioned . . . from the nation so offending, until, in the opinion of the President of the United States, proper satisfaction shall have been
made.”

The treaties did nothing to limit Americans from crossing the plains or violating Sioux rights. While the American government ostensibly designed treaties to prevent violations by either an American or a Sioux, the Sioux could only appeal to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to hear their grievances. Resolution rarely favored the Sioux, but it was a different situation for the Kazakhs.

The Speransky reforms created courts systems in the steppe, purportedly designed and tasked to resolve disputes between farmer and nomad, native and Russian. In the event that a Kazakh alleged a Russian peasant committed a crime or violated the law, the regulations permitted Kazakhs to mediate the case in a Russian court. The reforms, however, did not compel Russians to attend native Kazakh courts, which used Kazakh customary law (adat), but a Russian could bring a case against a Kazakh in the Russian court. Despite Russian attempts to create judicial institutions that legally integrated Kazakhs to resolve disputes, the system generally failed or benefited Russian peasants at the expense of Kazakh rights. One of Kenesary Kasymov’s constant complaints to Russian officials was that Russian peasants settled on Kazakh land, and the Russian government and its courts ignored the situation. Russian resettlements continued unabated to partition the Kazakh Steppe. Similarly, one Sioux chief at the 1851 Fort Laramie negotiations echoed Kenesary’s concerns when he declared, “You have split my land and I don’t like it.”

Resettlement by Americans in the plains and Russians in the steppe altered the respective regions’ demographics, a process that accelerated in the 1850s.

Population shifts evident in the United States and Russia compelled the American and Russian governments to establish frameworks to accommodate that resettlement and reorganization. American pioneers and Russian peasants moved and settled on the plains and the steppe, a process that clearly resembled colonies in other contexts. The scholar Jürgen Osterhammel referred to this particular type of “socio-political organization” and “system of domination” as border colonization, a case in which the boundary was pushed into a wilderness that was contiguous to the recognized boundaries of the expanding state. In the American case, internal colonization occurred at the same time as the military conquest. Similar growth happened in the plains territories, Colorado, Montana Territory, the Dakotas, and Texas.

Russian settler colonization was different and did not initially transgress the Russian military conquest and its frontier. Nonetheless, once the Russians established a boundary that prohibited Kazakhs to cross, Russian peasant settlers—legal and illegal—quickly followed to occupy the land in general proximity to those regulated areas. In 1854 the Russians founded the city of Verny (present-day Almaty) in Semirechie, which gave the Russians the geographic
base necessary to expand deeper into Turkestan. Within a decade, the Russians occupied Tashkent; and by the 1870s, the khanates—Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand—fell under Russian rule. The Russians did not initially attempt to open Turkestan to Russian peasant resettlement; in fact, the Russian government closed Semirechie and Turkestan colonization for a couple of decades. Instead, the Russians focused their attention on trying to manage the settlement process in the Kazakh Steppe, which many observers believed was chaotic and out of control.

Russia’s problem was that the government tried to restrict peasant movement within the empire, which became more difficult following the 1861 serf emancipation. In the United States, the government prohibited settlers from occupying land set aside for Indian reservations, but the restrictions did not pose an obstacle to migration before or after the Homestead Act. In Russia, the government restricted peasant migration by numerous edicts and regulations, but peasants still managed to find their way to the Kazakh Steppe. Indeed, within a couple decades after the emancipation, Russian officials estimated that more than 70 percent of Russian emigrants to Siberia and the steppe settled there illegally. It was not difficult to understand the surge of pioneer and peasant resettlement in the plains and steppe: accessible land. In the United States, 160 free acres was too attractive for pioneers to ignore. After the serf emancipation, the average peasant holding in European Russia was only 3.5 desiatin, but a Russian peasant could occupy at least 15 desiatin (roughly 40 acres) in the Kazakh Steppe, according to resettlement rules enacted decades earlier. A later Soviet source claimed that more than 75 percent of peasants indicated that land shortages in European Russia was the reason to migrate east to find available allotments.

According to economic historian Maurice Dobb, the empire’s wheat yield in European Russia was between eight to ten bushels per acre, which ranked below Serbia and Italy, and only about half as much as Austria-Hungary. The average cultivated area was little more than 1 desiatin, which failed to increase significantly following the 1861 emancipation. Moreover, as the Russian population grew significantly between 1861 and 1897 (the year of the first Russian All-Empire census), arable land became scarcer. European Russia’s population density, excluding Poland, was almost twice that of the United States, whereas the total amount of cultivated land was no more than 25 percent. Siberia and the Kazakh Steppe captivated the Russian government’s attention as an obvious answer to the agrarian problem in European Russia, but the government failed to devise mechanisms to control migration and resettlement.

In the 1850s and 1860s, the United States and tsarist Russia tried to develop mechanisms to demarcate the land for pioneers and peasants as well as for the
Sioux and the Kazakhs. The American and Russian governments reserved land for their emigrants to claim and farm, but they also designated land ostensibly reserved only for the nomadic Sioux and Kazakhs to use. Pioneers and peasants often ignored the artificially applied boundaries. The 1860s was a watershed decade, in many respects, for American and Russian internal colonization of the plains and the steppe.

THE EARLY STAGES OF ALLOTMENT

In 1862 the US Congress passed the Homestead Act, considered by some scholars one of the most important legislative acts in American history, although it was not the only land policy at work in the plains or the American West.\textsuperscript{47} The homestead idea, deeply grounded in the Jeffersonian ideal of the yeoman farmer, seemingly reignited during the free-soil and antislavery debates tearing the country apart in the 1840s and 1850s.\textsuperscript{48} The act, according to historian Richard Slotkin, was also “part of a large social improvement program designed finally to purge American society of those nagging disorders that plagued it. The perennial ‘Indian question’ would now be justly resolved by dividing Indian lands into Homestead-type allotments and having the Indian integrated with civilized society in the sanctified status of yeoman farmer.”\textsuperscript{49} The Homestead Act opened land in the West for individuals to file permits to acquire a 160-acre allotment; farmers were required to occupy the land for five years and improve the land. The Russians, who considered it a possible example to follow to promote more organized resettlement in Siberia and the Kazakh Steppe, studied its success extensively.\textsuperscript{50}

Although the Russian government never enacted a comparable homestead law, Russian statutes and regulations designed to manage the resettlement process included similar elements, such as financial incentives to improve the land on allotments and inducements to construct permanent dwellings or other buildings. One Russian agronomist, writing many years after the Homestead Act’s passage, noted that it helped the United States to “create prosperous [\textit{tsvetoishchiia}] provinces on their own uninhabited lands in a very short time,” and he seemed to lament the fact that Russia failed to follow the American example.\textsuperscript{51}

In 1865 the United States and Russia established commissions to investigate their respective policies and administration of native affairs. The US Congress created the Doolittle Commission, chaired by Sen. James R. Doolittle, to investigate failures of American policies and recommend reforms to resolve the Indian problem, especially in the plains. In the United States, the discovery of gold in Montana, the 1862 Sioux rebellion in Minnesota, and the Homestead Act
created a combustible mix of circumstances that accelerated the process of confining the Sioux to reservations.

Also in 1865, the Russian government formed the Steppe Commission, which it instructed to investigate conditions in the steppe and propose new regulations for its administration. The commission spent two years traveling around the Kazakh Steppe, in Semirechie, and in Turkestan. The Doolittle Commission also spent two years investigating and issued a report in 1867; its work received added impetus due to the increased violence along the Bozeman Trail and the 1866 Fetterman Massacre.

Although the Doolittle Commission’s report highlighted the failures of American policy, it produced little legislatively to stem the violence. It was, as one scholar noted, an aptly named commission. As Prucha observed, the report’s most significant contribution was that it stimulated eastern Christian reformers to demand changes to American government policy toward natives. In Russia, the Steppe Commission did not investigate policy failures; rather, it considered what policies to enact in order to yield a more efficient colonial administration. Its report did not highlight mistreatment of the Kazakhs or insist upon equitable land distribution. It did not deviate from its instructions to demand any substantial reforms; it proposed only organizational and administrative restructuring.

The Russian Steppe Commission produced a significant administrative regulation, which the Russian government enacted in 1868, known as the Provisional Statute on the Administration of the Turgai, Akmolinsk, Uralsk, and Semipalatinsk Oblasts. Intended to be a temporary (until 1871) reorganization, it remained in effect until 1917. The provisional statute essentially created two guberniia, one for the steppe and the other for Turkestan. The statute subdivided the steppe into four oblasti, highlighted in its title. It further reduced native leadership, and, additionally, the Russian government unified the civil and military authority in the region under the command of a governor-general. The commission concluded, as well, that the Kazakhs were unprepared to adopt an agrarian life because the steppe was unsuited to extensive agriculture—except for settlers with agricultural experience, such as Russian peasants.

American diplomat Eugene Schuyler visited the steppe and Turkestan shortly after the regulation went into effect. He concluded, “the gulf between the conquerors and the conquered has been widened and deepened through defects inherent in methods of government subsequently developed, as well as through the faults of the administrators.”

The 1868 statute recommended nothing in the way of assistance for Kazakhs dislocated by increased Russian peasant resettlement in the steppe; the government also became the final arbiter to resolve land disputes not just between
Russian peasants and Kazakhs but among Kazakhs themselves. This established, more firmly, the allotment of specific territory for agriculture and livestock, between sedentary Russian peasants and nomadic Kazakhs. According to historian Peter Holquist, “Russia was unique among colonial powers in establishing ‘norms for meeting the land needs of natives’” but nonetheless confirmed “a clear preference for sedentary over nomadic life.”59 Although not called reservations by the Russians, the effect was the same. Kazakhs could only use designated territories within a specifically assigned district in a particular province.

Russia implemented policies that historian Matthew G. Hannah observed, in the American case, emphasized “[s]patial fixation and restriction [that] were of central importance to the plan for civilization.”60 The Russian government severely curtailed Kazakh migration and prohibited movement from one district to another without official permission. The American government exhibited similar restrictive bureaucratic hurdles after it consigned Sioux to specific reservations. For example, in September 1886, No Flesh, a Sioux assigned to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota Territory, requested permission to go with a small party to visit friends who lived on the Rosebud Agency. The acting agent, Capt. James Bell, wrote to BIA commissioner John D.C. Atkins to request permission to let No Flesh go. Atkins replied, “I have to say that while it is against the policy of the Government to permit Indians to leave their reservation for the purpose of visiting Indians upon other reservations, I cannot see that any harm could result . . . provided that such visits are made at the proper time and will not interfere with the work of the visiting Indians or the friends whom they may visit.”61 Atkins reminded Bell that it was the “object of the Government to encourage all Indians to become self-supporting by means of agriculture or other employment and the practice of visiting to and fro should be discouraged.”62

Atkins concluded the message to Bell by explaining that these sorts of decisions should remain at the agent’s discretion. What Atkins’s missive reveals was the truly intrusive nature of American internal colonization. The Russians, however, imposed restrictions chiefly to prevent conflict between different migrating Kazakh auls that might fight to use specific pastures or between Kazakhs and Russians. Thus, the Russian regulations restricted Kazakhs to a specific uezd, the Russian government entertained Kazakh requests to pasture livestock in a different district. It was highly unlikely that a Russian official ever even considered it necessary to ask if a Kazakh could travel to visit friends or relatives who happened to live in a different uezd. The Russians restricted the Kazakh Steppe land to specific uses; the Americans restrictions were more socially, culturally, and personally pervasive.
The Homestead Act and the Russian provisional statute further threw open the doors to American pioneers and Russian peasants to resettle in the plains and the steppe. While different in conception, they were similar in consequence. American pioneers benefited far more from the new circumstances than did Russian peasants, generally because the Russian government continued to monitor closely all peasant migration and resettlement in the steppe. The Russian government also maintained rigid restrictions on rural populations in European Russia. Nonetheless, illegal emigration to the steppe continued, and local Russian officials often just ignored the problem. The Russian officials in Saint Petersburg were aware that Russian peasants settled illegally in the steppe, but officials in the capital and the steppe tended to ignore the problem because the peasants served the state’s interests by fortifying Russia’s demographic position along the frontier. For example, in Turgai Oblast, from 1875 to 1882, the area under settlement by Russian peasants grew from 17,000 to 44,000 desiatin. The peasants were the spearhead of Russian internal colonization.

Before the provisional statute, Kazakhs had relatively free movement in the steppe south of the Russian line. After 1868 the Russian government more closely regulated Kazakh migrations. It was comparable to what happened to the Sioux following the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie. At that time, the American government and some Sioux bands agreed to tribal boundaries and reinforced and reorganized in 1868 after the American government established new territorial limitations to demarcate the Great Sioux Reservation. By the 1870s, however, the Black Hills, initially located on the reservation and reserved for the Sioux, became a source of tension after the Custer expedition reported discovering large quantities of gold there. The American government proved unable—even unwilling—to prevent American pioneers from pouring into the Black Hills, in violation of the 1868 treaty. This pattern happened repeatedly; the Americans and Russians imposed territorial margins and defined the boundaries between colonizers and colonized but watched, unmoved but not uninterested, as pioneers and peasants defied the government’s authority to breach the margins. Internal colonization in the steppe and the plains accelerated after 1868 in both the United States and the Russian Empire.

**Allotment**

By the end of the 1860s, both the United States and Russia reevaluated internal colonization, its administration, and, to a lesser extent, the mechanisms to manage resettlement of pioneers and peasants and the native populations on colonized land. The United States already embarked upon a policy of using
treaties to secure the Sioux on reservations; Russia started allotting land generally designated for Russian peasants (i.e., sedentary) and Kazakhs (i.e., nomads). There were other events that pushed the United States toward its own reforms in Indian affairs. The 1868 Fort Laramie treaty ended Red Cloud’s War and helped initiate President Ulysses S. Grant’s so-called Peace Policy to reform American Indian administration and policy. Another issue that bothered many Americans was the treaty system, which many considered fundamentally inconsistent with the goal of assimilation and the unique position granted Indians by annuities and treaty responsibilities imposed on the American government.

In 1868 Grant’s reform agenda—the Peace Policy—included a program that was probably inconceivable to Russian administrators in the Kazakh Steppe. The Grant administration subscribed to the idea that the BIA was rife with corruption, graft, and irregularities that completely mishandled relations with Indians since its inception in 1824; that it was largely responsible for antagonizing the various tribes, which led to conflict; and that it stole land and goods from Indians with impunity. Russia’s colonial structures were not immune to similar allegations; many Russian officials also noted significant corruption that accompanied Russian administration and resettlement in the Kazakh Steppe—what one critical observer described as “nothing but a long and nasty anecdote” that was replete in “thefts and embezzlement” of state funds, “impenetrable stupidity,” and “brutality and wastefulness” in the government’s policies.64

The solution to these problems in the United States, and one long advocated by many reform-minded Americans, was to appoint Christian leaders as agents, teachers, and matrons on the reservations and to positions of authority throughout the BIA. Russian officials never considered using Russian Orthodox leaders to serve as administrators in the steppe. Nevertheless, the United States followed that course exactly, and in early 1869, Congress established an independent institution—the Board of Indian Commissioners (BIC)—charged with oversight responsibilities of the BIA and government treatment of Indians. It issued annual reports every year well into the twentieth century.

Within three years of its inception, BIC members proclaimed success but noted there was still work to do. According to the third annual report in 1872, of the warlike tribes of the Sioux of Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming, hunting peacefully for buffalo without occasioning any serious alarm among the thousands of white settlers whose cabins skirt the borders on both sides of these plains, shows clearly . . . the efforts of the friends of peace in establishing confidence between the white people and the Indians. We contrast this picture with that presented by the same tribe, when, five years ago, in
consequence of our Government’s bad faith in violating its treaties with them, they were engaged in a war made memorable by the so-called Fort Kearney massacre . . . and in the course of which many settlers on the frontier lost their lives, and so many hundreds of others were compelled to abandon their cabins and flee to the larger towns for safety.65

Grant never completely suspended his belief that BIA ought to transfer from the Interior Department to the War Department. Nonetheless, he agreed with Gen. William T. Sherman that all Indians must settle on their respective reservations and, more importantly, it should be a “double process of peace within their reservation and war without.”66

By the mid-1870s, Grant’s Peace Policy reforms also included replacing all Indian agents with Quakers, Protestants, Catholics, and, in some cases, Army officers on the many reservations. The goal was to eliminate the corruption that American reformers insisted was one of the major reasons for continued conflict with the Sioux and other Indians. In 1871 the United States unilaterally abandon treaty making with all Indian tribes, which meant that relations with the Sioux became a domestic relationship rather than one under the guise of “foreign relations.”67 The decision stipulated, “hereafter no Indian nation or tribe within the territory of the United States shall be acknowledged or recognized as an independent nation, tribe, or power with whom the United States may contract by treaty.”68 No longer were relations dictated by diplomacy; instead, the relationship was based on social policy, and American social policies demanded assimilation. Despite these steps, the “political anomaly” that treaty making created for reformers was not resolved as long as the Sioux lived communally on reservations.69

It was a transitional phase of American Indian federal policy that had no comparison in Russian policy, particularly reforming to manage the Russian Empire’s minority nationalities. Reform groups in the United States spearheaded the reforms; oversaw government appropriations, education, and the distribution of annuities; and rigidly adhered to a Christian, civilizing, and coercive character and agenda. Many reform-minded organizations, led by men such as Herbert Welsh and organizations such as the Women’s National Indian Association and the Indian Rights Association, eventually coalesced in 1883 with the first meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of the Friends of the Indian. These reformers generally lacked official status but connected informally to the Board of Indian Commissioners.70 All of these individuals and groups, inspired by their Christian faith, seemed driven by a simple ideology: they knew how to help the Indian better than the Indian knew himself. In order to save the Indian, he must stop being an Indian. In the case of the Sioux, they must adopt American
civilization, embrace Christianity, and learn to read and write English and labor. Well-known nineteenth-century American educator Richard H. Pratt succinctly described this ideology as “kill the Indian in him, and save the man.” It was the clearest articulation of the American policies and justifications behind internal colonization, which meant Americans wanted the Sioux to abandon completely Sioux culture, language, and spiritual attachments to become Americans. The Russian government did not subject Kazakhs to similar coercive pressures; the Orthodox Church did not involve itself intrusively in the spiritual affairs of the Kazakhs until the early twentieth century. Christian reform movements did not influence Russian policies in the steppe. The Russians did not want to make the Kazakhs become Russians; they merely wanted the Kazakhs to be less like Kazakhs. Essentially, the Kazakhs could keep their language, traditions, and even religion; but the Russians just wanted them to stop being nomads. Once settled, Russians expected Kazakhs to learn civilization and, in time, adopt the culture, language, and religion of the empire.

In both cases, however, governments determined that the best way to achieve their objective was land allotment. It was, essentially, land redistribution. Both governments allotted natives specific parcels of land to settle and farm and redistributed the surplus—significantly more than the native allotment—to American pioneers and Russian peasants. The American and Russian governments implemented allotment differently; however, both regarded allotment as the surest way to settle the Sioux and the Kazakhs. The intended consequence made land available to those who might best exploit its bounty, but, more importantly, it eroded the communal bonds that ostensibly kept the Sioux and the Kazakhs uncivilized. The American government considered a variety of solutions, but the means chosen was the 1887 General Allotment Act, or Dawes Act, which “mandated a fundamental change in Indian-White relations.” Commissioner Atkins clearly articulated the act’s intent: “It is the earnest desire of the Government that the Indians give up their nomadic habits; settle upon land in severalty; go to work and earn a living; educate their children and become intelligent, respected and worthy citizens.” Many well-intentioned supporters of the act believed it appropriately encouraged Indians to be more amenable to white settlement and to adopt agriculture permanently. Writing many years after the act’s passage, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis E. Leupp wrote that most Americans regarded the reservations as “a system whose evils it requires the larger part of the energy of recent Indian administration to remedy,” but also that each was somehow “a princely domain.” It assumed, one advocate claimed, to elevate the barbarian because civilization “follows the improved arts of agriculture as vegetation follows the genial sunshine and the shower, and
that those races who are in ignorance of agriculture are also ignorant of almost everything else.”

The agrarian life produced, presumably, industrious, productive farmers who settled on large tracts and were rapidly assimilated into civilized society. Atkins endorsed the reforms because the “benign policy on the part of the Government toward the Indian race, dictated by a love of humanity, one in which both political parties have fortunately and exceptionally agreed, is a proud national distinction.” Nevertheless, he cautioned critics and supporters of allotment to be patient. He noted, “Character, habits, and antecedents can not be changed by an enactment. The distance between barbarism and civilization is too long to be passed over speedily.” Most historians concluded, however, that the Dawes Act, in effect until 1934, was a dismal failure.

According to the act, the head of each family was eligible to receive a 160-acre tract of land; single individuals over the age of eighteen received an additional 80 acres and children under eighteen received 40 acres. On reservations with land suitable only for livestock, the allotment doubled. Allotment was compulsory; the government assigned land to individuals who refused allotment within four years. Allotments were technically twenty-five-year trusts, during which time the individual could not sell nor lease the land. The government granted title after twenty-five years, but all reservation land not allotted was available for sale, with the proceeds held in trust by the government. Initially, the Sioux had the right to approve all sales of surplus land, but in 1903 the courts determined that approval was unnecessary. Therefore, the Sioux ultimately had no say in the disposition of their land; neither tribe nor individual could reject allotment—the government simply imposed the legislation.

In 1889 Commissioner of Indian Affairs T. J. Morgan identified eight “simple, well-defined, and strongly-cherished convictions” to guide his administration, including that the “reservation system belongs to a ‘vanishing state of things’ and must soon cease to exist.” All Indians, he argued, must be absorbed “into our national life, not as Indians, but as American citizens.” Morgan wanted Indians to adjust accordingly to destroy tribal relations, “peacefully if they will, forcibly if they must.” He understood the difficulties, however, writing in 1890 that the “natural conservatism of the Indians, which leads them to cling with tenacity to their superstitions and inherited practices, adds to the difficulty of inducing them to abandon their own and accept the white man’s ways.” Allotment proceeded slowly, but another principal blow to the Great Sioux Reservation was President Benjamin Harrison’s 1890 proclamation that broke the reservation into several smaller reserves, granted rights-of-way to railroads, and made land available to homesteaders.
Throughout the 1890s, reservation agents reported “progress” toward allotment’s completion, but they also noted that opposition remained. In 1894 the Pine Ridge Reservation agent reported that roughly 90 percent of the Sioux there opposed the plan. In 1897 Sen. Richard F. Pettigrew, chairman of the Senate Committee of Indian Affairs, interviewed a delegation of four Oglala Sioux from Pine Ridge as they visited Washington. He asked them directly if any selected their allotments; all four said no. The reason was not solely an objection to the law but rather, they claimed, because the land was incapable of supporting large-scale agriculture; it was, however, suitable to raising livestock. Red Cloud, one of the delegates and well-known to American officials for his role in the conflict along the Bozeman Trail in the 1860s, explained to Pettigrew that his people knew the land well, but that it was unsuitable for agriculture. “We can not,” he said, “raise anything on it . . . we do not want it.” Pettigrew asked about cattle, and Red Cloud turned the discussion to American desires for the Sioux to be self-supporting people, telling the senator that “if we try to depend on tilling the land we have no returns for it; there is no way of making ourselves self-supporting when the Government lets us alone.” The delegates submitted a petition to the committee, which rejected allotment and claimed “that by following stock raising we will in time become civilized, enlightened, thrifty, self-governing, and independent citizens.”

It was, essentially, a plea to allow the Sioux to use the land as they saw fit, not allot the land in parcels too small to support livestock because they could only be self-supporting through livestock, not agriculture. Allotment, according to Red Cloud and the other delegates, kept the Sioux on Pine Ridge wards of the government, contrary to the law’s elementary purpose. It could be too that Red Cloud simply failed to convince Pettigrew that the land was unproductive; dry farming in the plains had a large number of adherents, and there was unquestionably a belief that the “rain followed the plow.”

Even if that was the case, it is also doubtful that the Sioux had the knowledge, seed, or implements to farm successfully in the northern plains without adequate water resources. In a sense, the Sioux delegation’s comments echoed Zebulon Pike, who considered the plains suitable for livestock but not agriculture. In fact, the Sioux complaints matched what various reservation agents were telling different commissioners of Indian affairs for decades; but after 1887 the government was determined to settle the Sioux onto individual allotments and make them farmers.

The Kazakhs noted similar difficulties with forced sedentarization on the steppe. Russian geographers often debated the feasibility of intensive agriculture in the Kazakh Steppe; many argued that it was suitable only for livestock,
which required extensive allotments to be profitable and effective. Of course, the Russian government was compelled to accelerate migration to the Kazakh Steppe, especially following the disastrous 1891–1892 famine in European Russia.90

The idea of virgin untilled land, even land that specialists understood was arid and not suitable to intensive agriculture, led to mass corruption and further impoverished Kazakhs and robbed them of land. Alikhan Bokeikhanov, a Russian-trained Kazakh agronomist, joined an expedition to the steppe—the so-called Shcherbina Expedition—and observed that Kazakhs in many districts averaged only about 6 desiatin of land, not the 15 desiatin promised following the 1896 Russian statute to allot land in the steppe.91 Moreover, Kazakhs who agreed to settle and become farmers received more land than those who persisted with livestock nomadism.92 Gen. Aleksei Kuropatkin, governor-general of Turkestan, after touring recently colonized lands in Semirechie, noted, “Particularly inadmissible to me is the giving . . . of 180,000 desiatin of pasture land to various individuals including 10,000 desiatin to Porotikov, police chief of the city of Vernyi . . . . Turning the Kirgiz to a sedentary life we parcelled out to them only plough lands while the pasture lands—180,000 desiatin—we gave to speculators, not to the Kirgiz.”93

In the Russian case, allotment policies implemented in the Kazakh Steppe were not enacted to break apart reservations or necessarily designed to erode Kazakh society, but the consequences impoverished Kazakhs and, even if
unwittingly, forced them to abandon their nomadic life and settle on land utterly insufficient to raising livestock. Kazakhs were compelled to take menial jobs, usually as laborers or hired field-workers, simply to survive. Kazakh sociopolitical structures collapsed as a result.

Beginning in the 1880s, the Russian government enacted several new laws that drastically altered the steppe’s demographics and worsened economic conditions for the Kazakhs. The movement of samovol’tsy (voluntary, or unauthorized) peasants dominated the second half of the nineteenth century. The government failed to control this movement, which increased conflict and tensions for land, as the samovol’tsy generally occupied land allotted for Kazakhs. Initially, the government rhetorically discouraged samovol’tsy from occupying Kazakh lands but did very little to prevent it. The samovol’tsy were no different from Americans who defied American laws that prohibited squatters from settling on Indian reservations. Similar to the Russian situation, as Patricia Nelson Limerick noted in the American case, “Squatters defied the boundaries of Indian Territory and then were aggrieved to find themselves harassed and attacked by Indians.”

Russian courts generally decided in favor of Russian peasants when land disputes were presented, forcing Kazakhs to migrate or settle elsewhere.

The number of peasants seeking new lives in the steppe overwhelmed Russian officials. These officials also recognized the potential for conflicts in the steppe between impoverished Kazakhs and Russian peasants. They decided the best remedy was, similar to the American case, to prohibit Russians from settling on allotted Kazakh lands. In 1883 the Russian government once again announced a ban against resettlement in the steppe oblasts. Even with the prohibitions, the government was unable to regulate the movement of Russian peasants into the steppe; the prohibitions proved ineffective. The Russian government decided to reevaluate how much land Kazakhs needed and how much land to make available to Russian peasants. The illegal migrants were, according to one local Russian official, “unable to be patient” and tended to settle in places that lacked “supervision” (nabliudenie), occupying the land “without proper permission.”

One official complained that at the rate the Russian peasants were flooding into the steppe, they were on the verge of “completely covering the steppe with Russian settlements.” Indeed, according to historian Geroid T. Robinson, “among the peasants west of the Urals,” the land to the east was “regarded as a kind of Utopia.”

In 1888 Russian officials observed significant increases the number of indigent Kazakhs. One report noted, “in order not to die from starvation, they [poor Kazakhs] take work as seasonal laborers at local markets and factories, and live as farm hirelings doing agricultural work for other Kazakhs. Contact with
Russians has taught them how to cultivate fields and small gardens. The number of these beggars already numbers in the thousands. In 1889 the Russian government established the Resettlement Act, which permitted peasants to migrate legally and settle on lands that the Russian Interior Ministry deemed excessive—namely, on lands that the government believed were unnecessary for Kazakh nomads. Often these were communal lands, shared by Kazakhs from the same clan or horde. Moreover, given that Russian laws that restricted Kazakhs to specific districts disrupted Kazakh migration patterns, the land assigned to Kazakhs was often not suitable for livestock.

This combination of rules severely weakened the Kazakh nomadic economy and sociopolitical structures. To encourage Russian peasants to settle on steppe lands and to make tangible improvement to them (permanent buildings and year-round occupation), Russian peasants were granted tax exemptions and provided some assistance to construct new residences. The 1889 act, according to a Kazakh scholar, threw the door to the steppe wide open once again; but even under the new act, local officials were not able to manage effectively the resettlement process. Russian peasants tended to settle where they wanted, not on land the government assigned to them.

In addition, beginning with the 1889 statute, the Russian government designated certain lands excess, or superfluous (izlishnii), for nomadic use and placed such land under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and State Property. Consequently, peasant holdings often exceeded the 15 desiatin normally allotted by the government for settlement. This was a Russian version of the Homestead Act, but it was still a rather chaotic environment. In 1896 the Russian Interior Ministry established a special Resettlement Administration (Pereselencheskoe Upravlenie), which assumed certain duties formerly handled by the ministry’s “land section” (Zemskii otdel). This new administrative structure managed and promoted the practice of “scouting” (khodachestvo) to survey the best land for Russian peasants to occupy. One French visitor commented that the “scouts” were little more than thieves sanctioned by the state to seize land from the natives. In the zest to identify “surplus lands,” in a somewhat comical turn, an overzealous official—a certain Mazurenko—inadvertently incorporated some Chinese territory in the tracts he categorized as surplus and fit for settlement. In order to organize peasant resettlement with better empirical evidence, the Russian government dispatched several scientific expeditions to the steppe to determine what lands were best suited for resettlement. In one case, a Russian government expedition surveyed roughly 36 million desiatin in the steppe reserved for Kazakhs, but it concluded that it was more than double the amount necessary for them to survive.
Russia’s Resettlement Administration established regulations to manage allotments but often ignored its own rules, which forced many Kazakhs to resettle on hilltops, mountainsides, and deserts in order to survive. One Kazakh described his allotment as “worthless” because Russians allotted the best land to peasants or wealthy Kazakhs. He lacked provisions and fodder for his livestock, which was “falling into extreme impoverishment.” Another Kazakh claimed that he was not granted his full 15 desiatin allotment of “suitable land” (udobnoi zemli) guaranteed by law, which caused his family to live in absolute poverty. The government provided inadequate training and support to Kazakhs forced to take up the sedentary, agrarian life. A similar situation existed in the United States. Stories of corruption and unscrupulous Americans taking advantage of Indians—not just the Sioux—were almost axiomatic. Helen Hunt Jackson’s 1881 classic, A Century of Dishonor, was not the first to highlight this fact, but it certainly seemed to galvanize reformers to demand drastic changes to the American treatment of Indians. One of the principal means devised to reform Indian affairs was allotment—the very thing many Sioux opposed. It did not matter.

In the United States, Sen. Charles Dawes of Massachusetts, the architect of allotment, seemed to echo similar concerns when he spoke for the Sioux a couple of years after the act’s passage. He observed that Indians had “no homes, no horses, no hoes, no seeds, and had they had ploughs, they would not know how to use them.” The United States and Russia desired to expand agriculture because each believed that the agrarian, sedentary life was markedly superior to nomadism. Both governments allotted land to force the Sioux and the Kazakhs to accept small allotments to farm, even though both governments also recognized that the Sioux and the Kazakhs were not experienced farmers. Perhaps the most unusual explanation for the Kazakh land shortage—not one that seems to be used in the United States—came from well-known Russian Orientalist Vasilii Grigoriev, who attributed the Kazakh problems in the steppe not to Russian colonization or because Russian peasants occupied the best land. Grigoriev claimed that before Russian expansion into the steppe, Kazakhs were in a constant state of internecine warfare. As a consequence, this barbaric warfare kept the Kazakh population small relative to the available land. Russian colonization brought order, peace, and stability to the steppe; the Kazakh population thereby increased, and they “began to live in peace and multiply their numbers. This development resulted in land shortages.”

The expanding American and Russian colonizers allotted the land in specific ways, using specific categories; but both governments also had to deal with pioneers and peasants who transgressed against the allotted boundaries. There were, in both cases, severe consequences for the Sioux and the Kazakhs
following the intensified allotment efforts evident in the American Dawes Act and the Russian 1889 and 1896 statutes. Historian Richard White summarized the Dawes Act this way: “The policy of allotment in severalty was as draconian a case of social reform forced on an outside group—most Indians were not yet citizens—and with as disastrous consequences as anything in American history. It was done in the name of capitalist progress, democracy, Christianity.” According to Emily Greenwald, it was an effort to “atomize Indians, to break down their economic and social bonds by dispersing them onto individually owned parcels of land.” By 1907 about 3,000 of the 6,700 Pine Ridge Sioux eligible for allotment had made their selections. The impetus for future allotments, according to George E. Hyde, Red Cloud’s biographer, was that the United States had effectively destroyed the Sioux sociopolitical structures by compelling them to take land. The Dawes Act made more than 9 million acres available through allotment to American settlers, essentially dismantling the Sioux reservations. In fact, according to Wolfe, in total land redistribution, “in the half-century from 1881, the total acreage held by Indians in the United States fell by two thirds, from just over 155 million acres to just over 52 million.” Rather than assimilating the Sioux, allotment and forced sedentarization created deep social, cultural, and economic crises on the various Sioux reservations well into the twentieth century. In the Kazakh Steppe, as David Moon described Russian efforts, “Hand-in-hand with Russian conquest, peasant settlement, loss of land, and sedentarization came attempts to undermine the local culture as the Russian state began to move away from its earlier policy of accommodation with local elites.”

The United States and Russia imposed their culture on the Sioux and the Kazakhs; they compelled social and political accommodation and demanded assimilation into the dominant society by insisting that the Sioux and the Kazakhs accept allotments in order to become part of the agrarian ideal. The colonizer used schools and education to teach assimilation, the social and cultural behaviors Americans and Russians deemed essential for settled, civilized, and productive members of society. Education was the tool to destroy the barriers that kept the Sioux and the Kazakhs primitive peoples; it was the instrument to create social, cultural, and political uniformity. It is to that process that this study now moves.

NOTES

1. Richard White argued, “Western expansion was about empire, as much as the American people and many historians would like to treat it as a purely domestic development. . . . [And] the creation of an overseas empire in 1898 was not ‘unthinking or accidental.’ It had


5. Ibid.

6. According to Robert P. Geraci, “Russian statesmen often used Russians’ putative empathy with other peoples as a justification for imperialism . . . This view described the Russian Empire as a justifiable philanthropic undertaking in contrast to the other European empires that were supposedly illegitimate, coercive, and exploitative. The capacity for ventriloquism, then, was especially important in Asia, where it turned out that the ulterior motive was not the appreciation of non-Russian cultures but a mission to spread Russian culture.” “Genocidal Impulses and Fantasies in Imperial Russia,” in Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2010), 361, emphasis in original.


8. According to Patrick Wolfe, “settler colonialism is an inclusive, land-centered project that coordinates a comprehensive range of agencies, from the metropolitan centre to the frontier encampment, with a view to eliminating Indigenous societies.” “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native,” Journal of Genocide Research 8, no. 4 (December 2006): 393.


11. According to Robert M. Utley, “The Indian Bureau had two major purposes: to extinguish Indian land titles and to grapple with the vexing problem of what to do with the people whose title had been extinguished.” The Indian Frontier, 1846–1890, rev. ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 38.

   Wright did not distinguish between Siberia and the Kazakh Steppe.
18. Speransky’s reforms targeted not only Kazakhs but Buriats and other Siberian peoples as well.
26. Michael L. Tate, “From Cooperation to Conflict: Sioux Relations with the Overland Emigrants, 1845–1865,” Overland Journal 18, no. 4 (Winter 2000–2001): 18. According to Tate, Indians killed only 362 emigrants, whereas during the same period, emigrants killed 426 Indians. These statistics reflect all overland trails, not just the Bozeman, Platte, or other routes that crossed Sioux territory.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., 77.
32. Ibid. De Koninck argues that the “same process has been active in the colonization not only of large areas of the so-called New Countries, such as the United States, Canada, or Australia—notwithstanding the larger degree of ‘freedom’ enjoyed by many of the pioneers in these New Countries—but also of the frontier, buffer, or marginal lands of the old empires. Thus, with the eastward expansion of Russia, particularly throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that of Chinese settlers into Manchuria during the nineteenth century, or
of Japanese settlers on the island of Hokkaido, starting in 1868 and continuing well into the twentieth century, and involving soldier-settlers” (232).


34. Utley, Indian Frontier, 60.


37. Ibid., 595.


42. Leasure and Lewis, “Internal Migration,” 381.

43. I. L. Iamzin and V. P. Voshchinin, Uchenie o kolonizatsii i pereseleniiakh (Moscow: Gos. izd-vo, 1926), 39.


45. Ibid., 54.

46. Ibid., 39.

47. See, for example, Harold M. Hyman, American Singularity: The 1787 Northwest Ordinance, the 1862 Homestead and Morrill Acts, and the 1944 G.I. Bill (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986); Paul W. Gates, The Jeffersonian Dream: Studies in the History of American Land Policy and Development (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996). According to Gates, the act was “intended to reward him [the pioneer] for his courageous move to the frontier by giving him land, the value of which he and his community would create.” See “The Homestead Act: Free Land Policy in Operation, 1862–1935,” in Land Use Policy and Problems in the United States, ed. Howard W. Otoson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 28. Gates, however, was also a critic of the act, arguing that it did not end land speculation but, instead, the “existence of the Pre-emption Law and its later variations, the Desert Land Act, the Timber Culture Act, the Timber and Stone Act, the land grants to railroads and states, the cash sale system, the Indian land policy, the acts granting land warrants to ex-soldiers or their heirs, and the Agricultural College Act of 1862, which granted millions of acres of land scrip to Eastern states, tended to make it practically as easy for speculators to engross huge areas of land after 1862 as before.” “The Homestead Law in an Incongruous Land System,” American Historical Review 41, no. 4 (July 1936): 656.


55. This statute did not happen in a vacuum but was one of dozens of such reforms following Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War, the best known being the 1861 peasant emancipation. It was two decades of sweeping institutional reforms— in a sense, a revolution from above—that affected the Russian Empire’s military, judiciary, administration, industry and agriculture, and transportation. See Ben Eklof, John Bushnell, and Larissa Zakharova, eds., Russia’s Great Reforms, 1855–1881 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); W. Bruce Lincoln, The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990).


62. "Letter From Office of Indian Affairs Commissioner Atkins to Capt. James M. Bell," NAKC.


64. Quoted in Anna Rochester, *Lenin on the Agrarian Question* (New York: International Publishers, 1942), 76–77. The 1822 Spersky reforms also included Kazakh leaders to help administer the steppe provinces, and, as one Russian official described it, Kazakhs were equally susceptible to the administrative corruption as Russian government authorities. He alleged, "The eagerness to become volost head . . . can be explained by, on the one hand, a quite significant salary, and, on the other, control over tax collection for the entire county, at a time when unlawful misappropriations, tardy remission of money to the Treasury, and even concealment of the money were possible. Besides, the head of the volost . . . could impose fines up to 3 rubles. The control of his activities with regard to such amounts was totally impossible, especially given the nomadic life style of the population." Quoted in Nadira A. Abdurakhimova, "The Colonial System of Power in Turkistan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 2 (May 2002): 247.


72. Prucha, *Americanizing the American Indians*, 8. According to Prucha, the racial element was a mitigating factor due to the recent influx of eastern and southern European immigrants into the United States.


74. "Letter From BIA Commissioner Atkins to Agent, Pine Ridge Agency," February 2, 1887, box 8, NAKC.

76. Annual Report, 1885, 3.
77. Annual Report, 1887, 4.
79. Washburn, American Indian, 437.
80. See Kappler, Indian Affairs, 1:943–45.
83. Ibid.
85. See, for example, Peter A. Russell, "The Far-From-Dry Debates: Dry Farming on the Canadian Prairies and the American Great Plains," Agricultural History 81, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 493–521. Writing in 1923, geographer O. E. Baker described the very regions where the various Sioux reservations remained: "the deficiency in moisture is so discouraging to crop production that farmers are compelled to place their principal dependence upon pasture and live stock, that is, where the value of the pastureage exceeds the value of the crops." The Agriculture of the Great Plains Region," Annals of the Association of American Geographers 13, no. 3 (September 1923): 114.
86. In a 1906 source, Michigan Farmer, the author of one article claimed the right type of seed was necessary for dry farming to work. The author claimed that the "steppes of Russian and the arid plains of Turkestan have been drawn upon to furnish our seed supply and these when raised under conditions here have given an abundant harvest." This Russian wheat seed base was "grown for years on the steppes of Russia on a rainfall of less than 10 inches. Brought into this country by the Department of Agriculture, the first crop was harvested in 1901." See H. F. Palmer, "Dry Farming as Developed in the West," Michigan Farmer 50 (July 21, 1906), 33. See also Gary D. Libecap and Zeynep Kocabiyik Hansen, "'Rain Follows the Plow' and Dry-farming Doctrine: The Climate Information Problem and Homestead Failure in the Upper Great Plains, 1890–1925," Journal of Economic History 62, no. 1 (March 2002): 86–120.
89. Interestingly, poor Kazakhs also complained about rich Kazakhs taking larger allotments than permitted by law. In March 1899, one petition sent to the Russian government by some poor Kazakhs claimed that a certain wealthy Kazakh, Begali Batyrbekov, several years ago "started to crowd in on our land," pasturing his herds on their best fields, which hurt their ability to pasture their own herds or raised fodder because "this place in not good to grow hay." TsGA RK, f. 78, o. 2, d. 2920, l. 3–4; d. 3018, l. 5–6.
91. In Uralsk, in the northwest portion of the oblast, by the mid-1890s, the majority of the Kazakh population was forced to abandon nomadism and livestock raising and settle, but their plots were small, usually only between 4.4 and 6.0 desiatin per household. A. A. Kaufman, *K voprosu o kolonizatsii Ural'skoi oblasti* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiiia V.O. Kirshaumba, 1903), 22.


94. Some Kazakhs started raising cattle on the small allotments rather than sheep and horses; they engaged in subsistence farming and produced some dairy products in summer and meat in winter. *TsGA RK*, f. 25, o. 1, d. 3755, l. 13–14.


99. *TsGA RK*, f. 25, o. 1, d. 1446, l. 22.

100. *TsGA RK*, f. 25, o. 1, d. 1502, l. 1.


102. *TsGA RK*, f. 64, o. 1, d. 125, l. 44.


109. *TsGA RK*, f. 25, o. 1, d. 3281, l. 56.


111. According to this 1909 Orenburg Revenue Department report, local Russian officials indicated that many impoverished Kazaks found work as manual laborers, often as “farmhands, shepherds, mowers, ploughmen, unskilled laborers, guards, sentries; hiring themselves out to [wealthy] Kazakhs and settlers [Russians] . . . earning usually only 60 to 115 rubles per
year; the number of such people . . . must be rather significant, since almost every prosperous home of Kazakhs and settlers has Kazakh laborers.” TsGA RK, f. 25, o. 1, d. 1549, l. 57.


113. Hearings on H. R. 7902 before the House Committee on Indian Affairs, part 9, 73rd Cong., 2nd sess. (1934), 468.


116. Emily Greenwald, Reconfiguring the Reservation: The Nez Perces, Jicarilla Apaches, and the Dawes Act (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2002), 2. The commissioner of Indian affairs emphasized this view when he stressed that Indians “must abandon tribal relations; they must give up their superstitions; they must forsake their savage habits and learn the arts of civilization; they must learn to labor, and must learn to rear their families as white people do.” See Annual Report, 1885, v.

